The Evolution of the Local Role of the University

Javi Ortega Colomer
COSINUS CONFERENCE,
Bristol (UK) 5-6 September 2011
Bristol Business School - University of West England
Outline

• The Context of the Study
• Conceptual Framework
• Research Questions
• Methodology
• Results and Concluding Remarks
The Context of the Study

- The New Role of Universities
- INGENIO (PhD Courses)
- Project: ‘The Third Mission of Universities’
Conceptual Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agglomeration Models</th>
<th>Knowledge Dynamics Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Industrial Districts</td>
<td>• Innovation Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clusters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Role of university?
- Characteristics of the Context?
- Historical Perspective?
- Systems Approach?

- ALL TOGETHER?
Research Questions

1. How has the role of an HEI evolved in a low-tech context, including changes in its interactions with society at different levels (local, regional, national, international)?

2. How have HEI personnel identified the local needs of new knowledge over the last thirty years (to improve their performance)?
Methodology

• A Case Study on a specific HEI
  In a Low-Tech Context
  + 150 Years of History

• 10 in-depth Interviews at two levels: Managerial and Academic Bodies

• Semi-structured questionnaire

• Complementary Document Analysis: Local Historians

• Qualitative approach: Perceptions, Motivations, Feelings, etc.

• **Snowball Technique**
### Empirical Results

#### Three periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From 1828 to 1972</th>
<th>From 1972 to 1995</th>
<th>From 1995 to Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inextricably Spheres: Government, Industry and University</td>
<td>The End of the Dictatorship Regime</td>
<td>Reigniting of collaborative relationships at all levels: Palm-tree Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor as a Businessman</td>
<td>First Democratic Elections</td>
<td>First PhD Offering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessman as a Professor</td>
<td>Training of HEI personnel</td>
<td>Deliberative Clusters Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor as a Local Decision-Maker</td>
<td>New Players in the Game</td>
<td>Few firms’ creation and NO spin-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent Relationships with Financial Sector: Local Savings Bank</td>
<td>New industries: electronics, ICTs, Services but...</td>
<td>New technology-based firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local and National HEI Funding Sources</td>
<td>Strong dependence on the Building Sector</td>
<td>Formal Interface Structure to interact with the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few but strong dependence on foreign sources of Knowledge</td>
<td>1983 Universities Act</td>
<td>High Level of Employability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile, Paper and Metal Industries</td>
<td>The Role of Profesor Asociado</td>
<td>Life-long Learning Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching of mineral deposits</td>
<td>Technology Institutes as the main technological industry partners</td>
<td>Better Communications (except in railway transport)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Offered: Expert or Technician</td>
<td>Still Poor Communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Communications</td>
<td>Important Role of Church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Note:* The table above outlines key empirical results and changes over three distinct periods from 1828 to 1972, 1972 to 1995, and from 1995 to the present. Each period highlights significant developments and collaborations across government, industry, and university sectors, alongside shifts in economic focus, technological advancements, and educational impacts.
Concluding Remarks

- From the Entrepreneurial HEI to the *Ivory Tower*?
- Systems Perspective required
- Skilled People more than Technology Transfer
- New Players, but University Expertise still Dominates
- Final Project as the Most Successful Means to Interact with the Environment
- High Percentage of Employability at this Kind of HEI
Thank you for your attention.