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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to balance two major conceptual tendencies in science policy studies, continuity and discontinuity theory. While the latter argue for fundamental and distinct changes in science policy in the late 20th century, continuity theorists show how changes do occur but not as abrupt and fundamental as discontinuity theorists suggests. As a point of departure, we will elaborate a typology of scientific governance developed by Hagendijk and Irwin (2006) and apply it to new empirical material. This makes possible a contextualization of the governance of science related to the codification of the 'third assignment' of the Swedish higher education law of 1977. The law defined the relation between university science and Swedish citizens as a dissemination project, and did so despite that several earlier initiatives actually went well beyond such a narrow conceptualisation. Our material reveals continuous interactive and rival arrangements linking the state, public authorities, the universities and private industrial enterprises. We show how different but coexisting modes of governance of science existed in Sweden during the 20th century, in clear contrast with the picture

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promoted by discontinuity theorists. A close study of the historical development suggests that there were several periods of layered governance when interactions and dynamics associated with continuity as well as discontinuity theories were prevalent. In addition, we conclude that the typology of governance applied in the present paper is fruitful for carrying out historical analyses of the kind embarked upon in spite of certain methodological shortcomings. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)