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Abstract

Based on key governance and organisational characteristics from the 1970s universities have been conceptualised as organised anarchies and loosely coupled systems. More recently, a number of studies have argued that universities have been changing their internal governance and organisational structures leading to tighter vertical steering and the emergence of more integrated organisations. In this article, it is argued that while tighter vertical integration indeed might be observed, this does not necessarily imply greater horizontal integration in university organising as well. By drawing on case studies of five research-intensive universities in five different countries, we discuss how strengthened hierarchical governance is driving increased organisational specialisation and professionalisation, but that this also may result in horizontal de-coupling within universities. The article ends by a discussion of the positive and negative implications of coupled, de-coupled and loosely coupled organisations. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)