

Autonomy and Academic Freedom in Universities: Country Examples Based on Types of Governance

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Autonomy and Academic Freedom in Universities: Country Examples Based on Types of Governance

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Abstract

The first university in Turkey is Istanbul University, which was established in 1933. The purpose of this research is to qualitatively and quantitatively compare the "organizational, financial, staffing, and academic autonomy" aspects of higher education in the models of decentralization (UK), federal (Germany), and centralization (France and Turkey) based on the results of the European University Association (UAE) University Autonomy in Europe, and to make comments and suggestions for higher education in Turkey based on the comparison results. The 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries saw an increase in the number of universities in medieval Europe, and they have continued to exist to this day. In European universities, the Humboldt model emerges in the early 19th century. Humboldt and Schleiermacher, while discussing the dual structure of universities, which includes scientific research alongside the teaching duty that leads to knowledge, highlight this dual structure as the distinguishing feature of universities compared to schools. The Humboldt model was implemented in the USA and Japan after World War II. In this model, a master's degree, doctorate, and habilitation exam have been introduced to become a professor. In this research, the autonomy dimensions of the 3 countries selected as models have been shown in tables for comparisons in the ranking of 35 countries. Turkish universities do not rank within the top 400, and they have no academics that have conducted research and won a Nobel Prize.

Keywords: Universitas, Freedom, Autonomy

Introduction

“Although a connection is made between the establishment of universities during the Ottoman period and the founding of eight madrasas known as Sahn-ı Seman, built on the southern slopes after Fatih Sultan Mehmet demolished the Church of the Holy Apostles in 1453 and removed the surrounding graves to construct a mosque in the middle of this plain” (Ergin, 1939 p. 83), this claim stretches beyond the concept of universitas. These schools were traditional institutions based on religious references (Şanal and Alaca, 2023).

Lewis (1988), wrote the following about the first higher education institution under the reforms of the 19th century "Despotism and Enlightenment" subheading (p.180):

"Among the education reforms) the greatest of all was the establishment of a Turkish university." This bill, which was first discussed in 1845, faced many difficulties and fell victim to a series of never-ending attempts. The Darülfünun, which was named Istanbul University, was only able to open its doors in August 1900" (Ergin, 1939, s.997).

During the Ottoman period, the Darülfünun and the İnas Darülfünun for women were established (Dölen, 2006). In 1932, Atatürk invited pedagogy professor Albert Malche to Istanbul and asked him to

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prepare a report on Darülfunun. According to Malche's findings, "Turkish scientific publications are lacking, the teaching method is outdated, and the students' foreign language proficiency is inadequate..." Most importantly, the poorly paid professors, most of whom were inadequate, were doing work outside of their classes (Malche). In 1933, this institution was closed, and Istanbul University became the first step for Turkish universities.

Turkey's first universities are Istanbul University (1933), Istanbul Technical University (1944), Ankara University (1946), Karadeniz Technical University (1955), Ege University (1955), Atatürk University (1957), and Middle East Technical University (1959), making a total of seven (Kömürlü, 2019)

Philosophical and Systemic Developments Related to the Scientific World in Europe

Özsoy and Balyer (2023) discuss how the processes of the Renaissance and Reformation influenced the concept of the university, emphasizing the autonomy of universities and the preservation of the prestige of scientists. They also highlight the prioritization of research over teaching.

University Expansion Efforts in Europe

The establishment of the university in Perugia, Italy, began in 1306. From June 27-29, 1306, the city council of Perugia decided to establish a university focused on two branches of law. According to the city's decisions, the university needed to be recognized as a general educational institution by the city through a papal privilege. (Zhang, 2010, s.25). This is an example of autonomy. Perugia University is currently ranked 527th in the world.

Table 1. The founding dates of the first universities in Europe and some of them

Country Name	Date
Italy	Bologna University 1088
England	Oxford University 1096; Cambridge Trinity College 1546
France	University of Paris 1150
Austria	University of Vienna 1365
Germany	Marburg University 1527
Russia	Sankt-Petersburg University 1724; Moscow State University 1755

(Smith, 2001, s.201-206; Zhang 2010 and Wikipedia Liste der aeltesten Universitaeten)

In Table 1, considering the University of Bologna, the establishment of a university in Turkey was delayed by 850 years, until 1933.

Thorens (2006) explains the meanings of the university and academic studies as follows (Ren and Li 2013): The university is a higher education institution that combines education and research, particularly advanced research, with its primary mission being the pursuit of facts for their own sake. It also contributes to the dissemination of innovations for the welfare of humanity through research and education, without expecting any returns.

The validity claims of educational principles from each period must be examined and interpreted within their own cultural and historical contexts (Wulf, 1994) because culture is transmitted through education, and the individual becomes a member of that society or group, thereby forming communities.

The Formation of the Concept of "Universitas" in Europe and the Ideas of Autonomy and Freedom

The formalization of the powers and duties of new institutions in higher education begins with the famous "student privilege" (Authentica Habita) law, issued by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1155, which provided protection to scholars traveling to new centers of learning (Ruegg, 2006, p.42 and Karran 2009).

Ertem and Aypay (2023) emphasize the importance of the scholarship of teaching and learning in their research, noting that this scholarship encompasses the three fundamental missions of higher education: teaching, research, and service, all of which are obligations.

Ren and Li (2013) consider academic freedom as a necessary freedom that enables members of the institution to fulfill their individual responsibilities in the best possible way. Yılmaz (2019) views universities as service institutions that must address society, stating that academic freedom is interchangeable with accountability.

When discussing autonomy and academic freedoms, an anecdote from Immanuel Kant's work "The Dispute of the Faculties" is particularly interesting: a French minister asks merchants for suggestions on how to assist trade. An elderly merchant, who had been silent at first, suggests improvements to the roads and granting the right to quick exchanges, and ultimately says, "Leave the rest to us." The autonomy that Kant envisioned for universities in the 18th century became part of the modern constitutional state with the civil rights movement of the 19th century (Schiedermaier, 2007).

Himmelmann (2007) further divides democracy into two major areas: one is political democracy, as we understand it today as a system of governance, while the other is democracy as a social idea.

The Association of Differences in Countries' Governance Systems with University Management

In a university context, the transfer of decision-making powers from seminars and institutes to the faculty level or even further to the university administration level can be defined as centralization. In Mintzberg's terminology, such shifts are referred to as "vertical decentralization" or "centralization." Additionally, these concepts can also be expressed using the terms "horizontal decentralization" or "centralization" (Lazzari, 2018, p. 23 and Mintzberg, 1983, p. 323-324).

In general terms, horizontal decentralization should be understood as the process of creating and delegating subordinate units within a unit, along with assigning appropriate tasks and responsibilities to these units; this process begins with an increase in their decision-making authority. Conversely, vertical centralization can be understood as a reverse process. At the university administration level, it refers to the relationship between the rectorship (executive), coordination and planning committees, and the board of directors (legislative). At the level of "organizational units," it is defined as the relationship between management bodies (such as deanships, department heads, etc., in the sense of "executive") and councils representing all committees and member groups ("legislative") (Lazari, 2018).

"Centralization" refers to the process within an organization where planning and decision-making activities are concentrated in a specific leader or position. In contrast, "decentralization" enables a structure where teams or departments possess decision-making authority and encourages communication in all directions (Wale, 2015 to 2024 CFI Education Inc).

Decentralization is closely related to multi-level governance and federalism. However, the term 'federalism' refers to a specific vertical governance arrangement. Federalism is a self-governing and shared governance system, derived from the Latin word "foedus," meaning "agreement" or "contract" (Decentralization & Localization, September 2024).

Formation of Universities

"The Apennine Peninsula, now Italy, is one of the main homelands of the university. Particularly in Bologna and other Italian cities, the teaching of Roman law and canon law continued with scholastic methods from the second half of the 11th century. Without any regulation or instruction, students in Bologna formed a corporation (universitas) throughout the 12th century according to their own wishes and needs. This spontaneously formed university (ex consuetudine / from custom, meaning 'due to tradition') was initially self-organized, self-governed, and financially autonomous. Professors were elected and appointed either by the university or by the students" (Zhang, 2010, p. 16-17).

In 1348, at the time of the founding of the University of Prague, the first university in the "Holy Roman Empire," there were 23 universities on the continent, nine of which were in Italy and eight in France. He notes universities such as Prague, Vienna, Heidelberg, Cologne, Erfurt, Leipzig, Rostock, Louvain, Greifswald, Freiburg, Basel, Trier, Ingolstadt, Mainz, Tübingen, Wittenberg, and Frankfurt (Oder). All of these were founded between 1348 and 1506. Bologna and Paris left a lasting mark on the process of university formation. The slogan was "a university for everyone." German universities emerged later than those in Italy, but as a result, they created new models. These institutions initially came under significant pressure toward centralization (Schwinges, 2008).

Zhang (2010) explains that during the Middle Ages, universities in Central Europe offered more privileges compared to other schools:

"At Erfurt, a university generally offered its members more than a school could. At the university, one could study not only fine arts but also civil law, theology, and medicine" (p. 151).

The shaping of European universities with the emancipatory movements of the 19th century, particularly the Humboldt principles, which influenced not only German and French universities but also American universities, provides an opportunity in this section to address some key views within the context of the research. Rüegg (2007) uses the following description to explain Humboldt's understanding of autonomy: *"Scientist and diplomat Wilhelm von Humboldt, at the beginning of March 1809, fulfilled the request of his king, who had been exiled to East Prussia by Napoleon, to reorganize the Prussian education system. This request also included the establishment of a 'general and higher education institution' in Berlin, which the king had ordered in 1807."* Humboldt received approval from the King "to give it the name of a traditional university and grant it the right to confer academic honors." The founding charter was granted on August 16, 1809, and the university opened in Michaelmas 1810... This move inspired new institutions, as seen in Zurich in 1833 and Bern in 1834, and by 1914, it had transformed the university system in Europe, North America, and Japan. After the Second World War, thanks to the model created by American universities, it spread across the entire World (p.1).

Özsoy and Balyer (2023), when discussing the Humboldt model, state that this structure is based on German idealism and views the production of knowledge and adherence to research requirements as the primary responsibilities of universities.

Schleiermacher and Humboldt derived the autonomy of the university from the fundamental difference between schools and universities: while the task of schools was to transmit predetermined, recognized, and applicable knowledge as endorsed by authority, the task of the university was "to demonstrate how knowledge is obtained by visualizing the principles and outlines of all knowledge." For Schleiermacher, the essence of study was already "the learning of learning," and university education was summarized in an act where "knowledge awakens in a person as a guiding principle, as the highest consciousness of reason." The professor "should not merely convey what they know, but reproduce their own cognition, the act itself, so that [the listeners] not only collect information..." (Rüegg, 2007, p.3).

Here, the term "SelbstActus" is used. (This is a concept understood in the context of "self-determination and self-realization," rooted in German idealist philosophy). According to Humboldt, the start of academic work occurs with independent doctoral research following bachelor's and master's studies. The position of associate professor (Dozent) corresponds to Habilitation, and Habilitation was introduced as an additional examination for teaching qualifications at some German universities between 1799 and 1804, and it was officially adopted in the Berlin University statutes in 1816 (Rüegg, 2007, p.4).

The phrase "Science and teaching are free" is used in the Constitution of St. Paul's Church dated 1849. In the history of universities in the 20th century, which experienced the brief time differences between two world wars, higher education institutions faced attacks from political dictators (Schiedermaier, 2007).

In the United States, university autonomy is a result of professors' academic freedom. The locus of academic freedom is the professor, and autonomy is the reflection of this freedom within the university.

Autonomy is the academic freedom of the university as a community of scholars. In contrast, in Latin America, academic freedom is understood as a result of the university's institutional autonomy. The focus of autonomy is the university, and the freedom of faculty members stems from the liberties granted to the university (Bernasconi, 2021, p. 57). The freedom of research and teaching is also a freedom of service. The freedom of research and teaching is a status right aimed at securing the benefits of free and unrestrained science for the general public by guaranteeing it under individual law.

The article by Yıldız (2016) examines academic debates on centralism in the Turkish education system. It analyzes the central administration of the Turkish education system (TES) and the ongoing discussion about whether centralism is a suitable solution for its structural problems:

Historical Context: The model of the nation-state established after the French Revolution led to state control over education systems worldwide, aiming to cultivate loyal citizens. In Turkey, this model was particularly adopted in the early years of the Republic.

Problems of Centralization: Although the initial centralization was historically considered necessary, it is now regarded as one of the main causes of the current challenges in the Turkish education system.

Centralism as a Supposed Solution: At the same time, arguments in favor of decentralization include adaptation to international education standards, increased participation in decision-making processes, improved communication through multiple channels, more flexible resource allocation, and greater efficiency in examination outcomes.

Scientific Reflection and Epistemological Challenges: The article advocates for a nuanced discussion on decentralization that goes beyond simplistic contrasts such as "centralized = bad, decentralized = good."

Critical Assessment: The text critically examines the decentralization debate in the Turkish education system and cautions against uncritically viewing decentralization as a universal solution.

The article by Trakman (2008) focuses on the model of academic self-governance ("faculty governance") at universities. It is presented as a traditional governance model in which academic staff play a central role in decision-making processes, either through university senates or faculty representation in governing bodies.

Main points of the text:

Justification: Academic staff are best positioned to understand and implement the university's academic goals and mission.

Criticism: Common criticisms include a lack of governance skills, disinterest in administrative tasks, and difficulties in dealing with stakeholders outside academia.

Resilience of the Model: Despite criticism, faculty governance elements are often relied upon, especially when issues arise with alternative governance forms.

Philosophical Perspective: Faculty governance is associated with "academic democracy." One example is the Cambridge model, where the "Regent House" serves as the highest governing body.

Challenges: Faculty-dominated governance models are under pressure, particularly in bicameral systems where academic self-governance is separated from economic and strategic management.

Solutions: To address competency gaps, governance training for academic staff is increasingly being offered, for example, at Harvard Business School.

Relevance of the Model: Despite different governance approaches, academic participation remains a central component of university administration, particularly in areas such as relations with unions and student representatives.

Overall, the text explores the tension between academic self-governance and modern governance requirements, particularly in financial and administrative matters. Theoretical focal points from the text by Berggren and Bjørnskov (2021):

1. Definition and significance of academic freedom
Academic freedom is the freedom of scholars and students to conduct research, teach, and disseminate knowledge without external influence.
2. Relationship between academic freedom and knowledge production
Academic freedom contributes to the production and dissemination of new and useful knowledge, fostering innovation and economic development.
3. Innovation and economic growth
In addition to science, entrepreneurs play a key role in utilizing innovative insights to enhance economic efficiency.
4. Three favorable conditions for the positive relationship between academic freedom and productivity growth
 - (i) External actors (state, clergy, and economists) who do not restrict freedom and possess excellent management skills.
 - (ii) Internal actors, particularly scholars, who produce useful knowledge.
 - (iii) Entrepreneurs who economically exploit this knowledge.
5. Institutional complementarity between science and the economy
 - A strong legal infrastructure (e.g., protection of property rights) is crucial for the effective economic utilization of knowledge.
 - Academic freedom promotes productivity growth.
 - Endogenous growth theory (Romer).
6. Testable hypotheses
 - a) Academic freedom contributes to productivity growth when useful knowledge is produced.
 - b) A high-quality legal system protects property and contracts.

The key focus of Bleiklie's (2018) study describes two fundamental organizational and decision-making models of universities:

1. University as a “Republic of Scholars”:

- Institutional autonomy and academic freedom are inseparable.
- Decisions are based on collegial resolutions made by independent scholars.
- Power primarily rests with the professors.

2. University as a “Business”:

- Institutional autonomy serves strategic decision-making by leadership figures.
- Scholars are just one of several interest groups.
- Decisions follow a hierarchical logic, with power concentrated in leadership and stakeholders.

Particularly in private higher education systems, the business-oriented logic is reinforced, viewing universities as economic actors. New Public Management (NPM) calls for clear goals and strategic governance, whereas an alternative perspective sees universities as “special organizations” characterized by diffuse decision-making processes.

Bozkurt and Balcı (2020) examine in their article the perception of organizational democracy and academic freedom by Turkish academics, as well as their implementation at universities. They find that democratic elections are considered an essential element of participation within higher education institutions. The study shows that university democracy is inextricably linked to participation in administrative processes, a democratic institutional climate, freedom of expression, and academic self-governance. However, the criteria set by the OECD for the autonomy of Turkish universities are only partially implemented. Academics perceive Turkish Higher Education Law No. 2547 as a significant obstacle to university autonomy. For example, curriculum design requires approval by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), universities have no decision-making authority regarding the number and selection of undergraduate students, and they are restricted in hiring or dismissing academic staff. The study identifies several key barriers to democracy and independence in Turkish higher education, including centralized bureaucracy, the lack of a democratic culture, the electoral system, legal

restrictions (Law No. 2547), political pressure, arbitrary decisions, deficits in leadership competence, and inadequate procedures for academic appointments.

The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey of 1961 placed greater emphasis on the scientific and administrative autonomy of universities and granted faculty members extensive freedoms. In contrast, the 1982 Constitution led to increased state control, both in terms of administration and the academic orientation of higher education institutions. Academic freedom was relativized through comprehensive regulations on political activity, university governance, and state supervision (Güçlü 2020).

The following comparative analysis was conducted using Güçlü's (2020) study, which examines the impact of the constitution on Turkish universities, as well as the constitutional texts of 1961 and 1982.

Table 2. The constitutions of 1961 and 1982 have a decisive influence on higher education

	Constitution of 1961	Constitution of 1982
Scientific and administrative autonomy	Ensuring scientific and administrative autonomy	Significant restriction of autonomy
Foundation and organization of universities	Establishment by state law and administration, as well as oversight by a board of faculty members	Pursuit through strict state regulations, as well as administration and control by law
Freedom of science and protection of lecturers	Guaranteeing the status of faculty members as well as their right to research and publication	The subjugation of academic members to strict regulations
State control and supervision	Administration and supervision by authorized faculty committees, but without direct political control	Assumption of strict control of universities by the state
Appointment of university administrations	The administration of universities by university members	Appointment of rectors directly by the president; deans by the Higher Education Council (HEC)
Political influence	No specific regulation regarding the political activities of university members	Regulations on the membership of faculty members and students in political parties and their restrictions
Educational goal of universities	No specific definition of curricula and national objectives	Education at universities according to the needs of the country; protection of the independence and unity of the Turkish state

Method

The design of this research has been structured as a discussion of the data on autonomy and academic freedom in universities, interpreted through case studies and comparative qualitative and quantitative analyses, using a retrospective approach (Flick, 2000).

The perceptions of autonomy and freedom in the universities of England, Federal Germany, and Turkey have been examined from the perspective of "case studies." Unstandardized data (such as observations and documents) have been compared and classified according to a hermeneutic understanding. Therefore, this research falls within the scope of qualitative social research (Bacher and Horwath, 2011).

In qualitative research, the problem based on the perception of autonomy and freedom in this study has been formulated by placing it within a factual context as follows (Leitfaden für qualitativ-empirische Abschlussarbeiten):

Research Problem:

This study examines universities in countries with federal, centralized, and decentralized governance models (Germany – Brandenburg, England, and France) in relation to key aspects of academic governance, including:

- a) organizational autonomy (statutes, executive leadership, governance bodies, structures, regulatory oversight)
- b) financial autonomy (public funding allocation, financial management, tuition fees)
- c) staffing autonomy (recruitment, salaries, careers & dismissal)
- d) academic autonomy (student enrolment, degree programmes, external quality assurance),

Furthermore, the study explores the distinction between autonomy and academic freedom and evaluates the Turkish higher education system—characterized by a centralized structure—against these principles. Additionally, by analyzing universities within these governance models based on their performance in Nobel Prize achievements, the study investigates how different governance structures influence scientific publication success.

The establishment of universities and their gaining of autonomy have been utilized in quantitative and qualitative comparisons from articles and books taken from journals surveyed in historical research, with the support of UNESCO's "European University Association (UAE) University Autonomy in Europe October 2023 (for Germany), December 2023, April 2024" (for France, England, Turkey). With "World University Rankings 2023," the rankings of universities in these three countries were examined, and the data were analyzed hermeneutically.

Findings

Turkey

University Autonomy in Europe (UAE) research report on higher education in Turkey (EUA IV Country Profiles, April 1, 2024, pp. 89-96) provides detailed insights into Turkey's university system.

Table 3. Turkish universities

State universities	129
Foundation universities	79

Note: The percentages in Table 3 are taken from UAE IV Country Profiles (III) April 2024 (Higher education landscape) p.89

There are more public universities.

Table 4. Autonomy percentages

Organisational autonomy	%39
Academic autonomy	%46
Finnacial autonomy	%37
Staffing autonomy	%46

Not: Information UAE IV Country Profiles (III) April (Factsheets).It was taken from the 90s.These have been tabulated below to show their position in the group according to the years of participation and their ranking among the 35 countries.

Table 5. Autonomy dimension

Dimension	2010	2022	2022 cluster	Rank
Organisational autonomy	%39	%39	Düşük	35
Finnacial autonomy	%49	%37	Düşük	31
Staffing autonomy	%47	%47	Orta düşüklük	30
Academic autonomy	%46	%46	Orta düşüklük	29

Note: The information is taken from UAE IV Country Profiles (III) April 2024(Factsheet) p.90.

Due to legal changes related to higher education in Turkey and the practices of YÖK associated with them, autonomies are falling outside the scope of the 'UAE' methodology:

Appointment of Rectors: “The first paragraph of the (a) clause of Article 13 of Law No. 2547, published in the official gazette on 09.08.2018, states, “The rector of state and foundation universities is appointed by the President.” In universities established by foundations, the appointment of the rector is made upon the proposal of the board of trustees” (Şen, 2021).

This practice is not found in other higher education systems analyzed by the Autonomy Scorecard. The European practice limits external authorities' intervention in this matter to the formal approval of the selection made internally by the university

The system governing the appointment of university rectors differs from what is considered aligned with the general principles of institutional autonomy of the European university community. Turkey's score should be analyzed based on this system when considering its position on the Autonomy Scorecard.

Governing Bodies: Turkish universities have a unified management model where decision-making powers are concentrated in the senate and the university management board. The Senate is presided over by the rectors (with a vice-rector participating as an observer). The Senate consists of rectors, deans, heads of other academic units, and faculty senate representatives.

Structural Units: The establishment of faculties or other academic structural units requires the approval of YÖK.

Financial Autonomy: The university budget is allocated annually in items by the Ministry of Finance.

Tuition Fees

The tuition fees, which are considered as contribution fees, are determined annually by the Council of Ministers

Personnel Autonomy

Recruitment: The recruitment processes for academic staff classified as civil servants, including the determination of open positions for academic roles, are centrally conducted by the government and the “Council of Higher Education” (YÖK)

Salaries: In state universities, the salaries of academic and administrative staff are determined by the government each fiscal year and, if necessary, twice a year due to inflation. Foundation universities also comply with this.

Career: The conditions for obtaining academic titles are determined by higher education law. Vacant position announcements are published in the official gazette after YÖK approval, and anyone who meets the qualifications for that position can apply. The dismissal of all academic staff who hold civil servant status has also been strictly regulated by law.

Academic Freedom

Student Enrollment

YÖK determines the admission requirements and numbers for undergraduate students at all universities. In their graduate studies, universities determine their numbers based on the number of their academic staff.

- In the Turkish higher education system, autonomy and academic freedom fall outside the European system, making it impossible to compare in terms of similarities with other countries.
- There are no Turkish universities in the top 300 of the UAE ranking for the 2022-2023 period. Additionally, since the establishment of Turkish universities in 1933, there has been no Nobel Prize in the field of science awarded to academics within the Turkish university system

Country Profiles in the UAE

UAE profiles have been developed based on data collected from the Autonomy Scorecard (from national rector conferences and university associations): These include surveys, follow-up discussions, and interview reports. In this profile, the comparison of higher education systems in 35 countries is explained quantitatively and qualitatively in the following four dimensions in University Autonomy in Europe IV Country Profiles (I) p.4:

1. Autonomy of the higher education organization, 2. Financial autonomy, 3. Academic freedom, 4. Autonomy in personnel recruitment.

In four key dimensions of autonomy

Organisational autonomy	Financial autonomy
covering academic and administrative structures, leadership and governance	covering the ability to raise funds, own buildings, borrow money and set tuition fees
Staffing autonomy	Academic autonomy
including the ability to recruit independently, promote and develop academic and non academic staff	including study fields, student numbers, student selection as well as the structure and content of degrees

This diagram is taken from UAE October 2023 p.4.

Comparisons of Autonomy and Academic Freedom in the Universities of the Countries within the Scope of the Research

Here, the universities of the three countries mentioned in the problem statement (the United Kingdom, the German state of Brandenburg, and France) are compared both quantitatively and qualitatively in terms of autonomy and freedom, along with their rankings in global university lists and the number of Nobel prizes awarded. (The data were obtained from "Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from UAE IV in April 2024 and UAE (I) in October 2023, and the following comparisons have been made"):

Table 7. Autonomy rates of the 3 countries selected as a sample

Country	Organisational autonomy	Academic autonomy	Financial autonomy	Staffing autonomy
England	%100	%89	%89	%96
Germany Brandenburg State	%58	%87	%44	%58
France	%57	%42	%44	44

Note: The percentages in Table 6 were taken from UAE IV Country Profiles (III) April 2024 p.36 for France, p.29 for the UK, and from UAE Country Profiles (I) October 2023 p.28 for Germany's Brandenburg state.

In Table 7, universities in the UK, operating under a decentralized system, are ahead in terms of autonomy and freedom compared to the other two countries.

Table 8. Cluster and rank according to the autonomy rates of 3 countries in the UAE

Country	Autonomy dimension	2010	2017	2022	2022 Cluster	Rank
England	Organisational autonomy	%100	%100	%100	High	1.
Brandenburg		%58	%58	%58	Medium low	23
France		%57	%57	%57	Medium low	24.
England	Financial autonomy	%89	%89	%89	High	2.
Brandenburg		%44	%44	%44	Medium low	27
France		%47	%44	%44	Medium low	27.
England	Staffing autonomy	%96	%96	%96	High	4.
Brandenburg		%58	%58	%58	Medium low	24
France		%43	%43	%44	Medium low	31
England	Academic autonomy	%83	%89	%89	High	3.
Brandenburg		%67	%87	%87	High	9
France		%37	%38	%42	Medium low	32.

Note: The percentages in Table 8 were taken from UAE IV Country Profiles (III) April p.36 for France, p.29 for the UK, and from UAE Country Profiles (I) October 2023 p.29 for Germany's Brandenburg state.

In Table 8, England ranks at the top in autonomy and freedoms among the 35 higher education institutions listed in the UAE Country Profiles.

Qualitative Comparisons of the Three Countries

(from University Autonomy in Europe IV Country Profiles (I) October 2023 and (III) April 2024

Table 9. The tabular analysis of organizational autonomy in Germany, England, and France

Aspect	Germany (Federal System)	England (Decentralized System)	France (Centralized System)
Statutes	Universities approve their own statutes; no external validation required.	Universities can freely change statutes but must report significant changes to the regulator; post-1992 institutions need Privy Council approval.	Changes to university statutes must be submitted to the ministry, including for experimental institutions (EPE).
Executive Leadership	The university senate elects the rector; ministry validates the result. Selection criteria and a six-year term are legally defined. Dismissal requires a two-thirds	Governing bodies appoint executive heads without external validation. No legal selection criteria. Universities	The president is elected by the board, without external validation. Selection criteria include holding an academic position and an age limit (under 68). The ministry can

	senate majority and external confirmation.	set terms and dismissal procedures independently.	suspend the president under specific conditions.
Governance Bodies	Senate-based unitary governance. Senate size and composition vary, but external members are not included.	Dual governance: board/council handles strategic decisions, senate manages academic governance. External members are included in governance bodies.	Board governs the university (strategy, budget, staffing). Academic council (with two committees) oversees research and teaching. External members are part of governance bodies.
Structures	Universities can freely define academic structures and create for-profit/non-profit legal entities.	Universities freely decide on structures and can create for-profit/non-profit legal entities.	Universities have legally regulated structures (faculties, schools, mixed research units). The university board can create additional structures.
Regulatory Oversight	Autonomy in governance, but within state laws and ministry validation.	Compliance with the Higher Education Code of Governance is expected; regulator (OfS) monitors governance.	Strong state control via the Education Code and ministry oversight.

The organizational autonomies of universities in the UK and Germany are similar to each other. In the UK, the university president is appointed by the governing bodies. In Brandenburg State, Germany, the senates elect the president in newly established universities and the rector in traditional universities. In France, the rector is elected by an absolute majority of the members of the management board

Table 10. A tabular overview of the financial autonomy of universities in Germany (Brandenburg), England, and France

Aspect	Germany (Brandenburg)	England	France
Public Funding Allocation	Two-year budget cycle with no internal allocation restrictions.	Annual block grant with no internal allocation restrictions.	Annual block grant divided into categories (investments, salaries, operational costs); some earmarked funds cannot be reallocated.
Financial Management	- Universities may retain surpluses from public funds, but allocation is predetermined by public authorities. - Borrowing only allowed from a state-owned bank and within a limited amount. - Universities manage real estate but do not own buildings (except foundation universities).	- Universities may retain surpluses from public funds without restrictions. - Borrowing is allowed with external approval. - Universities can own and sell buildings without restrictions.	- Universities may retain surpluses without restrictions. - Borrowing is highly restricted (only short-term loans or from the European Investment Bank for specific real estate projects). - Universities may own real estate, but ownership is rare; selling property is restricted to specific institutions.
Tuition Fees	No tuition fees for national, EU, or international students.	- Bachelor's degrees: Tuition fees for national students capped (£9,250 in 2023). - Master's & doctoral degrees: No government-imposed limits. - International/EU students: No fee cap.	- Tuition fees set by public authorities at all degree levels. - Higher fees introduced for non-EU students in 2019. - Universities may waive fees for up to 10% of enrolled students. - Special fees for non-state-recognized university diplomas.

In England, there are no restrictions, and they can even borrow money (similar to a corporate structure). In Brandenburg, there are no restrictions on the internal use of the received funds.

Table 11. Here is a tabular comparison of staffing autonomy in Germany (Brandenburg), England, and France

Aspect	Germany (Brandenburg)	England	France
Recruitment	- Universities recruit senior staff autonomously. - Senior staff hold civil servant status, with different rules for those hired before/after 2002.	- Universities freely recruit senior academic and administrative staff.	- Majority of senior staff are civil servants. - Public authorities regulate the number of senior academic posts and confirm professor appointments. - The 2020 research law introduced junior professorships and eased recruitment requirements.
Salaries	- Staff salaries are decided by Land authorities and vary across Germany. - Academic staff salaries have an overall limit. - Salary bands for senior administrative staff are negotiated between unions and Land authorities.	- Universities follow a nationally agreed pay scale but apply their own pay policies. - Senior staff salaries are determined by the university's governing body.	- Salaries consist of a fixed part (seniority-based) and a variable part (defined by institutions within ministry-set limits). - Junior professor salaries are set by the ministry. - Contractual staff salaries are institution-set but usually follow civil servant scales.
Careers & Dismissal	- Staff dismissal is strictly regulated due to civil servant status. - Dismissal is limited to cases of gross misconduct. - Promotions depend on the availability of higher-level posts.	- No sector-specific dismissal regulations; national labor laws apply. - Universities freely decide on promotions.	- Promotions for civil servants are subject to state-imposed quotas. - 50% of senior academic promotions are decided nationally, 50% by institutions. - Junior professors gain civil servant status upon positive assessment. - Senior administrative staff promotions are usually decided externally. - Dismissal is strictly regulated due to civil servant status.

In England, academic and administrative staff are in the same category and are hired freely. In Brandenburg, universities are also independent. In France, the majority of senior staff are civil servants, and staffing is regulated by public authorities

Table 12. Here is a tabular comparison of academic autonomy in Germany (Brandenburg), England, and France

Aspect	Germany (Brandenburg)	England	France
Student enrolment	- Universities negotiate student numbers with an external authority. - Admission process co-regulated by external authorities and universities. - Universities decide admission for master's programmes autonomously.	- Universities autonomously set student numbers and admission criteria. - Student number caps lifted in 2015, but debates continue.	- Free admission remains a key feature. - Since 2017, universities can set criteria and rank applicants. - Bachelor's graduates have the right to continue to a master's degree.
Degree programmes	- New bachelor's and master's programmes require accreditation unless self-accreditation is permitted. - Doctoral programmes can be opened without prior accreditation. - Introducing or terminating programmes requires negotiation with external authorities. - Universities can introduce short-cycle programmes for lifelong learning.	- Universities can introduce and terminate programmes at all levels without prior accreditation. - Full autonomy in choosing the language of instruction.	- Universities are accredited for five years with a fixed list of recognised programmes. - Universities can open their own degree programmes at any time. - Termination of programmes is autonomous. - Language of instruction is restricted for bachelor's programmes but flexible for master's.
External quality assurance	- Universities choose between programme accreditation, system accreditation, or alternative procedures. - System accreditation allows full internal quality assurance.	- Universities undergo institutional quality assurance by the Office for Students (OfS). - Universities autonomously	- Institutional evaluation every five years replaces programme-level accreditation. - The High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education

- Universities can choose foreign accreditation agencies. - Free choice of language of instruction.	determine their own quality assurance methods. - Focus is on student outcomes and programme relevance.	(Hcéres) oversees quality assurance. - Evaluations cover institutions, research units, and study programmes.
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It is observed that English universities are ahead of other countries in terms of academic autonomy.

The Effects of Autonomy on Academic Achievements According to Times Higher Education and World University Data

Among the top 130 universities in the World University Rankings, there are 10 British universities, which have received a total of 136 Nobel prizes (timeshighereducation, 2023):

Federal Germany

Among the top 130 universities in the World University Rankings, there are 12 German universities and a total of 315 Nobel prizes.

<https://www..com/world-university-rankings/2023/world-ranking?page=1#>:

Brandenburg universities are ranked between 201-250 among world universities.

France

Among the top 130 universities in the world rankings, there are 5 French universities and the number of Nobel laureates is 76.

According to these three observations, the impact of the autonomy of English universities on the scientific world is significant.

Discussion and Comments

This section focuses on the discussion and comments regarding the higher education system in Turkey. It has been interpreted based on the data presented in the conceptual framework of the other three countries

Under the heading 'Views from the sector,' it is stated that 'According to the CoHE (Council of Higher Education), Turkey's higher education system is entering a transitional period after a significant transformation stage, with nearly half of the existing universities established in the last twenty years. This transition period brings both positive and negative outcomes for Turkey's higher education system...' (University Autonomy in Europa IV, April 2024, p. 96)

The political movements that negatively affected Turkish universities include the March 12 Memorandum of 1971, the rise of political Islam, and the subsequent military intervention of September 12, 1980 (Başbuğu, 2020, pp. 157, 165, 289, 433, 437; Peköz 2009 p.129; Zürcher, 2004, pp. 373, 380, 401-408). The negative impacts on the universities' organizational autonomy and academic freedoms can be summarized as follows:

- The use of freedoms for faculty members and organizational autonomy by the highest political organizations (Presidency, Council of Higher Education).
- The transformation of higher education into vocational training aimed at obtaining a profession or even a diploma.
- While Turkey's population is 85,372,377 and the number of academic staff is 184,021, the number of students in universities is 6,950,142, meaning that 12% of the population prefers or is directed to pursue more than eight semesters of education, thus showing those unemployed from the working population as higher education students.

Basic issues

- The lack of accredited private institutions that would evaluate universities in all aspects to inform the public (Ültanır, 2016, p. 46-55).
- Over the last 45 years, due to the increasing influence of the political structure in universities, academics have experienced uncertainty in their academic attitudes, and academic research has been conducted solely for the purpose of title promotion rather than for advancements in the sciences.
- Instead of testing the SelbstActus ability, which should be present in independent researchers, through examinations conducted by universities, research assistants, master's, and doctoral students are selected through a centralized examination system and the inclusion of certain success scores in the selection process.
- The loss of the pyramid structure in academic status :According to YÖK data, in the 2022-2023 academic year in Turkey, 19% of faculty members are professors, 12% are associate professors, 24% are doctoral faculty members, and 25% are research assistants. The remaining 20% belong to teaching staff. There is only a 1% difference between research assistants and doctoral faculty members.

Proposals for Changes to Ensure Autonomy in the Structure of Turkish Universities

- Based on the dominant examples of England and Germany, and since Turkey's administrative structure is of a centralized type, organizational autonomy and academic autonomy should be ensured compared to France.
- Universities should be modernized in accordance with a "secular foundation" that will create the image of a contemporary person, produce science, provide technology that will compete with foreign countries in the business world, and nurture "geniuses" who will create reform within the social structure.
- The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) should be abolished, and autonomy and freedoms should be transferred to universities.
- State universities with academically insufficient (unsuccessful) academic staff should be separated, leaving only a number of universities appropriate to the number of provinces. Those not included in this number should be transferred to the Ministry of National Education and converted into two- or three-year vocational colleges.
- Rectors should be elected by the senate from among the successful professors at the university for a term of 5 years. The same rector should serve for another 5 years if the Senate deems it necessary.
- The rector's role is to ensure coordination among university units and establish integrity, and to present the structures necessary for financial autonomy of the university to the senate, revitalizing those structures based on the outcome obtained. The rector cannot intervene in academic activities and positions.
- According to the academic promotion criteria of universities ranked in the top 100-200 in the world university rankings, the academic promotion criteria in Turkey need to be regulated

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