It is inherent in the rationalisation decisions that the University may need to offer other CAE-type courses from time to time and this raises questions of accreditation and funding. Normally universities approve their own courses and this in principle can happen with diplomas as well as with degrees. It has been argued (see, for example, Professor Sir Bruce Williams[2]) that the basic binary approach to higher education would be weakened if funding were determined in accordance with the usual Universities Council procedures.

At the opposite extreme, the "comprehensive" university could have diploma courses accredited and funded as if it were a college of advanced education. This too has disadvantages. First, there would be multiple paymasters. Second, it is difficult, and perhaps undesirable, to separate diploma and degree students in programmes which may well have the first few years in common. Third, there may be an implication that the university would have two different categories of academic staff. This idea is unacceptable to the staff of the University of Tasmania.

A possible compromise is for UG3 level diploma courses to be provided by University staff under contract either from the CAE or from Further Education as appropriate. The award would then be given by the contracting body and funds would come through the appropriate tertiary sector. Degree and UG2 or postgraduate diplomas would be provided by the University in the normal way. The ideal arrangement has yet to be decided.

In Tasmania, to compound the problem, there is no separate Advanced Education Accrediting body. The Council of the TCAE accredits its own courses and has not shown any great inclination to extend its role.

Unless there is an independent accrediting authority, it will be very difficult to establish tertiary courses at the appropriate level and at the same time facilitate their conduct on contract by the appropriate institution in each region. Separate accrediting bodies exist in all other States and with the movement of both the University and Further Education sector into diploma courses there is a need in Tasmania to implement similar policies. This would leave the Tasmanian Council of Advanced Education with only those powers appropriate to a council of a college of advanced education.

Before the rationalisation decision there was a growing awareness within the University that it had to be more concerned with the perceived needs of the community. In 1980, despite the obvious difficulty of providing evening classes as well as day classes in a small university, an increased number of units was offered at times suited to part-time students. The demand for part-time studies will never be very large in any one discipline, and it is likely that courses may have to be provided for part-time students in rotation, the range being limited in any one year.

The educational needs of the people of the North West are particularly important. They are being considered by a new Council for Community Education on which one of us (Peter Byers) serves. The University has indicated its willingness to co-operate as well as it can short of contemplating branch campuses. It seems likely that visiting staff from the TCAE and the University may provide a limited number of courses in the North West using Further Education facilities and study centres located in community colleges.

It may well be desirable for visiting staff from the University to give some courses at the TCAE in Launceston. For rationalisation to be a success, it is vital that the College and the University should facilitate the transfer of students in both directions between the two institutions.

Professor Sir Bruce Williams (*loc. cit.*) has criticised the use of the term "comprehensive" by the University of Tasmania, stating that it will not be any more comprehensive than some larger universities have been in the past. This is certainly true. The point is that most small universities have been much more restricted in their offerings than the larger universities were before colleges of advanced education came into existence in large numbers in the sixties. The Tasmanian experiment requires both the University and the TCAE to become broader and more flexible. This is a necessity for a small State and it should not be seen as being destructive of the binary system of universities and colleges which has worked well elsewhere.

The changes in the University are only just beginning but it is already clear that there is a renewed interest within the University in providing a broader and better service to the community. Reviewing the progress during 1980, it seems that innovation within the University is more probable now than even a year ago. As an example, the older part of the University is introducing four new masters degrees (Humanities, Social Sciences, Financial Studies, Legal Studies in Welfare Law), and two new postgraduate diplomas (Welfare Law, Operations Research) in 1981.

At the same time, there is an insistence that, whatever is done, the standards must be those proper to a university. The University will not dilute its standards in becoming more comprehensive. Rather it intends to apply standards of excellence to wider areas of higher education. Perhaps as a result of this insistence on standards and because of the awakening in the University, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Commonwealth Postgraduate Research and Course Work awards received by the University for 1981. It reflects the high activity in research and postgraduate studies which differentiates a university, "comprehensive" or otherwise, from other institutions.

The Tasmanian experiment will take some years to work out and premature judgment is unwise. Whatever the judgment may finally be, the University will certainly emerge as a different institution. While there may be lessons to be learned from the Tasmanian experience which can be applied in other small centres, it should be remembered that Tasmania is unique, and the solution to a purely Tasmanian problem may not necessarily be as useful in the major metropolitan areas.


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# UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY: A NEW ANALYSIS[1]


**J. E. Lane,**
Center for Administrative Studies,
University of Umea,
Umea, Sweden


## Introduction

Among scholars doing research on university organisation the concept of autonomy is used as the theoretical tool by means of which the relationship between the university system or any system of higher education and the central authorities is understood. To these scholars the transition from elitism to mass education has been accompanied by a reduction in traditional university autonomy or at least they assert that the trend has presented threats to university autonomy.[2] However, general statements about the evolution of university autonomy in the western democracies may fail to do justice to the variety of systems within higher education. The development of the Swedish university system does not confirm the notion of decreasing autonomy. On the contrary, the reform of 1977 will increase the autonomy of the Swedish universities. Among most scholars doing research on university autonomy there is a general value commitment to the ideal of the autonomous university, although some of these scholars are pessimistic as to the realism of making a stubborn stand against all encroachments on autonomy. However, none of these scholars have made it clear why autonomy is to be considered of value in relation to the university system. Is university autonomy to be considered an end in itself or is it to be regarded as a means to some valuable end? An answer presupposes some kind of deeper understanding of the functions of autonomy within university systems; it would, in effect, require a theory of university autonomy.

Though the concept of university autonomy occurs in most studies on the external relationships of systems of higher education it still remains to be seen what "university autonomy" really means and what measurement procedures would allow systematic comparative studies of university organisation in various countries. There is something vague about statements to the effect that the autonomy of the university system in country $C_1$ has decreased or that the system in country $C_2$ has more autonomy than the one in $C_1$. Moreover, since there are practically no theories of university autonomy available there is as yet little understanding of the great differences in autonomy between various systems. While university autonomy has been a prominent feature of Anglo-Saxon systems, continental university systems like the German and the Swedish ones have witnessed virtually no autonomy. How come? If autonomy is so valuable, what substitutes are there for systems with little autonomy?

I intend to put forward a tentative analysis of the concept of university autonomy and I will outline some steps towards a theory of university autonomy. My approach is comparative and my analysis is aimed at an understanding of the fundamental difference between the Anglo-Saxon and the German-Swedish type, between an independent system and a dependent system or in the terminology of the analysis, the autonomy-oriented system and the heteronomy-oriented system.

## Concept of University Autonomy

Though the concept of autonomy is extensively used, little effort has been bestowed on conceptual development and clarification. Lyman Glenny and Thomas K. Dalglish equate "autonomy" with "independence" and "self-government", but that is all. No guidance is offered as to how these synonyms are to be analysed. Glenny and Dalglish speak of degrees of autonomy when comparing various types of universities in the United States. However, there is no indication as to what constitutes the basis of such comparisons: what scale, what indicators and so on. Glenny and Dalglish point out that the concept of autonomy should be kept distinct from other similar concepts such as tenure and academic freedom.[3] These distinctions are vital in an initial approach to university autonomy, yet Frederick Balderston seems to mix up these concepts when discussing the future of the university.[4] Leon D. Epstein contrasts two extreme models for the relationship between public authority and the university, one of which is the autonomy model. To Epstein, university autonomy is a type of institutional autonomy which is separate from e.g. faculty autonomy. Epstein equates "autonomy" with "independence" and speaks implicitly of degrees of autonomy. However, such arguments are not backed up by explicit considerations of concept formation or measurement procedures.[5] Robert O. Berdahl distinguishes between procedural and substantive autonomy — one of the rare attempts to clarify the concept by making more refined distinctions between types of autonomy.[6]

Berdahl is careful to point out that the concepts of academic freedom and institutional autonomy are to be kept clearly apart. To Berdahl institutional autonomy has two dimensions, procedural and substantive autonomy. The first type relates to the way in which the universities spend, or are authorised to spend, public funds. The second type comprises decisions which concern the appointment of teachers, the selection and certification of students, research programmes, etc. An investigation into the amount of procedural autonomy will look at the administrative system: planning, budgetary processes, allocation systems, audit programmes, etc. The degree of substantive autonomy depends on the state involvement in academic policy and in the choice of goals and methods within educational and scientific fields. It may be argued against Berdahl that the distinction is not altogether clear since the two concepts are not separate. Government control over academic issues may take place through the allocation system or in the budgetary process. In effect, procedural decisions seem to be a means to an end, viz. substantive decisions, which implies that the concepts are not on the same level. Berdahl does not introduce scales with which to measure degrees of autonomy.

Moodie and Eustace refer to autonomy as institutional autonomy. To them "autonomy" means "non-interference" and "independence". They distinguish between complete, formal and real autonomy, but these distinctions are not explained or introduced in any precise way. They talk as if comparisons of the degree of autonomy between university systems were possible.[7] However, the basis for such statements is not shown.

Autonomy seems to be an important concept for the analysis of relationships between the university and its environment, in particular the state of the government. To speak of autonomy in relation to an organisation is to say something about the decisions which govern the actions of the organisation. An organisation O is autonomous when it decides itself what to do. The actions of O follow decisions made by O and not by any organisation or person outside O. O makes up its own directives and takes no orders from anybody else. In an organisation there are collective decisions and individual decisions producing directives for what the actions of the organisation should be. When these directives are determined by the organisation itself either collectively or individually and the actions follow these directives the organisation is autonomous. Thus, a university is **autonomous** when the decisions governing the actions of the university are made by the university itself, collectively or individually.

The opposite of autonomy is heteronomy. A university or a university system is **heteronomous** to the extent that the environment decides what it is to do and how it is to do it. Heteronomy may occur as the outcome of power or result from authority. In the first case the university is forced to comply with directives determined by the environment. In the second case the university voluntarily obeys what the environment decides.[8]

The concept of autonomy covers different kinds of phenomena. An understanding of university autonomy and its various types is enhanced if some distinctions covering the differentia specifica of autonomy are introduced.

### Legal Autonomy and Real Autonomy

In their investigation into university systems in the United States which are guaranteed autonomy in the state constitution and university systems which do not have such guarantees, Glenny and Dalglish observe:

> *In conclusion, universities with constitutional status do not all possess such status in the same degree and do not enjoy whatever autonomy they have simply as a result of constitutional language vesting management and control in a governing board of regents.*

And they continue:

> *As will be seen in later discussion elsewhere, real autonomy is also a function of a host of non-legal considerations: tradition, the political winds in a state at any time, the popular respect accorded higher education or the institution or its administrators, faculty and students, and other concerns not founded entirely in the legal framework provided for the institution.*[9]



The distinction Glenny and Dalglish refer to is the common separation of the formal and the behavioural aspect of an organisation. Autonomy or "real autonomy" as they call it, is a behavioural concept. Insofar as legal documents are part of behavioural processes they may considerably influence the degree of autonomy of a unit, which the study by Glenny and Dalglish shows. Such legal provisions become an essential part of the struggle for maintaining autonomy between boards of regents, legislatures, governors and courts.[10] When the law in effect becomes the main pillar on which university autonomy is based it may be necessary to distinguish between **legally based** autonomy and **non legally based** autonomy. Legal autonomy may be limited by means of judicial instruments of control. Appropriations may be allocated in the form of bills and whatever legal autonomy a university may have it thus comes into conflict with the constitutional power of the state to determine the budget. If a university has constitutional autonomy there is an outright constitutional clash concerning the use of funds allocated through the state budget when the budget is built up of separate appropriations on a line-item or functional basis. This type of tension between the university and the state has been prevalent in some states in the United States. The University of Michigan has successively fought against such encroachments in court, whereas the University of California has sought to adapt to political realities by means of negotiations.[11]

Though legal autonomy is by no means a reliable criterion of autonomy (real autonomy) such legal provisions may be an important factor in the fight for maintaining autonomy.

### Explicit Autonomy and Implicit Autonomy

The legal autonomy of a university system may be of two types. Legally valid provisions may explicitly grant autonomy to a unit. The California constitution states:

> *The University of California shall constitute a public trust, to be administered by the existing corporation known as 'The Regents of the University of California', with full powers of organisation and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to ensure compliance with the terms of the endowments of the university and the security of its funds.*[12]

And the Michigan constitution contains the following paragraph:

> *The power of the boards of institutions of higher education provided in this constitution to supervise their respective institutions and control and direct the expenditure of the institution's funds shall not be limited by this section.*[13]

Explicit autonomy occurs not only in **constitutional law**. In Maryland there is a **statute law** called the "Autonomy Act":

> *Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, the board of regents shall exercise with reference to the University of Maryland, and with reference to every department of same, all powers, rights, and privileges that go with the responsibility of management . . .*[14]

Even if the law governing the relationships between the state and the university contains no such provisions, the very absence of state law directives controlling the activities of the university may confer upon the unit a substantial amount of autonomy. This type of implicit autonomy can occur, even though the law explicity states that the university is legally subordinate to the state.

As far as real autonomy is concerned, it is an empirical question what degree of autonomy systems with an explicit autonomy as opposed to systems with an implicit autonomy command. One way to come to grips with autonomy as a behavioural phenomenon is to look at the law, but it is not the only way. Legal autonomy may be circumscribed by guidelines in the appropriations or it may be limited by control procedures.

British universities have explicit autonomy. Moodie and Eustace state:

> *The universities are without exception independent corporations able to own property, to sue and be sued, and to regulate their own affairs within the wide powers granted to them by the instruments of their incorporation. A few of the instruments are Acts of Parliament . . . but the characteristic instrument is the Royal Charter, granted through the Privy Council.*[15]

These charters contain directives for the governance of the university. The involvement of the Privy Council in the making of charters seems to be merely formal:

> *The universities depend for their existence on the conferment of their Royal Charters but this action by the Privy Council simply produces in parchment form the decisions taken by the DES on the recommendations of the UGC.*[16]

A striking feature of these charters is their permanence. In the words of Moodie:

> *. . . one can say that there have been important changes in the distribution of (political) power and of authority, but that these have led neither to radical amendment of the legal rules nor to their neglect. In consequence the constitutions are neither fully adequate as description nor mere shams.*[17]

Through such charters the universities acquire the right to govern themselves. However, the autonomy granted by means of charters is restricted through other instruments of control. The fact that the government pays a substantial part of the costs for the operation of the universities constitutes one source of external control. Halsey and Trow state:

> *The expansion of university studies . . . has almost completely eroded the financial basis of*

*autonomy, converting the universities to this extent into state dependencies and thus placing the burden of maintaining academic freedom on the beliefs and sentiments of those who wield power in the modern system of government and administration.*[18]

Of course, **financial independence** may be conducive to autonomy, but the problem of university autonomy is a **decision problem** involving the division of decision competence between the university and its environment. Poor universities may be autonomous, just as rich universities may be heteronomous.

To get at the autonomy of British universities it is obviously not enough to look at their legal autonomy nor to look at their degree of financial self-sufficiency. **It is necessary to investigate what unit makes decisions in what areas.** In various ways the University Grants Committee and other controlling bodies like the research councils are responsible for directives governing university life:

*Certainly a university is not required in any legal sense to follow UGC, but the politically rational behaviour of an institution towards its patron must surely involve only exceptional and considered disregard for that guidance . . .*[19]

In various fields the universities find various types of restrictions upon their power to govern their lives. For example, the UGC makes recommendations on curriculum construction and the division between undergraduate and graduate courses. In the words of Embling:

*Any major new development will be cleared with the UGC if only because of the financial commitment involved. The committee may from time to time encourage a particular development at selected universities by offering inducements through earmarked grants.*[20]

The UGC allocates the funds to the institutions by means of a block grant — in principle. In reality, the UGC divides the grant into separate appropriations on a line-item basis:

*Portioning of the financial cake will start with the main UGC committee taking out slices for libraries, administration and other central services, which it will later allocate between universities. After retaining a further reserve slice, to allow some final exercise of discretion, the main committee will divide the remainder between its subject subcommittees. The subcommittees will then complete the process by subdividing their portions between individual universities. The total quinquennial grant to each university will be determined by aggregating the allocations made to it for 'academic departmental expenditures', by the subject subcommittees and for 'Central Services' by the main committee.*[21]

There is little room to manoeuvre in relation to these lines, particularly if the increment is small. If there is a yearly increment there is room for local decision-making.[22]

### Unconditional Autonomy and Conditional Autonomy

Explicit autonomy may be of two types, unconditional or conditional. Unconditional autonomy occurs when changes in **legal** autonomy require the introduction of new laws, constitutional amendments or revision of charters. Universities in the United States and in Britain are of this type. Conditional autonomy prevails when the state may temporarily intervene in university life by suspending the legal autonomy granted. France is an example of conditional autonomy.

French universities used to be characterised by a low degree of autonomy.[23] In fact, they could be described as heteronomous.[24]

One of the objectives of the Faure reform of 1968 was autonomy. The reform introduced three types of autonomy into the university system: administrative, pedagogical and financial autonomy. It is not clear what constitutes the basis for these distinctions. Such categories as administrative, pedagogical and financial autonomy seem to be too interrelated to admit of clear-cut classification.

However, whatever autonomy local units command is conditional. The Ministry allows as much autonomy as it is prepared to accept. If boundaries are crossed the Ministry uses **legal** instruments in order to suspend the autonomy of the local units:

*In provisions that cut across all arenas of university autonomy, the lois d'orientation attempt to curtail the councils' autonomy with safeguards. These safeguards always involve recourse to centralised authority. Article 18 empowers the Minister to assume the functions of the various mixed participation councils when they enter into 'grave difficulties' (a term that is conveniently left undefined by the law) or default in the exercise of their responsibilities.*[25]

Moreover, the daily operations of the universities are under the surveillance of the rector of the regional academies. The rector is the representative of the Ministry and he participates in various ways in the decision-making structures at the local units. The rector has great potential power:

*The law provides that the rector can suspend the decisions of the council for up to three months, pending action by the Minister following consultation with the national council.*[26]

Thus, whatever autonomy French universities may command according to law is dependent upon the approval or disapproval on the part of the state of the use of this autonomy. The United States or Britain have nothing corresponding to it.

### Primary and Secondary Autonomy

To make a decision implies two things, to decide what is to be done and to decide how it is to be done. To decide that an action is to be performed is one thing, to decide how or the way it is to be performed is another. An action can be performed in many different ways. These ways are the **alternatives**. A university can decide that a school of public policy is to be set up; then it has to make a decision between some crucial alternatives: to what extent courses should be of the applied type, how locally oriented they should be, how selective and so on.

A university like any other type of organisation engages in some types of actions or in areas of actions. To each organisation there is a more or less coherent set of areas in which the organisation acts. Over a period of time some areas may be dropped and other areas added.

Now, a university can decide itself what areas to engage in or another organisation such as the state, the government or some other kind of external authority can decide that the university shall do this and that. The university can decide how it is to act in an area; or the government may decide what alternative the university shall follow or delimit the number of alternatives from which the university can make its choice. By setting up restrictions on the number of alternatives the government limits the **degrees of freedom** of the university. For example, the government can decide that the university should have a Ph. D. programme in applied psychology and then leave it to the university to decide what the programme should be like. Or the government may decide the content and form of the programme or set up restrictions on the alternatives from which the university may choose. A university U has **primary autonomy** in an area $A_1$ when U decides to engage in $A_1$. U has primary heteronomy, i.e. non-autonomy, in area $A_2$ when some other organisation decides that U is to engage in $A_2$. U has **secondary autonomy** in $A_1$ and $A_2$ depending on the number of degrees of freedom U has in $A_1$ and $A_2$ respectively. The autonomy of U is a function of its primary autonomy and its degree of secondary autonomy in the different areas $A_1, A_2, \ldots A_N$.

**Figure 1.**
**Types of Autonomy**

| Deciding that / Deciding how | U decides | E decides |
|---|---|---|
| U decides | Full autonomy | Limited heteronomy |
| E decides | Limited autonomy | Full heteronomy |

U: a university
E: the environment

### Internal and External Autonomy

Sometimes in debates on university autonomy questions of internal affairs are raised. The autonomy of the department within the university organisation has been a key issue in the reforms of the sixties and the seventies. It is important to make a distinction between this type of internal autonomy and the autonomy of the whole university, simply because the two do not necessarily go together. A university or a system of universities may achieve more external autonomy from the state at the same time as more power is concentrated in bodies and structures above the department within the university (e.g. the 1977 reform of the Swedish universities).

### Autonomy and Autokephaly

Universities act in various areas of activity. Some areas occur uniformly in the behaviour of most universities. One such area is the recruitment of the leaders of the university, the members of the governing boards of the universities. A university may be more or less autonomous within the area of recruitment as within any area $A_1, A_2, \ldots A_N$ it engages into. The area of recruitment of the leaders seems to be a crucial aspect of the autonomy of universities. It is possible to make a distinction between autonomy within the area of recruitment of the leaders and autonomy within the other areas $A_1, A_2 \ldots A_N$. Speaking formally, a university is more or less **autokephalous** to the extent that it makes the decisions governing the appointment of its leaders. The opposite of autokephaly is heterokephaly, i.e. some other unit appoints all the members of the governing board of the university. There seem to be significant relationships between on the one hand the degree of autonomy within all areas of activity, except the area of leadership, recruitment, and the degree of autokephaly on the other hand:

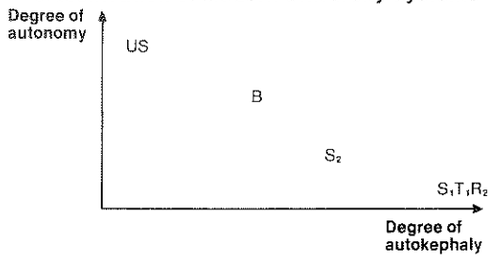
**Figure 2.**
**Types of External Control**

| | Autokephaly | Heterokephaly |
|---|---|---|
| Autonomy | Independence | Semi-independence |
| Heteronomy | Semi-dependence | Subordination |

There are two main instruments of control available to the environment to control the universities. In various ways it can issue directives decreasing the autonomy of the university, e.g. through law, budget regulations, and so on. Or it may pick the people on the governing board of the university. These two instruments may be substitutes: if one is used the other may not be required and vice versa.

Figure 2 in effect contains an initial approach to a theory of university autonomy. It may be used as a tool for the classification of various university systems. The distinction between autonomy and autokephaly pinpoints some basic differences between the Anglo-Saxon type and the continental European one. The classification that follows from the typology in Figure 2 is presented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3.**
**Classification of Modern University Systems**




B = British universities
US = United States universities
$S_1$ = Swedish universities before 1977
$S_2$ = Swedish universities after 1977
$T_1$ = German universities of Ordinarien type
$T_2$ = German universities of Gruppen type

British and United States universities fall under the type heterokephaly-autonomy. The governing boards of these institutions, the court and the council in Britain and the regents in the United States, consist more or less of laymen, appointed by public bodies outside the university.[27] Swedish universities used to be of the type autokephaly-heteronomy, but since the reform of 1977 they have moved towards less autokephaly and more autonomy.[28] It is not easy to classify German universities into the figure since the German university system used to be characterised by great variety. However, some distinctions can be introduced. The Ordinarien-Universitat of the Prussian type was totally autokephalous, since various units within the university picked the rector, the prorector and the small senate **(Senatsverfassung)**. The Ordinarien-Universitat in South Germany had a **Rektoratverfassung**, which implied that the final decision concerning the appointment of the rector lay in the hands of the state.[29] The introduction of the Gruppen-Universitat has not changed the predominantly autokephalous nature of German universities. On the contrary, the Gruppen-Universitat is totally autokephalous since its leaders are picked by groups within the local units. The difference between the Ordinarien-Universitat and the Gruppen-Universitat lies, of course, in the spread of participation in governance to new groups.[30] As far as autonomy is concerned, the Ordinarien-Universitat had a low degree of autonomy. The recruitment of academic staff, the selection of students, the construction of physical facilities, the organisation of institutions, the awarding of some first degrees — all of these university activities were heteronomous.[31] The state had some powerful instruments with which to control directives governing university life: the university charter, university acts and detailed itemised budgets.[32] The transition to a Gruppen-Universitat has not been accompanied by any drastic changes in the amount of autonomy of the university contra its environment.[33]

**Measurement of University Autonomy**

Intuitively it seems reasonable to speak of various degrees or amounts of university autonomy. It seems correct to relate the concept of university autonomy to that of areas of university action. The actions of universities consist of regularities, i.e. they engage in typical actions like research, teaching, selection of students, and so on. Autonomy is related to these areas of activity in such a way that there may be differences in degrees of autonomy between the various areas for one and the same unit as well as between different units. The main areas of university activity are:

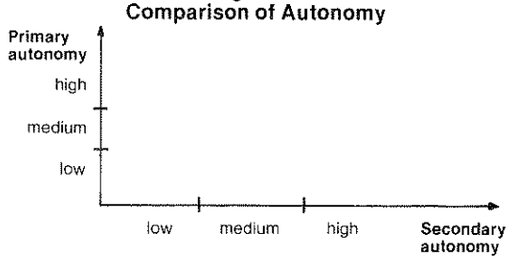
a) Education
b) Research
c) Recuitment of academic staff, administrators and people on the governing boards
d) Selection of students
e) Physical environment
f) Organisation of institutions

In each of these areas there are decisions leading to directives as to what is to be done as to how what is to be done is to be done. The autonomy of the university is a function of its primary and secondary autonomy with regard to these decisions which determine the activity in each area.

To speak of university autonomy thus means that something is stated about two questions:
— How much primary autonomy is there?
— How much secondary autonomy is there?

To arrive at aggregate measures for these two variables, primary and secondary autonomy, there must first be an investigation of the values of these variables in each of the areas of university activity. If such measures are arrived at they can be aggregated into values for the primary and the secondary autonomy of the university. The concept of autonomy may be measured by two scales, one measuring the degree of primary autonomy and the other measuring the degree of secondary autonomy.[34] It is possible to describe the development over a period of time of a university system with these scales. And different universities or university systems can be compared. Such descriptions and comparisons thus imply that units are mapped into the following figure:

**Figure 4.**
**Comparison of Autonomy**






When measuring university antonomy it is vital to make a distinction between the **area of activity** and the **instrument of control**. In order to establish the degree of autonomy a university has in various areas it is necessary to look at the instruments which the environment uses to gain control over various aspects of university life. However, a comparison of degrees of autonomy should be based on the various measures for the different areas of activity and not on observations about the existence of various means of control. Such instruments differ from country to country and they may be applied differently from time to time. In any case, judgments about the degree of autonomy should not be based on a mixture of both the area of activity and the instrument of control.

An analysis of the development of the Swedish university system from elitism to mass education may be used to state some tentative hypotheses, which may be developed into a theory of university autonomy. The U68 reform implies a fundamental transformation of the organisational frame of the Swedish universities.[35] Up to 1977 the framework was basically elitist.

**Swedish Universities Before and After the U68 Reform**

**Education.** In the pre-U68 university the teaching activities were primarily heteronomous. No university could decide to introduce any kind of instruction without the approval of the government. The central authorities, the government and the state agency made all the decisions concerning the curriculum, the various undergraduate courses and the graduate programmes. As regards secondary autonomy the situation was different for undergraduate and graduate education. In the area of undergraduate instruction the elite university was almost entirely secondarily heteronomous. The government made nearly all the decisions about the contents of the curriculum and the courses. Only the reading list was left to the local units for decision-making. With regard to graduate instruction the situation was different. With the exception of the examination criteria the full professors at the local universities made all the crucial decisions: the programmes, the number of courses and the reading lists. The system of graduate programmes was basically reformed in 1969, when the previous high degree of secondary autonomy was reduced.

The Swedish elite university had a low degree of secondary autonomy as far as undergraduate instruction is concerned and up to 1969 a high degree of secondary autonomy as far as graduate instruction is concerned. The introduction of the U68 system of higher education has definite implications for autonomy. There will be an educational system comprising five types of activities:

1. General educational lines
2. Local educational lines
3. Individual educational lines
4. Single courses
5. Graduate programmes

The first four activities cover undergraduate instruction. With regard to primary autonomy the government decides what general educational lines a local university should have, but each local university introduces its own local and individual lines as well as its own set of single courses. Concerning secondary autonomy the U68 university is better off than the elite university. The government makes decisions on the outline of the general lines, but the local units decide the contents of the courses, both the courses which are included in general lines and the courses which are included in local and individual lines, as well as single courses. The decisions introducing graduate programmes remain with the government and the state agency. The degree of secondary autonomy increases, however, since the local units decide the contents of the graduate programmes.

**Research.** Swedish universities — and this was also true before U68 — make few decisions about research activities at their local units. The government makes almost all the decisions concerning the ordinary research post at a local unit. A local unit may introduce a post on its own but such a post may only be established for a short time. Major research programmes including non-permanent posts at the local units are decided on by the research councils and various agencies within the authority of the ministries. The primary autonomy of Swedish universities as far as research is concerned is low. On the other hand the amount of secondary autonomy has been and will remain high. There are no regulations of any kind restricting how a person in an ordinary research position may act. And though councils and agencies decide what projects there will be at a local unit they usually do not interfere with the details of the projects they support and the way the project is conducted.

**Recruitment.** The system of rules governing the recruitment practices of the local institutions will not change considerably with the implementation of the U68 university. As far as primary autonomy is concerned, the local units used to follow central directives concerning recruitment to academic and administrative positions. The system of rules also clearly stated when the university was to recruit members of its board. To a small extent the local units could decide by themselves to recruit academic staff or administrative staff. The U68 university does not have more primary autonomy. The secondary autonomy is affected by the introduction of the U68 university. In the elite system the government appointed the permanent academic staff as well as the higher officials within the administration at the local units. Moreover, the government laid down rules governing the appointment of the local units as far as non-permanent staff and minor administrators are concerned. The U68 university has the same system, characterised

as it is by the central position of the government controlling essential aspects of recruitment. However, in the case of recruitment to the governing body there will be significant changes. The local units used to appoint the people on their boards themselves, though within strict government regulations. Now the universities only appoint some people on their boards. The government picks the rector and local and regional authorities appoint some members on the governing boards.

**Selection of students**. As far as autonomy is concerned there is no difference between the old and the new system. both have a low degree of primary and secondary autonomy. The government decides that the local units should recruit students and it decides how they shall do it.

**Physical environment**. Swedish universities do not own the university buildings or the university equipment. These are owned by the state and they are administered by the agency, the Royal Building Agency. The universities cannot build or buy any large equipment by themselves. With minor exceptions the universities do not engage in building activities. Matters relating to physical environment are the responsibility of special state agencies. In the last resort the government controls the physical environment to the last detail, as building operations and equipment are primarily and secondarily decided on by the government. The universities, however, do take part in these activities by means of various influence mechanisms, like participation and representation in various bodies. The physical environment is an area where conflicts between the universities and the central authorities have been reduced considerably by means of a carefully built-up system of influence for the universities within external agencies. In the near future this pattern will change as the local units will take over the responsibilities for the planning of the physical environment. However, the government will continue to make the crucial decisions.

**Organisation of institutions**. In the pre-U68 university the government made all the crucial decisions concerning departments, schools and the like. The universities had a low degree of both primary and secondary autonomy. The introduction of the U68 university entails a change. The local institutions assume responsibility for the structure of departments.

**Summary**
Swedish universities used to have a low degree of autonomy — primary and secondary — in most fields of activity:

**Figure 5.**
**Autonomy of Swedish Universities**

| | Elite University | | U68 University | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Autonomy | | Autonomy | |
| | Primary | Secondary | Primary | Secondary |
| Education | low | low | medium | high |
| Research | low | high | low | high |
| Recruitment | low | medium | low | medium |
| Selection of students | low | low | low | low |
| Physical environment | — | — | low | low |
| Organisation of institutions | low | low | medium | medium |

**Some Theoretical Propositions on University Autonomy**
In order to understand university autonomy it is certainly necessary to look at various aspects of the total system for higher education of which the university is part. Moreover, traditions of public administration are another significant variable. However, taking a broad look at the autonomy of university institutions a few more general theoretical propositions which explain different autonomy situations may be put forward. Trust is mentioned as a basic explanatory variable. Such arguments run the risk of circularity: Why is there a low degree of autonomy? Because the public has a low degree of trust in the universities. How does one know that trust is low? Look at the autonomy! Trust as an explanation does not seem to increase the understanding of autonomy as a way of handling the problem of the relationships between the university and the government (state).

I will focus on two organisational features, the internal structure of universities and the relation between autonomy and influence contra the state.

a) The more autokephaly the less autonomy.
b) The less autokephaly the more autonomy.

The degree of autonomy seems to be inversely related to the degree of autokephaly. The environment may use two instruments to control the university. On the one hand there is direct rule by means of directives which tell the universities what to do and how to do things. On the other hand indirect rule may occur as the environment appoints laymen to the board governing the university.

Up to 1977 Swedish universities had, on the whole, a low degree of primary autonomy and a medium degree of secondary autonomy. Swedish universities were firmly integrated into the state, which is highly centralised to the government and its agencies. Only in one area did the universities score high



on autonomy, viz. concerning how the universities chose the contents of their research programmes. However, up to the reform the local units picked their own people for their governing bodies. The reform will change these patterns. The degree of primary autonomy as well as the degree of secondary autonomy will increase. This will be particularly obvious in the areas of education and organisation building. In these fields the local units will feel the effects of decentralisation. At the same time they will lose their autokephaly. The governance structure of the pre-U68 university was built up around the permanent positions. The tenured constituted the faculty, which selected its dean, who automatically became a member of the university board. In 1969 a system including representation for students and the employee organisations was implemented, but in effect the governance structure remained in the hands of the permanent staff, i.e. the full professors. The governance structure in the U68 university means a radical break with the old structure. The university board will be recruited on the basis of representation, not on the basis of professionalism, and it comprises the following categories: one third will represent local and regional public bodies, one sixth will represent the students' organisations, one sixth will represent the employee organisations and one third will represent the teachers at the university.

c) The less the autonomy the more the influence.
d) The more the influence the less the autonomy.

University systems try to control their life. They can do this in two ways:

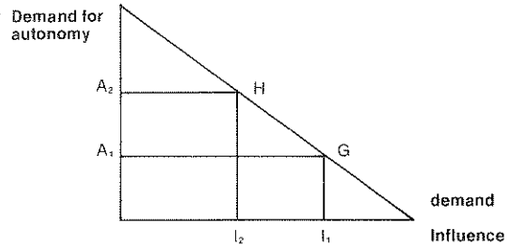
CONTROL = AUTONOMY + INFLUENCE

Control of the activity an organisation performs implies either that the organisation makes the decisions governing the activity and issues the directives as to what is to be done and how what it is to be done is to be done, or that the organisation has influence over the unit that makes decisions governing its activity. If the activity is heteronomous the only alternative to making it autonomous is to gain influence over the decisions that make its activity heteronomous. University systems facing a low degree of autonomy like the Swedish university system manage to survive and even flourish by means of mechanisms that will guarantee the university a considerable amount of influence over decisions made above the local units. Swedish universities before the U68-reform exercised influence on the directives issued by central authorities through a refined and smoothly operating system of participation and representation. University people were represented in the various commissions that proposed the reforms. They were represented within the state agency implementing government directives (the UKA, Universitetskanslersambete), in the so-called "faculty commissions". They participated in various ways in the determination of central policies. Within the area of physical construction no major decision was made without consultation with various university groups. Every major proposal for reform was sent to the universities in order to obtain their views.

The introduction of the U69-reform implies an entirely different pattern of rule. Accompanying the shift towards heterokephaly is an increase in autonomy. The increase in autonomy occurs at the same time as the amount of influence is reduced. The universities will suffer a loss in representation at the state agency (the UHA, Universitets -och hogskoleambetet), as new groups — particularly the employee organisations — enter the consulting bodies. University people will lose their dominant position with the consulting boards. Moreover the interests of outside groups in university life are beginning more and more to be considered legitimate at the expense of academic opinion. In both representation and participation university people will suffer a decrease in influence on policy-making at the centre.

The Swedish university has moved from low autonomy and high influence to medium autonomy and medium influence:

**Figure 6.**
**Autonomy and Influence of the University Organisation**




Suppose that the Swedish university system were able to secure the amount of influence $I_1$ on central policy-making before the U68-reform. The system will then be satisfied with the degree of autonomy $A_1$, since G is an equilibrium point. Suppose now that the system suffers a reduction in influence ($I_1$-$I_2$). It will correspondingly demand more autonomy, $A_2$, since H is an equilibrium point. The U68-reform entails precisely this movement from G to H.

**Conclusion**
It is often maintained that autonomy is of crucial value for university organisation. The commitment to university autonomy seems to be more of a dogma than the outcome of an understanding of the functions of autonomy in real-world university systems. University autonomy is not of one piece but there exist a number of different types of autonomy and there are great differences between the university systems of Western democracies as regards the

amount of autonomy these institutions command contra the environment. The basic difference is that between the Anglo-Saxon type of universities and the continental one as exemplified by Germany and Sweden. If autonomy is of such crucial value to university organisation, how do systems with a low degree of autonomy manage to survive and develop? If autonomy is **the** value of university organisation, are systems with a low degree of autonomy to be considered inferior to systems with a high degree? Of course not. Institutional autonomy varies between different areas of activity. A high degree of autonomy within purely academic matters, like the basic principles governing research and the basic principles governing instruction, is a *sine qua non* for university organisation. No university can operate without the institutionalisation of the principle of academic freedom. But in other areas of activity like recruitment of staff, physical construction, the organisation of departments and schools, and the principles of curricula, a high degree of autonomy contra the government or the state is not **the** value of the system. The value of university organisation is professionalism or academic competence. Autonomy is one way to safeguard that value, but it is not the only one. Whereas the Anglo-Saxon model protects the institution of professionalism by means of autonomy, the continental European type protects academic competence by means of influence over the decisions of central authorities which govern the life of these universities. Autonomy is vital to the survival of the university system; however, even more important is the protection of professionalism and that institution may not only be challenged from the outside as German[36] and Danish[37] experiences show.

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# THE IMPACT OF THE STEADY STATE ON THE PROFESSIONAL LIVES OF ACADEMICS


**J. P. Powell**
Tertiary Education Research Centre
University of New South Wales


## Introduction

The great majority of contemporary academics commenced their careers in a professional environment which was dramatically different from that which surrounds us today. They experienced what appeared to be unbounded growth in student enrolments, budgets and the size and number of institutions offering post-secondary education. Governments and electors shared a common faith in the worth of higher education, if not for its own sake at least as the key to economic and social development. It was a period of confident expansionism which offered the academic profession many rewards in terms of job mobility, rapid promotion, salary increases and a higher level of community regard than it had been accustomed to receiving.

All of that now belongs to another era and most of us are seeking to accommodate to a situation which is disturbingly unfamiliar in terms of our previous experience. The expression "steady state" is rapidly becoming an inaccurate descriptor as enrolments decline, budgets are pared and career opportunities diminish. The study to be reported here was an attempt to gauge the impact of these changing circumstances upon the working lives of academics.

The investigation was an exploratory one aimed at improving our understanding of how academics view the current situation, establishing some base-line data so that comparisons might be made in the future, and providing information relevant to institutional decision-making.

The study was a collaborative one between researchers at Monash University, the University of New South Wales and the Western Australian Institute of Technology. The initial design envisaged a sample of 24 academics from each institution drawn from tenured staff appointed between 1972 and 1975 to the Faculties of Arts and Science. Tutors and professors were excluded from the sample. The object was to identify a group of staff who had been in post long enough to recall pre-recession days but who were still likely to have an expectation of advancement. For a variety of reasons the criteria for drawing the sample had to be made rather more flexible and the character of the group from each institution was as follows:

***MONASH.***
*Humanities: three senior lecturers and nine lecturers. Science: one reader, six senior lecturers, two lecturers. Two were untenured.*