# Stakeholder Expectation on a Sustainable University

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# Agenda

**Input (15 Min.)**

*Stakeholder Theory as a Framework*

*Fields of Tension in a Sustainable University*

*Governance-Equalizer as a Heuristic for Tensions and Trade-Offs*

**World-Café (75 Min.)**

*1. Round (20 Min.)*

*2. Round (20 Min.)*

*3. Round (20 Min.)*

*Wrap-up by the moderators (15 Min.)*

# Stakeholder theory is an appropriate framework for the university-society interaction

- University and society **interact** and are **deeply interwoven** (de la Mothe 2001, 3).

- Society is a major force for **changing university models** → Change within HE has mostly been initiated from outside (Stephens & Graham 2010, 612).

- Theoretical approaches that frame the relationship between a **HEI, society and sustainability** are surprisingly rare → **Stakeholder theory can fill this gap** offering bridges to concepts like sustainability management or social responsibility while taking internal and external stakeholders and their expectations into account.

- A stakeholder theory-based discussion can be helpful to
  a) **picture sustainability-relevant stakeholders** of the HEI,
  b) **structure a dialog** and therewith gain insights of their expectations,
  c) **prioritise** those expectations.

# Becoming a sustainable HEI provokes tensions and conflicts



- HEI are **affected by expectations** of different internal and external stakeholders considering their specific role and contributions → Arena of Rationalities (Stichweh 2009).



- Many HEI have started to adjust their **academic contributions to sustainability** and align their whole institution toward a sustainable development.



- This provokes tensions between internal stakeholders due to **competing ideas** about **basic assumption** of how a HEI is modelled, e.g. in terms of the degree of autonomy, how sustainability research is carried out (disciplinary or transdisciplinary) or if the major objective should be excellence or relevance.
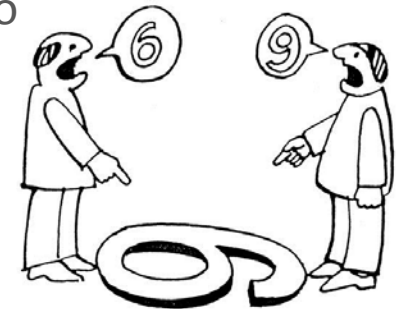


- Research question: *What are the expectations of internal and external stakeholders considering trade-offs and tensions for a sustainable university?*

# Tensions to consider for a (sustainable) university?

- Social Relevance
- Useful Knowledge & Skills
- Transdisciplinary Knowledge Production
- Regional Contribution
- Stakeholder Orientation
- Active Designer

- Scientific Excellence
- Personal Development
- Disciplinary Knowledge Production
- International Contribution
- High Autonomy
- Quiet Observer

We think of these criteria as constitutive elements for higher education institutions

# Origins of tensions in the literature

| Field of Tension | Origin/ Literature |
|---|---|
| **Research Objective**<br>Societal Relevance & Scientific Excellence | • Triple Helix Model (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 2000)<br>• Mode 2 Science (Gibbons et al. 1994)<br>• New Science-Society Contract (e.g. Hessels et al. 2009)<br>• Truth and Utility (Kaldeway 2014) |
| **Educational Concept**<br>Personal Development & Professional Training | • Evolution of Universities (e.g. Martin 2012)<br>• Humboldt University |
| **Problem Definition & Knowledge Production**<br>Scientist & External Actors | • Transdisciplinarity<br>• Transformative Science (Schneidewind & Singer-Brodowski 2013) |
| **Level of Contribution**<br>Regional & Global | • 3. Mission of the University (E3M Project 2012)<br>• Stakeholder Approach in HE (Jongbloed et al. 2008) |
| **Autonomy of Institution**<br>Autonomy & External Stakeholder Orientation | • Stakeholder Approach in HE (Jongbloed et al. 2008)<br>• New Public Management<br>• Humboldt University |
| **Role of Higher Education**<br>Quite Observer & Designer of Societal Environment | • Transformative Science (Schneidewind & Singer-Brodowski 2013)<br>• 4. Mission Co-Creation for Sustainability (Trencher et al. 2014) |

# Governance-equalizer as a method to analyze tensions and trade-offs

Relevance

Excellence

Disciplinarity

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# Governance-equalizer as a method to analyze tensions and trade-offs

| Dimension **Criteria A** vs. **Criteria B** | A ●——|——|——|——|——|——█——|——|——|——|——● B |
| --- | --- |
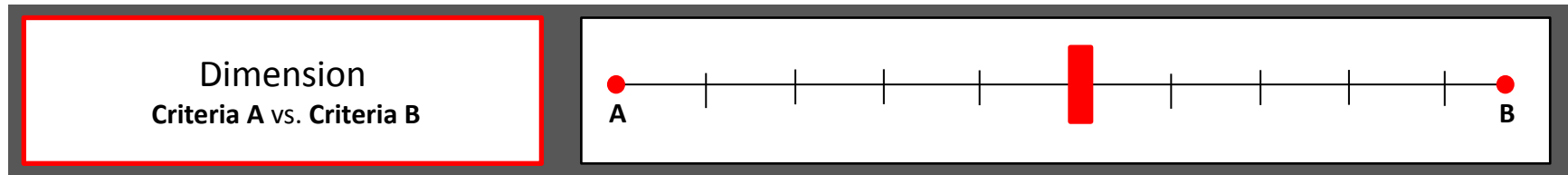
- Originally a method to analyze new public management reforms (de Boer et al. 2007).

- Description of different dimensions of action in form of "sliders", which are elevated to varying degrees.

- Useful heuristic to look at fields of tensions as no "either-or" logic is embraced, but an "and" is emphasized.

- Equalizer offer possibility to "model" ideas of different higher education institutions, e.g. a sustainable university.

- Two logical determinations for an equalizer: trade-off or relative importance.

- First consideration: is there a trade-off between two aspects?

# Logic of equalizer

Is there a trade-off?

Yes

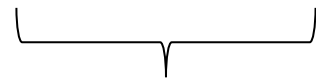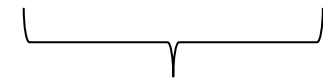No

How would you
allocate the resources?

What is the relative importance
of the criteria?

100%                    0%

| Excellence | | |
| Relevance | | |

0%                    100%

**Trade-off**
one criteria can only be archived
by getting less of the other

| Excellence | | |
| Relevance | | |

**Tension**
both criteria can be fully
archived

# The equalizer "research objective" takes two constitutive elements of science into account

| Research Objective<br>Societal relevance vs. scientific excellence | only societal relevance —————— equal representation —————— only scientific excellence |
|---|---|
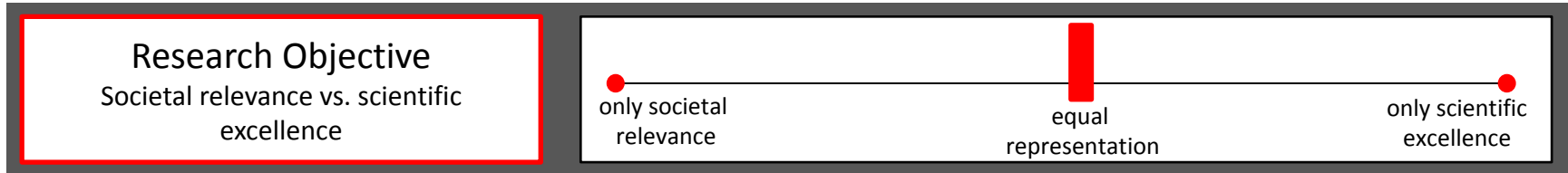
*How would you assess the interplay between scientific excellence and societal relevance in a sustainable university? What should be the general objective for research? Please assess the interplay of the two aspects by setting the equalizer in a way that expresses your opinion.*

→ **Social relevance:** some sort of a return of investments for the society, e.g. useful knowledge, problem-solving etc.

→ **Scientific excellence:** High quality of research evaluated by the scientific community, measured by e.g. citations, scientific acknowledgments (prizes), key-notes etc.

# The equalizer "educational approach" asks for the proportionality between professional education and humanistic education

| Educational Approach | |
|---|---|
| Utilitarian approach vs. humanistic approach | utilitarian approach · · · equal representation · · · humanistic approach |

*What educational approach should be dominant in a sustainable university? A utilitarian approach that educates professionals equipped with useful knowledge and skills or a humanistic approach that fosters personal development and the full humanistic potential of the individual? Please assess the interplay of the two criteria by setting the equalizer in a way that expresses your opinion.*

→ **Utilitarian approach:** Fachhochschulen, Grande école, Institutes of Technololgy

→ **Humanistic approach:** Humboldt university, humoldtsches Bildungsideal, self-reflection, critical thinking

# The equalizer "problem definition & knowledge production" analyses the integration of non-academic knowledge into research

| Problem definition & knowledge production **Scientists only vs. int. of external actor** | |
|---|---|
| scientists only | equal representation     full integration of external actors |

*Should the problem definition and knowledge production of research in a sustainable university be carried out exclusively by scientists or fully integrate external actors in terms of co-design and co-production? Please assess the interplay of the two aspects by setting the equalizer in a way that expresses your opinion.*

→ **Scientists only:** Mode 1 science, disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge production

→ **Integration of external actors:** transdiciplinary knowledge production, integration of non-academic decision-makers and actors, production of socially robust knowledge

# The equalizer "regional & global contribution" investigates on the interplay between regional & global issues

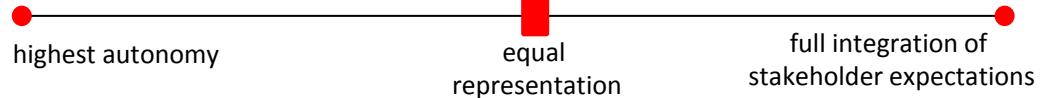| Contribution to regional issues vs. global issues | only regional contribution | equal representation | only global contribution |
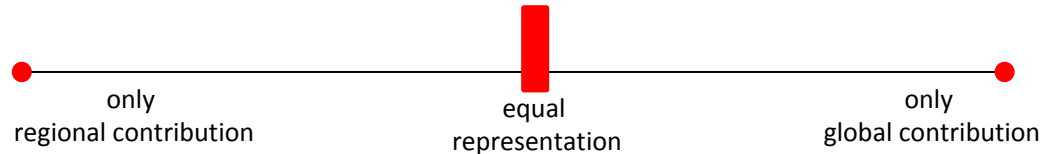
*What should be the proposition of contribution in terms of research for regional and research for global issues in a sustainable university? Please assess the interplay of the two criteria by setting the equalizer in a way that expresses your opinion.*

→ **Regional contribution:** in the sense of "the funding state level", research for regional issues

→ **Global contribution:** research on international issues like climate change and ocean acidification

# The equalizer "autonomy" asks for the level of integration of external stakeholder expectations

Autonomy of institution
autonomy vs. external stakeholder

highest autonomy | equal representation | full integration of stakeholder expectations

*How do you assess the institutional autonomy in opposition to external stakeholder orientation in a sustainable university? The former represents the level to which an institution keeps its decision-making mechanisms autonomous to external expectations where the latter represents an approach that takes expectations by external stakeholder into consideration while managing the organisation. Please assess the interplay of the two criteria by setting the equalizer in a way that expresses your opinion.*

→ **Definition Stakeholder:** "group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman 1984)

# Thank you for your attention!

# Literature

- **de Boer; Enders & Schimank (2007):** On the Way towards New Public Management? The Governance of University Systems in England, the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany. In: New Forms of Governance in Research Organizations Disciplinary Approaches, Interfaces and Integration, Jansen (Editor). Springer. 137-152.

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- **Stichweh (2009):** Autonomie der Universitäten in Europa und Nordamerika: Historische und systematische Überlegungen. In: Jürgen Kaube (Hg.): Die Illusion der Exzellenz. Lebenslügen der Wissenschaftspolitik. 2. Aufl., Berlin: Wagenbach.

# Images

- https://www.reputationinstitute.com/getmedia/3fc5ccaf-2b7e-45d8-8a04-ccd6024dd94f/stakeholders.aspx;;?width=290&height=218
- https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/gallery/ul2/main-images/science/cml/industrial_ecology.jpg/industrial_ecology.jpg/d880x320
- https://pamgrout.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/perception1.jpg
- https://media.giphy.com/media/SufoKsersIO2Y/giphy.gif

# World-Café Questions

1. Please discuss and describe the **relationship** between the criteria?

   – *If necessary, start by **defining** the relevant terms. Write down your arguments.*

2. Do you see a **tension** or a **trade-off**?

   – *Please discuss and write down your arguments.*

3. How would you **set the equalizer**?

   – *Please indicate with a mark.*

4. Why would you set the equalizer **that way**?

   – *Please discuss and write down your arguments.*

each table needs
a moderator