

GOVERNANCE, EFFICIENCY AND EQUITY THE CASE OF THE AUSTRIAN SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Orientation of Reforms of HE

- Traditionally Universities were characterised by a bureaucratic structure with a low degree of autonomy
- Expansion of HE and the growth of institutions of HE posed a major challenge to this traditional system of planning, financing and controlling
- Problems with this structure:
 - Direct costs (more elaborated bureaucratic structures)
 - Indirect costs (lack of flexibility and adaptiveness with respect to new demands)
 - Principle agent problem

Paradigmatic Change

- Wide scope of autonomy of HE institutions

Case of HE in Austria

- 1993 new segment of HE: Polytechnics („Fachhochschulen“)
- 1999 new law on the accreditation of private universities
- University Law 2002
 - High degree of autonomy
 - Organisational reforms strengthening the management structure of the universities
 - Federal government grants a three years global budget complemented performance contracting
 - The universities are free to allocate their resources (personnel, establishment of new study courses etc.) under the control of a governing body for each university.

Effectiveness, Efficiency and Equity in HE

- New institutional setting took up characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon system of governance in HE which is seen as more competitive, more responsive to societal needs, more adaptive and flexible
- Effects of new governance structure are ambiguous:
 - Only stringent budget allocation
 - Policy of budget consolidation

- Female students gained a small majority among all university students in recent years
- A considerable segregation of male and female dominated study courses still exists
- Obviously this segregation in HE also leads to similar segregation in the labour market
- Young Austrians with a migration background are severely underrepresented in HE
 - mainly due to the fact of a severe under representation already in higher secondary education

Tuition Fees

- Introduction of rather moderate (€363,36 per term) tuition fees in HE in 2001/2002
- No evidence that the introduction of tuition fees has impaired the social structure of university attendance

