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Eriksson-Zetterquist, Ulla; Sahlin, Kerstin

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# Introduction: Revitalizing Collegiality: Restoring Faculty Authority in Universities

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## Kontakt/Contact

ZBW – Leibniz-Informationszentrum Wirtschaft/Leibniz Information Centre for Economics  
Düsternbrooker Weg 120  
24105 Kiel (Germany)  
E-Mail: [rights\[at\]zbw.eu](mailto:rights[at]zbw.eu)  
<https://www.zbw.eu/>

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# INTRODUCTION: REVITALIZING COLLEGIALITY: RESTORING FACULTY AUTHORITY IN UNIVERSITIES

Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist<sup>a</sup> and Kerstin Sahlin<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*University of Gothenburg, Sweden*

<sup>b</sup>*Uppsala University, Sweden*

## ABSTRACT

Collegiality is often discussed and analyzed as a challenged form of governance, a form of working that used to function well in universities prior to the emergence of contemporary and modern forms of governance. This seems to suggest that collegiality used to dominate, while other forms of governance are now taking over. The papers in volume 86 of this special issue support the notion of challenged collegiality, but also show that for the most part, nostalgic notions of “the good old days” are neither true nor helpful if we are to revitalize academic collegiality. After examining whether a golden age of collegiality ever existed, we discuss why collegiality matters. Exploring what are often described as limitations or “dark sides” of collegiality, we address four such “dark sides” related to slow decision-making, conflicts, parochialism, and diversity. This is followed by a discussion of how these limitations may be handled and what measures must be taken to maintain and develop collegiality. With a brief summary of the

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remaining papers under two headings, “Maintaining collegiality” and “Revitalizing collegiality,” we preview the rest of this volume.

**Keywords:** Dark sides of collegiality; diversity; parochialism; revitalizing collegiality; slow decision-making; maintaining collegiality

## CAN CHALLENGED COLLEGIALLY BE RESTORED?

Collegiality as a mode of governance in universities has been challenged and partly replaced by more enterprise-like and bureaucratic forms of governance. Papers in this special issue point to some of these forces and report on a turn toward viewing universities as enterprises (Denis et al., 2023, Vol. 87; Hwang, 2023, Vol. 86) and to structuring universities as organized actors (Lee & Ramirez, 2023, Vol. 86). University transformations have followed similar trends as organizations in other societal sectors, with leadership structures inspired by and sometimes directly patterned after private businesses (Crace et al., 2023, Vol. 87), global organizational expansion with diffused prototypes for what proper organizations should look like (Lee & Ramirez, 2023, Vol. 86), emerging hybrid forms of governance (Denis et al., 2023, Vol. 87), and new tasks and expectations applied to universities, university leaders (Mizrahi-Shtelman & Drori, 2023, Vol. 87) and recruited faculty (Gerhardt et al., 2023, Vol. 86). Collegiality is also challenged by a changing political landscape (Crace et al., 2023, Vol. 87; van Schalkwyk & Cloete, 2023, Vol. 86; Wen & Marginson, 2023, Vol. 86), new forms of competition (Kosmützky & Krücken, 2023, Vol. 86) with a high focus on excellence funding programs (Harroche & Musselin, 2023, Vol. 86) and a high proportion of temporal research staff with loose connections to collegial processes and communities (Pineda, 2023, Vol. 86).

Additional challenges to collegiality stem from the condition that it remains quite unspecified as a mode of governance (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023, Vol. 86). Data from several of the studies reported in this special issue show that interpretations of the content and function of collegiality often remain taken for granted, unclear (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023, Vol. 86), and diverse among practitioners in higher education and research (Denis et al., 2023, Vol. 87; van Schalkwyk & Cloete, 2023, Vol. 86).

We have argued that a maintenance and revitalization of collegiality require specifying and clarifying what collegiality is and how it can be practiced. As a starting point, research can reveal consequences of transformed modes of governance for collegiality. Interestingly, research reported in these volumes also shows that a taken for granted and dormant collegiality may be mobilized by reforms that challenge it (Denis et al., 2023, Vol. 87; Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023, Vol. 87) or by reality breakdowns (Crace et al., 2023, Vol. 87).

In this introductory paper to Vol. 87 we elaborate on two additional ways to facilitate restoration and revitalization of collegiality. First, we need to open up taken-for-grantedness and discuss why collegiality matters. What are the motives

for maintaining or even strengthening collegiality? Collegiality is essential for upholding independent research and teaching – for protecting academic freedom. Second, we address limitations and weaknesses of collegiality. Exploring “dark sides” of collegiality, we review commonly discussed limitations and explore how they may be handled. Specifically, we address four “dark sides” related to slow forms of decision-making, conflicts, parochialism and diversity. Finally, we preview the remaining papers in this volume by summarizing them under two headings: “Maintaining collegiality” and “Revitalizing collegiality.”

## WHY COLLEGIALLY MATTERS

When collegiality is discussed in academic meetings and at seminars and conferences, it is not uncommon to hear reactions such as, “So what? Why should we care? Isn’t collegiality all about friendly relationships among the more or less privileged, yet lamenting faculty?” A very short reply to such comments would be that the task of faculty members is to develop knowledge as a public good, to preserve academic freedom, and to lay the foundation for students’ and others’ scientific knowledge formation and their ability to receive, critically scrutinize, and use such knowledge. Such tasks are conditioned by the way in which research and education are governed. For faculty to have control over these operations there needs to be a system of self-governance in place, a system that then demands the commitment and engagement of faculty members.

Academic freedom is in decline. As we were working on this introduction, *University World News* (Greenfield, 2023) reported that over the past decade, academic freedom has declined in more than 22 countries representing more than half of the world’s population. The news item is based on the *Academic Freedom Index: Update 2023 (AFI)*, published by the V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.<sup>1</sup> The AFI is a study of 179 countries based on a survey completed by 2,197 experts in higher education. The Academic Freedom Index primarily focuses on political pressures. Throughout Vols. 86 and 87 of this special issue, it becomes clear that academic freedom may also, for an individual scholar or different groups of scholars, be restricted by the governance and management practices of universities and systems of higher education and research.

Waters (1989, p. 958) emphasized that collegiality is a means for self-control and independence.

Collegiate organizations are self-controlling and self-policing; that is, they are not subject to direction from any external source once they have been constituted. Formal autonomy has two aspects. The first is freedom of action in relation to the pursuit of professional goals. Groups of colleagues are free to do research, to instruct others, and to communicate findings or other forms of knowledge insofar as these things are relevant to professional standing. Collegiate organizations are ideally facilitative rather than authoritarian systems, in which performance standards are established interpersonally and informally rather than by formal rules. However, these standards apply only within the collegial membership. Even here, there are, nevertheless, minimum standards of performance and certain prescriptions that are implied by the ethical norms discussed above. A second aspect of formal autonomy, then, is that the violation of ethical norms, except where these constitute legal transgressions, are matters for self-regulation within the collegium rather than an arena for bureaucratic, commercial, or state legal interference.

In the introduction to Vol. 86 (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023, Vol. 86), we distinguished between vertical and horizontal collegiality. Both aspects are alluded to in Waters' definition. Along the vertical dimension, the decision-making of universities is organized around faculty authority. Vertical collegiality concerns decision-making structures within a formal organization and rules. This can include the composition of university boards, senates and committees, and the selection of "primus/prima inter pares" as academic leaders (Lazega, 2020, p. 10). Horizontal collegiality encompasses the communities of peers in departments, at universities, among reviewers, at conferences or in scholarly networks. The two aspects are interdependent. Peers provide reviews, scrutiny and advice, and are mobilized to elect those who serve in formal positions in universities, research councils and other bodies related to a university. The vertical collegial structure is also based on legitimacy from the horizontal collegium.

Comparing the corporatization and bureaucratization of universities with the organizing principles of collegiality summarized by Waters (1989), we find that almost all aspects of collegiality are challenged. The six principles are as follows: theoretical knowledge, professional career, formal egalitarianism, scrutiny of product, collective decision-making and formal autonomy (see also Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023, Vol. 86). However, while (vertical) collegiality has been weakened as a mode of university governance, it appears to have remained somewhat more robust outside universities (Denis et al., 2023, Vol. 87; Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016), in academic journals, academic associations and research councils that build largely on horizontal collegiality. Denis et al. (2023, Vol. 87) described this development as the dislocation of collegiality. This also maintains the calling for science, or science as vocation (Lee & Walsh, 2022; Weber, 1958), given the considerable time and resources scholars invest in academic citizenship, even if this too is challenged both by the increased bureaucratization of scientific work (Lee & Walsh, 2022), and – as we argue in the introduction to Vol. 86 (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023, Vol. 86) – by individualization more generally in society (see also Kosmützky & Krücken, 2023, Vol. 86). Nevertheless, it can be noted that in some countries, evaluators on research councils are qualified as "experts" rather than as "peers," and such peers are not always chosen through elections (see for instance Harroche & Musselin, 2023, Vol. 86). Moreover, horizontal collegiality is subject to bureaucratization and enterprization.

In the introduction to Vol. 86 we defined collegiality as "an institution of self-governance" (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023, Vol. 87); as such, it shares institutional dimensions of democratic governance drawing upon the logic of appropriateness with regard to not only practices and rules, but also individual identities and intentions (March & Olsen, 1995). While the institution of collegiality affords the raw materials of social interactions and guidelines for their use, people upholding these social interactions provide its energy and meaning as an inhabited institution (Hallett & Ventresca, 2006). Yet, social interactions can also have negative outcomes. We continue by exploring the nostalgic notion of collegiality as well as its dark sides. Nostalgic claims are discussed in a brief review of an assumed "golden age of collegiality."

### *Was There Ever a Golden Age of Collegiality?*

For some, collegiality can be seen as a mythic (Barnes, 2020) and romantic ideal way to govern universities and knowledge production, a practice allegedly based on consensus decisions made by academic staff. In recent decades, this search for a golden age has been described as “a growing disenchantment about the fundamental satisfactions of a career in higher education” (Bennett, 1998, p. 5), a focus on delivering learning outcomes on behalf of “inspiring love of learning” (Rowland, 2008, p. 353), or alienation as a result of increasing individualism on behalf of collective self-governance (Fleming, 2020, 2021). These descriptions seem to suggest that there once was a period when universities and academic staff enjoyed a golden age of collegiality, an assumption that quite rapidly dissolves upon reading historical accounts of university development and governance (see Östh Gustafsson, 2023, Vol. 86). Over time, mixed interpretations lead to ambiguities regarding the missions of universities, modes of governance and collegiality.

In an analysis of the unprecedented success of the university as a world institution, Frank and Meyer (2020, p. 6) drew parallels with religious movements and perceptions of a golden age that are central to such convictions:

A siege mentality is common. Here the Golden Age is not in the future but in an imagined past of intellectual and cultural purity, removed from the vulgar pressures of the present .... This is a misleading conception of the past university – and of the society in which it operated.

Scholars who have researched the development of universities certainly question assumptions about a golden age of collegiality (see, for instance, Clark, 2006; Merton, 1942; Östh Gustafsson, 2023, Vol. 86). Universities were controlled by the Church in medieval times, from Enlightenment onwards universities were largely leveraged by specific state interests to build nation states and national cultures, and then, more recently universities have had the role to uphold the Humboldt tradition of advocating academic freedom (Clark, 2006; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2014), at least as an ideal. Still, under the influence of the Church and state interests, by organizing knowledge development in structures similar to guilds, some qualified scholars were provided space for collegial governance, and thus, for more or less independent knowledge development (Björck, 2013; Clark, 2006; Frängsmyr, 2017; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2014).

Transformations of universities have continued over time. During the first half of the 1900s, the expansion of subdisciplines within universities led to an epistemological fragmentation (Huldt et al., 2013; Macfarlane, 2005), a development that would result in what Macfarlane (2005) called “silo” effects. Conditions for governance fundamentally changed with the massification of higher education from the early 1960s onward, as the number of students and scholars in academic departments grew in line with arguments for improved career mobility (Macfarlane, 2005).

Whereas Frank and Meyer (2020) noted a striking homogenization of universities in a move away from institutional differentiation, others have noted diversification as nations have sought to develop regions by establishing universities there, in contrast to the more traditional model where universities were

established primarily in areas of historical importance (Shattock et al., 2022). In the realignment of these trends, many higher education institutions have become universities, and degrees, programs and areas of study have become increasingly similar. Polytechnics in the UK were transformed into universities in the 1990s (Willmott, 1995). In Sweden, university colleges have become re-regulated and resourced over the last 25 years to become increasingly similarly regulated as universities, and several university colleges have also been transformed into universities. Together, the massification of higher education and shift away from vocational education led to more people being involved in university operations, including students, scholars, professional administrators, and eventually, managers. As Macfarlane (2005) pointed out, this was the introduction of the “disaggregated university” where the former sense of community among scholars who viewed themselves as part of “intellectual corporations” has been replaced with the notion of the university as comprising disengaged individuals who are merely members of a legal entity.

This raises issues about staffing of universities, how this is controlled and by whom. In a study of the introduction of recycling programs across US universities and colleges, Michael Lounsbury (2001) discovered much variation. While some universities and colleges hired full-time professional recycling managers and established special units staffed by environmental activists, other schools built smaller units staffed by current employees where management practices were typically part-time tasks. One main explanation for these variations, Lounsbury (2001) found, followed on activities of field level organizations. Active social movement organizations around those schools that came to build more resourceful professional and activist bodies had lobbied for such bodies to be built. This lobbying was largely channeled by students. A brief look at how universities around the world have handled the pandemic reveals a similar diversity. Whereas in some institutions, faculty members have had authority over the handling of the pandemic, in others pandemic responses have been treated as managerial tasks, and faculty are being controlled by administrative measures (see Jandrić et al., 2023, Vol. 87).

This brief overview of university transformations over time illustrates how the exemplar or model-oriented ideal of “collegiality” rarely can be ascribed to a specific time or place in the history of universities. Rather, the institution of collegiality has always been interwoven with societal conditions, nation building, political ambitions, and visions regarding the objectives of university knowledge and education. In addition, the student cohort has changed over time, from clergy to privileged elites, and since the 1960s, to the masses. More recently, university education has been viewed as a tool to both increase education levels in the population and educate future members of the labor market (Zawadzki et al., 2020). Multiversity development can also be seen in increases in the number of students, scholars and administrators, and in turn, a steady increase in published papers (Pineda, 2023, Vol. 86). Newly arising challenges associated with governing these new dynamics are among the many consequences of the development of multiversities (see Krücken et al., 2007). To understand how the institution of collegiality is undermined or revitalized in universities, it is critically



important to consider broader and long-term societal and cultural movements, constellations of actor groups within universities, associated organized interests and the channels between them.

## **DARK SIDES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE INSTITUTION OF COLLEGIALLY**

When exploring collegiality as an institution and how it gains legitimacy, it is vital to discuss its boundaries, limitations and what we refer to here as its “dark sides.” Commonly posed questions concern, for example, whether collegiality is upholding a system of privilege and whether it is characterized by closure rather than openness. Those questions inevitably lead to a need to discuss shortcomings and limitations of collegial governance – that is, dark sides of collegiality (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016). When exploring disadvantages and dark sides, it is important to keep in mind that all forms of governance have constraints, both for those managing them and for the governed. One of the most well-known examples is Weber’s description of the limits of bureaucracy as an iron cage that both protects employees and constrains them (du Gay, 2008; Styhre, 2007). In an extension of the iron cage, enterprise governance as an ideal type ascribes freedom and autonomy to the business owner who controls employees by owning the results of their work (Bendix, 1945).

Bringing in disadvantages of institutions may also appear to be somewhat external to the more general topics explored within institutional studies. For instance, in some discussions, “institution” represents “good elements,” as in the “open institution, inclusive, and sacramental and ‘normalizing,’” in contrast to authentic charisma that serves as the expression of a sect (Marzano, 2013, p. 312). In a similar vein, a more recent discussion has questioned the potential to include critical perspectives in institutional theory to understand issues of power dimensions and inequality related to social category or hierarchy (Munir, 2019). In a comment, Drori (2019) explained how the institutional theory perspective is inherently critical; for instance, when it came back into vogue in the 1970s, institutional theorists offered alternative explanations to the research results advocated by rationalist-oriented scholars.

Furthermore, longitudinal studies of institutions often advance narratives that include good elements, dark sides, struggles to establish legitimacy, resilience, and transformation. The Church is an example of an old institution that has remained powerful and has maintained legitimacy over the centuries, protecting its values and morals despite accounts of transgressions and repression, but also known for transformation and redefinition despite strong opposition (Meier Sørensen et al., 2012; Quattrone, 2022; Styhre, 2014). As Parker (2009) explained, the institution of the Church is depicted as the long-term balancing of “good” elements with the dark sides; for example, pre-medieval angels could represent both good and evil, and 17th century women were characterized as being tempted by the dark sides while men were characterized as embodying “good” elements such as strength and morality. Just a very brief account of the history of the Church thus tells



of institutional resilience enduring ongoing transformation, adjustments, and opposition, including both legitimate and illegitimate institutional work. Or, in the words of [Drori \(2019, p. 5\)](#), for an analysis of critical perspectives of institutions, the focus must be on the “variety of contextual features” and how they are “imbued with meanings, set into practices and routines, and embodied in structures and material objects.”

In general, the dark sides of collegiality within universities can be sorted into four categories. Collegiality may (a) lead to slow decision-making, (b) be a breeding ground for conflicts, (c) foster parochialism, and (d) have a tendency to prioritize some (privileged) groups on behalf of others. In the contemporary debate, the last category has attracted great interest, a development that is also connected to the more general discussion about diversity and inclusion. We report findings from some recent studies in this field after we discuss collegiality’s effect on the speed of decision-making and collegiality as a breeding ground for conflicts and parochialism. At present, discussions about collegiality’s role in breeding conflicts have attracted significant public attention in light of cancel culture, as well as publicized accounts of academic fraud and unethical research.

### *Speed in Decision-making*

A common critique of collegiality that has prevailed over time concerns slowness. This critique can be found in Weber’s writings and is generally seen as an inherent feature of collegiality. While the collegial system enables a process whereby issues can be handled by several people at the same time to facilitate a more thorough examination, processing is inevitably slower ([Östh Gustafsson, 2023, Vol. 86](#); [Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016](#)).

The 1963 Robbins report – which kickstarted the transformation of English universities from self-managed and collegial organizations to centralized organizations driven by enterprise ideals (including bureaucracy and the notion that higher education is an enterprise) – also inspired new commentary about the collegial model. As universities expanded, the collegial model was claimed to be too slow to handle rapid growth and external changes in financial models (first expanding, then shrinking) ([Burnes et al., 2014](#)). The focus on achieving a deliberated consensus by exploring and articulating as many different perspectives as possible and having lengthy academic discussions contributes to the perception that collegial governance prolongs decision-making. By comparison, decision-making in the private sector appears to be a much faster process.

This view of collegiality as a slow form of governance relative to bureaucratic or enterprise forms of governance is also upheld in media reporting. For example, media narratives frequently amplify events such as thousands of employees being laid off without any prior notice, or a CEO suddenly being replaced. These media narratives exclude the methodological work and jurisdictional rules behind such decisions and how they have been deliberated by executives (often over a period of several months), and in some countries, even in formal discussions with trade unions. A reason for this is that such preparations are often seen as trade secrets, not to be publicly exposed until formal decisions have been made. A forewarning

is thus not possible. Decision-making within the collegium on the other hand, unfolds in a different way; most information is accessible to outsiders both during and after a decision-making process. As a consequence, enterprise decision-making is (falsely) presented as rapid and as driven by deliberation at a single board meeting, while collegial decision-making is depicted as slow in comparison. Notably, thorough, and prolonged deliberations are commonplace within each form of governance discussed here, even if such deliberations are not visible to the public.

Another aspect contributing to the slowness of collegial decisions is the focus on anchoring decisions and building trust, also frequently touted as advantages. Lazega (2020) described how the process of collegiality often is contrasted with the bureaucratic procedure applied in global companies (and neoliberal public authorities). The latter is part of “a capitalist society that wants citizens to believe in its antitrust regime” (Lazega, 2020, p. 158) by referring to bureaucratic principles and regulations. Still, such references to bureaucratic principles necessitate closer examination. According to Lazega, collegial decision-making tends to be necessary at the top hierarchical levels of bureaucracies. As the task is to set the rules and routines for the rest of the organization, the same does not apply to them; hence, top executives embrace the ideals of collegiality. Their work is based on relationships, and meetings are usually conducted behind closed doors. Describing the differences in meetings based on collegiality and bureaucracy, Lazega (2020, pp. 15–16) wrote:

In a bureaucratic context, meetings are for impersonal reporting upwards and giving orders and instructions downwards. In a collegial meeting, members take turns and participate in decision-making (at least in appearance), then personalize their interactions, get angry, joke and conflict openly.

Furthermore, Lazega emphasized that collegiality is not the informal dimension of bureaucracy. Rather, collegiality and bureaucracy are to be seen as two different – and often complementary – modes of organizational governance with different aims and purposes (bureaucracy for rational planning and effective administration, collegiality for knowledge development and innovation) (Lazega, 2020).

Put differently, collegiality has also been described as a conservative and protective mode of decision-making (Tapper & Palfreyman, 2010). When all members of the collegium, from newcomers to senior professors, are deeply involved in operations, the decision-making process is prolonged, but issues are thoroughly examined and decisions are legitimized by everyone (Bennett, 1998; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2010). The commitment required by all involved also can be seen a vulnerability of the model. A very committed collegium can be threatening to newcomers who could articulate alternative perspectives in the decision-making process. That is, group dynamics in academic settings can also become contexts where unfamiliar or provoking arguments are not brought forward (see also Lamont, 2009; Langfeldt, 2001). Collegiality may, in other words, also imply closure. At the extreme, cliques may begin to develop. Furthermore, as the ideal of the collegial governance model includes everyone

in the collegium, the process can be undermined if some members decide not to concern themselves with issues that are relevant to decisions (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016).

Decision-making that follows principles for collegial governance thus comes with certain risks. Still, the question remains of what to ascribe to the collegial form of governance and what to ascribe to group processes and power dynamics more generally. It has also been noted that the conservative and protective part of collegial decision-making is not about holding on to the old and familiar, but rather the process of reaching consensus. Some Latin words may be helpful here. As explained in Wiktionary,<sup>2</sup> the word “consensus” originates from *consentio*, meaning “feel together; agree”; expanded to “consensus,” the meaning is “agreement, accordance, unanimity.” It comes from “consent,” constructed by combining *con* meaning “together,” and *sentire* meaning “feel.” According to the Collins Dictionary *-tus* (*-sus* in English) is a verb suffix meaning “action.”<sup>3</sup> Collectively, the meaning of the word consensus combines together, feel, and act. In the Collins Dictionary, the difference between compromise and consensus is elaborated:

A compromise is a deal between different parties where each party gives up part of their demand. Consensus is the result of a group decision-making process in which group members develop and agree to support a decision in the best interest of the whole.

Thus, a consensus-based decision can be seen as the best group (“together”) outcome that would be reached at a specific point in the process. When evaluating the speed of decision-making, the time horizon needs to be considered, and universities generally operate according to long time horizons.

### *Collegiality as a Breeding Ground for Conflicts*

Universities have longstanding reputations as arenas for conflicts, many of which spark heated debates and intense argumentation (Sorensen & Traweek, 2021). Every now and then, the public becomes aware of disputes among academic staff. Such conflicts, which have been topics of interest in scientific journalism, the public media and popular culture, often are tied to paradigm-shifting science and knowledge breakthroughs (Kuhn, 1962/1992), thought collectives (Fleck, 1935/1979), principles of falsification (Popper, 1959), and boundary work (Gieryn, 1999). Debates and conflicts, in other words, are inherent aspects of research and scientific developments. However, such conflicts are also associated with collegiality as a form of governance. As elaborated by Lazega (2020, pp. 12–13):

contrary to frequent misconceptions of collegiality, collegial relationships are rarely congenial and synonymous with “nice.” Rather, they are often characterized by status competition, from friendly to cut-throat, and deep rivalries. When work is not routine, there are many dimensions and criteria to evaluate its quality, and very rarely do committees agree easily – if at all – on the criteria that should have priority. Peers can accuse each other of mediocrity, bad faith, particularistic favoritism and cronyism when the committees make decisions that do not correspond to their own preferences or criteria.

As described by [Merton \(1957, pp. 636–637\)](#), conflicts and disputes over priorities of scientific discoveries are not rare, but

frequent, harsh, and ugly. They have practically become an integral part of the social relations between scientists. Indeed, the pattern is so common that the Germans have characteristically compounded a word for it, *Prioritätsstreit*.

A fundamental part of such controversies concerns the dominant norms of science and what constitutes “good research,” and more recently, whether good research can be evaluated by metrics or whether originality should be assessed in other ways. In fact, competing, even conflicting arguments and views, form the very fundament for collegial processes. This fundament enables an open and solid way to scrutinize arguments and consistency of the claims made. Formal organizational arrangements structure the processes in ways to bring forward such competing arguments, for example by employing procedures with opponents, external examiners, and peer review (see also under Definition of collegiality and scrutiny in the introduction of Vol. 86).

Merton discussed conflicts over who receives credit for scientific discoveries. Among the more common explanations for such conflicts are, for instance, that science is conducted by egocentric, “quarrelsome or contentious personalities” ([Merton, 1957, p. 638](#)) searching for fame: “In any event, it should not be difficult to find *some* aggressive men of science” ([Merton, 1957, p. 638](#)). However, Merton offered an alternative explanation, namely “that these conflicts are largely a consequence of institutional norms of science” ([Merton, 1957, p. 639](#)). Norms of science stipulate that the role of the scientist is to advance knowledge with original findings. Such work receives recognition from scientific peers who constitute the collegium and define what is seen as original. He continued: “When the institution operates effectively, the augmenting of personal fame go hand in hand; the institutional goal and the personal reward are tied together” ([Merton, 1957, p. 659](#)). The processes for ascribing rewards for originality come with a great risk for conflicts. In addition, scholars’ search for originality may imperil organizational recognition, as it can lead to deviant behavior and misconduct in science, particularly in stressful situations ([Merton, 1957](#)).

[Lazega \(2001\)](#) provided another explanation. Continuing his discussion of how not all peers are equals, he identified a group of peers who help settle conflicts. These peers are likely to be viewed as more powerful, wiser and more competent by the collegium. He noted that conflicts surface along two dimensions: niche seeking (i.e., when peers in search of “bounded solidarity” formally and informally connect with other organizational members) and status competition. Niche-seeking peers draw upon “social relations and the resources that they concentrate” as sources of power ([Lazega, 2001, p. 5](#)). This is the reason why collegiality is not a matter of being nice to each other in a tearoom setting. On the contrary, “status competition among peers can be all the more ferocious, as it is heavily personalized. Collegial committees can be as brutal as autocrats when they vote like lynch mobs” ([Lazega, 2001, p. 5](#)). Status, on the other hand, can be acquired by being “the most competent, the most popular, the most committed – all of

these have some sort of status, and participate in the coordination of collective action” (Lazega, 2001, p. 6). The incapacity for self-regulation within collegiality introduces the potential for various conflicts to emerge in the competition for resources and status.

Conflicts are, in other words, an inherent part of collegiality – and by extension, scientific developments. The extent to which such conflicts facilitate or stigmatize the advancement of knowledge and innovation depends on how they are handled. Collegiality demands strong and legitimate leaders who can navigate such conflicts and turn them into constructive drivers for development (see Goodall, 2006, 2008).

### *Parochialism in Collegiality*

A core feature to the institution of collegiality within universities is the self-governance of equals, striving to ensure innovative knowledge formation (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023, Vol. 86; Waters, 1989). Still, when scrutinizing inadequacies of collegiality, this claim requires further attention. Scholars within this field argue that organizing universities according to collegial principles is precisely what enables autonomous knowledge formation for the public good. For instance, Lazega (2020) reasoned how the collegial governance ideal enables innovation, in contrast to the rule- and routine-driven bureaucratic governance ideal. Yet scholars within the field of bureaucracy have claimed the opposite. Large, bureaucratically organized firms establish specialized divisions to offer the flexibility and autonomy required for innovative work and progress (Styhre, 2007). While this exception is noted, knowledge formation inherently involves activities that enable or constrain innovative thinking, which can be considered in relation to collegiality.

Kuhn (1962/1992) and Fleck (1935/1979) showed that in scientific work, groups of scientists come to share values and embrace assumptions that hinder or enable further progress. The consequences of such parochialism are that colleagues are selected or promoted based on the extent to which they share the established style of thought (Fleck, 1935/1979) or scientific paradigm (Kuhn, 1962/1992). Explaining the sociology of scientific knowledge, Kuhn (1962/1992) described how a new idea or an innovation is not easily accepted by scholars with shared assumptions about how the world functions. Rather, new findings and theories are evaluated against existing ones until intense scrutiny fails to disprove them, leading to a crisis that ultimately forces the group to accept new assumptions, which in turn provides a new shared foundation for research.

Even though the ideal may sound completely rational, specialized experts who make decisions in consensus (Waters, 1989) still control the conditions for scientific development. As Kuhn (1962/1992) explained in his postscript, when scholars within a discipline share a theory (or set of theories), they also develop group loyalty. Such loyalty and joint valuations manifest not only through accepted theories, but also problems and accepted methods for solving and explaining them. Similarly, Fleck (1935/1979) explained how science evolves in thought collectives (*Denkkollektiven*). While some traditions of knowledge formation would assert

that objective facts should be applied using neutral and impartial methods, Fleck showed how the very notion of what is considered a fact is decided by social forces that over time lead to stylized solutions being seen as “truth.” Such truth is neither relative nor subjective, but the result of a thought collective which organizes the acceptance of new ideas and facts across different stages: (a) a contradiction to an established idea initially seems unthinkable; (b) findings that do not align with established understandings are dismissed and remain unseen; (c) findings that are noticed are kept secret; (d) great efforts are made to explain exceptions and new results in ways that comport with established understandings; until finally, (e) “despite the legitimate claims of contradictory views, one tends to see, describe, or even illustrate those circumstances which corroborate current views and thereby give them substance” (Fleck, 1935/1979, p. 27).

This safeguarding of harmony within the thought collective functions as a safety net to get scholars to direct all their efforts toward exploring a particular problem in the prescribed way, thereby facilitating a thorough, precise and meticulous process to investigate all possibilities and options related to the problem at hand. At the same time, it inevitably protects the thought collective from challenging ideas and findings, thereby hindering innovativeness and the acceptance of ideas “not-invented-here” (Fleck, 1935/1979). As Shapin (1986) put it, scholars must rise to the task of defending their “professional vested interests” acquired through socialization within their scientific community. A negative consequence of this approach to the development of scientific facts is that ideas and perspectives that have not been invented within the collective attract little attention. To the extent that scholars are seen as loyal members of a discipline or as part of the thought collective, knowledge formation risks becoming parochial.

A remaining question concerns whether the development of thought collectives, knowledge progress in paradigms, and parochial knowledge formation are specific characteristics of the institution of collegiality. As captured by the title of Fleck’s work, Kuhn and Fleck reflected upon the “genesis and development of a scientific fact”; it can be noted that the characteristics of a thought collective and parochial knowledge are related to collective mechanisms that would play out similarly in bureaucratic, enterprise and collegial systems. Yet, while bureaucratic or enterprise-oriented organizations can structurally separate research groups and assign them the task of developing ideas based on different methods, theories and their inherent values, such a separation requires someone outside the thought collective to make that decision.

Disregarding differences among various ideal types of governance, thought collectives and paradigms establishes a boundary for what is considered the right way to conduct science. A shortcoming to bear in mind is that science also risks becoming parochial, pushing away unfamiliar findings and ideas. Yet, as Fleck (1935/1979, p. 42) pointed out, there will always be transformation when “thoughts pass from one individual to another, each time a little transformed, for each individual can attach to them somewhat different associations.” Thus, when a thought returns to its originator, it may not even be recognized. This local adjustment of ideas surfaces hope. Considering this transformation from the perspective of the travel of ideas as elaborated by Czarniawska and Sevón (1996)

and Sahlin-Andersson (1996), there is a constant innovativeness taking place in departments and among scholars. In the process of translating ideas into their own, and in promoting them to others, new aspects and dimensions are incorporated, thereby constantly changing and adjusting them to local settings and the questions at hand (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996).

Although this is not the place to discuss scientific developments more generally, we note that correctives to these limitations – that is, questions about shared assumptions – are important to scientific communities and scientific developments. These include, for example, strong demands to make the research process transparent, so that it may be scrutinized or even replicated, and to open up research discussions to different audiences and research groups. From a governance perspective, this highlights how the management of research settings may allow for or limit the influence of critique and diverse perspectives. Along the vertical dimension of collegiality, parochialism is fostered if committees, leaders and decision-making processes are established by scholars with similar backgrounds, knowledge and perspectives, and if organizational boundaries set limits for bringing in additional expertise. Along the horizontal dimension, parochialism may be fostered if researchers only interact with their closest colleagues or those working in the same research tradition in activities such as reviewing, selecting experts for projects, recruiting, etc. This brings us to the importance of diversity for a well-functioning collegiality.

### *Diversity, Inclusion, and Collegiality*

In recent decades, diversity and inclusion have become topics of growing interest for many organizations, partly replacing previous interest in gender issues. It has been argued that diversity is of particular interest in university settings, as higher education attracts students with different experiences and backgrounds, draws attention to contemporary political tensions, and pursues internationalization as an ideal (Desivilya et al., 2017). Another dimension of inclusion concerns how collegiality and management practices more generally involve the organizing and distribution of power and legitimacy (Lipton, 2019), surfacing claims that collegiality is still not inclusive to women. Such arguments draw upon the fact that women historically were excluded from universities, but also a prevalent understanding of collegiality as gendered – that is, a boys' club (Lipton, 2019). Likewise, Lazega (2020, p. 207) noted that “top-down collegiality often increases gender and minority discrimination.” That is, inherent frictions between status competition among peers and the ambition to promote diversity and inclusion within universities require specific attention.

Extensive research shows that universities, even if claimed to be run by ideals of an “egalitarian and collegial philosophy” (Eslén-Ziya & Yildirim, 2021, p. 302) are still gendered. Women face particular difficulties when struggling to publish in high-impact journals, end up “opting out” from research to focus mainly on teaching, become targets for gendered stereotypes in career and evaluation processes (Manky & Saravia, 2021), and are excluded from central networks (Eslén-Ziya & Yildirim, 2021). In brief, academic excellence, or the “ideal academic”



has been ascribed a masculine gender (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012), thereby disadvantaging women, men who seek to strive for work-life balance (Lund et al., 2019), and scholars from the global South (Manky & Saravia, 2021). The dominance of a gendered ideal for academic excellence affects both women and men.

While university settings have their particularities relative to other organizations, an analysis acknowledging collegiality as a form of governance foregrounds some other dimensions to claims of being non-inclusive or gendered. Intertwined in the analysis of university settings as discriminatory to certain groups are diverse understandings of how to pursue a career, and in such understandings, formal and informal instructions are provided about the governance model in place. Collectively, these may play into the hands of the privileged – that is, those who seemingly have figured out how to use the system for their own benefit. Given the differences among organizational ideal types for self-regulation, combined with a form of governance that relies on peers who tend to reproduce themselves, it can be anticipated that there is a higher risk within collegial settings for discrimination against certain groups (Lazega, 2020). Here, we analyze three examples related to sexual harassment in the workplace, equal opportunity programs, and academic housekeeping.

Diversity and inclusion issues attracted increased attention in the wake of the #MeToo movement that gained traction in October 2017 when assaults within the film industry that had been silenced for many years became known to the world. These revelations foregrounded problems with sexual harassment and sexual violence in the workplace. As part of the #MeToo movement, other types of gender-related workplace mistreatment began to be discussed. In a study of career experiences at UK business schools affiliated with research-intensive universities, Fernando and Prasad (2019) interviewed female academics about their work experiences and career paths. They explicitly asked about experiences of “insulting, hostile and degrading attitudes that made them feel bullied and/or excluded because of their gender category” (Fernando & Prasad, 2019, p. 1572). One informant who had negative experiences wanted to warn others about the potential for harassment and get the harasser to stop. Her colleagues, however, advised her that it would be in the best interest of her career not to report “unwanted sexual attention,” as she did not want to be known as a troublemaker and develop a negative reputation. She took their advice and remained silent. Experiences of sexual harassment have also been reported in field-based courses, where temporal and spatial boundaries are broken down to support new career trajectories in science. Challenging conditions provide participants with “embodied cultural capital,” but if alcohol is brought into the setting, the risk of women being sexually assaulted increases (Posselt & Nuñez, 2022, p. 185).

In the study by Fernando and Prasad (2019), it was argued “that academia is a small and tight-knit community, where social capital is critical for career advancement” From such a perspective, it may be deduced that the university, and especially the collegial form of governance, leads to situations such as these. As have been reported in conjunction with the #MeToo movement, and in other studies, such transgressions are not unique in organizations with collegial governance structures, including universities. Additionally, pursuing a career inevitably

involves learning the ropes (Louis, 1980) and attracting scrutiny from those who want to ensure the system is understood (Avery, 1968). Yet, this does not mean that newcomers should be victims of unwanted sexual attention, or be concerned that reporting it will jeopardize their careers.

In our second example, the university is an arena for innovativeness with an extended history of internationalization and diversity in the sense that scholars travel between different countries and work at different universities (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2008). As a method to improve internationalization and hence innovativeness, equal opportunity programs have become popular. However, such programs have been found to meet both open and more covert forms of resistance (Van Den Brink & Benschop, 2012). In a study of physics departments in the Netherlands, it was found that career progression was easier for men because they had access to informal career enablers such as mentoring programs and academic networks. To increase the number of women physics professors, corresponding formal programs were established to support their careers. Soon, however, men began to complain that their women colleagues were given access to career enablers that were unavailable to them. That is, men had not consciously recognized their established advantages (Van Den Brink & Benschop, 2012). When analyzing collegial practices, this points to the importance of considering formal as well as informal aspects, but also explore the interplay of horizontal and vertical collegiality (see Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2023, Vol. 86).

Equal opportunity programs are expected to lead not only to greater diversity, but also to greater inclusiveness (Dobbin & Kalev, 2022). Even though anti-bias training has been found to not change people's biases, to activate stereotypes rather than eliminate them, and to lead people to become complacent about their own prejudices, it is almost ubiquitous in programs to improve diversity (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). In fact, such programs can have the opposite effect (Dobbin, 2009). Furthermore, simply having a diversity program, an equal opportunity program, or diversity officers does not lead to inclusion (Dobbin, 2009). Instead, bottom-up initiatives, holding managers accountable, and mandatory training programs for managers may be more successful (Dobbin, 2009; Dobbin & Kalev, 2022). The unveiling of informal networks and ways to support the careers of certain groups may be more visible within university settings, as these are systems where researchers may have easier access. That is, discrimination is not a consequence of collegiality as a form of governance but is found in organizations with bureaucratic and enterprise forms of governance as well. Kanter (1977) was the first among many to show how gender is constructed in bureaucracies, and how privileges are connected to existing structures.

Our third example of diversity and inclusion in relation to collegiality comes from another recent discussion within academia concerning which faculty groups are being assigned service-related tasks on behalf of more career-oriented ones. This discussion is not new; for instance, previous studies have found that internal service tasks tend to be assigned to junior faculty, while senior faculty take on tasks connected to wider scholarship with the potential to attract recognition. Junior faculty report not being able to refuse roles, a development which has led to collegiality being experienced as "contrived" or "hollowed" (Macfarlane, 2007,

p. 267). To an even greater extent, this has been the situation for women who historically have been assigned a large proportion of “academic housekeeping” tasks (Macfarlane, 2007; Macfarlane & Brug, 2019).

Exploring the situation of privileges and internal service within the STEM field Miller and Roksa (2020) found that white men are assigned tasks involving the most research work. While career-oriented tasks within the faculty include protected time for research, building collaborations and networks, and grant writing, service-oriented tasks include committee work, advising students, and taking care of administrative matters, and within the STEM field, training students to work in laboratory settings. In their interview study with biology PhD students working at 20 departments in the USA classified as having the “highest research activity,” Miller and Roksa (2020) found that white women, African-American women and men, and PhD students self-identified as Latinx were disadvantaged in the sense that they are expected to do more service-oriented tasks and are not given access to professional networks to the same extent as white men. Similar results have been reported in China, where results of a national survey of master’s students in STEM fields show that male students are provided more access to and extended more invitations to take part in research projects (Yang & Shen, 2020).

These studies relate to previous discussions where collegiality has been described as a “conspiracy of old men” (Björck, 2013; Litpon, 2019) in which established male academics who are connected in friendly and professional networks award each other research grants (Gemzöe, 2010; see also Lamont, 2009). As concluded by Miller and Roksa (2020), in launching diversity initiatives driven by good intentions, the unequal distribution of working tasks has led to a situation in which different groups of PhD students receive dissimilar training and unequal preparation for future careers within academia. To counteract this, support measures for less privileged students have been recommended to prevent the “leaky pipeline” (Yang & Shen, 2020). It must be noted, however, that such measures may backfire (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). In terms of academic housekeeping, newcomers must learn how to operate in the work setting (e.g., a research laboratory). Furthermore, in terms of governance, clarifications regarding who should do what appear to be crucial to avoid individual overload.

Again, we can conclude that these shortcomings or limitations concern the interplay of horizontal and vertical collegiality. Moreover, they point to questions regarding how many scholars must participate for collegiality to work. Can these issues be resolved informally, or should there be regulations about participation, division of tasks, etc.? This speaks to the complementarity of governing models. On some occasions, the rules and routines provided by bureaucratic forms of governance may be used to correct shortcomings that follow from collegial reliance on social ties and relations.

A related development concerns the establishment of diversity offices, which serves as an example of universities becoming actors (Lee & Ramirez, 2023, Vol. 86). To some extent, this appears to lead to further bureaucratization and to strengthen the influence of enterprise forms of governance. While university mission statements emphasizing “gender and diversity management” have been found to be prevalent in more recently founded universities in Germany

(Oertel & Söll, 2017, p. 8), in most American universities, measures to promote diversity and inclusion have resulted in the development of formal structures for diversity work (Lee & Ramirez, 2023, Vol. 86) such as diversity offices, diversity officers, new research centers, and educational programs. Moreover, most strategic plans and missions take diversity, equity and inclusion into account. Some universities even have chief diversity officers (CDO). Unlike Germany, in the USA, CDOs are mostly found at (older) elite universities with significant resources. Diversity measures target students and faculty, but also include more general commitments to ideas and ideals related to diversity within higher education more broadly as part of the “rights revolution” in the USA (Kwak et al., 2019, p. 212). Within universities, this implies that persons should not only be seen as customers or clients, but “also as citizens and humans with rights that need to be respected”; that is, diversity is an equity issue and persons have “the right not to be ‘othered’” (Kwak et al., 2019, p. 212).

These efforts are being driven by broader societal interest in diversity (Kwak et al., 2019). When translated to the university setting, diversity concerns both equity and excellence.

There are appeals to fairness and justice: the previously excluded should be more thoroughly included. There are also appeals to excellence and progress: all will be more empowered from greater exposure to greater diversity. (Kwak et al., 2019, p. 214)

That is, diversity is seen as a resource, with the potential to leverage and valorize the experiences of the newly included and further strengthen organizational excellence. In Desivilya et al.’s terms (2017), diversity thus becomes a “business case” applied to improve performance and results.

Studying university governance surfaces questions such as governance by whom, for whom and for what. While programs to support less privileged groups come with certain limitations, questions also arise if efforts to formally promote diversity and inclusion by establishing bureaucratic structures just may be window dressing, with no intention to change the underlying conditions (see Gavrilu et al., 2023). Governance procedures in organizations both reflect and contribute to gender (in)equality and (a lack of) diversity (see e.g., Acker, 2006; Dobbin, 2009; Kanter, 1977). Furthermore, it can be noted that irrespective of the form of governance, governance procedures include practices for excluding new groups and new thoughts – otherwise, neither diversity nor inclusion would be issues that need to be addressed. Studies of collegial practices may reveal the extent to which collegiality forms mechanisms of closure, and the extent to which combinations of collegial, democratic, bureaucratic and enterprise models may lead to further closure or to opening up for increased diversity and inclusion. Yet, the situation in collegiality where some peers become more equal than others create diversity and inclusion challenges that require attention. Those who are closer to decision-making bodies and have access to more information may also be ascribed higher status and legitimacy (Lazega, 2020). Inequality among peers can also result from excellence programs (Harroche & Musselin, 2023, Vol. 86; Kosmütsky & Krücken, 2023, Vol. 86) and thus challenge a fundamental collegial principle of formal egalitarianism (Waters, 1989). To ensure active and progressive work that fosters diversity and inclusion, structural inequality must be addressed.

Inclusion is a fundamental requirement for collegiality to work, as universities are becoming more heterogeneous. [Van Schalkwyk and Cloete \(2023, Vol. 86\)](#) showed that differences are beneficial for collegiality, as they can prevent the parochialism that often accompanies scrutiny. However, different groups must talk to each other to seek consensus in a collegial way. Heterogeneity that results in polarization and groups seeking to advance their own agendas threatens collegiality and global science ([van Schalkwyk & Cloete, 2023, Vol. 86](#)).

### *Dark Sides or a Lack of Maintenance?*

A review of common critiques of collegiality led us to ask: Are dark sides inherent features of the governing ideal, or are they consequences of failing to maintain and properly practice collegiality? When discussing dark sides of collegiality, issues of privilege, legitimacy and power are foregrounded. Collegiality as a governance form is not democratic, but neither are bureaucratic, or enterprise-oriented forms of governance. Collegiality, when properly practiced, is a way to handle daily disagreements, tensions, debate, and scrutiny, and thus make wise decisions. This is accomplished through processes that demand both active participation and active leadership ([Van Schalkwyk & Cloete, 2023, Vol. 86](#)).

The discussion of why we should care about collegiality leads to questions regarding what parts and aspects of university collegiality are essential for this form of self-governance to function. As emphasized Vol. 86 in this special issue, we have seen a turn toward viewing universities as enterprises and structuring universities as organized actors. What remains has been described as hybrid governance ([Denis et al., 2023, Vol. 87](#)), mixed modes of governance ([Parker & Jary, 1995](#)), pockets of collegiality ([Lazega 2020](#)) or islands of collegiality ([Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016](#)).

When collegiality remains only as pockets ([Lazega, 2020](#)) or islands ([Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016](#)), both those who govern and the governed become less acquainted with how the system may work and its institutional foundations. A weakened collegiality and eroded faculty authority have consequences for the robustness of collegiality as a system of governance. The lack of acquaintance with the system – its main ideals and practices – can open up for the above-mentioned dark sides. This also means that a weakened collegiality will have consequences for the quality of higher education and research. In the papers in this volume, the question is asked whether universities are on a path where faculty authority will continue to be eroded to the point where collegiality will inevitably fade away, or if this development can be reversed? As will be shown, increased awareness and knowledge about how collegiality is supposed to work and how it may play out in practice, can actually reverse the trend and instead strengthen faculty authority.

## THE PAPERS IN THIS VOLUME

In this introductory paper to Vol. 87 we have asked whether and how collegiality can be restored and revitalized. We have explored two ways forward. First, we

need to open up taken-for-grantedness and elaborate why collegiality matters. Collegiality is essential for upholding independent research and teaching – that is, for academic freedom. Second, we need to address the limitations and weaknesses of collegiality. These weaknesses are not inherent to the institution of collegiality, but are limitations that deserve special attention. Like all modes of governance, collegiality needs to be actively managed and maintained. Below, we briefly preview the papers in this volume under two headings: “Maintaining collegiality” and “Revitalizing collegiality.”

### *Maintaining Collegiality*

In the first papers in this volume, Audrey Harroche and Christine Musselin explore the introduction of excellence initiatives for universities within the French system, a restructuring initiative to secure more funding for research, recruit the best researchers, and further improve the reputation of French research. To enable this, mergers among universities were implemented and more enterprise-oriented governance ideals were introduced. One of many consequences was that the former collegial recruitment process for professors was changed to follow guidelines based on enterprise-oriented ideals. Whereas newer universities implemented the new guidelines, reducing the influence of collegial practices in the process, more established universities with better reputations followed the new guidelines for a short period of time, received the funding, and then returned to their collegial systems.

While the COVID-19 pandemic provided opportunities for universities worldwide to demonstrate their capacity for rapid transformation when all activities, from teaching to meetings, shifted to digital platforms within mere days, conditions for collegiality and community building changed accordingly. Jakov Jandrić, Rick Delbridge and Paolo Quattrone explore how these changes unfolded within a business school in the UK. The findings suggest a wide range of perspectives on collegiality, with features of horizontal collegiality perceived as playing a critical role in successful academic responses to the crisis. The findings also indicate how sustaining a collegiate environment within a university department requires a conscious choice and concerted effort from leadership and staff, particularly when decision-making primarily occurs at the center of the university, beyond the department itself.

### *Revitalizing Collegiality?*

Another example of how collegiality is challenged but also revitalized is explored by Logan Crace, Joel Gehman and Michael Lounsbury. They investigate how faculty and students responded to a reality breakdown that occurred during their ethnography of collegial governance in a large North American university that was undergoing a strategic change initiative. Their findings suggest that a consequential process follows reality breakdowns whereby institutional inhabitants construct the severity of these events. In this particular context, institutional inhabitants first attempted to restore order to their



social world by reaffirming the status quo; when their efforts failed, they began to formulate alternative possibilities. Simultaneously, they engaged in a distributed sensemaking process whereby they diminished and reoriented necessary changes, ultimately inhibiting the formulation of these new possibilities. Findings confirm reality breakdowns and institutional awareness as potential drivers of institutional change. Moreover, Crace, Gehman and Lounsbury find that interpretive flexibility in collegiality contributes to making this institution unstable, and collegiality thus risks erosion when drawn upon in isolation.

Academic leadership courses may be important sites for maintaining and transforming collegiality. Course content may help open up the taken-for-grantedness of collegiality and relate it to other modes of governance. Thus, participation in such courses matters. Ravit Mizrahi-Shtelman and Gili S. Drori study these courses as settings where networks form, strengthen and transform. Course participation signals who is regarded as a colleague. Mizrahi-Shtelman and Drori compare two Israeli leadership training programs: one that trained professors and administrative staff separately, and another that trained professors and administrators together. The analysis reveals two “ideal types” of collegiality: Model A bifurcates between the professoriate and administrative staff, while Model B binds administrative and academic staff members through course composition, pedagogy, and content. The study suggests a pattern of transformation of collegiality in academia: whereas academic hierarchies are maintained between academic faculty and administrative staff and between universities and colleges, collegiality in academia is being transformed as extending beyond the boundaries of the professoriate and emphasizing a partnership approach to collegial ties.

Jean-Louis Denis, Nancy Côté and Maggie Hébert explore how manifestations of collegiality have changed within two Canadian universities. With increased emphasis on research funding and the potential to attract large grants and financing for chairs, governance has become more enterprise-oriented with a stronger emphasis on hierarchies and publication metrics. The authors show how these new forms of control within universities lead to the development of hybrid forms of governance. This in turn drives a *delocalization* of collegiality whereby faculty engage in horizontal collegiality outside the university and limit their participation in the university’s vertical collegiality.

The past few decades of reforms of the Swedish university landscape have introduced more enterprise and bureaucratic modes of governance at the expense of collegiality. Kerstin Sahlin and Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist report on a development following these reforms – namely, increased interest in collegiality and a reintroduction of collegial bodies and procedures. This development is sometimes termed “re-collegialization” by scholars, leaders within academia, and the Swedish government. Sahlin and Eriksson-Zetterquist review examples of peer reviewing, research assessments and the direct recruitment of professors and ask whether these new translations can be understood as a revitalization of collegiality or as a matter of “collegiality washing” similar to greenwashing.



### Outroduction

The last paper in this volume is the result of our collective work. Within this project, we have explored ideas in workshops, both in real life, and when COVID-19 hit, online. Throughout the project, the contemporary threat to universities and their central tasks of education and knowledge formation have become more obvious. In parallel, our joint understanding of the functions of and contemporary conditions for the institution of collegiality have become more distinct. As a result of our collective work, we set out to collectively write an “outroduction.” Together, we outline suggestions for a new research agenda within organization theory and higher education.

### NOTES

1. See <https://www.v-dem.net/our-work/research-programs/academic-freedom/>.
2. [https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/consensus#:~:text=consensus%20%28countable%20and%20uncountable%2C%20plural%20consensuses%29%20A%20process,exercises%20some%20discretion%20in%20decision-making%20and%20follow-up%20action](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/consensus#:~:text=consensus%20%28countable%20and%20uncountable%2C%20plural%20consensuses%29%20A%20process,exercises%20some%20discretion%20in%20decision-making%20and%20follow-up%20action.). Retrieved on December 7, 2022.
3. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/consensus>. Retrieved on December 7, 2022.

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