

Cairo Meeting Pro **Fulbright New Century Scholars Cairo Meeting**
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Working Group 3: The Role of Higher Education in Supporting the Public Good

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Our group spent the time in Cairo discussing progress made on individual projects, the framework for interviews, and the strategies for publishing results. Richard Kraince reported on the interviews conducted at Islamic universities in Indonesia. Since he had been just returned from field work he had the most detailed reports to offer. Nancy Lesko arrived in Cairo from her field visits, and returned to her field work following the Cairo meeting, thus she was able to inaugurate the framework the most quickly. Michael Bastedo decided to concentrate on universities in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and to hone in on how they treat topics of religious minorities. Steve Heyneman has been able to add a university in Kyrgyzstan to his original list of Kazakhstan and Georgia.

With respect to the framework, it was agreed that we would study how universities manage sensitive topics such as the integration of religious minorities, ethnic nationalism, professional corruption and severe epidemics, such as HIV/AIDs. It was also agreed to inquire about five areas: (i) the mission of the university, (ii) the formal curriculum, (iii) the 'climate' outside of the classroom (such as public presentations and debates), (iv) the mechanisms for deciding what should be taught, and (v) the public perception of the university. We did some early work on a generalized model of how a university might affect social cohesion. We conceived of its role as flowing through four generalized areas of contest. These included contests over knowledge, standards of professional behavior, who should participate (minority representation among students and faculty for instance), and over purpose (whether the university should seek behavioral or technical goals). This framework is reproduced below.

We conceptualized the strategies used by universities as falling into two groups. First is a proactive strategy in which a university would imagine that the more groups and points of view represented the better. A proactive strategy is pluralistic in intention. It might include substantive techniques (for instance, the infusion of sensitive topics into the curriculum), or procedural techniques (for instance, by encouraging open debate on campus). In industrial democracies, many western universities prefer a proactive strategy based on pluralistic principles.

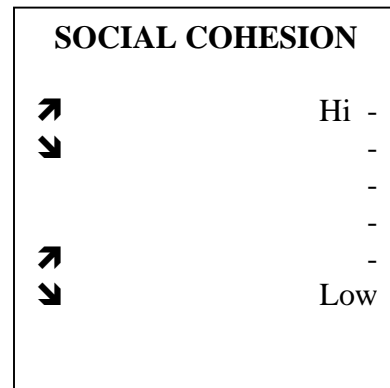
On the other hand, a university might use a reactive strategy. This may include a substantive element in which sensitive topics are formally avoided in the curriculum or a policy which effectively closes off campus debate. While there are many instances in which a pluralistic strategy is called for, and preferred, there are also circumstances in which including a sensitive topic in the curriculum or sponsoring a debate without sufficient control could inflame rather than inform. After much discussion we agreed that either strategy could lead to greater social cohesion; and either strategy, in other

circumstances, could threaten social cohesion. We also conceived of social cohesion as not being binary, but as a being quantity which could range from low to high. These discussions are also displayed in the figure below.

		Fields of Data Collection within the University				
		<i>Mission</i>	<i>Curriculum</i>	<i>Climate</i>	<i>Adjudication</i>	<i>Public Perception</i>
Contestations	<i>Knowledge</i>					
	<i>Standards of Behavior</i>					
	<i>Standards of Participation</i>					
	<i>Purpose</i>					

Strategies Used by the University to Affect ----- ➔

- Proactive (Pluralistic Logic)
- Substantive (Addresses sensitive topics)
 - Procedural (Facilitates open debate)
- Reactive (Assimilative Logic)
- Substantive (Avoids sensitive topics)
 - Procedural (Closes off debate)



We agreed to jointly submit our papers as a candidate for a panel session at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, in November, 2006. We also agreed on deadlines: By April 1st, we would each draft two paragraphs on our projects; by April 15th Steve Heyneman will draft the proposal to be cleared and submitted by May first. We also agreed to submit 'Back-to-Office Reports' once our field work is finished. The purpose of these short memoranda will be to summarize, in succinct fashion our early impressions. These will be submitted as follows: Rick Kraince: April 15th; Michael Bastedo: September 15th; Stephen Heyneman: August 1st; Nancy Lesko: May 8th.