

**ARE THEY ALL ALIKE? THE ISOMORPHIC PRESSURES FACING B-SCHOOLS IN  
LATIN AMERICA**

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Agradecimento à orgão de fomento:  
CAPES e ao FAP-UNINOVE.

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### Introdução

By participating in rankings, B-Schools are subject to specific criteria. The institutional forces on B-Schools also stem from pressure from publications in ranked periodicals. It also occurs through internal institutional pressures from Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to which they belong. Internal pressures include organizational structures, mission and corporate vision, objectives of HEI, norms, values and traditions, power relationships, dominant coalitions and organizational culture. The pressures of the country can also be significant and will affect how the B-Schools operates.

### Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

We aim to understand the interactions of isomorphic pressures that affect the adaptation of B-Schools in Latin American from América Economía ranking. They feel isomorphic pressures from different sources. All these pressures will influence the decision-making of managers when allocating organizational resources and capabilities to adapt. The pressures from ranking and other sources are pressures for legitimacy. A qualitative study was conducted with semi-structured interviews with educational and administrative managers of B-Schools schools in Latin American countries.

### Fundamentação Teórica

Many B-Schools participate in more than one ranking or have accreditations. The most influential accreditation agencies (Wilson and McKiernan 2011). B-Schools can also be included in other rankings with a more global impact. Accreditations exert coercive isomorphic pressure. The actions taken by managers of the B-Schools can be influenced by the pressures of the HEI to which they belong. Mimetic isomorphism is related to the uncertainty of the environment (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Wilson and McKiernan (2011), argue that B-Schools are at risk of becoming increasingly similar to each other.

### Metodologia

We investigated 12 from 35 B-Schools from AER. The choice of clustering the B-Schools into each third in the ranking was made to avoid bias in the positioning and eventually show mimetic behavior. We interviewed 19 managers of the HEI participating in the AER. There were 150 pages and over 20 pages of notes taken during the interviews. We made multiple readings to develop a data structure, and interactive coding was performed with the aid of MAXQDA software. It helped to identify the characteristics mainly related to isomorphism in the perspective of the interviewees.

### Análise dos Resultados

The results of the analysis indicate a perceived hierarchy of legitimacy among the rankings. It indicates that the B-Schools are in the rankings to gain legitimacy to preserve their reputation in the region or achieve international legitimacy, in the case of the B-Schools at the top of the ranking, or to achieve a local/regional reputation and legitimacy for those lower down. The associations of B-Schools and association with accreditations as sources of mimetic pressures. The pressures exerted by the rankings are often greater than the institutional pressures of the countries.

### Conclusão

Although there are many studies on rankings, there are few empirical studies on B-Schools, and fewer still evaluate reactions to isomorphic pressures from the institutional environment to which B-Schools are submitted. The most important aspect is that, due to the amount of institutional pressures on B-Schools, it is difficult to identify the individual impact of isomorphic pressures. This work helps to understand the effect of different isomorphic institutional pressures, whose contributions can be summarized by the situational model of the influence of institutional pressures on B-Schools.

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