

# Students as Stakeholders in the policy context of the European Standards And Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in Higher Education Institutions

*A comparative case study of a German and Dutch Higher Education Institution*

FOHE: 25th of November, 2014

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## I will address

- Research Questions
- Theoretical Background
- Methodology
- Comparative Case Analysis (NL/DE)

## Research Question

***To what extent are students perceived as stakeholders in internal quality processes at different higher education institutions within the framework of the European Standards and Guidelines of Quality Assurance?***

## The ESG 2005 and student involvement

- **Policy and procedures for quality assurance**

—————> involve students into internal quality assurance structures

- **Approval, monitoring and periodic reviewing of study programmes**

—————> participation of students in quality assurance measures

- **Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff**

—————> involvement of students to improve teaching quality

## Stakeholder Theory: Mitchell et. al. (1997)

### Power

- Stakeholder's influence potential
- Enforcement of interest

### Legitimacy

- Accreditation of stakeholder's competence
- Stakeholder involvement decision making processes; access to information

### Urgency

- Stakeholder's claims & interests

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# Stakeholder Theory Mitchell et al. (1997)

Figure 2. Stakeholder categorization by Mitchell et al. (1987)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency
<b><u>Latent Stakeholder</u></b>			
Dormant Stakeholder	x		
Discretionary Stakeholder		x	
Demanding Stakeholder			x
<b><u>Salient/ Expectant stakeholder</u></b>			
Dominant Stakeholder	x	x	
Dependent Stakeholder		x	x
Dangerous Stakeholder	x		x
<b><u>Definitive stakeholder</u></b>			
Definitive Stakeholder	x	x	x

Source: Own illustration based on Mitchell et al. 1997

Not majorly important

Fairly important

Very important

## Propositions

- If students are perceived as **Definitive Stakeholders**, students have an influence on internal quality assurance processes in the HE institution.
- If students are perceived as **Salient/Expectant Stakeholders**, students have a limited influence on internal quality assurance processes in the HE institution.
- If students are perceived as **Latent Stakeholders**, students have no influence on internal quality assurance processes in the HE institution.

## Methodology

**Research Design:** Comparative Case Study

**Case Selection:** Extreme Case Sampling: Bologna countries

Purposive Sampling:  Faculty vs.  Institute

**Data Collection:** Desk research; Semi-Structured Interviews;  
Student Survey



# Comparative Analysis



## **Dutch Case Study: The Institutional View**

### **Policy and procedures for quality assurance in the Dutch Faculty**

—————> Limited Legitimacy -

### **Approval, review and monitoring of study programme**

—————> Power +

—————> Urgency +

### **Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff**

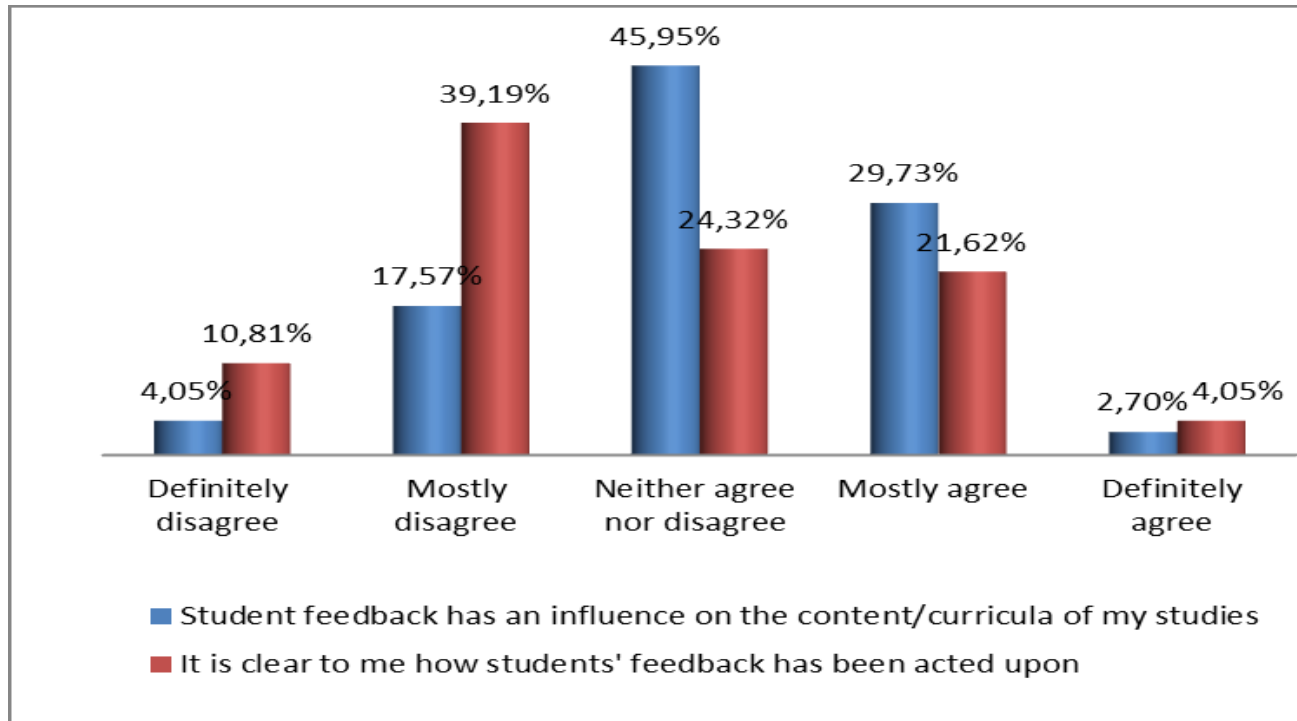
—————> Power +

Students have power, limited legitimacy and urgent claims = Definitive Stakeholders



## Dutch Case Study: Student view

### Students' power estimation



Legitimacy +;  
Lack of  
transparency -



doubt Power -

### Students and the quality assurance of teaching staff

- Legitimacy +, Power -



## Conclusion Dutch Faculty

<u>Institutional View</u> (Desk Research + Interviews)	Weak Definitive Stakeholders	Limited Power Legitimacy Urgency
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<u>Student View</u> (Survey)	Dependent Stakeholder	Limited power Limited Legitimacy Urgency
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**Weak Definitive Stakeholders**



## German Case Study: The Institutional View

### Policy and procedures for quality assurance in the German Institute

—————> Limited Legitimacy --

### Approval, review and monitoring of study programme

—————> Power - ( Soft-follow up system)

—————> Urgency

### Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff

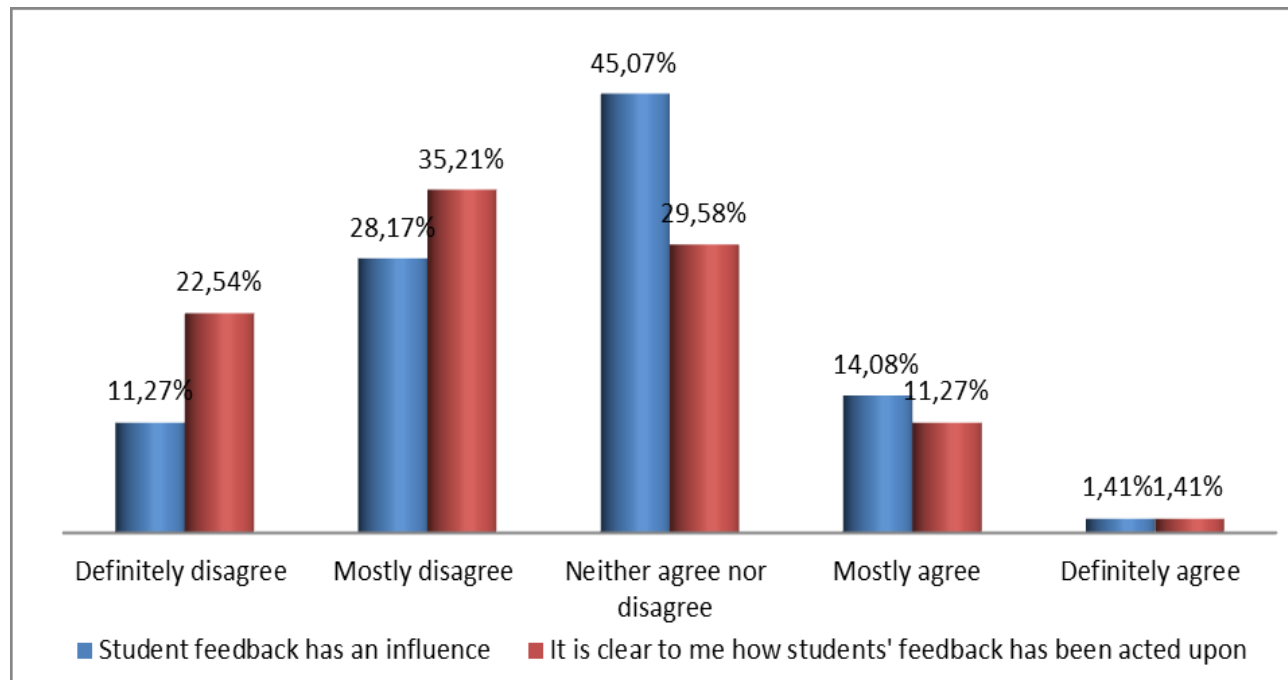
—————> Power -

Students have limited power, limited legitimacy and urgent claims =  
Dependent Stakeholders



# German Case Study: The student view

## Students' power estimation



Legitimacy -;  
Lack of  
transparency -



Doubt Power --

## Students and the quality assurance of teaching staff

- Legitimacy ; Power -



## Conclusion German Institute

Institutional View (Desk Research + Interviews)	Dependent Stakeholders	Limited Power, Limited Legitimacy Urgency
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Student View (Survey)	Weak Dependent Stakeholder	Limited Power, Limited Legitimacy, Urgency
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**Weak Dependent Stakeholders**

## Revisiting propositions

### Students' Stakeholder categorization

- If students' have an influence on internal quality assurance processes in the HE institution, students' are perceived as **Definitive Stakeholders**

➔ Confirmed by Dutch Case

- If students' have limited influence on internal quality assurance processes in the HE institution, students' are perceived as **Salient Stakeholders**

➔ Confirmed by German Case



## Conclusion

- Students regarded as stakeholders but different degrees of salience
- Course evaluations main instrument of student integration
  - ➔ differences in set-up of follow up systems
  - ➔ lack of systemic transparency
- Compliance to ESG rather unconsciously = no direct influence
  - ➔ **ESG cannot be considered as policy framework clearly strengthening students' position in IQA**



Any questions??



Thank you for your attention