

# Culture, The Changing Innovation Landscape and Institutional Challenges to Universities

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## BACKGROUND

- Universities are increasingly expected to contribute innovation-led development of regions they are located.
- Innovation landscape, on the other hand, has witnessed the rise of social innovation, the growing emphasis on valorization of local assets and role of culture & art in innovation and regional development.
- Despite all these expectations, there is no sufficient consideration on how universities organize themselves internally to adapt to changing innovation landscape and challenges they face in doing so.

**Social Innovation** : Social entrepreneurship, socio-organizational innovation, grand challenges.

**Valorization of Local Assets:** Economic valorization, local products (food, tangible/intangible assets).

**Role of Culture & Arts in Innovation:** Creative class debate, cultural and creative industries, art festivals, design thinking.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature of changes taking place in third mission related organizational structure of universities and to what extent they reflect developments in changing innovation landscape?
2. How do multiple stakeholders envision the role of culture and arts in regional development and what role do they cast for universities in their vision?
3. Based on the expectations, to what extent universities are able to assume these roles and what are the emerging institutional challenges?

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Sociological institutionalism
- Historical institutionalism
- Institutional logics
- Place-based regional development strategies

## METHODS

1. **Multiple case study:** University of Aveiro / Aveiro Region (Portugal) & University of Twente / Twente Region (The Netherlands)
2. **Semi-structured interviews:** In-depth interviews with academics, policymakers, practitioners, managers of companies collaborating with the two universities. 53 completed, 28-32 yet to take place in 2018 autumn & 2019 spring.
3. **Data analysis:** Narrative analysis & thematic analysis, document analysis.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- Universities face internal and external challenges when they attempt to adapting to changing innovation landscape; thereby engaging in social innovation and valorization of local assets.
- Financial regulations with regard to organizational spending, political vision with regard to regional development path and its digital narrative, the rise of rankings are some of the external challenges.
- Career evaluation and promotion system, diminishing value of social sciences, paperwork related bureaucracy, difficulty of multidisciplinary research are some of the internal challenges.
- Despite all these challenges, universities still manage to play a significant role in regional development and, to some extent, adapt to changing innovation landscape.