

# University Governance and greater autonomy - the long quest for a holy grail?

A Franco-German Perspective

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## roadmap

- definitions and context
- governance, autonomy, new public management
- a short look on HEI landscape in France and Germany
- external governance elements– state to university relationship
- internal governance elements
- conclusion

## definitions and context

- University Governance should optimize internal and external self-regulation
  - ensure the reporting to society and politics with a minimized effort
  - respect subsidiarity and academic freedom
  - balance the conflict between personal accountability and responsibility of academic institutions
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- governance depends from societal, cultural, academic traditions, legal frame
  - no “one governance model fits all”
  - public and state funded HEI with continental-European tradition (mainly France and Germany)

# governance, autonomy, new public management (NPM)

## Governance Dimensions

- State regulation and control  
e.g. by law (HE, budget law,, administrative ), funding, approval of curricula or appointments....
- Self-organization  
prevailing for universities, strong position of professors, faculties, boards  
forces compromise orientated decisions and governance
- Objective based control by external stakeholders  
Typical objective based contracts with ministries  
Theory: agree on objectives  
Reality: Risk of indirect regulation
- Competition  
global, external, internal e.g. excellence initiatives  
structural sustainability? measurable? Preserve creative scientific “chaos”?

# governance, autonomy, new public management (NPM)

## Dimensions of institutional autonomy (taken from Nickel, S. (2011))

Autonomy dimension	Responsibility of Higher Education Institutions
Organizational autonomy	Determination of internal structures
Policy autonomy	Staff appointment and staff salaries Selection of Students Fixation of the number of study places Development of teaching and research programs
Interventional autonomy	Definition of strategy and profile Reporting Administration of an quality assurance systems for teaching and research
Financial autonomy	Decision on the internal allocation of public and private funds Building up reserves and/or carry over unspent financial resources from one year to the next Determination how to spend the public operational grant Lending funds on the capital market

Nickel, S. (2011) Governance als institutionelle Aufgabe von Universitäten und Fachhochschulen, CHE Gemeinnütziges Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung, published in: Brüsemeister, Th./Heinrich, M. (2011) (Hg.): Autonomie und Verantwortung. Governance in Schule und Hochschule. Verlag Monsenstein und Vanderdat.,Münster.

# autonomy and scientific output

## Selected results from EUA's Autonomy Scorecard (2011)

Number is indicating the respective rank from 1 (i.e. higher autonomy) to 28 (i.e. lower autonomy). Reference year is 2010

	Organizational autonomy	Financial autonomy	Staffing autonomy	Academic autonomy
UK	1	3	2	3
France	16	22	27	28
North Rhine Westphalia(GER)	5	14	19	11
Hesse (GER)	8	27	19	11
Brandenburg (GER)	15	24	22	13
Spain	19	17	25	16

Estermann, T./ Nokkala, T./ Steinel, M. (2011) University Autonomy in Europe II – The Scorecard, European University Association (ed.), 84 pg., ISBN: 9789078997306

- could be better!
- but no clear evidence on impact of autonomy and suitable governance on scientific output
- true budget autonomy correlates positively with research output (SRI)
- Universities have several missions!

## a short look on HEI landscape in France and Germany

both countries: quantitative and qualitative challenge over the last 15 years

### Germany

- 2.7 Mio. students (2014/15)/ 498,924 freshmen
- mainly Universities (106, 2/3 students) and Universities of Applied Sciences (212, 1/3 students), private HEI less significant
- budget/student constant or reduced (but consider increasing cost)
- no/low tuition, reduced possibility of entrance selection
- Research: Universities + structures outside the universities (Max-Planck, Helmholtz, Leibnitz, Fraunhofer)
- Excellence (research) initiative with at present 99 projects selected, 4.6 bill.€, recent decision to continue

## a short look on HEI landscape in France and Germany

### France

- 2.42 Mio students (2012/13), 460,000 freshmen
- Universities (80, most with one or several integrated IUTs (Instituts universitaires de technologie), 60% of the students)  
Ecoles (250 – partly integrated in universities) incl. Grandes Ecoles (elite schools)
- Universities: no entrance selection, low fee  
Ecoles: severe selection and higher fee
- Research: handful of large of large state research organizations (CNRS - Centre national de la recherche scientifique, INSERM, ..)
- Excellence initiative with at present 11 sites selected, 6.35 bill.€



## external governance elements– state to university relationship

### France

- national HEI policy and strategy
- state institutions and legal entity as public corporate body
- operate on the basis of five year contracts
- contract negotiation preceded by an external evaluation by HCERES (Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur)
- structural effect of 2013 law: some HEIs created by self-decided mergers increasingly COMUEs “metastructures” (Communautés d'universités et établissements)
- budgets mainly global and transferable
- real estate can be transferred to a COMUE after evaluation (maintenance cost? heritage?)
- follows the basic idea of NPM, but frequent changes of politics

## external governance elements– state to university relationship

### Germany

- HEI under authority of 16 States -> competition due to federal deregulation
- state institutions and legal entity as public corporate body (“Körperschaft”)
- increasingly HEI with different legal and governance status  
e.g. Technical University Darmstadt (Hesse), Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Baden-Wuerttemberg), foundations in Hesse (Goethe Univ.) or Lower Saxony
- development strategy for 4-5 years
- up to rectorat, decision by boards/senate and approval by the state ministry
- External QA by national agencies
- some states negotiate objective based contracts
- budgets mainly global, but as well still cameral accounting and position plans
- Real estate handling very different

## internal governance elements

University Board, Senate, Rectorate, Faculty board, Deans

### France

- university board and academic council (studies and research)
- both include now external members  
e.g. university board (20-40 members) 8 external
- decisions about structures, budget allocation, administration
- so basically comparable to Germany

### Germany

- university boards for external stakeholder input
- power and composition differ widely
- majority of members mostly external
- from purely consultative to final decision on budget, strategic plan or to confirm/ elect rectors
- Senate (internal members, majority professors) mostly the “strong” institution

## internal governance elements

University Board, Senate, Rectorate, Faculty board, Deans

### France

- faculty boards / Deans relatively weak
- relatively autonomous for appointments

### Germany

- faculty boards strong for academic issues and appointments
- deans in difficult position: responsible, but few direct power
- autonomy for appointments  
(faculty board and senate decide, rector appoints, lifetime positions, so approval by state authority)

- problem: in both countries often “multiple” legitimations for decisions and lack of arbitration in case of lasting conflicts
- deans are important interface and should have stronger position

# internal governance elements

## Presidents

### France

- stronger position in new law
- 4 years term, renewable once
- represents university and chairs the 3 councils
- elected with the absolute majority of university board of administration
- few external candidates

### Germany

- as in France now stronger position
- Double legitimation: absolute majority of academic senate/  
confirmed by the university board or vice versa
- approved by the ministry, appointed by prime minister
- Power split: chancellor/ provost responsible for staff and budget execution
- few external candidates

## conclusion

- Universities are quite autonomous (more in Germany than in France) in academic matters
- Further development necessary for financial, real estate and staff matters, structural decisions
- good Governance respects subsidiarity and ensures institutional goals
- is reliable, transparent and understandable
- provides personal responsibilities and the required competences (“power”)
- minimizes multiple checks to overcome the university-typical paralyzing of decisions
- relies on objectives
- Shouldn't overstress competition

....side effect of our cross-border governance experience...

Your questions are welcome



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