

Towards an analytical framework for understanding the establishment of quality assurance in joint doctoral degree programmes between European and Chinese universities

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Abstract

This paper explores quality assurance in Europe-China doctoral education, an area that has been largely under-researched by both constructing an analytical framework and applying it in a specific empirical case. The analytical framework is developed from the perspective of institutional theory with a particular focus on understanding the establishment of quality assurance in cross-border joint educational programme as reconciling between different conceptions of quality both sides' providers as well as possible factors facilitating the process. In the empirical analysis, we take a joint doctoral programme between a Chinese university and a Portuguese university as an example to analyse the initiation and implementation of quality assurance system in the programme. While developing a system accommodating the traditions and needs of both sides is not an easy task, we found that a few factors that may facilitate the process, namely profitability of the programme, institutional compatibility of the both the Chinese and Portuguese parties, and agency of some key managers.

Keywords: quality assurance, Europe, China, Portugal, doctoral education, joint education provision, organisational innovation, institutional logics.

1 Introduction

Along with the growing demands for accountability of doctoral education (DE), quality assurance (QA) has become a key issue for both European and Chinese stakeholders concerned to address. ‘Quality assurance is about ensuring that there are mechanisms, procedures and processes in place to ensure that the desired quality, however defined and measured, is delivered’ (Harvey and Green 1993, 19). Today not only national governments but also international accreditation agencies endeavour to vouchsafe the quality of DE (Nerad and Trzyna 2008; Nerad 2010). For instance, supported by the Chinese government, Peking University and Chinese Academy of Personnel Science co-conducted a national investigation of the DE quality from 2007 to 2010 and proposed several policy-recommendations for enhancing the DE quality in China. On Europe’s side, the European Commission proposed the Salzburg Principles II Recommendations for guiding the European DE reform and enhancing the DE quality, and suggests that European HEIs should enhance the quality of DE through internationalisation strategies (Byrne, Jorgensen, and Luukkola 2013; European University Association (EUA) 2010).

Chinese and European stakeholders not only have common needs in assuring the quality of doctoral education, but also share common objectives of internationalising doctoral education. When time comes to 21st century, internationalisation of higher education has become more than ever important in fostering innovation and enhancing economic competitiveness in the global market (Shumilova and Cai 2016). One important dimension of internationalisation of higher education is international collaboration in research and teaching, which has gained central places in both internationalisation strategies of both Chinese and European higher education (Cai 2005; Cai 2013; Cai 2014). Doctoral education, which is embedded with both research and teaching, has gradually become the policy focus for both China and Europe. Against this background, European and Chinese HEIs are encouraged to develop collaborative partnership in doctoral education with each other, with a particular emphasis on developing EU-China joint doctoral degree programmes (UNICA 2015; EUCNDOC 2015). As currently the European countries are engaging in doctoral education collaboration with China are mainly from European Union (EU) member states, by the term ‘EU-China’, we use ‘EU’ to represent Europe. Joint (degree) programmes refer to programmes which involves at least two partner institutions, and awards one joint qualification upon completion of the programme requirement established by the partner institutions (Knight 2008). Joint qualification can be either one degree certificate with the names of all partner institutions, or one degree certificate with one institution's name and a supplementary unofficial certificate if the national regulation prevent the joint conferral

of a joint degree certificate (Knight 2008). In our study, EU-China joint doctoral degree programme refers to an international doctoral degree programme which involves at least one Chinese partner institution and one European partner institution, and awards one or two qualifications upon completion of the programme requirement.

Comparing to the growing needs in developing quality EU-China joint degree programmes, little research has been carried out in the field. Nevertheless, some relevant research can be identified. For instance, some scholars (Knight 2011; Knight 2008; Micheal and Balraj 2003; Waterval et al. 2015) discussed the models and challenges regarding international joint degree programmes, pointing out QA is one of the major challenges for the programme management, though not addressing the issue in the context of DE. Some other research (Stella 2006; Stella and Bhushan 2011; Zwanikken et al. 2013) and some studies under the umbrella of ‘Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education Project’, which is funded by the European Commission from 2013 to 2016 (QACHE 2016), discussed different issues related to QA of transnational or cross-border education. However, so far there has been few studies exploring QA of Europe-China doctoral degree programmes. There are even less efforts to bringing theoretical perspectives for better understand the topic.

This paper is a preliminary attempt to bridge the research gaps by constructing an analytical framework for understanding the initiation and implementation of QA system in a joint doctoral programme between European and Chinese universities and then apply it to a concrete case. The specific research questions are: 1) How can we understand the initiation and implementation of a quality assurance system in an international joint doctoral degree programme from institutional theory perspective? 2) How can such theoretical insights be applied for analysing the development of quality assurance system an EU-China doctoral degree programme, particularly a China. Portuguese joint programme? We approach the research questions by seeing the establishment and implementation of QA system in the joint programme as a kind of organisational innovation taking place in a context with multiple/conflicting institutional logics. In line with such thinking, we also explore the possible influential factors affecting the institutionalisation of such innovation.

The paper is divided in two parts: analytical framework construction and empirical case analysis. When establishing an analytical framework for understanding the establishment of quality assurance system in cross-border joint programmes, we will first introduce the notion of quality in higher education and then explain how it can be perceived from institutional logics perspective. It is followed by the elaboration on organisational innovation, where the establishment of QA in joint programme is applied, and factors affecting the process of implementing innovation. In the empirical analysis

part, we will employ the framework for analysing the process of initiating and implementing QA in a joint doctoral degree programme between a Chinese university and Portuguese university.

2 Analytical framework

2.1 Conceptions of quality in higher education studies

For developing an analytical framework for understanding QA, we must start with the concept of quality. It is difficult to define quality in relation to higher education, as quality is an ‘elusive’ (Green 1994, 22), ‘multiple’ (Sahney, Banwet, and Karunes 2004, 149), and ambiguous concept (Harvey and Knight 1996). ‘Quality’ has different meanings for different stakeholders (Harvey and Green 1993), as such, it has ‘been defined with different perspectives and orientations, according to the person, the measures applied and the context within which it is considered’ (Sahney, Banwet, and Karunes 2004). In spite of that ‘varying conceptualisations pose problems in formulating a single, comprehensive definition’ (Sahney, Banwet, and Karunes 2004, 149), what has been still commonly cited is a classic definition of quality of higher education developed by Harvey and Green’s (1993), in which five categories of the conceptions of quality are distinguished and described as follows:

- **Quality as exception:** A traditional concept of quality in relation to the concept of ‘excellence’. There are three variations in this notion: 1. the traditional notion of quality as distinctive, 2. a view of quality as embodied in excellence, 3. a weaker notion of exceptional quality, as passing a set of required/minimum standards.
- **Quality as perfection:** A notion concentrating on process and sets specifications that it aims to meet. The concept of perfection is related to the ideas of zero defects and getting things right first time. Zero defects is bound up with the notion of a quality culture, which refers to one in which everyone in the organisation, not just the quality controller, is responsible for quality.
- **Quality as fitness for purpose:** Quality is judged by the extent to which a product or service meets its stated purpose. The purpose may be customer-defined to meet requirements or more often institution-defined to reflect institutions’ mission or course objective, or defined by external professional body.
- **Quality as value for money:** Quality is equated with level of specification and related to cost. This notion assesses quality by return on investment or expenditure. The core of this definition is the notion of accountability.

- Quality as transformation: A notion seeing quality as a transformative process, which in higher education adds value to students through their learning experiences. Two key notions of this definition are: enhancing the consumer and empowering the consumer.

Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2003) further interpreted the five dimensions of quality of higher education (Harvey and Green 1993) from stakeholders' perspective, and presented a new set of categories of quality of four main stakeholders, namely:

- Providers (funding bodies and community at large): quality is interpreted as 'value for money'.
- User of products (e.g. current and prospective students): quality is interpreted as 'excellence'.
- User of outputs (e.g. the employers): quality is interpreted as 'fitness for purpose'.
- The employees of the sector (both academics and administrators): quality is interpreted here as 'perfection'.

Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2003) argued that Harvey and Green's fifth interpretation of quality, quality as 'transformation' is a meta-quality concept, which subsumes the other ones, thus they did not include it in their new model. Before their proposition, Harvey and Knight (1996) also maintained the other four categories of quality are possible operationalisation of transformative process than ends in themselves. We agree with Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2003) and Harvey and Knight (1996), and hence in our study we do not include 'Quality as transformation' in our discussion. That means we will focus only on the first four conceptualisations of quality by Harvey and Green (1993).

Regardless of the divergent on the categories of the concepts of quality, both Harvey and Green's (1993) and Srikanthan and Dalrymple's (2003) understandings of quality entails two perspectives that quality is either concerned with the final products/service or the process of producing them (Sahney, Banwet, and Karunes 2004). Harvey and Green (1993) made an explicit claim that quality is relative to either 'process' or 'outcome', thus we label them as 'outcome-oriented' or 'process-oriented' perspectives.

Except for the distinction of 'outcome-oriented' and 'process-oriented' perspectives, we will create another dimension to comprehend the concept of quality, in which the different categories of quality conceptions are associated with corresponding institutional logics that are derived from organising principles in the society. The institutional logics perspective on quality in higher education will be further explained next.

2.2 Quality from the perspective of institutional logics

Institutional logic is defined as ‘a set of material practices and symbolic constructions’ that constitute an institutional order’s ‘organising principle’ and are ‘available to organisations and individuals to elaborate’ (Friedland and Alford 1991, 248). The primary motivations for institutionalists to develop the institutional logics approach are twofold (Cai and Mehari 2015): one is to use institutional logics to concretely define the content and meaning of institutions (Thornton and Ocasio 2008); the other is to better explain the process of institutional changes (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012). Such perspective sees institutionalisation as a process of reconciling different or even competing institutional logics and draws particular attention to institutional compatibility and the role of agency in the process of institutional changes. While the concept of institutional logics were originally developed for better understanding the institutional contexts of our societies (Friedland and Alford 1991; Alford and Friedland 1985), these logics can be available at organisational field levels (Greenwood et al. 2011) and organisations as well (Cai and Zheng in press).

Here we try associate institutional logics with different conceptions of quality, because actors’ shared conception of quality are largely concerned with the multiple/contesting logics in the institutional environment. According to Scott (2008), actors’ shared conceptions and subjective interpretation of the objective conditions are shaped by the common categories, distinctions and typifications of the objective conditions in the institutional environment (Scott 2008), which are to a large extent about institutional logics. Based the five category institutional logics identified by Friedland and Alford (1991) and the seven category logics by Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury (2012), we identify the following five logics relevant to the conceptions of quality.

- **Profession logic:** According to profession logic, organisations/actors seek to enhance its status by increasing the personal reputation (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012). The authority of professional logic are ‘a code of ethics and peer surveillance organised by external associations’ (Thornton 2004, 42).
- **Market logic:** According to market logic, a person in a market is under the authority of shareholder activism in the market, and they act to pursuit their own profits and interests (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012).
- **Corporation logic:** According to corporation logic, a person becomes an employee, equating to being under control of managers (Blau and Scott 2003), and all employees are expected to conduct standardised corporate practices (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012).

- **Bureaucratic state logic:** According to Bureaucratic state logic, actors/organisations attempt to convert diverse individual situations into the basis for routine official decisions that can be made by consensus (Friedland and Alford 1991). The logic entails rationalisation and the regulation of human activities by legal and bureaucratic hierarchies (Friedland and Alford 1991).
- **Democracy logic:** According to democracy logic, an organisation/actors would attempt to convert diverse issues into decisions that can be made by majority vote (Friedland and Alford 1991). The logic of democracy refers to ‘participation and the extension of popular control over human activity’ (Friedland and Alford 1991, 248).

It should be noted that Friedland and Alford (1991) made a clear distinction between bureaucratic state logic and democracy logic in their study, whilst Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012) merged the two variants and defined it as ‘state logic’, based on their understanding of the western society. However, when it comes to the comparison between European and Chinese society, we prefer Friedland and Alford’s approach. For instance, the logic of China’s state is more related to the ‘bureaucracy state logic’, while the state logic of the western society concerns with ‘democracy logic’. Moreover, one must be aware that corporation logic and market logic are usually interactive but meanwhile different concepts (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012): Even though both logics motivate actors to pursuit efficiency, market logic emphasizes the efficiency in gaining the returning of investment, while corporation logic stresses the efficiency in management practices. Similarly, whilst a logic of corporation is to commit capital to the firm, a logic of market is to commit capital to its highest market return (Thornton 2004).

Now we relate the categorisation of the conceptions of quality (Harvey and Green 1993) to both the outcome-/process-oriented perspectives and the underlying institutional logics, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Concepts of quality in higher education from institutional logic perspectives

categories	key notions of the definition	outcome/process-oriented perspective	underlying logics

<i>exception</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) traditional notion of quality: distinctiveness 2) exceeding high standards (excellence 1) 3) checking standards 	outcome-oriented	profession logic
<i>value for money</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) accountability 2) customer's charter 		market logic
<i>fitness for purpose</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I: meeting customer specification 2) II: meeting institution mission 		market logic and bureaucratic state logic
<i>perfection (consistency)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) zero defects (excellence 2) 2) getting things right first time 3) quality culture 	process-oriented	democracy logic and corporation logic

Source: the authors

Next, we further explain our arguments underlying the table:

- Quality as exception accentuates on the idea that ‘providing a product or service that is distinctive and special’ (Green 1994, p.13). In this sense, the notion sees quality from outcome-oriented perspective. This notion is aligned with profession logic, as it entails the elitist view of the high quality of a product or service in terms of its reputation. In other words, under the impact of profession logic, quality is often seen as excellence, which is judged by the reputation of actors or organisations.
- Quality as value for money stresses the return from the investment or expenditure, thus naturally revealing its outcome orientation. Quality as value for money is underlined by the logic of market, as it sees education as a commodity with its expenditure. Harvey and Knight (1996) also maintained value for money is ‘a market view of quality’ (Harvey and Knight 1996, p. 7).
- Quality as fitness for purpose is judged by the extent to which a product or service eventually meets its stated purpose, clearly reflecting the outcome orientation. Quality as fitness for

purpose reflects both market logic and bureaucratic state logic. The concept implies the significance of efficiency in the use of resources to fulfil institutions' mission (Green 1994; Sahney, Banwet, and Karunes 2004), which indicates a logic of market, as mentioned by (Harvey and Green 1993, p. 19); 'Quality as fitness for purpose becomes fitness for' and 'the market as perceived by the institution' . Further, as fitness for purpose concerns with satisfying customers' needs and valuing customers' satisfaction, it indicate an encouragement of market niche and competition (Harvey and Knight 1996), which entails a logic of market as well. On the other hand, by supporting approaches of external quality monitor, which is related to the government policies or mandates and redistribution of higher education budget (Harvey and Knight 1996), the mission-based fitness for purpose also reflects the bureaucratic state logic,.

- Quality as perfection focuses on the process of producing products/service, which is naturally a process-oriented perspective. Quality as perfection is aligned with the democracy logic and corporation logic, as the concept accentuates on democratic participation and standardised process. Further, the bounded notion of perfection, quality culture emphasised on 'democratising quality by making everyone involved in a product or process responsible for quality at each stage' (Harvey and Knight 1996, 16), and thus revealing the underlying democracy logic in this category.

Although the four categories are associated with different logics from different perspectives, they are not mutually exclusive (Harvey and Knight 1996). In practice, people may switch from one perspective/approach to another without being conscious of any conflicts (Harvey and Green 1993, 28).

We have written in length about institutional logics underlying the conceptions of QA, because actors' shared conceptions of quality determine actors' judgement and choice of QA approaches. Within an institution, 'shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made' (Scott 2008, 57), affect actors' evaluation, judgments, predictions and inferences (Scott 2008). As such, we believe any kind of QA approaches are determined by the actors' certain conception of quality, which is aligned with certain institutional logic or logics which affect their conception of quality. Hence, it is reasonable to interpret the underlying logics aligned with a certain QA approach through understanding the conception of quality behind the approach and its underlying logics. In order to do so, we start from understanding the conceptions of quality.

2.3 Establishment of quality assurance in EU-China joint doctoral programme as organisational innovation

From the perceptive institutional logics perspective, the establishment of quality assurance system between two sides with difference cultures and traditional in higher education might take place in the context with multiple and even conflicting institutional logics underlying the conceptions of quality. That means the logics underlying the new quality system in the joint programme might be different to the logics of one or both sides.

Thus, following Levine (1980) that organisational innovation is ‘any departure from the traditional practices of an organisation’ (4), we consider the establishment of quality assurance system in cross-border joint educational programme organisational innovation. In order to meet the needs of joint programme, the QA system in the joint programme can be different from the QA system in either partner institution. Levin (1980) identified four stages of innovation process: Stage 1, recognition of need for change; Stage 2, planning and formulating a solution to satisfy the recognised need; Stage 3, implementation of plan as a trial and error process; Stage 4, institutionalisation or termination.

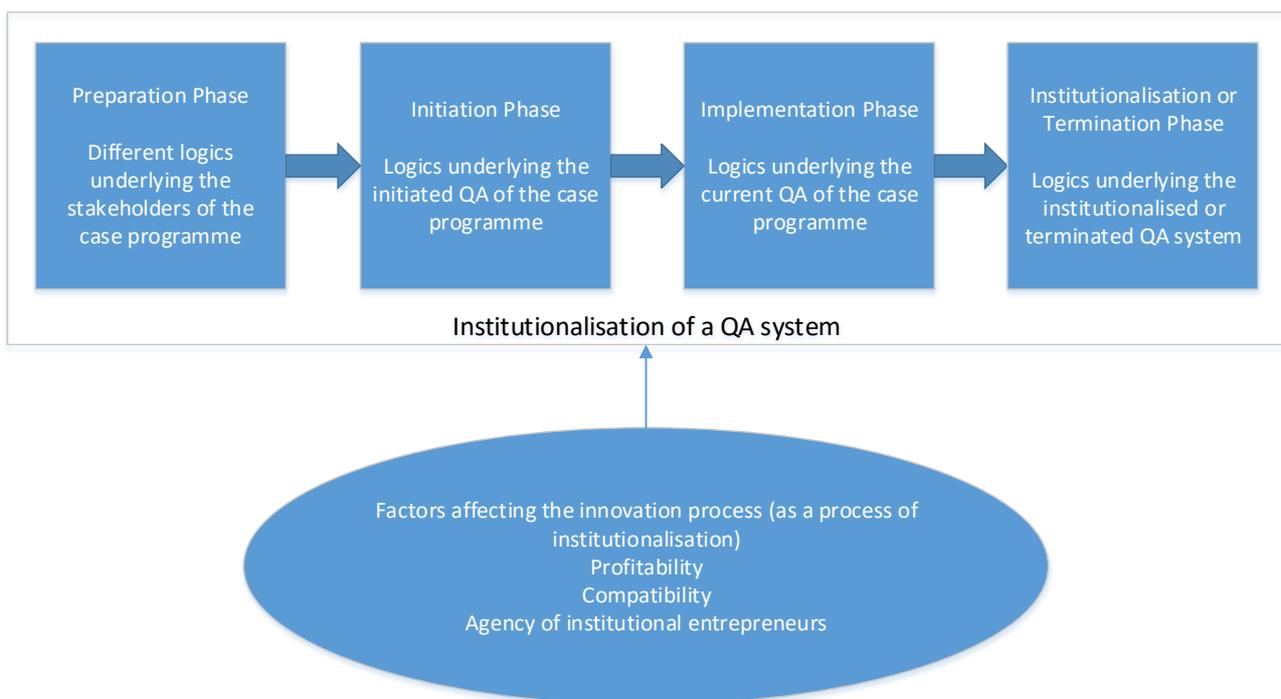
Levine (1980) also suggested that the extent to which an innovation is institutionalised depends on two factors, namely profitability and compatibility. Profitability is about how an innovation satisfies the needs of the host organisation (called general profitability) or the needs of the individual members or sub-groups within the hosts (called self-interest profitability). The higher level of profitability perceived by either the hosts or their members, the more likely the innovation will be institutionalised. Compatibility refers to ‘the degree to which the norms, values, and goals of an innovation are congruent with those of the host’ (Levine 1980, 17). While it is expected that the higher degree of compatibility leads to higher extent of institutionalisation of innovation, the innovation by its nature of departing from traditional practices often challenge traditional norms and values of the host organisation (Levine 1980).

Cai and his co-authors (Cai et al. in press; Cai, Zhang, and Pinheiro 2015) improved Levine’s conceptualisation by using the insights of institutional theory. First, they enhanced Levin’s concept of institutionalisation of innovation by explicitly using the definition of Selznick (1957, 16); institutionalisation is an inherently historical process: ‘It is something that happens to an organisation over time, reflecting the organisation’s own distinctive history, the people who’ve been in it, the groups it embodies and the vested interests it has created, and the way it has adapted to its environment’. Next, by criticising that Levine only looked at institutional compatibility from an intra-organisational perspective (Cai, Zhang, and Pinheiro 2015), they draw attention to the external dimension of compatibility because the survival of an organisation depends largely on how it

conforms to external social legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Moreover, they add agency as a key factor affecting institutionalisation of innovation (Cai et al. in press). Agency refers to the actions conducted by some individuals, or called ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ (Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum 2009), to change the existing institutional rules for facilitating innovation. In the higher education context, the institutional entrepreneurs may be policy-makers, top-managers and even some academics, as demonstrated in a case study on successful university’s engagement in local economy and innovation development (Cai and Liu 2015).

The elaboration mentioned above can be illustrated in Figures 1.

Figure 1. Institutionalisation of a QA system in joint programmes as an innovation



Source: the authors

Here, we see the initiation and implementation of QA system in a joint educational case programme a process of organisational innovation, in which different logics underlying the conceptions of quality confront, mingle, and eventually become internalised into one constellation of logics aligned with the institutionalised QA system. The institutionalisation process can be divided into four stages, namely 1) the preparation phase where the actors realise the needs for innovation and head for that, 2) initiation phase where the actors launch an initial plan for innovation, 3) implementation phase, where the plan has been implemented often in an error and trial process, and finally 4) the phase where the innovation has been institutionalised (if not terminated). In this study, we will focus on the second and the third stage, by examining the institutional logics aligned with the QA system in the two stages,

the changes of institutional logics, as well as factors affecting the changes. Specifically, our analysis will answer the following four questions:

- What are the institutional logics respectively aligned with key managers of both sides in the case programme?
- What are the underlying institutional logic at the Initiation Phase? How is the case QA system initiated in the commencement of the programme?
- What are the changes of institutional logics during the past five years' operation? How has the QA system been adjusted during that period?
- How have the factors, such as agency of institutional entrepreneurs, profitability and compatibility of the QA system affect the initiation and implementation of the QA from institutional logics perspectives?

3 Empirical case analysis

In order to gain deep understandings concerning the development of QA in EU-China joint doctoral degree programme to test the analytical framework, we selected one but representative case—the Doctoral Programme of Management in Health-care (DMH), which is a joint degree programme between Southern Medical University of China (SMU) and ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL), for our study. Based on our collected data, so-far there are only 6 EU-China doctoral degree programme accredited and approved by the Chinese government (Ministry of Education of China 2016). Some characteristics can be observed among the six programme (Ministry of Education of China 2016): 1) Most of the EU-China doctoral degree programme focus on business executive education; 2) In the majority of the programmes, graduates receive European partner institutions' doctoral degree when they graduate; 3) Most of the European partner institutions are from South Europe. As the DMH programme can represent all the main characteristics of EU-China joint doctoral degree programme as mentioned above, we believe this case is a representative case.

Regarding the two partner universities, the SMU is one of the leading medical universities in China, which has been cultivating numerous medical professionals for the country. In recent years, as there is a growing demand in China for well-trained management personnel to cope with healthcare reform, the SMU recognised the need for developing higher level of education for senior managers in hospitals. The ISCTE-IUL is a public Portuguese university with near 30 years cooperation

experience with Chinese universities. Except for economic consideration, it is also highly interested in engaging in the Chinese healthcare reform with its relevant expertise.

In respect of general information of the case programme, with the common interests of both partner institutions, the programme was first established and accredited by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2010, and approved for student recruitment for a two-year trial in Guangdong province in China. After the two-year trial, in 2012 the DMH programme bypassed the MoE's accreditation officially and began to recruit students nation-wide. Each year about 20 to 25 Chinese student are enrolled into the programme. Students mainly complete their coursework and these in the Chinese partner institution. Lecturers and supervisors for the programme are mainly from the Portuguese partner institution, but also include some academics in the SMU and some invited lecturers outside partner institutions. Successful graduates will receive doctoral degrees from the ISCTE-IUL.

Empirical fieldwork was carried out from September 2014 to May 2015 by the authors. The empirical data are collected mainly by classroom observation, participation in thesis seminars and student-supervisor meetings, and interviews of managers of the programme. We managed to interview all the key managers in the programme, including one academic director of the programme (A1, dean of School of Humanity and Management in the SMU), two programme coordinators (A2, administrative director of the DMH programme and head of the International Affairs Office in the School of Humanity and Management; B1, director of China's programmes and professor from ISCTE-IUL), and one senior professor (B3) from the ISCTE-IUL, who participates in the programme management and coordination as well. In addition to formal interviews, the authors also managed to gain more insightful knowledge of the programme via informal communication with other participants in the programmes, such as students (S1, S2, S3) and administrators (A3, deputy head of the International Affairs Office; A4, one administrator in the International Affairs Office). Besides, Manager B2, as a co-author of the article participated in the study and shared his insights of the programme. After data collection, the Nvivo software was used for coding and analysing the data. The structure of coding is mainly based on our analytical framework as introduced above.

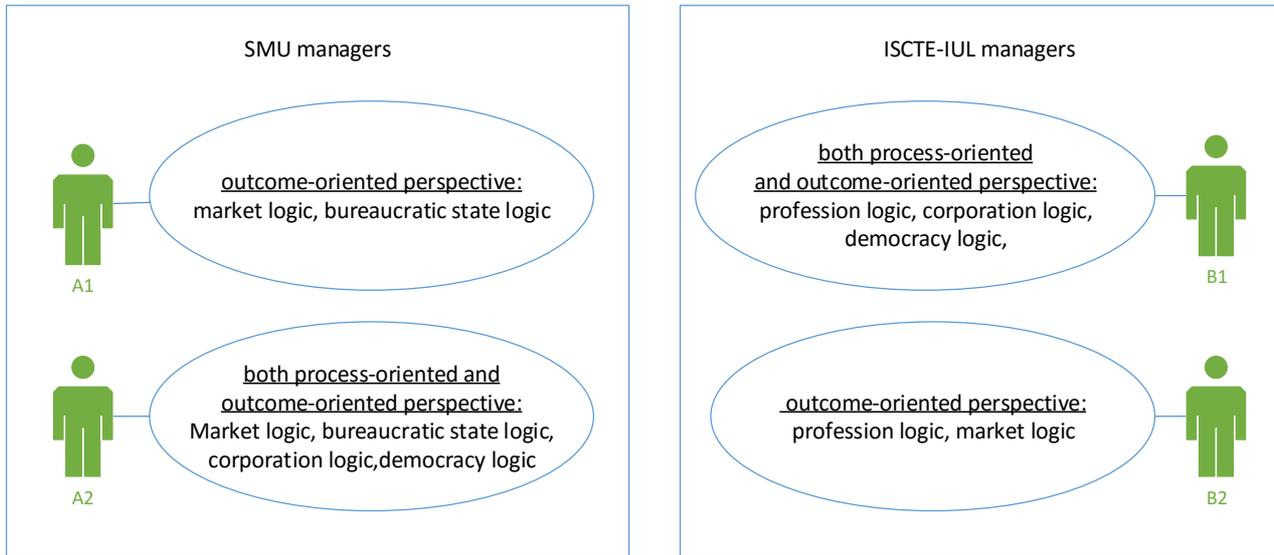
Next, we will directly respond to the aforementioned four empirical enquiries, based the analysis of our interview data.

3.1 What are the institutional logics respectively aligned with key managers of both sides in the case programme?

Here we try to trace the institutional logics respectively underlying the Chinese and Portuguese managers in the programme as inherited from their previous experiences or the higher education

contexts in which they have worked. Interview data reveal that key managers in the programme see quality and QA of doctoral programme from different perspectives, and there are even variations between the managers from the same university. Their perceptions of quality do reflect associated institutional logics (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Logics aligned with key managers of the case programme



The Chinese managers saw quality as value for money, fitness for purpose and perfection, which were driven by a mix of logics of market, bureaucratic state, corporation and democracy, but in varying extents. The two interviewed Chinese managers also have different views regarding whether QA should be outcome or process oriented.

For instance, driven by a mixture of market logic and bureaucratic state logic, A1 (interview, September 17th, 2014) saw quality as value for money and fitness for purpose from outcome-oriented perspective. When talking about the programme's quality, A1 highlight the importance of learning outcome and the result of programme accreditation, which explicitly reflects the perspective of outcome orientation on QA. He clearly linked quality to the concept of 'value for money', and believed that the education provided in the programme combining the expertise and experience of two strong patterns would provide students what they pay for. This indicates a market logic. Further, A1 supported the view of quality as fitness for mission, and stressed the significance of the external accreditation of programme by the government, which was a form of external quality monitor of the programme and closely related to the government regulation, and thus entails logic of bureaucratic state as well.

The perceptions of A1 were to a large extent shared by A2 (interview, May 17th, 2015), by supporting the idea of seeing quality as value for money and fitness for purpose, but meanwhile she also see

quality as perfection, and thus the underlying logics around her conceptions of quality is a logics constellation of market, bureaucratic state, corporation and democracy. Driven by the logic of market, A2 contended that the network provided in the joint programme itself worthy for what students pay for, which reflects a view of quality as value for money. Further, A2 saw quality as fitness for customers' specifications as she expressed explicitly the purpose of her job is to satisfy and coordinate students and supervisors' needs. The emphasis on the fitness for customers' specification and the value of the programme as an affordable commodity, also indicates A2's outcome orientation of QA. But A2's approaches are not solely outcome-oriented, as she also found QA concerns with process and quality is related to perfection. For example, she maintained that QA should be a standardised process, with a set of guidelines for people to follow. This also manifests a logic of corporation. Further, she highlighted the importance of democratic participation in QA process by stress the quality culture. For example, she stated 'The key to the success of this programme, is that everyone feels responsible for quality and get involved in the process, considers students' need, and develops an institutionalised process'.

On the other hand, Portuguese managers conceived quality as exception, perfection and value for money, which were underpinned by a constellation of logics of profession, democracy, corporation and market. Interviewed Portuguese managers, similar to their Chinese peer, to a large extent shared a common understanding of quality and underlying logics among themselves, but also held different views in some aspects. Their views also differed when it comes to whether QA approach should be outcome- or process- oriented.

Interview data showed B1 saw quality as exception and perfection, which were driven by logics of profession, corporation, democracy logic (interview, April 15th, 2015). On one hand, B1 stressed the importance of bypassing the academic standard in ISCTE-IUL, which demonstrated her view of quality as a notion of bypassing certain checking standard. It is one notion of quality as exception, which entails a logic of profession and outcome orientation. In addition, her statements, such as 'because we give the degrees, we must control the quality', also manifested her outcome-orientation in seeing quality. On the other hand, similar to A2, B1 saw quality as perfection. She believed QA is relevant to standardised process. For instance, her statement, like 'For the QA of this programme, something we try to do is to give a structure to the process', explicitly demonstrate her support for process-oriented approach of QA and corporate behaviours. B1 also accentuated on the development of quality culture with multiple stakeholders' involvement, which reflects the democracy logic. For instance, she stated that 'we grow with these students, not only the supervisors, including myself, the academic directors, administrative director. So everybody is taking care of each student in particular.'

Comparing to B1, B2 shared the same approach of seeing quality as bypassing checking standard, but differed in seeing quality as value for money. His perceptions of quality reflects logics of profession and market, and entails an outcome orientation of QA. B2 saw quality as bypassing the standard, as he believed ‘Students should respect and follow the rules and standards of ISCTE-IUL, and produce quality research’. In addition, B2 believed quality is related to the programme’s reputation, implying an elite view of quality. Driven by this logic of profession, B2 intended to enhance the status of the programme by increasing its reputation. But different from B1, B1 explicitly supported the idea of embedding market logic in QA. Driven by the market logic, B2 demonstrated his conception of quality as value for money, by stating that ‘students will find that their learning experiences are rewarding when they come up with solid research findings’. B2’s perceptions of quality, with an emphasis either on exception or on value for money, all manifest B2’s outcome-oriented approach of seeing and assuring quality.

By comparing the underlying logics of both partner institutions, we found that even though it seems managers’ conceptions of quality vary from person to person and so do the underlying logics around their conceptions, there are some commonness between two sides: first, market logic, corporation logic and democracy logic can be observed in both sides. Second, both outcome- and process-oriented perspectives of QA claim their stands in both institutions.

When the joint programme is established, different logics aligned with managers would be brought into the programme’s institutional environment. Different logics may reconcile and compete with each other, which would be further explored next. But before that, we will briefly describe how the QA system was initiated in the programme.

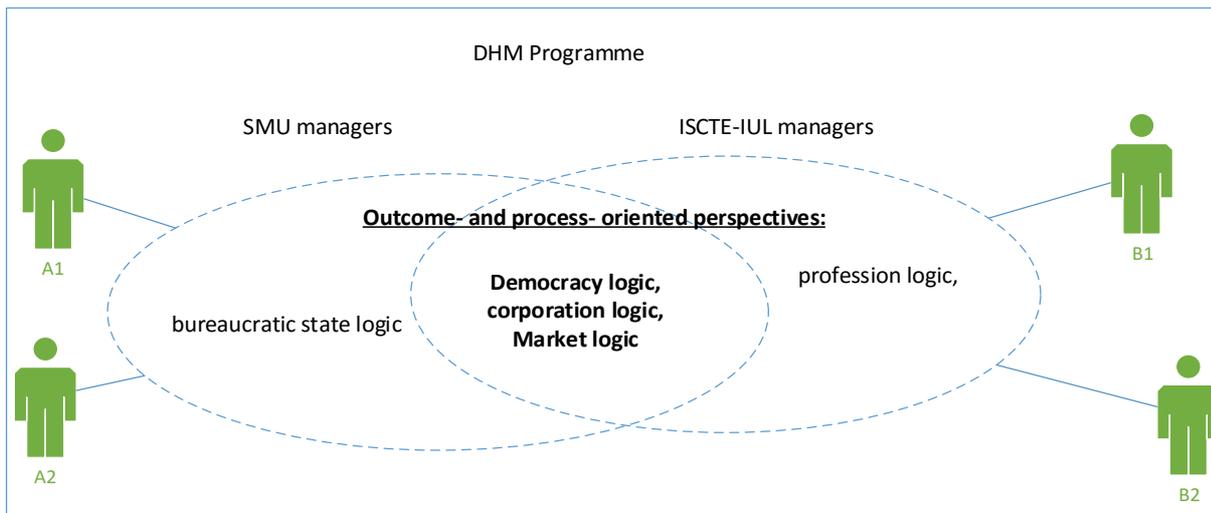
3.2 How is the QA system initiated in the commencement of the programme? What are the underlying institutional logics at the Initiation Phase?

Given the DHM programme as an organisation, naturally both the Chinese and Portuguese institutions soon recognised the needs for a new QA system specifically for the programme, which is different from their existing QA system in home institutions, since the establishment of the programme. For one thing, considering the characteristics of international joint programme, both institutions recognised that it is impossible and unfeasible to apply any single institution’s existing QA system in the case programme. First, programme managers believed the QA system in the programme needs to respect and comply the policy of both nations and institutions, and reflect mutual understanding and acceptance. Second, the students and staff members in the programme are different from those in their home institutions and ‘new’ for them. There is no existing policy accommodating the new

stakeholders in either institution. Third, there is a need to overcome the practical problems in administration, such as geographical distance, language and culture barriers. For another, the specialty of executive business education calls for a new QA programme specifically. Programme managers recognised that nowadays there is a demand in China for business executive education, including the doctor of management (DoM) programme. However, they also realised that currently the market of executive business education in China is quite competitive, as international business schools from worldwide, such as the U.S., Europe and Asia compete intensively against and also with them, and quality is the major concern in offering business executive education. Managers in the case programme believed the sustainability of business executive education in the competitive market fundamentally depends on its quality. As such, the best QA system for the case programme should consider the need of both effective international collaboration and quality business executive educations. Such system was not available in either home institution.

After recognizing the needs for changes, programme managers planned and formulated the QA system based on an agreement which reflects both institutions' responsibilities and commitments for a shared vision of the programme. Later, a joint programme management team was established. Along with the establishment of the management team, the underlying logics aligned with key managers, which has discussed before, first time formed the constellation of logics of the QA system (see Figure 3). It was a mix of multiple logics, consisting of all logics brought in by key managers in the programme. Democracy logic, corporation logic, and market logic, as the common logics accepted by both institutions, were prevailing in the QA system in the Initiation Phase. Other logics, such as bureaucratic state logic from Chinese managers and profession logic from Portuguese managers, respectively played their role in the QA system in different aspects. And by merging different logics together, the programme managers also came to accept both outcome- and process- oriented perspectives to assure quality. Driven by this constellation of logics, the Chinese and Portuguese institutions divided their responsibilities/workload clearly based on agreement in the Initiation Phase. For example, Chinese institution was mainly responsible for the daily administration and the external accreditation of the programme, whilst the Portuguese institution took care of all academic issues, such as curriculum design and thesis supervision. Even so, there were frequent communication and consortium on each issues between the two institutions.

Figure 3. Underlying logics of QA system in the Initiation Phase



Next we will present the key features of the QA system in the Initiation Phase under the impact of this constellation of institutional logics:

First, driven by the logic of democracy, efforts were input to get more democratic participation in the QA process. For instance, a special programme office in the SMU was established to be a 'hub' to connect different stakeholders, e.g. professors, managers, administrators, and students. Meanwhile, a Chinese office was established in the ISCTE-IUL correspondingly. In addition, a key manager from the ISCTE-IUL, B1, was appointed to the SMU as the representative manager of the institution, and worked constantly with Chinese managers and solved management puzzles. B1 tried to involve supervisors and students in the QA process by working closely with them.

Second, process-oriented QA approaches were not only reflected in widening participation, but also in standardizing the process. Staff training, covering administrators training and supervisors training, was the main means to standardise the QA practices in our case, which were mainly led by A2 and B1, who deeply believed quality concerned with perfection/consistency.

Third, in terms of outcome-oriented QA approaches, the impact of market logic was enforced by both institutions, in particular in the student recruitment policy. Motivated by the market logic, the programme managers made full use of their networks in the previous healthcare executive programmes and applied 'Star Student Strategy' to open the programme market. A2 suggested strategically, they have enrolled all the big figures in the area in the first two cohorts of students. These students became star students to attract more students later, through whom, more people got to know about the programme. Further, following the logic of market, managers also tried to recognise

the diverse needs of their customers (mainly students), and to communicate proactively with students to meet their needs.

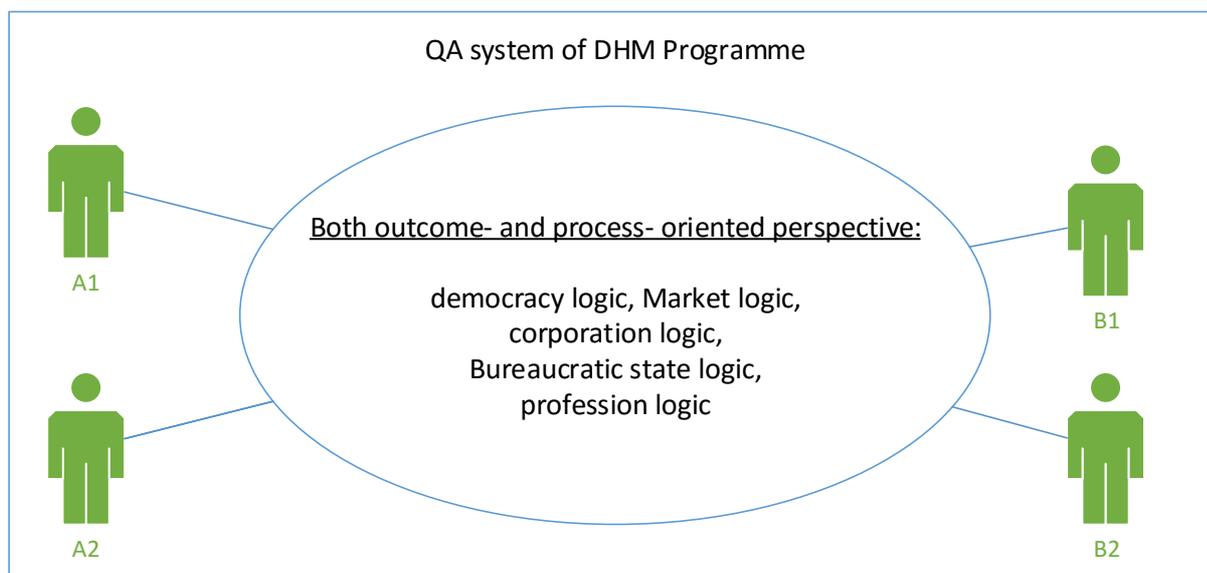
Fourth, except for the mutual enforcement of common logics from both institutions, other logics' effects on the QA system were also visible, but more closely associated with the aspects in which the certain managers, being underlined by the certain logics, worked on. For example, driven by profession logic, which was introduced by Portuguese managers, a programme handbook was drafted, in which academic standard in terms of course teaching and thesis supervision was set. As such, the academic standard for the programme was mainly following the Portuguese practices. For instance, the programme was designed to follow the Portuguese supervision policy, the traditional apprenticeship. A dual-supervisor policy, one local Chinese professor and one Portuguese supervisor, was adopted, as ensure the expertise from both institutions can be fully used. On the other hand, guided by the bureaucratic state logic and the government regulation, the Chinese managers took up the major responsibility of routine administrative practices and worked on bypassing the external quality monitor/accreditation of programme in China, the Official Accreditation for Chinese and Foreign Joint Degree Programmes.

Therefore, in the initiation phase, logics aligned with key managers were brought into the QA system, and firstly formed a constellation of logics of market, democracy, corporation, bureaucratic state and profession. This constellation of logics wasn't fully integrated yet, and thus having affected the development of the QA system, either by mutual enforcement from both institutions if the logics were widely accepted by both side, or by individual enforcement on one particular aspect if the logics were introduced by only one institution and new to the other. As seen, underlined by the newly formed constellation of logics, both process- and outcome- oriented perspective were considered in the QA system's development.

3.3 What are the changes of institutional logics in the pass five years' operation of the programme? How has the QA system been adjusted during the period?

It should be noted that it takes around four years or more for students to graduate from the programme. Therefore, the implementation process takes years and it is an on-going continuous improvement process, given the dynamic change in internal and external environment and the diversity of student and faculty. In the past five years, the different logics aligned with the case QA system further mingled and reconciled with each other, and gradually they became a dynamic integrated constellation of logics, including all logics brought in by programme managers (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Underlying logics of the current QA system



Based on our interview data, the democracy logic, corporation logic, market logic remained the prevailing logic in the QA system: first, under the impact of democracy logic, a quality culture was embraced and reinforced in the programme. B1 suggested because of the strong quality culture, the quality control in the programme was much stricter, comparing to that in home institutions. Second, with the support of corporation logic, the QA process have been being standardised in the past five years. In the process of standardisation, programme management handbooks were continuous improved and enriched. Third, driven by the market logic, programme managers tried to attract more students in the educational market from diverse background and maximise the profit of the programme, the target students for the programme recruitment was changed from provincial to national area, from solely healthcare sector to healthcare sector and other relevant areas.

Meanwhile, the dominant logics also were also competed and reconciling with profession logic. For instance, to some point, the democracy logic reconciled with the introduced profession logic and affected the development of supervision policy. As a result, the supervision mode of the programme changed from traditional apprenticeship between supervisors and students, to a new supervision mode, involving supervisors, students, programme managers, administrators and translators in the process. For another example, the corporation logic also contracted the effects of the profession logic, which was reflected in standardizing and structuring the thesis supervision process. A check-point system for monitoring thesis process was established after the application of the traditional Portuguese supervision policy failed. Following the checkpoint system, students and supervisors are required to finish a certain task at each checkpoint rather than solely rely on supervisor-students

apprenticeship. In addition, market logic also interacts with profession logic and affect the development of academic standard. For instance, curriculum design have been constantly adjusted yearly according to students' and lecturer's feedbacks to satisfy students' needs. According to students' needs, the dual-supervisor policy was adjusted to open for one ISCTE-IUL supervisor and dual-supervisor approach.

Unfortunately, the interactives of the bureaucratic state logic with other logics are not so noticeable in the past five years. Nevertheless, driven by the bureaucratic state logic, the programme managers take the MoE's accreditation of the programme seriously and adjust the QA system according to the external evaluation results every two year.

Therefore, the underlying institutional logics of the QA programme have been in dynamic changes in the past five years, which led to the development of the programme QA system. Next we will continue to explore why the QA system developed in such direction, still from institutional logics perspective.

3.4 How have the factors, such as agency of institutional entrepreneurs, profitability and compatibility of the QA system affect the initiation and implementation of the QA from institutional logics perspectives?

Based on our data analysis, we argue that there are three key influential factors that affecting the changes of the QA system and its underlying logics: profitability and compatibility and agencies of the institutional entrepreneurs.

One motive factor for the changes is to enhance the profitability of the programme. Our analysis indicates that when multiple logics competing with each other, institutional logics that can lead to profitability enhancement for an institution, will remain/become dominant. For instance, in our case, the market logic can remain dominant in affecting actors' QA approaches, mainly because their impacts, such as revising the recruitment policy to attract more students, have enhanced the profitability of the QA system. Another example is the interactive between democracy logic and profession logic. As widening the democratic participation and developing quality culture is profitable for the programme, the traditional supervisor-students apprenticeship mode following the 'logic of profession was changed to multi-stakeholders supervision mode. Profitability enhancement may an effective factor for transforming institutional logics as it touches the core of what the actors to do innovation really care about—whether the innovation can satisfy the needs of the organisation and itself.

The second key effective factor is the compatibility enhancement. This argument is supported by our analysis result as the democracy logic, corporation logic, market logic remain prevailing in the QA system, mainly because they can reinforce and enhance the compatibility of the QA system. For instance, the reason behind the embracement of quality culture in the programme not only lied in its profitability, but also in its compatibility. The development of quality culture led the QA system as well as the programme to be more compatible with the host institutions, as it encouraged different stakeholders to work together for the same goal, and can increase the mutual understanding and culture acceptance of both institutions. For another example, driven by corporation logic, standardised practices were implemented to avoid conflicts in QA process, which also contributed to the compatibility enhancement. Compatibility enhancement could be an effective mechanism for transforming institutional logics as it can enable institutional logics become more congruent with or even dominant in the institutional environment and better compete for resources.

Agency of institutional entrepreneurs is another key influential factor. The four key managers in the programme are identified as the institutional entrepreneurs in our case, as they have the resources and interest for institutional changes, and they bring in new logics to the institution. Interview data showed that their actions did affect the changes of institutional logics. For example, B1's actions, such as organizing supervisors training and constant managers meetings and offering frequent students consultancy service, which are underlined by the democracy logic and corporation logic, did enforce the impacts of the two logics in the QA approaches in the programme. The same situation applies to activities of other managers. As Thornton and Ocasio (2008) believed agency of institutional entrepreneur is one key mechanism for changes of institutional logics, our analysis result did support their belief and further underpin Cai and Liu's (2015) argument that the agency of institutional entrepreneurs can affect the institutional changes through the influence of the institutional entrepreneurs' actions on the focus of attention of other actors.

4 Conclusion

This study develops an analytical framework for understanding the process of establishing QA in joint educational programmes and applies it for a detailed account of the process of institutionalisation of QA system in a Portuguese-Chinese joint doctoral degree programme. In so doing, we consult institutional theory, particularly institutional logics perspective.

The empirical study demonstrates that manages of both sides are influenced by the logics of market, corporation and democracy when it comes to their conceptions of quality assurance. However, the

major differences are the absence of profession logic among the Chinese managers and the absence of bureaucratic stage logic in the Portuguese side. Against our common perception of weak democracy logic in China, our study indicates Chinese and Portuguese managers share the common logic of democracy. This might imply that although democracy logic is weak in Chinese societal and political sphere, it might have been more introduced in the academia. These institutional logics mingled and interact with each other when the case QA system was established. After establishing the programme, the key managers in the case programme came to recognise there was a need for a new QA system for the case programme, as to ensure the international collaboration be effective and the provided doctoral education be of quality. Hence, managers planned and formulated the case QA system following their conceptions of quality and underlying logics together. Naturally the common logics of both sides, i.e. democracy logic, corporation logic and market logic, became the dominant among the newly-formed logics constellation of the case QA system, and motivate programme managers to nourish quality culture, standardise the QA process and corporate practices, and promote the programme in educational market. The absence of a certain logic in its partner institution whilst it was common and dominant logic in its host institution, results in a clear division of workload associated with the different logics between the two institutions in the Initial Phase. For instance, driven by the profession logic, which was solely from the Portuguese institution, academic standard and academic regulations in the programme mainly followed the Portuguese manners, while the Chinese institution took responsible for bypassing the external quality accreditation of the programme and routine administrative practices. Analysis result showed that in the past five years, the logics of market, corporation and democracy in the QA system remain dominant and reinforced the quality culture, standardised process management, and marketing approaches in the programme. It also enacted the impacts of profession logic and resulted in several adjustment of QA system, particular in academic perspective. Factors, such as profitability enhancement of the programme, compatibility enhancement of the programme and agencies of key managers, may influence the changes of institutional logics and contribute to the remaining dominance of market, democracy and corporation logics in the case.

The chapter contributes to the knowledge pool by interpreting the underlying logics around conceptions of quality in higher education and constructing an analytical framework to understand the institutionalisation of QA system in international joint programmes. Meanwhile, it first time reveal the process of establishment of QA in EU-China joint doctoral programmes with the illustration of a Chinese-Portuguese joint programme.

Nevertheless, this study is still a preliminary effort to enhance both theoretical and empirical understandings on the QA in EU-China joint doctoral programme. More empirical studies are expected to be conducted in the future to further verify the applicability of the analytical framework.

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