

**10th International ISTR conference
Democratization, Marketization and the Third Sector**

**Challenges for Civic Mission at Croatian Universities:
Academic Youth is Not That Interested?**

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Discussion points

- University Civic Mission
- Academics and Civic Mission Integration
- University Civic Mission in the Croatian Context
 - Law and other acts?
 - Rectors?
- The Croatian case – methodology and research results
 - academics more/less into change and civic mission
 - limitations and challenges

Reflection on the university civic mission

- academic knowledge improving living conditions in local communities
- academics' contribution to democracy and civil society development
- teaching and research connected with local needs/problem
- various activities of university civic engagement
- university - community non commercial linkages
- educating responsible and active citizens



University civic mission...

(...) engaging in those community areas in which we are not buying or selling, but talking with neighbors about the benefits for our community.

Barber, B. (1996)





LET KNOWLEDGE SERVE THE CITY

ZNANOST NARODV



Academics and university civic mission

- transforming traditional teaching and research patterns
- Boyer (1990) - scholarship of service/engagement
- Nussbaum (1997) - curriculum transformation
- Ostrander (2004)
 - curriculum transformation
 - enhancing teaching and students' learning
 - community-based research priorities
 - collaborative production of new knowledge



Academics and university civic mission

- persistence, patience and a long-term commitment
- civic mission dependency on academics:
 - attitudes toward the (civic) mission of the university
 - willingness to (re) define their traditional work
 - institutional support - motivation for a demanding change



Civic mission: The Croatian context

Law on HE

Higher education in Croatia is based on

“interactions with social community”...

“higher education institutions are obligated to develop social responsibility in students and other members of the academic and scientific community” (Article 2)



Civic mission: The Croatian context

Law on HE

“university performs its tasks in accordance with the needs of the community in which it acts” (Article 3)

“academic freedoms, academic self-government and university autonomy shall also include the responsibility of the academic community towards the social community in which it acts” (Article 4)



Civic mission: The Croatian context

Statutes, Strategies, Government and Ministry Official Documents (79 documents analyzed)

- praising cooperation with business sector and industry
- advocating primarily the HE influence on the national economy development
- not a trace of civic mission indicators

Civic mission: The Croatian context

What Do Rectors Say About It?

“Our society has still not reached the level of development in which the question of education would be based and defined on such community needs (...) community needs are related to the market needs for qualified employees and the possibilities of their employment.”



Civic mission: The Croatian context

What Do Rectors Say About It?

“It is clear that even encouraging the cooperation between universities and the market does not bring significant results, let alone the concept you are talking about, developing cooperation with organizations and institutions in the community, i.e. the civil sector...we are currently truly in a very bad situation (...)”



Civic mission: The Croatian context

What Do Rectors Say About It?

“(...) the time has simply not yet come for civic mission. You have to understand that we need to survive. In order to even enter this social dimension, develop this level of cooperation in the community, we have to first, metaphorically speaking, provide for room and board (...) We have not yet had the time to think about this social segment.”



Civic mission: The Croatian context

What Do Rectors Say About It?

„...it is difficult to even imagine such a situation (...)

I cannot see something more significant
being done that is not being evaluated or considered a
source of income (...)

for now this is set in stone and I do not see any
upcoming changes soon.“



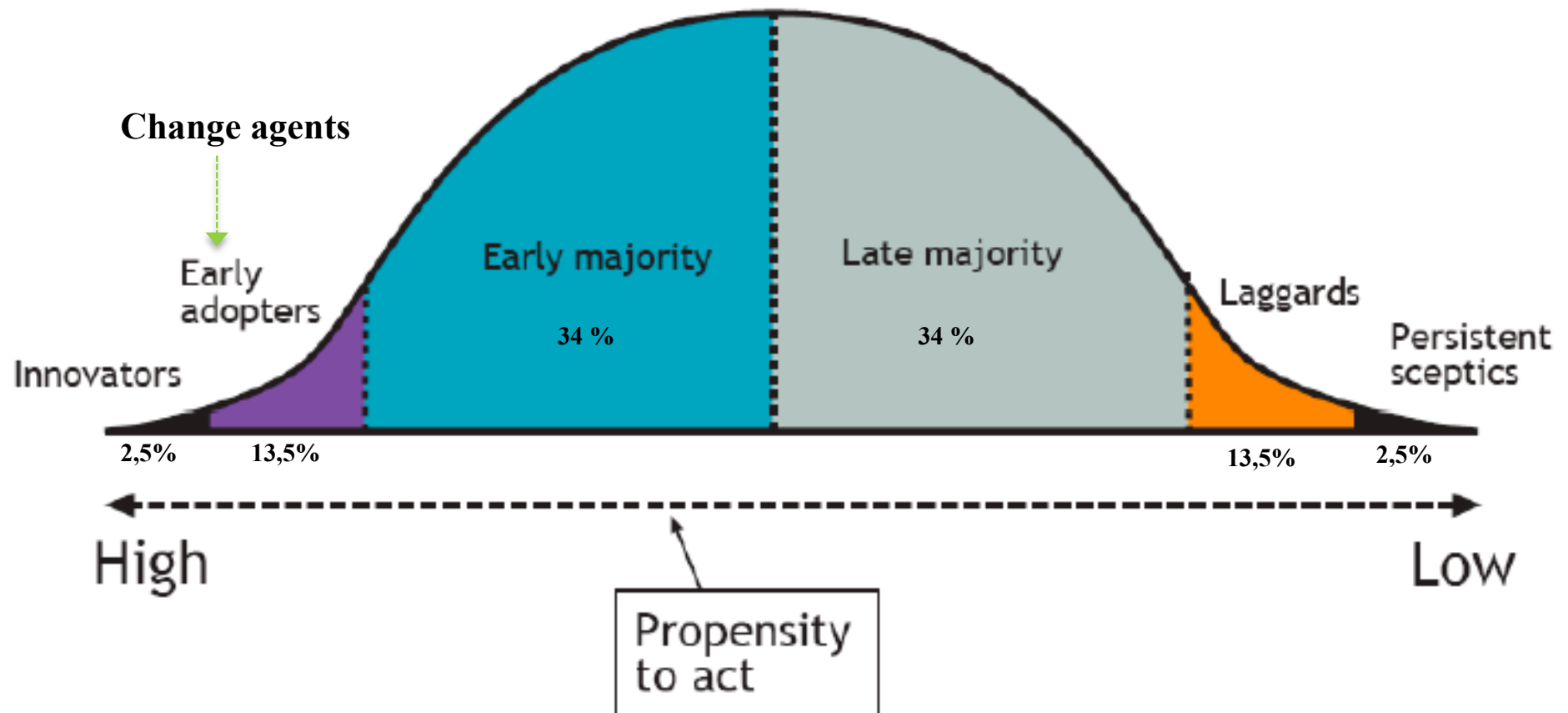
Research: rationale, question and methodology

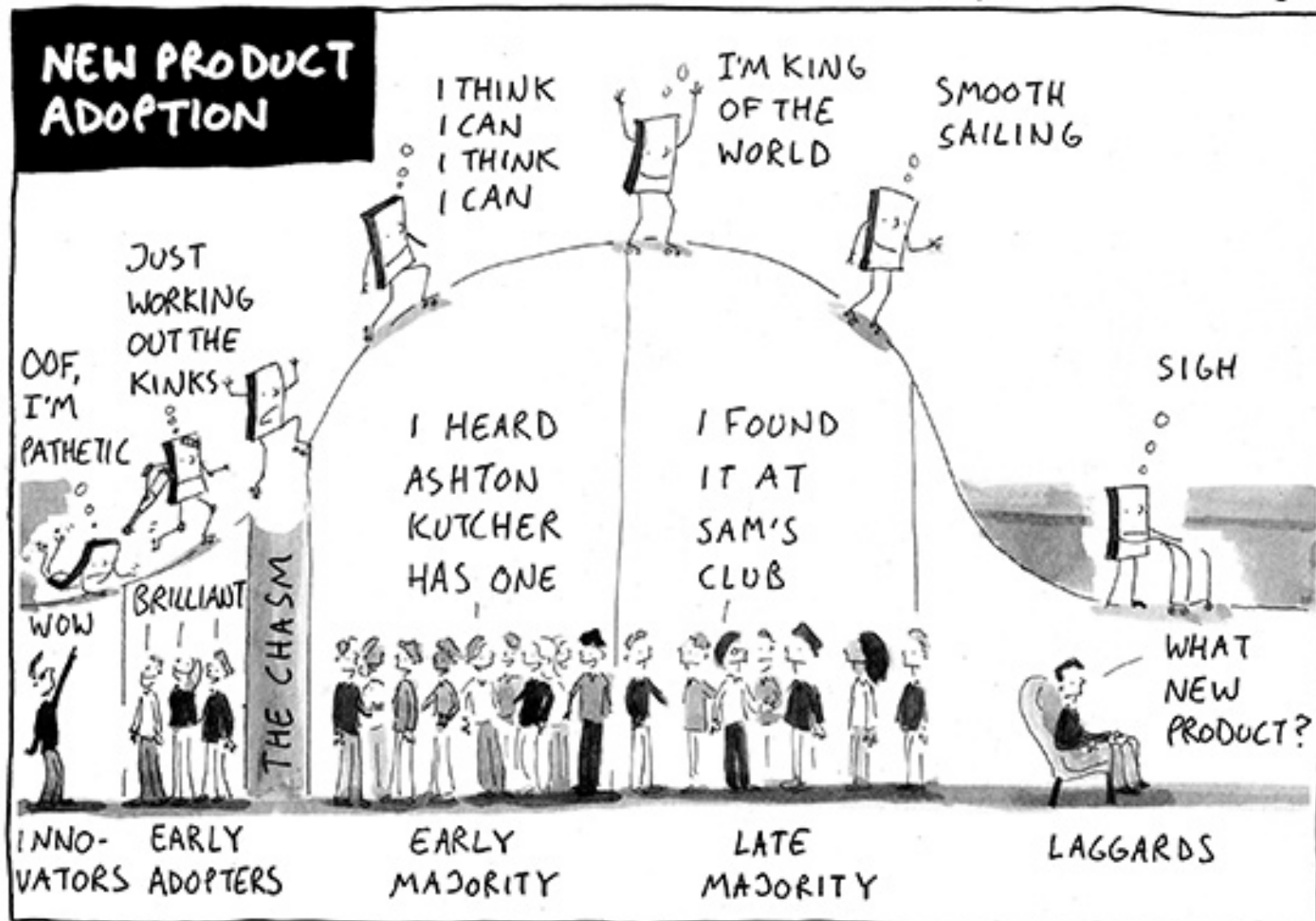
- left with individual aspirations of academics and their own understanding of the purpose of university
- civic mission depends on academics' autonomy and personal understanding of their civic responsibility
- 570 respondents, on-line questionnaire
 - readiness to introduce change into teaching and research
 - attitudes toward civic mission
 - incentives

To what extent can we expect the devotion of Croatian academics to integration of civic mission and under what conditions?



Adopter categorisation on the basis of innovation





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Factor: Innovation					
Willingness to accept changes in everyday teaching and research					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Innovators and early adopters	81	14,2	15,0	15,0
	Early majority	192	33,7	35,6	50,6
	Late majority and laggards	267	46,8	49,4	100,0
	Total	540	94,7	100,0	
Total		570	100,0		

Diffusion of Innovation, Rogers (1962)



Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to the categories of innovation / willingness to accept changes; overall sample (N=570)

Typology of Croatian academics

Innovators and early Adopters (introduce and accept changes)

73,5 % assistant/associate/tenure professors

59,2 % 31-50 years old

7,4% juniors up to 31 years old

Late Majority and Laggards (refuse changes; conservatives - Laredo, 2008)

38,7 % junior researchers and teaching assistants

56,2 % up to 40 years old

62,9 % juniors up to 31 years old

More into change and university civic mission

- academics from humanities, social sciences and art
- female
- associate and tenure professors
- academics from 41 to 50 years of age

Less into change and university civic mission

- juniors up to 31 years of age (6 years contract)
- teaching assistants
- junior researchers
- male

Potential motivational factors for civic mission integration – top 5*

students' interest	78,2 %
administrative support and infrastructure	73,8 %
financial support for the costs of designed activities	66 %
Flexible workload and adequate evaluation of various academic activities	64,9 %
training opportunities	62,6 %

administrative and financial support + salary bonus > juniors up to 31 years



* Responses 4 and 5 on a scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

Final remarks...

- trend to avoid activities that “distract” academics especially among young researchers (Krücken, Meier & Müller, 2009; Göranson, Maharajh & Schmoch, 2009)

"There was a sharp awareness among academics that community engagement brings a loss of status and does not contribute to the employment maintenance, promotion opportunities or payment raise" (Macfarlane, 2005, p. 173).



Among challenges for Croatian universities...

When academic youth is reluctant, is there any place
for nurturing civic mission?