

07.7.2025

**Author**

CHRISTENSEN, Tom

**Title**

University governance reforms: potential problems of more autonomy?

**Publication year**

2011

**Source/Footnote**

In: Higher education. - 62 (2011) 4, S. 503 - 517

**Inventory number**

31034

**Keywords**

Hochschule : Verwaltung allgemein ; Hochschulreform : allgemein

**Abstract**

University governance reforms are very much a reflection of the broader New Public Management reforms that are focusing on increasing efficiency in public organizations. The article deals with how university reform ideas of a generic nature, emphasizing that universities should be treated and reformed like any other public organizations, are important and reflected in specific reform measures. The special empirical focus is on that universities through reforms are changing their formal affiliation to superior ministries in a more autonomous direction, implicating more autonomy in financial, management and decision-making matters. On the other hand, universities are also through reforms more exposed to more report, scrutiny and control systems, financial incentive systems, pressure to get resources from other sources than the government, cut-back management, etc. So a main question in the analysis is whether universities, as traditionally having quite a lot of real autonomy, through the reforms in fact are getting less autonomy, not more, like the reforms entrepreneurs often are promising. The analysis is based on a transformational approach from organization theory, representing a combination of structural, cultural and environmental factors of

**07.7.2025**

explanation for reforms processes and their effects. Empirically the article is based on the author's own empirical studies of university reform and reviews of comparative studies. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Christensen, Tom, E-Mail: [tom.christensen@stv.uio.no](mailto:tom.christensen@stv.uio.no)