

The Historical Evolution and Inspiration of Internal Governance Models in British Universities

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Abstract: University governance has a history of nearly 800 years. Universities on the European continent were influenced by reforms implemented by Wilhelm von Humboldt of Germany and Napoleon I of France. The governance models within these universities also exhibit obvious characteristics. Scholars believe that universities on the European continent often work closely with governments, and scholars who hold positions in these universities hold the status of government officials. However, from a historical perspective, universities are constantly competing for the best resources of teachers and students. They all regard university autonomy as a key factor in the smooth implementation of university development strategies. On the basis of a systematic review of the development of the UK university system, this article elaborates on the different types of governance models in UK universities. They are the governance models of Oxford University and Cambridge University, as well as the governance models of Scottish University and City University. Subsequently, this study analyzed the evolution trend of university governance models in the UK and provided some insights for the development of China's university system.

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the increasing role and influence of higher education institutions in economic and social development, university governance has become a focus of attention in the academic community and government administrative departments. In fact, university governance has a history of nearly 800 years. As early as 1231, when Pope Gregory IX recognized the Magna Charter issued by the President of the University of Paris, which stipulated that the appointment of theology and ecclesiastical law teachers by the President must be voted upon by the professors, it could actually be seen as the beginning of internal governance within the university. The internal governance model of the University of Paris was subsequently transplanted by the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, and later borrowed by universities in British colonies. The universities on the European continent were influenced by the reforms implemented by Wilhelm von Humboldt of Germany and Napoleon I of France. The governance models within these universities also exhibit distinct characteristics. Scholars have conducted a detailed analysis of this and believe that universities on the European continent often cooperate closely with the government, and scholars serving in universities all have the status of government civil servants. However, from a historical perspective, universities in English speaking countries such as the UK, the US, and Australia are constantly competing for the best teachers and students. They all regard university

autonomy as a key factor for the smooth implementation of university development strategies.

2. Background

Among the universities in the aforementioned countries and regions, the governance model of British universities is the most eye-catching. On the one hand, the "Oxbridge" governance model represented by Oxford University and Cambridge University still adheres to the principle of academic autonomy, deeply embodying the essence of medieval universities. On the other hand, universities in the UK are different from those in the United States or most federal countries, and their governance models do not come from the same tradition. The rise of City University, Plate Glass University, and post 1992 universities not only enriched the university system in the UK. Their unique governance models also make it difficult to summarize the main characteristics of the governance structure of British universities as a whole. Here, this study follows the historical development trend, analyzes the main characteristics and changes in the governance models of different types of universities in the UK, and conducts relevant discussions.

3. Overview of the Development of the University System in the UK

From a macro perspective, the university system in the UK has been continuously enriched during its development process. With the emergence of Scottish universities, city universities, flat glass universities, and post 1992 universities, the richness and diversity of the UK university system have greatly increased. Various universities in the UK have gradually formed their own distinctive educational characteristics and governance models.^[1]

The earliest universities in the UK were Oxford and Cambridge. Their establishment originated from academic migration. In the mid-12th century, due to the escalating conflict between King Henry II of England and Archbishop Beckett, many British scholars who were visiting or teaching at the University of Paris were forced to return to their home countries.^[2] These scholars gathered at Oxford. Scholars imitated the organizational structure of the University of Paris and established a scholarly guild. Oxford University was born from this. The rise of Cambridge University is closely related to Oxford University. In the early 13th century, Oxford University was forced to shut down due to intense conflicts between scholars and local authorities. Some scholars migrated to the Cambridge area, forming the University of Cambridge. Since the establishment of these two universities until the first half of the 19th century, there have been no other new universities in England for hundreds of years. Therefore, the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge are often referred to as classical universities.^[3]

In the 15th and 16th centuries, due to the development of primary and secondary education, as well as the increasing frequency of student exchanges with the European continent, the Kingdom of Scotland successively established four universities: the University of St. Andrews, the University of Glasgow, the University of Aberdeen, and the University of Edinburgh. These universities form the second type of the UK university system - the Scottish university model. Among them, the establishment of three universities is closely related to the support of the Pope, regional bishops, and kings. The birth of the University of Edinburgh is mainly attributed to the strong efforts of the Town Council. Although Scottish universities imitated the University of Paris and the University of Bologna in their management system and curriculum at the beginning of their establishment, after the Reformation, Scottish universities were brave enough to innovate in terms of admission requirements, curriculum content, and teaching management. Its reputation even surpassed that of Oxford University and Cambridge University at one point. It has had a huge impact on the development of higher education in the UK and even around the world.

In the 19th century, due to the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization, the

demand for high-quality professional and technical talents in the British economy and society greatly increased. But the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge remain stagnant. The demand for the establishment of new universities in society continues to rise. In this historical context, a new type of university - City College - emerged in the important industrial cities of England. Unlike classical universities, City College was founded by local entrepreneurs and charitable organizations through donations to meet the needs of local economic and social development for technological talents and workers. Since the birth of City University, its educational goals have focused on cultivating professional and technical talents, thereby serving the local economic and social development. The divergence in educational objectives has also led to significant differences in the educational model and curriculum system of City College compared to Oxford University and Cambridge University. City colleges place greater emphasis on the connection and collaboration between themselves and the local economy and society, and they have included more content in science and technology education in their curriculum system. In the process of talent cultivation, they also pay more attention to the improvement of students' professional skills and professional qualities. At first, the British government held a certain reservations towards City College, a "new university", and did not grant it the power to independently award degrees. Therefore, City College had to emulate the educational models of Oxford University and Cambridge University. City colleges integrate more humanities courses into their own curriculum system and continuously improve their academic level and social recognition through training, vocational education, and consulting services. It was not until the first half of the 20th century that City College gradually gained government recognition, gradually upgraded to City University, and officially gained the power to independently award degrees.

The Second World War made the British fully aware of the importance of national technological strength. The development of technology is inseparable from the cultivation of advanced professional and technical talents, as well as the expansion and reform of higher education. The Butler Education Act of 1944 established a secondary school education system for all young people in the UK, leading to a significant increase in the number of secondary school graduates. The country's emphasis on higher education, the increase in high school graduates, and the emergence of the post-war baby boom, coupled with the rapid economic recovery, contributed to the flourishing development of higher education in the UK in the 1960s. With the publication of the Robbins Report in 1963, new universities such as Sussex University, Kiel University, and Warwick University were successively approved for establishment. These 8 advanced technical colleges have also been upgraded to universities one after another. Due to the use of modern technology and techniques in the construction process of the new university, which extensively utilizes flat glass in the steel or concrete frame structures of campus buildings, it is also known as the "Flat Glass University". The sudden rise of "flat glass universities" in the mid-20th century not only enabled British higher education to achieve the goal of rapid expansion in scale, but also due to their vastly different organizational management, educational models, and curriculum settings from previous universities. Therefore, these universities have further enriched the university system in the UK.

After entering the 1980s, with the rise of the Thatcher government and the end of consensus politics, the macro policies of higher education in the UK also underwent significant changes. Marketization and performance have become the main themes of reform. The government has begun to use legislative means to strengthen control over universities and vigorously promote reforms. The promulgation of the 1988 Education Reform Law and the 1992 Continuing Education and Higher Education Law. The implementation of two laws not only freed multidisciplinary technical colleges and other colleges from the control of local authorities and began to have the same status and independent degree granting power as universities, but also declared the end of the "dual system" of higher education in the UK. Due to the fact that the Polytechnic College and other

colleges obtained university status in 1992. Therefore, people also refer to it as a "post 1992" university. Its rise not only adds new types to the UK university system, but also makes the governance models of UK universities more diverse and complex.^[4]

4. The Historical Evolution of Internal Governance Models in Various Universities in the UK

The various types of British universities such as Oxford University, Cambridge University, University of Scotland, and City University have emerged in specific historical backgrounds and historical circumstances. It is not derived from the same tradition, let alone the result of deliberate government guidance or advance planning.^[5] British scholar Michael Shattock divided the governance models of British universities into four types: Oxford and Cambridge governance models, Scottish governance models, urban university governance models, and higher education corporate governance models. The author will explain the historical evolution and main characteristics of various university governance models.^[6]

4.1 The governance models of Oxford University and Cambridge University

The governance models of Oxford University and Cambridge University can be said to be the closest to the "scholar guild" autonomous model of medieval universities. This is closely related to the social background and historical characteristics of the rise of Oxford University and Cambridge University. On the one hand, Hastings Rashdall said that the communication between the University of Oxford and the University of Paris is so close that any new measures or changes in the organization management of the University of Paris will be borrowed or transplanted by the University of Oxford. The governance model of the University of Paris was established by the Pope himself. He regarded the university, a guild organization composed of scholars, as an authoritative institution of the clergy, and appointed the president to be responsible for handling the relationship between the university and the outside world. The governance structure of the University of Paris was naturally adopted by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. On the other hand, church control over education is a fundamental characteristic of British history. From 1850 to the 1920s, under pressure from various sectors of society and even within universities to call for reform, the British government sent three Royal Committees to conduct detailed investigations into the "Oxbridge".

The complex governance structures of Oxford University and Cambridge University have been harshly criticized by the Robbins Report. They believe that it seriously affects the decision-making efficiency of universities. The two universities subsequently began a new round of governance system reform. But there are differences in the direction of reform: Oxford University conducted a comprehensive investigation through the Franks Committee and the North Committee and introduced some outsiders into its governance structure. They strive to rationalize their governance structure. The University of Cambridge still regards the Regent House as the highest authority and insists that its members must be teachers or scholars of the school. They refuse the entry of any outsiders.

It can be seen that Oxford University later introduced some outsiders into its governance structure. But fundamentally, the governance models of Oxford University and Cambridge University still largely inherited the legacy of the medieval university "scholar guild" system. They maintain a high degree of autonomy towards the outside world. They implement club based management internally. Universities are relatively independent of external intervention and constraints, and scholars also have great academic freedom.

4.2 The governance models of Scottish

The Scottish governance model specifically refers to the governance structure and methods of the four universities established in Scotland in the 15th and 16th centuries. It does not cover the governance models of other universities established thereafter. The early governance models in Scotland can be roughly divided into two categories. One type is church led. Its characteristic is that the president (director) of a university is appointed by government officials in the host country and has extraordinary powers in judicial and academic affairs. However, it is still subject to the control of the honorary principal (Chancellor) appointed by the regional bishop. Teachers are assigned to various colleges and are under the leadership of the dean. The University of St. Andrews, the University of Glasgow, and the University of Aberdeen all adopt this governance model. The other type is urban dominated. Its representative is the University of Edinburgh. The Edinburgh Municipal Council primarily decides on all major matters of the university and implements daily management through the *Senatus Academicus*.^[7]

The governing bodies of Scottish universities include the Board of Trustees and the Academic Council. There is a clear division of responsibilities between the two. The school affairs committee is responsible for the financial management, resource allocation, and student recruitment of the university. Its actual leader is an executive principal appointed by outsiders. The academic evaluation committee only has decision-making power over academic affairs. It has no authority to intervene in other affairs of the university.

4.3 The City University Governance Model

The prototype of the "bicameral" governance model adopted by City University can be traced back to the governance structure of Manchester Owens College in 1880. At that time, the highest governing body of Owens College was the School Council. The specific executive body of the university is the Administrative Committee. The members of these two committees are mostly composed of outsiders. The academic committee is composed of academic personnel from the school. So far, this governance structure has not undergone significant changes. However, the responsibilities and powers of each governing body have been constantly changing.

The bicameral governance model of City University is similar to that of Scotland. However, the functions of its school affairs committee are blurred, and its administrative committee actually assumes the role and functions of the school affairs committee in the Scottish governance model, responsible for the university's educational goals, development strategies, teacher appointments, and financial management. The function of the academic committee is relatively single, only responsible for managing affairs in the academic field.

5. The Enlightenment of the Internal Governance Model of British Universities on China

From the overall trend, the level of involvement of outsiders in universities is constantly deepening. Although Oxford and Cambridge universities are essentially still managed as societies of scholars, they have introduced outsiders to participate in their internal governance. In the mid-19th century, Scottish universities established the core position of the academic council, which was dominated by outsiders, in university governance. After the establishment of City University, the role of academic committees in university governance has become increasingly prominent. However, the rise of the Thatcher government and the implementation of the "New Public Management" reform have led to the administrative committee, mainly composed of outsiders, re assuming the core responsibility of university governance. Since its establishment in 1992, universities have adopted a "one house" governance model under the responsibility of the board of

directors. The board of directors has full authority to handle all management affairs of the university. The roles of faculty and student groups in the governance system are extremely limited.

The changes in the internal governance structure of universities are closely related to the changes in the university financial system. Initially, the British government specifically established UGC, which was responsible for implementing regular financial support for universities. But the outbreak of World War II led to a deterioration of the overall economic situation in Britain, as well as a significant reduction in university donations and tuition revenue. The government funding provided by UGC is gradually occupying a dominant position in university revenue. Peter Scott said that British universities, once known for their university autonomy, have become essentially "public universities" since the 1960s due to their high financial dependence on government funding.

With the increasing influence of the UGC, mainly composed of academic elites, on universities, the power of academic councils and academic communities in university governance has also been further strengthened. However, after entering the 1980s, the government implemented the "New Public Management" reform in the field of higher education, and the funding model for universities shifted from government funding to market-oriented new models.

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