ALPEN-ADRIA
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Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stefan Brauckmann

More Action Than Reflection?

Empirical Insights into the Relationship
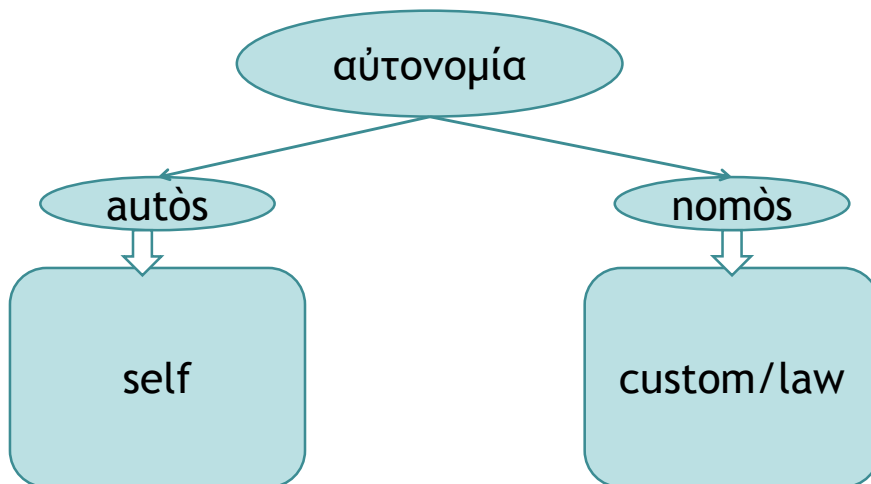of School Autonomy and School Leadership

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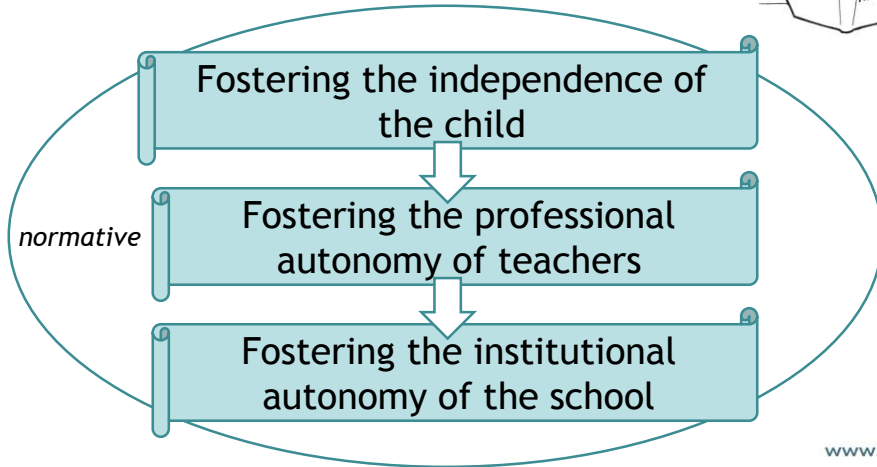**How could you as school leaders deal with autonomy in a productive way?**

- Autonomy **and** leadership

- Autonomy **versus** leadership

- Autonomy **or** leadership
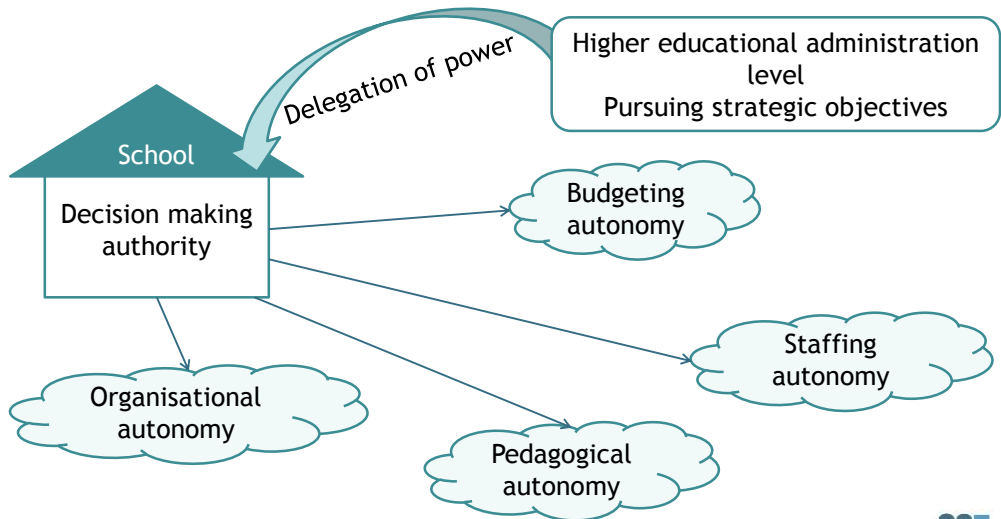
- Autonomy **as** leadership

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Evolution of the term autonomy – Meanings and assumptions

αὐτονομία

autòs

nomòs

self

custom/law

Fostering the independence of the child

normative

Fostering the professional autonomy of teachers

Fostering the institutional autonomy of the school

Idea(l) of school autonomy

Delegation of power

Higher educational administration level
Pursuing strategic objectives

School

Decision making authority

Budgeting autonomy

Organisational autonomy

Pedagogical autonomy

Staffing autonomy

School autonomy as a kind of magic after the PISA shock

- Unleashing the innovative potential

- Focus on locally adapted and portable solutions (less red tape)

- Better fit between the closer environment of the schools and the needs of the students

- Fostering tailored made instructional and school development activities

- Enabling schools to produce better student performance

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School autonomy as new hope

„Improvement of school quality and meeting more locally specific needs"

(OECD 2008a, S.524)

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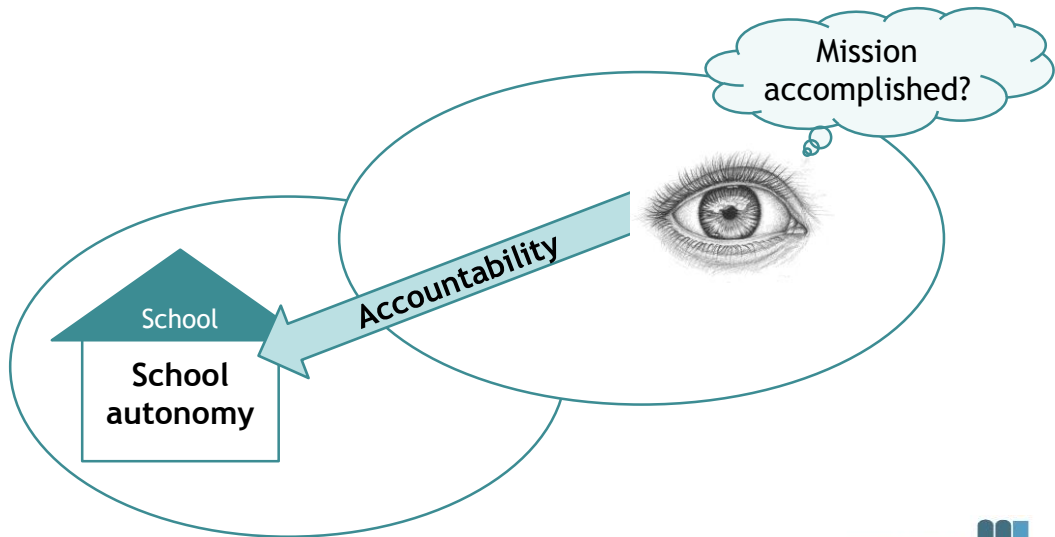
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When was the last time you saw such a powerful instrument in the hands of an even more powerful principal using it to the benefit of his students?

Dealing with autonomy – some lessons from the real world

The siamese twins of educational governance

Mission accomplished?

Accountability

School

School autonomy

Becoming more autonomous and accountable!
But as a school leader…

➢ Do I **want** to do this?

➢ Am I **allowed** to do this?

➢ **Can** I do this?

Lust for leadership in Germany?

„Teacher Union prophesizes lack of school leaders" (Handelsblatt, 5.01.2012)

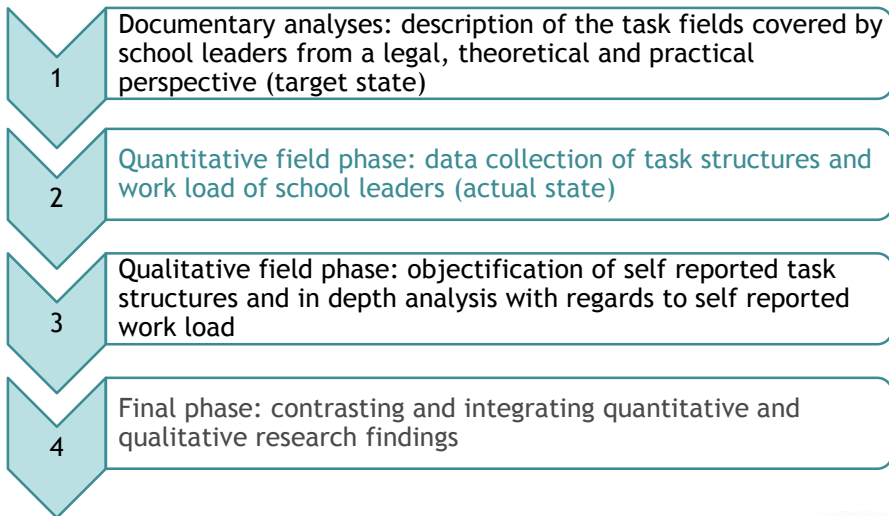„Lack of school leaders in Germany" (3sat.online, 30.09.2011)

„School leaders desperately sought" (taz.de, 16.06.2011, Berliner Zeitung, 19.04.2010)

„359 schools at Rhein and Ruhr (NRW) without school leaders"
(Rheinische Post online, 13.02.2008)

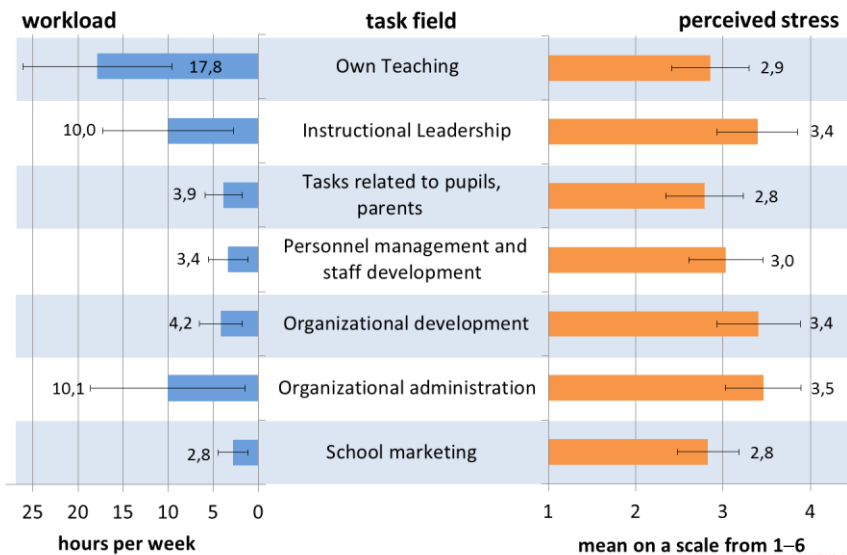www.aau.at   13

The BMBF funded research project SHaRP

- Which activities can be found in the context of autonomous schools?

- What does the workload of school leaders look like?

- What kinds and levels of stress do these activities place on the school principals?

- What kind of additional resources are provided to the school principals in order to pursue their new tasks?
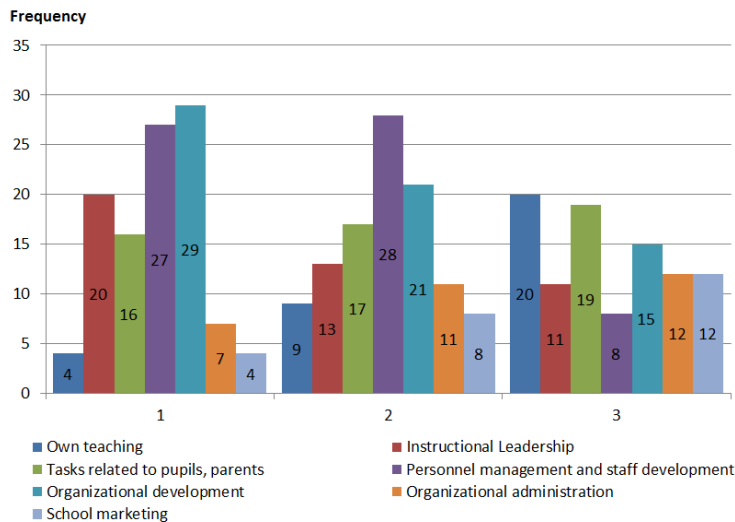
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SHaRP research design

1	Documentary analyses: description of the task fields covered by school leaders from a legal, theoretical and practical perspective (target state)
2	Quantitative field phase: data collection of task structures and work load of school leaders (actual state)
3	Qualitative field phase: objectification of self reported task structures and in depth analysis with regards to self reported work load
4	Final phase: contrasting and integrating quantitative and qualitative research findings

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Selected empirical findings

workload	task field	perceived stress
17,8	Own Teaching	2,9
10,0	Instructional Leadership	3,4
3,9	Tasks related to pupils, parents	2,8
3,4	Personnel management and staff development	3,0
4,2	Organizational development	3,4
10,1	Organizational administration	3,5
2,8	School marketing	2,8

hours per week (25 20 15 10 5 0)

mean on a scale from 1–6 (1 2 3 4)

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Action priorities by task field (3 most important areas)

Frequency

Legend:
- Own teaching
- Instructional Leadership
- Tasks related to pupils, parents
- Personnel management and staff development
- Organizational development
- Organizational administration
- School marketing

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- **More time** spend on tasks does **not** result necessarily in **higher stress**

- **Importance** of **new task fields** (staff development, school development) seems to be **high, amount of time** spend on those *new tasks* is **rather low** (professional dilemma)

- A **greater workload** with regards **to organizational administration** (delegation of administration)

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Minds on

- Autonomy **may provide** the basis as well as **supportive conditions** for the enhanced governance of the system, **but** whether they are **successful** in the defined sense remains an **empirical question**

- **Innovation** does **not** work by **itself**, delivering the desired benefits **automatically** → Rather, innovative measures need to be understood at different levels of the education system, adapted and developed in new measures

- **Controversial demands** might result from the new tasks

- The autonomy mix is highly **context specific** (differs from country to country, region to region, school to school)

- There is no such a thing like one size fits all

Hands on

Bottom up autonomy/autonomy within the organisation

- **More space** for „new" **leadership** activities might **result** out **of** a well designed organisational structure

- Translating **instructional** autonomy (best practice) into **school autonomy**

- More **problem** related and context specific **training** arrangements there is **no standardized** school **leader**

- Failure recognition and fault tolerance

- Granting, not imposing autonomy on schools

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- ➤ There is no best autonomy (recipe) also everybody might wish for it from time to time… (as a kind of a magic)

- ➤ In the end you shape a school culture and school structure which allows for different levels of a self learning organisation and therefore self governed school… (**you create your own magic**)

- ➤ So get ready…

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Αὐτοῦ γὰρ καὶ Ρόδος καὶ πήδημα

Ιδού η Ρόδος , ιδού και το πήδημα.