

**An investigation of the Weberian notion of bureaucracy in
the context of service higher education institutions. A
qualitative study at the University of Damascus.**

Submitted by Lubna Almasri to the University of Exeter
as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management studies in March 2011.

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Abstract

This thesis uses elements of Weberian theory, particularly the Weberian notion of bureaucracy, in order to speculate on the impact of bureaucracy on academia. It examines bureaucracy within the specific context of the higher education institution of the University of Damascus in Syria, using various qualitative research methodologies and techniques including documentary/archival material, observation, and interviews. The study presents a contrasting assessment of the bureaucratic mode of academic administration at the University of Damascus, considering the links and the relationship between the University and the State on national and organisational levels. On a national level, the study explores the relationship between the University and the State by analysing documentary/archival material supported by literature on the history of Syria and of the University of Damascus. The analysis at national level illustrates that the centralised conduct of bureaucracy the limits imposed by the bureaucratic model of academic administration are in place to safeguard certain ethics and to secure the ethical responsibility of the University towards the State.

The empirical study shows that the role of bureaucracy in ensuring the accountability of the University to the State and in safeguarding equal opportunities among academics is the primary factor demonstrating the positive aspects of bureaucracy in the context of academic administration in the public sector. However, the empirical study also explores the negative consequences that the bureaucratic mode of academic administration has on the academic profession. Although academics can enjoy a level of participation in academic administration by virtue of the collegial elements outlined here, the adoption of excessive regulations and the concentration of strategic academic, financial, and administrative decisions at the apex of the bureaucratic hierarchy shrinks the autonomy of professional academics and can negatively affect creative academic work by constraining academics in their teaching and scholarly work.

This study reveals that an understanding of the bureaucratic conduct of Higher Education institutions is incomplete without an appreciation of the context within which the academic instructions operate. Considering this context, particularly the political context of Higher

Education institutions in the analysis, helps us to reassess critiques of the bureaucratic model and to present an alternative understanding of bureaucratic constraints in the public Higher Education sector.

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Chapter one: Introduction

The notion of bureaucracy has attracted many theorists to investigate the functions and dysfunctions of bureaucracy and to re-examine its relevance in contemporary organisational studies. While a number of writers have presented severe critiques of the bureaucratic model, calling for the end of bureaucracy (i.e. Bauman 1989; Kanter 1989; Miller 1967), other theorists have defended bureaucracy against a variety of allegations arguing that bureaucratic characteristics are still relevant in order to regulate contemporary organisations (Du Gay 2000, 2005; Due Billing 2005; Olsen 2006). Weber's theory of bureaucracy and its elements embodied in a fixed division of functions, specialisation, a hierarchy of authority, and rules and standards, creates an empirical model that helps us to understand the dynamic of postmodern organisations in the light of bureaucratic bases, and of bureaucratic forms of control (Walton 2005). Therefore, it is worthwhile reassessing Weber's key concepts of bureaucracy into contemporary and future research into organisations.

This thesis examines the conduct of bureaucracy in the context of academic organisations. It examines the academic profession, considering how bureaucracy can hinder the practice of academia whilst at the same time being undeniably relevant to its administration. The thesis also investigates how the conduct of bureaucracy at the University of Damascus is conditioned by the relationship between State and University.

The contribution of this work to the wider field of studies in this area is to provide insight into the contrasting influence and the negative and positive aspects and impact of bureaucracy in the specific context of academia, with particular reference to the university-state relationship. In academic organisations, bureaucracy coexists with other forms of governance, such as collegiality, to shape a hybridised type of bureaucracy where a certain level of autonomy and freedom is secured. Therefore, the extent to which traditional critiques of bureaucracy are relevant to academic administration deserves our attention. This study also contributes to the literature in this field by redressing the present research gap in exploring the impact of bureaucracy in relation to creativity in the context of

academia, providing an empirical insight into bureaucracy in the very specific context of Syrian public universities.

This thesis will begin with an examination of the theoretical background literature to this research, thereby providing a basis for, and deepening our understanding of the questions and issues to be addressed within the main body of this work.

1-1 Theoretical framework

Bureaucracy has been perceived by Max Weber as a form of organisation that is associated with the emergence of modern civilisation. Max Weber is one of the most famous thinkers whose work has had a remarkable influence on the field of organisational theory. His work covers a wide range of religions, economics, and politics and presents a historical study of the development of Western capitalist culture. His work also includes an analysis of the systems of domination and offers a unique methodology to study the bureaucratic form of domination in relation to the wider external environment.

Weber began writing on bureaucracy in 1908 (Morrison 1995). Later, in his work *Economy and Society*, and *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, Weber studied bureaucracy more closely. Weber's study of the development of bureaucracy is part of his expansive study of the types of domination and rationality. Bureaucracy is understood by Weber as a manifestation of the transformation from traditional to instrumental rationality (Weber 1947). Bureaucracy, which means a method of ruling and organising conducted from the office and is characterised by a formal, and hierarchical form of organisation with the impersonal application of rules and regulations, in which authorities and responsibilities are formally assigned to organisational members, and career paths are clearly prescribed, has been considered by Weber as an efficient form of organisation to be adopted by capitalist enterprises. However, a review of the literature reveals that the Weberian bureaucratic model has been perceived by contemporary theorists (i.e. Bauman 1989) as a type of administration that promotes dehumanisation and immorality. It is also perceived as a form of organisation that creates alienation through its application of excessive regulations and rigid adherence to formal rules (Matheson 2007; Miller 1967).

In the late twentieth century, Weber has been viewed by new managerialists either as an advocate of rationalism and de-morality or as a theorist who looks critically at the ethos of instrumentality and expresses anxiety towards the negative results that the rationalisation process could produce, such as the distortion of ethics (du Gay 2000). However, both views, du Gay argues, assume “rationalisation” is the central tenet of Weber’s work. They both also suggest that the spirit of ‘bureaucratic culture’ embedded in features such as dehumanisation, demoralisation and the metaphorical entrapment of employees into an ‘iron cage’, can no longer meet the demands of our changing society (du Gay 2000).

Weber’s work on bureaucracy has been misread as a prescriptive model of how organisations ought to be. This narrow understanding of Weber’s ideas has led many thinkers to criticise him and undervalue the significance of his work with regard to contemporary organisational studies. The critiques of bureaucracy became intensive with the transformation to a postmodern society suggesting an alternative type of organisation where flexibility and creativity can be accommodated.

The literature on the critiques of the Weberian bureaucratic model in this study concentrates mainly on the impact of bureaucracy on creativity. The reason for considering the relationship between bureaucracy and creativity here is because creativity is an important element in knowledge-based organisations such as academic institutions. Academics are scholars whose main task is to transmit and create knowledge. The involvement of academics in intellectual activities and their responsibility to educate generations of students, to equip students with entrepreneurial skills, and to do research that contributes to the benefit of society does require that academics are creative and commit themselves to the purpose of scholarship by pursuing its growth by means of keeping their education and scholarly work up-to-date with the most recent advances and knowledge in their field. This implies that academic organisations have the responsibility to create a suitable environment that enables academics to enjoy the autonomy they need to develop their knowledge and to be free enough to respond to the demands of the academic profession. Autonomy is also an essential element for academia to promote a collegial culture (Dearlove 1997; Eustance 1987). As academics are employed in organisations where bureaucratic elements are relevant for regulating academic institutes (Blau 1994;

Middlehurst 1993), this study demonstrates the impact of the bureaucratic form of organisation on autonomy.

This study explores the notion that the rigid, bureaucratic form of institutional organisation is incompatible with the academic profession's need for autonomy. This incompatibility is built on the Weberian image of bureaucracy as an 'iron cage', which controls the behaviour and the activities of employees and directs their behaviour to conform to formal rules (Courpasson and Reed 2004; du Gay 2000; Peters 1994; Reed 2005). The tendency of bureaucracy to control activities and to restrict individuals' autonomy threatens the entrepreneurial spirit of employees and stifles their creative acts (du Gay 1996, 2000; Kanter 1989, 1992). The tension between bureaucracy and creativity also lies in the tendency of bureaucracy to promote predictability (Kanter 1989) and systemised knowledge (Braverman 1974; MacDonald 1995) which do not meet the requirement of creativity for originality and for challenging traditional ways of thinking (Daymon 2000; Sternberg and Lubart 1999).

Weber's work on bureaucracy considers organisations as part of the complex political and economic dynamics operating in society. Weber's historical analysis of modern capitalism and of its types of domination demonstrates the connection between the bureaucratic form of organisation with the wider structure of society. The interconnection between organisations and the broader society they are located in offers a useful lens through which to examine the bureaucratic conduct of organisations in relation to the wider environment, and thus encourages a multi-levelled analysis including national and organisational levels. At a national level, organizations such as academic institutions can be subject to the influence of the state and the market.

This study borrows this expansive lens to investigate the interplay between academic institutes and the wider society, exploring specifically the bureaucratic conduct of the University of Damascus and broader Syrian society. The study focuses in detail on how the bureaucratic conduct of the University is shaped by the University-State relationship. Particular attention is given to the University-State relationship because the University of Damascus is a public institute which is subject to political considerations. The operation of an academic institution within the political domain implies a particular conduct of its

administration. This research draws on the work of du Gay (2000, 2005) and Due Billing (2005) to reveal that bureaucracy is an essential form of organisation for regulating public institutes and thus certain features of bureaucracy should be retained in order to achieve certain objectives. Their main argument rests on the idea that the demise of the bureaucratic model carries with it the danger of losing the important merits of bureaucracy, which are embodied not only in the efficient performance of bureaucratic organisations but also in the privileges that the rational and the impersonal conduct of bureaucracy provides in terms of safeguarding the ethics of equality among citizens and thus contributing to the welfare of those individuals employed in bureaucratic organisations and to the welfare of citizens in general. The rational conduct of bureaucracy, its efficiency and its commitment to securing ethical values mean that bureaucracy is still relevant in regulating academic organisations, particularly those which are part of the public administration, where political accountability and the ethics of equality are regarded as the primary responsibility assigned to government.

1-2 The structure of the thesis

In seeking to understand the positive and negative aspects of bureaucracy in the context of academia, this study provides a theoretical background to bureaucracy and the academic profession, supported with empirical studies. Chapters two and three of the thesis review the literature and address the issues surrounding the bureaucratic model and academia, examining the theoretical literature in greater depth. Chapter two explores in detail the arguments for and against the bureaucratic model, while chapter three concentrates on the issues surrounding the academic profession and academia itself.

Chapter four discusses the methodology of the study and the methods employed to answer the research's questions. I discuss the use of qualitative methods based on interviews, observations, and documentary/archival material in my study of bureaucracy in the context of academia. I also provide some reflection on the research process and describe the problems I encountered in undertaking the research. This chapter also reveals how I analysed the data and presented the findings of the study.

In chapter five I begin the analysis by presenting a historical background of the University of Damascus, drawing on the archival material and supported with literature on the history of the university. As the University of Damascus operates against the background of Syrian culture, a relatively brief background of the history of Syria has been considered in this chapter. The main purpose of this chapter is to address how the autonomy of the University of Damascus has been influenced by the University-State relationship.

Chapter six presents the findings of the study which demonstrate the positive and the negative aspects of the bureaucratic conduct of the academic administration of the University of Damascus. The findings in chapter six reveal that the bureaucratic mode of the University of Damascus has negatively influenced the academic profession by restricting the autonomy of the University as an institute and by threatening the autonomy of individual academics. The bureaucratic control of the financial and the administrative aspects of academia has caused a challenge to the academic profession as academics could not enjoy the autonomy they needed to effectively carry out their academic and scholarly work.

In chapter seven I continue my analysis and examination of bureaucracy and develop my discussion of the bureaucratic conduct of the university in the light of the review of other writings and the theoretical background to bureaucracy and the academic profession in chapters two and three. To develop the analysis I combine documentary/archival material with interview material in order to assess the bureaucratic conduct of the academic administration at the University of Damascus in the light of the University-State relationship. I argue that some restrictions imposed by bureaucracy are justified, particularly in the context of public higher education, in order to safeguard the accountability of the University towards the State. In this chapter I readdress the tension between bureaucracy and academic autonomy in order to explore and examine its implication on creativity. I also consider the positive relationship between bureaucracy and the academic profession, demonstrating that there is space within bureaucracy to safeguard collegial traits and enhance the profession. I also revisit the role of bureaucracy in securing ethics, particularly equal opportunities, in order to discuss this point in the light of the literature reviewed.

Chapter eight provides a summary of the study and outlines the main conclusions drawn from the research as well as reflecting on future areas of fruitful research.

Chapter two: The Weberian bureaucratic model and the debates on bureaucracy

2-1 Introduction

The aim of this literature review is to explore some of the key works of Max Weber. In particular, the literature review aims to explore in depth his notion of bureaucracy and the arguments around the Weberian bureaucratic model. The main motivation for our focus on Max Weber's work on bureaucracy is the essentiality of the bureaucratic model to organise organisations, including universities. The rationality of the bureaucratic model represents bureaucracy as a necessary type of administration, which exists and will continue to exist in order to administer organisations (du Gay 2000, 2005).

The essentiality of the bureaucratic model for the operation of organisations and its significance in analysing and understanding contemporary organisations pushes bureaucracy to the centre of this study. The question of how bureaucracy can restrict or support the activities of organisational members - particularly in the context of academia - is a central concern of this thesis. Therefore this review of the relevant literature in the field will demonstrate some arguments presented by contemporary thinkers for and against the Weberian bureaucratic model.

This chapter is organised into four main sections. The first section explores some of the background to the historical development of bureaucracy, drawing on the work of Max Weber. A Weberian historical study of bureaucracy is useful for the purpose of this study as it provides us with a useful method in the light of which we can understand the interplay between organisations and their wider society.

The second section introduces the concept of bureaucracy, whilst the third section explores the traditional critiques of the bureaucratic model and reveals in more detail the critiques of the bureaucratic model in relation to creativity.

In the fourth section, the literature illustrates some arguments that favour bureaucracy and its ethos, tracing the attempts made by some theorists, particularly Paul du Gay, to re-assess Weberian concepts into the current studies in the field. In defence of bureaucracy, I mainly focus on the work of Paul du Gay because his work allows us to develop sensitivity to the context within which the public sector and, here in particular, public academic institutions operate. This study also traces other works that support the role of bureaucracy in sustaining the ethos of the office, particularly the ethos of equal opportunities.

2- 2 Max Weber on bureaucracy: The historical background

In his work *Economy and Society*, Weber expanded and intensified his studies on modern means of administration to track the historical development of bureaucratic organisations. The twentieth century was characterised by the domination of capitalism and of organisations where the pure type of bureaucracy had become privileged. Bureaucracy has been presented by Weber as the preferable model for administration because it serves the objectives of capitalism through the efficient use of means to achieve certain ends. The rational conduct of bureaucracy meets capitalistic enterprises' urgent need for a calculable and strict form of administration. This is why the bureaucratic model has an important role in administrating modern society (Weber 1947, 1948, 1968).

Weber's study of the emergence of a bureaucratic type of domination is part of his analysis of capitalism and of the development of rationalism in modern Western culture. As rationalism is the apparent theme in Weber's historical study of bureaucracy, I will look briefly into Weber's work on capitalism and rationality in the modern world and present this as a starting point from which to address Weber's study of bureaucracy.

In his study of the development of the modern Western world, Weber points out that modern capitalist culture has emerged out of the transition from a magical to a universal religion. Modern capitalist culture has also emerged from the rise of rational methods

(Weber 1976). For Weber, ancient Judaism has played a significant role in influencing both Islam and Christianity, and in developing Western civilization and modern capitalism (Weber 1967). In Judaism, the separation of transcendent God-Yahweh from imperfect human life led to the rise of rational science as a way to understand and satisfy the demands of Yahweh. The rational thought associated with the commercial spirit of the Jewish community has contributed to the development of modern capitalism (Weber 1968: 1203).

In addition to the influence of Judaism on developing rational thinking and capitalism, Weber points out that Protestantism has also been among the influential factors supporting the rise of rationality. In *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber explores how Protestantism contributed to the emergence of rationality in modern society. For Weber, protestant doctrine enabled both the development of the spirit of modern capitalism and the rise of instrumental and rational rules as a way to order and systemise Western life. Weber points out that a desire for gain does not contribute to the development of capitalism unless this desire has been associated with a regular investment of wealth through economic exchange (Weber 1976: 3). Weber explains that the impulse towards accumulating wealth combined with the absence of spending on human desires has its root in Christianity through the concept of a 'calling', that lends individuals a sense of moral responsibility toward their society. The accumulation of capital, and the continuous and regular investment of wealth to achieve economic growth, not individual rewards, is the driving force that stands behind the rise of modern capitalism (Weber 1976: 4).

In the context of capitalism - in which the purpose of modern life is conceptualised in terms of 'acquisition' and 'engagement to make money' – secular values had to escape religious beliefs and follow their own logic. The substitution of ultimate and moral values with worldly values in the pursuit of material and rational outcomes engendered the disenchantment with religious and spiritual beliefs of legitimisation. Gane reflects on Weber's perspective on the role of Protestant religious belief in the rise of rationality and comments:

Protestantism, in its quest for rational knowledge of God's purpose and for an understanding of this world, engendered its own demise, for it lent legitimacy to a secular science that in turn rejected and devalued or disenchanting itself, for in its attempt to prove its own intrinsic rationality through non-religious means it affirmed the value of science, and with this laid itself open to the charge of irrationalism and to attack from the outside from 'rational', secular forms of this-worldly legitimating (Gane 2004: 21).

Weber believes that the process of rationalisation was a determinant of modern society (Weber 1976). He noted that rationalisation had dominated the political, social and economic life which gave rise to modern Western culture. The rise of capitalism in the Western world has been linked to the rational organisation of labour where functions in organisations are administered in a routinised and calculated manner (Weber 1976: 3). The subordination to rational and calculable principles was also associated with an impersonalizing and bureaucratising process in every sphere of life. The rationalisation process aimed to homogenise cultural forms, and reduce the range of conflicting values by replacing them with a predictable and standardised form of social order. The outcome of that process was the Weberian bureaucratic model grounded upon formal-legal rationality and resting upon universally calculable rules and regulative laws to conduct business and organise modern life.

The Weberian historical study of modern culture differs considerably from studies of modern culture done by other theorists such as Marx (Marrison 1995). While Marx sees historical development through an economic lens, Weber acknowledges that economic factors are not the only determinant of society and argues instead that social development cannot be understood without taking into account religious, political, social and legal factors, which from his point of view also shape history. Therefore, rather than subjecting all spheres to economic law and reducing history to material reason, Weber believes that social spheres including political, economic and religious spheres are all interlinked and they together change and affect society in different ways (Morrison 1995).

The historical methodology of Weber's study of modern culture, in addition to considering external factors, is sensitively combined and closely linked to social theory (1976: 2). In the light of social theory, human actions are studied and understood in relation to the cultural values that give meaning to human actions. Weber's contribution to social theory can be tracked in a number of his books such as *Economy and Society* and *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. In both of these works Weber proposed the theory of social action as a privileged method in social science to be grounded upon the role of values and interpretation in studying and understanding human actions. Weber's theory of social action presupposes that human beings have the ability to behave and act rationally, and that social science can effectively understand and interpret human actions (1968, 1947). His theory emerged out of his concern to draw a sharp distinction between natural and social science.

Weber identified four types of actions with an emphasis upon their different rational orientations (Weber 1968: 24-5, 1947: 115). The first type of action is traditional action; in this form of action, actors' behaviours are guided by habits and customs and governed by fixed traditional norms. The second type of action is the effectual type, which is motivated by emotions and devoted to achieving non-rational goals, such as the need for revenge. The other two types Weber describes are value rational action which seeks ultimate values in the pursuit of religious, political or ethical objectives regardless of its prospects of success, and, fourthly, instrumentally rational action. The fourth type of action, 'instrumentally rational action', rests upon means and ends calculations and is viewed in terms of instrumental standards and formal rules. While traditional and effectual types of action are considered by Weber as non-rational actions, he acknowledges that the other two types, value rational and instrumentally rational action, have a rational orientation (Weber 1947: 117). For Weber, rationality has imprinted upon all patterns of actions including traditional and effectual types of actions, and has penetrated the economic, social, and political spheres in modern society to give birth to a particular type of domination.

For Weber, 'domination' does not have the same meaning as 'power'. Although systems of domination are constructed on the concept of power, Weber acknowledged that there was a difference between these two concepts (Weber 1968). He pointed out that in the light of the concept of power, an individual may have his will applied in spite of opposing or resisting

factors. However, the domination system, for Weber, refers to the possibility of a command being obeyed through a framework of shared norms and values within which the interaction between actors and masters can be organised. Therefore, domination does not rest upon an imposing force; instead it is only understood as institutionally structured relationships that guide economic, social and political actions (Weber 1968; Lounsbury and Carberry 2005).

Weber distinguishes three types of domination: 1. Legal-rational authority, 2. Traditional-rational authority, and 3. Charismatic-rational authority. For Weber, legal-rational authority is rooted in legal norms and beliefs that give those in authority the right to give a command. However, traditional authority rests upon long-established values and customary beliefs that legitimate the command of those in authority, whilst charismatic authority is supported by the exemplary traits and the unique personal qualities of a person in authority (Weber 1947: 328, 1968: 215).

Weber used the transformation from traditional or charismatic authority to legal-rational authority, and the subordination of moral values to instrumental and formal or rule-bounded norms, as a foundation to understand the emergence of modern economic, legal, and social systems in Western society (Cohen, 1981). While Marxism rested upon the surplus theory of value to present an analysis of the exploitation relationship in capitalism, and Adam Smith used the concept of the free market as a basis for his studies of economic welfare, Weber emphasised formal rational principles as a pre-assumption of his understanding of modern capitalism (Cohen 1981).

Weberian formal rationality, Cohen (1981) argues, has influenced two main institutional areas; firstly in modern capitalist enterprises by developing rational accounting principles, founded upon profitability criteria, to be central standards in capitalist institutions. The second area is in the bureaucratic form of domination, which is rooted in legal and instrumental principles and is used as a basis to legitimate actions and to subordinate them to means-ends rationality. Therefore, for Weber, bureaucracy has been developed to transform social action into rational and organised forms of action (Weber 1968: 987) and to respond to the growth of rational calculation that dominates all spheres in modern world (Gane 2004; Giddens 1973; Morrison 1995; Reed 2005; Weber 1968).

Weber argued that bureaucracy is the most suitable type of organisation for modern capitalist enterprises. The superiority of bureaucracy over other types of organisations is attributed to its capacities to increase precision and speed and to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty (1948: 215, 1968: 973). Weber comments:

The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely *technical* superiority over any other form of organization...precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal cost - these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration (1968: 973)

It is these characteristics of bureaucratic organisations, grounded upon rational calculations of means-ends, which make the modern bureaucratic model different from other types of administration. From Weber's point of view, pre-modern societies, such as feudal societies, lack the bureaucratic style of administration (Weber 1947, 1968). He pointed out that the administration in feudal societies differs from the bureaucratic model in many aspects. Though feudal administration was organised and performed by staff, it was primarily patrimonial rather than bureaucratic in character. One of the aspects that made administration in feudal societies deviate from being bureaucratic is the type of authority exercised by the lord. The power was not defined by legal rules and was not practised on the basis of legal authority. Rather, it was exercised according to traditions and norms and the decisions were made by the lord according to his will, not on a rational basis (Weber 1968: 375-6).

The development of the bureaucratic type of administration has also been influenced by socialism in addition to capitalism. For Weber, socialism has had a stronger influence on the rise of bureaucracy than capitalism (1947, 1971). He, for instance, argues that socialism requires a “higher degree of formal bureaucratisation than capitalism” (1947: 339). Socialism, Weber argues, necessitates rational conduct and the expansion of bureaucracy,

which by its technical efficiency serves the objectives of socialism. Socialism has been defined by Max Weber as a 'collective economy' where the economy is regulated by officials to limit the control of materials and resources by the private sector (Weber 1971). This can take place through the process of nationalisation and the creation of amalgamated firms in which the state can share the private-sector ownership of enterprises, profits, and policy making (Weber 1971: 202). Weber also points out that the idea that guides the socialism movement and which stresses "the separation of the worker from the tools of his trade" (Weber 1971: 197) has fostered the process of bureaucratisation as workers no longer own the tools and resources which they use for production; rather they are salaried employees who sell their labour for wages.

This separation from the means of production is the core characteristic of modern culture. In the modern world, administrators do not own their jobs or the means of administration such as records, or computers. Similarly, soldiers, teachers, and bureaucrats do not own their means of production (Weber 1971). The situation in the modern world is contrasted with that in ancient times, when armies owned their weapons and were expected to equip themselves at their own expense, as was the case in ancient Rome. A master teacher in medieval universities also owned the means of production as they would own the school in which they taught. However, Weber points out that the ownership of resources and tools are no longer safeguarded because of the technical requirements and the advancement of technology in the modern world. He comments (1971: 199):

Everywhere we find the same thing: the tools within the factory, the state administration, the army and the university faculties are concentrated by means of a bureaucratically constructed human machine in the hands of him who controls the machine. This is due partly to purely technical considerations, to the nature of modern tools - machines, guns, etc . . . - but partly simply to the greater efficiency of this kind of cooperation; to the development of "discipline," army, office, shop floor, and factory discipline. [...] The separation from the means continues in any case. As long as there are mines, furnaces, railways, factories and machines they will never be the property of an individual or of several individual

workers in the sense in which the materials of a medieval craft were the property of one guildmaster of a local trade association or guild. That is out of the question because of the nature of present day technology.

In addition to the economic and technical factors mentioned above and which gave rise to the development of bureaucracy, Weber pointed out that increasing populations and the development of civil policies have also contributed to the rise of the 'bureau' as a type of administration to organise enterprises. Political life has also contributed to such development. Among the political factors are the increased control of society by the state and the involvement of the state in administering every aspect of life, and the intensity of administrative tasks assigned to the state (Weber 1968). Bureaucratisation has also been accompanied by democratisation. By 'democratisation', Cohen (1991: 90) points out that Weber does not mean 'direct democracy' or the increased participation of people in the act of governing. Instead, by democratisation he means 'massive or passive democratisation' which is achieved through securing equal rights for all by subjecting people to objective law instead of subjecting them to personal rule (Cohen 1991: 90). The demand for equality finds its locus in the formal conduct of bureaucracy. Weber comments “ ‘Equality before the law’ and the demand for legal guarantees against arbitrariness demand a formal and rational ‘objectivity’ of administration, as opposed to the personal discretion flowing from the ‘grace’ of the old patrimonial domination” (1968: 979-80). I will revisit this point later in my discussion of the positive aspects of bureaucracy.

The next section explores the concept of the ideal type of bureaucracy suggested by Max Weber and its principal characteristics.

2-3 The Weberian ideal type of bureaucracy

The word 'bureaucracy', Halsey (1977) points out, has been informally used to mean abuse. However, the original meaning of bureaucracy is derived from "bureau" and refers to the cloth used to cover the desks of public officials in France in the 1700s. With the suffix added to bureau, the word bureaucracy refers to 'the rule of government' (Halsey 1977:

222-3). The word 'bureau' refers to administrative units or departments of the public sector that are responsible for the implementation of the rules and policies of officials or government and are conceptualised as an integrated and crucial part of the governing process (Goodsell 2005: 17). Most bureaux, Goodsell argues, meet the characteristics of bureau identified by Max Weber in terms of keeping records, a hierarchy, formal written procedures and impersonal rules. While bureaux vary in the degree in which they fulfil these criteria, all bureaux sustain a level of hierarchical authority in order to ensure that external accountability is safeguarded (Goodsell 2005: 18). Hall (1968: 94) in his studies of organisations uses a dimensional approach by which he identifies six dimensions to determine "the degree of bureaucratisation in an organisation". These dimensions are: the division of labour; the presence of procedure and written rules; the specification of roles; impersonality; the degree of centralisation or the hierarchy of authority, and technical expertise. Every organisation which scores high on some of these dimensions is characterised as highly bureaucratic in these particular areas whilst characterised as less bureaucratic if scoring low in these dimensions.

The Weberian ideal type of bureaucracy is grounded upon the exercise of legal authority (Weber 1947, 1968). With this type of authority, its legitimacy derives from the rationality of actions and decisions which are translated into legal rules and regulations. The ideal type of bureaucracy suggested by Weber (1947, 1968) is characterised by certain principles, which are also summarised by Albrow (1970: 43-5) in his writing on bureaucracy. These characteristics are identified by the separation of individuals from the office, and a precise division of tasks to be arranged in a hierarchical order. The division of tasks rests upon a clear definition of both the responsibilities and the authorities given to officials, who in turn are allocated to their jobs according to the skills, merits and qualifications required to occupy the position. Rules are prescribed and impersonal in order to eliminate any arbitrariness or favouritism, thereby achieving equality of treatment (Albrow 1970: 43-5; Weber 1947: 333-4, 1968: 956-7). Individuals' career paths are predetermined and structured hierarchically for a regular advancement based on seniority. Bureaucratic organisations also presuppose channels of command and communication; while the command flows from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy, communication flows in the

reverse direction and takes the form of written documents and file keeping (Weber 1947: 333-4, 1968: 956-7).

Weber (1968) argues that the bureaucratic model is privileged over both the traditional model - which rests upon compulsion and force - and the charismatic model - which is fleeting and contingent. Weber also mentions that bureaucracy eliminates the social differences among people by allocating positions to them on the basis of their qualifications rather than on their loyalty to rulers. Heugens (2005) also identifies some important areas in which the bureaucratic model has great advantages. He points out that bureaucratic organisations allow for an effective allocation of resources for the accomplishment of tasks. They also repudiate random and haphazard decisions by shifting to a framework of accountability and legitimacy, through which decisions are to be taken according to calculable rules. The rationality of bureaucracy resides in maximizing production and minimizing deficiency through the efficient and best use of means to achieve particular ends. The last section of this chapter explores in more detail the positive aspects or the advantages of the Weberian bureaucratic model.

On the other hand, Weber was also aware of the negative consequences of bureaucracy embodied in its de-humanization of organisational life and in its concentration of power in the hands of masters, who might exploit their authority to serve their own interests. As Weber comments, "the bureaucratic structure goes hand in hand with the concentration of the material means of management in the hands of the master because the rules of bureaucracy restricted officials from ownership in the organisation, and the hierarchical nature of the bureaucratic structure made it ultimately obedient to the commands of the master" (Weber 1978: 980, cited in Lounsbury and Carberry 2005: 505). In the following section, I turn to address the arguments against bureaucracy.

2-4 Arguments against bureaucracy

Weber's ideas and his bureaucratic model have been open to intensive critique with the emergence of the new managerial discourse of reform and change. The dominant theories

in the organisational field stress the need for a more flexible and entrepreneurial organisational culture to replace the rigid and inflexible character of bureaucracy (i.e. Courpasson and Reed 2004; du Gay 2000; Peters and Waterman 1982; Peters 1993, 1994; Reed 2005). The critiques of the bureaucratic model and the demand for a more flexible form of organisation have begun with changes taking place in the external environment as a result of globalisation, communication and information development.

In their article, Courpasson and Reed (2004) describe the fate of bureaucracy at the hands of the age of enterprise. They anticipate the dissolving of the Weberian 'iron cage' under the pressure of globalisation and information technology. They argue that by the twenty-first century, the fate of bureaucratic rationality will be sealed with the economic, social, and technological transformation, which will generate new conditions under which the vestiges of bureaucratic organisations will be removed. The twenty-first century, Courpasson and Reed comment, "will be the 'age of networks' and the socio-technical infrastructure that make them indispensable as the new modes of collective cognition and governance required in revolutionary times" (2004: 6). However, they both acknowledge that Weberian bureaucracy has played a vital role in fostering the theoretical and practical field of governance by establishing a 'civic ethic', which rests upon the values of fidelity, responsibility and duty.

Such developments in technology, information systems and trade put pressures on organisations to be rapidly responsive to the continuing changes, and adequately entrepreneurial in dealing with an uncertain and ambiguous environment. In an environment characterised in such a way, bureaucratic organisations (because of their stable and predictable nature) will not be able to survive. Reed (2005: 133), for instance, comments:

Bureaucratic forms of imperatively coordinated and controlled organisation cannot hope to survive in this kind of environment because they are 'congenitally lacking' in the right kind of social and cultural 'genes' that can facilitate the appropriate internal adaptation to a radically changed environment"

This view has also been supported by other theorists such as Peters (1994) and Kanter (1989, 1992), who argue that in a rapidly changing environment a new form of organisation is needed to meet the requirements of the changing society. These organisations should be flexible and should be based upon greater responsibility and autonomy being given to employees. In contrast to a bureaucratic organisations, in which the fragmentation and the separation of work life from non-work life takes place, du Gay (2000) points out that an entrepreneurial organisation is organic and harmonious. He describes it as follows: “ in such an organisation, work and leisure, reason and emotion, pleasure and duty are conjoined and, as a result, the human being is once again a plenitude- restored to full moral unity” (du Gay 2000: 66).

While most contemporary thinkers criticise bureaucracy on the grounds of its incapability to meet the emergent demands of the new environment, the classical literature on bureaucracy has mainly considered the influence of the bureaucratic model on the personality of individuals (Mouzelis 1967: 36). Using the Marxist term, individuals in bureaucracies feel ‘alienation’ because they are separated from the means of production and thus are powerless in the face of official administrators. The separation of individuals from the means and the tools that they use in production is the main source of dehumanisation and alienation. In his study of public service in Australia, Matheson (2007: 233) finds that bureaucracy causes alienation generated by its routinised way of carrying out tasks, by its rigid form of control, by its impersonality, and by its instrumental rationality. He defines alienation “as being the absence of personal involvement in and fulfilment from work, or what Marx called ‘self-estrangement’” (2007: 234-5). His surveys, for instance, show that alienation among Australian public servants is attributed to the limited control public servants have over their work and to the limited chance they have to participate in decision-making which resulted in low job involvement and minimal intrinsic motivation. Miller’s (1967) study is another example that reveals the impact of bureaucratic control on alienation. Miller (1967: 766) in his study on the engineers and scientists in an aerospace organisation discovers that when individuals experience direct control over their work they feel a greater degree of alienation; however, they feel less alienation when they are given a degree of autonomy to control their work and to participate in the decisions that affect their work. Individual autonomy is likely to shrink with an increased degree of hierarchical authority and a concentration of power at the top level of organisation. Similarly, Weber

points out that the concentration of means of administration dehumanises individuals as they become a cog in a big machine, which is controlled and regulated by technical expertise and within which individuals have insignificant power.

Bureaucracy, in addition to its impact on dehumanizing individuals, can force people to act immorally. To Bauman (1989), bureaucracy has dominated modern society to the point of introducing the ethos of instrumentality as a driving vehicle of the civilizing process of modernity, which excludes all alternative ethical norms of action. For him, Weberian bureaucracy generates de-morality, and separates instrumental criteria from the moral evaluation of the outcomes that it seeks to achieve. Bauman describes instrumental rationalisation as a process of the ‘silencing of morality’, which arises from two fundamental processes: the precise division of labour, and the replacement of moral responsibility with a technical one. Bauman gives the Holocaust as an example on how bureaucratic logic contributes to immorality (1989: 99-100). For him, what happened in the Holocaust resulted mainly from the application of bureaucratic administration. The division of administrative acts into small functions such as the registration of population, the manufacture of gas products, and the construction of death chambers, ended with tragedy of the Holocaust.

Bauman's example of the Holocaust presents an answer to how people employed in bureaucratic organisation can behave in an immoral way. According to Bauman, the division of processes into many small and discrete tasks separates the people from the final outcome that they serve. The distance between what individuals do and the consequences of their actions makes them unwilling to be responsible for the ends to which they contribute. Jones, Parker and ten Bos (2005: 90) also make the same point and argue that distance is “a good strategy for disposing of care”. They point out that people in hierarchical organisations obey rules and commands imposed upon them from above. Therefore, it is hard for individuals to negotiate these orders with individuals they cannot meet.

du Gay (1999, 2000) presents some flaws in Bauman’s analysis. Bauman, for instance, misreads Weber’s ideas and interprets his work as a call for more rationalisation processes and for a greater injection of the ethos of the bureau into all spheres of life. Bauman also holds an abstract interpretation of the bureau to represent a general critique of bureaucracy

resting upon its failure to serve ultimate moral ends. du Gay (1999, 2000) illustrates that Bauman's view of the distance within bureaucratic hierarchy as a main source of de-morality is the outcome of his conceptualisation of morality in relation to proximity (1999: 577). du Gay also points out that Bauman's critique of bureaucracy has resulted from his restricted view of 'formal rationality' as an 'instrumental calculation' of means to achieve particular ends and which disassociates instrumental criteria from moral values. However, du Gay argues that the formal rational conduct of bureaucracy cultivates a 'substantive ethos' embodied in the impersonal conduct of bureaucracy (1999: 379). We will explore this in more depth later.

In addition to the tendency of bureaucracy to promote de-morality, bureaucracy is criticised on the grounds of the conservative culture that it promotes. Such a culture produces unimaginative individuals because it breeds conformity, rigid control, and inflexibility which stifle the imagination and the creative behaviour of employees (Kanter 1989; Peters and Waterman 1982; Thompson 1965). The next section is devoted to look in more detail into creativity, considering how bureaucracy can be incompatible with creativity.

2-4 -1 Bureaucracy and creativity

Bureaucracy is conceptualised by a number of contemporary thinkers as antithetical to creativity. In bureaucratic organisations, rules are the main characteristic of formal organisations, where formal rules and regulations are utilised to specify what organisational members have to do. The idea of rule-following or rule-obeying limits the opportunities available to employees to participate in the formulation of goals or even to decide on the best way to conduct their work. Therefore, individuals in bureaucratic organisations can be constrained by the bureaucratic form of control, which hinders the generative acts of individuals and stifles their abilities to take initiative or to produce creative or new ideas. In the next subsection I introduce the concept of creativity before moving on to address the impact of the Weberian model of bureaucracy on creativity.

2-4-1-1 The concept of creativity

Creativity is an important, perhaps even the most valuable, component of enterprises (McWilliam and Haukka 2008; Taggar 2002). It is through creative capital and creative skills that problem-solving, new opportunities and innovative products or services can be achieved (McWilliam and Haukka 2008). Creativity also enables organisations to compete in the global market (Miron, Erez and Naveh 2004). In the context of public service, organisations innovate in order to improve their performance and to sustain its legitimacy by providing a good service to the public (Walker, Jeanes and Rowlands 2002). The contribution of creativity to problem-solving, and the development associated with organisations' need to adapt to changes and to face the challenges imposed by advanced technology and furious competition, push the concept of 'creativity' to the heart of business and organisation studies (Thompson 1965:1; Williams and Yang 1999: 374).

Studies on creativity in management and its organisational context are not in great abundance as most of the research undertaken in the organisational field, and which is relevant to creativity, has focused mainly on innovation in a broader sense (Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin 1993: 306). There is also relatively little empirical work on the type of organisation that promotes or stifles creativity (Cummings, Hinton and Gobdel 1975: 490). However, there have been considerable efforts made by some researchers to inject the concept of creativity into the organisational context (i.e. Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, Herron 1996; Kanter 1992; Mauzy and Harriman 2003; Staw 1984; Williams and Yang 1999) and which are concerned with investigating how the type of organisation, its characteristics or its culture could negatively or positively influence organisational creativity.

The definition of 'creativity' is considered by many theorists as a mysterious one as there is no agreement amongst them on what 'creativity' actually means (McWilliam and Haukka 2008: 652). The concept of 'creativity' in the educational context has been relevant to artistry and has been held to refer to arts and music. However, this notion of creativity has changed with the development of media and business studies to propose and emphasise creativity as a crucial element of organisations and as an essential factor behind their

success. The meaning of 'creativity' can be tracked back to the ancient age when the word 'creativity' was first used in a religious sense to refer to 'creators' or the act of 'creation' (Pope 2005). However, later, and as the word 'creativity' has been used in education, management and the organisation field, 'creativity' has cultivated a secular rather than a religious or divine meaning (Pope 2005: 1).

The concept of creativity is essential for individuals and the wider society. At an individual level, creativity is perceived as an important element for the survival of human beings in economic and social terms (Jeanes 2006: 128). It enables individuals to solve their problems and to bring new ideas which help them to manage their life in a better way (Sternberg and Lubart 1999: 3). At the macro level, creativity is important for society as it contributes to the flourishing of the economy through the application of new knowledge and through the production of advanced products which keep the economy competitive and adaptive to recent changes (McWilliam and Haukka 2008; Sternberg and Lubart 1999; Zampetakis, Tsironis and Moustakis 2007). While the literature on creativity emphasises on the positive aspects of creativity, in her article, Jeanes reflects on the negative aspect of creativity arguing that creativity can be destructive or harmful. In capitalist societies, creativity is important for change which in turn is considered as an essential requirement for development (Jeanes 2006). However, change does not always yield useful results as it can be associated with the erosion of traditional social relations and religious values to focus instead on heterogeneous ideas and to stress new types of social relations (Bogue 2004 cited in Jeanes 2006: 131).

Creativity can also negatively affect social cohesion and equality. In his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida (2002) argues that the creative economy has contributed to the emergence of a creative class which enjoys a higher income and better working conditions than the rest of society, leading to class divides. He reveals that American society has been segmented into cities and suburbs which are divided into communities of 'haves' and 'have-nots' (2002: 320) or into communities of economic winners and economic losers. Such a division, Florida (2002) points out, weakens the ties between communities and loosens the bonds which connect people together and thus gives rise to a fragmented society in which people no longer enjoy social ties and a cohesive network of relationships (Florida 2002: 325). The erosion of social cohesion is also attributed to the emergence of new forms of

institutions and to the rise of new economic roles which have emerged out of the economic transformation. Such change implies new ways of how people can relate to each other. In a creative economy, strong communities are replaced by contingent communities – which are more capable of accommodating and meeting the requirements of a creative society characterized by 'diversity', 'high rates of mobility' and 'contingent commitment' (Florida 2002: 323).

In addition to the negative consequences of creativity on social cohesion and equality, creativity can also yield undesirable results if creative activities are not directed towards serving good and peaceful ends. For instance, the technological advances of the twentieth century have led to new discoveries that have been invested for the benefit of human beings; however, the technical and scientific advances have also evoked the weapons industry that has caused harm and devastation across the world. Therefore, we should consider the end purposes towards which our creative capacities are directed (Florida 2002: 325). Considering the consequences of our creative activities brings us to think about what kind of society we seek to build for future generations and what tasks we can undertake in order to achieve a truly creative economy. This view helps to address the notion of creativity as an 'intellectual' process through which creative capacities can be directed to change society for a better future. I will address the concepts of creativity in more detail in this section.

Creativity is related to any domain or human activity exercised by individuals such as engineering or business. In this context Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 27) comments:

Creativity occurs when a person, using the symbols of a given domain such as music, engineering, business or mathematics, has a new idea or sees a new pattern and when this novelty is selected by the appropriate field for inclusion into the relevant domain. The next generation will encounter that novelty as part of the domain they are exposed to, and if they are creative, they in turn will change it further.

In the domain of business and organisations, the need for creative capital can vary across hierarchical levels of organisations. In their article, Koberg and Hood (1991: 270) argue that the need for creativity is greater at the higher levels than at the lower levels of organisations. They found that in certain organisations such as accounting firms, the requirements needed to carry out jobs vary across the hierarchy of the organisation. Top management has a responsibility to interact with the external environment and to respond to the demands of clients. Therefore, the need for creativity at the level of top management is higher than that in lower management, whose role is limited to following clear procedures and criteria already specified by top management. At the level of lower management, caution and accuracy are fostered at the expense of risk taking and inventiveness. However, McWilliam and Haukka (2008) argue that creative capital is not reserved to a particular group in an organisation, to be possessed by certain staff such as IT staff or to be confined to a particular level of organisation. Rather it is diffused at all levels and to all individuals working in organisations.

Creativity has been defined as generating useful or new ideas or problem-solving (Amabile et al 1996: 1155; Amabile, Barsade, Mueller and Staw 2005: 368). Therefore, creativity can be understood as "an intellectual activity" (Deleuze 1994 cited in Jeanes 2006: 128) or as "the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e., original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e., useful, adaptive concerning task constraints)" (Sternberg and Lubart 1999: 3). It means a process of involvement in creating useful or novel ideas whether the outcome of the process results in creative ends or not (Drazin, Glynn and Kazajian 1999: 287). Drawing on that, creativity is used by Drazin et al. (1999) to refer to the process of seeking creative outcomes regardless of the actual results of the process. Creative outcomes are defined as 'unconventional' and 'novel' when they challenge the accepted and established ways of thinking and of doing things (Daymon 2000: 19). Similarly, Jeanes (2006: 133) supports the idea that creativity can be understood as a 'process of thinking' that generates 'new concepts' that allow us to think in different ways and to change our assumptions, thereby departing from traditional ways of thinking. This view is similar to Plsek's (1998) perspective on creativity. Plsek (1998) points out that creativity can only be achieved when people escape their current patterns of thinking and do not let their past and current experiences shape their future judgement

Creativity, Gurteen (1998) argues, is an important concept in knowledge management. In the context of knowledge management, creativity and innovation refer to the production and implementation of new knowledge to generate and achieve business values (Gurteen 1998: 6). While 'creativity' concerns the generation of new ideas, the word 'innovation' is used to describe the application of the new ideas and their transformation into action. Gurteen (1998: 6) points out that "creativity is about divergent thinking. Innovation is about convergent thinking. Put simply, creativity is about the generation of ideas, and innovation is about putting them into action". Amabile et al. (1996: 1155) make the same point and argue that the word 'innovation' can be reserved for referring to the "successful implementation of creative ideas within an organisation". Drawing on that, creativity is understood as the bedrock or fuel for innovation and is a prerequisite of it.

In the light of the definitions given for creativity, it appears that 'unconventionality', 'originality', and 'novelty' are the main features of creative acts. However, we should be aware of simplifying the meaning of creativity. Instead of assigning certain terms to the concept of creativity, it is useful to consider the multidimensional aspects and the flexibility of the concept of creativity. In this vein, Pope (2005) argues that creativity as a concept requires a constant reassessment, reinterpretation and reconstruction which necessitates alternative terms to what creativity currently means. Rehn's work is instructive here. Rehn (2011) has launched his book *'Dangerous Ideas'* to present an alternative understanding of the concept of creativity. It seems from the title of the book that there is a warning message. This message invites people to be cautious of trapping themselves into their personal boundaries and of being stuck in their comfortable thinking. He points out that working within frameworks of practice and modes of thinking that people feel comfortable with yields imitation rather than creativity because people tend to copy behaviour and practices that have been proved to be successful. This view shares the Deleuzian perspective of the idea that creativity generates 'new concepts' which free us from established or traditional ways of thinking. It implies a reconceptualisation of creativity. For Rehn (2011), creativity is no longer understood as *exciting* or *comfortable* ideas which can be easily developed and implemented, rather, creativity can be perceived as *disturbing* ideas which appear to be *dangerous* and which strive for radical change in society. This revolutionary force of creativity means that creativity can be destructive, the point that I have already addressed as constituting a negative aspect of creativity. This vision reveals a paradox in the concept of

creativity and demonstrates that while creativity refers to the capacity to innovate and to change the world to guide society towards a better future, it does this at the expense of continuity (Bilton 2007: xv). Considering this contradiction in the organisational context, the role of management becomes one of deciding how to reconcile between the need for novelty and the demand for continuity. Management itself becomes a creative process that strives to manage the relationship between these contradictory demands (Bilton 2007). In other words, creative management becomes responsible for creating a balance between stability or doing business in a conventional way and the desire for challenging the established way of operating. This view evokes the need for new approaches to organisational structure and to strategies adopted by management.

The notion of creativity in an organisational or management context extends the concept of creativity which dominates the fields of psychology, education, and history. The major studies on creativity in psychology and the education field, William and Yang (1999) argue, have focused on personal characteristics, traits, capacities and the experience of individuals to present creativity as a concept relevant or specific to personality and oriented towards individuals regardless of the environment within which the individuals work. This approach to understanding creativity has been termed by Bilton (2007) a psychological model of creativity. Such a model focuses on a set of traits to be held by creative individuals. However, creativity – particularly in the organisational context - is not only defined as a set of traits or personal characteristics of individuals. Rather, creativity is best understood in its wider context to propose creativity as part of 'a complex cultural phenomenon' (Bilton 2007: x) which extends across groups and nations to stress the interaction between individuals, organisations, and the broader environment. Therefore, the emphasis here is on the system of relationships that individuals and organisations establish with other individuals and organisations. In the light of this view, creativity is fostered by establishing strong and well-developed relationships with their peers in order to help individuals and organisations collaborate, and exchange information and ideas with other individuals and organisations. The establishment of an organised system of relationships also encourages the development and the exploitation of ideas and allows the transformation of these ideas into products (Bilton 2007). This concept of creativity presents a sociological approach to creativity and locates creativity in its bigger picture to demonstrate an interest in a multilevel of analysis.

The sociological model of creativity implies the encompassing of micro and macro levels of analysis including individual, organisational, and national levels. It focuses on the extent to which creativity is conditioned by the cultural context and is rooted in a specific geographical place and historical background (Bilton 2007, Florida 2002, 2005). Florida (2002, 2005), for example, finds that creativity dominates cities which accommodate diversity, heterogeneity, and tolerance. Cities such as San Francisco, Boston, and Chicago – for instance – score high in both a high technology index and diversity index. The correlation between these two indexes - Florida (2005) argues - reveals the positive relationship between high technological growth and the readiness of cities to be open and tolerant. Drawing upon this vision, culture can be perceived as the driving force of creative practices.

Economic history has also contributed to profound change in society which has fostered and flourished human creativity (Florida 2002). Florida (2002) identifies four main transformations which have given rise to new economic life. These transformations are summarised in the rise of agriculture, the growth of trade and specialisation in tasks and activities, the emergence of the factory system, and the growth of large-scale organisations. While these factors have contributed to fostering human creativity by - for instance - urging the need for technical and scientific knowledge and by expanding investment in new creative industries, their negative impact on creativity are also realised in that these factors have promoted standardised and routinized behaviour and have given rise to a strict form of control to increase efficiency. The emergence of large- scale organisations and mass production, for example, has contributed to the development of bureaucratic organisations with a hierarchical form of command which is believed to be antithetical to innovation and creative behaviour. I will turn now to address the relationship between the organisational structure and creativity, focusing mainly on the impact of the bureaucratic model of organisation on creativity.

2-4-1-2 The impact of bureaucracy on creativity

Research on creativity in the organisational context has focused on the interactions individuals have with their organisations (William and Yang 1999). Drawing on this perspective, the primary concern of studies on organisational creativity is to focus on individuals in the context of and in relation to their external environment in order to explore how organisational settings influence creativity (William and Yang 1999). Such studies touch upon the structural type of organisation to investigate whether the structure of the organisation contributes to the flourishing or to the restriction of creativity.

In bureaucratic organisations, functions are organised by formal rules, which are relatively stable and fixed. The authority to order matters in bureaucratic organisations is legitimised on the basis of legal-rationality, which regulates matters as an abstract case rather than regulating it on an individual basis (Weber 1968: 958). Responsibilities, roles and duties assigned to organisational members are specified in detailed instructions and regulations.

As discussed earlier, bureaucratic administration aims to maximise predictability through the reliance on clear procedures and rules and by ensuring the accountability of organisational members to their superiors, who in turn can check the performance of employees against pre-established criteria. Formal relationships in bureaucratic organisations are impersonal and devoted to the purpose of 'office'. Formal control is exercised from the top to the bottom to allow superiors to supervise employees at lower levels in an organisational hierarchy (Weber 1968: 957).

While the above characteristics of bureaucratic organisations exist in order to achieve certain organisational goals, they have disadvantages in terms of constraining creativity. Kanter (1989, 1992) and Thompson (1965), for example, argue that the dominance of tall hierarchy in organisations results in less creative behaviours. Hierarchical organisations hinder creativity as the activities of organisational members are driven by the instructions given to them from superiors.

To enhance accountability, jobs and responsibilities are narrowly assigned and clearly defined by rules. Any problems encountered are passed up the hierarchical ladder to

superiors, leaving those lower down the ranks no opportunity to participate in problem-solving or to allow for discretion and flexibility (Kanter 1989, 1992). Kanter (1989: 280) writes:

In the traditional bureaucratic corporation, roles were so circumscribed that most relationships tended to be rather formal and impersonal. Narrowly defined jobs constricted by rules and procedures also tended to stifle initiative and creativity, and the atmosphere was emotionally repressive.

Kanter (1992: 76) points out that Meridian Company, for instance, has a restrictive structure. She illustrates that the management at Meridian consists of fifteen levels. The tall hierarchy of Meridian management has resulted in slow responses and restricted improvement. The management sought to concentrate decision-making at the top level of management. The existence of a tall hierarchy was perceived by some of the organisational members as an attempt by the management to concentrate power in its own hands and to weaken the talent of individuals at lower levels by blocking their contributions or participations. Southern is another example of another company which is characterised by a strict form of control, resulting in limited opportunities to generate free or new thought and initiative-taking. Kanter (1992: 77) writes that one of the executives at the company makes it clear that his company discourages the freedom to make changes and limits any chance to negotiate ideas with the people who are at the apex of the hierarchy.

Therefore, an individual in a bureaucratic organisation is an 'organisation man' who tends to obey rules and regulations which are derived from Weberian formal rationality (Whyte 1956). In such organisations, individuals can pay no attention to the overall goals of organisation because of the domination of a regularised type of behaviour and a routinised way of thinking which tends to avoid conflict and diversity of opinion in favour of consistency and of the preservation of the existing patterns of thinking (Cummings 1965: 223).

Building upon this, rules are turned into ends in themselves instead of being instrumental in the advancement of organisational goals and promoting productive thinking. In this context Merton (1952: 366) comments:

This emphasis, resulting from the displacement of the original goals, develops into rigidities and an inability to adjust readily. Formalism, even ritualism, ensues within an unchallenged insistence upon punctilious adherence to formalised procedures. This may be exaggerated to the point where primary concern with conformity to the rules interferes with the achievement of the purposes of organisation, in which case we have the familiar phenomenon of the technicism or red tape of the official.

However, bureaucratic structures can be less rigid if, for instance, the rules utilised in organisations set minimum standards of behaviour, but organisations allow for behaviours that do not preach these standards (Gouldner 1954). Drawing on this, employees can enjoy a level of autonomy in the bureaucratic form of organisations.

The autonomy of the members employed in organisations is emphasised in a number of studies as an essential element for creativity (i.e. Amabile et al. 1996; Andriopoulos 2001; Collier and Esteban 1999; Cummings et al 1975; Kanter 1992; Mauzy and Harriman 2003; Wink 1991; Sheldon 1995). The delegation of authority and the distribution of resources to local units become a necessary requirement to utilise potential efforts and skills, to stimulate inspiration and novel ideas, and to encourage staff to pursue their own entrepreneurial projects (Kanter 1989, 1992). 3M and Steelcase are examples of companies which attempt to promote creativity by giving their employees the autonomy to run their own projects and to do their jobs, thus enhancing a sense of self-direction and self-responsibility for the objectives of their organisations (Mauzy and Harriman 2003: 98).

In addition to autonomy, Amabile et al. (1996: 1160-1) identify and assess other organisational factors which play a role in influencing creativity. These elements include the support and the encouragement management provides to its employees, and having enough resources such as time, funds and information. Knowledge and access to

information is of prime importance for enhancing creativity. Hemlin (2009: 283) argues that individuals should be able to access the most recent developments in their field and to share knowledge and exchange ideas with others. Communication processes and the flow of information should not be limited to upward and downward communication; rather members in organisations should communicate through an open network of communication and should talk with their peers and colleagues to share ideas and discuss problems with each other (Hemlin 2009). Network communication can not be fostered in a bureaucratic structure as the segmented nature of the bureaucratic structure, accompanied by the high specialisation of individuals, hinders the intra-interactions between units and transforms an organisation into a block with fences established among directorates to create a roadblock to communication and the cross-fertilisation of opinions (Cummings 1965; Kanter 1992). However, this argument is flawed because bureaucracy can provide a structure which encourages cross-institutional interaction. Bureaucracy in higher education institutions, for instance, structures academic administration on the basis of committees which encourage communication between colleagues and between those working at different organisational levels.

Reading bureaucracy as a restrictive model of structure has promoted the notion of 'excellence culture', which has been presented as a solution to bring about and encourage communication, the exchange of ideas and the flow of initiatives (Peters and Waterman 1982). In their book *In Search of Excellence*, Peter and Waterman (1982: 232-3) argue that 'excellent' companies tend to be decentralised. The 3M company, for example, is a radically decentralised company which is characterised by a high level of flexibility in carrying out functions and in shifting its employees between divisions. Excellent or entrepreneurial companies are characterised by a fluidity which allows for rapid actions and quick responses to dealing with issues and taking advantage of opportunities. Bureaucratic organisations, on the other hand, initiate change only in exceptional and limited circumstances. Any such changes are made only by those at the top of the hierarchical ladder and, in most cases, the top bureaucrats resist rather than encourage change (Kanter 1992). Unlike bureaucratic organisations which seek conformity and a stable environment, entrepreneurial organisations operate in a dynamic and ever-changing climate and can take advantage of opportunities and adapt to emerging requirements ((Kanter 1989, 1992; Peters 1993). Kanter (1989: 353) comments:

Whereas bureaucratic management is inherently preservation-seeking, entrepreneurial management is inherently opportunity-seeking. The major concern of bureaucracy is to administer a known routine uniformly, guided by past experiences, whereas the major concern of an entrepreneurial organisation is to exploit opportunity wherever it occurs and however it can be done, regardless of what the organisation has done in the past. The post-entrepreneurial organisation brings entrepreneurial principles to the established corporation.

In the age of enterprise, the competitive market forces organisations to replace their spirit of dependency with an entrepreneurial one in order to survive. Such a spirit can only be found in flexible organisations and not in bureaucratic and hierarchical ones (du Gay 1996, 2000; Kanter 1989; Peters 1994). Du Gay (2000) argues that bureaucracy, particularly in the public sector, is incapable of promoting an entrepreneurial spirit because the instrumental rationality of bureaucracy and its features of impersonality, formality and neutrality are unable to foster entrepreneurial qualities. Instead, new norms of conduct and practices are required to meet managerial ethics in a society where activities and institutions have become highly market-oriented. He writes “for the entrepreneurial managerialists, the ethico-moral demands are different. Here, the (public) bureau ‘fails’ because it is seen to be incapable of fostering the forms of conduct and habits of action-entrepreneurial morality - that are deemed essential for organisational survival and flourishing in the dislocated external environments of the present” (du Gay 2000: 8).

In the discourse of enterprise whereby an enterprise culture replaces a dependency one, employees can no longer protect themselves and hide behind bureaucracy. Instead, they should cultivate creative and entrepreneurial skills that enable them to challenge their risky and uncertain future (Kanter 1989). The new management term 'entrepreneurship' promotes a new image of organisational life and organisational culture. In such an organisational culture, the workplace is realised as a source of pleasure where teamwork, cooperation, and social relationships exist (Kanter 1989). However, we should bear in mind that entrepreneurship can have negative consequences. The challenging and competitive environment entrepreneurship creates can cause stress to individuals employed in

organisations. Added to this is the fact that entrepreneurship requires a devolution of authority and resources in order to enable individuals at operating units to carry out their entrepreneurial projects. The devolution of resources may result in the fragmentation of the institution as a whole and thus hinder the intra-interactions between departments (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling 2008: 368). This vision of entrepreneurship challenges Kanter's view of entrepreneurial culture as an open network of communication because it suggests that the devolution of authority and resources required for entrepreneurship might also contribute to fragmentation within the organisation unless individuals at operating units can identify themselves with the corporate values of their organisations.

Entrepreneurial companies, as Peters and Waterman (1982) point out, hold a set of values such as quality, regular communication and experimentation, and quick feedback which provide a framework in which individuals can enjoy autonomy. Peters and Waterman comment that (1982: 322) "Autonomy is a product of discipline. The discipline (a few shared values) provides the framework. It gives people confidence (to experiment, for instance) stemming from stable expectations about what really counts". Holding strong core values, Rippin (2007: 217) argues, can act as a "guide to action". Holding core values can also replace leadership function in encouraging and promoting high performance (Rippin 2007). Individuals can be stimulated to add new ideas, to participate, and to contribute to innovative processes (du Gay 2000; Kanter 1989; Peters and Waterman 1982).

The need for autonomy in order to promote an entrepreneurial spirit, (Mauzy and Harriman 2003: 97) should not be absolute to allow for arbitrary behaviour. Rather, autonomy means the freedom to practise work in ways that individuals find best to meet organisational objectives. In order to keep individuals committed to the overall goals of their organisations, organisations should operate on the base of the loose-tight principle in order to display the maximum level of autonomy and entrepreneurial behaviour while at the same time keeping individuals focused on the central direction of their organisations. These contradictory characteristics present a paradoxical combination (Harvard Business Essentials 2003) that, according to Peters and Waterman (1982) can be solved through the value system.

In addition to excellence organisations, 'participative organisations' are suggested by Collier and Esteban (1999: 182) as a contrasting type to bureaucratic organisations, where creative acts can be promoted by giving the members in these organisations the freedom to participate and make decisions about their work, and the independence to pursue and achieve goals which they themselves deem important instead of those imposed by their hierarchical superiors. While Collier and Esteban (1999) acknowledge the essentiality of freedom to creativity, they argue that freedom and creativity are not separate features which characterise organisations; rather they are interlinked in a continuous and ongoing relationship. To illustrate this point Collier and Esteban (1999) argue that understanding freedom as an opportunity to pursue the aims that individuals value is fuel for creativity. Creativity generates knowledge, which in turn creates further opportunities to achieve those goals considered important to their organisations by its individual members, thus promoting freedom.

The above paragraphs demonstrate the tension between creativity's need for autonomy and the tendency of bureaucracy to control activities and to repress individual initiative. Bureaucracy also hinders creativity through its mechanism of employment. Creativity, Williams and Yang (1999: 376) argue, is inhibited in bureaucratic organisations through the promotion of a 'bureaucratic personality'. They point out that bureaucratic features embodied in the security of tenure, and life-long jobs create blocks to creativity because tenured members in bureaucratic organisations are concerned mainly in securing their presence in the organisation, resisting any change in their organisation which could threaten the security of their tenure.

Drawing on the above, organisational culture can either enhance or hinder the creativity of individuals depending on whether the culture exhibits those conditions which encourage creative thinking or restrict it. Organisations which support the freedom and the autonomy of their members, encourage risk-taking, tolerate errors and facilitate communication within organisations have greater scope for creative behaviour. Such characteristics of organisational culture are likely to be accommodated in flexible and decentralised organisations to permit developing a quick response to a changing society and to keep their employees empowered to take the initiative. These are some of the advantages that give

non-bureaucratic organisations the lead over bureaucratic ones regarding their readiness to breed a greater propensity for creativity. Having explored the critiques of the Weberian bureaucratic model, the next section addresses the advantages or positive aspects of bureaucracy.

The positive and the negative aspects of bureaucracy reflect the paradoxical nature of bureaucratic organisations. Though, for example, hierarchy and formality are essential elements for assuring efficient performance and coordination, they are associated with the danger of losing flexibility and quick responses to the demands of change and novelty. Such a paradox implies a contradiction in the way organisations can be managed.

A similar contradiction in managing organisations can be found in the work of Weick and Sutcliffe (2001a, 2001b) in their study of high reliability organisations (HROs). Weick and Sutcliffe (2001a, 2001b) point out that reliable organisations are those organisations that can behave and operate in a consistent, safe, and effective way despite the unpredictability of the challenges and the complexity of the events and risks that they constantly confront. Such organisations are adaptive and flexible enough to respond to the unexpected and to cope with risky conditions and thus ensure safe operations and stable high performance (Sutcliffe 2001a). To ensure flexible operation in reliable organisations, culture is used as the source that provides organisational members with the autonomy they need to carry out their tasks while keeping them concentrated on the overall goals of their organisations. This view corresponds to Peters and Waterman's (1982) perspective on excellent companies, which are characterised by a decentralised/ centralised form of management.

Weick and Sutcliffe (2001a, 2001b) provide a compelling analysis of reliable organisations and present an interesting view about culture in reliable organisations. They argue that culture is "both a way of seeing and a way of not seeing" (2001a: 111). By this expression, Weick and Sutcliffe mean that culture can be understood as the tool that socialises organisational members into seeing the world by bringing people together and holding them together by common values and shared expectations of their roles in organisations which become assumptions which are taken for granted. While this view of culture that is based on the development of shared assumptions helps people achieve their collective goals, it has its negative aspects in that it makes people unaware of the important issues

surrounding them thus promotes blindness to vital factors and discourages foresight because of its tendency to organise activities in accordance with abstract or generic categories by promoting a bounded view of rationality which standardises the task of decision making in organisations (Weick and Sutcliffe 2001a: 112). In this vein, Turner and Pidgeon (1997: 47) comment:

Part of the effectiveness of organizations lies in the way in which they are able to bring together large numbers of people and imbue them for a sufficient time with a sufficient similarity of approach, outlook and priorities to enable them to achieve collective, sustained responses which would be impossible if a group of unorganized individuals were to face the same problem. However, this very property also brings with it the dangers of a collective blindness to important issues, the danger that some vital factors may be left outside the bounds of organizational perception.

Drawing on the above view, culture is a way to organise people's activities in order to achieve certain targets. However, culture can promote a common or homogenous approach to dealing with problems which might ignore the complexity of their context and thus hinder people's ability to act mindfully¹. Considering this contrasting assessment of culture to understand the paradoxical nature of bureaucracy, I argue that bureaucracy is an effective form of organisation because of its capacity to organise and coordinate the activities of organisational members and to direct these activities towards achieving collective purposes. It coordinates actions by promoting shared perceptions of the roles within organisations and by developing unified rules and regulations and standardising the task of decision making. However, this very virtue of bureaucracy has negative consequences in that organising activities in accordance with standardised procedures implies a generalisation and simplification of the events that confront organisations. This simplification leads to a narrow foresight and restricted view of the world and discourages people from being

¹ For Weick and Sutcliffe (2001a: 32), mindfulness involves the ability to refine the existing experiences in the light of new ones, which are based on the appreciation of unexpected events and of the multiple dimensions of the context.

sensitive to heterogeneity and the complexity of events occurring both inside and outside their organisations.

An appreciation of heterogeneity and multiplicity of organisation corresponds with the rhizomatic thought inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (1988). Rhizomatic thought challenges the idea of dichotomies, totalization, and linear thought to stress instead on plurality, multiplicities and nomadic thought in order to interpret social phenomena as dynamic and networked systems. Applying the nomadic thought inspired by Deleuze and Guattari to understanding organisations, 'nomadic organisations' can be perceived as an ongoing reconfiguration of process and activities that reflects the complexity of reality, the multiplicity of relations, and a continuous adaptation to change (Styhre 2001).

The above view of organisations challenges the idea of dichotomy. Organisations are not perceived in the light of the market-hierarchy axis with a few hybridized forms of network-bureaucratic forms of organisation (i.e. clan organisations) (Styhre 2001). Rather, the boundaries between different forms of organisations are dissolved to escape dichotomies and to stress instead on the interaction and the multi-dimensional analysis of organisations. This view suggests that bureaucracy is not monolithic; rather, it is a multi-sided organisational device that proliferates, adapts, and reconfigures (Du Gay 2005: 3) to reflect multiplicities of relations within (bureaucratic) organisations. Considering the multi-dimensional analysis of (bureaucratic) organisations allows us to elaborate some of the contradictions within (bureaucratic) organisations. For instance, bureaucratic organisations are characterised by hierarchical authority and a rule-governed form of structure which are believed to be antithetical to flexibility. Bureaucratic organisations are also characterised by the separation of people from the office s/he serves. The separation of person from office implies that roles are performed and tasks are allocated on the basis of qualifications and job requirements regardless of personal qualities (Thompson and Alvesson 2005: 97). While this view can demonstrate the importance of the hierarchical structure and the formal nature of organizations - which were previously perceived to be incompatible with the need for flexibility - flexibility can be enhanced in bureaucratic organisations because roles can be changed and adjusted more easily than personal behavior and characters (Thompson and Alvesson 2005: 97). This again reflects the paradoxical nature of bureaucracy and

demonstrates the tensions in bureaucratic organisations which can simultaneously enhance and resist flexibility.

Similarly, Reed (2005) presents some contrasting perspectives on bureaucratic organizations in relation to flexibility. He argues that bureaucracy – which is perceived as resistant to adaptability and flexibility - can cope with unpredictable environments by "continually re-aligning itself with the shifting balances of power occurring in its wider institutional environment. This process of continuous re-alignment is made possible by the deft combination of specialized knowledge, practical political expertise, and technical effectiveness on which long-term bureaucratic survival has always been dependent" (Reed 2005: 124).

In this vein, bureaucracy cannot be understood as a static order. In contemporary societies, which have witnessed ongoing change, organisations have been subject to 'rebureaucratisation' rather than 'debureaucratisation' (du Gay, 2005; Thompson and Alvesson 2005). In other words, contemporary changes have attempted to reconfigure bureaucratic forms of organisation in order to constitute bureaucracies in different ways highly conditioned by the context (Thompson and Alvesson 2005). Drawing upon this view, the assessment of forms of organisations is sensitive to the context which abandons producing an idealised account of bureaucracy (Thompson and Alvesson 2005). This in turn invites us to be cautious of idealising the virtues of bureaucracy in order to present an assessment of bureaucratic virtues in a specific context. In the next section I turn to examine bureaucracy in the very specific context of public administration.

2-5 In defence of Bureaucracy

Despite critiques of the bureaucratic model, bureaucracy is essential for society and is an inevitable type of structure for most organisations. Any society which seeks efficiency and productivity should cultivate some bureaucratic bases because of the rational conduct of bureaucracy which gives it technical superiority over other types of organisation. Bureaucracy has played an important role in ordering our lives and in achieving economic, social and political objectives (du Gay 2000, 2005; Wriston 1980). Bureaucracy has a significant contribution to make to the development and sustainability of ethical values (du Gay 2000, 2005; Parker 1993; Stokes and Clegg 2002) and it would be difficult to imagine administration in large organisations being carried out without relying on at least some bureaucratic principles.

In both of his books, *In Praise of Bureaucracy* and *The Value of Bureaucracy*, du Gay (2000, 2005) argues that bureaucracy is on the rise again. He points out that the bureaucratic model has some advantages over other types of administration. He reveals, for instance, that the traditional framework of accountability based on the hierarchical structure of a unified authority, has some advantages over the fragmented system because it costs less than the pluralistic forms of delegated responsibility (du Gay 2000). He writes that “the transaction costs of devolved and fragmented management are apt to be very high, and it often turns out to be necessary to reintroduced new mechanisms of standardization and control” (2000: 111). Similarly, Reed (2005: 134) points out that the hybridised form of organisations grounded upon the elements of market, network, and chain of command requires an expensive and complex form of coordination. In addition to the economic efficiency of the bureaucratic model in controlling and coordinating functions in an organisation and holding it together, du Gay (2005) provides further advantages of the bureaucratic model. He presents an example of a study that, for him, revives the need for bureaucratic features in organisations. He points out that *The Economist's* reviewers found that there was an increasing demand for a clear chain of command initiated by people's need to have clear regulations and procedures and to know the individuals they should report to. du Gay (2005) concludes that contemporary attempts to de-bureaucratise organisations are not without their limitations. For him, “bureaucracy, like the proverbial

elephant in the living room could not be positively acknowledged nor could it be ignored, or magically spirited away” (2005: 2)

In his defence of Weber’s ideas, du Gay (1999) points out that according to Weber the problem with bureaucracy arises from the unjustified extension of the ethos of the office, and from the injection of the instrumental spirit of bureaucracy into all political and social spheres. It was therefore the disregard for the limitations of bureaucracy’s competence that led to the failure of bureaucratic model in Germany (du Gay 1999).

The failure of bureaucratic government is attributed in large part to the attempts to use the rational model described by Weber to organise society, when social, economic and political life are different from those during Weber’s time (du Gay 2000). In the context of ‘enterprise governance’, du Gay (2000) argues, new rules and modes of conduct should be generated if public organisations are to survive. These modes should be established upon a ‘regulated autonomy’ and ‘self-surveillance’ and rest upon entrepreneurial qualities that fit the culture of enterprise and help to produce enterprising individuals. For du Gay (2004: 38) ‘enterprise’ is not only perceived in terms of independent and entrepreneurial qualities, rather it is a form of conduct that penetrates organisations, governments and the life of individuals.

In the 1980s, Britain and other countries saw a major cultural transformation whereby governments adopted the rationalities of the ‘new right’ and ‘enterprise’ into their political, economic and ethical reforms (du Gay 1996). The discourse of enterprise was synonymous with Thatcher’s regime in the United Kingdom and with that of Reagan in the United States (du Gay 1996). It also penetrated management discourses and entered people’s lives in various ways. Within the discourse of enterprise, employees were re-imagined in line with the new ethical and political rationalities which rely upon entrepreneurial, autonomous, and self-steering individuals (du Gay 1996, 2000; Peters 1994; Rose 1998). In the light of the discourse of enterprise, Rose (1998) argues that employees can no longer depend on the government to serve and look after them; instead they should be active and self-steering individuals who have the capability to determine their own future. In the age of enterprise, du Gay (2000, 2005) argues that the core values of bureaucratic rationality rest upon

political accountability and impartiality and are pushed to the margin of the discourse on entrepreneurship, substituted by the ethos of customer satisfaction, economic efficiency, decentralised control and a softer form of surveillance. Stokes and Clegg (2002) make a similar point and argue that the eradication of the ethos of 'bureau' in seeking efficiency may lead to accountability reductionism in public organisations because it sorts out one dimension at the cost of other considerations.

The ethos of the 'bureau' has its significance in public sectors but not in private ones (du Gay 2000, 2005). Public organisations and commercial or private enterprises share some forms of managerial work (du Gay 2000). However, the difference between the private and public sectors in the source of ownership is among the main factors that lies behind the claim that management in private companies does require methods different from those applied by administration in public sector (Bovaird and Löffler 2009). The difference between private and public sectors also lies in the difference in their value system because of the political system in which the public sector operates and which forces bureaucrats to act and conduct their business differently from their counterparts in commercial enterprises. Governments in liberal societies do not only provide services to citizens, but they also have to act within a framework of accountability (du Gay 2000, 2005; Olsen 2006; Stokes and Clegg 2002). As the state exercises its legal power over citizens and provides services to 'citizens' rather than to 'customers', this implies that ministers and senior civil servants should be accountable for their actions and should be committed to the purpose of office, within which their responsibilities are well defined (du Gay 2000). The concentration of the important decisions at the top level of government becomes a necessary technique to avoid the denial of responsibility to safeguard the rights of citizens to make claims (du Gay 2000) and to keep officials accountable for their performance.

Accountability has been defined by Trow (1996: 310) as "the obligation to report to others, to explain, to justify, to answer questions about how resources have been used, and to what effect". The political accountability of higher education can be translated into the responsiveness of higher education to the interest groups including, for instance, 'elected officials', 'clientele groups' and the 'general public' (Currie, DeAngelis, De Boer, Huisman, and Lacotte 2003 :115). Higher education institutions, for example, are responsible to the public with regard to their performance and their contribution to the development of society

(Currie et al 2003). This accountability is true particularly in the context of the public sector because the public sector is highly influenced by political activity; the public sector operates within the domain that requires a good reflection of parliamentary opinions and an effective response to the public interest (du Gay 2000). The accountability of the public sector and the responsibility of officials to respond to public interest demands that bureaucratic elements be embodied in a hierarchical structure of organisation (du Gay 2000). Applying this argument to the context of higher education, I can argue that to secure the accountability of public higher education and to safeguard its responsibility to serve the public interest, the hierarchical structure of organisation and the concentration of key educational decisions at the apex of the hierarchy are justified in order to keep higher education responsive to public demands.

A bureaucratic form of governance is important in the absence of common objectives, and the increased heterogeneity and diversity in society, in order to enable government to reconcile differences of interest (Olsen 2006). This requires a kind of impartiality that can only be found in the Weberian legal form of rationality. The impartiality of the Weberian legal form of rationality, du Gay (2000) argues, lies in the requirements of 'office' to separate public administration from private morality and to devote oneself to the purpose of the office. du Gay (2000) adds that the impartiality required from the bureaucrat does not imply the dismissal of humanity or the denial of personal feeling and emotion. Rather than eradicate their moral values, bureaucrats generate some barriers in front of those activities, which could open the door to corruption, such as the misuse of personal patronage. Weber (1968: 267) presents the impersonality of bureaucracy as an essential element to safeguard the impartial conduct of bureaucracy and to ensure equal treatment among citizens, who are no longer subject to personal connections or to the mood of the bureaucrats. He points out:

The dominance of a spirit of formalistic impersonality: '*sine ira et studio*', without hatred or passion, and hence without affection or enthusiasm. The dominant norms are concepts of straightforward duty without regard to personal considerations. Every one is subject to formal equality of treatment, that is, everyone in the same empirical situation. This is the spirit in which the ideal official conducts his office (Weber 1968: 267).

Weber (1968) argued that the modern state with its legal and democratic structure had emerged to replace the empire state. Democratic movements that demand "equality before the law" (Bendix 1960: 430; Weber 1968: 983) and "legal guarantees against arbitrariness in judicial and administrative decisions" (Bendix 1960: 430) led to the development of bureaucracy. The bureaucratic form of administration in Germany, for instance, has been associated with the decline of the empire and its systems of absolute monarchy (Weber 1968). This decline was also accompanied by the shrinking of the aristocracy and their monopoly, and with the demand to end the laws that served the interests of one group. The 'property-less masses' demand guarantees of their rights and greater protection from arbitrariness. The poor seek justice in terms of enjoying the opportunity for equal economic and social opportunities (Weber 1947). Bureaucratic organisations were presented as a type of organisation that shrinks social and economic differences.

In the light of the above vision, the ethos of the office is valuable in a liberal democratic society because this ethos relies upon objectivity, reliability, justice, and fairness in the treatment of citizens (Bendix 1960; Due Billing 2005; du Gay 2000, 2005; Wriston 1980). du Gay (2000: 76) comments:

Without the historical emergence of the ethical sphere and persona of the bureau and the bureaucrat, the construction of a buffer between civic comportment and personal principles - a crucial feature of contemporary liberal democratic government - would never have been possible.

Though bureaucracy contributes to the safeguarding of democracy, Weber points out that bureaucracy does not always demonstrate the ethics of democracy. Bureaucracy and democracy can be found to be in conflict since bureaucracy in some cases tends to serve certain interest groups and to strengthen their social and political power (Weber 1968). Democracy, for its part, threatens the basis of 'office' through its tendency to shrink and limit the authority of office in favour of reflecting 'public opinions' and through its emphasis upon election instead of appointment on the basis of special qualifications (Weber 1968: 985).

Though this study is not concerned in examining the relationship between bureaucracy and democracy, I do touch upon democracy because the empirical study addresses the role of bureaucracy in securing equal opportunities among academic citizens, which is an essential requirement of democracy.

The need to inject democratic values into the public sector, Coleman, Brudney and Kellough (1998: 718) argue, has been well documented in political literature. Among these democratic values is 'equality' among citizens. The discourse of 'equality' has dominated political thought in the twentieth century. Before modernity, economic and social inequality was considered a natural condition (Heywood 1999: 285). However, modern thought opposes the pre-modern view, holding that all people have equal worth. Equality has become a fundamental feature of the welfare state (Allardt 1984: 170). The concept of equality is very complex as it comprises various forms of equality such as 'formal equality', 'equality of opportunities', and 'equality of outcome' (Heywood 1999: 285).

By formal equality Heywood (1999: 287) means that every person ought to be subject to equal treatment under the rules of social justice on the grounds of his or her humanity. In this context nobody should be disadvantaged on the basis of their race, colour or gender, and should be treated equally independent of class or family background and without regard for their religious, economic or political background (Heywood, 1999). Equal opportunities concern the levelling of social and economic differences by removing any barriers that prevent people from pursuing their personal development and improving their social position (Heywood 1999: 292- 3, Due Billing 2005: 258-9).

Equal opportunities policy, Due Billing (2005) points out, relies upon the idea that all people have equal worth and thus should have equal opportunities to participate in every aspect of life. The concept of equal opportunities differs from the notion of equality of outcome. While the former concerns and is founded on the 'starting conditions' of life, the latter considers the end results such as wage and resources, regardless of the initial conditions (Heywood 1999). Equal opportunities also differ from formal equality by considering the chances available to people. Formal equality, however, does not consider opportunities or chances, but rather concerns itself with "the status people enjoy either as human beings or in the eyes of the law" (Heywood 1999: 290).

Equal opportunities among citizens can be protected by the State, which in turn is responsible for safeguarding equal rights between men and women in participating in economic, social, and political domains. Equal opportunities are safeguarded by the impersonality of bureaucracy in ensuring that there is no favouritism or arbitrariness in its treatment of citizens. In this context, Due Billing (2005: 276) comments "non-bureaucracies do not provide the protective structures (against arbitrariness and nepotism) that bureaucracies ideally can do". In addition to the impersonal conduct of bureaucracy, equal opportunities are protected by the concept of the merit base in bureaucracy, according to which employees are selected and promoted on the basis of their qualifications and competence (Due Billing 2005; Grey 2009). The idea of merit is grounded upon neutral competence (Kaufman 1956). Kaufman (1956: 1060) defines neutral competence in terms of "the ability to do the work of the government expertly, and to do it according to explicit, objective standards rather than to personal or party or other obligations and loyalties". In bureaucratic organisations where jobs are occupied on the basis of qualifications and competence followed by clear procedures and regulations for assessment and advancement in a career ladder, prejudice over gender and arbitrariness is reduced to a minimum. The role of bureaucracy in minimising prejudice over gender is important to safeguard the participation of women in economic, social and political development and to enable them to enjoy equal rights with men in the workplace where women typically experience marginalisation and disregard (Rippin 2009). Even when change occurs it can often serve to foster inequality and maintain the passive role of women (Rippin 2005).

While the arguments above explore the significance of the ethos of the office, we should not exaggerate the role of bureaucracy in safeguarding the ethos of gender equality. Bureaucracy, which is perceived to minimise gender prejudice by virtue of its impersonal conduct and thus contribute to gender equality, can also promote inequality between women and men as the rational conduct of bureaucracy requires employees to suppress their emotional and private needs - which do not meet the rational requirements of bureaucracy. This fact makes men more privileged in bureaucratic organisations than women (Ashcraft 2001). Ashcraft (2001) suggests 'organized dissonance' or 'feminist bureaucracy' as an alternative form of organisation to traditional bureaucracy where

women's empowerment can be enhanced. This form of organisation comprises elements of the bureaucratic model and elements of feminist organisation. 'Feminist bureaucracy', for example, is characterised by a form of conduct which is based on a formal and hierarchical form of structure compromised by egalitarian practices. 'Feminist bureaucracy' or 'organized dissonance' is also characterised by an efficient use of means to achieve particular ends (the rational aspect of bureaucratic model) combined with feminist consciousness/women's empowerment (a principle of feminist organisation). In such a form of organisation, women's empowerment can be fostered by accommodating egalitarian relations among groups in organisation and by supporting personal development which embraces emotional needs and informal criteria (Ashcraft 2001). In this vein, Ashcraft (2001: 1304) comments:

In brief, organized dissonance meets routinely paradoxical, ostensibly debilitating demands (for instance, to create hierarchical accountability to secure grants to support egalitarianism; to enhance efficiency amid growth yet uphold consensual decision making) by reframing dualisms as dialectics

The above quotation suggests that bureaucracy can operate or behave in a way that alters the traditional view of bureaucracy. This enacted behavior is highly conditioned by the readiness to accommodate contradictory elements. Drawing upon this vision, I argue that within bureaucracy there is space to safeguard feminist consciousness and women's empowerment by - according to Ashcraft (2001) - establishing a dynamic interaction between practices and structure. Such a dynamic interaction reconciles between universalism and contextualism. In other words, a structure-practices relationship embraces a standardised and an objective conduct of bureaucracy subject to their situational context. The interaction between structure and practices also implies an expansion of the rational aspect of the bureaucratic model to accommodate, in addition to impersonal and formal criteria, the emotional and private needs (Ashcraft 2001).

The above paragraph suggests that the dynamic interaction between structural elements and practices can adjust the bureaucratic model to respond to feminist criteria. In addition to the structure-practices relationship, the (political) context within which bureaucracy operates

shapes the readiness of bureaucracy to promote feminist consciousness. The State, for example, can adopt policies and initiate programmes that promote gender equality and protect women's rights such as in the case of Danish government (Due Billing 2005). The State adheres to regulate rights and ensure equal opportunities through laws and legislations (Due Billing 2005) which are implemented through the bureaucratic structure. In the light of this vision, bureaucracy becomes the mechanism through which women can have good access to careers and thus advance their status. In other words, bureaucracy becomes an institutionalised means which enables women to exercise their influence on the strategic economic, political and cultural policy of the State and thus engages women in shaping society. The participation of women in economic, political and social life empowers women by allowing them access to the technical and financial resources necessary to develop their skills. The participation of women in shaping society, combined with the use of their collective experience, contributes to an expansion of the feminist agenda which can overcome 'administrative inertia' (Ku 2008).

This section addresses the bureaucratic virtues in exploring the role of bureaucracy in safeguarding the ethos of gender equality; however, this should not suggest that bureaucracy is the perfect model and is protected from criticism. Instead, bureaucracy has its own limited ethico-political values, which are contingent and are designed to meet specific ends (du Gay 2000, 2005). Drawing on the limitations of the bureaucratic model, du Gay (2000) points out that it seems illogical to evaluate the ethos of the "bureau" in the light of "entrepreneurial criteria" because they are not designed to meet such criteria. Similarly, Olsen (2006: 28) acknowledges the limitations of bureaucracy and comments that "bureaucracy is not *the* way to organise public administration, for all kinds of tasks and under all circumstances. Bureaucratic organisation is part of a repertoire of overlapping, supplementary, and competing forms coexisting in contemporary democracies, and so are market organization and network organization".

Despite the awareness of du Gay of the limitation of bureaucratic ethics, Grey (2009: 27) points out that du Gay's defence of bureaucracy is only right when bureaucracy operates in its ideal and purest type and thus it is the ideal type of bureaucracy that engenders the ethos of office. However, bureaucracies more often operate differently from their ideal type

(Grey 2009; Thompson and Alvesson 2005), which contributes to the failure of bureaucracies to embody the ethos of equality and objectivity. The conduct of bureaucracy is highly conditioned by the context within which it develops (Thompson and Alvesson 2005: 92). Grey (2009: 28), for instance, draws upon the studies of Crozier (1964) and Kanter (1977) which show that actual bureaucracies behave in a very different way from the ideal type. In his study of bureaucracy in France, Crozier found that French bureaucrats did not act in an impartial way and that their conduct is highly influenced by their emotion and preferences. Similarly, Kanter (1977) found that the behaviour of bureaucrats is characterised by bias as they tended to recruit employees with whom they share some personal considerations such as race or gender. Due Billing (2005: 263) also points out that when bureaucracy fails to embody certain ethos - particularly gender equality - this can be attributed to reasons other than bureaucracy. She, for instance, points out that social factors promote a stereotype or a particular image of the role and the capacities of women and men in society. The notion of stereotypes is closely aligned with the constructionist view of gender which rests upon the idea that gender is "comprised of *socially constructed* meanings about how people should act, feel, and express themselves as girls/women or as boys/men" (Bird and Rhoton 2011: 247).

Historically, women were stereotyped as housewives whose main role was restricted to private life. The stereotype can have negative consequences. In this context Rippin (2007: 218) comments "The stereotype ultimately does not help either men or women because it sets up unreasonable expectations of how people can and will behave". The fact that women were stereotyped as housewives forced women to leave work when they got married and thus contributed to constructing bureaucracies which were mainly dominated by men (Due Billing 2005). Therefore, marriage and the responsibilities of women to look after their children and to do housework are among the main issues that made bureaucracy more accessible to male labour. Drawing on Due Billing's argument, the context within which bureaucracies operate plays a significant role in shaping the conduct of bureaucracy. Legislative laws and rules in bureaucracies become "subject to the same gendered power relations" which dominate society (Jeanes 2007: 552). Developing an awareness of or sensitivity to the context within which bureaucratic organisations operate allows us to understand why bureaucracy succeeds in embodying the ethos of the bureau in certain cultures whilst failing in others.

To sum up, throughout this chapter, I have explored the Weberian notion of bureaucracy and the arguments presented by contemporary theorists on the bureaucratic model. Weber, who is one of the most important and influential sociologists of the twentieth century, creates core ideas that have been influential in organisational theory. His study of the rise of capitalism presents a historical grasp of the conditions under which modern capitalism emerged. Weber believed that Western modern capitalism played a role in economic progress and was accompanied by the crucial rationalisation of social behaviour for the sake of standardised and systemised social action. The rationalisation process aimed to homogenise cultural forms by replacing them with predictable and standardised forms of social order. The outcome of that process was the Weberian bureaucratic model grounded upon formal-legal rationality and resting upon universally calculable rules and regulative laws to conduct business and organise modern life.

The Weberian bureaucratic model has been shaped by particular economic and political factors which make it distinct from other types of administration. The rational conduct of bureaucracy allows for efficient operation and promotes the ethics of equality among citizens. However, in the contemporary age - the age of enterprise - many thinkers criticise Weberian bureaucracy. Their main argument is that entrepreneurship requires individuals who are active, self-reliant and autonomous to run their own jobs. Such characteristics are a prerequisite for enhancing creative acts. In the context of creativity, where greater autonomy is required to take the initiative and to promote an entrepreneurial spirit, the bureaucratic model is attacked on the grounds of its inflexibility and its tendency to restrict autonomy and to stifle the creative spirit.

While a number of theorists anticipated the end of bureaucracy in the age of enterprise, which is characterised by uncertainty, ambiguity, and the need for flexibility, some theorists such as du Gay and Due Billing revive Weber's ideas to emphasise that the bureaucratic character is still relevant to our present day. Du Gay's main argument rests upon the idea that the impersonal and formal-rational conduct of bureaucracy should be restored to achieve impartiality, justice and equality in public administration. Du Gay's descriptive analysis of the role of bureaucracy in the context of public administration

allows us to build on the positive aspects of bureaucracy bearing in mind the limitations and contingencies of bureaucracy in the context of the culture of enterprise.

Chapter three: Professional bureaucracy and Academia

3-1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research literature on professions and academia. As the focus of this thesis is to investigate how academics experience bureaucracy, it is perhaps useful first of all to examine some of the issues surrounding professions in general. The reason for presenting an account of a profession is to understand the particular aspects that distinguish professions, and thus also academic work, from other kinds of occupations. As professions in general have their own distinctive traits that distinguish them from other types of occupations, we can argue that those professionals, and particularly academics, employed in bureaucratic organisations may experience bureaucracy in a different way to other groups. A professional's need for autonomy and for self-control would suggest that professionals such as academics would tend to reject the limits or restrictions imposed by bureaucracy over their work. Considering the essentiality of autonomy to a profession in general and to the academic profession in particular, this work will give the concept of autonomy particular attention.

The literature review in this chapter is divided into seven sections. Each of these sections deals with a particular element of the subject area. Section two of this chapter elaborates on the concept of a profession. Section three addresses the relevance of ethics to a profession. Section four focuses on professionals employed in bureaucratic organisations and addresses the issues surrounding professional autonomy. In section five, I explore the collegial-bureaucratic nature of universities. Section six considers the concept of academic autonomy revealing the impact of external factors including bureaucracy, the state, and the market on academic autonomy. Section seven ends the chapter with a reflection on the relevance of creativity to academia. While an attempt has been made to present this chapter in distinct sections, an overlap between the themes obviously exists.

3-2 Profession: definition and perspectives

An understanding of the term ‘profession’ brings us to look into some of the various meanings the word ‘profession’ has had over the time. This will help us to understand the existence of various perspectives on professions and the difficulties associated with them in order to present a unified definition of the term.

In fifteenth and the beginning of sixteenth century, as O’Day (2000: 13) points out, the word ‘profession’ had a religious meaning. It was used to mean a ‘declaration’ or a ‘vow’ made by people when they decided on religious matters. It also meant ‘faith’. By the beginning of seventeenth century, the word ‘profession’ had maintained its meaning as a ‘declaration’ in spite of some occasional use of the word to describe particular forms of communities. ‘Profession’ was employed in particular to refer to three forms of communities: lawyers, divinity scholars, and medics (Bellis 2000). As the members of those communities had to deal with issues concerning the human condition such as health, fiscal or spiritual matters, trust between professionals and their clients was a significant issue. That in turn gave rise to the importance of ethical behaviour within professional occupations (Bellis 2000). It also, along with other factors, contributed to the development of professions as occupations with special expertise. Annan (2000: 10), for instance, makes reference to the developments which took place in Britain by the mid-nineteenth century, which resulted in expanding professions and the emergence of new professional groups such as civil engineers.

Annan (2000) points out that, in the first half of the 19th century, the establishment of civil engineering institutes that were responsible for harnessing power sources and exploiting them for the benefit of humankind and the welfare of society were associated with the emergence of sophisticated and complicated governance and the need to employ staff with special expertise, which led to the rise of a new professional group, and cultivated the ground for other groups to emerge. Later, and as a result of industrialisation in the UK, the word ‘profession’ began to be used intensively to refer to forms of organised groups such as teachers, engineers, accountants, and medics (Annan 2000; Bellis 2000).

Professions, according to the ‘traits’ model of professionalism,² are defined as occupations that are characterised by certain ‘attributes’ or ‘traits’ (Barber 1963; Goode 1957; Greenwood 1965; Millerson 1964; Whitty 2008). Drawing on this method of defining a ‘profession’, there are certain features that an occupation should have in order to be characterised as a de-facto profession. These features stress the use of theoretical knowledge and training to practise a profession, and a general intention to provide society with good services and to adhere to a code of ethics (Barber 1963; Greenwood 1965; Millerson 1964; Whitty 2008). An institutional organisation of the professional groups is also considered as one of the traits of a profession (Millerson 1964; Bellis 2000).

In the light of the above criteria for an occupation to be termed a profession, three prime dimensions can be distinguished in the definition of ‘profession’. The three main elements are: ‘cognitive’, ‘normative’, and ‘organisational’ elements. By cognitive element, Bellis (2000: 319) refers to the knowledge and training required to carry out a profession. The normative element reflects the ethical side of the profession and its duties towards society, while the organisational element is used to refer to organised communities with legitimised power. A definition of ‘profession’ can therefore be presented here which reflects or meets the cognitive, normative, and organisational elements of a profession: Bellis quotes Rugland’s (1993) definition of a profession:

A profession is a vocation founded on specialized educational training, the purpose of which is to supply disinterested counsel and service to others, for a direct and definite compensation, wholly apart from expectation of other business gain...[.]. This definition implies that, for a profession to be recognised as a profession, it first must be organised within a professional body (Rugland 1993, quoted in Bellis 2000: 319).

² The trait approach to professionalism is very similar to the functionalist approach in the sense that both focus on the traits or the attributes of a profession. However, the functionalist approach attempts to present a reductionist (limited) list of attributes of a profession. While Millerson (1964), for instance, defines 23 attributes in his definition of professions, Barber (1963) presents four main elements to characterise professions. As both approaches focus on traits, I present these two approaches in this study as one model of professionalism under the term ‘trait’ model.

Professional culture has also been identified as one of the attributes of a profession (Evan 2008; Greenwood 1965). Professions, Evan (2008) argues, have their own distinctive culture through which members of a professional community share practices, relationships, symbols, ideologies, and beliefs. While professional culture refers to beliefs, values and attitudes shared by professional members, Evan (2008: 25) argues that professionalism has a broader meaning, though professional culture forms a substantial component of it. Professionalism, Evan comments, “seems generally to be seen as the identification and expression of what is required and expected of members of a profession”.

Evan (2008) also argues that professionalism is concerned with determining how professional members function. He points out that professionalism is not something created by external bodies to be imposed on professionals; rather, it is formulated and developed within the professional discipline itself. Drawing on this perspective of professionalism, a new model termed the ‘power’ model of professionalism is developed to define a profession as a form of occupation that requires considerable control over the occupation (Freidson 1970: 134). The exercise of control over work is justified on the grounds of the trustworthiness of professional groups (Freidson 1970) and of the special expertise professions have (Barber 1963; Blackler 1995; Freidson 1970; Macdonald 1995).

Freidson argues further that it is not only the knowledge and the nature of a profession that determine the degree of self- control over the occupation; rather, it is the ability of a profession to negotiate and “establish favourable jurisdictions in an organised division of labour and to control the labour market” (1977: 23). It is this degree of control that is used by Freidson as a fundamental attribute to distinguish between occupations.

Professionalism has also been presented by Johnson as one of institutional forms of professional control. In this context, Johnson (1972: 45) comments: “A profession is not, then, an occupation, but a means of controlling an occupation”. Johnson (1972) suggests three forms of professional control. Firstly there is ‘collegiate’ control, where professionals have considerable power over defining the needs of clients and over the process of meeting these needs. Secondly there is ‘patronage’ control, where the needs and the processes of meeting them are defined by the clients. Lastly there is ‘mediate’ control where a third party (i.e. the state) acts as a mediator between the professions and their clients. In the light

of the 'power' approach to studying professions, it is not the special traits of professions which are important, but rather how professions retain power and exercise it to advance their own interests.

The power professions enjoy is derived from the unique knowledge, skills, and expertise they possess and the ability to provide services that other people cannot. It is the possession of knowledge and qualifications that reinforce the prestigious position of professions and facilitate upward mobility (Blackler 1995; MacDonald 1995). It is also the possession of professional skills which are difficult to imitate that allows professions to obtain high rewards and to achieve economic advantage compared to those occupations that are characterised by a standardised and routine form of service (Reich 1991, cited in Blackler 1995: 1027). Barber (1963) argues that status is more important for professions than financial reward because the knowledge professions have is oriented towards community interest. Status, Barber (1963) points out, is granted to those occupational groups who enjoy control over their knowledge and who orient their knowledge to serve the community interest.

Using Marxian perspectives on social production, we can argue that professions with their own unique knowledge and qualifications (the means of production) tend to maintain their monopolistic position and thus to dominate society. From the Weberian perspective, professions are interest groups who use their collective actions and power to secure their privileged economic and social positions (MacDonald 1995). While the Marxian perspective shares with the Weberian perspective the idea that professions seek to enhance their monopoly and to secure their economic and social privileges, they have different departure points. Monopoly, according to the former, has been conceptualised as the logical outcome of the ownership of the means of production. However, according to the latter, monopoly is generated by the collective actions of professional groups (MacDonald 1995). Monopoly has become part of the professional project.

The professional project can be understood in terms of the attempts made by professional groups to secure and safeguard their social and economic advantages and to thus distinguish themselves from the rest of society (MacDonald 1995).

MacDonald (1995: 9) quotes Larson (1977: xvii) to present her views on the professional project, which are summarised in the following quotation:

Professionalisation is thus an attempt to translate one order of scarce resources – special knowledge and skills – into another – social and economic rewards. To maintain scarcity implies a tendency to monopoly: monopoly of expertise in the market, monopoly of status in a system of stratification. The focus on the constitution of professional markets leads to comparing different professions in terms of the ‘marketability’ of their specific cognitive resources. It determines the exclusion of professions like the military and the clergy, which do not transact their services on the market. The focus on collective social mobility accentuates the relations that professions form with different systems of social stratification; in particular, it accentuates the role that educational systems play in different structures of social inequality

MacDonald (1995) argues that since, according to the professional project, professions intend to achieve economic and social advantages, they create barriers to entry into their professions and thus close access to their knowledge in order to keep control over their market and safeguard the scarcity of their services. By so doing, they contribute to inequality in society. Professional groups also seek protection from the state in order to safeguard their monopolies and licensing (MacDonald 1995; Zhou 1993). The state, for its part, intervenes in order to prevent the misuse of power by professions and to ensure that professions adhere to providing a good service to society and thus act in line with a code of ethics. An exercise of external control can be a useful mechanism to minimise the misuse of power by professions and to avoid a profession failing to safeguard certain ethics such as gender equality. Some professional organisations, particularly those dominated by men, have masculine standards of success (Bird and Rhoton 2011). In such organisations, women - even though they possess the expertise and qualifications necessary to do their work – can experience challenges to succeeding and advancing in their professional career (Bird and Rhoton 2011). The potential failure of professions to regulate themselves fairly explains why external control exercised by, for example, bureaucratic logic, is legitimised in order to regulate professional organisations.

In this section I have explored the meaning of a profession, considering its distinctive attributes. As the adherence to ethical norms is among the main attributes of a profession, the next section looks into the relevance of ethics to professionalism.

3-3 Professionalism and ethics

Drawing on the ‘traits’ approach, a profession, in addition to the acquirement of ‘systematic knowledge’, also has a set of ethics which makes a profession different from other types of occupations (Bellis 2000; Greenwood 1965; Whitty 2008). The personal and confidential nature of many professional services places moral issues, such as trust and moral responsibilities, in the centre of professions. Moral responsibility is required on the part of professions because they have specialist knowledge that enable them to act on behalf of the public and make decisions that other people cannot make (Whitbeck 1998). Therefore, the way this knowledge is handled in respect of the public becomes the main issue of the moral aspects of a profession (Chadwick 1998).

Hughes (1971: 375-6) points out that practising a profession in order to provide a service for the benefit of clients and society in general implies that:

Professionals profess. They profess to know better than others the nature of certain matters, and to know better than their clients what ails them or their affairs. [...] Since the professional does profess, he asks that he be trusted. [...] The client is to trust the professional; he must tell him all secrets which bear upon the affairs in hand. He must trust his judgment and skill.

Trust is also essential for professions because they provide an intangible product that cannot be examined by clients and which makes professions different from other occupations such as trade or craft (MacDonald 1995). Crook (2008: 15) also illustrates the difference between professions and industry derived from the perspective of the British

scholar Tawney (1920: 94-5) on this point. He points out that the objectives of industry are directed to achieve gains and profits for stakeholders, while a profession is mainly concerned in providing good service to the public. In the light of this distinction between industry and professions, professionals such as doctors or lawyers can practise their profession to earn money but money should not be the main purpose of their career because any activity exercised by professionals which is motivated solely on the grounds of accumulating income is considered an abuse to the professional spirit. However, it is worth mentioning that the comparison between industry and professions that Crook (2008) uses could well be flawed because it does not compare like with like since industry is a sector whilst professions are occupational groups. However, it helps us to make general sense of the difference between occupations in industry and those in professions.

The importance of a code of ethics in the context of professions explains why professions tend to retain autonomy and a level of control. Freidson (1970: 135) points out:

A code of ethics or some other publicly waved banner of good intentions may be seen as a formal method of declaring to all that the occupation can be trusted, and so of persuading society to grant the special status of autonomy. The very existence of such a code implies that individual members have the personal qualities of professionalism, the imputation of which is also useful for obtaining autonomy.

Professional ethics co-exist with other sets of values which together determine the ethical conduct of professionals at work. These values are classified by Lunt (2008: 82) in three groups: 1. the individual values of professionals. This set of values is shaped and influenced by family, social groups, political and religious beliefs and so on; 2. the values of the organisations or associations in which professionals work, and 3. legal values. As the sources of all values are different, professionals might face conflict or confusion between these values which, in turn, could result in ethical dilemmas which would be difficult to resolve. In addition to a common code of ethics, professions can have their own code of ethics which specifies what professions can do. Though there is a common formal code of ethics to enable agreement on the key principles of professionals' ethical behaviour, this

cannot always prescribe appropriate behaviour in all cases because it ignores the sophisticated and complex nature of ethics and the individuality of particular circumstances. However, we can refer to some values which are widely accepted within the professions. These values are trust, respect, competence, integrity and responsibility (Lunt 2008: 90-3). O'Day (2000) also refers to other values, which stress diligence, care, achievement of the common good, and devotion to vocation.

The concept of 'competence' suggests that professionals have to develop their expertise and education through lifelong learning in order to keep their expertise and skills relevant to recent advancements in knowledge and science. This requires a degree of commitment or devotion to the profession which ensures professionals are diligent in seeking the continuous improvement of their qualifications and knowledge. O'Day (2000) points out that the ethos of diligence and devotion is derived from a sense of 'calling' which has its origins in Christianity. Devotion to one's profession, O'Day (2000: 42) comments, was "frequently motivated by a passionate belief that theirs was a calling from God and that they remained accountable to God for their professional actions as well as their private actions". Drawing on this, Christianity has contributed to the promotion of the ethical side or the normative element of a profession. However, it is useful to suggest here that ethics can not just be understood as a list of traits. From MacIntyre's point of view, ethics are not rules or duty to be followed by individuals and which prescribe what individuals have to do (Economides and O'Leary 2007; Knights and O'Leary 2006). Rather, ethics are understood in their social context which relates individuals to organisations, society and other communities (Economides and O'Leary 2007)

As we have seen previously, the need for a code of ethics in the context of professions associated with their distinctive characterising attributes such as the ownership of specialist knowledge and expertise implies that professions have the right to claim some autonomy over their occupations. The next section addresses some of the issues surrounding professional autonomy, considering the impact of bureaucracy on this professional freedom.

3-4 The impact of bureaucracy on professional autonomy

Considering autonomy in the context of professional bureaucracy brings us to reflect back on some issues mentioned previously with regard to professions and thus explore how the distinctive traits of a profession recall the need for autonomy and how the 'iron cage of bureaucracy' causes a threat to the identity of a profession as an autonomous group.

Professions, by virtue of their knowledge base, have played a significant role in the formation of society (MacDonald 1995; Svensson 1990; O'Day 2000). O'Day (2000) argues that the central position professions have occupied in England has resulted partly from the increasing number of professions such as lawyers and physicians and the increasing demand on the services they provide. In addition to this, the dominant view, which conceptualises professions as socially-responsible agents in society whose job is to help and provide services to people in need (often regardless of background), has pushed 'professions' to a position of esteem in society. They are distinguished from other groups as their position is mainly derived from their special expertise and knowledge compared to other groups whose social position is determined by wealth or labour force.

As professions own the specialist expertise in the areas they practise, and so can claim monopoly over their work, especially with the increasing growth of science and the capacity to acquire a deep knowledge in particular specialisations, autonomy over their work is a crucial issue. The need to exercise 'personal judgement' in professional careers also recalls the need for autonomy and for self-regulated professional communities which can best contribute to their job when they work in an environment free from strict administrative constraints and direct regulations (Bellis 2000).

Ferrell and Morris (2003: 138) distinguish between 'professional autonomy' and 'the managerial autonomy of professionals'. The former has a broader meaning than the latter. It refers to "the autonomy of professionals to carry out their job" (Ferrell and Morris 2003). It

can also mean the ability to carry out jobs without pressure from clients, the employing organisation, or any external bodies or groups (Forsyth and Danisiewicz 1985). However, the latter refers to the ability of professionals to control the financial and managerial decisions that influence and regulate their professional career (Ferrell and Morris 2003). It seems from these definitions of autonomy that the managerial autonomy of professionals is a precondition for professional autonomy.

Bureaucracy, in general, is perceived to have a negative influence on professionals whose values are said to be diminished by the bureaucratic structure (Mills 1957). Among the values threatened by the bureaucratic model is 'trust'. Instead of trusting professionals and feeling confidence in their competence and expertise, bureaucracy subjects professionals to administrative control through a detailed conformity to formal regulations and the requirements of form-filling for assessing, performance and measurement (Lunt 2008: 85). Davies (1983) argues that the enrolment of professionals in bureaucratic organisations has been recognised as problem because the principles of professions and bureaucracy are in conflict. For Davies (1983) the structural principles of bureaucracy yield compliance instead of motivation.

Bureaucracy, with its limits and routinised form of administration, hinders professionals and makes them unable to fulfil their professional requirements as the knowledge and the skills professionals have tend to be systemised and standardised, resulting in less-skilled individuals (Braverman 1974). Indeterminacy and the sophisticated nature of professional knowledge allows professionals to acquire knowledge only through experience and training. As knowledge in bureaucratic organisations tends to be handled in a systemised way, this shrinks the space available for professionals to exercise their judgment and discretion. In this context, MacDonald (1995: 61) comments:

Bureaucracies are not merely systems of rules, they are also means of handling knowledge and therefore the threat that they pose to the professional ideal is the systematization of professional knowledge in a manner that will remove professional judgement, 'indeterminacy' and ultimately professional power, by rationalizing the corpus of knowledge into bureaucratic procedures and division of labour.

Bureaucracy is based on the idea of the separation of work between employees – who are doing the jobs assigned to them by management – and management, which is responsible for organising, regulating and controlling the work process that limits the intellectual efforts of employees (Kärreman and Alvesson 2004: 150). In traditional bureaucracies, the strict and rigid structure of this form of bureaucracy results in machine bureaucracy, where direct supervision over work and a hierarchical type of authority are exercised (Mintzberg 1979).

Drawing on the above view of the traditional or machine bureaucracy, it can be argued that professional autonomy in such a type of bureaucratic organisation is restricted because professionals lose a degree of control over their occupation due to the necessary conformity of their professional requirements to the standards and regulations implied by such an organisation and its administration. Engel (1969, 1970) and Hall (1968, 1975) acknowledge that bureaucracy imposes restrictions over professional activities. However, they take a step further to argue that professional autonomy is not threatened by bureaucracy per se but by the degree of bureaucratisation in professional organisations. Hall (1968), for instance, points out that it is the *increased* bureaucratisation that is incompatible with professional autonomy. Hall (1968: 102) comments:

Increased bureaucratisation threatens professional autonomy. It is in these relationships that a potential source of conflict between the professional and the organisation can be found. The strong drive for autonomy on the part of the professional may come into direct conflict with organisationally based job requirements. At the same time, the organisation may be threatened by strong professional desires on the part of at least some of its members.

Drawing on the above quotation, a certain level of bureaucracy does not appear to cause a threat to professional autonomy (Hall 1968). This is particularly true in certain types of profession as the relationship between bureaucracy and professional attributes is

conditioned by the nature of the knowledge-base of a profession which determines the level of autonomy required to practise it (Hall 1968).

Engel (1969) distinguishes between two types of professional autonomy. The first type is “individual professional autonomy” which refers to the ability of a professional to exercise self control over his professional activities. The second type of autonomy is “community professional autonomy” which refers to the ability of a group or a community of professionals to make their own decisions and direct their own activities (1968 cited in Engel 1969: 31). To safeguard professional autonomy, professional bureaucracy is presented as a privileged type of organisation, where professionals can enjoy autonomy over their work (Mintzberg 1979, 1983).

Professional bureaucracies are occupied by those who possess specialised expertise and knowledge obtained through years of training (Mintzberg 1979, 1983). Given the fact that professional bureaucracies are comprised of highly educated individuals, this means that professional bureaucracy tends to be decentralised in its structure. In professional bureaucracy, the influence of the operating core is higher than that of administration, and the power of expertise outweighs the authority of office. In professional bureaucracy, professionals are the core operators and the driving force of change in their bureaucracies (Mintzberg 1979). They have control over their tasks because their work handles complex matters and deals with difficult problems that require professionals to exercise their judgment (Mintzberg 1979: 349). In professional bureaucracies, professionals are influenced by professional culture through which they enjoy shared values and beliefs instead of being subjected to external regulations and control.

I have addressed earlier the issue of bureaucratic and professional characteristics being incompatible on the grounds of the tension that exists between bureaucratic control, which stresses conformity to work procedures, and professional autonomy which insists on self-regulation. However, bureaucratic and professional elements can be mutually interlinked. Toren (1976) points out that professional attributes embodied in technical qualifications and competence are prerequisite for recruitment and advancement in bureaucracy. The bureaucratic element, based on allocating a licensed official position to a professional,

enhances and fosters professional authority and allows a professional to practise his/her profession (Freidson 1970).

Bureaucracy can be an essential mechanism to organise and coordinate professional work in large organisations (Kärreman and Alvesson 2004; Kornhauser 1962). In their study of the one of the IT consultancy companies, Kärreman and Alvesson (2004) found that bureaucratic elements did exist in the management of the company. These elements are identified in explicit and hierarchically-structured career paths. Bureaucratic elements are also identified in standardised work procedures such as the use of a unified methodology in projects and the use of a systematic way of monitoring the budget. The reliance on standardised methods in carrying out projects, Kärreman and Alvesson (2004) pointed out, had promoted a conformity to standards and had made the contribution of individual expertise insignificant. However, in knowledge-intensive firms, the 'bureaucratic' or 'technocratic' forms of control interact and interplay with the 'socio-ideological' form of control. Loosening and softening the 'iron cage of bureaucracy' to allow freedom, personal judgment, and flexibility requires tightening the 'mental cage of subjectivity' by influencing the values, beliefs, and thoughts of organisational members (Kärreman and Alvesson 2004: 171). By 'mental cage' Kärreman and Alvesson (2004: 171) mean the extent to which employees identify themselves with the corporate objectives of their organisations and its values. Applying Kärreman and Alvesson's argument to the context of academic institutions, particularly public higher education institutions, suggests that the socio-ideological form of control could result in academic staff's identification with State higher education policy by directing their academic scholarly work to respond to the State agenda, and/or the expectations of their academic community, which may not always directly correspond. The processes of normalisation in (public) higher education operate at the institutional and (professional) community level. However these processes are not entirely independent from, for example, academic judgement on acceptable standards for research drawn up and regulated within the profession and yet influenced by the government preference for particular types of research (Koro-Ljungberg, Gemignani, Brodeur and Kmiec 2007).

The process of normalisation is primarily based on managing values. The interest in managing the values and beliefs of employees has been initiated by a shift to understanding organisations as a culture (i.e. Kunda 1992). This shift has been associated with the development of knowledge work and the dominance of a service economy, which have led to the emergence of a new way of managing organisations. In professional or knowledge-intensive organisations, it is not the activities and the work practices that are the target of management, rather it is the values, beliefs, feelings, and underlying behaviours of employees that are subject to management control (Etzioni 1964; Kärreman and Alvesson 2009; Kunda 1992). In this context, Kunda (1992) points out that the attempt made by the management at the high tech company to control the minds and to gain the commitment of its employees generates a masked form of control or normative control. This form of control substitutes the formal and external forms of control by using culture to create a flexible environment for work and to enhance the employees' initiative (Kunda 1992). While normative control substitutes formal external forms of control by internalising the goals and the objectives of the company, normative control manipulates the subjectivity of the employees, who in turn have to tie their identity to the value system and the corporate interest of their organisations.

Studying knowledge-intensive organisations or knowledge work has received attention from a number of scholars (i.e. Blackler 1995; Kärreman and Alvesson 2004, 2009; Kunda 1992; Starbuck 1992). In such organisations, intellectual abilities and qualified individuals with a good mindset become more important to the organisations than capital or physical capacities. The reason for the emphasis upon intellectual abilities in knowledge-based organisations, as I noted earlier, is that people in knowledge-intensive firms engage in sophisticated and complex tasks that require flexibility and a high level of skills that cannot be standardised in procedures and regulations. Drawing on this, knowledge work requires a high level of discretion and judgement, which is not a crucial requirement for other types of occupations (Kärreman and Alvesson 2009: 1117). The following sections address one of the knowledge-intensive organisations, a university, to address the nature and the main characteristics of an academic organisation.

3-5 The organisational characteristics of academic institutes

Academic institutes have general characteristics which make higher education institutes share certain features of other organizations and thus display practices and a structure similar to those adopted by other organisations. Universities, for example, like other organisations, aspire to make rational decisions and seek efficiency in performance. The need for rational conduct and efficiency in management implies certain practices and a form of organisational structure which increase predictability and calculability. According to the Weberian perspective, the need for efficiency retains the bureaucratic model as the dominant form of organisation by virtue of its technical superiority over other forms of structure and its capacity to ensure precision, predictability and rational calculation of means- ends (Weber 1968). The tendency to meet rational, predictable, and calculable standards gives rise to the McUniversity which relies on quantitative measurements for its operation and employs advanced technology to enhance control over functions (Hayes and Wynyard 2002).

In seeking to make rational and predictable decisions, academic organisations, as previously mentioned, employ certain practices and organisational forms which contribute to similarity and homogeneity amongst them. In addition to the tendency of organisations to meet rational and predictable standards, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) point out that organisations are subject to powerful forces such as State, professionalization, and competition that make organisations resemble each other in their behavior and practices.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) adopt the concept of 'isomorphism' used by Hawley (1968) to refer to the process of homogenization across organisations. They argue that organisations at the beginning of their establishment develop their own goals and draw new strategies that lead to diversity in organisational characteristics among organisations. However, in the long run, organisations adjust their practices to conform with and to adapt to environmental conditions. As organisations (i.e. Universities) operate in a common legal, cultural, economic and political environment that force them to modify their practices to respond to the requirements imposed by external factors, the consequence of organisational responses to a common environment is homogeneity among organisations (DiMaggio and Powell

1983). This view incorporates the idea of organisation as an 'open system' and addresses the importance of the wider environment in shaping, structuring, and regulating organisations (Scott 2004).

The State, for example, imposes certain legal requirements such as adherence to laws or to standard requirements (i.e. keeping records, annually reporting the financial status of organisations etc). The response to such external and legal requirements results in organisations displaying some practices similar to those displayed by other organisations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The connection with the wider environment gives rise to a network system which constitutes a 'socially constructed arena' within which institutional effects can be examined (Scott 2004) and the diffusion of organisational forms can be explained. The interdependence among organisations, for example, and the reliance of organisations on other organisations for resources or services and the establishment of transaction relationships can be among the factors that put a pressure on organisations to adjust their behavior to resemble those adopted by the organisations on which they depend (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). However, organisations do not always respond to external pressures which evoke organisation to adjust their practices. Organisations might also employ strategies which challenge, avoid or compromise external pressures (Oliver 1991).

The above factors explain why organizations - such as higher education institutes - can share some of their organisational characteristics with other organisations. (Academic) institutes can also 'mimic' the practices or 'model' themselves after other (academic) institutes - which appear to be a successful model to follow (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). For example, recently, the Syrian higher education sector has employed the notion of quality assurance and has initiated some strategies for implanting quality standards similar to those of European institutions as an attempt to improve the performance of the Syrian higher education sector. The attempt of the Syrian higher education sector to model itself after the European model gives rise to some similarities in practices between the Syrian higher education institutes and the European higher education institutes.

The tendency of organisations to mimic the practices of successful organisations combined with the factors mentioned above reveal that the need of higher education institutes for 'institutional legitimacy' and for 'economic and social fitness' stands behind the similarity

between academic institutes and other organisations in the field³ (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). This view helps us to locate higher education institutes in their wider context and to reveal some of the characteristics of academic institutes as a form of organisations. By so doing we can build on what are the 'general' features and the 'particular' nature of academic institutes.

Academic institutions are knowledge-based organisations which are characterised by a dual system of governance based on collegial and bureaucratic elements (Blau 1994; Middlehurst 1993). Middlehurst (1993), for instance, points out that academic institutes cultivate some bureaucratic features such as an administrative hierarchy, division of labour, the formal specifications of roles and responsibilities and rational conduct. The relationship between staff is also characterised to some degree by formality and impersonality. This is true particularly in large academic institutions, where a personal and spontaneous form of contact among institutional members, including academics and administrators, becomes increasingly limited to formal forms of contact as the number of staff enrolled in the institutes increases (Blau 1994). Rules and regulations are utilised for administering functions in academic institutes (Middlehurst 1993).

The committee system also governs and operates on the basis of the bureaucratic model in terms of, for instance, reliance on the formal specification of the responsibilities and duties of committee members (Middlehurst 1993). The committee system also operates at different levels of hierarchy. It is characterised by formal and rational forms of conduct as decisions made by committees are legal and rational-based upon achieving better allocation and a more efficient use of resources (Bolton 2000: 20).

Though academic institutes have bureaucratic elements, other bureaucratic characteristics do not exist in academic institutes such as a close supervision over the work of academics and detailed formal regulations of academics' conduct (Blau 1994; Middlehurst 1993).

³DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 148) define the organizational field as "those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products".

Added to this is the fact that the degree of bureaucratic features such as the degree of centralisation of the administration varies from one University to another (Blau 1994).

Academic institutes can also be understood as professionalised organisations through the way the academic work is carried out and governed. Universities provide teaching, research, and scholarship. Such activities are underpinned by professional expertise. Harman (1990: 33) comments:

Universities are seen as extreme cases of professionalised organisation as they create and transmit specialised knowledge and skills; their members are granted a great deal of autonomy once their qualifications and competence have been certified, and their bases of authority are determined by professional expertise as opposed to bureaucratic hierarchies.

Academics can be understood as professionals by virtue of their knowledge and their requirement of autonomy. Blau (1994: 11-2) presents two different perspectives on academia generated from understanding academic work in the light of the two main attributes of professionalism which are “the body of abstract knowledge” and the “ideal of service”. He points out that some scholars, like Ben-David (1976) and Goode (1969), who support the idea that academics are perceived as professional members, arguing that academic work exhibits professional attributes such as “the body of abstract knowledge” – the first principal attribute of professionalism - in addition to other attributes such as autonomy, education and a commitment to their career. Academics participate in a range of activities that demonstrate their professionalism. Academics are involved in transmitting knowledge, producing intellectual culture, and creating new knowledge. They teach students at different levels, engage either individually or collectively with their colleagues in undertaking research, and communicate with the relevant external bodies (Farnham 1999). However, the concept of a profession which is grounded upon the idea of a unified body of knowledge implies that the term ‘profession’ is restricted to characterising some academic disciplines and not all (Blau 1994). Blau (1994) illustrates his point by arguing that a unified body of knowledge does exist in certain academic disciplines such as medicine and law. Though lawyers and physicians can specialise in certain areas, they can

still practise their occupation as general practitioners. In other academic disciplines, however, such as the liberal arts, general practitioners do not exist. Based on this view, the whole academic community cannot be understood as a profession (Blau 1994: 12). However, Blau (1994) stresses that the academic community shares, as a profession, a very important attribute, which is the need for autonomy. The academic community, as a profession, have their own 'disciplinary', 'occupational', and 'material' interests in the institutes where they are employed (Farnham 1999: 11). These interests can be summarised in terms of the freedom to decide on educational and research agenda without being subject to external influences and the right of academics to participate in decision-making that affects their working and employment conditions such as security of tenure (Farnham 1999).

Hughes (1958) uses “the ideal of service” to decide on whether an occupation can be termed a profession or not. Based on “the ideal of service”, professionals are practitioners who are expected to serve clients. For Hughes, academics as scholars are not professionals when considering “the ideal of service”. Academics, Hughes (1958) argues, serve clients when they practise their career as teachers and thus their clients are students. However, they do not serve clients when they practise their career as scholars. In the light of this view presented by Hughes, academics are considered as professionals only when they practise their academic work as teachers. Farnham (1999: 14) points out that academics’ clientele is not restricted to students. Though students are the primary clients of academics, the business sector, the state, and society can also be presented as clients that academics serve. Therefore, I can suggest here that academics, even when they practise their career as scientists or scholars, still serve clients since the business sector and society as a whole benefit from their scholarly work.

The views suggested above can be criticised on the grounds of their tendency to present a simplistic approach to judging whether or not an occupation is a profession. Carr (2000: 42) argues that to consider an occupation, in this case academic work, as a profession by examining it according to certain criteria and deciding whether or not it satisfies these criteria is an overly simplistic approach. His reason for this is because there is a difficulty in providing an accurate interpretation of the criteria of professionalism. To what extent

professionals (academics) in an association, for instance, enjoy the appropriate and sufficient autonomy to exercise their profession could be a difficult question to answer.

The professional notion of academics compares with the collegial notion in that both emphasise autonomy in their governance (Middlehurst 1993). The collegial notion stresses the idea of 'community' and conceptualises academics as a group of knowledge workers who share information and ideas and exercise influential power to make consensus decisions through self-governing committees and within a limited hierarchical structure (Dearlove 1997: 58; Middlehurst 1993 : 49). However, Blau (1994) argues that the notion of academic work as a community of intellectuals or scholars who interact with each other is threatened with the growth of science and education and with the increase of professional labour now employed in large organisations. Specialisation has also an impact on the fragmentation of the academic community and thus on interaction within academic community (Blau 1994; MacIntyre 2009; Smith 2003).

Collegiality embraces the idea that academics have equal worth and so the relationship between academics and academic administrators⁴ should not be hierarchical and characterised by a master-subordinate relationship. Instead, the relationship should be based on consultation and democratic participation in decision making in order to achieve consensus within the community and to promote the group's interests (Middlehurst 1993: 50). Collegiality also places educational and organisational matters in the hands of the academic community for decisions, excluding the influence of lay members, students, administrators or any external pressure on University governance (Dearlove 1997, Eustance 1987).

The collegial notion of academics presents autonomy and self-regulation as the bedrock of academic work (Dearlove 1997; Eustance 1987). In the light of the collegial notion of academics, I can argue that academics tend to retain the power to decide and regulate administrative and academic issues and thus exercise control over their occupation (the 'power approach' to professions). The notion of 'collegiality' can be armed with the concept of 'distributed leadership'. 'Distributed leadership' suggests a view of life within institutions

⁴ I use the term 'academic administrators' to refer to academics who occupy administrative positions such as heads of department, vice deans, deans, vice president and the president of a university.

"whereby individuals, groups and teams at all levels collectively influence strategic direction" (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling 2009: 269). This means that a University tends to be bottom-heavy in order to keep authority in the hands of the individuals who carry out teaching and research activities (Halsey and Trow 1971). However, both collegial and professional notions are now under threat with the influence of the macro environment and the exercise of political and economic pressures which aim to re-structure academic institutes and their administration in favour of controlling academic life in universities and achieving more efficient performance (Dearlove 1997, 1998; Middlehurst 1993; Parker and Jary 1995).

In the next section I address the concept of autonomy in the context of academia, exploring the impact of the state and the market on academic autonomy.

3-6 Autonomy in the context of academia

The concept of 'autonomy' overlaps with the concept of 'freedom' in an academic context. The issues of academic freedom and academic autonomy have been raised by many thinkers such as Abdel-Motall (2002), Berry (1980), De Figueiredo- Cowen (2002), and Henkel (2005). Academic freedom means that academics or scholars are free to search and to seek the truth and to convey their opinions or ideas on particular subjects to the public either orally or in writing without being subjected to punishment or threat exercised by a powerful group or organisation (Berry 1980: 640). Academic freedom is a precondition for scholarly academic work (Abdel-Motall 2002). Traditionally, to secure academic freedom, academics should be able to express their views and opinions freely, to teach courses and modules they are interested in, and to carry out the research that matches their interests (Nixon, Marks, Rowland and Walker 2001). The term 'academic freedom', as argued by Nixon et al (2001: 175), has also been used to refer to the autonomy of the disciplines so that academics can work within their own disciplines without any interference from other disciplines. Academic freedom in democratic societies is seen as the logical product of a culture characterised by respect for free thought and expression. However, in totalitarian countries, the ideas and information provided by academics could be subject to censorship

or suppression by the government if these governments find that such ideas or information, for example, threaten the regime or oppose its political agenda (Moran 1998). To protect academic freedom implies that governments should not interfere in or control the expression of academics and academic organisations in order to encourage and facilitate the free flow of information. Moran (1998: 3) uses the term “silencing scholars” to refer to the attempts made by governments to suppress academics’ ideas and censor their writing. However, such silencing is not only exercised by governments; it is also exercised over academics by their colleagues or by the peer review community who sometimes attempt to block academics’ ideas by, for example, rejecting letters or papers to be presented in conferences. This pattern of silencing is expressed as “stonewalling” (Moran 1998: 3). This indicates that it isn’t just those external to the profession, and the rules and regulations (bureaucracy) that control the professions, and which can restrict academic freedom, but that much can be regulated negatively as well as positively ‘within’ the profession itself. Scholarly work, for example, can be controlled by ethical standards of research practice established by ethics committees and which can infringe academic freedom and subject academics to prescribed rules (Cannella and Lincoln 2007; Koro-Ljungberg et al. 2007; Ramcharan and Cutcliffe 2001).

Freedom or autonomy is a very important and valuable concept in the context of academia. It is the central and crucial element upon which academic identity is constructed. In his article, Henkel (2005) presents a summary of the findings of his study of academic communities to point out that academic autonomy has been realised in different ways by members of academia. Henkel (2005: 169) comments:

It (academic freedom) was given a variety of meanings, individual and collective. They included being individually free to choose and pursue one’s own research agenda and being trusted to manage the pattern of one’s own working life and priorities. For some, it was a matter of quality of life and perhaps the main reward of an academic career. However, it had a collective significance, too. Underlying many of the interviews were more basic assumptions: that individual freedom was a function of academic control of the professional arena of teaching and research, that

these were necessary conditions for academic work and therefore the conditions in which their academic identity was grounded.

Academic freedom is the ‘moral bedrock’ of the identity of academic professionals (Nixon et al 2001: 183). The importance of exercising individual judgement or discretion is located at the heart of the concept of academic freedom, which implies that an academic should have the ability to control the content and the nature of their academic activities without reference to a boss (Middlehurst 1993: 74). This particular concept of academic freedom shares with the concept of academic autonomy the idea of exercising control over the content of academic work without interference from administration. As this study is concerned with examining how the bureaucratic conduct of academic administration influences academia, I will focus more on the concept of autonomy throughout the review.

Academic autonomy is threatened as academics become employed in more bureaucratic organisations. The bureaucratisation of universities is the normal outcome of the maturity of the higher education sector. Higher education institutions are expected to cultivate more bureaucratic elements. The degree of bureaucratisation is determined by the increasing reliance on formal rules and regulations and increasing levels of hierarchy (Engel 1970: 15; William L and Waugh 2003: 91). Divisions of labour, specialisation, formal and impersonal forms of conduct are also employed as universities and faculties mature. The bureaucratic form of conduct is also employed in academic institutions in order to secure accountability and increase efficiency.

Bureaucratic features in academic institutions tend to be fostered particularly with the increasing pressure on universities to act and operate efficiently. Weber addresses his concerns about the rationalisation and bureaucratisation of academia. In his lecture “science as a vocation”, Weber (1988: 12) argues that scholarship requires an ‘inner calling’ in which an academic worker should devote himself to the subject that he serves. Weber describes scholarship as a vocation that demands passion and inspiration in order to achieve the purposes of scholarship. However, he adds that in rationalised modern universities, like those in Germany and America, the ‘inner calling’ is modified and reconciled by separating the means of production from the academics in bureaucratic universities.

Weber (1968: 983) argues that the process of bureaucratising universities and research institutes is associated with the concentration of the resources in top management. He puts it:

In the field of scientific research and instruction, the bureaucratization of the inevitable research institutes of the universities is also a function of the increasing demand for material means of operation...Through the concentration of such means in the hands of the privileged head of the institute the mass of the researchers and instructors are separated from their "means of production", in the same way as the workers are separated from theirs by the capitalist enterprises (Weber 1968: 983).

This in turn guides us to consider how bureaucracy, which is characterised by rigidity and inflexibility, can be used to regulate work which requires flexible conditions to stimulate imaginative and original ideas. On this topic, Blau (1994: 2) comments that "bureaucratic rigidity and discipline are incompatible with scholarship, which requires a flexible, imaginative approach to teaching that stimulates student interests and the freedom to explore original ideas and depart from established practices in the pursuit of knowledge". Therefore, autonomy is a necessary requirement for those involved in intellectual and creative activities in order to motivate and enable them to exercise their scholarly work to the full (Becher and Kogan 1992).

The bureaucratic nature of academic institutions, with their hierarchical structure of power and an imbalanced distribution of resources also seems to be incompatible with 'distributed leadership', which suggests collective rather than individual practices of leadership (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling 2009: 260) and encourages collective participation in drawing higher education strategy instead of concentrating strategic decisions at the apex of the hierarchy. Such a concentration of strategic decisions in the higher education sector shrinks the autonomy of the academic community operating at departmental and University level.

The threat to academic autonomy, particularly at departmental and University level, is also caused by professional associations as students become increasingly influenced by

professional bodies, which consider universities convenient places to develop professions and to provide these professionals with sustainable theoretical knowledge (Association of Commonwealth Universities, 1985). Professional bodies exercise their influence on universities through interference in the development of programmes and the content of the curriculum, imposing special requirements such as additional courses or practical training on the basis of granting accreditation or professional recognition to successful students to then practise a profession. The intervention of professional bodies, such as practising accountants or practising lawyers, in the academic side of a profession supports the earlier point that professions, including the academic community, are not only subject to control by external factors but are also controlled and regulated internally.

The role of universities is then affected by the requirement to develop programmes which reach a compromise between the missions of the academic institutes and the requirements of professional associations (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985: 51). The influence of professional associations does not stop at programme development, but extends to the structure of academic disciplines, leading at times to divisions among and between departments and isolation between academic programmes. However, there are some benefits that could be obtained from the relationship between academic institutes and professional bodies. Academic institutes, for instance, can, through the requirements offered by professional bodies, design programmes which develop the professional competences of students and contribute to the welfare of society (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985).

The autonomous identity of the academic community has been particularly threatened by the increasing intervention of the government in guiding and steering education and research agendas to serve its national objectives, and with the pressures imposed on the higher education sector as a result of the marketisation of education (Bernstein 2000; Henkel 2005; Parker and Jary 1995; Power 1997; Van Damme 2002). Academics' responsibility to develop society also causes some challenges to their professional autonomy. Traditionally, academics enjoyed a collegiate authority that enabled them to exercise their professional control amongst the students as their clients and amongst themselves by virtue of the authority of their occupation or by virtue of the existence of a strong academic community (Farnham 1999). However, collegiate control can be

substituted by patronage control where higher education is directed to meet the demands of the business sector. A 'state mediation' form of control can also be promoted where the higher education sector becomes increasingly subject to the influence of the State either by interference in University regulation and academic affairs or by exercising financial pressures on universities (Farnham 1999). In the following sub-sections, I turn to explore what effects external factors, particularly the state and the market, have on academia.

3-6-1 The University and the State

Universities are recognised as higher education bodies whose role is to transmit and pursue knowledge, provide professional learning, and communicate with and establish dialogue at both national and international levels. A review of the role of universities over time demonstrates that the purpose of higher education has changed. This changing role of universities has implications for the relationship between the University and the State. In his article, Kavanagh (2005, 2009) points out that universities have been given a different level of significance over time, shifting from the idea of a University as an 'ancient university' and 'medieval university', developing through the idea of a University as a 'university of culture' and a 'professional university', to the concepts of an 'entrepreneurial university' and a 'postmodern university'⁵.

The idea of the University as a 'medieval university' or a 'university of God' dominated some European countries such as France and England in the late eleventh century. The role of the 'University of God' was to teach theology, law, and medical material. The advancement of knowledge was not an important task of the University; rather the University's main objective was to give instruction to students. The medieval University emerged from the monasteries and cathedral institutes and was isolated from civic society. The influence of the Church on universities was greater than that of the State, which had an insignificant relationship with universities. The medieval University was guided by the ideology of Christianity. However, the relationship between the University and the Church was reshaped by the eighteenth century, progressing towards the decline of the Church's

⁵ Kavanagh (2005: 1) identifies eight ideas of the university developed over time which are: the ancient Universities, the University of God, the University of Reason, the University of Culture, the Civic/Professional University, the University of Emancipation, the University of Enterprise, and the Postmodern University.

influence on universities that were drawing ever closer to civic society (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985; Kavanagh 2005). In the light of the idea of the University as the “university of culture”, universities became more involved in presiding over the spiritual life of people and in providing them with a liberal education and a moral base, both of which were tasks previously assigned to the Church.

Later, universities became involved in the industrial and agricultural development of society. This was as a result of the industrial revolution that dominated Europe at the time. The role of the University as “the professional or civic university” was modified to teach students practical science and to do research and advance knowledge (Kavanagh 2005, 2009). Universities also became responsible for training students and preparing them for new occupations. As the purpose of the University was re-defined to involve it in economic development, in doing research relevant to industry and in qualifying students for employment, its role became more aligned with that of the State (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985; Kavanagh 2005). The new University-State relationship has developed universities into institutions with economic and political concerns which tend to be committed to the national objectives of the State and to serve economic development and social and political progress. This situation, in addition to the fact that universities have increasingly become reliant on funding from the State, subjects universities to the control of the government (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985; Dearlove 1997; Henkel 2005; Marginson 1997).

To free academia from governmental control, academia should operate in a private realm. However, governmental control can not be eliminated completely even in democratic societies as some portion of the financial resources of the State is allocated to fund much of the research and scholarship that takes place (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985; Dearlove 1997; Henkel 2005; Marginson 1997). The relationship between higher education institutes and employment justifies the government’s expenditure on universities and is thus a reason why universities accept its interference in designing courses which are then made more attractive to the labour market (Barnett 1988: 92).

The higher education sector has increasingly become a tool to achieve the political and economic objectives of the State. The commitment of academic institutes to serving the

national objectives of the government distracts universities from being politically neutral (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985: 107; Henkel 2005). Universities and research centres have started to lose their identities as autonomous institutes. For universities to be autonomous, bureaucratic practices imposed by the State should be alleviated. Autonomous universities work independently from economic and political influences. Functions are carried out in a decentralised way and decisions are made inside the University and not decided by an external body (De Figueiredo- Cowen 2002).

Along with De Figueiredo- Cowen (2002), Marginson (1997) and Henkel (2005) make the point that the extent to which institutions enjoy autonomy is conditioned by the political framework within which academic institutions operate. An academic institution could enjoy a good level of decentralization to manage its tactical decisions and to set its own programs without going back to having an external governing body. While this allows an institution to alleviate excessive rules and regulations in the institution, the adherence to working within the framework of the national State policy and the centralization of the strategic decision-making at the top level impose constraints on the autonomy of academics and administrators who in turn now have to justify their actions in the light of national policy (Henkel 2005; Marginson 1997).

As there are limited financial resources allocated to fund research, governments develop policies and explicit plans of research with identified priorities in order to achieve an effective use of their funds. Research sponsored by the State is often directed to achieve the priorities suggested by the government. Consequently, permission is often only granted to conduct research on particular subjects or areas on the grounds that such research reflects the government agenda for research (Marginson 1997). In the UK, for instance, the governmental control of research is administered through research councils, which, in the light of governmental and industrial policies, are responsible for setting research priorities. As research priorities are to be identified by research councils, this means that professional academics are less active in deciding on the projects they want to undertake and in making decisions on the allocation of funds (Henkel 2005). Their research projects are highly conditional on funding priorities set by the research councils and the topics and issues to be addressed by the research are decided outside the academic community. Such an influence is highly apparent in applied sciences such as management research which is supposed to

respond to different external interests. In this context, Tranfield and Starkey (1998: 350) draw on the comment made by Becher (1989: 147):

The predominant feature of soft, applied knowledge is the susceptibility of its research agenda to dictation by non-academic interests. Because of their close links and overlapping membership with the academic community, the relevant professional practitioners associations will often have a strong say in identifying issues and approving strategies of enquiry. . . Government ministries will tend, by their control of sectoral research budgets, to promote developmental activities alongside investigation into “useful” topics. Client groups may also seek to exert their influence.

As there are various elements, including the State, exercising their influence on the research agenda, we can argue that the challenge that faces academics is to carry out research that incorporates sensitivity to different interests. As universities are accountable to the State to provide a public service to its citizens, this means that universities and their members cannot enjoy complete freedom in carrying out their functions and practising their work. Rather, there should be an appreciation of the limits and obligations imposed over their work and an acceptance and willingness to reconcile these different interests (Henkel 2005).

The relationship between the State and academic institutes has been understood differently by different thinkers. Neave (1988: 34), for instance, points out that there is a need to balance between the State’s control of higher education and the autonomy of universities. He draws on the Kantian model of the autonomy of universities which makes an attempt to shape the relationship between the State and academic institutes. The Kantian model is to balance between the requirements of scholarship to be free from bureaucratic constraints and the need of the State to control some professions (Neave 1982: 231). In the light of the Kantian model, the State can intervene and has the right to control some academic disciplines such as law and medicine because such disciplines are forms of applied science and are concerned with the well-being of people and in regulating their public life.

However, in the field of philosophy, such control does not exist as philosophy is perceived as a pure science concerned mainly in searching for the truth (Neave 1982, 1988). Therefore, independence from the State and autonomy should be preserved in order to help scholars in philosophy to pursue their scholarship in their search for 'truth'. However, Neave (1988) finds some limitations on the Kantian model and argues that this model is based on dualism between disciplines which end in the legitimisation of external constraints or the interference of the State in vocational fields whilst rejecting its interference in non-vocation fields.

For some scholars such as Von Humboldt (quoted in Berchem 1985), the role of the State should be limited in order to protect academic life from external pressures and to maintain a common cultural identity. From the view of Von Humboldt, the existence of the State does not have a negative influence on academic institutes if its role is limited to set out a legislative framework within which universities can advance their culture and pursue their teaching and learning. While the role of the State according to Von Humboldt, ought to be limited to protect universities from other external influences, this does not imply that universities are not accountable to public administration. Rather, universities serve as a place for training the elite who will occupy jobs in public administration. Universities are also accountable to the ministry of education (Neave 1988).

The degree of influence the State exercises over academic institutes is conditioned by the culture within which the academic institutes operate. Therefore, the relationship between the State and its academic institutions is shaped differently from one country to another. In Britain, for instance, the structure and status of the academic profession is an internal matter within the individual academic institutions (Neave 1983). The negotiation between universities and the State is not based on detailed regulations. Rather, trust and mutual confidence characterise the relationship between the two parties (Neave 1988: 38). However, the situation has changed more recently with the emergence of quality assurance.

In the 1980s, an education reform act in Britain was implemented as a response to the new government policy that combined features of bureaucratic planning with those of the quasi-

market and which allowed the government to have control over macro policies while at the same time providing the institutions with relative autonomy (Middleton 2000: 538). According to this policy, British universities enjoyed a local autonomous funding regime that gave them the freedom to shift funds between research and teaching and direct these funds to serve various educational purposes within the academic institutes. However, through the 1990s, higher education policy tended to be centralised as the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCE) became responsible for implementing State financial policies, deciding on performance criteria, and prescribing procedures for external quality assessment. In the light of external quality assessment, academic institutes became increasingly subject to detailed and explicit standards for quality (Middleton 2000; Power 1997; Parker and Jary 1995). If universities failed to meet certain criteria, further intervention from the State could be expected (Middleton 2000: 541-2).

In France, academia is more subject to control by the State than it is in Britain. It is useful to present the French model as an example here because the French model of the University-State relationship has been the model most influential in Syria (which operated under French mandate for the first half of the twentieth century, precisely the time during which the University of Damascus was been established). In France, higher education has been subject to central government control as a result of the emergence of the Republic that incorporated universities into national bureaucracy (Neave 1988: 36). The Republic regime was “obligatory and secular schooling” (Prost 1987: 234, quoted in Burnham 1999: 75). This definition of French Republicanism, Burnham (1999) argues, demonstrates the political significance of the University-State relationship in French culture.

During the pre-revolutionary period in France, the French state exercised control over the educational sector through patronage and decrees. The educational sector was characterised by the domination of technical and vocational schools compared to other schools and faculties (Green 1990: 132). The domination of vocational schools over other types of school reflects the fact that the educational system was directed to serve State objectives with schools training future public servants and qualifying them to serve in the system of State bureaucracy. During the revolution period, a particular form of secular national education was introduced which reflected the objectives of the French government by fostering cultural uniformity and homogeneity in an indivisible State (Burnham 1999;

Green 1990; Neave 1988). To safeguard the role of higher education in promoting uniformity and homogeneity in French culture and in serving the State priorities, the educational system in France was subject to a standardised and centralised form of administration (Green 1990; Neave 1988). Neave (1988: 36) comments that “teaching and learning were thus subject to legislative oversight by central government acting as the incarnation of the nation, its culture, ambition and genius”.

The French government exercised considerable control over universities by determining the number and the form of institutions as well as their financial support. The central government also controlled access to universities by introducing the baccalaureate⁶ (Burnham 1999). The baccalaureate examination was organised by the Ministry of Higher Education in France and was used as a criterion for student admission in French universities, while universities were not permitted to set up their own special requirements for admission. Central bureaucratic control over the appointment, selection, and promotion to posts was presented as a means to develop universalistic standards for advancement and assessing merits in France (Neave 1988: 36). Despite some disadvantages of the French version of the University-State relationship, such as a highly centralised form of bureaucracy and restricted autonomy, this model did fulfil some objectives, such as prompting a homogenous culture among universities and keeping national unity through the commitment to ensuring equality amongst academic institutes (Neave 1988: 36). The interference of the State in regulating (academic) organisations has been already addressed in section (3-5) as one of the factors that contribute to homogeneity and similarity across organizations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The University-State relationship determines the degree of autonomy enjoyed by academic institutes. In addition to the impact of the State on academic autonomy, market forces such as globalisation have an impact on academia and I turn to examine this next.

⁶ The baccalaureate is an examination that students at the end of secondary school education undertake to be able to join universities.

3-6-2 Marketisation and academia

The process of marketisation has a crucial effect on academia and on the relationship between academics and knowledge. An example of this can be found in the tendency of higher education institutes to engage in international cooperation, achieving convergence in the field of quality assurance and accreditation (Van Damme 2002). The development of the credit-transfer scheme UCTS was mainly initiated with the aim of granting credit recognition and facilitating student mobility between different regions. Excellent examples of the credit-transfer scheme are Erasmus or the European Credit Transfer System ECTS. ECTS “is not intended as a solution to problems of equivalence of courses and credits as far as contents or quality are concerned. It is rather a framework within which participating institutions agree to recognise quite automatically delineated components of study and thus facilitate the transferability of credits” (Van Damme 2002: 117). Such programmes, in addition to accrediting bodies which tend to exercise an external influence on schools to control pedagogy and enhance homogeneity and conformity to particular standards, (Volkman and De Cock 2007) can cause a challenge to academic autonomy by directing academic programmes to be more attractive to the overseas market.

Academic autonomy is also threatened by the emergence of an ‘audit culture’ (Power 1997). In the late twentieth century, the word ‘audit’ has been used in the UK in different contexts. Audit in the contexts of accounting, the environment, teaching, and management are well-known examples. With the introduction of audits into the context of academia, academic institutes and academics alike have to deal with the evaluation procedures and requirements of the audit process which subjects academics to formalised and intensive regulations for checking up on them. In the light of the audit requirements, academic practices have to be restructured to meet performance criteria and to ensure that academic work is committed to the new mission of the higher education institutes (Power 1997).

With the emergence of an ‘audit culture’, performance standards have become externally prescribed (Power 1997). The relationship of academics to knowledge has shifted from being characterised by an inner commitment to knowledge, to being based upon an adherence to external regulations and quality assurance criteria (Power 1997; Parker and Jary 1995). Accordingly, academics are in danger of losing their normative control, which

is sustained through the socialisation process and is derived from the values and norms of the profession. This normative control would be substituted by a managerial control, exercised through defined rules and criteria that are generated from outside the professional community. To highlight the negative effects of such a change in the academic sector, Enders (1999) describes this change as a shift towards the bureaucratisation of academia.

Academia has been under increasing external pressure as universities train future employees (Barnett 1988; Maginson 1994; Middleton 2000). The link between both public and private universities and their students' future employers, has promoted the role of universities in providing courses which create opportunities for students in the labour market. Universities have come under pressure to tailor and restructure programmes to meet the demands of diverse students and companies as their future employers (Barlow 1994; Maginson 1994; Middleton 2000). New models have been introduced to teach generic skills to emphasis teamwork and to deal with 'problem solving'. The term 'genericism' has dominated higher education and has penetrated all levels and fields of studies in response to serving the demands of employers and qualifying future employees by providing them with the skills that enable them to carry out different tasks (Bernstein 2000). The pressure of globalisation, the need to cope with new technologies, and the need to adapt higher education to emergent challenges also prioritise the value of genericism. Blunkett (2000) argues that:

Universities need to adapt rapidly to the top-down influences of globalisation and the new technologies, as well as to the bottom-up imperatives of serving the local labour market, innovating with local companies and providing professional development courses that stimulate economic and intellectual growth.

Under these circumstances, life and work cannot be understood as stable domains, rather life experiences and work experiences are grounded upon the rapidly changing expectations of the future. To cope with change, 'trainability', a new term coined by Bernstein (2000: 59), is required to engage in continuous learning and developing skills and thus cultivating generic skills. While the introduction of genericism has an advantage in terms of

empowering people and providing them with flexible skills, this could pose a challenge to academics, who lose some control over the courses they teach as knowledge in this case tends to prioritise the value of genericism.

In addition to the influence of the market on the curriculum, scholars such as Etzioni-Halevy (1985), Henkel (2005), Gibbons et al (1994) and Bernstein (2000), highlight the impact of the market on research. The increasing tendency to direct research to meet external demands such as the welfare of society and global and commercial competitiveness has an implication on research in general. Such tendencies give rise to 'strategic research'. In the light of the concept of 'strategic research', all types of research - including 'pure research' - have to focus on problem solving (Gibbons et al. 1994; Henkel 2005). 'Pure research' is traditionally distinguished from 'applied research' in that it is regulated and steered from the 'inside', while applied research is initiated and determined from the 'outside'. In this context, Tranfield and Starkey (1998: 344) comment:

A key feature of the pure versus applied property concerns the method and style by which the discipline is mapped. Whereas in pure areas mapping is cumulative, largely dictated by the linear and logical development of an academic agenda, in applied areas this condition does not hold. These areas are much more open to a wide variety of environmental influences, such as changes in user agenda, revised government policy or the influence of natural disasters.

By the late twentieth century, the distinction between pure science and applied science had shrunk as research became increasingly problem-focused. The shift to producing knowledge to deal with real problems has been termed by Gibbons and his co-authors as 'Mode 2' in knowledge production. This mode in knowledge production is characterised by the domination of knowledge which is produced in the context of application. Mode 2 in knowledge production is also understood as multi-disciplinary knowledge produced by teamwork. This mode of knowledge production is contrasted with 'Mode 1' in knowledge production which is characterised as being discipline-based and initiated by the individual endeavours of the researchers themselves (Gibbons et al. 1994). Each mode in knowledge

production has its advantages and disadvantages. Mode 1 can safeguard academic autonomy as disciplines are steered from the inside; however, Mode 1 can also contribute to the fragmentation of higher education. The fragmentation of higher education along different disciplines prevents the universities from being able to function as a unified body (MacIntyre 2009; Smith 2003). For MacIntyre, the purpose of academia should stress the wholeness of the institution and should be directed to create the unity of the community within which individuals can talk and think together. His idea of the wholeness and the integrity of community is derived from the Christian view of 'unity' (MacIntyre 2009) and is armed with MacIntyre's view on a practice as a "coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity" (MacIntyre 1981: 187).

The shift to 'Mode 2' in knowledge production has implications for academic autonomy. The control of the quality of research in Mode 2 is no longer the responsibility of peer review, but instead the government, industry and research councils participate in determining the external criteria for research quality (Gibbons 1998). Gibbons (1998: 9) comments:

Criteria to assess the quality of the work and the teams which carry out research in 'Mode 2' differ from those of more traditional, disciplinary science. Quality in 'Mode 1' is determined essentially through the peer review judgments about the contributions made by individuals. Control is maintained by careful selection of those judged competent to act as peers which is in part determined by their previous contributions to their discipline. [...] In Mode 2 additional criteria are added through the context of application which now incorporates a diverse range of intellectual interests as well as other social, economic or political ones.

Similarly, Stiles (2004) points out that Mode 1 and Mode 2 in knowledge production are associated with a particular perspective on academic identity. He distinguishes between three perspectives on academia: separatist, integrationist, and hegemonist (Stiles, 2004: 160). Figure (3.1) illustrates the three theoretical perspectives on academic identity.

Theoretical Base	Ontology (Nature of social world)	Epistemology (Nature of knowledge)	Academic organization	Academic Identity	Institutional strategies
Separatist	Autonomous actors Defined boundaries	Distinct domains Mode 1: Specialist, monodisciplinary, basic	Segregated Traditional	Independent Unitary/Rational Collegial values	Collegial
Integrationist	Semi-autonomous actors Semi-permeable boundaries	Interacting domains Mode 2: Broad, transdisciplinary, basic and applied	Contextualized Traditional and entrepreneurial	Conflicting Disintegrated Fragmented values	Cultural Political Stakeholder Garbage can
Hegemonist	Dominant actors Permeable boundaries	Hegemonic domains Conflictual, socially biased	Socially subsumed Co-opted	Dependent Hegemonic Subsumed values	Managerial Radical Postmodern

Figure (3.1) Theoretical Bases of Academic Organisation and Identity. Source: Stiles (2004: 160)

According to the separatist perspective, academics are conceptualised as autonomous actors and academic institutes are portrayed as entities with little connection or interaction with the wider society (Stiles 2004: 160). Academics, according to this perspective, acquire knowledge for its own sake and develop common values to promote collegial culture. Academics enjoy a stable identity generated from loyalty to a well-defined knowledge or monodisciplinary base. For Bernstein (2000), loyalty and inner dedication can only be found in pure identities or ‘singulars’. Singulars, Bernstein (2000: 52) points out, are specialised knowledge or academic disciplines with strong boundaries between these disciplines. Such disciplines have rules about how knowledge can be created and are constructed around specific subjects of knowledge. They are also identified by particular names such as physics, and are developed from the intrinsic values of their discipline.

The integrationist perspective conceptualises academics as semi-autonomous actors who respond to the demands of stakeholders and whose identity is constructed as fragmented (Stiles 2004: 161). This identity emerges out of the market (Bernstein, 2000) as research and curricula become domain-driven rather than discipline-driven (Gibbons et al. 1994;

Henkel 2002). In other words, knowledge, according to the integrationist perspective, is transdisciplinary and fits into Mode 2 in knowledge production.

Considering what effects the shift to Mode 2 in knowledge production have on social and human science, Etzioni-Halevy (1985) points out that the emphasis on the practical aspects of social and human science and on their success in pursuing goals which receive great support from the public has eroded the theoretical aspect of social and human science, which stresses the critical and original nature of knowledge. The limitations of the financial resources to fund research, Etzioni-Halevy (1985) argues, have also made it more necessary for academics to legitimise their research in the light of their practical results and of their contribution to society. While directing social research to investigate social problems contributes to the benefit to the public, this carries with it a threat to the epistemic identity of the discipline and may prevent academics from pursuing knowledge for its own sake (Etzioni-Halevy 1985).

In the UK, the Research Assessment Exercise acknowledges the importance of structuring knowledge production around single disciplines (Henkel 2002). However, competitiveness both inside and outside academic institutes and the drive to increase income and to commercialise research put pressure on academics to direct their research to dealing with projects generated by the market rather than those emerging more naturally from their discipline (Gibbons et al. 1994; Henkel 2002).

This section has explored the influence of the market on academic autonomy, demonstrating the challenges caused by globalisation and by the requirement to respond to market forces on academic autonomy. However, operating in a global market promotes the need for creative skills in order to enable academics to respond to market changes. The next section addresses the relevance of creativity to academia.

3-7 Academia and the quest for creativity

Academics can be seen as an ‘intellectual’ group whose job it is to make and to transmit knowledge and ideas. They have an influential role in changing society through their impact on technology, health, the economy, and policy formulation. The knowledge they possess plays a significant role in educational, economic, and social development (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985, Enders 1999; Etzioni-Halevy 1985). Through research, individuals can discover new areas which can be exploited and developed to the benefit of society and the human race. Academics also have a distinctive role in shaping the opinions of others and in influencing people’s perceptions of the world around them (Etzioni-Halevy 1985). They are involved in undertaking research that provides practical solutions for everyday problems.

Academics participate directly in shaping society through their membership in governmental committees and through their occupation of superior positions in a State bureaucracy (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985; Etzioni-Halevy 1985). Academics can also advise officials on particular matters and provide elites with ideas upon which they can rely when they decide on social, economic, and political matters.

Academics indirectly shape the State through their students or graduates, who play an active role in society as they are recruited into public or private organisations (Etzioni-Halevy 1985). Graduates from different faculties constitute a channel between academics and society through which academics’ knowledge and ideas can be transmitted and translated into practice.

Academics educate other professions (Perkin 1969) and conduct research in the interests of public bodies and private enterprises. Their involvement in intellectual activities demands continuous learning and creative elements. This is particularly true with the advancement of knowledge and technology. With the advancement of technology and the development of communication a new form of society has emerged. This new society has been termed a ‘knowledge society’ (Van Weert 2006: 217) or post-industrial society (i.e. Hinchcliff 2006:

82). The main features of the knowledge society are 'lifelong learning', 'knowledge development' and 'knowledge sharing'. Van Weert (2006: 218) comments:

Just as other knowledge workers in the knowledge society, educational professionals will find themselves in a continuous process of innovative change, necessitating lifelong learning. The professionals in education will need to *learn lifelong*, to *develop knowledge* about innovation of educational processes and to *share knowledge* with others to keep knowledge up to date.

A continuous process of learning becomes an essential part of the 'knowledge society' in order to keep up with recent developments and to compete in the market. The process of learning is reinforced in network communities that encourage the sharing of knowledge and the exchanging of ideas and information, thus facilitating cooperation and communication among academics (Van Weert 2006).

In the post-industrial or knowledge society there is more demand on exploratory and innovative research to track advances in modern technology (Hinchcliff 2006). Academics bear a significant responsibility to pursue the growth of science, to keep education and research relevant to the rapidly changing society, and to contribute to society's enlightenment. They will be expected to cultivate entrepreneurial skills that enable them to offer new opportunities to be used for the benefit of society. However, the role of academics is no longer confined to that of educating people and producing knowledge, which allows academics to explore and discover new areas. Instead, academics are the key players in achieving sustainable development in technological and economic terms (Yusof 2009). At the heart of the new task of academics lies academic entrepreneurship. Academic entrepreneurship aims, Yusof comments (2009: 64), to create "economic value through acts of organisational creation, renewal, or innovation that occurs within or outside the university that results in research commercialization and technology transfer". Therefore, the aim of academic entrepreneurship is to pursue the advancement of science and technology through acts of innovation.

Innovative universities, Clark (1998) argues, rely on strong basic academic units which are flexible enough to embrace change and to react quickly to the demands of their environment and the outside world. Such universities are dependent on diversified financial resources and are less reliant on government funding in order to enable basic units to respond quickly to change. The idea of innovative universities can be threatened by transferring universities into places for training students. Hinchcliff (2006) points out that the traditional vision of scholarship, which stresses ‘curiosity’, ‘imagination’, and ‘creativity’ and which has been undermined as a result of using universities as places for training students for a future career, should be revived in order to enable scholarship to guide our society towards a better future. He also comments (2006: 82-3):

The definition of “scholar” will eventually include involvement in the actual intellectual and physical dynamics of the complex process of change [...] The post-industrial university must recommit itself to all of the altruistic and venerable purposes of scholarship so that the campus can once again be a place – real and/or virtual – where knowledge and wisdom are pursued; a place where innovative ideas are tested freely among scholars – both students and professor – and where educated and responsible activists openly prepare themselves to change the world. It will be a place where great visions are shared and challenged and nurtured by plans for action.

Changes in the external environment have resulted in the globalisation of academia and have opened academia up to compete in international educational markets. Universities have to behave like business enterprises in terms of adopting strategies for maximising profit and minimising costs (Stewart 2007: 136). Universities are also forced to behave as entrepreneurial organisations, to adjust themselves to cope with change and to adopt business rhetoric such as quality assurance and total quality management (Ranjan 2008; Taylor 1999). Academics find themselves under pressure to adopt different market strategies and to target different markets for research (Stewart 2007: 136). They also become more involved in developing flexible curricula and having to internationalise educational courses and to develop diversified training courses (Stewart 2007: 136).

Academic workers have become key 'global players' (Enders 1999: 74). Research undertaken by academics has played a significant role in the globalisation of the world since the twentieth century. In the light of globalisation, the boundaries between countries have dissolved as new technologies of communication transform the world into a global village, where the exchange and transmission of knowledge can be openly exercised. Opening to international markets and the need to face the challenges imposed by competition in the international markets give significant importance to innovative research. The advancement of communication and information systems has not only dissolved the boundaries between markets but has also dissolved the boundaries between different sites of knowledge encouraging the emergence of 'Mode 2' in knowledge production (Gibbons et al. 1994). The advancement of communication does not only allow for the domination of multi-disciplinary knowledge but also for the involvement in continuous reformation and configuration of knowledge. In this context Gibbons et al. (1994: 35) comment that:

The expansion of the number, nature and range of communicative interactions between different sites of knowledge production leads not only to knowledge of different kinds, not only to sharing of resources, but to their continuous configuration. Each new configuration becomes itself a potential source of new knowledge production.

The fact that higher education is operating in a competitive market, and in an environment characterised by interaction between different disciplines, grants a particular role to the higher education sector. This sector tends to empower academics to develop their critical skills and to encourage them to be involved in producing new knowledge. In other words, the higher education process aims, as Harvey and Knight (1996: 10) point out, to prepare academics who can reconceptualise problems and imagine new ways to approach and deal with problems. Hence, critical and creative academics cultivate elements that enable them to respond to an unpredictable future and to produce new knowledge that challenges the familiar, discovers new problems and creates a novel approach to dealing with old problems (Harvey and Knight 1996: 10; Holmes 2002: 77). Given the fact that academics play a role in changing society and in shaping the opinion of others either directly (through,

for example, their roles as expert advisors) or indirectly through their teaching and research, creativity also enables academics to guide society towards a better future.

To sum up, in this chapter I have sought to provide a review on issues surrounding professions and academia. My purpose in so doing is to explore how the distinctive characteristics of professions and thus academic work exist in tension and conflict with characteristics belonging to the traditional type of bureaucracy. Professionals in general, and academics in particular, are knowledge workers who are assumed to have extensive knowledge and expertise and to adhere to codes of ethics that enable them to claim autonomy over their occupation and to exercise their authority in universities. As academics are conceptualised as a highly educated group which engages in a sophisticated, creative and challenging type of work, the traditional type of bureaucracy with its restrictions, its conformity to rules and regulations, and its tendency to control activities is proved to be an unsuitable place for carrying out professional work. The knowledge professionals and academics have contains elements that make this professional knowledge hard to manifest and master in an environment dominated by rules and procedures. Along similar lines, academics are employed in a particular type of organisation in which collegial/professional elements can be secured in order to enable academics to retain control over their knowledge and activities and to be self-regulating and autonomous from the pressures exercised by their employing organisation. Academic autonomy, which stresses the idea that academics, by the virtue of their expertise and knowledge, are the key players in guiding and deciding higher education policies of research and curriculum, enters into conflict with the external pressures exercised by market forces and the State. The State, acting as the key financial supporter for universities, plays a significant role in influencing higher education policy and in directing it to serve the national objectives of the State. In later chapters, I will explore how the influence exercised by the State on the higher education sector finds its locus in the bureaucratic type of administration. The hierarchical structure of bureaucratic organisation, this study will demonstrate, can serve the political objectives of the higher education sector by keeping higher education institutions in adherence with the State's higher education policy and thus safeguarding the accountability

of the University towards the State. At the same time it can also serve to protect members of the profession.

Chapter four: The methodology of this study

4-1 Introduction

The principle aims of this study can be divided into two main areas: firstly, to explore the relationship between bureaucracy and academia from the perspective of academics at the University of Damascus; and secondly, to understand the nature of bureaucratic conduct of the University of Damascus, particularly the restrictions imposed by bureaucracy on academic affairs, both in an historical context and in relation to the University-State relationship.

This study focuses on academics employed in universities. The main reason for placing academics at the centre of this study is because of the active role academics can play in developing society, in educating students and in qualifying them for their future career. Academics are believed to have the expertise, knowledge and skills that enable them to meet these targets and to keep their work up to date with the advanced area within their particular field of research. The role of academic administration therefore becomes that of creating an environment that enables the academics employed in the institutions to enjoy the autonomy they need to decide on the nature of their work and to develop their academic and scholarly studies. Since the administration of academic institutes cultivates a combination of bureaucratic and collegial/professional elements and since the degree of bureaucratic and collegial elements determines the level of autonomy academics enjoy over their work, this research investigates the relevance of bureaucratic elements to the academic administration at the University of Damascus as a step towards examining the extent to which the bureaucratic nature of the University of Damascus imposes restrictions over academic and scholarly work.

The most important step in any research is the selection of the research methodology that most suits the study and allows a researcher to examine the main question at the heart of the research. Therefore, it is the type of question a research seeks to answer that justifies the type of research methodology adopted (Yin 2003). In this study, the question of how

bureaucracy can hinder or support academics and how the bureaucratic nature of the University of Damascus has been influenced by the University-State relationship as it has developed over time justify the use of qualitative methods based mainly on interview, and documents/archival material, in addition to observation employed in a single case study of the University of Damascus. Case studies can be multiple or single (Eisenhardt 1989: 534). A single case can involve multiple levels of analysis including, for instance, the organisation and industrial levels (Eisenhardt 1989). This study involves three levels of analysis including an individual, organisational and national level analysis. The study uses qualitative evidence alongside quotations from interviews to investigate the bureaucratic conduct of the University of Damascus.

This chapter explores some existing literature on qualitative studies and makes this a starting point for understanding the methods adopted in this study and for demonstrating how the methodology chosen to conduct this research supports the development and conclusions of the research itself.

4-2 Qualitative research in organisational studies

Qualitative studies in the organisational field are in abundance. There is a range of qualitative studies carried out by researchers to describe and analyse life in organisations. These studies tell different stories and reveal different aspects of organisational behaviour including, for instance, the attitudes of the employees towards their jobs and interpersonal relations (Crozier 1971), loyalty in organisations (Adler and Adler 1998), concertive control (Barker 1998) and organisational change (Cole 1998). These studies are based on qualitative methods, and the techniques used range from archival analysis for historical studies, to participant and non-participant observations and interview analysis in order to grasp the participants' points of view and generate a clear picture and better understanding of life in the organisations. The significance of interviews and observations was initiated by research undertaken at the Hawthorne plant, an electric company in Chicago, as an attempt to examine the relationship between work conditions and the productivity of the workers, and to unveil the employees' perspectives on their work conditions (Schwartzman 1993).

Interviews replaced controlled experiments in the study of the employees at the Hawthorne plant because the controlled experiment had proved to be insufficient to answer the research question.

The inadequacy of quantitative methods and their attempts to fix reality and to provide abstract knowledge of the phenomena being studied are the main factors that support the increasing use of qualitative methods to study organisations. Qualitative research gives more opportunities to get a better understanding of the settings by providing rich information about events and by accommodating the multiple meanings individuals give to their world (Alvesson and Deetz 2000; Miles and Huberman 1984; Creswell 2003). Miles and Huberman (1984: 15), for example, justify choosing qualitative methods in their research and comment that:

Qualitative-data are attractive. They are a source of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of process occurring in local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, assess local causality, and derive fruitful explanations. Then too, qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to theoretical integrations. They help researchers go beyond initial preconditions and framework.

Qualitative researchers acknowledge the complexity and ambiguity of the world. They stress the heterogeneity and inconsistency of events and settings (Van Maanen 1979a), showing a commitment to understanding processes and to presenting practices, values, and beliefs from participants' points of view (Bryman 1988; Lincoln and Denzin 1994). They are also concerned with investigating meanings and the experiences people have (Merriam 1998; Van Maanen 1998), exploring and describing specific social events that occur in specific contexts (Van Maanen 1998) or revealing personal feelings and emotions (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

Van Maanen describes data generated from qualitative research as the following: “Such data are symbolic, contextually embedded, cryptic, and reflexive, standing for nothing so much as their readiness or stubbornness to yield to a meaningful interpretation and response” (1979 a :521). Drawing on the contextual nature of qualitative data, qualitative studies do not present the full knowledge of the issues investigated as they study them in the context of their origins and give interpretation and meaning to behaviour, actions and events that take place at a specific time and under specific settings (Van Maanen 1979 a).

Some types of qualitative studies do not radically vary from quantitative researches (Alvesson and Deetz 2000). Both qualitative and quantitative studies can at times share positivist assumptions, claiming objectivity and absolute truth. Qualitative studies, for instance, might be limited to providing a description of the world (Ellen 1984) in order to claim that this description presents an objective version of reality. Both types of studies, qualitative and quantitative, also share the notion of the relativity of the truth they investigate. In addition, qualitative work as well as quantitative is questionable and open to critique as the methods both systems rely upon could be viewed as flawed from an epistemological point of view (Van Maanen 1998). Researchers can adopt qualitative and quantitative methods which are based upon positivist assumptions - claiming a ‘sterilised context’ and neutrality in the collection and treatment of data to reach an objective truth (Alvesson 2002; Miller and Glassner 1997), yet the knowledge these methods produce can be open to question from a postmodern perspective since the issues of validity and reliability are no longer understood in terms of the accuracy of the procedures used and the provision of identical answers every time they are conducted and under any circumstances (Holstein and Gubrium 1997). Instead, the emphasis is now on the ability of these methods of inquiry to develop a contextual and local understanding of reality (Holstein and Gubrium 1997). Therefore, the potential of positivist research methods to produce sound, objective knowledge is challenged by the postmodern perspective on the grounds that such methods should be open to multiple ways of understanding their contents. Researchers should also consider the complexity of the phenomena studied and the contextual nature of the language used (Alvesson 2002).

The choice of research methods and the appropriate techniques with which to address the research question is dependent upon the approach the researcher chooses to adopt in his/her investigation of the phenomenon being studied. In their work, Alvesson and Deetz (2000: 32) identify four types of approach to organisational studies which are: ‘*normative studies*’, ‘*interpretative studies*’, ‘*critical studies*’, and ‘*dialogic studies*’. These studies are classified around two main axes: the first axis is the ‘*consensus-dissensus*’ dimension, and the second axis represents the ‘*local/emergent*’, ‘*elite/ a priori*’ concepts.

The figure 4.1 shows the types of approach to organisational research organised along these two dimensions.

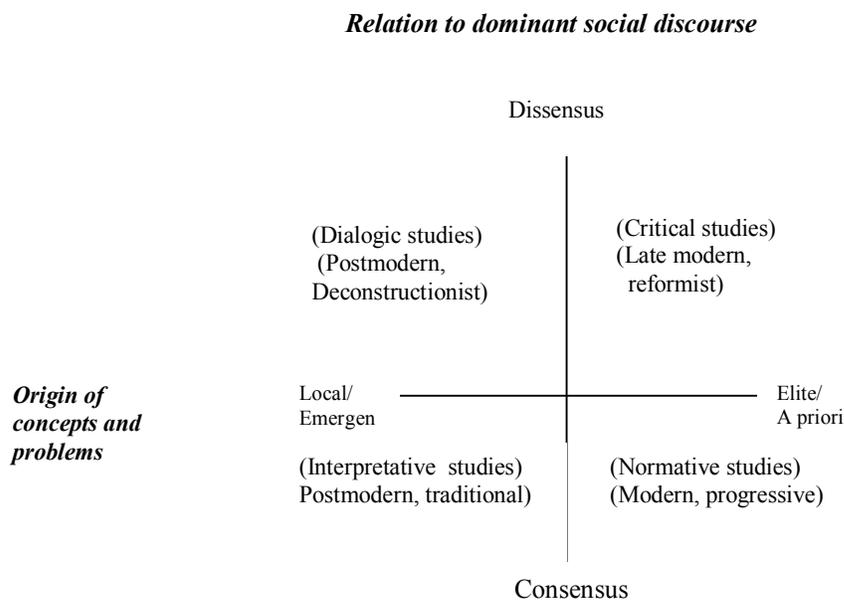


Figure (4.1) Research approaches classified along alternative perspectives in social studies

(Quoted from Alvesson & Deetz, 2000 : 24, original source: Deetz, 1994).

The ‘consensus-dissensus’ axis refers to the extent to which research is committed to the existing discourses. The second axis, ‘local/emergent’, ‘elite/ a priori’ concepts is concerned with the origins of the concepts and the problems of research. It shows, as Alvesson and Deetz (2000: 28) comment, that “concepts are either developed in relation with organisational members and transformed in the research process or brought to the research ‘interaction’ by the researcher and held static throughout the research process - that is, concepts may be developed *with* or applied *to* the organisational members being studied”.

Research concentrated around the *consensus* pole takes the form of normative or interpretative studies. Interpretative studies understand organisations as socially constructed units. Organisational members are also seen as subjects existing within communities who give meaning to and make sense of the world around them (Alvesson and Deetz 2000). The role of a researcher, then, is to investigate the meanings and norms which construct reality and to construct a description and explanation of the events studied. Such studies are characterised with regularity and with their adherence to the dominant social orders. Language is used to reflect and describe what is going on in a neutral form.

Contrary to the consensus perspective is the *dissensus* perspective, which shows respect and appreciation for the fragmentation and conflict existing in the world. It acknowledges the random nature of systems and uses new ways to understand the world. It also challenges existing assumptions in favour of revealing the contradictions and variations underlying such assumptions. Research adopting the dissensus perspective is described as critical and dialogue. Critical studies, Alvesson and Deetz (2000) argue, express a commitment to investigating the formation of knowledge from various perspectives and to linking the phenomena studied to their wider context. While critical and dialogue studies share the idea of the disordered and fragmented nature of society, they are different with regards to their position around the ‘local/emergent’, ‘elite/ a priori’ dimension. Alvesson and Deetz comment that “critical theories differ from many dialogic or ‘postmodern’ positions primarily in whether dissensus is produced by the use of elite understandings and procedures [...]; or in a deconstructive process whereby elite conceptions are unmasked to allow organisational activities to be given multiple and conflicting descriptions within particular sites” (2000: 28).

Critical theory studies are far from being local and emergent and are more likely to generalise beyond the creation of fragmented systems. The main concern of critical theory studies is to investigate types of domination and asymmetry and to understand them in relation to external social effects. They link organisations to their wider social and political contexts and read them as socially constructed entities. Critical research (including *critical ethnographies*) also challenge assumptions, and dismiss familiar ways of thinking to instead adopt new ways of dealing with phenomena and interpreting data (Alvesson and Deetz 2000; Thomas 1993).

Data, from the critical perspective, is constructed rather than collected. Critical researchers engage in the research process, decide what type of questions to ask, which things to consider and which to ignore, and how to make sense of their research environment. By so doing, critical researchers “do not collect data that we then interpret. Data is an outcome of interpretation and construction” (Alvesson and Deetz 2000: 21). Therefore, reflexivity becomes a key element in critical research in the sense that researchers have to reflect on how their beliefs and values, their experience and involvement in the field and their interaction with participants could influence the research’s strategy and findings (Alvesson and Deetz 2000; Simon and Dippo 1986).

Following on from the above, I would suggest that this thesis is informed by the interpretative approach in terms of understanding organisational members (academics) as subjects who give meaning to and make sense of the world around them. This study encompasses an interest in exploring academics’ opinions, closely examining their experiences at the University of Damascus and revealing how they make sense of the bureaucratic nature of the University’s academic administration. To draw on these accounts, interviews have been used in order to approach the focus of this research from the angle of a flexible and open-ended inquiry and to adopt a stance which is facilitative and helpful in order to capture the experiences of the academics in rich and detailed accounts. This study also employs a critical lens which enables me to locate the phenomenon studied in its historical context and to examine the restrictions imposed by bureaucracy in relation to the wider environment. The historical study necessitated the use of archival research in order to grasp how the current operation of the University has historically been shaped by

the University-State relationship. The study is therefore not limited to the present day, or to presenting an examination of bureaucracy in isolation from the external factors which have shaped the bureaucratic conduct of the University. I will revisit this point later in my discussion of the research methods employed here. Firstly, however, I will introduce the ethical practice of the research and will reflect on the difficulties I encountered during the process of conducting the research.

4-3 Research and ethical practice

The British Sociological Association (2002) highlights some elements of ethical practice that sociologist researchers have to adhere to. These ethical principles can also be adopted by any researcher undertaking academic research. Researchers have to make sure that their research will not cause harm to the people who participate in the study. In order to ensure that research participants are not negatively affected by the research, researchers have to protect the rights, the privacy and the sensitivities of research participants. Researchers should also be aware that their research might be disturbing or discomforting to participants as the research could potentially intervene in their personal affairs or give rise to stress and anxiety. Therefore, researchers should do their utmost to minimise or eliminate any stress, anxiety or discomfort their research might potentially cause to the people they study (Polonsky 1998; The British Sociological Association 2002).

Researchers should adopt the appropriate techniques to preserve the confidentiality and to protect the anonymity of participants including hiding the identity of participants and their personal information and using false names in order to ensure that data cannot be attributed to identifiable persons (Polonsky 1998; The British Sociological Association 2002). Researchers should also obtain the informed consent of participants in order to ensure the voluntary participation of the individuals studied and to assure participants of the right to refuse participation in the study for whatever reason or to withdraw their participation in the study at any time. Researchers should also outline the purpose of the study to potential participants, state the duration of the interview, and describe the procedures adopted to collect data (i.e. survey, notes, video or tape recording) (Polonsky 1998; The British Sociological Association 2002).

I assured all potential respondents that taking part in the study was voluntary. In order not to cause any embarrassment to the potential respondents, I immediately provided those who expressed hesitation with my mobile phone number in order to contact me in case they were willing to take part in the study. I provided the potential respondents with the approximate duration of the interviews and verbally explained to them the purpose of the study. I assured them of their right to refuse to answer any question they preferred not to respond to. I also assured them of the confidentiality of the information they would provide and of their anonymity. The respondents were not asked to sign a formal consent form as I preferred to assure the confidentiality and the anonymity of the respondents verbally or in an informal way in order to make the respondents feel relaxed and unconcerned that their participation in the research could potentially be harmful to them. To disguise their personal information, I used a code in order to make it impossible to identify the departments to which the respondents belonged to or to identify a particular academic. The code I use for interview material is identified by three initials. The first initial refers to the department to which the respondents belonged. The second initial refers to academic rank, while the third digit (accompanied by a number) identifies gender. I also hid the identity of the academic departments included in the study by using the general name of the academic departments, such as the Engineering faculty and Social Science 1, 2, and 3, instead of giving the exact name of the academic departments. Anonymising the academic departments and the academics employed therein helped to conceal personal information and to ensure that the participants in the study would not be identified. I also hid the detailed information given by the academics on their research projects which might identify those participating in the study.

4-4 Research difficulties

During both periods of the study, I experienced feelings of anxiety and frustration. This was true particularly in the first month of my research. Most of my frustration was because of the difficulties I encountered whilst carrying out the fieldwork. Gaining access to one of the departments I had selected to study was more problematic than originally anticipated because of the difficulty I experienced in contacting the potential interviewees, in addition

to the refusal of some potential interviewees to participate in the study. Due to these difficulties of access to that particular department I made the decision to shift my focus to another faculty, an engineering faculty, and interviewed the academics employed in that faculty instead. The shift to an engineering faculty enabled me to reveal some of the negative aspects of the bureaucratic control of resources (such as research equipment) which were not addressed by the academic respondents employed in other faculties included in the study.

Another difficulty I encountered was that some academics did not keep their appointments, so they either did not come on time or did not turn up at all. That caused considerable inconvenience to me, especially when I had two interviews on the same day, because the delay in the first interview often required rescheduling subsequent interviews. I managed to reschedule subsequent interviews when delays were anticipated in the earlier interviews by contacting those involved in the later interviews by mobile phone, explaining the situation to them, and asking if it would be possible to shift their interviews to a later time. Those contacted understood the situation and responded positively in this respect.

I also encountered difficulties in collecting some official documents from the University of Damascus as the administrators often responded that they did not have the documents requested. The documents needed could be obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education, however. Collecting archival material also carried with it some difficulties because the archive materials were not electronically saved and it was difficult to search and locate the documents I needed using the computer. My request to photocopy pages from particular volumes was rejected initially as the staff at Alasad library claimed that it was forbidden to photocopy pages from thick volumes, which might break the glass of the photocopier. Photocopying yellow pages from the archival records was also initially rejected because staff claimed that the copies of those pages would not be clear. However, I was able to get official permission to photocopy the pages I needed from the archival records. The head of the Syrian Hall at Alasad library was very cooperative, particularly when she knew that I was doing my PhD in the UK and I had only a short period of time to complete my fieldwork in Syria. She helped me get permission to access and photocopy the archival material I needed for my research. However, given the fact that the archival

material was not electronically accessible, this required me to spend some weeks in the library to collect the archival material that I needed.

4-5 Research Methods

The research method for this study is the qualitative method. The study depends primarily on interviews in addition to documents/archive material and observation in order to address the main focus of this research. This method helps me to approach the research by allowing me to access the experience of the University of Damascus' academics through interviews, and to investigate how they make sense of the formal culture of the University within which they are employed, thus examining in which ways bureaucracy can be of support or hindrance to academics from their own perspective. The interview material was supported by observations of life within the departments to reveal how academics at the university manage and administer their affairs through attending board meetings. The archival material was also of great value towards understanding the bureaucratic conduct in its historical context. I used the archival material here to refer to those documents collected from Alasad library and which are primarily concerned with regulating the University of Damascus since the time of late Ottoman ruling until the beginning of 1970. The use of archival material reveals aspects which could not be subject to extensive research given the fact, as pointed out earlier, that archival material is not electronically saved, in addition to the fact that it is only available at Alasad library and not at the University library.

The next subsections discuss the qualitative techniques adopted in this study including interviews, observation, and documentary/archival material.

4-5-1 Interviews

Interviews are a useful source of information. They provide researchers with detailed and in-depth accounts relating to participants' experiences, ideas, opinions, and personal feelings (Bryman 1988; Fontana and Frey 1994). They also reveal seemingly ambiguous matters to researchers and help provide a better understanding of the actions observed

through providing access to ideas only obtainable by establishing a dialogue with the participants (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Interviews are useful techniques to access the personal experience of the academics at the university and to gain insights into and detailed information about how the academic respondents make sense of the formal culture of their institute.

Though previously employed as a member of the academic staff at the University of Damascus myself, I had not experienced much academic work at the University because since beginning my career as a teaching assistant I had been seconded abroad to continue my postgraduate study in the UK. As I have little knowledge of how academics at the University of Damascus experience the bureaucratic conduct of the University, the interviews were designed, as far as possible, to allow the interviewees to talk freely about their experience at the University, using the terms and expressions of their own choosing while enabling me to keep to the agenda of the research questions I aimed to cover. Therefore, I used semi-structured interviews, which gave me greater flexibility to inquire and probe (Cohen and Crabtree 2006; Pawson 1996) by establishing a dialogue with the academic staff and by asking them open-ended questions regarding their academic career and their experience at the University of Damascus. At the same time, the interviews comprised main themes in order to maintain control over the conversations and to facilitate comparison between the respondents' answers (Pawson 1996).

An issue of concern that arises as researchers decide to conduct interviews is *who* to select for interview. Some interviewees might offer their help and ask the researchers for an interview. The informants could also be chosen by gatekeepers⁷ who sometimes nominate interviewees to researchers in order to help the researchers collect the data or to monitor the results of the research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). However, researchers should leave themselves some freedom in selecting the interviewees in order to have control over the process and to avoid misdirecting information. By so doing, researchers have the chance to choose their interviewees in a strategic way, considering, for instance, the informants' desire to give information, and their objectivity and neutrality. The sensitivity

⁷ Gatekeepers have been defined by Hammersley and Atkinson as the following: Gatekeepers are "actors with control over key sources and avenues of opportunity. Such gatekeepers exercise control at and during key phases of the youngster's status passage(s). Such gatekeepers' functions would actually be carried out by different personnel in the different organisation settings"(1995: 34)

of the interviewees to the topic being studied and a consideration of what particular knowledge they can bring to the study and whether it is likely to challenge previously-held assumptions, should also be considered. (Dean et al. 1967, cited in Hammersley and Atkinson 1995).

Another issue which arises when researchers are selecting their interviewees is *how many* participants are to be interviewed. As interviews are both time- and effort-consuming, it is difficult to interview all the people in an organisation, especially if the organisation is a large one. Therefore, a sample should be chosen to represent the society being studied. The representative sample can be selected randomly. The sample can also be stratified to represent the diversity among the society's inhabitants (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). While a representative sample is an important requirement for qualitative studies aimed at revealing perspectives and opinions, in other qualitative studies, for instance those that rely upon 'eliciting information', the need for a representative sample is less important (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995).

For interviews, I selected a representative sample of the academics employed at the University of Damascus. The interviews were conducted between July and the end of September 2007. This included 31 interviews conducted with academics from different faculties and from different disciplines. Three disciplines in social science and one discipline in engineering were selected for this study. The respondents were selected from different genders and from different academic ranks (see table 4.1). The length of their experience at the University of Damascus ranged from 10 months to 35 years. Some of the respondents selected in this study also had experience of working at private universities.

<i>Dept</i>	Engineering	social science 1	social science 2	social science 3
	9	8	5	9
Gender				
<i>M/ F</i>	7/2	5/3	2/3	7/2
Academic rank				
<i>Professor</i>	4	2	1	2
<i>Professor- assistant</i>	2	2	2	2
<i>Lecturer</i>	2	2	2	3
<i>Teaching- assistant</i>	1	2	0	2

Table (4.1) The distribution of the academic respondents according to their departments, gender, and academic ranks

The duration of most of the interviews conducted ranged from a minimum of 60 minutes to a maximum of 120 minutes. However, two of the interviews lasted for approximately 20 minutes. The sample of 31 respondents also included academics occupying different administrative positions, including those occupying senior academic administrative positions. I also had an informal conversation with two administrators at the University of Damascus in order to get additional information on the rules regulating academic affairs.

The study is intended to examine how bureaucracy either enables or prevents academics from carrying out their research interests. The question which forms the primary focus of this research is to investigate the positive and negative aspects of bureaucracy in the context of academia.

The interviews started with some biographical questions about how the respondents were recruited to the University, their educational background, their years of experience, their academic rank, and the modules they teach. Before moving on to address the academic respondents' perspectives on bureaucracy, I asked general questions about how the

respondents perceive the educational policy of the University in its supporting of teaching and research. I also asked a question about the issues that affect academic careers; i.e. what are the factors that help or hinder the academics in their ability to pursue their academic work (teaching and research) effectively. Then I moved on to address their perspectives on bureaucracy and asked them questions about how they perceived the rules that regulated their academic work including teaching, scholarship, and research; what control the academic respondents enjoyed over their career, and the changes considered necessary by the academics in order to improve their academic career but which had not yet been undertaken by the administration. The questions I asked also addressed their opinions on the importance of formal rules and its role in safeguarding fairness. Appendix A gives more detail on the main questions the academic respondents were asked about in the interviews.

The main questions I asked and the sub-questions developed during the interviews focused primarily on open ended question such as 'what' and 'how' questions to elicit information, to clarify points and to give the academic respondents the chance to reflect on their opinions and to add their own thoughts (Stein-Parbury 1993). The interviews ended with a general question allowing the respondents to reflect on their experiences, both good and bad, at the University of Damascus. I also gave the respondents the chance to add any additional comments they wished to make at the end of the interview. In some cases, the interviewees were willing to reflect on their impressions of the interview. One of respondents, for instance, commented that the interview made him feel that his opinion was important and valued. Another respondent answered the questions and commented that the interview was a good opportunity to express what she felt and to reveal the problems she had encountered at the University, expressing that she felt happy to have found someone to talk to about it.

All the interviews took place in the respondents' offices at the faculties where they worked. I could have access to the building without any difficulties as it is open to the public between 8am and 3pm. However, during exam times, the guards only allow authorised people (administrative staff, academic staff, students who have to attend exams) to enter the building. Therefore, during July, when the Open University exams were taking place at one of the faculties selected in the study, I had to use my identity as one of the members of staff at the University in order to access to the building.

I contacted the respondents either by phone or face-to-face, inviting them to interview. The faculty secretaries helped me by providing me with the phone numbers of the academics. The secretaries also provided me with information on the days /times of the departmental meetings so I could arrange to meet a number of academics either before or after the meetings, asking them if they were willing to participate in the study and to be interviewed. I also asked if it was permissible to attend the board meetings and my request was granted.

In some research, interviews might be used together with observations, which provide meaning and interpretation to the data obtained by interviews. A study done by Dexter (1970, quoted in Hammersley and Atkinson 1995), for instance, on congress in the US provides a good example of research which relies upon the combination of participant observation and interviews in order to give a better understanding of the data collected by these two techniques and interpret them in the light of each other. Dexter (1970) outlines how his participation in the events organised by congress, and the observations he made about the visitors and the staff, enhanced his understanding of what the interviewees had said during interview (quoted in Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). However, the decision to use interviews as the only source of information or together with other sources (i.e. observation) depends on the circumstances facing the particular researcher as well as on the aims of the study. In this study, I decided to attend the board meetings held at a departmental level in order to explore how academics participate in the administration of the department, and run their academic affairs. Those observations made during the departmental meetings, combined with documentary evidence of the responsibilities and roles assigned to the academic board at the departmental level, give a better understanding of life within the department.

4-5-2 Observation

The use of observation in this study means that the study is informed by the ethnography tradition. Ethnography occupies a central position in social studies (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). It involves an immersion in the participants' culture through spending a long period of time in the field, allowing a researcher to maintain a close relationship with the informants, and to participate in their daily lives. It also involves access to various cultural settings, and watching events take place in their natural situations (Alvesson and Deetz 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Ethnography uses multiple techniques consisting of interviews, observation and documentary materials in order to generate as much data as possible.

Well-known examples of researchers who have conducted ethnographic work in organisations include Kunda (1992) and Van Maanen (1979 b). Van Maanen carried out his ethnographic studies in a police department in order to describe police work in depth, develop insight about the practices of the police force, and explore how policemen behave in specific settings. He comments on the aims of his research as the following: "to uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation" (1979 b: 540).

This study does seek to give an in-depth description of academics' culture. I did not immerse myself in the academic's world as Van Maanen did in his study of the police department. However, given the fact that I was one of the academic staff employed by the University, I was not a complete outsider and thus had some knowledge of life within the University. Observations I made were drawn from two meetings held within the department and thus focusing on moments of comparative 'formality' (reflecting the bureaucratic processes) rather than the informality of everyday exchanges. These observations were useful to reveal some aspects of collegial life within the departments, such as how academics make decisions, and what types of decisions are made at the departmental level. The observations were also useful to demonstrate the variation between the documentary

data, which presents what academics should do, and the observational data⁸, which present what academics actually do or how they actually behave.

A researcher might take different roles in the fieldwork (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). See figure (4.2).

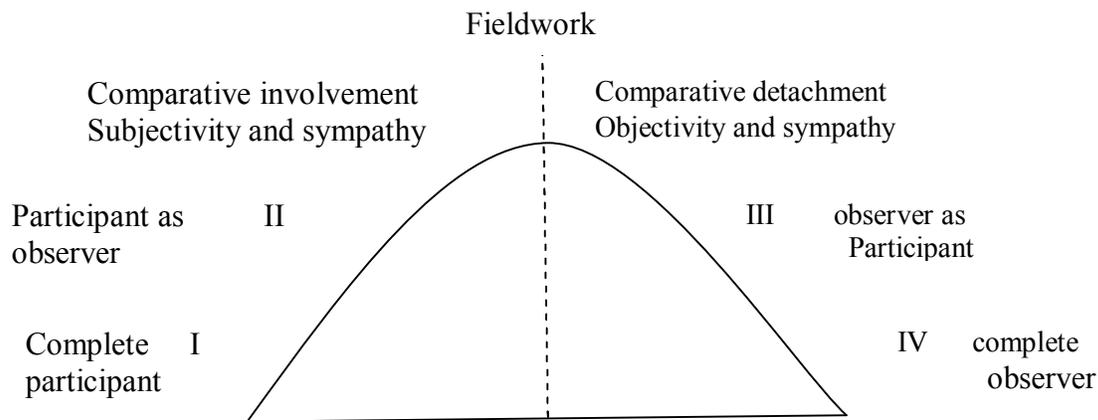


Figure (4.2) Types of roles for fieldwork. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 104) original source. Junker (1960: 36)

The researcher could, at times, be involved in the field as a ‘complete participant’. In this case they would hide their identity as a researcher and become a member of the

⁸ Van Maanen (1979 b) identifies observational data as operational data - which is generated by observations of their daily activities. For Van Mannen (1979b) operational data are distinguished from presentational data - which refer to the manufactured settings created by the participants in order to present their activities as they would like them to be perceived by others. Van Mannen (1979b: 542) comments “ operational data deal with observed activity (behaviour per se) and presentational data deal with the appearances put forth by informants as these activities are talked about and otherwise symbolically projected within the research setting” .

organisation. By acting as complete participants, ethnographers can have the chance to be completely immersed in the organisation's activities and to develop an in-depth knowledge of life inside the organisation. They can also get information about issues and events which cannot be accessed by other methods (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). However, disguising the subjectivity of a researcher might be not conducive to an atmosphere of trust as organisational members do not know who a researcher is, what their task is or why they are doing it. Such an approach would also preclude the possibility of undertaking formal interviews and would also raise ethical concerns with respect to informed consent (The British Sociological Association 2002).

A contrasting role to that of 'complete participant' is that of 'complete observer'. Ethnographers acting as complete observers detach themselves from the people being studied and only observe them, with little contact between them. Complete observation has a limited use because not every setting can be observed (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Added to that is the fact that fieldworkers cannot access the participants' points of view and uncover what they think about the world around them. This could result in a misinterpretation of the behaviour and actions of participants because they are understood only in the light of the knowledge of the fieldworkers. However, complete observation and complete participation both have an advantage in that they avoid the negative effects resulting from the interaction of ethnographers with informants as researchers. In addition to that, complete observation has advantages in terms of the objectivity and emotional neutrality that it might develop.

Ethnographers are usually involved in the fieldwork as 'participant as observer' and 'observer as participant' which mediate the two extreme positions of complete participant and complete observer. However, 'complete participation' and 'complete observation' are still helpful in certain stages of the fieldwork (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). The decision about what role to adopt is determined by the purpose of the study, what kind of data the researcher wants to collect, and the kind of setting s/he plans to study.

In the departmental meetings that I attended I adopted the role of complete observer as my role was limited to recording what the academics were saying without taking any part in the discussion taking place. The overall aim of the observations I made during my attendance

at the departmental meetings was to explore how the collegial elements of the academic administration at a departmental level, which are enshrined in the legal form of bureaucracy, were exercised in practice. The observational data, in addition to the documentary data, helped to explore how the collegial elements of academic administration coexist with the bureaucratic elements in order to run and manage academic affairs.

4-5-3 Documentary/ archival research

Organisations and their members use and produce documentary materials in the course of their daily activities. The documents can be formal, including, for instance, annual reports, financial reports, prospectuses, and written rules (Atkinson and Coffey 1997), or informal such as “fictional literature, diaries, autobiographies, letters, and mass media products” (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 159) which might include newspaper and magazines. Mason (2002) also points out that parliamentary papers, administrative rules, strategic plans, formal policies and legislation, reports on financial status, minutes of meetings, diaries and letters are included in documentary materials. While these documents are considered text materials, documents could be also be non-textual materials, for example maps and photographs (Mason 2002).

Documentary materials are useful when they are used as supporting evidence for data collected from other sources (Yin 2003). However, documents, Atkinson and Coffey (1997) argue, should not only be used to check the accuracy of data already obtained by other techniques such as interviews and observation. Rather, documentary materials themselves are data which can be used for constructing a view about organisations.

Documentary sources are distinctive by their own characters, language, content and styles which reflect the particular cultural features of organisations. A review of teaching quality assessment (TQA) documents, for instance, is useful to shed light on the educational policy of schools and to describe the life in academic departments. A review of documentary materials helps researchers to grasp personal accounts, and to understand the context of the particular settings. It is also useful to gain a better understanding of the way organisations

operate and the way their employees act in the workplace. Moreover, it is sometimes difficult to approach research questions without taking into account the documentary materials (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). In a documentary inquiry, the process does not stop with presenting the actual documents. Atkinson and Coffey comment that “it must also incorporate a clear understanding of how documents are produced, circulated, read, stored and used for a wide variety of purposes” (1997: 47).

When documentary materials are to be collected and analysed it is useful to consider what questions the documents can answer and what story they can tell. As the main concern of this study is to investigate the bureaucratic conduct of the University of Damascus, and as bureaucracy is embodied in detailed rules and regulations, access to the University’s rules and regulations (The Law of Organising the Universities) was vital for this study. The documents which were considered relevant were those which explore the way the University operates and is regulated. Such documents are the locus in which the legitimacy of the operation of the University can be recognised. Printed and online University newspapers and brochures were also included in the documentary materials. I use the word 'documents' in this study to differentiate between the contemporary documentary materials collected from the institutions and the material collected from Alasad library which is considered archival material.

The documents were collected from the Ministry of Higher Education. I also collected documents, particularly those concerned with the Five-Year plan of the State, from the State Planning Commission. As part of the study is to explore the relationship between the State and the University, the State's constitution, and the Five-Year plans of the State were included in the documentary materials. Presenting an account of the relationship between the State and the University enables us to explore the fact that the bureaucratic conduct of the University is shaped to a large extent by the University-State relationship. This study investigates this relationship in its historical context. Therefore, access to archived newspapers and legislation was necessary to reveal and to present an account of how the conduct of bureaucracy has been influenced by the University-State relationship as shaped over time. The value of this research lies in its ability to study the current operation of the University in its historical context and to thus ensure that our current understanding of the bureaucratic conduct of the University of Damascus is contextualised. Therefore, the

findings generated from this study cannot be generalised to understand the bureaucratic conduct of another institution in another culture.

Archival research is often historical in nature (Furnham 1990: 104). It involves the use and description of data which existed in the past and before the time of the research being undertaken (Jackson 2008: 86; Martin 1995: 12). Archival data may be verbal or numerical. It can vary and range from data or information which is made public such as annual reports, statistics and genealogical data, to more private information such as health histories, diaries and personal letters. The archival data might be published or unpublished, in a written or spoken format. The word 'archive' is used to refer to the information or records themselves, or to the sources where the information or records are collected such as the public organisations, universities, libraries, etc. Archival information can be subject to content analysis, which can be defined as "any systematic examination of qualitative information in terms of predefined categories" (Goodwin 2007: 387). Lau and Russel (1980, cited in Goodwin 2007) have used content analysis in their study of sport in order to examine how athletes explain their losses and success. They analysed quotes extracted from newspapers in order to investigate how athletes explain their failure and success in sport. Archival research can be qualitative in nature if the research is based on qualitative methods such as interviews or historical cases, or quantitative research based on quantifying the records and translating them into numbers (Martin 1995: 12).

The merit of archival research is that researchers can have access to a range of information and data which already exist; so archival research can be less time-consuming and the cost of the archival data is cheap and can be quickly collected (Goodwin 2007; Jackson 2008; Shultz, Hoffman and Palmon 2005). Given the fact that archival data already exists, archival research minimises the problem of reactivity (Goodwin 2007; Jackson 2008) which results in the distortion of results because researchers do not interact with participants, and thus also minimises the bias which results from the tendency of participants to behave in a particular way. The huge database of archival data available to researchers allows researchers to test a phenomenon across many societies and for a period of years instead of limiting the results of research to the present (Furnham 1990; Mitchell and Jolley 2009). This advantage gives archival research external validity and allows researchers to generalise the results of their research (Mitchell and Jolley 2009: 219). In

some types of research, it is difficult or even impossible to approach the topic of research without archival study. Some research, for instance, aims to make comparative studies and to investigate a particular phenomenon in its historical context. Therefore, archival research is often a useful approach.

However, archival research also has its limitations. Despite the huge amount of information available to researchers, there might be gaps in archival research and some important information or data might be missing or incomplete (Furnham 1990; Goodwin 2007; Shultz et al. 2005), or might be in an inappropriate format. The most common limitation of archival research, as is also the case with other research, is the bias exercised by the researcher. The researcher tends to select the data or information that they are most interested in and which support the hypothesis of their research. The interpretation a researcher gives to the archival data or information is also influenced by the background of the researcher and by their own perspectives (Goodwin 2007). Archival data, as Goodwin (2007: 386) points out, refers to "information that has already been gathered for some reason aside from the research project at hand". The fact that archival data is collected for purposes other than that of the study means it is difficult for researchers to ensure that the archival records are reliable or even ideal or suitable to use in the research. Archival data, for instance, may reflect the behaviour of groups, not individuals, which does not quite suit the purpose of the study. Some of archival data may have been purged at some time and researchers cannot know why this data was purged (Jackson 2008). Archival data such as that concerned with unemployment, inflation, or suicide rates might also be based on estimations instead of accurate measurements. Moreover, archival data might be measured and recorded differently across different groups or societies which makes comparison difficult or even impossible (Furnham 1990). Therefore, it is important to develop an awareness of the advantages and the limitations of archival research. However, many of the limitations of archival research mentioned above are avoided in this study because the archival research used here the study did not rely on estimated data or on comparisons made between different groups or different societies. Rather, this study is concerned mainly with the legislation issued over time and which has regulated the University of Damascus since the time of the Ottoman ruling up to 1970.

The archival materials used in this study were collected from the Alasad library in Damascus. The archives at Alasad library are kept in hard copies (volumes) in the Syrian Hall on the third floor of the library. The archival material was analysed to present an historical grasp of the university-state relationship. The archival material supported by literature on the history of Syria and on the University of Damascus presents the historical side of the study and expands the analysis to include the national perspective. Throughout the historical part of the study I demonstrated that the centralised form of the bureaucratic conduct of academic administration at the University of Damascus, and its tendency to impose constraints, can be attributed to factors external to bureaucracy itself, which shaped the accountability of the University to the State. In chapter seven I explore that such restrictions are justified in the context of public academic administration.

4-6 Data analysis

Qualitative methods were used to analyse the data. The first step to analysing data was to organise the data in order to prepare it for analysis (LeCompte 2000). Researchers have to go through the data obtained from different sources (interviews, documents, field notes) in order to become familiar with it (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Copies of all data were made. All data was put into files based on the type of material collected (interviews, documents, and field notes). All files were labelled according to their contents.

My analysis of the interview material was guided by the concern to understand how academics at the University of Damascus experienced bureaucracy. In other words, the analysis of the interview material aimed to address in which ways the academic respondents rejected or supported bureaucracy. In order to achieve my aims, I carried out a thorough reading of the interviews conducted with the respondents in order to characterise their content and to identify important themes. This process has been identified by LeCompte (2000: 148) as 'sifting' data which is carried out by a repeated reading of the data collected by different techniques in order to identify themes relevant to the question of the research. I used content analysis to analyse my data. Content analysis is defined as "a

systematic research method for analyzing textual information in a standardised way that allows evaluators to make inferences about that information" (Weber 1990: 9). In content analysis, the large number of words in the text can be classified into or reduced to fewer categories (Weber 1990).

I shifted between two approaches in classifying categories: the emergent approach and the a priori method. According to the emergent approach, categories are identified through examining and reading the data to come up with the themes. In other words, themes emerged from the data. However, the a priori approach identifies themes on the basis of theory (Weber 1990). The themes which emerged from the interviews and which I identified as important were those that were frequent (emerging from the data) and at the same time relevant to bureaucracy. For instance, among the main themes identified by the study were the negative consequences of bureaucracy on academic autonomy and the role of bureaucratic rationality in securing equal opportunities. Those two themes were identified due to their frequency. They appeared in the interview material many times (the emergent approach). They were also identified on the basis of theory as those two themes fit within the literature on the critiques and the defence of the Weberian bureaucratic model.

When I read through the interview material, I listed the academics' main activities. The list included research, teaching, and scholarship. I developed categories of academic activities which were constrained in order to meet bureaucratic requirements. Using these categories as sub-headings, I re-read my interview material and filed relevant quotations under the appropriate sub-heading. The researcher could trace the various perspectives of the academics by examining and re-reading the quotations on each theme to see if the contents of the quotations show any differences. Having read through the interview material and extracted quotations, a picture of how the academics opposed bureaucracy began to emerge. I combined the material I collected from the interviews with that collected from documentary material. I used the documentary material (the University Act) as supporting evidence of the bureaucratic constraints over academic careers. Putting interview and documentary material together enabled me to test the validity of the data as the documentary data was used to support and corroborate the data collected by the interviews. However, the documentary material was not only used in this study as supporting evidence

for the data collected in interviews; the documents themselves also formed part of the data. The University Act, for instance, provided information on the formal structure of academic administration at the University of Damascus. Documents such as the State's Five-Year plan and parliamentary papers were also used to track the State's higher education policy.

Having identified some constraints imposed by bureaucracy over academic activities, I extended the process of analysis to uncover how those constraints had been produced and to examine those constraints in their historical context. I examined the archival data to address this and I used the archival material to demonstrate how the restricted autonomy of the University of Damascus has been shaped over time and has been influenced by factors in the external environment.

I reread the interview and documentary material. Through a documentary analysis, I could identify the relevance of bureaucracy to academia in terms of its role in setting the legal framework for the operation of academic administration. The key themes which emerged from the interview/documentary material with regard to the positive aspects of bureaucracy were 'quality assessment' and 'equality'. Under the theme of 'equality', I combined the interview material with the archival/documentary material in order to reveal that the formal rules utilised for regulating recruitment and for securing equality among citizens had been initiated by the government to protect citizens from political influences. I triangulated and brought together the data collected by different qualitative techniques in order to understand the bureaucratic conduct and the context (the contextual dimension of bureaucracy) in more detail (Patton 2002; Yin 1993, 2003).

4-7 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study can be attributed in large part to methodological limitations. Interviews, for instance, have their own problems that distort qualitative data and prevent it from being fully accurate. For example, there are some interviewees who are unaware of the issues surrounding their world, or are sometimes insensitive to matters crucial to their activities (Van Maanen 1979a). Some participants are also unwilling to provide true

information if this information is related to their private life, or is embarrassing or shameful to them. There is also the fear that participants act in an artificial way in order either to present themselves in the best light to the researcher or because they presume to know what the researcher is looking to discover (Van Maanen 1979a; Lecompte and Goetz 1982). Drawing on this, there is an effect of reactivity on the validity of the data gathered. Even when a researcher adopts a neutral position by detaching themselves from the participants, this could result in poor data because of the very distance in the relationship and the hostile image participants might develop about the researcher (Lecompte and Goetz 1982). However, I did my best to alleviate any negative effects of reactivity by avoiding asking the respondents any questions that related to their personal life or which might cause embarrassment to them. Introducing myself as a teaching assistant and as a staff member at the University of Damascus also helped me to build intimacy and trust and to establish a good relationship with the respondents, who in turn were encouraged to speak freely and spontaneously about the issues I asked about. Such an empathic relationship is important and should be maintained in order to minimise the bias resulting from the tendency of interviewees to hide and distort information (Alvesson 2002).

The use of language in a qualitative study also has its limitations because participants might not express their real opinions and feelings, or communicate the right message through the language they use (Alvesson and Deetz 2000). Van Maanen (1979 b) also points out that the various meanings a researcher records through his/her intensive fieldwork are more likely to reflect what participants think about their reality rather than offer an account of any 'objective reality'. In this study, problems surrounding the use of language also lie in translation. As all the interviews were conducted in Arabic, and the documents and archival material collected were also written in Arabic, I had to translate the relevant conversations and documents into English before being able to use them in the presentation of my findings. I did my best to accurately translate the conversations and documents used in this study, focussing primarily on translating the *meaning* rather than the individual words. I adopted this approach to translation in order to remain as close as possible to the intended meaning the academic respondents tried to convey in their interviews and to represent an accurate understanding of what the documents and archival records and observations can

tell us. However, focussing on translating the meaning in this way can also bring potential disadvantages in that some words are lost by adopting this approach to translation.

Another limitation of this study is the difficulty in suggesting that I address in depth all the positive and negative aspects of bureaucracy in the context of academia or to suggest that I understand bureaucracy as my respondents do. Even when researchers work in the field for a long period of time and have access to various cultural settings, this does not imply that researchers can develop a 'natural' understanding of the participants' world (Van Maanen 1979 b). Van Maanen acknowledges that his ethnographic studies in the police force have limitations and comments that "While I tried to listen, to see, to talk, to feel, and to get into every odd cultural corner I could, it would still be absurd to suggest that I understand the police world as my informants do" (1979 b: 542).

Another problem with qualitative work is that qualitative studies are very time-consuming and deal with an enormous amount of data, all of which is hard to consider fairly and document in the research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). A researcher has to be selective of the data reported in the study. Dealing with a huge amount of data also makes it difficult to give multiple interpretations to the data and to develop critical understanding of it. In this study, I acknowledge that I give considerable attention to the data that seemed relevant to bureaucracy and that data in particular was prioritised for selection in the findings of my work. For example, I primarily focused on the challenges the academics experienced due to administration, while the difficulties and the challenges experienced by academics which were attributed to personal/private reasons or to cultural causes were marginalised. Some academics, for instance, pointed out that in Syrian culture some topics related to sexuality and homosexuality are considered taboo, therefore academics are discouraged from doing research in such areas.

Lastly, it is useful to point out that qualitative studies investigate particular phenomena in specific settings, and that this imposes constraints on the reliability of the research findings. Qualitative data, particularly observation, is gathered in natural settings, and neither human actions nor social events remain the same over time (Lecompte and Goetz 1982). Added to this is the fact that the quantity and quality of data depend on the role the researcher adopts

in the field and his/her relationship with the informants. Data obtained by qualitative research cannot be replicated if the research is done at a different time or by another researcher. These factors imply that the reliability of qualitative researches is limited by their relevance to the researcher's personal strategy (Lecompte and Goetz 1982).

The findings of a study can be organised by adopting different strategies. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 217), for instance, identify chronology as an appropriate strategy when data is concerned with the passage of time. Therefore, chronology can be perceived as the best strategy for developing insight into the history of the University of Damascus and for organising the majority of the archival material. I have organised my findings under three main thematic headings. The first of these is developed in chapter five and is concerned with the history of the University of Damascus. Within this chapter I used the chronology strategy for organising the text. The second and third thematic headings consider the relevance of bureaucracy to academic administration and the negative aspects associated with the bureaucratic model of the University of Damascus. These two themes are examined in chapter six. In chapter seven I develop my discussion of the main themes emerging from the study in the light of the literature reviewed in chapters two and three and I expand and broaden the analysis to move forwards and backwards through different levels of analysis including organisational and national levels. This strategy has been identified by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) as narrowing and extending the focus of analysis. I found this strategy appropriate for organising the text in chapter seven and for moving between archival and documentary materials and interviews in order to present a discussion of bureaucracy in light of the University-State relationship.

Chapter five: The University of Damascus: a historical background

5-1 Introduction

This chapter has been developed in order to present an account of the history of the University of Damascus since its establishment in 1903 under the late Ottoman ruling until now. Through developing a historical background of the University of Damascus I aim to track the emergence of bureaucratic features at the University since the time of the late Ottoman ruling and under the Arab government. By ‘bureaucratic features’, I primarily focus on the University Acts and rules in place to regulate the University. The main reason for my study’s focus on the rules utilised to regulate the University over time is because all the challenges and constraints addressed by the academic respondents in this study were primarily attributed to the rules and regulations which infringed academic autonomy. Therefore, it is useful to investigate the history of the University Act in order to ensure that our understanding of the bureaucratic conduct of the University in the present day is contextualised, reflecting the ‘hows’, and to some extent ‘whys’ of these constraints.

This chapter also aims to present an account of the history of the University of Damascus in order to consider the issue of the University’s autonomy in its historical context through exploring how the relationship between the State and the University has developed over time, particularly under the French mandate and the United Arab Republic which to a large extent has shaped the present day relationship between the University and the State. Addressing the bureaucratic nature of academic administration at the University in its broader context and particularly in relation to the University-State relationship shaped over time deepens our understanding of the factors underpinning the nature of the bureaucratic structure.

This chapter makes reference to archival and documentary material (i.e. the University Acts, and the strategic policy of the State), supported by literature on Syrian history and the history of the University of Damascus. The archival material used in this study tracks the beginning of the establishment of rules and regulations for the operation of the University and explores the role of the State in managing the University's affairs.

Before looking into these issues, I would like to briefly present a historical background of Syria since the late Ottoman ruling with particular reference to the status of the educational sector in Syria over that time, with reference to various texts. Considering the broader environment within which the University of Damascus operates is a vital step towards considering the interplay between the administration of the University and its external environment.

5-2 A brief history of Syria

5-2-1 Syria under the late Ottoman ruling: the emergence of state schools

During the 16th century, as Joarder (1977: 4-6) points out, Syria was a combination of various religious and ethnic groups including, for example, the Sunnis, Shi'a, Alawites, Christians, and Druzes. This diversity of religious values influenced social relationships amongst the various groups in a way that made it difficult for ethnic religious communities to share a set of values and beliefs. The loyalty of an individual was primarily to the ethnic or religious group to which he belonged (Joarder 1977: 6). Under the Ottoman government these religious groups enjoyed a high level of autonomy to administer and regulate their own religious and civil affairs. However, at the same time, there was a lack of inter-group communication. Syria was described as the following:

It would not be wrong to say that there was no Syrian nation and that there were only Syrian communities that lived side by side on the same territory but whose autonomous constitutions and particularistic mentality kept one separated from the other (Rabbath 1928, cited in Joarder 1977: 6-7).

The Ottoman Syria, particularly the Eastern and Southern parts of Syria, was governed traditionally by tribal chiefs who enjoyed independent ruling over their areas. However in

the 1800s this traditional type of authority was weakened and the power of the Ottoman's officials increased (Joarder 1977: 10). Workshops in Syria during the Ottoman ruling took the form of 'small family' shops, which consisted of a boss and his close kin. The relationship between the workers and the boss was characterised by traditional and personal relationships (Allouni 1959: 64).

The Ottoman state did not intervene much in social welfare in areas such as health and education and the majority of its people had not received any formal education. However, the publication industry during the Ottoman ruling was subject to strict and rigid policies that hindered the development of publication in Syria (Cioeta 1979).

The main task of the Ottoman state was to stand against the European occupation, allocating much of their funds to financing the military and administration. The Ottoman government sought to tighten its financial control in Syria (Masters 1992; Thompson 1999). Its main concern was to collect taxes, to raise as much funds as possible, and to maintain its dynasty's prestige in the Syrian districts by presenting itself as Islam's only protector (Masters 1992: 15). The Ottoman government formulated some regulations on trade and set market prices (Thompson 1999). It also supported some educational establishments and the health service by establishing religious schools and hospitals in the major areas. However in the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman government started to spend more money on social affairs and to undertake Tanzimat reforms, creating an imperial bureaucracy to administer its reforms (Commins 1990). The term 'Tanzimat' refers to the improvement and the restructuring of state administration, including educational reform, as well as reforms in technical and social affairs (Acer 2009: 189-190). The Tanzimat reforms were known as a Westernisation movement which aimed to reorganise the Ottoman Empire along the lines of the European model by establishing a powerful state and forming a law force (Acer 2009).

The domination of the law force above any power, Acer (2009) argues, was driven by the secular and democratic movement, which sought to organise the relationship between the State and its citizens and to establish equality between citizens. The Tanzimat reforms brought a significant change to the Ottoman Syria. Tanzimat reforms, Gelvin (1994: 646)

points out, contributed to the modernisation of Syrian-Ottoman culture by enhancing capitalist relations in Ottoman Syria and by establishing enterprises similar to those that dominated the Occidental world. Tanzimat policies also encouraged the development of a centralised bureaucracy to administer the Syrian provinces and the growth of a secular and rational, modern State (Khoury 1991: 1380).

Before the Tanzimat, the culture of Ottoman Syria was characterised by a commitment to tradition and to religious values (Acer, 2009). The superiority of religious values over other values meant that the Ulama⁹ in Damascus enjoyed a high level of esteem and honour (Ma'oz 1992). Ulama were presented as a status group¹⁰ and were conceptualised as an intellectual elite who monopolised the educational and judicial posts (Commins 1990). The subordination to religious values was reflected in educational schools in the way that the curriculum focused on religious issues, and the administration of schools was in the hands of the Ulama, the religious scholars (Commins 1990; Kasmieh 1992).

The educational system was separated from the influence of the State and there were no educational institutes to teach students except some religious schools (Bashshur 1966: 452). Education was treated by Ottoman policy as part of religious affairs. Therefore, the Ottoman government gave communities the right to establish schools and to run them entirely by themselves. The schools were to be ruled by the A'lem¹¹ on the principle of *taqlid*,¹² that is "accepting the rulings of earlier authorities without inquiring into their reasoning" (Commins 1990: 8). In the light of the principle of *taqlid*, when the A'lem dies, his son follows him in teaching and running the school. Religious schools were funded by wealthy Muslims or by local charities which received their funds from *awqaf*¹³.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were no public or 'state' schools in Syria. In Syria and other Arab provinces such as Palestine, learning began with *kuttab*¹⁴ and

⁹ Ulama are the religious scholars.

¹⁰ The category of status group is defined by Max Weber as one "determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honor" (1946 quoted in Commins 1990: 7).

¹¹ A'lem is a singular of Ulama which means a religious scholar.

¹² Taqlid means tradition.

¹³ Awqaf are religious endowments.

¹⁴ Kuttab taught the Koran whereas Madrasa taught the precepts of Islam (Kasmieh 1992: 123). Dasen and Akkari (2008: 227) point out that Kuttab is the basic education established as small learning units to be joined

madrasa, both of which were attached to the mosque (Kasmieh 1992: 123). Curricula usually focused on jurisprudence, Quran recitation, worship, and other religious issues. The Ulama were highly specialised in “*manqul*” or traditional transmitted science, in addition to having some qualifications in “*maqul*” science - that is the rational sciences, such as mathematics, philosophy, logic and astronomy (Commins 1990: 15). In addition to Islamic schools, education in Syria was comprised of Christian schools, which taught the bible, and Arabic language, and which were attached to the Church (Kasmieh 1992: 123).

The above paragraphs reveal that the educational system under the Ottoman ruling operated in a culture characterised to some extent by the domination of religious values, with schools as an extension of the mosque, funded by religious endowments or communities. These schools are similar to the ‘schools of God’ described by Kavanagh (2005, 2009) which are tied to religious institutes such as the Church and are not tied to or influenced by the State.

However, with the introduction of Tanzimat reforms in the late nineteenth century and the building of the Ottoman bureaucracies, the Ottoman education system received great attention from the State as education was seen by the Ottomans as a means to resist European subversion, to propagate Arab nationalism, and to educate future bureaucrats (Thompson 2000: 74). The extension of the Ottoman role into the field of education led to an increase in the number of state schools and to a decrease in the authority of the Ulama, who had previously enjoyed a huge influence over State affairs. In the first decades of the twentieth century, new schools and courts were staffed and run by civil servants, while the Ulama’s role was restricted to that of religious affairs only (Commins 1990: 13-14). The reliance on civil servants in managing the school and the minimization of the Ulama’s power and authority reflected the belief that the Ulama were no longer capable of taking the empire forwards into the future, and were not relevant to the emerging political and social changes in the late Ottoman Syria. At that time, bureaucrats had become the dominant group. Their responsibilities were to direct reforms towards achieving economic prosperity and their expertise fitted with Tanzimat values (Commins 1990: 13).

by young children. Madrasa is an educational unit of a relatively bigger size and with a better structure than Kuttab. It teaches, in addition to the Koran and theology, philosophy and other secular sciences.

Tanzimat bureaucrats, Commins (1990: 14) points out, sought to protect and enhance their own interests in many ways. For example, they established public schools to train future bureaucrats, to teach them Tanzimat values, and to provide them with the science and techniques that seemed important to govern and manage the Empire. State schools in Syria were distributed primarily in the cities, where the urban elite, who were the most likely to become bureaucrats, lived (Thompson 2000: 74). The curricula of state education focused on Islamic lessons, and on Ottoman history, in order to promote loyalty to the government. State education also derived from European models in order to qualify skilled staff or 'cadres' for civil service (Thompson 2000: 78).

Using universities as units for qualifying bureaucrats and for preparing them for civil service has been described by Weber (1974) as a condition that contributes to constraining and undermining the autonomy of educational schools by transforming schools from scholarly-oriented institutes into vocational- or career- oriented institutes. Weber (1974) makes particular reference to universities in the Occidental world such as Germany and points out that the political and economic conditions in the Occidental world in the modern age played a role in threatening and repressing scholarly ethics, by which he means the autonomy of universities. He addresses the hostility to scholarly ethics in both the commercialization of universities (turning educational institutes into market-oriented institutions) and the intervention of the State into University affairs that causes a threat to academic freedom.

The State can intervene in regulating administrative, financial, and scholarly affairs at universities. The degree of the State's control of University affairs determines the level of autonomy a University enjoys and the degree of centralisation of its academic administration. The supervision of the State over the higher education sector in Syria nowadays has been shaped through changes that Syria has witnessed over time and which I will go on to explore further. The next section gives the background to Syria during the French mandate and the United Arab Republic. This period of Syrian history is of particular interest because Syria witnessed changes during this time that prepared the ground for further intervention of the State in higher education.

5-2-2 Syria during the French mandate and the United Arab Republic: State supervision over the economy

During the French mandate, Syria entered a new stage with the establishment of the republic and the introduction of representative government in the form of a parliament and a cabinet (Bashshur 1966: 454). Syria witnessed further intervention of the French government into social services - including education, health, agriculture, economic and labour policy, and communication services - compared to under the Ottoman Empire (Thompson 2000: 62). Social affairs were retained as the main task undertaken directly by the highest level of the State. In the 1920s and 1930s, the French established a centralised administration, the High Commissioner, which was characterised by a hierarchical structure of administration, with a centralised form of power. The tasks of the High Commissioner focused primarily on planning, coordinating, and controlling the financial aspects of State administration. In the field of education, the tasks of the High Commissioner included the authorization of and the supervision of educational institutes. The French introduced, for instance, a national system of education (Bashshur 1966: 454) and set the principles of public education administration, laid out the educational standards and organised State examinations (i.e. the French baccalaureate examination) (Bashshur 1966; Longrigg 1968).

The power relationship between the State and civilians was defined by rules and norms laid down by French bureaucracy. These rules and norms constituted 'the colonial civic order' upon which the relationship between the State and its citizens was constructed (Thompson 2000: 65). The colonial civic order in Syria during the French ruling was characterised by paternalism. According to the paternalistic model of social order, male citizens dominate society, constructing a male hierarchy where men have authority over women. Privileges and benefits are allocated not according to the rights of citizens but according to the whims of the rulers (Thompson, 2000: 67). In a culture characterised by such a colonial civic order, the concentration of important decisions in the hands of French bureaucrats, who tightly controlled local government, was not abnormal.

When the union between Syria and Egypt took place in 1958, the union was perceived by the Arabs as a significant political event in the Arab world, as a symbol of the aspired-for unification of Arab nations. The union of Syria with Egypt (the United Arab Republic, or UAR) brought Syria and Egypt closer together with regard to economic, social, and educational issues (Potter, 1961). The new economic philosophy of the United Arab Republic is summarised by Keilany (1973: 63) in three main objectives: firstly, to achieve an equal distribution of wealth among citizens through agrarian reforms which limited the ownership of land and promised to redistribute land which exceeded the maximum limit of ownership; secondly, to remove private monopoly through shrinking private ownership in the economic sector and nationalizing most of the industrial and service institutions; thirdly, to increase government involvement in guiding and steering the economy through introducing central economic planning. The government intervened in specifying the number of members on the board of directors in both public and private companies and prescribed the salaries allocated to them (Aziz-al Ahsan 1984: 305).

The new economic philosophy transformed Syrian economy from that of a 'laissez faire' policy (Keilany, 1973: 70) or 'free enterprise economy' (Aziz-al Ahsan 1984: 301) into a centrally-planned economy. When Syria joined the United Arab Republic with Egypt, the Syrian economy witnessed fundamental changes driven by the 'socialism' movement, which was advocated and led by the president Nasser in order to achieve social justice and a booming economy (Aziz-al Ahsan 1984; Keilany 1973). The task of socialism was to convert the economy from being monopolised by the private ownership of businesses, which enjoyed freedom from governmental control and intervention, and transform it into a 'socialist economy' intensively owned and controlled by the State (Aziz-al Ahsan 1984; Keilany 1973; Devlin 1983). The expansion of the State's role in regulating the economy and its control of the strategic decisions in the country shaped the authoritarian agenda of the State that governed Syria by exclusive power relations which gave the State the right to interfere in regulating the economy (Hinnebusch 1993: 246; Perthes 1992a: 224; Tripp 2001: 204), contributing to the development of over-centralised bureaucracy and an authoritarian structure where important decisions were kept at the high level of bureaucracy (Perthes 1992a: 224).

When the union with Egypt ended in 1961, the State went further in the process of nationalisation and the socialist movement became harsher than that undertaken during the union from 1958 to 1961 (Aziz-al Ahsan 1984: 306). In 1965, for instance, and as a result of nationalisation, the State owned and controlled all banks, insurance companies and energy companies, most of the import and export trade, and most of the industrial sector in addition to a substantial portion of transportation. The State continued to squeeze the private sector. The Syrian economy was closed to the outside world (Aziz-al Ahsan 1984; Perthes 1992b). The Syrian government, for instance, banned the import of luxurious goods such as carpets and electrical equipment (Aziz-al Ahsan 1984).

The nationalisation process undertaken in the late 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, and the State's increased control of the economy, were expanded to include the higher education sector in Syria (Sa'eed 2007; Shoman 2005). In 1963, for instance, the President of the National Council of Revolution Leadership issued a legislative decree No 168, which nationalised textbooks at the University of Damascus in order to sell them to students at a very cheap price (The Official Newspaper of the Syrian Arab Republic 1963, No 42: 8812). The nationalised textbooks, according to the decree, had to be published and printed by the directorate of publication at the University and used in teaching for at least three years. I will elaborate on this point further in the next chapter.

The philosophy of education in both countries was guided by aims to achieve the national objectives of the Arab world and to revive Arab culture. This philosophy was clearly defined in the first article of 'the law of organizing the universities in the United Arab Republic' (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 10). The law in article 33 makes it clear that universities should be directed to achieving the national objectives of the State. The law stipulates that "the higher council of the universities should draw the general policy of higher education and of scholarly research at the universities and direct it to meet the needs of the State and to achieve the social, economic, cultural, and scholarly objectives of the State" (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 13). The law unified the regulations and rules in the universities¹⁵ spread throughout both Syria and Egypt. The law brought the

¹⁵ The universities regulated by the 1958 law of organizing the universities in UAR are the University of Cairo, the University of Alexandria, the University of Assiut, the University of Ain Shams in Egypt, and the University of Damascus, and the University of Aleppo in Syria.

universities in Syria and Egypt together into a centralised form of administration steered by the Ministry of Higher Education, which tended to regulate the operation of all universities in the United Arab Republic by the same rules and to homogenise universities' educational policy throughout the republic.

With the issue of the Law for Organising the Universities in the United Arab Republic in 1958, the academics in all universities in the UAR were subject to unified rules to regulate their academic careers; rules regarding issues such as recruitment, promotion, the transferral of an academic from one University to another, salaries, retirement, and scholarly leave including for instance sabbatical leave and sending academics abroad for short periods of time for attending conferences or doing scholarly research (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 15-19). These rules were studied by the senate at the universities in the Republic, approved by the higher council of the universities and then passed up from the Minister of Education to the President of State to be issued formally by a decree from the President (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 12). Therefore, no modification to the Law for Organising the Universities and its executive rules could be made without going through a long hierarchal process ending with the official approval of the state president. This situation resulted in a stagnation of the rules regulating the universities' affairs.

5-2-3 Syria in the late twentieth century onwards: signs for change and the implications on the higher education sector

In the 1970s, the Syrian government adopted a political strategy known as *infatih* through which the government attempted to release its control of the economy and encourage the role of private and foreign investment by opening the economy to the external world and to domestic private enterprise, and by introducing policies which were more friendly to foreign and local private investment (Perthes 1992a: 209, 1992b: 50). The government, for instance, allowed for mixed joint investment in the transportation and tourism sector. In 'mixed' investments, the State owns a minor portion of the share while the majority of the share is owned by private capitals coming either from Syria or the Arab world. However, the ideology of the State, which adhered to leading Syria toward socialism and to privilege

the role of the public sector in guiding the economy, made the process of privatisation very slow and cautious (Perthes 1992b: 53).

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Syrian economy had witnessed further changes. According to the '9th Five-Year Plan of the State 2000-2005'¹⁶, the government attempted to reform the economy, which was suffering from stagnation, an imbalance of the economic sectors, a high rate of unemployment, and a reduction in investment and economic growth. Furthermore, the Syrian economy had to respond to the State's new aspirations to open to the external world by making efforts to prepare the ground for accommodating various types of investments (The State Planning Commission 2000).

At its tenth national conference, the Al-Baath Arab socialist party put forward a framework to shift the Syrian economy from being a centrally-planned economy to a social-market economy and to prepare the economy to meet the demands of the twenty-first century and become more competitive (The State Planning Commission 2006). The shift to a new economy, according to the 10th Five-Year Plan of the State 2006-2010, was associated with projects to achieve political, social and administrative reforms. 'Innovative vision' was the slogan of the Al-Baath party which was to be implemented and translated into reality through the 10th Five-Year Plan of the State (The State Planning Commission 2006). A social-market economy is based upon the idea that the economy is regulated by the mechanism of supply and demand, but at the same time is directed by the State. State intervention in economic activities, according to the State Plan, is legitimated through its attempts to invest in projects which seem unattractive to the private sector, and is designed to regulate the economy by establishing a legal framework and setting rules that ensure the social responsibilities of investors and suppress monopoly and exploitation. However, rules and regulations should not threaten market competition. Rather competition should be secured by opening the economy to the market and by encouraging private and foreign investments.

¹⁶ The 'ninth Five-Year Plan of the State 2000-2005' shows that the state was heavily and increasingly reliant on extractive and agricultural products (The State Planning Commission 2000).

As the Syrian economy entered a new stage by transforming it from being a centrally-planned economy to a market-social economy, ideas of development, modernization, and reformation have emerged and penetrated the financial, social and educational sectors in an attempt to meet the demands of the new economy. This has resulted in the need to modernise the rules, reforming both the public and the private sectors, removing bureaucratic obstacles to encourage private and foreign investments (The State Planning Commission 2006).

At the level of higher education, the HE sector has witnessed changes through introducing multiple learning including open, virtual, parallel, and private learning¹⁷ (Ministry of Higher Education 2008). Up till 2000, the higher educational sector included just four state universities funded mainly by the government. However, by 2008 the sector included six public universities with 106 faculties distributed in all Syrian cities. The sector also accommodated 12 private universities with another 8 private universities under construction (Ministry of Higher Education 2008: 7). The development of the higher education sector has become the main concern of the Ministry. The coordinator of the Syria National Tempus office comments: ‘in recognition of the important role of higher education in the field of human resource development, the reform of the higher education system is currently a priority for Syria’ (Syria National TEMPUS Office 2004: 7).

The Ministry of Higher Education, with the collaboration of the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, has established the 'SHERN'¹⁸ project, which aims to build a network for connecting all public universities in Syria and for providing an Internet connection (Ministry of Higher Education 2004). The TEMPUS office was established in higher education in 2002 as a tool to reform and upgrade the academic institutes. TEMPUS is a program run by the European Community in order to improve the higher education system in partner countries. It achieves its target through funding projects, exchanging

¹⁷ Virtual learning is distant learning provided by the Syrian Virtual University. It aims to promote e-learning through providing online curricula and making agreements with foreign universities. The headquarters of the Syrian Virtual University is the Ministry of Higher Education in Damascus (Ministry of Higher Education 2004). Parallel learning is a fee-paying programme which aims to expand higher education to include those students whose scores at the baccalaureate stage do not qualify them to join the regular learning at Syrian public higher education institutions. Private learning is a form of learning which is provided by private or joint venture educational institutions in Syria (Ministry of Higher Education 2004).

¹⁸ SHERN stands for the Syrian Higher Education and Research Network.

academics and knowledge between European members and partner countries and between the partner countries themselves (Syria National TEMPUS Office 2004: 11). The TEMPUS program has run a number of projects to develop curricula in selected faculties at Damascus University, Aleppo University, al-Baath University, Tishreen University, and the Higher Institute of Applied Sciences & Technology (Syria National TEMPUS Office 2004). The TEMPUS program has also undertaken projects for structural reforms and has set up a framework for establishing electronic libraries.

At a University level, the University of Damascus introduced Open and Parallel learning in 2000. By introducing these programmes, the University of Damascus has shifted its recruitment towards targeting greater numbers of students by accepting students into the University regardless of their age and with qualifications less than those required to enrol on regular courses at the University. Open and Parallel programs have provided the University with additional financial resources through the tuition fees from their programmes.

The University has also undertaken horizontal expansion and has established faculty branches in other provinces. The University has opened faculties of education, economics, and literature in Dara and faculties of agriculture, education and literatures in Sweda. Table (5.1) shows the number of faculties and the departments at the University of Damascus distributed in the three provinces: Damascus, Dara and Sweda.

Province	number of faculties	number of departments
Damascus	17	114
Dara	3	3
Sweda	4	4

Table (5.1) The number of faculties and academic departments at the University of Damascus distributed in the Syrian provinces. Source (Ministry of Higher Education 2008: 10)

With regard to educational affairs, the University has started to establish joint educational programs at a postgraduate level with the cooperation of foreign universities. In 2003, the faculty of civil engineering at the University of Damascus carried out a project to develop a programme in water resources management with the cooperation of Austria and Germany (Syria National TEMPUS Office 2004: 17). A two-year Master's degree in banking and finance, a Master's in industrial systems and security management, and a Master's in repairing ruins and ancient buildings are other examples of joint degree courses established recently at the university (Syria National TEMPUS Office 2004). The University has also established programs in Persian, Japanese, and German at the faculty of literature. The University has been allowed for the first time to establish academic programs in postgraduate studies to be taught in foreign languages. The President of the University points out that the establishment of joint programmes will enhance the international relationship between the State's universities and foreign universities and will facilitate developing the new programs needed for the labour market (Mualla 2007).

With regard to the administration of the University of Damascus, a new Law for Organising Universities in Syria was issued in 2006 to replace the Law for Organising the Universities of 1975. The new law brought some changes to the administration of the University. In this context the President of the University of Damascus comments:

The new Law for Organising the Universities has advantages. One of these advantages is that the law gives the universities more relative autonomy. It also reduces teaching quorum and improves the income of academics in order to encourage academics towards full time work (Mualla 2006: 11).

The Law for Organising the Universities has defined Syrian Universities¹⁹, including the University of Damascus as the following:

¹⁹ The universities which are operating under the Law for Organising Universities in Syria are: the University of Damascus, the University of Aleppo, the University of Tashreen, the University of Albath, and any public university established by a law which stipulates the submission of that university to the Law of Organising Universities. (Ministry of Higher Education 2006).

Universities are scholarly and public entities with an administrative character. Each enjoys a moral personality and a financial and administrative independency as specified by this law and its executive rules.

The University of Damascus, for example, according to the University Act²⁰ 2006, seeks advancement in science, technology, and the arts. It also seeks the enrichment of human civilization and the achievement of economic and social development in the Syrian Arab public. The social responsibility of the University is defined by the Act as providing education to every citizen qualified to engage in higher education. The University also aims to encourage cultural and scholarship activities and to achieve a high level of interaction between the University and its institutions on the one hand, and society and its various cultural, social and economic institutions on the other hand (Ministry of Higher Education 2006).

The new law gives the University of Damascus relative autonomy as some authority has been delegated from the Minister of Higher Education to the President of the University (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). According to the new University Act 2006, academics, for instance, can move from one University to another without the need for approval from the Minister of Higher Education while previously they did need such approval. The Act also relieves academics from the rigidity of bureaucratic procedures, particularly those respecting changing curricula. Previously, changing curricula required issuing a decree by the President (Ministry of Higher Education 1975) - a process that can take years.

With regard to scholarly affairs, the new Act of 2006 reduces the period given to academics to do research abroad from six months (according to the 1975 act) to four months. The new law also outlines how research in each faculty needs to be carried out in 'research units' which every full-time member of academic staff must join. The amount of scholarly work required from each academic in order to qualify for promotion to a higher academic rank has also increased according to the new law. Despite these changes, the new Law for Organising the Universities 2006 does not bring any considerable change to the way the

²⁰ I use the term 'The University Act' and 'The Law for Organising Universities' interchangeably throughout this study.

University operates and regulates its academics' financial and scholarly affairs. Rules that specify the role and responsibilities of the Council of Higher Education, of the University's senate, and of faculty and department boards have remained the same. The Law for Organising the Universities 2006, like the Law for Organising the Universities in the United Arab Republic in 1958, brings the University of Damascus and the other public universities in Syria into a centralised form of administration which regulates the Syrian public universities according to unified rules. The current law for organising Syrian public universities, including the University of Damascus, has a historical background which gives birth to the way the University is operating nowadays.

Having explored a brief history of Syria since the late Ottoman ruling and highlighted some of the changes Syria has witnessed at a national level over time, I will turn now to present an account of the history of the University of Damascus, drawing heavily on the archival/documentary material and supported with established literature on the history of the University of Damascus. Presenting an account of the history of the University deepens our understanding of the context of the University of Damascus. In the history of the University I focus mainly on how the University of Damascus has been regulated over time, considering the attempts made by the government to bureaucratise the University by subjecting it to formal rules for its running and which have constructed the relationship of the University with the State in a particular way.

5-3 The University of Damascus in its historical context: The relationship of the University with the State.

The University of Damascus is the biggest University in the Syrian Arabic Republic and is the first University established in the Arab World. Its history can be tracked back to the beginning of the twentieth century when Syria was ruled by the Ottomans. This section charts the development of the academic administration at the University, from the Ottoman period, when there was little evidence of utilising rules which could impose constraints on academic careers, through the various stages of 'bureaucratisation'. The primary role of the

State during the Ottoman ruling was to fund the University without taking an active role in guiding its higher education strategy. However, the relationship between the University and the State was later reshaped to give the State more supervision over its higher education policy. In the following sections I will look in more depth into the history of the University of Damascus, demonstrating the successive attempts to bureaucratise the University and its consequences on shaping the relationship of the University with the State.

5-3-1 The university of Damascus under the late Ottoman ruling and under the Arabic Government

University of Damascus was established in 1903 when the Sultan Abdull Hamid II asked the Ottoman ministry of education and the governor of Syrian province, Nazim Basha, to establish a medical school in Damascus (Rafeq 2004). The Ottoman government allocated 10,000 Turkish pounds collected from taxes paid by slaughterhouses for the school's construction. The school was opened on the first of September in 1903, on the same day as the Ottoman provinces were celebrating the anniversary of the inauguration of the Sultan Abdull Hamid II. The opening ceremony of the school was attended by Nazim Basha, Hakki Bash - the general of the fifth Ottoman army in Syria - and some of the military physicians, governmental functionaries and Alayaan (Rafeq 2004).

When the school was opened it comprised only two degree programs: medicine and pharmacy (Bashshur 1966; Rafeq 2004). The duration of study was six years for medicine and three years for pharmacy. The curricula were the same as that in the medical school in Istanbul and were taught in both Turkish and French (Rafeq 2004). Students were accepted at the school without any tuition fees. The number of graduates at medicine school since the school was established in 1903 up until 1918, when the Ottoman ruling ended, was 110 graduates in medicine and 152 graduates pharmacy (Alshattee 1960, 1963).

The academic staff at the school of medicine were either military physicians sent from Istanbul to teach at the school or physicians who had joined the Ottoman forces in Damascus. The academics at the medical school in Damascus shared certain aspects with

their counterparts at the medical school in Istanbul. However, they differed in that they did not gain promotion to higher military ranks corresponding with promotions in their academic careers, whilst the academics in the medical school in Istanbul did (Khater 1924). Later in 1910, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Defence in Istanbul agreed to choose their academic staff from beyond the military physicians who received their salaries from the army. So the staff at the medical school were made up of two groups of teachers: retired military teachers and civic teachers. The teachers were classified into three levels according to the salaries given to them: teachers with a salary of 3000 paisters²¹ per month, teachers with a salary of 2500 paisters, and teachers with a salary of 2000 paisters per month (Atasoy, cited in Rafeq 2004).

Since the establishment of the University of Damascus, the relationship of the University with the State started to be shaped. The University of Damascus, for instance, was staffed by teachers who were civil servants and whose recruitment and salaries were decided by a governmental body (Khater 1924). The academics had to be selected by Ministry of Education in Istanbul after they passed a test. However, it was not until the French ruling that the university started to witness greater intervention from the government in regulating its affairs.

By 1913, the law school was opened in Beirut and then moved to Damascus by the beginning of the First World War. Both law and medical schools witnessed instability during the war and were closed by the end of Ottoman ruling. However, the schools²² were reopened during the Arabic government, which made an effort to ‘Arabise’ the curriculum (Rafeq 2004).

During the Arabic ruling 1918-1920, the schools of law and medicine were renamed the ‘Syrian university’ and were headed by Rida Saeed, the manager of the medical institute. The University kept its name of the ‘Syrian University’ under French mandate and the

²¹ Paister is a fractional monetary unit in Syria (the smallest coin in Syrian currency)

²² During the Arabic ruling, Alasema Newspaper referred to the schools by different names; sometimes the newspaper used “Arabic medical school” or “Arabic medical institute” and “Arabic law school”, or “Arabic law institute”.

name of the University was printed on the certificates issued by the schools (Alkateb 2000; Sabeh 1987)²³.

In 1919, both the law school and the medical school were regulated by the Syrian University Act of 1919. Through the application of this Act, the law school and the medical school each had their own rules for regulating administration and students' affairs (Alasema Newspaper 1919, No 1). The 1919 Act was divided into ten chapters, each dealing with a particular matter. Chapters one, two, and three of the Act dealt with issues concerning student admission and mobility. The Alasema Newspaper (1919, No 1; 1920, No 148) showed that students were asked to pass particular exams in order to enrol in medical school. They also had to pass a medical test to prove their fitness and ability to study and practise their chosen career.

Chapters four, five and six of the 1919 Act were mainly concerned with issues surrounding administration and discipline. The remaining chapters considered rules and regulations for financial affairs, examinations, and organising degree programmes at the law and medical schools. With regards to administration at the law and medical schools, the Syrian University Act of 1919 stipulated that all teaching affairs, including the introduction or withdrawal of teaching material, were assigned to the teachers' senate, which was comprised of the teachers and the Head of the school and was responsible for managing all educational affairs in the school. The school represented a professional bureaucracy that was occupied and led by academic staff. Article 23 of the Act stipulated that the teachers' senate at the medical school had to meet every week, whilst the senate at the law school had to meet every month. In the case of necessity, the Heads of the schools had the right to ask the senates to hold an exceptional meeting. When the Head retired, the teachers' senate nominates one member from among the senate members to be elected for the position. However, the Head of the school had to be appointed formally by a decision made by Ministry of Education (The Syrian University Act, 1919, Material 21).

²³ In his article, Sabeh showed a copy of a certificate issued by the medical institute; the certificate carried the name of the Kingdom of Syria in the top middle of the certificate, the name of the Syrian University at the top right-hand side, and the name of the medical institute in the top right side of the certificate. The certificate also carried the signature of the Minister of Education and of the President of the University.

In addition to the teachers' senate, the law and the medical schools were managed by an administrative committee, which was comprised of the Head of the school and two of the teachers. The administrative committee was responsible for managing the administrative affairs in the schools including disciplinary acts. All official documents regarding administration at the schools, student matters, and the formal correspondence between the schools and Ministry of Education had to be kept by a clerk at the school.

An examination of the Syrian University Act of 1919 shows no evidence of intervention from Ministry of Education in regulating educational affairs at the schools and the task of managing educational matters seems to have been assigned to the teachers' senate. Teachers at the schools were subject to few rules regulating their work at the schools. With regard to teaching matters, the 1919 Act just stipulated that teachers had to attend their classes at the specified times and days. They also had to sign an attendance form before they entered their classes.

Teaching matters were subject to further bureaucratisation under French ruling as more rules were in place for regulating academic administration and which put the Higher Education strategic policy in the hands of the State. I will explore this point in more detail in the next section.

5-3-2 The University of Damascus under the French mandate: a shift towards a centralised model of administration

By the beginning of the French ruling, the University was facing many challenges that threatened its survival. For instance, many French people were calling for the University's closure because of its competition to the French medical institute in Beirut (Rafeq, 2004). The French government also did not grant the University official recognition, and the certificates issued by the University were neither accredited by the neighbouring countries (i.e. Palestine and Egypt) nor by the Syrian provinces²⁴(Rafeq 2004). This situation led students to protest to Colonel Katro, the representative of the High Commissioner in

²⁴ Syria was divided into three provinces: Damascus, Aleppo, and the Alalaween province.

Damascus, about their lack of accredited certificates. These circumstances encouraged the French government to undertake reforms and to regulate the University. (Instruction Publique 1921, cited in Rafeq 2004).

The Syrian University, by the beginning of the French ruling, was enjoying a similar degree of financial and administrative autonomy to that under the Arab ruling. In a letter sent by Rida Sa'aed, the manager of medical school, to the consultant of French education on the first of December 1920, Sa'aed pointed out that the school had an independent budget and was profitable (Instruction Publique 1920, cited in Rafeq 2004). Sa'aed pointed out that the medical school's revenue in 1920 amounted to four times the costs, and were collected from its own resources including fees (tuition fees, registry fees, certificate fees, examination fees) and from slaughterhouses taxes. He tried in his letter to convince French administration that the school could fund itself and would not be a burden on the government (Instruction Publique 1920, cited in Rafeq 2004).

The schools continued to receive their funds from fees and taxes till 1923 when they were put under the supervision of the executive authority of the state by legislation No 132. The legislation was signed by the then-President of Syria, Subhi Barakat, and approved by the High Commissioner Weghan (Instruction Publique, cited in Rafeq 2004).

According to the legislation, the administration of the University was linked to the directorate of civil affairs, which was responsible for studying and examining all issues related to the University including the University's regulations proposed by the senate. The directorate also was responsible for studying the University's funding decisions as the manager of the directorate had to examine these decisions, comment on them and then pass them to the President for approval (Instruction Publique, cited in Rafeq 2004). At the same time as the Syrian University was being regulated, the University got official recognition from the French government²⁵ (Rafeq, 2004). However, by issuing legislation No 283 by Pierre Alype in 1926, which replaced the legislation 132, the University was no longer linked to the directorate of public civil affairs; instead, it was attached to Ministry of

²⁵ Rafeq (2004) points out that Syrian university got official recognition from the French government on the 15th of June 1923 and this is the same day the French administration had issued decree No 132 to regulate the University.

Education (Alasema Newspaper 1926, part 7: 44). Contrary to legislation No 132, which was issued with the participation of Syrian representatives and signed by the president of the state, the new legislation was signed and approved by the French administration during the absence of the Syrian president. Legislation No 283 carries the signature of the representative of the High Commissioner in Damascus, De Reffye, and was signed and approved by the High Commissioner, Pierre Alype, and the consultant of the education ministry, Perier De Feral (Alasema Newspaper 1926, part 7: 34).

The University, according to the legislation, enjoys its own moral personality and an independent budget funded from the University's fees and governmental funds. However, legislation No 283 ensured that the Syrian University is more aligned to the state. The President of the University and the Heads of the institutes, as mentioned earlier, now had to be appointed by the President of the State as legislation No 283 stipulates (Alasema Newspaper 1926, Part 7: 45). Legislation No 283 was divided into two main chapters; the first chapter considered issues with regards to the University and its administration as a whole and the second chapter dealt with the administration of the institutes.

According to legislation No 283, each institute had to be run by a senate, which was responsible for studying the fiscal, scholarly and administrative issues in the institute including funding, curriculum plans, recruitment procedures, and the internal rules of the institute. Each institute had to be headed by a manager secretly elected by the academics at the institute and formally appointed by a decision from the President of the State (Alasema Newspaper 1926, part 7: 45-6). The University had to be run by a President chosen from the Heads of the institutes and appointed by decree for a three year term. The President of the University had to head a senate, which was comprised of three academics chosen from each institute and secretly elected by their colleagues (Alasema Newspaper 1926, Part 7: 45). The senate was responsible for studying the University's affairs and the internal regulation of the institutes.

Alype pointed out that with the issue of the new legislation (legislation No 283), the University administration would enjoy more stability²⁶. However, the new legislation gave

²⁶ According to legislation No 283, the President of the University and the Heads of institutes are to be appointed for three years, while they were appointed for only one year according to the old legislation. The

the state more supervision over the University as the *scholarly, administrative and financial* issues of the University had to be discussed with the Minister of Education and had to get the approval of the Minister, the President of the State and the High Commissioner. With regard to *scholarly affairs*, the State had some control over educational matters as new programmes of study could not be introduced at the schools without the permission of the Minister of Education, the President of the State and the High Commissioner.

Legislation No 283 also gave the State control over administrative affairs at the University. For example, proposals suggested by the University regarding either recruiting or ending the service of academic staff had to be examined by the Minister of Education and approved by the President of the State and the High Commissioner. The approval of the President of the State and the High Commissioner was also required to regulate the internal affairs of the University. The legislation stipulated that the Minister of Education had to study the regulations of the University, the academic programmes, the timetable of classes, issues surrounding sending students to France for training, and the constitution of examination committees. The Minister then had to comment on those issues and to pass them up to the President of the State and the High Commissioner to be approved by them (Alasema Newspaper 1926, Part 7: 44-45).

The University was subject to further rules for regulating exams, competitions, and curricula²⁷ in the institutes, and for recruiting and promoting academic staff. (The Official Prospectus of the Syrian State 1932, No, 3: 26-32). Legislation No.3637 shows that academic staff were classified into four groups ranging from teaching assistants to teaching professors. The minimum and maximum weekly teaching hours (quorum) assigned to teachers, salaries allocated to academic staff, and the requirements for recruitment and promotion were also specified in legislation No. 3637 (The Official Prospectus of the Syrian State 1932, No, 3: 31). Subjecting workers, including academics, to rules outlining the terms and conditions of their recruitment, promotion, and salaries, for example, was

longer duration of appointment for the position could contribute to the stability of the University's administration, Alype pointed out (Rafeq, 2004).

²⁷ Legislation No 3637 stipulates that lessons (curricula) can only be changed and developed by a decision issued from the President of the State in the light of a recommendation made by the President of the university (The Official Prospectus of the Syrian State, 1932, No 3, p. 31).

driven by a political goal to protect citizens from arbitrary behaviour and political influence (Alasema Newspaper 1926, part 5: 45-46). In 1926, for instance, the French administration issued labour laws to regulate civil servants in public institutes in Syria.

The French administration was aware that public institutes in the Syrian State in general lacked a strong and fair system for recruiting and promoting civil servants. This is clearly demonstrated in the report a French officials named De Reffye sent to Alype, the High commissioner at Syrian-French government, in which he writes:

My senior the High Commissioner

The selection of functionaries (civil servants) in the Syrian state, their promotion and discipline are still not subject to explicit and clear rules, so there is a lot of abuse. And recruitments are not justified on the grounds of qualifications..., and firing civil servants sometimes happens on the grounds of political reasons. Therefore, there is an imperative necessity to secure sufficient guarantees for civil servants and to protect them from political changes in order to build a cohesive organisation of civil servants. The proposal submitted avoids the faults mentioned above and the large part of the proposal has been suggested by Mr. Dalila Dee Luj. He has specified the requirements for selecting civil servants from different backgrounds and it is not allowed, according to the proposed rules, to recruit any civil servant until s/he passes a test which confirms the competence of the candidate. The promotion of a civil servant is conditioned by the approval of a promotion panel...The disciplinary procedures should be undertaken against any civil servant only after an investigation of the case, hearing the defence of the civil servant and taking into account the comments (judgement) made by the disciplinary board (Alasema Newspaper 1926, part 5: 45).

The proposal, De Refye pointed out, respects the principle of power division and protects civil servants from fallacious or arbitrary accusations. It also secures the rights of civil servants and enables them to claim their rights easily. The proposal requires establishing a

ladder for promoting civil servants, allocating salaries for each rank and grade, and specifying the qualifications and requirements that candidates for certain positions should meet. De Refye pointed out that the rules proposed are to be applied to all civil servants except judges, members of Shura council, the police, and the heads of the administrative districts, who would be subject to special rules. In March 1926, Alype issued legislation No. 135 to regulate labour in the Syrian State. The legislation consists of six chapters and 39 articles which deal mainly with issues regarding recruitment, promotion, and disciplinary procedures (Alasema Newspaper 1926, part 5). Legislation No. 135 regulated administration at the Syrian University. However, academics were subject to a special legislation, as I outlined earlier, to regulate their work conditions and their recruitment and promotion.

The above paragraphs demonstrate the supervision of the State over civil servants' affairs by initiating projects to recruit and promote civil servants including the administrators and academics at the University of Damascus. In addition to the supervision of the State over administrative issues such as recruitment and promotion, the State also supervised educational affairs at the Syrian University. Starting new programmes of study or establishing new schools under the French mandate, for instance, could not happen without the approval of the State which resulted in delays in carrying out projects. In 1925, for instance, an attempt was made by Bihja Albeetar, a member of the Arabic scholarly foundation, to establish the school of literature at the Syrian University (Almuktabas Newspaper 1925); however his attempts failed. In 1926, Ministry of Education, with the support of the Minister himself, prepared a proposal to found the school of literature (Almuktabas Newspaper 1926). The Ministry studied the school's proposed programmes of study and the budget allocated to it. However, it was not until 1928 when the school was finally established after endeavours made by the minister himself. In his diaries, Mohammad Kurd Ali, the Minister of Education, commented: "I invested the opportunity of being at the Ministry and established the high school of literature and attached it to the Syrian university. I also facilitated and prepared for the establishment of the faculty of theology at the University" (Kurd Ali 1971: 343).

In addition to the supervision of the State over educational and administrative issues, the French legislation No. 283 gave the State considerable control over the University's

financial affairs. The University, according to the legislation, was mainly to be funded by the State in addition to funds collected from tuition fees and grants. Funds allocated to the University had to be decided by the Minister of Education and get the approval of the President of State and the High Commissioner. The University's funds, according to the legislation, were considered public funds to be audited in accordance to Generally Accepted Accounting Principle GAAP (Alasema Newspaper 1926, Part 7: 45).

The State's financial control of the University rendered the University further in the grasp of the political authority whose approval on any proposals suggested by the University was vital. The concentration of financial decisions at the top level resulted in delays in carrying out functions and sometimes in suspending the University's planned projects. Since 1923, the University had lost some of its control over the budget. In his diaries, Kurd Ali (1948) illustrated that in 1929, for instance, the University had decided to allocate 204,370 Syrian Lebanese pounds to its budget and had asked the approval of Muhammad Kurd Ali, the Minister of Education. The government decided to reduce the budget by 75,000 pounds, claiming that the amount would be allocated to establish primary schools (Kurd Ali 1948: 433). However, students at the University protested against the government's decision, claiming that it would paralyze the University's functions. The government withdrew its decision; however, it reduced the University's budget in the following year (1930) to 196,133 Syrian pounds (Kurd Ali 1948: 433).

The pressure on the University continued, as did the attempts to shrink its financial autonomy (Rafeq 2004). The University also did not receive its grants on time which resulted in suspending a number of reform projects the University was planning to do. Furthermore, the directorate of finance claimed that the University did not have the right to have its own budget and insisted that the surplus the University made by the end of the year had to be returned and to be injected into the budget of the directorate of finance (Rafeq 2004).

Over time, the Syrian University (The University of Damascus) was subjected to laws which replaced the French laws. In 1958, for instance, the University operated under the legislative law No. 184. The law was named "the Law for Organising the Universities in the United Arab Republic" because it was issued during the union of Syria with Egypt.

That law has constituted the basis of ‘the Law for Organising Universities 2006’ in the light of which the University of Damascus now operates. The next section illustrates how the Law for Organising the Universities in the United Arab Republic has shaped the relationship of the universities with the republic including that of the University of Damascus with the State, which has left its mark on today's University-State relationship.

5-3-3 The University of Damascus during the United Arab Republic and beyond

Universities in the United Arab Republic operated under the supervision of Ministry of Education, which was located in Cairo and headed by the central minister. The role of the central minister was to coordinate the educational strategies of the universities in both the southern (Egypt) and the northern region (Syria) (Potter 1961). In addition to the central minister, each of those two regions had an executive minister, who in turn had to report to and consult the central minister about educational issues in their regions (Potter 1961). When Syria joined the union with Egypt in 1958, the universities in both Egypt and Syria were linked together by the Higher Council of the Universities (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 13).

The Higher Council was comprised of academic members, including the manager and the vice manager and a professor from each University, and five non-academic members, who had to be selected by the Minister of Education (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 13). The council was responsible for studying issues concerning the strategic planning of learning and research, strategies for finance, and the coordination of scholarly affairs among the universities in the republic. The council, according to the 1958 law, had to be headed by the manager of the University of Cairo, who enjoys the same authority as that given to the Minister. In the case of his absence, the most senior manager of the University had to head the council (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 13). Each University, according to the law, operated in a hierarchical way through the departments, faculty boards, the University senate and the Higher Council of the Universities. The law specified rules not only for recruiting and promoting academic staff but also for regulating the additional administrative aspects of academic careers such as seconding academic staff, and the mobility of academics from one department to another within and among the

universities. The law also specified the responsibilities and rights of academics and rules for sick and scholarly leave, and ending service (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 15-17).

The Universities Act of 1958, which regulated the universities in the Republic, was issued by the President of the Republic, Jamal Abdull Naser, after negotiation with the State Cabinet (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 9). According to the 1958 law, the managers of the universities, the vice managers, the provost, and the Head of the Higher Council of the Universities had to be appointed by the President in the light of a recommendation made by the Minister of Education (the Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 11, 13). The financial regulations at the universities had to be approved by the President as well. (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 11).

The executive rules of the universities in the United Arab Republic which regulated enrolment policy, tuition fees, the duration of study, curricula development, the responsibilities and authorities assigned to the universities' managers, councils, deans, and provost had to be issued by the President in the light of recommendations made by the Higher Council of the Universities and after the approval of the Minister of Education (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 12). The approval of the Minister of Education and the President of the State was required for some decisions such as opening new departments, institutes, and faculties at the University (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 10-11). The approval of the Minister was also required to run academic affairs. If an academic wanted to teach in another University or wanted to travel abroad for scholarly purposes, s/he had to get the approval of the Minister. The right of academic staff to take a sabbatical leave for one year was also conditioned by the approval of the Minister.

The State's supervision over the universities in the Republic can also be noted in the government's representation in the Higher Council of the Universities. The members of government had to be chosen and appointed by the Minister (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32: 13). When Syria became independent from Egypt, the Law of Organising the Universities in the United Arab Republic was subject to minor modifications when the

President of the National Council of Revolution Leadership in Syria issued a legislative decree in 1963 (The Official Newspaper of Syrian Arab Republic 1964, No 2: 389). According to the legislative decree, the Higher Council of the Universities should comprise academic and non-academic members chosen only from two universities²⁸: the University of Damascus²⁹ and the University of Aleppo. The representation of non-academic voice in the Council of Higher Education is still apparent nowadays.

In 1966, the Ministry of Higher Education was established in Syria in light of the recommendations made by the National Leadership of Albaath party. Later, in 1975, the Higher Council of the Universities was replaced by the Council of Higher Education (Ministry of Higher Education 2008: 55) by issuing the Law of Organizing the Universities 1975. With the issue of the law 1975, the responsibilities of the Higher Council of the Universities have been shifted to the Council of Higher Education (Ministry of Higher Education 1975). The Law for Organising the Universities 1975 and later the Law for Organising the Universities 2006 also strengthened the relationship between the University and the State. The law of 2006 stipulates that the Council of Higher Education should be comprised of academic and non-academic representation. Non-academic representation includes, for example, a deputy minister to be named by the Prime Minister, and the vice president of the State Planning Commission. The members of the council are to be named by the Prime Minister in light of recommendations made by the Minister of Higher Education (Ministry of Higher Education 2006).

The President and vice President of the University have to be appointed by the President of the State in the light of a recommendation made by the Minister of Higher Education. According to the 2006 law, the approval of the President of the State and the Council of Higher Education is required for opening new departments, faculties, and institutes at the University. Any modification to the law and its executive rules requires the approval of the President and the Council of Higher Education (Ministry of Higher Education 2006).

²⁸ According to the law of 1958, the Higher Council should be comprised of academic members, including the manager and the vice manager of each university, and a professor from each university in the republic. The universities included the University of Cairo, the University of Alexandria, the University of Assiut, and the University of Ain Shams in Egypt, and the University of Damascus, and the University of Aleppo in Syria.

²⁹ When the University of Aleppo was established in Syria (in Aleppo city) in 1958, Syrian university was renamed the University of Damascus.

Establishing new degrees and sending academics abroad for research also requires the approval of the Council of Higher Education. The deans and the Heads of department also have to be appointed by a decision made by the Minister of Higher Education. The approval of the Minister of Higher Education and the Council of Higher Education is important in order to make curricular change. The law of 2006, like the law of 1958, has directed higher education policy towards achieving the national economic and social objectives of the State (Ministry of Higher Education 2006).

To sum up, in this chapter I have presented a brief history of Syria since the late Ottoman ruling. By presenting a background to the history of Syria in the late Ottoman ruling, I intend to demonstrate how the Tanzimat reforms undertaken during this period had an impact on the educational sector by transforming schools from being religious schools attached to mosques, run by religious scholars, and funded by religious endowments or local communities, into state schools funded by the State and run by civil servants. The emergence of state schools prepared the ground for the emergence of the University of Damascus (the school of medicine) towards the end of the Ottoman ruling as a state University linked to Ministry of Education. Since its establishment, the University of Damascus has been subject to a successive process of bureaucratisation embodied in utilising rules and regulations for the operation of the University and for regulating the affairs of its academics which paved the way towards the manner in which the University operates today.

In this chapter I have tried to demonstrate the interplay between the external environment and the University, and to use this expansive lens to understand some factors underpinning the bureaucratic structure rather than presenting an account of bureaucracy as a snapshot. An analysis of the archival material concerning the legislative laws issued for regulating the University of Damascus shows that successive attempts to regulate the University's academic administration were associated with the concentration of the strategic, financial, administrative, educational and scholarly decisions at a ministerial level and which reflects the hierarchical structure of the French government. This point has been explored through tracking how the relationship between the University and the State has historically been constructed. The archival materials show that the University of Damascus under the French

ruling witnessed an intervention from the State in regulating the scholarly, administrative and financial affairs at the University. The intervention from the State in regulating administrative affairs at the University, particularly those affairs related to recruitment and promotion, reflects the broader political concern of the French government to secure social justice and to minimise the misuse of power in the Syrian colony.

State's supervision of the university continued during the time of the United Arab Republic and beyond. The intervention of the State in regulating the higher education sector can be understood as part of a broader State agenda to control the economy through the process of nationalisation undertaken during the UAR and which gave birth to a centrally-planned economy. The primary political concern of the UAR government was to revive Arab culture and to involve the higher education sector in cultural and economic development. The involvement of the University in cultural and economic development, accompanied by the operation of the higher education sector in this centrally-planned economy, has presented the University as an institute more aligned to the State and has kept the administration of the University under the supervision of the State, which gave the University of Damascus relative autonomy to make its own financial, managerial and scholarly policies.

The attempts made by the Syrian government to release its control of the economy at the beginning of twenty-first century have positively impacted on the higher education sector through reforms to higher education policy. The reforms were accompanied by changes undertaken at the University of Damascus which aimed to develop its infrastructure and its academic programmes. The reforms have also been accompanied by some changes to the University Act, which governs the University. The new act delegates some authority to the University and to some extent alleviates the rigidity of the rules which regulate the development of academic courses. Despite these changes, the University of Damascus up till now has been operating in accordance with rules very similar to those in place during the United Arab Republic.

Chapter six: The positive and negative aspects of the bureaucratic nature of academic administration at the University of Damascus

6-1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall be looking at some bureaucratic aspects of the administration of the University of Damascus. Academic institutes, as outlined earlier in chapter three, can be understood as collegial institutes where academics behave as communities of scholars who collectively participate in consensus decisions and who enjoy considerable freedom and autonomy in running their academic activities and in determining the content of academic work. Academic institutes can also be understood as bureaucratic organisations with a structure of formal roles and responsibilities, the exercise of legal-rational authority within a hierarchy of coordination, and the control of academic work. Drawing on these two perspectives of academic institutes, this chapter begins with an elaboration of the relevance of bureaucratic elements for the administrative side of the University of Damascus.

This chapter is divided into two main parts. Part one explores the relevance and the positive aspects of the bureaucratic nature of academic administration at the University, whilst Part two examines the disadvantages. While these two parts present two separate themes, there is clearly a degree of overlap between them.

The chapter is developed from the documentary and interview material supported with observation notes taken during attending two meetings held by the departmental board. The use of documentary material, particularly the University Act, is useful in order to explore how bureaucracy, embodied in formal rules and regulations, structures the academic administration of the university. Given the relevance of bureaucracy for structuring the academic administration at the university and for setting formal guidelines for its operation, I will turn in the first part of the chapter to examine how academics at the University of Damascus experience bureaucracy, revealing the ways in which the academics recognised the need for bureaucracy to regulate their academic careers.

This chapter also focuses on examining the experiences of academic staff at the University to demonstrate the ways in which ways bureaucracy acted as a hindrance to their academic careers. The chapter mainly examines the views of the academic respondents, including academic administrators, on the rules that regulate their careers. The themes emerging from the interview material mainly address issues surrounding academic autonomy in the context of bureaucracy.

6-2 The relevance of bureaucracy to the academic administration at the University of Damascus.

A fundamental feature of bureaucracy is that a hierarchical structure of authority exists to achieve its organisational purposes by using purportedly rational means to pursue goals. The relationship between staff in a bureaucratic organisation is structured and formally regulated. It is characterised with impersonality and is organised by rules that assign responsibilities to individuals or groups, who coordinate these responsibilities and then direct them towards achieving a common goal (Weber 1947, 1968). In this section I will explore the bureaucratic nature of the University of Damascus and the formal structure of academic administration, which is established on the basis of clear formal responsibilities assigned to committees operating at different levels. Later in this chapter and chapter seven, I will reveal that within this formal structure of committees a certain level of collegiality can be secured.

6-2-1 The formal bureaucratic structure of the academic administration of the University

The documentary evidence of the University Act 2006 shows that the University of Damascus is run by a committee system structured in a hierarchal chain to distribute power and authority between a department, a faculty, the University, and the Ministry of Higher Education, although the committees operating at different levels can have different names such as 'board' at a faculty level, 'senate' at a University level, and 'council' at the ministry level. The term 'Senate' reflects the academic representation in the committee at

institutional level while 'council' is reserved to referring to the representation of lay members on the committee (Middlehurst 1993: 121).

The University Act stipulates that the Senate at the University of Damascus be headed by the President of the University and be comprised of the vice presidents, the faculty deans, the deans of the high institutes, the managers of the University research centres, a representative of the Ministry of Higher Education, the head of the teachers syndicate, and three students who represent the students' union. The President of the University of Damascus and the vice-presidents are chosen from among professors at the University.

The President of the University of Damascus is responsible for implementing the University's laws and rules, and the decisions made by the Council of Higher Education. He has the right, in any case where there has been a breach of the law, to suspend study in the University after he reveals the matter to the Minister within three days and to the University Senate within seven days. The President has to send back to the faculties any board decisions which do not meet the relevant laws and rules in order to have them reconsidered according to the law (Ministry of Higher Education 2006).

Financial, administrative and scholarly affairs at the University are discussed by the University Senate, and the general committee at the University including the Committee for Students' Affairs, the Committee for Scholarly Affairs, the Committee for Scientific Research and Postgraduate Studies, and the Committee for Open Learning. The general committee at the University has to meet at least once a year to discuss the University's educational policy and to suggest recommendations to the Council of Higher Education with regards to administration, learning and research affairs in the University.

The responsibilities of the University Senate can be summarised as follows. Its responsibilities are to:

- give suggestions with regards to recruiting, transferring, and lending academic staff and approving their resignations;
- suggest the establishment of faculties, departments, or institutes at the University;
- grant scholarly degrees;

- approve faculty timetables;
- suggest rules for students' admission and the mobility of students among the faculties and within and among the universities. The suggestions are to be passed up to the Council of Higher Education for approval;
- suggest general rules for the pay of contractors, researchers, lecturers and visiting professors;
- set out plans for developing the skills of academic and technical staff in the university;
- participate in formulating the rules for delegation abroad for scholarly research, and for attendance at conferences, seminars and training courses;
- draft a budget and allocate funds, grants, and endowments according to the rules and regulations;
- prepare the annual report on scholarly, teaching, administrative and financial affairs at the University.

Reporting on scholarly and educational affairs is one of the responsibilities assigned to the University senate. The process of reporting is a bureaucratic one carried out through a hierarchical chain as each department from each faculty in the University is required to prepare an annual report regarding the performance of the department (Ministry of Higher Education 1975, 2006). The report, according to one of the interviewed respondents (S, P, M1)³⁰, has to follow certain criteria and present an evaluation of the learning modules and the scholarly activities of the academics in the department. The report also includes recommendations from academics with regards to curricula, research activities and administration changes. Consequently, the report gives an account of which modules should be withdrawn and which introduced. It also includes recommendations made by academics with regard to the development of research plans, the improvement of teaching and learning methods, and makes suggestions for modifications to the internal regulation of the faculty.

Each department, the 2006 law stipulates, has to submit an annual report to the dean who in turn, and with the participation of the faculty board, has to prepare a formal report about the overall performance of the faculty over the course of the year and with their

³⁰ Each quotation has been identified by department, academic rank, and gender.

recommendations for the following year. The report then is sent to the central administration of the University after the faculty keeps written copies in its files. The University senate also has to prepare an annual report about the overall scholarly, teaching, administrative and financial achievements of the University and to discuss the report with the Council of Higher Education (Ministry of Higher Education 2006).

It is not only reporting which is carried out in a hierarchical chain, for discussion of the scholarly and educational policy of the University is also carried out in this way at the departmental, faculty, University, and Ministerial level (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). The responsibilities assigned to the University senate by the 2006 law show that the University senate has a crucial role in suggesting the scholarly, administrative, and financial policies of the University of Damascus. The scholarly and educational affairs at the University level are run through the Committee for Scholarly Affairs and the Committee for Scientific Research and Postgraduate Studies.

The Committee for Scientific Research and Postgraduate Studies is headed by the president of the University of Damascus. The committee is responsible for encouraging and organising research at the University and for giving suggestions about the distribution of research funding and grants. The committee is also responsible for setting up research plans; however, the research plans set by the committee have to be drawn in the light of the Higher Education Council's policy (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). The committee also suggests rules for mobility to do research abroad, and supervises over scholarly journals and postgraduate programmes. However, issues respecting the development of study programmes, the establishment of scholarly relationships with other national and international universities, the development staff skills, rules for attending conferences, seminars, and training courses, and supervision over the scholarly activities of the institutes and faculties within the University are tasks assigned by law to the Committee for Scholarly Affairs at the University of Damascus (Ministry of Higher Education 2006).

The University of Damascus has a number of faculties and each faculty has a number of departments. Each department forms a basic academic unit in the faculty. The faculty is run by a board headed by the dean and consists of the membership of the two vice deans, the

Heads of departments, two representatives of the student union and one member of academic staff at the faculty who is at the same time a representative in the teachers' syndicate .

The faculty board studies all issues sent to the faculty by the University senate. It coordinates scholarly research in accordance with decisions made by the Committee for Scientific Research and Postgraduate Studies. It coordinates curricula among the departments and sets the timetabling of classes. The faculty board also suggests the internal regulations of the faculty and gives recommendations with regards to funding for the faculty, curricula development, programmes for training academic staff, and granting scholarly degrees (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). Educational, scholarly and administrative issues at the faculty are also discussed at a departmental level by the general committee both within the department and by the department board. The department's general committee meets three times a year and is comprised of all academic staff in addition to technical staff at the department.

The University Act reveals that the administration of the University of Damascus is characterised by formality and the division of authority with clear specifications of the roles and responsibilities assigned to the committees operating at University, faculty and department levels. Departments have been defined by the University Act 2006 as the following: "a department is a scholarly and educational basic unit in the University. It is an administrative unit which is characterised by scholarly activities undertaken at the faculty...it can be comprised of one or more than one programme" (Ministry of Higher Education 2006: 9). The educational, scholarly and administrative affairs at the departmental level are run by the department board and are discussed in meetings which are held on a regular basis. The next section explores some of the issues I observed in the department meetings that I attended in two selected faculties included in the study in order to reveal how the collegial nature of academic administration, which is legally assured by the University Act, is exercised in practice.

6-2-2 The collegial nature of the department board.

Board meetings at the departmental level occur on a regular basis usually every other week, however, members of departments can also be invited to hold additional meetings to discuss any emergency issues at the department. Members are contacted by the departmental secretaries either by phone or face-to-face to confirm the date and time of the meeting. A notice can also be placed on the wall to invite members to attend board meetings. At one of the departments I visited, I found a notice on the wall containing an invitation from the Head of department asking the department's general committee to meet to discuss their educational policy for the academic year 2007-2008. The board meetings take place in one of the faculty rooms, usually in the Head of department's office. One of the department meetings I attended took place in the Head of department's office, however, the second meeting started at the Head of department's office, then moved to one of the meeting rooms available in the faculty. In the second department meeting, the meeting was held by the department's general committee, so a larger room than the Head of department's office was required in order to provide enough space for all members of the department.

Board meetings at a departmental level are an integral feature of academics' work lives and are formal occasions for discussing any issues related to academic work and its management. Among the main issues at the top of the agenda for discussion in board meetings are the development of study programmes at the department, the coordination between the department and other departments in the faculty, the setting up of research plans, the nomination of supervisors and examiners for Master's and PhD degrees, giving recommendations of modifications to the faculty's internal regulations, reporting on academic activities in the department and studying the department's need for academic and technical staff in addition to the department's requirements for equipment and machinery.

The meetings are chaired by the Head of department, who is chosen from the academics within the department and is appointed by a decision from the Minister for two years, a decision that is subject to renewal once. Academics from different academic ranks participate in the meetings. The department board consists of three professors, three

assistant professors, and three lecturers. In addition to academic staff, the department board also includes one member of the department's technical staff. The members of the board are named by the dean of the faculty at the beginning of the academic year and are chosen on the basis of seniority.

The duration of the meetings ranges between one to two hours. One of the meetings held at the departments I visited lasted for approximately one hour while the second one lasted for one hour and 45 minutes. The time spent on each issue raised in the meeting varied depending on whether the issues raised are to convey information to the participants or require a decision. When decisions need taking by the board, more time was allowed for group discussion of the issues at hand.

In one of the meetings, the board started the meeting by conveying their condolences to a colleague whose mother had recently died. The Head of department then checked whether all members were in attendance at the meeting. Two members were absent. The Head of department asked the secretary if the absent members had offered their apologies and then moved to discuss the issues at hand. The Head of department sat behind his desk and looked at the papers on his table. He began by reading to the rest of the participants the formal letters he had received from the academic administrators at the faculty. Among these was a letter containing information on the availability of a Japanese scholarship for a PhD programme. Another was one to inform the members about a European-Syrian meeting which was to take place at Rida Saeed hall at the University of Damascus. The presentation of the content of the letters was followed by a brief chat on the issues brought up in the letters.

The board then moved to discuss the issues concerning some academics at the department which required decisions. For example, the board discussed the application submitted by one of the department's academics to extend his employment even though he had reached retirement age³¹. The department Head looked at the paper in front of him on the desk and said:

³¹ According to the law of 2006, professors are retired at the age of 70, while assistant professors are retired at the age of 65.

Professor (his name) has applied to extend his employment for the academic year 2007-2008.

He immediately added:

How many academics at the department are specialised in H & PS!" (the department Head named the academic discipline which is relevant to the applicant's expertise).

The Head of department tried, through his comment, to convey to the participants the message that the department already had adequate academics specialised in the same academic field and who had similar expertise to that possessed by the applicant. It appeared to be an attempt from the Head of department to convince the participants that there was no need to extend the applicant's employment. The Head of department then turned to the other members and said: "What do you think?"

One of the participants understood that the Head of department did not want to approve the application of the professor. He attributed the Head of department's attempt to reject the application to a previously-existing conflict between the two of them. He commented:

We still have a problem with bringing our conflicts to the department; to which the Head of department replied:

No, no, believe me. There is no conflict between him and me. There was a misunderstanding and it was sorted out. I do not want to interfere in what has happened between him and the vice dean.

The discussion continued on that matter. The majority of the participants expressed their willingness to approve the application. One of them commented:

Professor (his name) is our professor. He gave us a lot of support. He is full of goodwill towards us and we all owe him. It will be the department's loss if he leaves.

Two of the participants nodded their heads to show their approval. One of them added:

Nobody can replace professor (his name). He not only teaches H modules but also RM. Only Dr (the name of the applicant) and Dr (the name) in the department teach these modules.

The discussion of the application was interrupted to discuss the academic programmes taught in the faculty with reference to some factors that had urged the academics to withdraw some modules. Among those factors was the refusal of the Syndicate of Engineering to accept the membership of graduates who specialised in majors other than general engineering. In other words, the syndicate only considered graduates who studied the general engineering programme as engineers. Therefore, some specialised modules had been withdrawn from the programmes on offer to graduate students as general engineers.

The Head of department directed the discussion back to the application submitted by the professor and asked the participants their opinions. Those in support of extending the employment of the professor did not appear to receive much attention from some participants in the meeting, including the Head of department. The Head of department, together with some other members, moved to discuss the availability of academics who could teach the modules previously assigned to the applicant. The Head of department turned to one of the participants and asked her if she could and whether she was ready to teach one of the modules in the new academic year. She expressed that she was ready to teach it. One of the participants also nominated another academics as well as himself to participate in teaching the modules. The discussion of the application was directed towards rejecting the application as the members were now engaged in discussing the various possibilities around the applicant's replacement. The discussion ended with the rejection of the application despite the support it had received from the majority of participants at the beginning of the meeting.

The board meetings present the collegial aspect of the administration of academic life at departmental level, embodied in the committee system through which academics collectively participate to discuss and make decisions. However, the above case showed that collegiality did not operate as one might anticipate. Collegiality has been hybridised with bureaucratic elements in terms of the influence of position (that of the Head of department) on decision-making. However, the influence of position on decision-making was noted in the meeting only in that particular case while in the discussion of other matters the influence of the post was insignificant, especially as the other issues raised at the meeting by the Head of department were open to discussion among the participants first, leaving the Head of department's opinion on the issues raised to the very end of the discussion.

Collegiality has been affirmed and safeguarded by the Law for Organising the Universities 1975/ 2006, which gives the academic community within departments the right to discuss academic affairs through the departmental board and to decide on educational, scholarly, and administrative issues within the department. Representative academics from each academic rank, as we have seen before, are members of the departmental board. Members are named every year in order to allow all academics in the department to participate in forming the educational and scholarly strategies of the department. Democratic participation is also safeguarded by the law by giving the board members, including the Head of department, equal weight in voting. The decision is made when the majority of the participants agree upon the decision. However, the above case shows that the decision made in the meeting reflected the opinions of a few participants including the department Head, who by virtue of his post, could influence the opinions of the rest of the participants. Although at the beginning of the meeting the majority of participants expressed their willingness to approve the application, they tended by the end of the discussion to agree on the rejection of the application, with two of the participants, through keeping silent, showing their dissatisfaction with the decision taken.

The power of position was not only realised in the influence of position on decision-making, but also in the power of position to have access to resources not accessible to non-academic administrators. In the departments I visited, I found that all rooms belonging to the academics who did not occupy administrative posts were not equipped with computers,

while most of the academic administrators including deans, vice deans and department Heads were provided with a personal computer in their offices. The offices of academic administrators are larger in size than the rooms of academics and are furnished with more luxurious furniture. Such influence and privileges enjoyed by the academic administrators at the University reflect the hierarchy that exists between academic administrators and academics without administrative responsibilities.

In bureaucratic organisations, commands replace consultation and dialogue (the fundamental features of collegiality). While collegiality characterised academic life at the University of Damascus as forms of dialogue and consultation prevailed at the board meetings, bureaucratic command, the giving of orders, was noted in the second department meeting I attended. At the start of the meeting, the Head of department received a call. I tracked his responses and his reactions to what the other party was saying. He looked unhappy with the content of the other end of the conversation. Some of his responses were as follows:

The (name of department) department is not a shoe³².

Are you asking our opinion in this regard or have you already made your decision and are giving us an order?

Anyway, I will inform the staff about that.

When the Head of department finished his call, he turned to the members in the meeting and informed them that the call he had received was from one of the vice deans at the faculty. The message he received was to move the department to the first floor and to evacuate the academics' rooms in the Social Science 2 department in order for them to be occupied by the academic staff from Social Science 1. The members were unhappy with what they heard and believed that the vice dean was privileging his colleagues - the academics in Social Science 1 - at the expense of the academics in Social Science 2. One of the participants, who I interviewed before the meeting, turned to me and said:

³² The participant meant by the expression "is not a shoe" that the department is not worthless and that the opinions of the academics within the department should be respected.

Is this something related to bureaucracy? This is just a glimpse of some of our problems.

The participants had a brief chat about this. One of the participants suggested bringing the matter up with the President of the University. The Head of department then interrupted the discussion and moved back to discussing the prepared agenda items for the meeting.

The Head of department started the meeting by reading to the others present a report written by the examiners of a thesis submitted by one of the department's students for a Master's degree. The Head of department then asked the participants if they had any comments on the report. As no comments were suggested by the committee members, the Head of department moved to look into the application submitted by one of the Master's students to change the title of her research from (..... in *modern* studies) to (.....in *contemporary* studies). The first couples of minutes of the meeting were attended by the student who had applied to change the title of her research. The student expressed her frustration with the complicated procedures that she had to go through just to change this one word in the title of her research, having to get the approval of the department board, the faculty board and the Committee for Scientific Research and Postgraduate Studies at the University of Damascus. The student then left the meeting which was resumed by the committee.

The committee did not seem just to spend time negotiating routine decisions, among which were the application for changing a research title in addition to the application submitted by one of the academic at the department for unpaid leave. Personal chats among the participants also took part in the meeting. The committee looked more interested and engaged in discussing issues related to the problems facing the academics in the faculty. When the Head of department informed the participants about a letter he had received from the dean which asked the faculty departments to specify their equipment and furniture needs for the new academic year, the participants actively engaged in the discussion. Some of the participants immediately raised the issue of the lack of adequate computers and of access to the internet in the laboratory. The following chat occurred between some of the participants:

We have six computers in the laboratory; three of them are out of order. We need the support of administration for equipping the laboratory with computers to help the students use the internet in the lab at the faculty to access the information they need for their assignments.

We should have asked for computers in our offices first, then we think about the students.

What about paying for internet service? It is not convenient for academics to have limited access to the internet from the University.

It seemed that the lack of adequate computers in the faculty was among the issues that had been frequently raised by the academics at the department. When the discussion on the department's requirements for equipment ended, the participants moved to a larger room in the faculty to negotiate and discuss the allocation of modules and the timetabling of classes, which consumed most of the meeting.

It seems from the evidence above that board meetings at a department level at the University of Damascus are sessions to allow members to express their opinions and to raise issues related to the academics' affairs and scholarly and educational activities. The meetings I attended revealed some of the tasks and issues that are considered on the board's agenda. However, the tasks and responsibilities assigned to the department board by the law of 2006 are not limited to the tasks explored in these two board meetings. Rather, the law outlines the responsibilities of the departmental board into nine items which can be summarised as touching on all scholarly, educational, and financial issues in the department, implementing the decisions passed to the department from the University's senate and the faculty's board and preparing annual reports on the scholarly and educational activities in the department. The issues studied and negotiated during the meeting are reported in a formal report to be kept in a file at the department.

The University Act 2006 not only regulates the operation of the committees, but also stipulates rules to regulate the affairs of academics such as recruitment, promotion, and

leave. The next section addresses the positive role of bureaucracy in regulating academic careers from the perspective of the respondents.

6-2-3 Bureaucracy and equal opportunities

One of the main issues raised by the interviewees when they were asked about what role bureaucracy can play in supporting academics was its importance in achieving equal opportunities and objective treatment amongst academics.

One of the respondents (PH, L, F1) commented:

Sure they [bureaucratic procedures] are important and we cannot manage without them. They are important to achieve equality in recruitment and opportunities. [...] In this regard, [equality] rules control things to some extent, however, this does not mean that there are no exceptions.

Regulating the institute by formal rules is a useful technique for avoiding personal considerations especially in a culture characterised by the domination of personal relationships. One of the respondents (PH, L, F2) commented:

Love and hate still play a significant role in influencing a lot of issues. This is obvious in assessing research for promotion or for granting Master's or PhD degrees. Unfortunately some academics do not take scholarly criteria seriously and their assessments are influenced by their personal relationships.

With regards to whether bureaucracy within the context of the University of Damascus has succeeded in achieving the fairness and objective treatment it promises, the majority of the respondents found that bureaucracy secured equal treatment. However, the rest of the respondents noted that bureaucracy only relatively achieved its promises.

One of the respondents (CE, P, M1) commented:

Dealing with people without bias is a quality per se and the institutes which are keen to treat their staff equally enjoy such a quality. I do believe that the public universities in general and the University of Damascus in particular – and in spite of its low salaries and complexity- is still the favourable workplace for many academics because of such privileges so nobody feels that he will suffer injustice as long as s/he meets the regulations set by the University.

Another respondent (PH, PA, F1) commented:

Yes; with regard to this point, the same rules are applied upon all. And this cannot be generalised to all public institutes. The situation at the universities is much better compared to other institutes and *wasta*³³ - if it exists in the University - it is practised in very few cases.

Another respondent (S, P, M1) expressed his view differently and commented:

The bias is not generated from the rules but from the people who apply the rules. To make rules effective, there should be consciousness and a submission [commitment] to the rules on the part of the individuals. All people know that when the traffic light is red they have to stop and when it is green they can pass, however, people play with rules whenever they find a chance to do so.

Some respondents demonstrated that personal relationships or favouritism could exist when rules had loopholes. Those loopholes were sometimes exploited by the administrators. For the respondents, loopholes exist when matters are left to the discretion of the academic administrators. Some examples were given by respondents who found that favouritism was exercised in some cases. For instance, to publish a textbook, the legislative law which regulates the publication of textbooks recommends co-authorship in publication. However, some academic administrators can sometimes strictly insist on co-authorship in order to refuse approval to those academics who want to publish a single-authored textbook, while at the same time granting such approval to others. This point illustrates that academic work,

³³ 'Wasta' means favouritism or connections.

and in this case the writing practice of academics is not only controlled and regulated by rules and regulations but is also regulated within the academic community, is subject to the discretion exercised by academic administrators.

Discretion can also be exercised when academics require the approval of academic administrators to move to another University. The approval of academic administrators in this case is conditioned by the availability of staff who can replace the academic who applies for leave. Since the academic administrators can exercise their discretion to decide whether the staff available in the department can best undertake the tasks assigned previously to the academic who wants to leave, personal relationships can play a role in influencing the decision in this case too.

What was apparent in the interviews conducted was that *wasta* is eliminated when matters are strictly regulated by clear rules and measures. The respondents presented scholarly leave and recruitment as two examples of when the rules were successful in securing equal opportunities.

One of the respondents (CE, PA, M1) pointed out:

Academic work cannot be regulated by excessive regulations; at the same time academic work cannot be free of regulations. [...] One of our colleagues is now preparing himself to travel to Germany to do research. Do you think that academics would be able to have the opportunity to travel abroad if the Ministry did not organise leave for scholarly missions!! If the regulations were missing to regulate this then all funds allocated to do research abroad would be enjoyed by one or two of the academics at each faculty while the rest of the academics would put their hands on their cheeks awaiting the mercy of God.

The above quotation demonstrates that some empowerment can be achieved by formal regulations which secure equal opportunities to career development. The delegation of academic staff to carry out research abroad is regulated by the University Act of 2006 on the basis of the credit points the academics have. Credit points are calculated on the basis of

the seniority of the academics and of their scholarly work including publications, translations, editing, and supervision of Master's and PhD projects, and participation in seminars and conferences (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006). Priority for travelling abroad is granted for the academics who score the most credits. As long as there are clear criteria to identify the eligibility of academics to travel abroad, there is no place to exercise *wasta* or favouritism.

The same thing applies to the recruitment of academic staff who start their careers as teaching assistants. All respondents agreed that rules achieve equal opportunities, particularly with regard to the recruitment of academic staff who start their careers as teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are recruited on the basis of their qualifications, which determine their eligibility to practise academic work at the University of Damascus. One of the respondents (A, A, M2) commented:

Teaching assistants are selected on the basis of their scores at the undergraduate stage regardless of who he or she is and nobody can play with [manipulate] the results of the competition.

The recruitment of teaching assistants is carried out in accordance to clear procedures. It is a centralised process as the terms and requirements for recruitment are set by the ministry. The Ministry sets the requirements for the position and writes the advertisement. Each candidate is required to submit documents such as copies of their qualification certificates, copies of his/her personal identification, proof that the candidate has not been jailed or subject to any sanctions, and other documents. The Ministry publicly publishes the names of the candidates with their qualifications recorded next to their names, and their qualifications are the only criterion upon which the selection is based.

Some respondents talked about some of the advantages they enjoyed thanks to the provision of equal opportunities in their employment. One of the respondents (S, L, F2) expressed her point as follows:

The good thing about the University is that you are dealing with people from different classes; there are rich and poor. You can also see the department. Each academic here comes from a different background to the others. This gives you the chance to communicate with people from different backgrounds in society.

Another respondent (M, PA, M2) put it:

This [equal opportunities] reduces opportunism and creates a comfortable atmosphere. Nobody comes here [to the University] unless they achieve certain requirements and nobody can take the place of others. This is important for building friendly relationships in the workplace. If you look at what some academics do at private universities!! There is jealousy and they fear that other academics will come and take their place in the University.

The role of bureaucracy in securing equality among citizens was extensively stressed by the female academics.

All female respondents expressed that the greatest advantage they enjoyed from working in an institute regulated by bureaucratic rules was that of having equal opportunities with their male counterparts particularly with respect to recruitment. The female respondents pointed out that by virtue of the Law for Organising the Universities, female academics could establish their existence at the University of Damascus.

One of the female respondents (M, L, F1) expressed her point by making a comparison between public and private universities. She revealed that private universities are emergent. From her point of view they lack the rules and regulations necessary for their organisation and operation. However, she pointed out that in the University of Damascus, there are clear rules and she knows her rights in the light of these rules. She also commented that:

In a private University, there is bias and it is easy to fire a woman. In general, they perceive women as a weak gender and consider their work secondary and not essential for society. They assume that women work only for luxurious

purposes and to entertain themselves, so they prefer men over women and they easily say good bye to us. But in the University of Damascus, nobody can harm me. They [men] can only annoy me with words and say ‘we will not work with women anymore’. They know they cannot do more than that.

Another female respondent (PH, L, F2) explained that women are generally stereotyped as housewives whose main job is to bring up children. She added that people still look at a successful woman with suspicion and consider her achievements as something that threatens the authority of men. She revealed that she had been planning to teach in a private University in the next academic year but she found out that the module that she had been going to teach had been stolen from her by her colleagues. She crossed her legs, lit a cigarette and angrily expressed that:

I have been working in a private University for two years and I do not think I will continue working here. Every time I arrive at the University I leave my femininity at the gates and behave like a man. I have to do so in order to defend myself.

Another respondent (S, L, F1) expressed that discrimination against women also exists at the University of Damascus and is practised by some faculty members. She made her point as follows:

The majority of people who defend women’s rights are also the majority who offend women³⁴; there are attempts from time to time to marginalise us [women]... we are suffering from bad traditions and habits that have developed over time and resulted in men feeling ashamed if a women goes out, and participates in public activities. And the problem increases with the misinterpretation of the religious texts that tends to divorce the text from its real meaning. [...] We need the power of the state and the power of the law in order to affirm our presence in society.

³⁴ There was a reference made to her male colleagues in the department.

The respondent (S, L, F1) talked about some incidents considered by her to be discriminatory action taken against her. She revealed that when she was a member of the departmental board and therefore, according to the rules, had to attend all the meetings held by the department, that there were three occasions on which she was not informed of the department meetings. She commented that "I am quite sure that this [not being informed about the meeting] did not happen by accident and I know the people who are behind this". She pointed out that the third time she was not invited to attend the meeting, she complained to the vice dean who in turn informed the dean and both decided to suspend the decisions the department had made during those meetings. She added that, in order not to cause harm to anyone who might be negatively affected by suspending the decisions the department made in those meetings, she and the dean agreed to only notify the people directly involved in the incident in order to make sure that that incident would not happen again. In the light of that example, the respondent, in order to secure her right to participate in board meetings, turned to those at the very top in order to assert her right to attend.

Most of the female respondents support the role of rules in protecting their rights to participate in academic administration. One of the female respondents (S, L, F2) expressed that if the rights of academic women were not protected, there would be the chance that women's rights would be violated. She commented:

I will give you a simple example. I started my career at the university ten months ago. I do not have yet a room at the faculty. I asked them to provide me with a desk in one of the rooms available to the academic staff. After a week they moved my desk out of the office [...]. How can we entrust our lives to the decisions and control of people who tend to undermine our abilities. If someone sees a woman driving a car, they immediately turn to their friend and say "be careful, that's a woman driving that car ". Do you think after all this they will allow us to practise our academic life in the same way they do!

The Law for Organizing the Universities, like the rest of Syrian labour legislation, gives both men and women equal rights. The language used to write the law is directed to both male and female academics without distinction between the two. Academic women enjoy the same rights as their male colleagues in terms of recruitment, promotion, retirement,

salary, compensations, scholarships, and leave. However, academic women have special rules for maternity leave.

The Syrian government attempts to secure gender equity in constitution No 208, which was issued in 1973. The constitution emphasises equality between men and women and the right of women to participate in society. The constitution also acknowledges the freedom of individuals and the responsibility of the government to guarantee equal opportunities among its citizens. In article 25, the constitution stresses that citizens are equal in rights and responsibilities and are all subject to the law. The constitution treats individuals as Syrian citizens regardless of their gender. According to the constitution (article 45), the government should undertake actions and procedures that guarantee the full participation of women in society and remove all obstacles that prevent women from practising their political, cultural, social, and economic rights.

The language of equity has been driven by initiatives undertaken by the government to incorporate the concept of 'justice' into its activities, to increase women's access to resources and to activate their role in economic and social development. To achieve these objectives, the 9th and 10th Five-Year State Plans have set certain targets that aim to increase the percentage of women in the labour force, increase the rate of women's participation in economic activities, and reduce the rate of illiteracy among women (The State Planning Commission 2000, 2006).

The equity between male and female citizens that the Syrian constitution promises has been put into practice through labour legislations including the Law for Organising the Universities 1975/2006 and the 1985 Basic State Labour Law, which was later adjusted in 2004 (Nijma 2008). Nijma (2008) points out that the Labour Law, the Social Insurance Law, and the Agricultural Relations Act are also laws developed to enhance the Syrian constitution. However, women in Syria still do not enjoy equal rights with men particularly with regard to the rights regulated by the Law of Domestic Affairs issued in 1953.

The Labour Legislation, Nijma points out, gives women the same rights as men regarding, for instance, 'employment contracts', 'employment duration', 'wages, and compensation', 'leave', 'retirement' and 'social and health insurance' (2008: 3). However, since

employment legislation is influenced by the prevailing culture in society, which implies a particular image of the role of women in society, there are some articles in the employment legislation which reflect the societal differences between women and men. These articles deal mainly with issues surrounding motherhood and the type of work that women should not do because of potential physical harm.

Another attempt made by the Syrian government to promote gender equity is its agreement to join the charter of the United Nations CEDAW - the Convention on Eliminating Discrimination against Women. In 2002, parliament consensually voted to join the convention and that was followed by issuing the legislative decree No 330 on 25th September 2002. The convention was issued in 1979 and it consists of 30 articles which stress the dignity of the human being, the human rights of the individuals, and equality between men and women. According to the convention, comprehensive development cannot be achieved without women's participation. Therefore, the countries involved in the 1979 CEDAW agreement should adhere to establishing an economic and social system that promotes equality and fairness and that guarantees equal rights between women and men to be involved in the economic, social, cultural, political and civil spheres of society. The agreement also emphasises that the freedom of all individuals should be respected and that all kinds of violence and discrimination against women should be eliminated. Consequently, the countries involved should undertake procedures to end discrimination on the grounds of gender and should develop regulations and rules that promote equal opportunities and equal treatment in careers, education, election and other political rights, and access to social, financial and health services.

While parliament did accept the convention, there were some articles suspended by parliament such as those regarding the rights of women to grant their own nationality to their children, and to have equal responsibilities and rights during marriage and divorce with regard to guardianship, kinship, spending, and adoption. The free rights of women with regard to mobility and housing were also suspended by decree No 330 because they were considered against Sharia law. However, what is important to our study is to re-emphasise the point that the initiative to safeguard equality between labour citizens in general, and between men and women in particular, through issuing labour laws has been successfully implemented at the University of Damascus.

In the next section I will continue my analysis of the relevance of bureaucracy to academia and address the need for quality within the bureaucratic elements.

6-2-4 Bureaucracy and quality assessment in the context of academia

Over the last three years, and as a response to the reform agenda adopted by the State, terms like ‘excellence’ ‘reforms’ and ‘academic quality’ have penetrated the higher education sector, generating new perspectives on how academic institutes can be managed. The introduction of ‘quality’ to the higher education sector was associated with attempts from the Ministry of Higher Education to inject the concept of quality into practice. The Ministry also hosted a number of workshops to develop an understanding of quality in academia, to introduce ‘quality’ as the cornerstone of good academic institutes and to prioritise it in higher education strategy. Issues and recommendations with regard to the improvement of educational programs in the academic institutes and the development of the higher education sector were raised in those seminars and with the participation of Syrian and European academic experts.

The University of Damascus has defined the concept of quality as the following: “meeting the demands of stakeholders including students, academic staff, employers, and administrative staff” (Mualla 2007: 17). As an attempt to improve the quality of higher education, the University, Al-Jamiah newspaper showed, invited all stakeholders involved in higher education, including academics, students, administrators, and employers, to redefine the mission of the University of Damascus (Mualla 2007). The stakeholders defined the mission of the University as including the following:

- Develop distinctive skills for students to meet the needs of the state institutes and of the labour market. Make the students more involved in the learning process.
- Establish strategic partnerships with academic institutes for developing learning and research.
- Establish ‘excellence’ in learning in selected academic programmes.
- Develop the financial resources and the infrastructure of education.

- Develop the skills of administrators and of the academic cadre at the faculties and the institutes affiliated to the University.
- Apply the principles of good management.

As a response from the Ministry of Higher Education to implement the concept of quality, the Ministry has been working on establishing the National Committee for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (Ministry of Higher Education 2008: 30). The committee will be responsible for assuring quality in higher education institutes through assessing the educational programs in the public and private universities, checking the progress of the programs, and giving recommendations in this regard. The Ministry has also established the directorate of assessment and accreditation, which takes responsibility for framing measurable standards of quality of programs, and developing measures in line with the prevailing international standards (Ministry of Higher Education 2008: 30).

6-2-4-1 Programme assessment

The criteria of assessment of an academic programme at the Syrian universities in general, and the University of Damascus in particular, as revealed by one of my academic respondents (M, P, M2), focus primarily on the objectives and mission of the programme, its structure and learning outputs, and the competence of the academic staff. The responsibility for specifying these criteria has recently been assigned to the centre of quality assurance with the cooperation of the academic departments. To assess the existing academic programmes, the faculties need to develop specifications for the academic programmes they provide (Centre for Quality Assurance 2008a). The programme specifications are kept in the files at the Head of department's office.

Documentary evidence of the records of programme specifications revealed that the specifications of the selected programmes follow certain standards, including a clarification of the programme's objectives together with a list of the modules the programme comprises. The specification distinguishes between the modules shared among the faculties

in the University, the modules shared among programmes in the same faculty, and the specializing modules in the programme. The modules the programme comprises are given codes and numbers and are ranked upward. Each module requires specifications that demonstrate the aims of the module, the teaching hours allocated to the module, the subjects taught - which are written in Arabic and in some cases are translated into English in brackets - and the main textbooks and other supporting references.

By the end of the academic year, the programmes are subject to assessment by the department board against pre-established standards. The academic respondents (S, P, M1) and (M, P, M2) pointed out that the decision to keep, withdraw, and develop some modules is made by the departmental board. However, the decision, particularly any decision to withdraw or introduce a module, needs to be approved by the University senate and should then be subject to further approval by the council of higher education.

One of the academic administrators (CE, P, M2) pointed out that his faculty was working on developing standards for good academic programmes in the faculty. He revealed that such standards will be incorporated into a comprehensive institutionalised process for quality assurance including a systemised method for evaluating the outcomes of the academic programmes. He also said:

We have been asked to identify the mission of our faculty and the outcomes of learning. We are thinking of integrating the concept of ‘sustainable development’³⁵ into our curriculum in spite of the difficulties that we might face. Consequently, our curricula will focus on developing and understanding engineering solutions in the context of environmental issues. How to construct a building with an economic use of energy.....This concept will later be an essential criterion for accrediting an academic program.

Recently, the University of Damascus has undertaken initiatives, with the cooperation of the United Nations Developing Programme and the British Quality Assurance agency, to assess the quality of its academic programmes. The University’s attempts to assure

³⁵ The respondent explained that ‘sustainable development’ means an achievement of economic and social development after taking into account environmental considerations.

academic quality were carried out separately through assessing selected faculties' programmes individually, the academic administrator pointed out. One of the academic respondents (CE, P, M3) revealed that one of engineering faculties has participated with other universities in the Arab world to assess its academic programmes on the basis of international standards. The faculty has compared its curriculum to similar programmes in engineering faculties in Sudan, Cairo, Riyadh, and Yemen and found that it was important to reconsider the philosophy of engineering education and direct it to meet the needs of the labour market. The respondent (CE, P, M3) also added that the University of Damascus was working on the development of an institutionalised system for assessing academic programmes.

The respondent (CE, P, M3) commented:

While the efforts made by the University to assure that academic quality are significant, such efforts are still incomplete and undertaken separately. However, the University is now developing a complete institutionalised system for quality assurance with the cooperation of the European community through which the academic programmes will be subject to vital and periodical reviews in order to ensure that they are up to date.

By the beginning of the year 2008, the University of Damascus had established the Centre of Quality Assurance. The centre is managed by the consultant of quality affairs and operates under the direct supervision of the President of the University. The centre is responsible for updating academic programmes and for developing quality standards with cooperation from external bodies. The centre is also responsible for assessing the University's strategic plan and for undertaking research on quality improvement in higher education (Centre for Quality assurance, 2008b). As a first step for updating the faculties' academic programmes, the centre is working on identifying the objectives of the academic programmes and the outcomes of learning in selected faculties such as pharmacy, dentistry, medicine, and chemistry. At the same time, the centre is working on assessing similar programmes in other countries in order to update the academic criteria in the light of international standards.

The introduction of 'quality assurance' to higher education, Jackson argues, is accompanied by bureaucratic procedures necessary for tracking academic performance. Jackson comments that "the move from implied to explicit quality criteria implies a move from a professional to an administrative (managed) model of quality and from dialogic to bureaucratic regulatory process" (cited in Salter and Tapper 2000: 79). From the perspectives of the supporters of managerialism, bureaucratic procedures are reasonable for undertaking 'self-review' especially with the imperfect nature of other types of control (i.e. professional control) (Power 1997).

While institutes seek to dismiss the negative features of bureaucracy embodied in red tape and the rigidity of rules by injecting new concepts like 'total quality management' and 'human resource management' into their practices, the institutes tend to favour a bureaucratic style for carrying out such programmes (Knights and Willmott 1999). The introduction of, for example, quality assurance or an audit culture into higher education has subjected universities to formalised procedures for checking academic work in order to ensure that the academic work meets performance criteria (Middleton 2000; Power 1997; Parker and Jary 1995) and responds to the demands of the new policy of higher education (Power 1997). Criteria and procedures for external quality assessment are identified with the participation of external bodies. In the UK, for example, prescribing procedures for external quality assessment is assigned to the Higher Education Funding Councils, which are also responsible for implementing financial policies.

The quality assessment of academic work, such as research, teaching and administration, requires a bureaucratic machine for its functions, contributing to the McDonaldization of the University (Parker and Jary 1995). Committees and bureaucratic agencies will be required for monitoring quality and checking whether the planned targets have been met. In the context of Syrian higher education, this has translated into the establishment of the National Committee for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, the directorate of assessment and accreditation at the Ministry of Higher Education, and the Centre of Quality Assurance at the University of Damascus.

6-2-4-2 Staff assessment

The need for formal procedures for reporting on work done by academics was mentioned as the respondents interviewed stressed the need for assessing the academic work of staff. One of the respondents (M, L, F1) pointed out that the University up till 2006 had adopted a narrow concept of quality as the administration's main concern was just to keep things ticking over. The respondent criticised the situation when academic institutes lacked a system for subjecting academic staff to regular assessment. In other words, there was a call for external regulations. The respondent pointed out that previously the administration was involved in evaluating academic performance only when the administration received complaints from students about the bad performance of academics in class. The respondent revealed that she herself had experienced that when some of her students had complained to the Head of the department that they could not understand her lectures. In her next lecture, the respondent pointed out, one of her colleagues, at the request of her Head of department, had attended her class in order to check whether the students' claim was right.

As an attempt from the University to monitor the quality of academic performance, each academic has to report to their Head of department about their scholarly activities. The respondent (M, L, F1) commented:

We do report to the department about the publications we have done, with copies of our publications. Academics also need to report the conferences and seminars they have participated in and the Master's and PhD theses they have supervised.

The respondents illustrate that the report is done to meet the University's regulation requirements which stipulate that academics have to submit at least one report every year to their Head of department. However, the respondents found that the report did not contribute much to the assessment of their academic performance. One of the respondents (S, P, M1) noted:

We previously did it [the reporting] because we had to. It could be useful to provide the University with statistics about the publication and research done in each faculty. What was more important for the administration is whether the academics attended their classes or not.

By 2007, the University had introduced a new system to subject the academics to periodical assessment. The outcome of the assessment is now considered by the University as a prerequisite for continuing to be a member of academic staff. The academic respondent (CE, P, M1) commented:

The assessment process has been recently introduced and is carried out by reporting what scholarly works have been done by the academic in teaching and research, giving a description of the originality and innovatory nature of their research and the refereed journals in which the academics publish their research. The assessment also considers the training courses the academics have attended. This will help the higher education council to identify the academics' needs for more teaching skills and the technical and language courses required.

The outcome of the assessment, as previously stated, is considered a prerequisite for continuing one's academic career and there is no evidence that the outcome of the assessment would be used as criteria for allocating funds among the Syrian public universities. However, in the UK, the quality assessment of academic work, particularly the Research Assessment Exercise or RAE, was introduced to higher education to rationalise the use of research funding by distributing the funding among those UK universities which wished to receive public funding (Henkel 1999; David 2008). The Research Assessment Exercise was introduced to the UK higher education system in 1985 by the University Grants Committee to establish a 'national system' for assessing research in UK universities (Henkel 1999: 105) and thus distribute the research funding universities received from funding councils according to the evaluation of each university against their research output. However, in the Syrian context, and as it appears from the interview cited above, the assessment of research is part of the overall process of the assessment of all academic work, which aims to evaluate the quality of academic work in order to ensure the capability and the diligence of the academics carrying out the work and to identify requirements for future training.

The academic respondents commonly welcomed the process of assessment and expressed the need for assessment in their institution. One of the respondents (M, P, M2) pointed out that the assessment ought to have been carried out by the University a long time ago. He expressed that he was surprised to find out that the administrators in all public institutes in Syria, including the public universities, were subject to assessment while academics were not. He revealed that according to the basic Labour Law in Syria, the administrators' performance is assessed and the outcome of this assessment is considered a prerequisite for continuing their career and for promotion. However, he explained that the University's regulations up till 2006 did not hold the assessment of academic performance to be a criterion essential for continuing an academic career. The respondent (M, P, M2) also commented:

Why should academics always be considered above accountability? If not all academics are lazy, not all academics are active. There are still some academics who do research for promotion just to extend their retirement. I do not exclude myself; I am also sometimes busy doing something else.

The discourse of quality assurance implies changes in power relations by increasing the power of the management at the expense of self-control exercised on the side of academics (Dearlove 1997; Salter and Tapper 2000). However, none of the respondents considered the assessment process as a burden or as a control mechanism imposed over them. Rather, the assessment was seen by the respondents as a legitimised mechanism and by some as a modern system used in advanced countries.

One of the respondents (PH, PA, M) commented:

We are pleased about the introduction of the assessment. This will help the university to track the level of academics' performance and keep it under review. We hope that this [the assessment] will be taken seriously and not be ignored by the administration. If so, then the assessment will be devoid of meaning.

One of the respondents (CE, P, M2) revealed the positive aspect of the introduction of staff assessment in terms of creating a competitive environment:

We do expect that the assessment will create competition among academics as continuing one's academic career now is determined by one's academic performance. In the case of the assessment outcome being unsatisfactory, the University has the right to transfer the academic to a non-academic post.

The point I want to clarify and stress here is that the assessment of academic work, which is highly praised by the academic respondents, does require bureaucratic elements, such as formal procedures that the academics have to go through, for assessment. Standardised formal procedures, in addition to the bureaucratic bodies, as stated in the previous subsection, are also necessary requirements for the quality assessment process.

In this section, the focus has been directed towards an elaboration of the relevance of bureaucratic elements to the operation of the University of Damascus and to the regulation of academic affairs at the University. In the next part I will turn to elaborate on the negative aspects of the bureaucratic nature of academic administration at the University.

6-3 Critiques of the bureaucratic conduct of the academic administration at the University of Damascus

This part begins with outlining the relationship of the University of Damascus with the Ministry of Higher Education through a reflection on the responsibilities assigned by the University Act to the Council of Higher Education, which plays a significant role in drawing up the strategic administrative, financial and scholarly policy of the University of Damascus.

6-3-1 The centralisation of higher education policy

The relationship between the University of Damascus and the Ministry of Higher Education can be tracked through the official documents, such as the Law of Organising the Universities 2006, that set administrative principles for the operation of the public universities in Syria, including the University of Damascus, and incorporates the administrative and scholarly policy of the universities into a strategic policy to be formulated by the Ministry of Higher Education.

The University of Damascus participates through its senate in formulating policies that enable it to achieve its aims. However, the strategic administrative, financial and educational policies of the University are made by the Council of Higher Education. The Council of Higher Education is headed by the Minister who runs the University through his office. The Law of Organising the Universities 2006 stipulates that this minister has the right to ask the panels and the committees to examine certain issues, particularly those related to the strategic policy of higher education and research scholarship. They also have the right to ask the University senates to reconsider their decisions if they see that the decisions do not meet the relevant rules and executive regulations. Therefore, the decisions made by the University senate can be suspended at the ministerial level. To provide just one such example here, one teaching assistant submitted an application to change his major. One of the respondents (M, TA, F1) pointed out that this teaching assistant, after having received the approval of the University senate to change his research area, had been waiting a couple of weeks to get the approval of the Ministry but unfortunately his application was eventually rejected.

The law assigns the Council of Higher Education the responsibility to set rules for regulating the scholarly, administrative and financial affairs of the University of Damascus in accordance with the Law of Organising Universities and its executive rules, and to formulate the administrative and organisational structure of the university (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). The Council of Higher Education is also responsible for formulating the rules for assessing and accrediting programmes, and for recruiting, delegating and promoting academic staff. Though the University of Damascus participates in drawing up its own recruitment and promotion policy and suggests its own recruitment needs, it is relatively powerless in this respect as the requirements for recruiting and

promoting academic staff are finally decided by the Council of Higher Education, with the participation of government members, and are subject to further consideration by the cabinet office. The cabinet office intervenes to ensure that the higher education recruitment and promotion policy is unified in all Syrian public higher education institutes. The cabinet office also intervenes in order to ensure that salaries paid to Syrian civil servants, including academic staff, do not vary hugely from one job to another.

One of the academic administrators (M, P, M2) pointed out that the University should have complete freedom to recruit its own staff and to select its own teaching assistants from the top graduates at the University. He said:

The process [of selecting academic staff] is run by the university supervision as candidates apply directly to the competition organised by the Ministry of Higher Education. Despite the University's great preference for recruiting teaching assistants from within the universities they graduate from, there are difficulties in putting this into practice. One of the reasons the Ministry gives is that this is considered against the equal opportunities that the Ministry adheres to. Graduates should have the right to apply for work at any public university in Syria.

The concentration of policy making at the ministerial level makes the University less responsive to the academic requirements of different faculties at the University since the Ministry of Higher Education tends to unify rules and regulations for the operation of all public universities in the country, and to regulate both vocational and non-vocational faculties affiliated to the public universities according to the University Act.

The respondents, particularly those in Social Science 3 and the Engineering departments, revealed some challenges they experienced because of the domination of one system in the University. They expressed that the Act ought to respond to the differences between applied and pure science and not subject all faculties to the same system for regulating academic affairs.

One of the respondents (CE, L, M1) commented:

All academics have to do three pieces of research in order to be promoted [from the rank of lecturer] to the rank of assistant professor, and five pieces of research to be promoted to the rank of professor. The problem vocational academics face is the difficulty in finding research to do. Here [in Syria] neither the public nor the private sector is interested in scientific research. The cement factory, for instance, causes environmental pollution and we have to cooperate with it to find solutions. But the manager, like other managers in other institutions, denies that his factories and institutes cause environmental problems and refuses to offer his help.... rule makers should consider the difficulties vocational academics face in doing research and not treat them equally with their counterparts in other faculties.

The point I want to make here is that bureaucracy treats faculties not as individual cases but as an abstract case and thus regulates the whole University with unified rules so that the same form of measurement is applied in all faculties instead of responding to the particular requirements of each faculty. The respondents illustrated that the operation of all faculties under the same Act, which unified the rules for regulating promotion and full-time employment in all faculties affiliated to the University, resulted in inconvenience to the academics in applied science departments. In the field of applied science, such as engineering, knowledge is applied to practical problems. Applied science is interlinked with industrial, commercial, educational, and health institutes in that applied science offers solutions to the problems that these institutes face whilst the institutes provide areas for research projects and an environment for testing ideas. Therefore, the cooperation and communication between the institutes that benefit from this research and these researchers is a necessary requirement to enhance applied research and any restriction which hinders this communication can negatively influence the ability of researchers to pursue their applied research.

One of the respondents (CE, P, M1) commented that:

According to the rules, if you work as a full-time academic you have to work 36 hours per week and you are not allowed to practise your vocation outside the 36

hours [outside the working hours at the University]. If this is convenient to academics in human science and education, we [engineers] learn from the projects we conduct with other institutes and companies. Full-time academics at the faculty of medicine are also not allowed to run their own clinics or hospitals even though these places are the best places to learn about diseases.

In addition to the relative autonomy the University has to manage the academics' affairs, it is also relatively powerless in managing students' affairs. Rules for student admission and enrolment at the University of Damascus and its institutes are also set by the Council of Higher Education (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). Admission rules are formulated by the council in the light of the State national policy and the Five-Year Plans. According to the 10th Five-Year Plan, higher education admissions policy aims to increase students' accessibility by 3% every year up till the year 2010. The admission policy also focuses on the programmes that occupy high priority in the 10th Five-Year Plan. The policy, for instance, aims to increase the number of students in business management and information technology studies by 9%, in science, engineering, technology, and medicine studies by 25%, and in education by 8%, while reducing students' number at the faculty of humanities and social sciences by 8% (The State Planning Commission 2006).

As the admission policy of the University is decided by the Council of Higher Education and with regard to State national policy, the University is relatively powerless in deciding the number of students joining the University every year. One of the respondents (M, P, M1) commented:

The biggest and most serious challenge the University faces is the growing number of students. Some faculties, due to the huge number of students, were forced to computerise the exams in order to avoid marking thousands of exam papers even though computerization is not an appropriate test method in selected modules.

He added:

We did suggest reducing the number of students this year but the suggestion was not approved [by the Council of Higher Education] and we had to accept an increased rate of students which has increased 10% compared to last year, and the University now is making intensive efforts to face the consequent challenges by developing the infrastructure and establishing new buildings. [...] We cannot do anything to control the number of students. In the 1970s the Ministry adopted the assimilation policy that accepts all students who pass the baccalaureate stage in the public universities. This has resulted in a huge number of students joining the University every year. The number of students in our faculty and in most theoretical faculties is not reasonable and has caused harm to the learning and administrative process.

The academic respondents expressed how the huge number of students negatively influences learning. One of the interviewees (S, TA, F1) said:

With the large number of students, assignments have become useless as tutors do not have time to read all of the assignments and to comment on them. The department is even planning to drop the assignments in some modules because of the small benefit they can provide to the students.

The number of students to each academic staff member in selected faculties at the university such as engineering, the Faculty of Human Science, and the Faculty Economics is shown in table (6.1):

Faculties	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Engineering/ Except agriculture	20	20	21	18	18	26
Economics	74	57	63	62	80	116
Human science & literature	81	71	86	90	104	161

Table (6.1). The number of students to each member of academic staff. Source. Ministry of Higher Education (2008)

While the University of Damascus is relatively powerless in making strategic decisions surrounding, for instance, staff recruitment and promotion and student admissions, the 2006 Act, in comparison with the previous Act of 1975, gives the University more autonomy to run its own affairs. The respondents revealed some advantages given to the faculties by the 2006 Act.

One of academic respondents (CE, P, M3) commented that:

The circumstances now are better than before. With the new law, some authority in higher education has been delegated to the Universities, and the universities have also delegated some of their authority to the faculties. We have now got more chance to suggest things and the possibility to put our suggestions into practice has increased. However, there is still centralization and routines, and the matters here go slowly. They need a lot of signs and consume a lot of time.

Another respondent (S, P, M2) put it:

Over this period [the last two years] the University's leadership has become more open. And any project we submit to the university receives approval with no obstacles, especially if the project is well studied and justified. There is support and encouragement to all workshops and seminars we raise with the University and they get the acceptance and the support of the president of the University.

One of the academic respondents (M, P, M2) also revealed that the new law of 2006 has brought some advantages to teaching. According to the new Act, academic programmes can now be developed through the university's senate and after the approval of the higher education council. Before the new Act, he pointed out, the development of programmes was carried out infrequently and required the approval of the president himself by issuing a decree. He also commented:

The law gives the University relative administrative autonomy and this will be reflected positively on the total performance of the University. For instance, there are many decisions that can now be made by the president of the University directly without going back to the ministry. Such decisions are those concerning promotion and the mobility of the academic staff from one University to another.

Despite the advantages of the new law, the University of Damascus is still facing challenges and aspires for even greater autonomy in order to be able to undertake its functions effectively. The President of the University of Damascus (Mualla 2006: 11) comments:

The universities were aspiring for more autonomy to be given to them by this law following their counterparts in the world. The universities wished to be able to have complete freedom to select their academic staff and teaching assistants from the top graduates, to decide the number of students who join the University and to set the principles of admission. The universities were also aspiring for more freedom in easing procedures particularly those respecting sending academics abroad for doing scientific research and for attending conferences.

However, that does not undermine the importance of the new law and its executive rules as a first step to face the challenges and to achieve good scholarly and cultural status.

Another respondent (M, P, M1) commented:

The council is assigned about 75% of the University's administrative responsibilities and the University has a simple role at strategic level because the administration is centralised and the council frames the plans and only 3% of the faculties participate in formulating the plans.

The centralisation of policy making means that the university cannot enjoy complete autonomy to run the University. The academic staff also have to work within legal and financial limits. The respondents talked about some constraints they had experienced at work. For instance they mentioned some difficulties they faced due to the centralised budget control and to the restrictions they experienced with respect to programme development and scholarly leave.

The next sections look into these issues in more detail supported with quotes from interviews.

6-3-2 Academic autonomy and the development of academic programmes

The introduction of new academic programmes at the University of Damascus, according to the University Act, can in general be approved on the grounds of meeting the demands of economic and social development in the county (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). The University's commitment to responding to the country's economic and social development in addition to its adherence to providing scholarly services to the public sector, make the educational policy of the University more aligned to that of the State. While the academic staff at the selected departments reported that they participated in formulating educational

policy in their departments, the academic respondents in Social Science 1 and Social Science 3 noted that the educational policy in their departments was to some extent influenced by the state plan. One of the respondents (M, L, M1), for instance, pointed out that one programme in Social Science had recently been introduced in the faculty as a response to Syrian economic reforms that urged the development of selected sectors in the country. The respondent pointed out that the programme had been suggested at higher levels while the academic staff at the faculty had studied the programme and the availability of qualified staff for teaching it.

Another respondent (S, PA, M1) also pointed out that his department was opening a new programme in Social Service as a response to the state plan for the coming five years which emphasised social affairs and gave 'social care' great attention in order to build a society with high quality services. The programme, he added, was approved by the Council of Higher Education on those grounds. However, he pointed out that he and his colleagues were among the academics who questioned the scholarly significance of the new programme. He also criticised the general tendency of research to meet the demands of the market and commented that:

Before applying the concept of quality in our institutes we do have to think of what we mean by quality in academia; does it mean the search for reality and creating knowledge or a response to the needs of society and meeting its demands! [...] While we do stress the importance of the former, the priority is still given in our faculty and in most other faculties to the latter.

The academic respondents revealed some difficulties they experienced in developing academic programmes. They pointed out that, according to the University regulations, programmes were subject to development every four years. One of the administrators at the University of Damascus (A, A, M1) pointed out that one of the reasons for undertaking curricula development every four years was to guarantee that all old printed textbooks were sold. However, he pointed out that curricula could also be developed every year in case there was a strong justification for development. However, he added that the new curricula should contain most of the subjects of the previous curricula.

He put it:

Surely we cannot erase the previous curriculum and introduce a completely new one. There is a high commitment to the old curriculum and the new one should include about 75 percent of the subjects of the old curriculum.

The academic respondents commonly expressed that there was a need to take serious initiatives to develop curricula at the faculties included in the study. Even though, according to the University Act, curricula can be subject to development every four years, the respondents pointed out that they were still reliant on teaching from some textbooks that were published in the 1980s. Some of the respondents expressed that academics were not encouraged to introduce new modules or to publish new textbooks because this sometimes clashed with the department, which prefers co-authorship and asks for a strong justification for publishing. They also found that the procedures they had to go through for curricula development were excessive and this made them hesitant to take the initiative to develop programmes in their departments. For them, introducing new modules is time-consuming as it requires the approval of the department board, the faculty board, and the University senate, before ending up with the approval of the Council of Higher Education.

The academics commonly expressed that academic work ought to be regulated by minimal bureaucratic procedures in order to alleviate any restrictions which could negatively influence academic work. The majority of academics addressed the need to teach from only a single source or particular textbook (the University textbook) as a restriction. One of the respondents (PH, L, F2) commented:

The academic here [at the University] has to teach from the University textbook, and changing the textbook takes years. Academics can only give students 20% of additional information outside the University's textbook. This confines students within the boundaries of the textbook and turns them into machines which can only memorise information.

While most of the academics who participated in the study revealed that the commitment to teach from a singular textbook for each module threatened their academic autonomy by imposing some limits on the subjects that the academics wanted to teach, only two of the respondents expressed that the adherence to teaching from a singular source did not cause a challenge to their autonomy. One of them (CE, TA, M) commented:

I feel as if this [the faculty] is my kingdom. Nobody intervenes in my work. I can also bring 20% of additional materials. This gives an academic control over their courses and the freedom to choose what they want to teach in their class.

One of the respondents (S, P, M1) illustrated that reliance on the University textbooks for teaching was a good choice in the past to avoid the high price of textbooks and of having translated materials in the hands of the students. However, he added, nowadays, since the cost of paper and printing is cheap, the reliance on University textbooks for teaching had less advantages.

The respondents revealed that working within some of the constraints applied by the rules which regulate curricula development eroded the enthusiasm of academics to improve and develop their careers. This can be clearly noticed in the following quotations:

One of the respondents (M, PA, M2) pointed out:

The commitment to teach from the University's textbook led to laziness both on the part of the teachers and the students; teachers no longer want to search and read books to deepen and broaden their knowledge and then guide students to useful references as they already have a textbook from which they have to teach. Students also no longer want to learn and deepen their understanding; they only want to pass the exam through memorizing the texts by heart.

Another respondent (CE, L, F1) made her point and commented:

The first time I came to the University I wanted to spend my time with students; I wanted to translate and to publish textbooks. However, after five years my enthusiasm faded. [...] We are confined with regards to the subjects we teach and we are free with regards to the way we teach students. Even when I try to give students something new, I find myself giving them the same information, the same examples and the same figures.

She also commented:

Our endeavours are directed to convince the higher councils to make curricula more flexible so the tutor can add around 30-40 % of new material if they find that such material will benefit the students and keep the curriculum up-to-date with scholarly developments.

The requirement to teach from textbooks published by the University of Damascus has a historical background that shows that University textbooks were introduced to the University curricula in order to provide students with affordable textbooks and to avoid problems emerging from a poor publication industry. In the next section I turn to elaborate this point in more detail.

6-3-2-1 The history of the University textbook

The introduction of the University textbooks to curricula can mainly be attributed to two major factors: firstly, to the nationalization process that Syria witnessed during the 1950s and 1960s; and, secondly, to the lack of a developed publishing industry in Syria during the twentieth century.

Syria nowadays occupies a good position among Arab countries with regard to book production, with a current production of over 1000 titles per year³⁶. However, the printing and publication industry in Syria was not well developed during the first half of the twentieth century. Joan Bowring reported on the situation in Syria at the beginning of the nineteenth century and commented that "not a single bookseller could be found in Damascus or Aleppo" (Antonius 1938, quoted in Bashshur 1966: 452). Among the reasons for the poor publication industry was that the Ottomans, who ruled Syria till the beginning of the twentieth century, subjected the publication industry to strict rules which discouraged its development (Cioeta 1979).

The Ottomans set requirements that publishers had to meet in order to be able to establish a publishing business in Syria. Among these requirements was the need to get a license from an official agency in Istanbul and be subjected to censorship (Cioeta 1979). In order to tighten its censorship over the press industry in the provinces, the Ottoman government issued a press law in 1909 which stipulated that each publisher had to send two copies of each potential publication to two senior official members of the government. Censorship, Cioeta (1979) argues, was a complicated and time consuming process that led some journalists to leave Syria and settle in Egypt. Cioeta comments that "censorship was definitely a hindrance to book publishing in Syria" (1979: 180). Even when Syria was ruled by the French, the French did not support the publication industry in Syria whilst they did in Lebanon for religious reasons (Rafeq 2004). The book trade was also not an attractive market for the private sector because of the high price of paper which resulted in expensive books and because of the low demand for books from Syrians. The publication industry continued to face difficulties because of the legal regulations put in place by the government which also subjected publication to censorship. In 2001, for instance, the government issued a legislative decree that prohibited any foreign financial support for the publication industry and which has slowed the development of the publication industry³⁷.

³⁶ This information is available at:

http://www.buchmesse.de/imperia/cecum/documents/summary_book_industry_syria_6997.pdf
Accessed December 2008.

³⁷ This information are available at:

http://www.buchmesse.de/imperia/cecum/documents/summary_book_industry_syria_6997.pdf
Accessed December 2008.

The existence of a poor publication industry created difficulties in providing affordable textbooks for students of a high quality and quantity, to be sold at a cheap price. Over the first half of the twentieth century, lecturers at the University of Damascus were dependent on 'Alamali'³⁸ in teaching. Over that period, most lecture time was spent dictating information to students who in turn were to transcribe the lecturer's words. This resulted in poor lecturing materials, presenting facts without adequate explanation (Sa'eed 2007). To sort out the problem, the government nationalised textbooks by issuing the legislative decree No 168 in September 1963.

The nationalization of textbooks, as I stated earlier in chapter five, was initiated by the socialism movement that Syria experienced in the 1950s and 1960s (Shoman 2005). By 1963, the Council of Revolution Leadership issued a number of decrees that aimed to limit the domination of the bourgeoisie and feudality and to shrink the size of the private sector and foreign investments. The Council of Revolution Leadership also issued a legislative decree to nationalise textbooks. According to the legislation, textbooks were to be sold at cost prices fixed by the Higher Council of the Universities in order to sell textbooks to poor students at low prices or for free (The Official Newspaper of the Syrian Arab Republic 1963, No 42: 8812). The legislation also stipulated that if it was necessary to make any modifications, that these modifications should be made by issuing handwritten or typed Alamali.

By 2001, the government issued legislation No 39 to regulate authorship, publication, and distribution of the Universities' textbooks. The legislation was negotiated in parliament. With the consensus agreement of the members of parliament on the legislation, the legislation was put into effect to replace the old legislative decree No 168. Legislation No 39 defines a University textbook as the following: "any textbook written or translated in accordance with the regulations of this law. It covers one module or more or part of it" (The Official Newspaper of the Syrian Arab Republic, 2001: 1266). Similar to legislation No 168, legislation No 39 imposes some limits on withdrawing textbooks. The legislation stipulates that textbooks cannot be withdrawn until four years after the year of publication and that academics at the Universities must be committed to teaching from the textbooks

³⁸ Alamali are teaching materials written in Arabic. Alamali were handwritten or typed notes and were distributed to a limited number of students (Sa'eed, 2007: 3).

for the period stipulated by the legislation (The Official Newspaper of the Syrian Arab Republic 2001).

In this section I shed light on the historical background of the University textbook in order to show that the restrictions imposed by bureaucracy on developing textbooks have legitimate reasons that can be understood in the light of the University-State relationship, and which can be justified on the grounds of the accountability of the University to the State. I will explore this point further in the next chapter. In addition to the commitment to teach from the University textbooks, the rules that regulate scholarly leave also impose some constraints on academic autonomy and I will turn to address these now.

6-3-3 Academic autonomy and scholarly leave

One of the key issues that the academic respondents commonly raised during interview was the need to have more opportunity to take sabbatical leave in order to develop their scholarly work and to keep their knowledge up to date with the most recent developments in their field. One of the respondents (PH, L, F1) pointed out:

I do not know why sabbatical leave is missing from University regulations. We are not only teachers in the faculties but also learners and researchers. We should not confine ourselves to routine teaching. Academics have to study in order to know what is new in their field and they also have to do research in new areas.

The respondents expressed that the University Act did not give them the right to take sabbatical leave for one year to study and do research. Most of the academic respondents pointed out that leave should not be limited to four months spent abroad. Leave should also be granted to do research and study within the country. One of the interviewees (M, PA, M2) put it:

We have been working with other academics in the faculty in order to raise the issue of sabbatical leave to the Ministry of Higher Education. We wish we could

take leave for a year to do research either inside or outside the country. We have discussed this several times during our department meetings but unfortunately the new law issued has no reference to the right of the academics to take sabbatical leave.

Another respondent (S, L, F2) commented:

The most important things that is missing from the new Law of Organising the Universities is the right to take sabbatical leave. This is secured in most universities in the world and even in the universities in neighbouring countries and we hope this will be put into effect in our University very soon.

The above quotations reveal that the respondents identified sabbatical leave as an important issue which was not considered by or was missing from the University Act. However, the University Act 2006, as stated earlier, gives academics the right to take sabbatical leave to do research abroad for four months. Because of the strict rules that regulate the sabbatical leave for doing research abroad, the sabbatical leave stipulated by the Act was more of a hope for academics than a real opportunity to develop their career. This is why they were aspiring to take scholarly leave to be spent in their home country. They were also aspiring to take leave for a greater amount of time.

Another respondent noted that the right to take sabbatical leave for a year did exist in the past. Documentary evidence of the Universities Act 1958, as stated earlier in chapter five, also demonstrates that academics during the United Arab Republic enjoyed the right to take sabbatical leave for one year subject to the approval of the minister. However, the respondent pointed out that with the increasing teaching burden the Ministry of Higher Education had suspended academics' right to take sabbatical leave.

The respondent (M, PA, M1) illustrated that the increase in the teaching burden resulting from the huge number of students and the inadequate number of academic staff was one of the key issues that resulted in suspending academics' right to take sabbatical leave for a

year. He intended to say that the restriction on granting sabbatical leave should be reconsidered as academic leave would not negatively influence the teaching process especially with the adequate availability of staff who could replace the academic on leave so that teaching can continue.

The interviewee (M, PA, M1) added that:

Our academic efforts [in the past] were mainly directed towards teaching. Academics had to teach many courses and their teaching hours exceeded the maximum hours [teaching quorate] allocated for each academic. But now the situation is better with the increased number of academic staff in the faculties. In our department, many modules are now taught by two or three tutors...and it is easier for academics to replace one another.

The respondents during the interviews commented on the rules that regulate the delegation of academic staff abroad to do scientific research. Most of the academic respondents expressed that they had limited opportunity to travel abroad for research. They revealed that, according to the University's regulations, academics travelled abroad for scholarly research in turn and priority was given to those who scored most credits. As the number of academics at the University of Damascus was huge and the University had a limited budget to be spent on scholarship, the academics commented that they might only have one chance to do research abroad over their academic life.

The academic respondents also addressed some challenges they experienced with respect to research and to which I turn now.

6-3-4 Academic autonomy and strategic research

Research at the University of Damascus is organised by the Committee for Scientific Research and Postgraduate Studies and the Directorate of Scientific Research at the central administration of the University of Damascus and at the Ministry of Higher Education.

Research at the University of Damascus is mainly funded by the government and research funding is suggested by the Council of Higher Education. Public funding for research at the University is incorporated into the budget of the higher education sector. Research at the university also can receive funds from the Higher Commission for Scientific Research. The respondent (M, P, M1) pointed out that the reliance on public funding as the only source for funding research at the University, in addition to the absence of the participation of the private sector in supporting research, had directed research to serving particular ends while ignoring other aspects. He commented:

The University has, for a long time, been reliant on a single financial support which comes from the government. The lack of cooperation of private institutes with the University has undermined the importance of scientific research in general and has limited the chance to open research activities to new areas and to benefit from the technical and financial support the private institutes can offer to research. Research in our country still plays a limited role in the comprehensive development of the country.

In 2005, the Higher Commission for Scientific Research was constituted by legislative decree No 68. The commission, according to the decree, aims to draw up the national policy for scientific research and to design strategies to meet the requirements of economic and social development. It also aims to coordinate research among all the research institutes and in all research areas, to distribute funds among them and to enhance the relationship between the research institutes and the public and private productive and services sector (Higher Commission for Scientific Research 2005).

The strategy of the Higher Commission for Scientific Research is steered by its council. The representation of government in the Council of the Higher Commission can be clearly noticed. The council, the legislative decree stipulates, is chaired by the prime minister as president and the minister of higher education as vice president. The council is also comprised of the membership of the ministers of finance, of agriculture and agrarian reforms, of communication and technology, of education and of industry; the president of the State Planning Commission; the presidents of the public universities; the Heads of

research institutes; the heads of commerce, industry, and agricultural chambers federation, and experts in scientific research (Higher Commission for Scientific Research 2005).

The Higher Commission for Scientific Research tends to fund research in the light of the practical output of the research. Each group of researchers either from the University of Damascus or from any public University or research institute who wishes to receive financial support from the commission should fill in an application form clarifying the objectives of their research. One of the respondents (M, P, M2) said that the application forms for financial support from the Higher Commission for Scientific Research were subject to an assessment. The applications are assessed in the light of certain criteria specified in the assessment form. The criteria include, for instance, the practical outcomes of the research in the economic, social, or technological field and the reliability of the estimated time and funds required for carrying out the research projects. The respondent (M, P, M2) explained that the same criteria were applied to assess applications for financial support for research in the humanities, management, economics or any other fields.

In the light of the assessment criteria, the research project proposals can be either accepted or rejected by the commission. If the research proposals are approved, then funding can be allocated to carry out research. It is good to point out here that not all research needs to be funded, such as research undertaken in the human field (i.e. philosophy, sociology) particularly when compared to research in other fields such as engineering, which requires investment in equipment and laboratories. However, funded research is more attractive to academics who tend to receive financial rewards from their scholarly work.

The emphasis of the practical output of research had been identified by most of the respondents in Social Science 1 as an undesirable criterion. One of the interviewees (S, PA, M1) put it:

I am one of many academics in the department who prefer not to carry out research which requires me to fill out research forms because you need to justify the objectives of your research and to think about the expected results of your research in advance.

The emphasis of the Higher Commission for Scientific Research on the enhancement of the relationship between research institutes, including the public universities, and the public and private sector, and to achieve comprehensive development in the country, is translated into the research agenda, which is formulated in the light of priorities suggested by the State Planning Commission and the ministries in Syria. The research agenda is then distributed to the public universities to be implemented by the academic staff at the University's research units who in turn can choose research projects in the light of the research agenda. In other words, academics at the University tended to direct their research towards meeting the demands of the public and private sectors. Academics who work in private universities which rely on external funding generated from industry or business sectors also experienced similar restrictions on their scholarly work. Academics find themselves having to direct their research to meet the demands of sponsors.

One of the respondents (CE, PA, M2) illustrated that academics at departments participated in drawing up the research plan. During the departmental meeting, the academics suggested a set of research projects to be the focus for future research. However, he pointed out that in the department, there was also a research proposal which guided the research agenda in the department. The research proposal was included in 30 pages and was suggested in the light of the research priorities identified by the public institutes such as the water institute, the electricity institute, and the housing ministry. When the proposal was approved by the cabinet office, the proposal was distributed to the faculty to work in the light of it.

One of the main issues raised by the respondents with regards to research was the new system which was recently introduced at the University of Damascus by the 2006 Act to regulate research at the University. According to the 2006 Act, every full-time academic should join one of the research units put together in the faculty by the Act. The number of research units established in the higher education institutes in Syria, including the

University of Damascus, has reached approximately 600 units distributed among different academic disciplines as illustrated in figure (6.1).

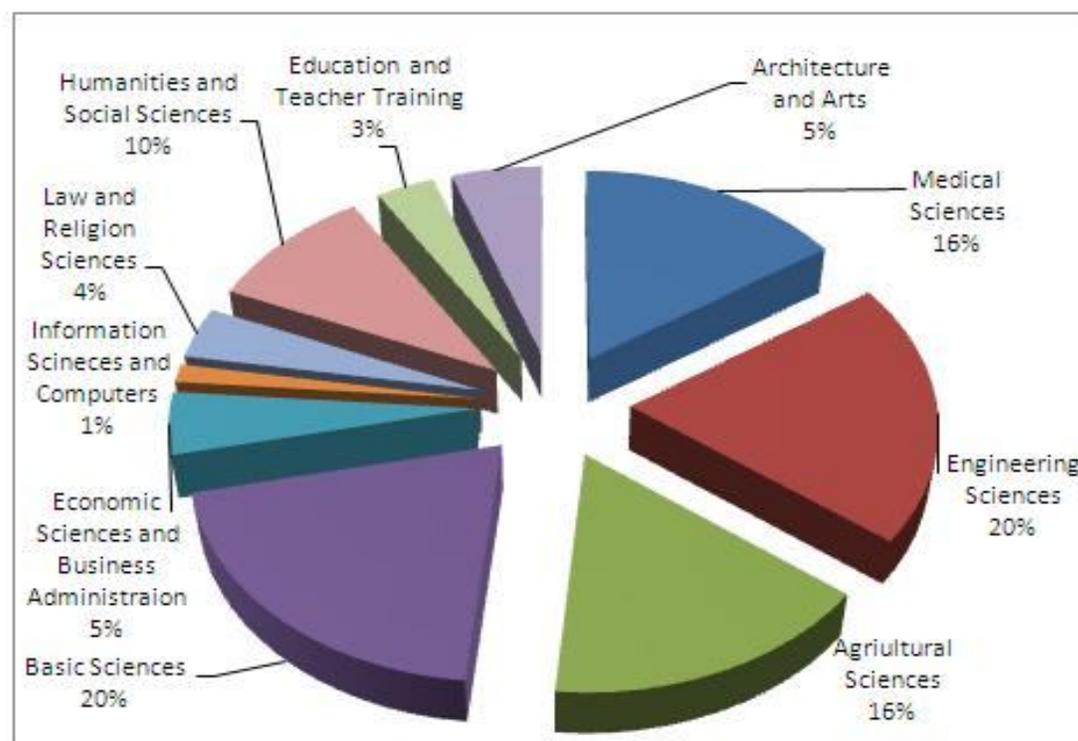


Figure (6.1) The distribution of research units among different academic disciplines in the Syrian higher education sector
Source: Ministry of Higher Education (2010).

Some respondents revealed that as a starting point to do research, the academics participating in research projects had to fill in a 'research form' to give details on the objectives of the research they were planning to do, the timetable for carrying out the research, the tools, materials, and technical aids required to do the research, and the academics who will participate in the project. The 'research form' submitted by academics is subject to the approval of the department board, the faculty board and the Committee for Scientific Research and postgraduate studies at the central administration at the University which in turn can either accept the project or refuse it.

The 2006 Act stipulates that research done by the academics at research units should be undertaken by teams of researchers. The respondents talked during the interviews about how they experienced the new system established by the Act to regulate research. The respondents in Social Science 1 pointed out that the research undertaken in research units

tended to take the form of survey research as researchers preferred to use the research done by teams to investigate and study phenomena with a large scope. However, most of the respondents in Social Science 1 found themselves pushed to do survey research which, for them, undermined scholarly work.

One of the respondents (S, P, M2) commented:

As there is an emphasis on team work, research undertaken in research units tends to take the form of survey research. The researchers exploit team work to investigate the phenomena of large samples distributed in different rural areas [...] I am not going to undermine this type of study but at the same time I would just consider them as surveys not research.

Other respondents in Social Science 1 and Social Science 3 also pointed out that research funding tended to prioritise certain projects such as those dealing with social and economic development. One of the respondents (S, PA, M2) put it:

Most of the research I did was paid research. I also did some research in the areas I am interested in just because I am interested in such topics and I wanted to deepen my knowledge. I was interested in analysing Qurani³⁹ texts to know how the role of women has been misinterpreted...

He continued:

Most of the research work has gone to paid research. I did paid research with the United Nations Development Programme and with the cooperation of the University and the centre of research and strategic studies [...]. The focus of that research was on the development of rural areas and on the problems faced by Syrian youth. We did research in the areas of drug, crime, and the withdrawal of girls from rural schools.

³⁹ The Quran is the holy book of Islam.

Another respondent (M, L, M1) said:

Research units are places to implement the strategic policy of scientific research and the approval for funding a research project is conditioned to some extent by the contribution of research to meet the needs of the institutes with which the University cooperates.

The respondents (particularly in Social Science 1) found that research undertaken at the university ought not to reflect a narrow view of Social Sciences by limiting research to particular areas and by systemising research methods. While they acknowledged that they themselves had undertaken a number of pieces of research that dealt with familiar problems and were studied by systemised methods such as surveys, they were aware that there were other interesting areas that should be given attention.

While respondents in Social Science 1 expressed some concern about the type of research undertaken in research units, the respondents in Social Science 3 and the engineering departments revealed that the research units put together in their faculties were a useful way of connecting them with the bodies and institutes that benefit from their research, thus enhancing the cooperation between the institutes and the researchers. One of the interviewees (M, L, M2) remarked that:

I have been working at the university for four years, we never hear from the trade or industry chambers or other institutes for the purposes of consultation or research. And if we kept waiting we would never hear from them.

Another respondent (CE, PA, M1) commented:

The good thing about them [the research units] is that we can expect the institutes and organisations to cooperate with us in order to carry out research. Previously, I made a mistake when I decided to make an individual initiative to undertake research at one of the institutes joined to a ministry. I asked to photocopy some papers at the Ministry for my research, and they only gave me

permission to photocopy half of the number of pages that I had requested. I was annoyed and decided not to do the research.

Drawing on the above, we can notice some different variations on the constitution of research units at the faculties between vocational and non-vocational respondents. The new system applied to regulate research appeared to vocational respondents at Social Science 3 and the engineering departments to have advantages by keeping them connected with the institutes and organisations that benefit from their research; however, comments made by the respondents in Social Science 1 revealed that the system tended to direct research to focus on particular areas and to use systemised methods which could confine the boundaries of their discipline.

6-3-5 Budgetary restraints

The University of Damascus is mainly funded by the government which makes its funding policies heavily reliant on government policies and subject to government restrictions. The budget of the University, according to the 2006 Act, is decided by the governing body as the Higher Education council suggests the amount of funds required for the universities and this is negotiated by the State planning commission and the cabinet office (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). Table (6.2) shows the grants the higher education sector has received from the government from 2002 to 2007 accompanied by a reduction in 2005 and 2007.

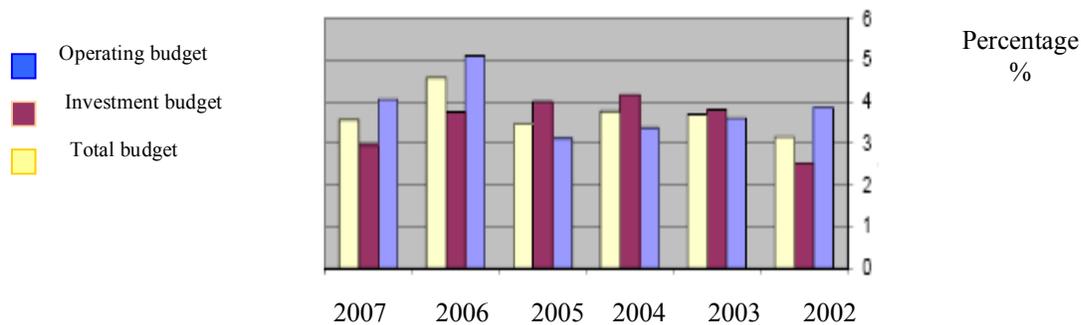


Table (6.2) The percentage of higher education grants to the total state budget

Source. Ministry of Higher Education (2008)

As demonstrated earlier in chapter five, government control of the University budget can be tracked back to the 1920s when the University of Damascus (University of Syria) was linked to the Ministry of Education by legislation No 283. Although the legislation stipulated that the University enjoyed autonomy over its financial resources which were collected from fees, endowments, and state grants, funding had to be suggested by the Minister of Education and be approved by the High Commissioner and the President of State (Alasema Newspaper 1926: 44). Such rules in fact contributed to the shrinking of the financial autonomy of the University.

The University Act of 2006 stipulates that funding at the University of Damascus is public funding to be audited and managed in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Funding, according to the University Act 2006, should be deposited in the central bank and only the President of the University can issue spending decisions. The University also has its own resources collected from grants, endowments, tuition fees, and the University accommodation and cafeteria fees. Some of the University's own resources are allocated for paying compensation for full-time employment and for purposes specified by the minister with the coordination of the minister of finance. Some proportions of the University's own resources also have to be allocated to the Ministry of Higher Education to be spent on purposes identified by the Minister (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006).

The budget of the University is tightly controlled by the central administration. That is what the academic administrators expressed. One of them (CE, P, M3) commented:

We are powerless in deciding budget allocations. We do not even have our own budget. The financial decisions are made through channels and issued by the approval of the President of the University or of the Minister.

Another respondent (M, P, M2) put it:

The strong centralisation in controlling the mechanisms of funding the faculties and the slowness in funding our plans and sometimes the cutback of funds during carrying out the projects made us unable to complete our projects in the planned times and sometimes we were forced to cancel some suggested projects.

The academic respondents revealed how the control of financial resources at the University of Damascus hindered the faculties from purchasing the equipment necessary for research. While serious endeavours are made by the University for maintaining and equipping laboratories in the faculties of science, medicine, and medical engineering, the respondents at the faculty of engineering pointed out that the laboratories in their faculty still lacked the necessary equipment. One of the interviewees (CE, P, F1) put it:

The environment laboratory lacks equipment for examining water, and sewage and for measuring noise. It also lacks the equipment for analysing solid refuse. There is a Master's student here whose research requires a model of a water treatment station and this model is not available in the faculty. The student does not know whether he should wait or should change the topic of his research.

The respondents in the engineering department pointed out that the lack of well- equipped laboratories was among the main challenges the academics in the engineering department experienced with respect to research in their faculty and which turned the academic staff into teachers while providing little chance for them to exercise their career as researchers. One of the respondents (CE, PA, M1) put it:

The emphasis in the University of Damascus in general and in our faculty [engineering] in particular is placed more on teaching than on research because

the fundamental requirements of scientific research are not yet available in the University. A researcher needs equipment and tools, and the ability to access international research and journals. A researcher also needs their research to be adopted by others especially if this research is vocational.

Most of the respondents in the Engineering department found that the lack of equipment in their laboratory was not attributed to the lack of funds so much as to administrative obstacles. The respondents referred to the rigid rules and to the system that hindered the flow of funds to local units. One of the respondents (CE, P, M2) expressed that the president of the University invited the academics from time to time to specify and order the equipment they needed and informed them that the resources were available and the University could meet the demands. The respondent pointed out that the complexities of administrative procedures, particularly those procedures undertaken by contact and purchasing directorates in the University, hindered the performance of the faculties and created obstacles to purchasing decisions.

The interviewee (CE, P, M2) put it:

We ordered equipment for our laboratory two years ago. Two years were spent between tenders and contracts directorates and things are still on-going. Our orders are sometimes returned to us to reconsider the conditions. When we want to undertake scientific research, we specify the tools and the equipment we need and send it to the contracts directorate. They [the contracts directorate] return the documents to us, asking us to set the price, to identify the academics who will participate in the research and sometimes to make a modification to the technical specification. It takes two years - coming and going, coming and going - without fruitful results.

The centralisation of financial resources and the tight control of the University budget hindered the staff at the University from pursuing their projects. The respondents stressed the need for releasing the tight control of the budget and for distributing resources to operating units so they could enjoy more freedom to undertake their functions and carry out

their projects. One of the interviewees (M, P, M1) who was previously the head of department expressed that the faculties should have their own budget and should be autonomous in making their financial decisions. He put it:

We should not go back to the central administration for small things. I would not say that departments should have their own funds but at least the faculties should. It is not appropriate to wait around 6 months to receive the piece I had ordered for my computer.

The respondents made general comments on the rules that regulate the operation of the University. For them, the rules are characterised by inflexibility and a slow response to change. One of the respondents (PH, P, M1) commented:

The administrative procedures which are considered Qurani texts⁴⁰ - I think -will lead to more rigidity and to the domination of one routine in all of the academic institutes. We should not look at laws as a recipe sent down from the heavens. This often limits the activities of academics and leads to greater complexity at an administrative level.

Similarly, another respondent (S, P, M2) expressed:

People are used to seeing things staying in their place; so it is not easy to move this [the phone] from here to there. There is a fear of change. They say this is how our ancestors lived and we can live like them.

In addition to the rigidity of procedures, another interviewee (S, L, F2) referred to the lack of experience of some staff at the central administration who attempted to suspend financial decisions for no viable reason. She put it:

⁴⁰ The Quran is the holy book of Islam. Qurani texts are read and memorised by Muslims literally. The academic meant by the metaphor “Quran” the rigid application of rules as administrators read and apply rules as literally as if they were Qurani texts.

Unfortunately, the Weberian concept of bureaucracy - which stresses performance and qualifications - is not understood by some administrators, especially those who undertake financial functions. They create hundreds of things in order to stop the decision and I think this is attributed in large part to their inadequate experience in administration in addition to their misunderstanding of the rules.

One of the respondents (CE, P, M2) pointed out that the University had made some attempts in the past to function better than it did now. He told me a story going back to the 1970s when the University had teams of academics called 'achievement teams', who were responsible for specifying and purchasing equipment for the laboratories and for the faculty in general. He pointed out that every academic was enthusiastic and encouraged to be a member of the team. He expressed that the team was given all the support they needed to carry out their task and enjoyed access to an open budget and unlimited funds for their purchases. He commented:

I was a member of the team and we decided to purchase our lab equipment from Germany. Within one week we got together, prepared everything and our passports, and flew to Germany... but hapless people are hapless wherever they go; we faced another problem as the Germans refused to sell high-tech machines to us when they knew that we were from the Middle East.

In addition to the lack of some necessary equipment in the laboratory, the academic respondents pointed out that they did not have access to the internet from their offices. They also revealed that there was a shortage of modern English journals and books in the university libraries. One of the respondents (S, L, F1) commented:

We did suggest through the department board an electronic library and asked for an internet connection; however, such services are still unavailable. The responses are slow and there are 100 excuses.

The respondents believed that the bureaucratic procedures applied in the University to control the resources caused delays in equipping their internet lab and the libraries. One of the interviewees (S, TA, M1) pointed out that their internet lab is still poorly equipped by

computers and wished that the computers ordered by the department would receive the approval of the central administration and would be delivered promptly.

Other respondents referred to the bureaucratic procedures undertaken by the faculties to purchase textbooks for libraries. They pointed out that the process of purchasing books is infrequent and organised centrally. One of the interviewees revealed that the University bought books from the book fair which takes place in Syria once a year, usually in September. The purchasing process is organised through the central administration, which asks the vice deans for scientific affairs at the faculties to invite the academics to specify the books they need for their libraries. In some cases, lists with titles of books are distributed to the academics who in turn tick the books they would find useful. The faculties then formally inform the central administration about their book requirements which in turn allocates funds for purchasing the books.

The interviewee (PH, PA, M1) commented:

The University is making intensive efforts to improve and we are grateful for these efforts. But sometimes these efforts are lost among the directorates. We specified the textbooks our library needed but we have not received anything yet. Anyway, we are also responsible and we have to follow up the process ourselves.

The comments made by the interviewees on the budget control show that the bureaucratic mechanism applied to control financial resources has separated the academic staff from the resources they need to develop their academic work in order to make them more reliant on what the central administration can provide for them.

To sum up, the University of Damascus is governed by the University Act which sets principles for regulating the academic administration of the University. The University Act sets formal rules that structure the academic administration at the University of Damascus on the principle of the dual system of hierarchal and consultative form of governance. The consultative nature of the academic administration, particularly at the departmental level,

was also explored by observing two meetings held by the department boards. The observation revealed that the department boards had the chance to negotiate and discuss issues related to their departments. However, the bureaucratic dimension in terms of the influence of position on decision making was also noted in one of the department meetings.

The bureaucratic dimension of the administration of the University of Damascus has also been explored in this study through the use of documentary material - the University Act - which demonstrates that the University operates on the basis of formality with a clear division of the responsibilities assigned by the Act to the committees operating at different hierarchical levels. The formality of bureaucracy is also reserved to regulate academic aspects such as programmes of study and staff assessment. The interviews conducted by the academic respondents in this study also demonstrate the relevance of bureaucracy to their academic career as the respondents stressed that rules were successful in achieving equal opportunities among the academics with regard, for instance, to recruitment and scholarly leave. The female respondents also emphasised the essentiality of rules to secure equal opportunities with their male counterparts. The interview material showed some examples of the challenges that female academics experienced within the academic profession and which demonstrated the dysfunction of professional control in securing ethics of equality.

Since 1966 the University of Damascus has been operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, which is responsible for drawing up the strategic administrative, scholarly, and educational policies of the university and for regulating the affairs of academic staff at the University. The centralisation of higher education policy has brought all faculties affiliated to the Syrian public universities, including the University of Damascus, to be regulated by the same Act, the Law of Organising the Universities. The links between the University and the Ministry and the centralisation of the University's financial, educational, and scholarly policies caused some challenges to individual academics who experienced constraints on financial support and on the development of their knowledge. The respondents revealed that they had very limited opportunity to take leave for study and for doing research. The academic respondents also experienced relative freedom to control the content of their academic work. While the academics participated in deciding the scholarly, educational, and administrative policies of their departments, the

adherence to respond to the strategic policy designed at the ministerial level caused some challenges to academics in individual departments. With respect to curricula development, for instance, the academics at the university had to work in the light of rules that specify certain conditions on the development of academic programmes at the University and which subject programmes of development to some constraints.

Research at the University is undertaken in the light of rules which direct research towards serving the strategic policy of the Ministry for research. Research done by research units is also subject to rules which specify standardised procedures to undertake research. While the general aim of the research units is to direct research towards serving the strategic research policy, the academic respondents in Social Science 1 were more concerned, compared to the respondents in Social Science 3 and the engineering departments, about the challenges that such a tendency might cause to their discipline.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings of the study which demonstrate the positive and the negative aspects of bureaucracy in the context of academic administration in light of the literature reviewed in chapters two and three. I will also expand the analysis by presenting an overview of the implications of the negative and positive aspects of bureaucracy. I will explore, for example, the impact of restricted autonomy on creativity. I will also integrate the national perspective into my analysis of bureaucracy and its consequences on academic autonomy in order to reassess the critiques of the bureaucratic model in the context of the public sector.

Chapter seven: The relationship between bureaucracy and academia

7-1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study is to explore the relationship between bureaucracy and academia and to explore this relationship through access to the experience of academics at the University of Damascus and through the use of documentary material. Drawing on a series of interviews with the academic staff at the University of Damascus, and supported by the documentary evidence revealed in the previous chapter, I explore the fact that the bureaucratic nature of the academic administration of the University of Damascus has both negative and positive aspects. In some ways, bureaucracy has threatened academia by imposing some limits on academic autonomy. However, bureaucracy has been found to support academia in certain aspects. Bureaucracy is necessary to regulate academic administration and to safeguard equal opportunities among academics.

In this chapter, I will discuss the negative and positive aspects of bureaucracy in the light of the literature review, demonstrating the consequences of both the benefits and the disadvantages of bureaucracy. For example, I will address the potential impact of restricted academic autonomy on creativity. I will also explore the ethical role of bureaucracy in safeguarding equality between citizens and thus protecting academics from arbitrariness and liberating them from prejudice.

In my discussion of the bureaucratic conduct of academic administration at the University of Damascus I revisit the documentary/archival material in order to consider the historical background of the bureaucratic conduct of academic administration in relation to change occurring at a national level which determines the role of the State in guiding higher education policy and thus shapes the University's ethical responsibility to the State.

This chapter is organised into four main sections. Section two addresses the bureaucratic and professional/ collegial mode of academic administration at the University of Damascus and its impact on academic autonomy in the light of change occurring in the external environment within which the University operates. Section three forms a critique of the bureaucratic model in relation to creativity. In section four, I turn to address bureaucracy in the context of the public domain in order to examine the relevance of bureaucracy and its essential role in securing the accountability of the University to the State. Section five addresses the ethical side of the bureaucratic conduct of public higher education institutes in terms of safeguarding equal opportunities among academics.

The University of Damascus does not operate in a vacuum. What occurs at a national level affects the higher education policy. The core of this thesis suggests three levels of investigation: national, organisational, and individual levels. At an organisational level, for instance, the study explores issues surrounding the autonomy of the University. At an individual level, the study reveals the impact of the restricted autonomy of individual academics on creativity. At the national level, I provide the historical context to track some changes at the national level which form the centralised mode of the operation of the University of Damascus. As a clear division between the national and the organisational levels is difficult to draw because of the mutual influence of and the interaction between these levels (Parker and Jary 1994: 2), I have integrated some of the analysis at national level with that at the organisational level in order to understand the bureaucratic conduct of the academic administration in relation to its broader context.

7-2 The bureaucratic-collegial nature of the University and its implication on academic autonomy

Academic institutes, such as the University of Damascus, can be identified as professional organisations through the nature of their work. As a profession is defined as an occupation which is founded on theoretical knowledge (Barber 1963; Bellis 2000; Greenwood 1965; Whitty 2008), academic work undertaken by staff at the University of Damascus involves

teaching (transmitting knowledge), and research (creating knowledge), thereby fulfilling the fundamental criteria of a profession.

In academic organisations, the administration operates on the basis of collegiality and bureaucracy. The analysis here will reveal that the collegial-bureaucratic mode of governance coexists in tension. However, there is the potential that this dual system of governance could be more harmonious. To illustrate this, I will start by exploring the tension between bureaucracy and collegiality, drawing on the findings of this study.

Collegiate authority is based on the professional control of academic careers and is exercised by virtue of the academic community (Farnham 1999). Central to the vision of collegiality is the idea of a 'community of scholars' (Middlehurst 1993: 49) who are co-equal in authority and who collectively participate in decision-making, express their views, and regulate their work internally without reference to a non-academic body (Dearlove 1997; Eustance 1987; Middlehurst 1993).

Though the University of Damascus operates on the basis of the committee system, the University of Damascus does not exhibit all of the possible collegial traits. The committees are headed by academic administrators: heads of department, deans, and the president. The title 'Head' of department represents the bureaucratic versus the collegial nature of the University since the title 'Head' is used to reflect the fact that the Head of department is appointed rather than elected by his or her academic colleagues (Middlehurst 1993: 129).

The University Act stipulates that the key academic administrators at the University such as the Heads of department, vice deans and deans are to be appointed by the government. Appointment versus election, particularly in the domain of public administration, shapes the identity of academic administrators as 'civil servants' whose ethical responsibility is to respond to the higher education policy of the State and to serve the body which appoints them. On the other hand, election is based on the idea of the direct accountability of elected officials to the people who elect them (Weber 1968: 960-61). Weber (1968: 960-61) argues that the direct accountability of elected officials to their electorate weakens the hierarchical structure of bureaucracy as elected officials will tend to be autonomous from their bosses.

Election can promote collegiality since elected administrative academics will represent the voice of the academics who elect them and will be accountable directly to them. On the other hand, bureaucracy, which is based upon the idea of appointment versus election, can cause a challenge to collegiality as academics might tend to perceive an appointed administrative academic as a boss or a superior rather than as a colleague. Collegiality, which emphasises the idea of a University as a community of academics who are co-equal in authority (Eustace 1987) is safeguarded by the University Act 2006. Co-equality among academics is secured by the Act as it stipulates that each member of the department board has equal worth in voting. However, observations made during department meetings revealed that the power of position could be highly influential in decision-making as the academics who occupy administrative positions had, in some cases, more influence on decision-making compared to non-administrative academics. This is an important point because academic administrators have a slightly different agenda compared to those who do not occupy administrative positions. The observations made during department meetings also revealed an example of the dysfunction of bureaucracy and demonstrated that some decisions could be affected by personal relationships. The influence of personal relationships on decision-making contradicts the principal characteristic of bureaucracy which rests upon formalistic impersonality through an adherence to the purpose of the office, independent of friendship, kin, and religious considerations. Drawing upon this vision I can argue that collegiality can be negatively affected by the bureaucratic attributes (i.e. appointment versus election in selection) as well as by the failure of bureaucracy to operate in an ideal way.

The tension between bureaucracy and collegiality is not only attributed to the principal characteristic of bureaucracy which is based upon the idea of appointment versus election. Collegiality also exists in tension with bureaucracy on the grounds that collegiality's need for autonomy from external organisation is incompatible with the tendency of bureaucracy to hierarchically control the activities of individuals.

The findings reveal that the committees at departmental and faculty levels work in the light of central strategic planning drawn by the Council of Higher Education, which operates at the ministerial level and is comprised of academic and non-academic representatives. The Council of Higher Education, the documentary material reveals, sets the formal rules that

govern working life at the University of Damascus and defines a range of issues such as student admission policy and those concerning regulating curricula development and research at the University.

With regards to their admissions policy, academics at the departmental, faculty and University levels work within the parameters of central policy drawn up at the apex of the hierarchy. The difficulty faced by academics at the departmental and University level in controlling the number of students posed challenges to the academics in some faculties included in this study who in turn had to accept the increased student numbers. The increased rate in student numbers, the interview material revealed, was accompanied to some extent by a loss of academics' control over learning. The academics in some cases had to adjust their teaching and drop assignments. They were also under pressure to computerise exams. Academics' professional autonomy in terms of their ability to control their academic work (Engel, cited in Engel 1969; Ferrell and Morris 2003) is threatened by the increased number of students.

The growth in the number of students enrolling, especially if the growth in student numbers is not associated with a parallel increase in government funding, will negatively affect the quality of teaching and scholarly work (Trow 2000). Academics will face increasing workloads as they have to teach many classes and this will be accompanied by a loss of some of the time previously devoted to research (Trow 2000). The decline in the staff-student ratio will also threaten the quality of teaching by transforming teaching into a process of providing instructions and by restricting the space available to both students and staff to establish dialogues and exchange ideas, thus limiting the chance to develop critical thinking.

In addition to the difficulties faced by the academic community in deciding and controlling the number of students in their faculties, in their basic units, that is the research units formed within the faculties, they also have only relative autonomy in steering the strategic research agenda of the University which is drawn up at a ministerial level. Funded research at the University of Damascus is directed towards responding to the funding priorities set

by the Council of Higher Education with the coordination of the Higher Commission of Scientific Research. Research funds, according to the University Act, are public funds allocated to the University of Damascus by the Ministry of Higher Education, to be distributed accordingly by the University Senate in the light of recommendations from the Committee of Scientific Research and Postgraduate Studies.

To regulate the research process and to control the financial resources allocated to fund research, a bureaucratic mechanism was applied. The academic staff who joined research units have to fill in a 'research form' giving details on their research projects. The research form submitted by the team is subject to the approval of the department board and of the Committee of Scientific Research and Postgraduate Studies. The committees in turn either accept the research projects proposed by the academics and allocate funds for research, or reject their research proposal. As there is a clear strategic research agenda to be distributed to the basic units, drawn up at the ministerial level with the cooperation of the Higher Committee for Scientific Research, academics at the University of Damascus tend to direct their scholarly activities towards matching the country's strategic research agenda.

The mechanism applied at the University of Damascus to monitor the research process in research units is similar to the process described by Whyte (1956). Whyte (1956) points out that the Universities that receive their research funds from the government tend to emphasise the systematised planning of research through which committees set the strategic plan of research and identify problems to be investigated by scientists, while the role of Universities is restricted to providing the tools and the setting for carrying out research. Academics become increasingly committed to research units or cells, which are constituted in and equipped by the University but whose direction is driven by an external body.

One consequence of working within the framework of the strategic research policy is that knowledge can no longer be produced and advanced for its own sake. Academics now have to justify their scholarly actions in the light of the strategic research policy (Henkel 2005; Marginson 1997; Whyte 1956). As Henkel (2005) points out, research funds become conditional or limited to strategic research which is expected to find solutions to certain problems. Academics become resources or 'organisation men' who have to serve organisational goals rather than being an active agent with the power of choice over his or

her own scholarly work (Whyte 1956). This is particularly true with regard to funded research, as academic researchers have to respond to funding priorities set by the sponsor.

Respondents from Social Science 1, Social Science 3 and the Engineering departments pointed out that research undertaken in research units was driven by strategic policy which prioritised certain projects, primarily those which attracted public funding. The bureaucratic mechanism that governs funded research at Universities and which directs academics to work within a strategic research agenda can challenge the collegial identity of academics as an autonomous research community. However, it is useful to mention here that academics do enjoy the freedom to carry out research in the areas in which they are interested, particularly if this research is non-funded.

The above paragraphs demonstrate the tension between the collegial requirement of autonomy and the bureaucratic feature of hierarchical control of administrative and scholarly affairs including student admissions and research. Curriculum development at the University of Damascus is also subject to hierarchical control and it requires the approval of the Council of Higher Education.

Within the perspective of a labour process, the management controls academic activities to represent the interests of the organisation. Braverman (1974) argues that workers employed in large factories are subject to control by managers, who direct the activities of workers to serve the interests of capitalist owners. Such control results in the degradation of work and de-skilled labour. Braverman's labour process theory may not appear immediately relevant to academics, particularly those employed in public higher education institutes, because academic staff in public academic institutes do not serve the interests of capitalist owners (Dearlove 1997: 63) and because academics are also conceptualised as intellectual or knowledge labour who retain a certain level of autonomy, therefore they cannot be subject to the same control exercised by management over workers in factories. However, Braverman suggests there is evidence for the proletarianisation or de-professionalisation of academics by means of bureaucratic control which restricts the autonomy of intellectual workers. In this context, Halsey (1992) points out that when the professional control and occupational authority of academics is weakened or constrained as a result of the external

control exercised by factors such as managerialism, academic staff are transformed into de-professionalised labour. Halsey (1992: 13) comments that:

The gradual proletarianisation of the academic professions [...] is propelled towards a wider admission of those who survive beyond compulsory schooling. Managerialism gradually comes to dominate collegiate cooperation in the organisation of both teaching and research. [...] The don becomes increasingly a salaried or even a piece-work labourer in the service of the expanding number of administrators and technologists.

Professional identity can thus be secured in collegial culture. Bureaucracy with its limits seems to be incompatible with collegial traits. However, I will take this point further and argue that the incompatibility of bureaucracy with safeguarding collegial culture is not attributed entirely to bureaucracy *per se* but to factors external to bureaucracy which shape its centralised conduct in academic administration and direct academic institutes towards serving certain goals deemed worthy in the context of public administration.

The key point that is suggested here is that the conduct of academic institutes is highly influenced by change occurring at national level, which shapes the role the State chooses to play in achieving the country's higher education objectives. The role of the State, for instance, can be restricted to providing funds and resources to Universities without taking an active role in defining their priorities or regulating them (Martinez 2002).

The historical study, which was explored in more detail in chapter five, helps us to understand that the bureaucratic mode of the University's administration has been imprinted by the University-State relationship shaped during the French ruling and the United Arab Republic. The archival material showed that the University Act of 1926 which was issued by the French government in order to regulate the University of Damascus governed the University by a rigid hierarchy and concentrated strategic decisions in the hand of the top administration (Alasema Newspaper 1926, Part 7).

The concentration of strategic financial, educational and administrative decisions such as deciding funding, opening new programmes and appointing the key academic

administrators, in the hands of the government during the French ruling reflects the French policy, which is characterised by the control of social sectors, including the educational sector, by the State (Thompson 2000).

When Syria joined the union with Egypt, the archival material shows that the strategic financial, educational, scholarly and administrative decisions were kept concentrated at the ministerial level and the approval of the President of State was required for some decisions such as those concerning curricula development (The Official Newspaper 1958, No 32). The centralised conduct of the administration was an expansion of the centrally-planned economy provoked by the nationalisation process that the Syrian economy witnessed in late 1950s and which was initiated by the socialism movement that subjected the Syrian economy to the supervision of the State (Aziz-al Ahsan 1984; Keilany 1973).

Considering this brief reflection on the historical background of the University-State relationship, which was explored in more depth in chapter five, allows us to suggest that the centralised conduct of an academic institute can be understood not as a product of bureaucracy *per se*, but rather as a product of external factors which determine the active role of the State in guiding higher education policy. The centralised form of academic administration finds its legitimised framework within bureaucracy, which in turn divides authorities into a tall hierarchy and utilises more regulations for carrying out functions. While the centralised conduct of bureaucracy shrinks the level of autonomy the University enjoys, I will explore later that such a conduct of bureaucracy is important to serve particular ends.

Autonomy is important for academia in order to enable academics, who possess specialist knowledge, to exercise their academic judgment and discretion. In addition to the possession of specialist knowledge, adherence to a code of ethics justifies autonomy over professions and enables professionals to claim self-control over their occupations (Freidson 1970: 135). However, the findings of this study show that the need for autonomy as a necessary requirement for the academic profession is mediated by the type of academic discipline to which the academics belong. While the respondents at the department of Social Science 1 tended to retain autonomy as a defining characteristic of their occupation

and reported some concern about working within the strategic research agenda, most of the respondents at the Social Science 3 and Engineering Science departments placed more emphasis on the positive aspects of the national strategic research agenda. The advantages accompanied by working within the strategic research agenda were primarily embodied in strengthening the cooperation between the academics who carry out research and the institutions which benefited from the research itself. Drawing on these different perspectives, I can argue that the bureaucratic mechanisms applied to monitor research and to direct it towards achieving the national strategic research policy and its impact on academic autonomy can be understood differently across different disciplines. The need for autonomy is conditioned by the type of knowledge. For instance, autonomy can be a more important element in the field of pure science than in the field of applied science.

Applied science is distinguished from pure science in that pure science is steered from within and is discipline-based while applied science is externally-steered and is subject to the influence of the external environment (Tranfield and Starkey 1998). The connection between applied science and the external environment means that applied research is directed towards dealing with real problems. Therefore, applied research can be influenced by the bureaucratic mechanisms applied to direct research to deal with the national problems of the State. The study reveals that bureaucracy can, for example, facilitate the connection between research units and the institutes and bodies that benefit from the research. The role of bureaucracy in enhancing the relationship between academia and the units that benefit from research also has a positive impact on the role of the academic profession.

Professionalism does not only consider the interests of the professionals. Professionalism also considers the interests of the institutions that employ the professionals and the interests of society as a whole. The duty towards society and the commitment to providing society with a good service has been identified as a fundamental characteristic of a profession (Barber 1963; Bellis 2000; Greenwood 1965; Whitty 2008). Therefore, it is useful to understand the bureaucratic mechanisms applied at the University of Damascus in order to keep its academic researchers committed to working within the strategic research agenda as an effective technique to enhance professionalism rather than as a challenge that threatens the professional identity of academics. Rules that regulate research at the University help to

link the University of Damascus and its academics with society and to activate the partnership between the University and the economic and social sectors. Academic researchers at the University will be more capable of dealing with issues of national interest and of developing themes vital to the development of society. The commitment to orienting knowledge towards serving society and towards achieving the common good is also identified as an ethical element of a profession (Bellis 2000; O'Day 2000) and is a necessary requirement for a profession to gain status (Barber 1963). Therefore, I can argue that academic professionalism can be enhanced by sustaining a balance between its requirement to provide a service to society and academia's need for autonomy and for the freedom to decide academic work and pursue scholarly activities.

The above two paragraphs demonstrate the positive role that bureaucracy can play in enhancing the academic profession by keeping academics in line with the corporate objectives of their institutes, which in turn serve the national objectives of the State in terms of social, technical and economic development. Bureaucracy can also be mutually interconnected with the academic profession on the grounds of legally securing collegial/professional traits which allow academics to enjoy a level of autonomy and to participate in managing their academic careers. The academic profession and collegiality can be protected by bureaucracy that gives committees the legal authority to carry out their own activities. The committee system is considered a fundamental component of self-governance and academic autonomy and a necessary part of collegiality (Middlehurst 1993: 49). The legal act which regulated the operation of the University of Damascus at the beginning of the French ruling, as the archival materials show, protected the collegial nature of the academic committee, the Teachers' Senate. According to the Syrian University Act of 1919, the University enjoyed substantial powers to guide its own educational policy as educational matters were kept in the hands of the Teachers' Senate, which represented the academic voice. The archival material also shows that the University Act secured collegiality since the key academic administrators at the University, including the Heads of the institutes and the members of the University Senate, had to be elected by their academic colleagues. Later, the University Act of 2006 also protected collegial traits. The Act stipulates the representation of academic voice on the University committees and assigns the committees operating at different hierarchical levels certain responsibilities that determine their roles in drawing up the higher education policy and securing a level of

participation in management and decision-making. The committee at the departmental level - the department board - studies all issues concerning the scholarly, educational, administrative, and financial affairs in the department (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). In the department meetings that I attended, among the issues discussed by the board members in the meetings were, for example, the timetable of teaching, curricula, a proposal for a Master's degree, and applications for employment and leave. Some of the decisions the boards at the departmental and faculty level make are not subject to approval from higher committees such as those concerning class schedules and shifting modules between semesters. However, there are some decisions made by the academic board at a departmental level which do require approval from the higher committees operating at the University, and the ministerial levels, in order to be put into effect.

Drawing on the above paragraphs, we can argue that within bureaucracy there is space for academics to participate in managing academic affairs and secure a level of autonomy for protecting the collegial nature of academic institutes. Autonomy and freedom are very important concepts in the context of academia. Autonomy is not only related to the security of collegiality and academic autonomy as an end in itself so that members of the academic community can decide what to teach and what research to carry out; academic autonomy is identified as a means to achieve worthy ends. Autonomy is an essential element for good scholarly work (Abdel-Motall 2002). When academic freedom and institutional autonomy are safeguarded, universities can best contribute to transmitting and advancing knowledge by enabling them to adapt to change in society (Ginkel 2002; Polak 2002). Autonomy is also an important element for involvement in discoveries and creative academic work and to extend the boundaries of knowledge. I will turn now to look at bureaucracy in relation to creativity in more depth.

7-3 The impact of bureaucracy on creativity

Creativity is a product of the human mind. When individuals are employed in organisations, perhaps the prime issue for management to consider are the organisational conditions which further or enhance creativity. Autonomy has been intensively emphasised

in organisational studies and has been frequently presented as an essential requirement for enhancing the creativity of the individuals employed in organisations (Amabile et al. 1996; Collier and Esteban 1999; Cummings et al. 1975; Kanter 1992; Peters and Waterman 1982; Thompson and Alvesson 2005). In professional organisations, such as academic institutes, the need for autonomy becomes greater the more the profession is engaged in knowledge production, which is characterised by the advancement and uncertainty of knowledge. The uncertain and indeterminate nature of knowledge requires professional judgment and personal discretion that enable inquiry and discovery. Therefore, subjecting knowledge to excessive regulations threatens the uncertainty of knowledge as knowledge tends to be handled in a systemised way (MacDonald 1995). The findings of this study develop this point and illustrate how bureaucracy, through the application of standardised procedures, can affect the nature of knowledge.

Research undertaken by research units is regulated by certain rules and procedures. The University Act 2006 stipulates that research carried out by the research units in the University faculties should be undertaken by teams. The application of such rules emphasising teamwork, accompanied by the tendency of the research to deal with familiar social problems (such as the development of rural areas) which were amongst the priorities of the strategic research agenda, shifted the focus of the social research done by the units in the Social Science 1 department. The academic researchers in Social Science 1 tended to undertake survey research to investigate social problems with a large scope. The emphasis on survey research, in addition to the tendency to deal with familiar social problems, can cause a challenge to the nature of social science.

The discipline of social science is regarded as a discipline with unlimited boundaries of knowledge. It is characterised by a broad range of problems and questions it investigates and a loose theoretical structure compared to other disciplines which have clear and restricted boundaries of knowledge (Becher, 1989: 153). For example, in the hard-pure science such as mathematics it is relatively clear what questions to ask and what method to adopt (Kavanagh 2006). In such a type of science, variables are few and there is more reliance on the causal relationship as a method of research (Kavanagh 2006; Weber 1947). Social science, on the other hand, has a wide range of topics which can be selected for research (Kavanagh 2006) and the methodology adopted depends much more on the

researcher's understanding and judgment (Kavanagh 2006; Weber 1947). Therefore, the shift in social research towards investigating social problems and the tendency to limit its methods of research shrinks the boundaries of social science because the epistemological stance of academic researchers affects what they know.

The bureaucratic systems applied at the University of Damascus to regulate research and which direct research towards dealing with the problems that face the public and private sectors matches 'mode 2 in knowledge production' as identified by Gibbons et al. (1994). Mode 2 in knowledge production is characterised by the domination of knowledge which is problem-focused and is produced in the context of its emergence through teamwork instead of being initiated by the endeavours of individual academics (Gibbons et al. 1994). The shift to mode 2 knowledge production, De Cock and Jeanes (2006) argue has been challenged by some theorists such as Grey (2001) and March (2002) who found that the freedom from orienting research to be practitioner-relevant is an essential requirement for producing useful knowledge.

The shifting of social research to focus on social problems can restrict creative acts and threaten the originality and the novelty of social research since this research is reduced to finding solutions to the problems that face social sectors instead of bringing new ideas, new questions and new ways of thinking to understand social phenomena. While creativity is described as a process of involvement in generating useful ideas and problem solving (Amabile et al. 1996: 1155; Amabile et al. 2005: 368), the concept of creativity is not restricted to this description. Creativity is also defined as the ability to create novel and unconventional work that questions the accepted assumptions and challenges the established way of thinking (Sternberg and Lubart 1999: 3). The original and the novel nature of research is unlikely to be safeguarded when the outcomes of that research are limited to those which are predictable. Research undertaken by the academic researchers in the research units was subject to standardised procedures as they had to report on the expected results of the research they planned to undertake in the research forms they submitted to their Heads of department. Thinking in advance about the results of research implies that the research will tend to produce conventional knowledge and will bring results

that do not go beyond the already-established understanding of the phenomena. In order to control knowledge, particularly that produced by government-funded research, ethics boards play a significant role in controlling the nature of research and deciding what scientific research is (Koro-Ljungberg et al. 2007). Ethics boards also define ethical standards for practices in research (Cannella and Lincoln 2007; Koro-Ljungberg et al. 2007; Ramcharan and Cutcliffe 2001). However, by defining particular ethical standards for research, ethics protocol can subject academics to bureaucratic procedures and to prescribed and extrinsic general standards which limit what academic researchers can do (Koro-Ljungberg et al. 2007). Koro-Ljungberg et al. (2007: 1084) argue that the protocol established by Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), for example, causes challenge to 'participatory form of research', which are adaptive to change in individual, cultural, and situational conditions. Ethics committees can also intervene in identifying what kind of questions are permitted and the sites approved for carrying out research (Cannella and Lincoln 2007). Therefore, research can be disadvantaged by seeking adherence to the standards made by ethics committees (Cannella and Lincoln 2007; Koro-Ljungberg et al. 2007; Ramcharan and Cutcliffe 2001) who subject scholarly work to a bureaucratic process that restricts and limits research design. This point supports the idea that the academic profession is not just controlled by rules and regulations external to the profession, but is also regulated within the profession itself. Therefore, academic autonomy, which should be secured for stimulating creative activities, can be negatively affected by professional control as well as by bureaucratic control.

Creativity is an essential requirement for academia because it is through creativity that academics can produce new knowledge and bring useful ideas which enable them to guide life in a better way (Sternberg and Lubart 1999). It is also through creative knowledge that society can be kept competitive and adaptive to recent changes (McWilliam and Haukka 2008; Sternberg and Lubart 1999). Universities are the ideal places to pursue scholarship which stretches the imagination (Hinchcliff 2006). In an age characterised by the advancement of technology and communication and the interaction between different academic disciplines, the role of universities becomes one of empowering academics to develop their intellectual and critical thinking in order to enable them to reconceptualise problems and challenge the familiar, thus enabling them, through discovering new problems, to deal with an unpredictable future (Harvey and Knight 1996). Drawing on this

role of universities, the bureaucratic mode of academic administration which tends to regulate research by standardised procedures, and which shrinks the boundaries of knowledge, seems to be an ineffective way to develop critical, original and creative research. While the concept of creativity can not be reduced to a simple explanation to refer - for example - to certain terms such as originality or critical thinking, I have stressed here on such terms because they can best describe the nature of academic and scholarly work. However, we should bear in mind that the concept of creativity is subject to constant revision (Pope, 2005).

I have already addressed the potential effect of bureaucracy on creative scholarly work. However, the bureaucratic procedures applied at the University also regulate teaching, and subject curriculum development to certain regulations which can cause a challenge to academics in developing a creative and flexible curriculum. The respondents in the study expressed that the rules that governed curriculum development at their University had slowed the progress of knowledge as curriculum development was confined to a four-year cycle at the very least. At an undergraduate level, the academics at the University teach from a singular textbook for each module and this is only subject to change every four years. However, academics can introduce 20% of new subjects every year if they find that such subjects are useful. The interview material revealed that the rules that regulate the curriculum and the textbooks confine both academics and students within the boundaries of the textbooks themselves and erode academics' enthusiasm and desire to develop the curricula within their faculties because of the long hierarchical chain that they have to go through in order to do this. The hierarchical control of curricula development can cause challenges to the academic 'calling' that gives academics a sense of responsibility towards their society and to the values held by the academics. Among these professional values are excellence in teaching (Stiles 2004), an adherence to the continuous process of learning, and the improvement of education and knowledge to keep their knowledge relevant and up-to-date. As academics educate other professions (Perkin 1969), the slowness in curricula development has implications for the ongoing life of a profession if the education of future generations is so limited. Added to this is the fact that academics are unable to release themselves from any of the constraints imposed by bureaucracy over their academic work, which brings into question their ability to be truly professional (Freidson 1970).

The control of curriculum development by explicit formal regulations is a normal product of a bureaucratic culture. In bureaucratic organisations, people cannot move beyond the established path prescribed by rules (Kanter 1989, 1992; Thompson and Alvesson 2005; Peters 1993). Bureaucratic culture is 'preservation-seeking' and is guided by past experience which confines organisational members within the boundaries of the existing system and limits the opportunity for changes (Kanter 1989). The inflexibility of the rules and regulations which regulate academic work at the University is realised when we consider the reforms undertaken by the higher education sector. The most recent reform to penetrate the higher education sector has been to introduce the concept of quality to higher education. There have been intensive efforts made by the Ministry of Higher Education to improve the quality of academic work and although such reforms were accompanied by an alleviation of the rigidity of the rules which regulate curriculum development, this flexibility in rules and regulations has also helped make room for more recent advances in knowledge.

The introduction of quality to higher education and the adoption of quality assurance mean that the programmes will be subject to regular and periodical assessment. Subjecting academic programmes to periodical review and to an assessment in the light of international standards suggests flexibility in the rules that govern programme development in undergraduate studies in order to keep the programmes responsive to international standards and flexible enough to accommodate advanced knowledge. Academics can, for example, depend on a multitude of sources in teaching instead of relying on one source for each module. Academics can also have the autonomy to change these sources whenever necessary rather than limiting module development to a four-year cycle at the very least. However, this was not in place when this study was conducted between 2007 and 2008. This example demonstrates that the rules cannot be effectively capable of responding to the changes initiated by quality assurance. While quality assurance suggests an alleviation of the rigidity of bureaucratic procedures, at the same time it recalls the need for bureaucratic-formal procedures to check academic work against performance criteria (Middleton 2000; Power 1997; Parker and Jary 1995). This view demonstrates contradictions in the bureaucratic model. While bureaucracy is believed to hinder flexibility and adaptability because of its reliance on rules and standardized procedures, those rules are a necessary

device for organising work and improving performance. Add to that the fact that bureaucracy, by virtue of the impersonal nature of its rules and accompanied by the separation of people from the role they perform, facilitates flexibility instead of hindering it because rules and roles can adjust and adapt to change more rapidly than people (Thompson and Alvesson 2005: 97). In other words, it is easier to change roles than to change the attitudes or the personal characteristics of the people who perform these roles. The conduct of bureaucracy in accordance with the rational perspective also implies consequent change to the way organisations operate and to roles performed by organisational members in order to ensure efficient performance and an effective response to organisational goals.

The need for flexibility in academic administration was stressed by the respondents in order to be able to have more opportunity to develop their knowledge. The interview materials, for instance, demonstrated that the respondents stressed the need to have more opportunity to take sabbatical leave for research and to not be limited to only four months able to be spent abroad. The academics at the University of Damascus have to meet certain conditions in order to be eligible to travel abroad for work purposes. The academics, for instance, have to score certain credits calculated on the basis of the number of pieces of research and publications they have done. Such criteria are decided and negotiated by the Council of Higher Education with the participation of academic and non-academic representatives.

The inflexibility of the bureaucratic model leads some theorists to advocate an alternative type of organisation to the traditional form of bureaucracy. 'Network organisations' (Kanter 1989), 'loose-tight organisations' (Peters and Waterman 1982) and 'participative organisations' (Collier and Esteban 1999) have been suggested as superior to the bureaucratic model. In 'loose-tight organisations', for example, the emphasis of management is on promoting core values which keep organisational members adhered to organisational goals and free enough to decide and pursue their work (Peters and Waterman 1982). While these forms of organisations are suggested by the theorists as an alternative type to the bureaucratic model, it is worth mentioning here that these types of organisations have emerged out of rebureaucratisation or reconfigurations of bureaucratic forms instead

of debureaucratisation (Du Gay 2005). In such types of organisations contradicted elements (i.e. centralisation /decentralisation) coexist in order to achieve an effective response to organisational goals. This contradiction can be sorted mediated by the value system

Managing by values is a quite apparent strategy in managing knowledge-based organisations (Etzioni 1964; Kärreman and Alvesson 2009; Kunda 1992). In knowledge-based organisations such as academic institutes, the commitment to professional values replaces a rigid and strict form of control in order to encourage and stimulate all the academics involved to take initiative and to participate in development and change projects. Therefore, what becomes important to management is to control the values and the beliefs of knowledge workers instead of controlling their activities (Etzioni 1964; Kärreman and Alvesson 2009; Kunda 1992) so that knowledge workers, or in this case academic staff, can enjoy autonomy over their work. While by controlling the values and beliefs of academics, the academics themselves are released from formal bureaucratic control, and become subject to another form of control, normative control, that manipulates the subjectivity of knowledge workers and ties their identity to overall goals and the corporate interest of their institutes (Kunda 1992). However, what is important to re-stress here is that the reliance on less bureaucratic control by alleviating the rigidity of bureaucratic regulations and the hierarchical chains is essential in order to allow for more flexibility at work and to empower academics to pursue their creative and scholarly work. The entrepreneurial activities of individuals can be repressed and constrained in rigid bureaucratic organisations through, for instance, careful control of the budget (Kanter 1989, 1992) which slows down the supply of resources academics need to carry out their projects.

The careful control of the budget, my interview material revealed, led in some cases to some academic projects being cancelled. The financial resources at the University of Damascus are subject to hierarchical control and to excessive procedures which also result in delays in supplying resources and in the lack of some equipment necessary for research. Access to useful textbooks and journals is also hindered by the bureaucratic control of the budget. The rigid conformity to bureaucratic procedures, Merton (1952: 366) argues, turns the procedures into an end instead of utilising the procedures to achieve organisational goals and in our case to advance the scholarly performance of the University. The

replacement of the University's goals in terms of encouraging scholarly activities with a conformity to procedures will stifle scholarly work and the development of knowledge.

The concentration of resources with top management has resulted from the process of bureaucratising universities (Weber 1968: 983). Bureaucracy, Weber argues, has turned universities into capitalist organisations where academics lose their individual power to administration. Academics no longer own the means of production required to carry out their professional work. Rather, they become dependent on what the administration puts at their disposal and become subject to the values of administration rather than the values of scholarship. Therefore, budgetary delegation or distributing resources to the local units where academics work (i.e. faculties) will empower academics to pursue their entrepreneurial and scholarly projects.

I would like to point out here that creativity is influenced by factors external to the organisations themselves as much as it is by internal factors. In other words, creativity is not only influenced by the organisational structure but is also conditioned by the network of relationships the organisation establishes with other organisations (Bilton 2007) and by the culture within which the organisation operates (Florida 2002). This vision helps us to locate creativity in its wider context and to reveal the impact of the macro level on the creative process. Creativity in academic institutes – including the University of Damascus – for example is not only fostered by securing individual autonomy and by providing the resources academics need for carrying out scholarly work, but also by enhancing and strengthening the relationship between universities and other higher education and professional institutes. Establishing relationships with funding bodies and institutes which benefit from research can also be a good strategy to stimulate creativity. Such relationships enable academics to share knowledge and ideas with their peers, and to provide the requirements needed for undertaking scholarly work. This view can be supported by the findings of this study. Some of the respondents put it clearly that among the main challenges that scholarly work encountered in Syria was the loose connections and weak cooperation between the university and the institutes which benefit from their research.

Considering the macro level in understanding the factors which affect creative practices, Florida (2002)'s work is relevant here as it reveals the interplay between the broader culture

and creative practices. The connection between the micro and macro levels in relation to creativity in the Syrian context suggests that Syrian culture can either foster creativity by producing incentives that stimulate human potential or restrict it by constraining human capacity. The historical background of Syria reveals that Syrian culture has been characterised over time by the tight control of economic, social, and political life by the State which has translated into a highly centralised form of organisations and thus contributed to the emergence of a rigid form of bureaucratic structure.

I have explored earlier the potential tensions between bureaucracy and creativity. However, it is worthwhile mentioning here that within bureaucracy there is still space for enhancing creativity. The idea of the merit base and the reliance on research as the main criterion for promotion will encourage a high proportion of academics to engage in research through which they can discover new ideas. The formal rationality of bureaucracy which means the achievement of a particular purpose by the use of the most efficient method can also breed a propensity for creativity. In an academic context, the main purpose of academic institutes is to seek the continuous advancement of research and scholarship. This purpose can be achieved through a commitment to professional values such as diligence, devotion to one's vocation (O'Day 2000) and the achievement of excellence in research and teaching (Stiles 2004). The advancement of scholarship can also be achieved through the formal-rational conduct of bureaucracy that seeks to use the most appropriate method to achieve a particular end. This method can be translated into, for instance, encouraging cooperation between different disciplines. Instead of hardening the boundaries between disciplines, there is space within bureaucracy to promote a diversity of perspective and to encourage debate between disciplines which in turn enable academics to discover new areas. Rules that regulate research at the University of Damascus, for example, give the individual academics who join research units the right to work with another research unit either within their faculty or in other faculties affiliated to the University. Research units, according to the University Act 2006, can also work with other research units in the faculties affiliated to the University or with other national and international academic institutes (Ministry of Higher Education 2006). Therefore bureaucracy, with its formal and clear structure, can support academic goals and organise scholarly work in a way that encourages communication and cooperation between different academic disciplines instead of building fences or boundaries that hinder the interaction between academic disciplines. The

bureaucratic role in providing a clear structure for organising activities demonstrates the advantages of the bureaucratic model. However, this advantage of the bureaucratic model is not the only one. In the next sections, I will turn to address the positive aspects of bureaucracy and to examine bureaucratic conduct in the context of public administration.

7-4 The conduct of bureaucracy in the context of public administration

While critiques of bureaucracy which are initiated by advocates of excellence and entrepreneurship such as Kanter (1989) and Peters and Waterman (1982) seem to be relevant and important in the domain of business management, du Gay (2000, 2005) point out that public services and business management work in different contexts and have different aspects to them. Though business and public services both aim to achieve efficiency and an effective use of resources, the political domain within which public administration works enforces certain limits on the administration of public services. Therefore, evaluating bureaucratic conduct in the context of business management and then developing a generalised critique of bureaucracy carries with it a very narrow understanding of bureaucracy. In the next section, I will re-examine some of the constraints imposed by bureaucracy which were experienced in a negative way by the respondents I interviewed, so as to present an alternative understanding of those constraints in the context of public higher education institutes. I use the word 'public' in this study to refer to the ownership of public higher education institutions by the government. In this context Bovaird and Löffler (2009: 5) argue that among the meanings given to 'public' is the 'collective ownership, in the name of all citizens' versus 'private' which is grounded upon the ownership of institutions by individual capitalists. This particular meaning of 'public', Bovaird and Löffler (2009) state, lies behind the claim that private companies require different methods in management from those applied in public institutions.

Since its establishment in 1903, the University of Damascus has been considered a public entity, owned and funded by the State. The budget of the University, the documentary material shows, has to be audited in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles GAAP. All public entities in Syria, including the University of Damascus, have

to report their financial statements in accordance with clear accounting principles. The implementation of such procedures can enhance transparency and allow the government to supervise the financial performance of the University.

The accountability of using public funds means that the public administration of higher education is constrained by excessive red tape and rigid procedures for controlling public funds. du Gay (2005) points out that such rigid criteria for governing and controlling public money are 'in place' in order to avoid corruption and the misuse of public funds and to protect the dignity of the government. Therefore, detailed procedures for monitoring the budget, and an inability to act fast are the cost that public administration pays in order to ensure that corruption and the private exploitation of public money are avoided or kept to a minimum (du Gay 2005). This view suggests another example of a paradox or contradiction within the bureaucratic model and demonstrates the tensions between the demands for transparency and accountability and the need for quick responses and flexibility.

Drawing on the above points, I suggest that the hierarchical control of the budget and the rigid application of bureaucratic procedures to control the financial resources, which were behind the delays in equipping the libraries with books and the laboratories with computers and with the necessary research tools and equipment, is in place to safeguard the impartial use of public funding. The concentration of purchasing decisions in the hands of the University's central administration and the confinement of resource supplies to decisions made by the President of the University enhance the accountability of the President to the Minister and thus to the State for an effective and impartial use of public funds. This is particularly true if the President of the University has the subject-specific academic expertise and understanding to make good judgements.

The bureaucratic rules applied to control purchasing decisions at the University of Damascus in some cases reflect a rational perspective. The interview material shows that the bureaucratic rules applied to organise the process of purchasing books for the libraries, for instance, confine the purchasing of books to those from the book fair, which takes place once a year. The aim of this is to buy the books needed for the University's libraries at a cheap price, thereby ensuring an effective use of money through minimising costs. As the

book fair in Syria is organised once a year, this means that the quick replenishing of the libraries with its requirement of books is sacrificed in order to achieve a rational use of public money.

While the delay hinders the academics at the University from receiving the books and the equipment they need promptly, it is good to point out here, as some interviewees revealed, that the delays in purchasing equipment which results in poorly equipped laboratories, is not only attributable to the application of bureaucratic procedures or to the hierarchical control of the budget, but also to the attempts of the administrators in central administration to create obstacles to hinder purchasing orders. These attempts made by the administrators breach the principal attribute of bureaucracy which rests upon efficiency in achieving organisational goals and demonstrates the dysfunctional conduct of bureaucracy. Therefore, I argue here that while part of the delay in equipping laboratories is attributable to the detailed bureaucratic procedures and the hierarchical control of the budget that is in place and should be retained, as du Gay (2005) points out, in order to reduce corruption, avoid the misuse of public money as much as possible, and enhance accountability for managing financial resources, excessive delays are not justified and could be avoided by an alleviation of the rigid application of bureaucratic procedures by those who control the financial decisions within the central administration of the University.

The demands to get rid of bureaucracy call to replace the bureaucratic form of organisation with a more flexible and 'flatter' type of organisation in order to respond to the need for entrepreneurship in a society characterised by rapid change, ambiguity and a high advancement in technology and communications (Kanter 1989, du Gay 2000). The discourse of enterprise has penetrated public administration to stress the need for flexibility and to prioritise customer satisfaction and economic efficiency over other values (du Gay 2000). This requires more freedom to be given to the managers of public institutes in order for them to be able to carry out their functions in a way that allows for greater efficiency and better services to be provided to customers (du Gay 2000). Therefore, bureaucratic organisations with their tight form of control cannot serve the objectives of entrepreneurship which requires freedom in order to provide better service to customers.

The point I want to clarify here, using du Gay's argument, is that the injection of the discourse of enterprise into public administration and the shift towards focussing on consumer service and economic efficiency push the value of bureaucratic rationality to the margins of the discourse on enterprise because contemporary reforms in the public sector require the need to separate the political role from the official role so that politicians will no longer be involved in the daily activities of public enterprises (du Gay 2000). The task of managing the institutes is to be left to the officials who in turn will become more active and flexible in management. In the light of the discourse on enterprise, the political accountability of public administration is sacrificed and replaced by financial accountability, whose main concern is to provide a better service to its customers with economic efficiency. However, public administration does not only provide services to the people, for it is also accountable for its actions to the government (du Gay 2000, 2005; Olsen 2006; Stoke and Clegg 2002). The same things can be applied to the Syrian higher education system because higher education in Syria is part of the public administration.

The Minister of Higher Education in Syria is accountable to parliament for the implementation of higher education policy. The Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic 1973/2000 reveals that it is through parliament that the development plans, policy and budget of each ministry including the Ministry of Higher Education are negotiated. The Minister of Higher Education has to report to parliament about the improvement of the higher education sector, the extent to which the Ministry has been successful in implementing its scholarly plans, the difficulties and challenges the Ministry has faced and any the suggestions and recommendations for further development in economic, social and cultural life. The University Act of 2006 stipulates that the President of each University in Syria, including the University of Damascus, has to report to the Minister by the end of each academic year on the performance of the University and the extent to which the University will achieve its targets.

As the University of Damascus is a pivotal organisation bound to society, the University is involved in securing social justice and participating in economic and social development. The idea of the University as responding to economic and social development depicts the University as becoming more aligned to the State (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985; Kavanagh 2005). In addition to the role of the University in

development, the fact that the University is a public university and is heavily reliant on funding from the government also subjects it to the supervision of the State, which in turn exerts its claim on the University and directs it to dealing with its problems (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1985; Dearlove 1997; Henkel 2005; Maginson 1997).

I have addressed earlier in this section the fact that the University-State relationship, in terms of the operation of the University in the public domain and its reliance on funds from the State, justifies the bureaucratic control of the University's financial decisions. I will apply the same argument to consider the role of the University in steering its educational and scholarly policies and suggest that the relative autonomy of the University of Damascus to decide its own scholarly and educational strategies is in place and can be justified on the grounds of safeguarding the accountability of the University to the State by directing its policies towards serving society. If authority is delegated to lower levels within an academic institution, the devolution of authority might result in the disempowerment of academic leaders at higher levels within the institution (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling 2008: 368). The devolution of authority might also result in the fragmentation of the institution (Bolden, Petrov and Gosling 2008) and in the loss of a clear vision and corporate policy for the higher education sector. If academics, for example, follow their own research agenda and make their own choices about scholarly work, their work might make a limited contribution to the development of society and thus their occupation as a profession, whose main role is to provide a service to clients and society, comes under threat.

The University's accountability to the State is political and is shaped by parliament through its constitution. The Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic, which is produced by parliament, stresses that education in Syria should be supervised by the government, which has the right to direct education towards serving socialist society and national economic, cultural and social development. The accountability of Syrian public Universities, including the University of Damascus, to deal with the technical, economic, and social problems that face the State and the public sectors in all domains and to find scholarly and practical solutions for these problems is a legal accountability and is translated into formal rules and regulations. The University Acts of 1958/1975/2006, which have governed academic administration and the operation of the University and are negotiated with and approved by

parliament, stipulate the higher education sector's responsibility for directing educational and scholarly policies to meet the needs of society.

In order to safeguard the University's accountability in serving society and meeting the State's national objectives, the various University Acts keep the strategic educational, scholarly and administrative decisions in the hands of the Council of Higher Education, which is comprised of the membership of academic and government representatives including for instance the Presidents of the Syrian public Universities, the Minister of Higher Education and the Vice President of the State Planning Commission (Ministry of Higher Education 1975/2006).

The accountability of public administration implies that operating within the political arena requires a commitment to political objectives, a responsiveness to the priorities defined by parliament and an ability to reconcile conflicts of interest. Drawing on this argument, du Gay (2000) points out that public institutes cannot enjoy the autonomy needed to carry out functions in an efficient and flexible way. Rather, there should be a sensitivity to the external accountability of the institute towards government so that managers in the public institutes should be aware of the limits imposed over their activities and be more conscious of the particular context within which they work.

In the context of public higher education, Marginson (1997) points out that higher education is influenced by the economic and political environment in which universities operate. Even when universities enjoy a high level of decentralisation of their operational or daily decisions, the accountability of universities to the State and the sensitivity to political and economic policy imply that strategic educational, scholarly, and financial decisions remain concentrated at the apex of the hierarchy. Therefore, working within the political sphere puts some limits on academic autonomy as academics have to justify their academic and scholarly activities in the light of the strategic scholarly plans drawn by the governing body.

The key point that can be raised here is that bureaucracy, in favour of controlling academic work and centralizing strategic plans, can change the nature of decision-making unless the people who make the strategic decisions have the ability to know what is right. The

boundaries of decision-making within bureaucracy can also be limited to those decisions which are subject to calculation in means and ends excluding the decisions which involve an orientation towards ethical norms. This view is based on Weber's understanding of bureaucracy as the outcome of the domination of formal rationality over substantive rationality⁴¹ (Weber 1968).

In an academic context, the tendency to centralise strategic academic decisions can be an efficient strategy to keep the higher education sector responsive to political demands, demonstrating the formal-rational conduct of bureaucracy. However, this means that the values within substantive rationality, such as academic freedom and the pursuit of scholarship for its own sake, might be compromised.

Contrary to the above view, I can argue here that the accountability of public higher education institutes to the State enhances the substantive rationality within bureaucracy and involves an appeal to values such as the ethics of equal opportunities and helping students from different social classes. To illustrate this point, I will reflect on the affordability policy of the Ministry of Higher Education. The key example that can be reexamined here is the case of the University's textbook.

The history of the University's textbook demonstrates the importance of the context in reassessing bureaucratic constraints. In the previous chapter, I revealed that the commitment to teach from a singular source for each module, known as the University's textbook, goes back to 1963 when the Council of Revolution Leadership nationalised the textbooks published by the University of Damascus. The aim to nationalise textbooks was to provide affordable textbooks to students and to help students avoid paying for textbooks at high prices which resulted from the underdeveloped publication industry in Syria at that time. Since the nationalisation Syria witnessed during its union with Egypt which aimed to transform Syrian society into a socialist society, affordability has become a key issue emphasised by the State's policy of higher education in order to enable lower and middle income students to pay for higher education. The affordability policy suggests that

⁴¹ Weber (1968: 85-6, 225-6) uses the term 'formal rationality' to mean the most efficient way to achieve particular ends. This term refers to the amount of calculation based on technical criteria to increase the chance of success in achieving the ends. However, substantive rationality is used by Weber to refer to the decisions which are oriented towards values and ethical norms regardless of the nature of the outcome.

'collegial control', in terms of exercising considerable power in deciding the requirements of an occupation and specifying the needs of clients (Johnson 1972), is modified by 'mediate control' where the State acts as a mediator between academic institutes and their clients (Farnham 1999; Johnson 1972) such as students. Through the exercise of 'mediate control' the State takes an active role in directing the objectives of higher education and sets the tone and legal framework for the operation of universities.

Affordability is stressed by the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic 1973/2000, which stipulates that education is the right of every Syrian citizen, and this right is safeguarded by the government. It also stipulates that the Syrian government is obliged to provide education to its citizens for free at all stages of their education (including primary, secondary and higher education stages).

The political accountability to those parliamentary demands which call for free higher education and for equal rights to education for all citizens means that the Ministry of Higher Education has to provide higher education to each citizen who is entitled to it. My interview material revealed that in the 1970s the higher education sector adopted an assimilation policy which allowed all students who passed the baccalaureate stage to join higher education institutes. The commitment of the higher education sector to make higher education accessible to all students with a baccalaureate, whilst limiting the University's ability to control student numbers in its faculties, does have an ethical dimension in terms of securing equal educational opportunities for all citizens and making higher education affordable to the lower- and middle- class citizens. Securing equal educational opportunities among its citizens reduced the social gaps between the Syrian people as all citizens have equal opportunities to learn and to possess a higher education that enables them to have a good future career and qualifies them for the labour market.

Drawing on the above paragraphs, I can argue that the accountability of the University to the State can promote a substantive rationality within bureaucracy by, for example, making higher education affordable to all students and by securing the ethics of equal opportunities for higher education among the student population. The conduct of bureaucracy itself

demonstrates substantive rationality. This issue will be addressed in more detail in the next section.

7- 5 The role of the bureaucratic ethos in securing equal opportunities

Bureaucracy has been conceptualised as antithetical to ethics and is considered as the main source of dehumanisation (Bauman 1989; Matheson 2007). However, this thesis attempts to revive the relevance of bureaucracy in public higher education and to illuminate the ethical dimension of bureaucracy.

The accountability of the University of Damascus, its responsibilities to respond to political objectives, and the need to keep important decisions concentrated in the hands of central government to safeguard this accountability, revive the relevance of hierarchy to the Syrian public higher education system. Hierarchy in public higher education is justified on the grounds of exercising central control over recruitment and promotion to provide a uniform public service to academics. I explored in the previous chapter the fact that attempts to regulate the affairs of civil servants in terms of recruitment and promotion were initiated by the government during the French ruling in order to secure recruitment and promotion on the basis of qualifications and merit, thus protecting civil servants from bias and arbitrary behaviour. The initiative to protect civil servants from arbitrariness expanded and penetrated the University of Damascus during the French ruling in order to subject its civil servants, the academics, to uniform rules for promotion and recruitment at the University. In public academic institutes, Rhoades (2007: 120) argues, academics can be conceptualised as civil servants⁴². In Syrian public higher education institutes, policies for recruiting and promoting academics are restricted by the general rules for civil servants. Salaries and working conditions for all tenured academics in the Syrian public sector are fixed at national levels. The status of academia in Syria can be contrasted with that in

⁴² The term 'civil servants' is used here to refer to employees working in a public department agency. However, the use of the term 'civil servants' varies from county to country. In the United Kingdom and United States of America, for instance, civil servants do not include teachers who are employed in the public sector (public universities) as academics in the UK and the USA are defined as professionals who are independent from the State. However, in European countries academics in public universities are conceptualised as 'civil servants', are employed by the government (Rhoades 2007 : 120).

Britain in that the structure and status of the academic profession has been considered a matter internal to the individual academic institutes (Neave 1983).

The University of Damascus has been subject to Acts that have linked the University with other universities operating in the country and which have unified the rules at all universities regulated by the Acts. The University Act 2006, for instance, has unified the rules for recruitment, promotion, and scholarly leave not only at the University of Damascus but also at all Syrian public higher educations. Regulating academics' affairs by uniform rules cultivates ethics in terms of safeguarding the value of 'equality'. If academics at basic units are given the legal authority to draw up the academic and administrative policy in their faculties, the delegation of authority adds to the potential for fragmentation in academic institutes. Academics at basic units can follow their own path to formulate rules for employment, promotion, and scholarly leave that are different from those formulated in other faculties. Therefore, the diffusion of authority carries with it the risk of threatening the value of equality.

The ethical dimension of bureaucracy in terms of securing equality can also be safeguarded through the impersonal conduct of bureaucracy (du Gay 2000, 2005; Weber 1968). Weber (1968) argues that the conduct of the bureaucratic office without relation to specific individuals can be perceived as a positive, ethical aspect for good government. Weber (1968: 267) argues that the "spirit of formalistic impersonality: '*sine ira et studio*,'" is a key element to promote equality. He indicates that it is only through bureaucratic office that the buffer between the ethos of office and personal considerations can be established as bureaucracy is a vocation that requires a commitment and duty to the purpose of office regardless of kin and friendly relationships and independent of religious, ethnic, gender and class considerations. This gives 'bureau' a privilege over other types of conduct and provides bureaucrats with ethical attributes. du Gay (2000, 2005) points out that the impartial application of rules and regulations, duty and commitment to the bureau, performing jobs without prejudice or bias or letting personal enthusiasm and morality influence the way civil servants treat citizens, are themselves a source of honour for civil servants, a precondition for liberty and an important feature for a democratic society. They

are also an essential requirement to protect citizens from dishonesty and the arbitrary behaviour of bureaucrats.

The archival material used in this study is useful to develop a contextual understanding of bureaucracy and to reveal some factors underpinning the bureaucratic model. For example, the use of formal rules for recruitment and promotion was guided by an aim to safeguard social justice. The report written by one of the French officials, De Reffye to the High Commissioner, Alype, demonstrated that the bureaucratic form of administration that was initiated by the government to regulate the civil servants' affairs during the French ruling emerged precisely in order to overcome certain problems that Syrian culture was witnessing at that time. The report revealed that at the beginning of the French ruling, civil servants in Syria were negatively influenced by political change. In some cases, the employment of civil servants was ended on political grounds. Recruitment and promotion were not based on merit or qualifications. Therefore, the report outlined that civil servants were subject to arbitrariness because of the absence of clear and explicit rules to regulate their affairs (Alasema 1926, part 5: 45). In the report, De Reffye suggested considering examinations and qualifications to recruit civil servants and to set out a ladder for promotion in order to ensure the competence of civil servants to carry out their job and to safeguard impartiality of treatment for those employed in the public sector.

The impartial conduct of administration at the University of Damascus is safeguarded through the rules for regulating academic affairs. The impersonality of these rules and regulations means that each academic at the University is subject to equal treatment regardless of his or her status, sects or other personal considerations. Rules for recruitment, promotion, and leave, for instance, are formulated on a merit basis regardless of personal considerations. Recruiting, promoting and delegating academics abroad on the basis of merit secures equal opportunities among those employed at the University. The respondents stressed the need for bureaucratic rules to regulate their academic affairs. While the respondents expressed some challenges with the application of regulations which confines their right to travel abroad on scholarly missions according to certain criteria and thus limits the opportunities available to them to travel abroad, the respondents also stressed the need for such regulations and mentioned the need for the rules to secure equal opportunities among academics.

The need for bureaucratic rules was also stressed by all female respondents. Some female respondents made it clear that Syrian culture promoted a particular image of women that conceptualised women as individuals subordinate to men. In this context, al-Rahbi comments (2008: 1) "The prevailing culture of machismo [in Syria] still governs women's views of themselves and the views of men, who see women as clearly inferior in all situations of life". The stereotype creates 'unreasonable expectations' of what women can do (Rippin 2007: 218). Therefore, if women are stereotyped as individuals subordinate to men, women are more likely to be disadvantaged. In this study, one of academic respondents pointed out that women in Syria were stereotyped as the weak gender. Another female respondent revealed that there was no trust in women's abilities. Drawing on this image of women, which is promoted throughout Syrian culture, equality between women and men, and particularly the rights of women to have equal rights with men to participate in different aspects of life and to enjoy equal worth, is difficult to secure in Syrian culture if bureaucracy is shed away.

In such a culture, hiring women as cheap labour, women having little chance of getting work, women having less opportunity to gain promotion to higher positions and to participate in decision-making within organisations could easily be the expected outcome without bureaucracy. To support this point, it is useful to reflect back on the findings of the study. The interview material showed an interesting example of the lived experience of one academic woman who faced some attempts to marginalise her role in the workplace. In general, when women expect marginalisation or injustice in the workplace they try to affirm and defend themselves in different ways. Women can use gender strategies to bridge the gap between their current circumstances and the desired ones (Bird and Rhoton 2011). For example, in professional organisations dominated by masculine standards of success, women can align their personal practices with 'hegemonic practices of masculinity' to advance their career (Bird and Rhoton 2011: 248). In addition to gender strategies which can be employed by women to minimise the gap in opportunities available for men and women, bureaucracy can serve as a useful mechanism to safeguard equality in opportunities between women and men in general and between female and male academics in particular. This study showed that equality between male and female academic was secured by the

University Act which subjected academics, both male and female, to the same rules for recruitment and promotion, and gave female academics equal rights with male academics to participate in academic administration. Such legal guarantees of the rights of female academics to participate in academic administration enabled the academic woman to claim her rights when she experienced injustice. The example presented here, whilst revealing the importance of bureaucracy to safeguard equality, also demonstrates the dysfunction of collegial/professional control in advancing the ethics of equality. Drawing upon this vision, we can argue that bureaucracy becomes a necessary mechanism to regulate academic institutions particularly when the academic profession fails to regulate itself fairly.

All female respondents recalled the need for formal rules to secure their opportunity to get a job at the University and most of them supported the role of bureaucracy in safeguarding the rights of female academics in their participation in academic administration. In non-bureaucratic organisations, Due Billing (2005) writes, equal opportunities are vulnerable as there is a space within a non-bureaucratic structure for bias and arbitrary behaviours due to the absence of rules and regulations which are applied without regard for personal considerations. In bureaucratic organisations where jobs are filled on the basis of qualifications and competence, followed by clear procedures and regulations for assessment and advancement up the career ladder, prejudice about women and arbitrariness is reduced to a minimum (Due Billing 2005).

The task of treating all employees equally can be initiated either by management or by the State through issuing, for instance, equality legislation and laws. Jeanes (2007) argues that legislative laws play a significant role in securing and safeguarding justice and equality in organisations. She also points out that legislative laws are themselves "subject to the same gendered power relations (and inequalities) that are pervasive throughout society" (p. 552). Therefore, bureaucracy, by means of its legal form of authority, can secure equality as long as the laws and rules themselves do not discriminate or are subject to bias.

As I explored in the previous chapter, in the Syrian context, 'equality' among citizens in general and between men and women in particular has been stressed by the State through its constitution of 1973. In the light of the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic, citizens, both men and women, are equal in their rights and duties. The State has the

responsibility of securing the freedom and the dignity of its citizens and their rights in participating in political, social and political life. The accountability of the State to ensure equality between women and men and to safeguard equal opportunities among citizens has been implemented through the University Act 2006. According to the Act, female academics have equal rights with male academics in terms of recruitment, promotion, leave, wages and benefits.

The purpose of equal opportunities is not confined to safeguarding the rights of academics at the University; rather there are some other advantages that can be obtained from the promotion of equal opportunities. One of respondents, for instance, addressed 'equality' as the other side of the coin to 'quality'. Another respondent referred to the advantages of equal opportunities in terms of broadening the boundaries of social communication in society by allowing academics from different backgrounds to communicate with each other. Among the most crucial advantage of an equal opportunities policy is securing democratic values. By securing the rights of citizens to have equal opportunities to participate in society and to influence all parts of life, an equal opportunities policy becomes a necessary requirement for democratic societies (Due Billing 2005). Securing equality in gender can also, Bovaird and Löffler (2009: 10) argue, be identified as one of the characteristics of 'good governance'.

Women's access to academia does have positive aspects not only by virtue of securing equal opportunities and sustaining democratic values but also by virtue of enriching academia with a female perspective. The access of female academics to academia enables women to promote their views and create an environment where the diversity of opinions is accommodated. In this context, Valian (2004) points out that diverse perspectives foster creativity in academic work. Valian (2004 :215) comments that "It is not that people reason differently as a function of their sex or race, but that they will have somewhat different interests and experiences which in turn give rise to different ideas". For instance, the entrance of women to the field of psychology has resulted in the development of the discipline as new areas have been studied (Valian 2004). Securing equal opportunities between academics also creates a strong reputation for a university for its commitment to secure fairness and thus builds loyalty within the institute and makes the institute more attractive to outsiders (Valian 2004). Therefore, I can argue that the role of bureaucracy in

safeguarding equal opportunities among academics, in addition to its contribution to ethics as an end in itself, can build an atmosphere of loyalty on the side of academics and encourage the participation of various people in knowledge development.

To sum up, the findings of this study reveal that the administration of the University of Damascus is characterised by two modes of University governance: collegiality and bureaucracy. The analysis in this chapter demonstrates the negative and positive relationship between bureaucracy and collegiality. The difference in the source of authority underpinning these two modes can involve a tension between bureaucracy and collegiality. Collegiality, exercised by professional authority, manages the University on the basis of consultancy, participation and the maximum possible autonomy being given to academics. Bureaucracy, exercised on the basis of legal rationality, manages the University through a clear division of responsibilities and through the conformity and adherence to the formal rules and regulations utilised for operation of the University which limit how people behave. However, the analysis shows that bureaucracy and collegiality can be more harmonious. The exercise of collegiality can be safeguarded by the legal authority of bureaucracy that secures the operation of committee systems within academic administration and thus guarantees academics a level of participation in academic administration.

The analysis reveals that the tension between bureaucracy and collegiality cannot be attributed to bureaucratic attributes *per se*. Rather, the tension between bureaucratic and collegial attributes is conditioned by the domain within which an academic institute operates, which shapes the conduct of academic administration in a particular way. Public higher education institutes, including the University of Damascus, are institutions owned and funded by public sector and are thus responsible to the government; this places a certain role on its academic administration which recalls the need for bureaucratic elements and retains bureaucracy as an essential mode of organisation for the regulation of public institutes. However, we should bear in mind that bureaucracy does not always operate in its ideal way and that the study has showed some examples of the dysfunction of the bureaucratic model.

The critiques of bureaucracy which have emerged with contemporary reforms have attacked bureaucratic conduct on the grounds of its conformity to rules and procedures which prescribe and limit what individuals should do and how people should behave, and for its tendency to centralise controlling regulations at the centre or apex of hierarchy. These critiques of bureaucracy were raised and supported by the academic respondents in this study. The concentration of strategic educational, scholarly and financial affairs at the apex of the hierarchy, and the constraints that such a concentration results in, can cause challenges to academic and scholarly work. The hierarchical control of scholarly affairs and the budget are the primary examples of the negative aspects of the University's bureaucratic conduct which can limit the University's autonomy as well as that of the academics employed in it, and can cause challenges to creativity. Creativity can, for example, be threatened by the hierarchical control of the budget which results in a slow supply of resources and hinders the ability of academics to pursue their scholarly work.

Creativity and autonomy are required in knowledge-based organisations such as the University of Damascus where academics are conceptualised as the core operators and the driving force for change in the University. However, autonomy is unlikely to be safeguarded in public higher education institutes. du Gay draws our attention to the context within which public administration takes place, which requires some bureaucratic elements such as a hierarchical control of the strategic policies of public institutes to ensure that they are responsive to political and preliminary demands. The legal and regulated framework within which Syrian public higher education works requires detailed procedures to safeguard the use of public funds. Procedures are also required for administering academics' affairs on a merit basis so that equal opportunities can be safeguarded. Utilising unified criteria for employment and promotion in all Syrian public higher education institutes, including the University of Damascus, is justified in order to ensure that the academics employed in the public institutes are subject to equal treatment.

The key academic administrators at the University of Damascus and the officials at the Ministry of Higher Education should also behave as bureaucrats whose ethical roles are to sensitively respond to government interests and to demonstrate loyalty to governmental and parliamentary priorities whilst still recognising the limits imposed on their actions by the governing bodies. The 'responsiveness' to governmental priorities in terms of making

higher education 'affordable' to students (by, for instance, selling textbooks at affordable prices to students) and directing higher education to provide a 'service to society' including the State is vital. The ethical accountability of the University of Damascus has the potential to influence how the University responds to political goals since altering its policies in accordance with the strategic policy of the State forms one of the limits on the University's academic administration. Considering the relevance of bureaucracy to public higher education, the key issue that should therefore be the concern of academic administration is how to create a balance between the accountability of University towards the State and its vital need for the maximum possible autonomy.

Chapter eight: Conclusion

8-1 Introduction

Having completed the main body of this research including the introductory comments, the literature review, the methodology, the findings and the main body of the argument, I turn now to briefly conclude the thesis by reflecting upon the main findings of the study, the contributions the study has made and suggesting areas for future research into bureaucracy and the academic profession.

8-2 Reflections on the main findings of the study.

Throughout this thesis I have demonstrated the positive and negative aspects of the bureaucratic model of academic administration which advance our understanding of bureaucratic conduct in the context of academia and which, to a large extent, support the claims and arguments already established in the research literature. The literature review revealed that critiques of the Weberian bureaucratic model have attracted a considerable number of studies focusing on the tendency of bureaucracy to dehumanise individuals, to trap them into an 'iron cage', and on the incompatibility of bureaucracy to respond to change and to promote and foster creativity. Despite the intensive efforts made by the contemporary theorists to explore and reflect in their studies on the disadvantages of bureaucracy, existing work on the critiques of bureaucracy in relation to creativity, particularly in the context of academia, remains an underdeveloped area. Studies on the positive aspects or the advantages of the bureaucratic model of administration are also relatively limited when compared to studies on the critiques of bureaucracy, with some notable exceptions such as du Gay (2000, 2005) and Due Billing (2005). Drawing on these limitations of current studies on bureaucracy, this study contributes to the body of research literature by examining the bureaucratic conduct of academic administration, revealing the positive (particularly the ethical) and the negative aspects of bureaucracy, and thus attempting to revive recent work on the ethical aspects of bureaucracy and to examine it in an academic context. This study also contributes to the literature by injecting theories related to the impact of bureaucracy on creativity into the specific context of academia, as

well as by addressing the impact of this, however slightly, in relation to various academic disciplines.

The empirical study supports the existing literature in a number of ways. The empirical study reveals that there is a tension between the tendency of bureaucracy to control work and academic activities and the academic profession's need for autonomy. Given the fact that autonomy is an essential requirement for creativity, this study explores some ways in which bureaucracy fails to promote creative acts. These aspects can be summarised in bureaucracy's tendency to centrally control financial decisions and academic and scholarly work, and to impose restrictions. The central control of financial, academic, and scholarly affairs by bureaucracy stifles academics' attempts to develop their research. The excessive regulations with regard to scholarly leave, in addition to the bureaucratic control of financial decisions, limit the opportunities available to academics to pursue and advance their research and, in some cases, cut academics off from receiving the resources they need to conduct their research, explore new areas of research and demonstrate their creativity. The tension between bureaucracy and creativity also lies in the tendency of bureaucracy to standardise the procedures which regulate knowledge production. Such a tendency causes a challenge to the originality and unconventionality of research, which are the main attributes of creativity. In addition to the organisational (bureaucratic) structure of the organisation, factors operating at macro level also play a role in constraining or stimulating creativity.

The disadvantages of the bureaucratic nature of academic administration are not limited to its negative consequences on research; rather, bureaucracy also has an undesirable impact on teaching. The bureaucratic nature of academic administration can result in inflexibility in developing curricula by subjecting curricula development to excessive regulations and by keeping the decisions surrounding it concentrated at the apex of the bureaucratic hierarchy. Bureaucracy can also tend to impose restrictions on teaching by, for example, confining academics to teaching from a singular textbook for each module.

However, this study expands the analysis to incorporate and address a national level of analysis in order to present an alternative understanding of the bureaucratic mode of academic administration in the context of public administration. The analysis explores the fact that the negative consequences of bureaucratic conduct can be understood differently

when the context is included in the assessment of bureaucracy. Given the fact that the University of Damascus is one of the public Syrian universities which are influenced by political considerations, the discussion of the findings reveals that the centralised form of the bureaucratic conduct of academic administration, and some restrictions imposed by bureaucracy on academic autonomy, are purposeful and essential to secure the ethical responsibility of the University towards the State and thus to society as a whole. Bureaucracy *per se*, by virtue of its principal features, rests upon impersonality and the merit basis in recruitment, and is of great value particularly in the domain of the public sector in order to safeguard the ethics of equal opportunities among citizens and to secure their right to participate in economic and social development in society and thus achieve social justice. Drawing upon this vision, this study reveals that bureaucracy has merits in (public) organisations which identify social justice and fairness among their priorities. This again demonstrates the contribution of this study in terms of developing an appreciation of the contextual dimension of bureaucracy rather than presenting a snapshot of bureaucracy itself. This study presents a step towards an understanding of the norms of control in relation to the modes of organisations. For example, in (private) professional organisations the substantive rationale can be primarily about occupational power, protectionism, success and career advancement while values such as fairness and gender equality are marginalised. In such types of organisation the merits of bureaucracy in safeguarding ethics of fairness are pushed to the margins in favour of achieving success and advancement in one's professional career. This is particularly true if professional organisations have masculine standards of success. Therefore, the study suggests that the interplay between and the combination of the bureaucratic-professional mode of control is conditioned by the substantive rationale of organisations.

I am aware that my empirical study focuses solely on the University of Damascus and on four academic departments. This study could be enriched for future research by offering a comparative study on the conduct of bureaucracy in Syrian public and private universities. However, the employment of a single case study is useful when a researcher presents a detailed account of the case. One example of studies which employ a single case study is the research done by Hollinshead and Maclean (2007). Hollinshead and Maclean (2007) use in-depth interviews in their study of one Siberian enterprise in order to reveal the underlying rationalities behind the changes carried out at the enterprise. Therefore, the

employment of a single study of the University of Damascus can be justified on the grounds of presenting a detailed account of the bureaucratic conduct of the University using multiple qualitative techniques including archival materials, in-depth interviews and observation. However, multiple case studies are a useful approach for conducting research in the future including, for example, comparative studies between the universities in Syria or between universities from different countries.

8-3 Areas for future research

In writing this thesis I have mainly focused on bureaucracy and academia. However, the thesis has touched upon other significant themes which remain, for now, underdeveloped and which deserve attention and could be usefully be explored in depth. The study, for instance, offers insights into professions. An interesting area for future research can be conducted into academic profession and occupational power. This area could be explored in detail to examine and reveal how the academic community as a profession uses its occupational power to negotiate any limits imposed by bureaucracy over their academic work. This topic can be linked to the negotiated order theory associated, for instance, with the work of Anselm Strauss which suggests an understanding of organisations as a dynamic relationship between actors which reproduces structure through interactions with others. Therefore, more in-depth study can be conducted on how ongoing interactions and relationships between actors play a role in shaping and reshaping the bureaucratic-professional relationship.

One of other areas that the study touches on is academic identity. Useful areas for exploration in the future could be conducted into the consequences or the impact of the degree of the bureaucratic control of academic administration on the identity of academics.

Bureaucracy is fundamentally based on formal rules and regulations that establish the legitimised framework of administration. Bureaucracy is also based on impersonal relations between employees and a clear division of the responsibilities and the authorities assigned to the individuals to be structured in a hierarchical chain (Weber 1974, 1968). All bureaucracies sustain these characteristics; however, the degree to which these

characteristics are in place varies among bureaucracies, which in turn shapes the conduct of bureaucracies in different ways. For example, some organisations extensively adopt bureaucratic elements and are overloaded by excessive levels of hierarchy or by rules and regulations put in place. It is the increased adoption of bureaucratic elements that results in the slow response of bureaucracy to developmental needs and in the restricted autonomy of the individuals employed in bureaucracy. However, the role of bureaucracy in other organisations can be limited to setting the legal framework and a clear structure for the operation of the organisation without imposing real constraints over employees' activities.

Therefore, how academics employed in academic institutes which adopt differing degrees of bureaucratic elements can perceive their role is an interesting area to explore. In the Syrian context, a comparative study can be made between, for example, the University of Damascus, which is relatively regulated by extensive formal rules and regulations, and one of the emergent private Syrian universities, which are less regulated by excessive rules. Another useful area for future research is to address the impact of the bureaucratic mechanism of employment on academia. Bureaucracy establishes a career path which is grounded upon the security of tenure and lifetime employment. The idea of 'tenure' or a 'secured job' can have both positive and negative consequences on academia. Lifetime employment might produce less productive academics. However, tenured academics might enjoy more economic benefits. They can also enjoy social stability which enables them to express their opinions more freely as their jobs cannot be terminated without sound reasons. Therefore, more in-depth study on the relationship between tenure and academia is a useful area to explore in the future.

Another interesting area for exploration in the future is the impact of culture on the conduct of academic administration. To examine the influence of culture on academic administration a comparative study which could be made between, for instance, one of the UK universities and one of the Syrian universities (bearing in mind that 'culture' has a very broad meaning and the future research could focus on one particular aspect of culture). In my historical study of the University of Damascus I have reflected on the interplay between the national and the organisational levels and its impact on the bureaucratic conduct of the University. This aspect could be expanded by comparing the operation of the University in the Syrian context with that in the UK context, revealing the difference in the impact of

culture and within which the universities operate on the conduct of their academic administration.

Appendix A: The interview questions

What are the factors that help academics employed at the University to pursue their teaching and research effectively?

What are the factors that hinder academics in their ability to pursue their academic and scholarly work?

How do the academics perceive the formal rules that regulate research?

How do the academics perceive the rules that regulate scholarship and teaching?

What are the procedures and rules undertaken by Ministry of Higher Education and which are identified by the academics as constraints over their career? Is there any red tape?

In which ways, from the academics' point of view, are formal rules and procedures important?

Does bureaucracy guarantee the academics' rights and succeed in achieving the fairness that it promises? How can fairness contribute to their academic career?

What role do the academics play in controlling their academic work? Do they have a role in negotiating the rules that regulate their academic affairs? Are they involved and do they participate in academic administration?

What kind of things does the academic administration at the University offer to improve teaching standards and research scholarship?

What changes has the University witnessed recently in terms of teaching, research and administration? This question was directed particularly to the academic administrators in the selected faculties at the University of Damascus.

How do the academics perceive the changes which have occurred recently at the University of Damascus? And what effects have such changes had on their academic activities?

What changes would be considered important by the academics but have not yet been undertaken by the University?

What research has been done by the academics? What are their reasons for doing this research? What type of research characterizes their work? Are there any constraints that direct them towards doing any particular type of research?

What things motivate the academics and make them interested in pursuing their scholarly work?

What are the good and the bad experiences the academics have had whilst working at the University of Damascus?

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