



# CHANGING NOTIONS OF THE GOVERNANCE – CREATIVITY NEXUS

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# Content

- **Focus:** Coincidence of organizational change and new ideas looking at periods of transition
- **Question:** Is there a relationship? If yes, of what kind?
- **Argument:** There is a relationship, but complex and ambiguous

# Transitions

- The beginning of universities – the questioning of holy texts 12th century (Peter Abelard)
- From scholasticism via humanism towards modernity 1450-1550 (Lorenzo Valla)
- From humanism to science (Atypical hero: Galileo)
- Emergence of the research university (From Berlin to Johns Hopkin)
- Mass education – knowledge society (From organized anarchies to penetrated hierarchies)

# Peter Abelard (1079 – 1142)

Founder of *Nominalism*

Subjected the study of authoritative texts to *disputation*

thereby transforming the approach from the contemplative:

*lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio*

to the combative:

*praelectio, quaestio, disputatio, determinatio*

Also known for his transgression with *Heloïse d'Argenteuil*

Governance innovation: establishing learned institutions formally independent from the Church



# Lorenzo Valla 1406 – 1457

- Gave the humanist program some of its most trenchant and combative formulations, bringing the study of Latin to an unprecedented level
- The meaning of a text can be understood only when seen in its original historical and cultural context
- Exposed *the Donation of Constanine* — a document justifying the Papacy's claims to temporal rule — as a forgery
- Compared St. Jerome's translation of the Bible with the Greek text of the New Testament, laying the foundations of critical biblical scholarship
- Governance: increasing importance of secular protection and funding





# Renaissance

'Many will traverse  
and  
knowledge will be increased'

Title page of Francis Bacon's *Instauratio Magna* (1620)  
[http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual\\_materials/maps/websites/thematicmaps/bacon/bacon.html](http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/thematicmaps/bacon/bacon.html)

# Galileo Galilei 1564 – 1642

Invented:

- *The Thermometer*
- *The Hydrostatic Balance*

Made: *The telescope famous*

Discovered:

- *The Moon's craters, mountains, valleys*
- *Venus's phases*
- *Jupiter's four largest satellites*
- *The drift of sunspots across the Sun's disc*

Attributed to Galilei:

- *The Microscope* Galileo made sketches and designs for a microscope but did not invent one

Governance:

- *Establishment of new disciplines outside universities*



Galileo showing the Doge of Venice how his telescope works  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galileo\\_Galilei#/media/File:Bertini\\_fresco\\_of\\_Galileo\\_Galilei\\_and\\_Doge\\_of\\_Venice.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galileo_Galilei#/media/File:Bertini_fresco_of_Galileo_Galilei_and_Doge_of_Venice.jpg)

# The research university – the German and US models

Institutional autonomy – state as funder and protector

Academic freedom

The research seminar

The single discipline professor

The US Graduate School

Achievements



# From research university to knowledge economy - Three tendencies

- **Rationalization – standardization**  
Quality assurance, evaluation, control, audits and incentive systems (formula funding models, systems for measuring research and teaching output)
- **Strengthening organizational hierarchies**  
Development of goals, strategies and stronger leadership and management structures and central control of internal decision processes as well as reduced academic influence
- **Strengthening of social relations across and between institutions and stakeholders – from state to stakeholder protection – diversity**  
Research funding, evaluation, promotion and publishing

# Five Governance Revolutions since 1980s

## **Systemic integration**

- From direct regulation to systemic regulation

## **Governance and decision making**

- From bottom up to top down

## **Funding**

- From input factors to output

## **Quality assurance and evaluation**

- From individual to organizational performance

## **Organization of academic work**

- From individual to groups / from teaching to research based organization of basic units

# Implications of governance reforms since 1980s

Stronger institutional hierarchies

Standardization

Diversity

Reconfiguration of academic power

# Current cites of creativity

- Culture rather than structure – the focus on academic excellence
  - All aspects of academic and administrative functions
- Collaborative relationships
- Less affected by imposed structural reforms than rank and file universities
- Diversity of resources
- Ability to attract talent
- Ability to forge connections

# Variation over time – stages and tensions

- From Ecclesiastical to Secular institutions and from Church to State to stakeholder protection
- Perception of knowledge (from given to new)
- Communication of knowledge: oral (disputation) to written (monographs, articles) to open access
- Object of knowledge: Holy and Classic texts, to modern languages to Sciences
- Organization of knowledge production: From *vita contemplative* to *vita activa* to *Freiheit und Einsamkeit* to the organized research group and clusters

# Conditions for creative robustness

- Spaces: institutional autonomy/academic freedom (but also coincidence)
- Authority: fame and status
- Closeness to power
- Resources
- Internal values and practices

# Conclusion

There is no single generally best organizational structure in terms of creativity

What promotes creativity at one point in time, prevents it at another

University governance typically impedes and facilitates creativity

Evidence suggests a crucial connection between internal values and practices and the environment of universities