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**Abstract**

Over the last years new incentives for professors were introduced into the German university system in order to strengthen the external motivation and the productivity of professors. At the same time a critical reflection has begun, in which the effects on internal motivation and deficiencies concerning the measurement and the overall effects on the science and higher education system were discussed. In addition to these criticisms, we will argue from an organizational perspective. From that perspective, incentives are a central aspect of power in organizations. This allows us to put incentives in a broader perspective, in which also other forms of power in higher education organizations come into light. Such forms are the power over resources, careers, and, ultimately, membership. The article argues that due to the specificities of the German university system and its organizations, the nexus between power and incentives is rather weak as compared to other systems. However, such a structure is not per se problematic. It generates a specific set of advantages and disadvantages with regard to the missions of universities in a knowledge society and some critical side-effects of a strong nexus

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between power and incentives can thus be avoided. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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