
18 Variety and Variation among Post-Soviet University Governing Structures

Toward Four Models

Peter D. Eckel and Darkhan Bilyalov

This book tells the stories of fifteen independent efforts to govern higher education – a set of individual journeys forward, each from a common originating point in the early 1990s. The cases profile the ways in which countries of the former Soviet Union are approaching governing their universities and what governance structures they put in place to undertake this essential task. Underlying these stories are the common and different governance structures of public universities. What do they have in common? How are they different? Some of the countries in this book have moved toward their existing models in response to independence and autonomy; others kept traditional centralized approaches; still others are trying approaches that are novel. This chapter suggests four different models that exist across the fifteen countries, described below in detail – *academic-focused*, *state-extended*, *internal/external*, and *external civic*.

This chapter signals the transition from describing each approach to looking at the set as a whole and identifying meaningful subsets and clusters of approaches. As the previous fifteen chapters demonstrate how each country structured the governance of its University systems, this chapter presents a broader view of the common and varied structures. This chapter is organized to describe patterns within the set. Subsequent chapters move toward analysis and discussion.

18.1 A REMINDER ABOUT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Structure, while not the only organizational element, matters to all organizations, including universities and policy agencies. The ways in which an

organization, and in this case the University governance body, is structured shapes what information is collected and how it is sorted, transmitted, and made available; the ways decisions are made, including which decision-makers come together under what opportunities and constraints, and the ways in which decisions are addressed and actions taken (Hammond, 1993, 2004; Mintzberg, 1993; Orton & Weick, 1990; Simon, 1957). “The structural design of public organizations is important for fulfilling collective public goals, and reorganizations will reflect changing goals” (Christensen, 2011, p. 505).

The structure of University governance is a complex undertaking regardless of context, involving multiple stakeholders (Jongbloed et al., 2008). “Even though the legal responsibility for an institution may lie in a single entity such as a governing board, multiple actors such as the legislature, the governor, higher education commissioner, and coordinating board all could compete for some controlling interest in the decision-making process of public colleges and universities” (Lane, 2012, p. 285). The governance structure dictates which stakeholders come together and how, including who has access to what information and how decision-makers work together collaboratively, sequentially, or independently. If, as former Harvard University Dean Henry Rosovsky astutely notes, “Governance is about power: who is in charge; who makes decisions; who has a voice; and how loud is that voice?” (1991, p. 261) then the governance structure is the vehicle for power.

The governance structure, however, also is an artifact of that power in that its contours reflect the wishes of the powerful who created it. The organizational configuration reflects values, meanings, and beliefs (Kallio et al., 2020). Patterns of power shape structures through both *de facto* (informal) and *de jure* (formal) ways. An inclusive authority will likely create avenues for multiple stakeholders to exert their variety of influence leading to a more open structure. A consolidated authority, such as solely in the hands of a ministry, will likely result in a different structure that is narrow. Research supports this notion in the context of gender equity, as an example, where women’s access to formal and informal sources of authority yield more inclusive opportunities (Milazzo & Goldstein, 2017). In the higher education context, ministries, universities, and even heads of state give form to University governance; they shape it and dictate its functions. The stronger the authority held by one, the seemingly more that power holder dictates the shape.

Organizational structure is both an independent and a dependent variable in organizational activity (Hammond, 2004; Simon, 1957). Structure and its information flows are never impartial (Hammond & Thomas, 1989). The

structure of a particular organization will bias decisions or policymaking toward some outcomes and away from others, even before one adds to the equation decision-makers' abilities, priorities, and dispositions. "If two institutions are identical in every respect (e.g., they have the same tasks, the same personnel, and even have access to the same raw data) but the two institutions' hierarchies [structures] differ, the institutions may classify the data differently, and thus the top level decisionmakers in each may learn different things from the information" (Hammond, 2004, p. 123). The results are different outcomes shaped solely by variation in structure. Structures in this view can be thought of as the independent variable that shape outcomes and processes (Hammond, 2004).

Yet structures also are dependent variables. They are "the outcome of forces both outside and inside of the University" (Hammond, 2004, p. 102). The structures that exist are shaped by a variety of factors, including historic and contemporary economic and political conditions, as well as collective beliefs and authority's preferences (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991), all of which evolve over time (Bucheli & Kim, 2013). Structure is not the only factor that matters, but it is a key one, discernable and describable, and the focus of this book.

18.2 COMPARING APPROACHES

This chapter compares the various structures of University governance across the fifteen former Soviet countries. Governance, as noted in Chapter 1, is the process and activities used to steer universities and operates through defined structures at the governmental as well as institutional levels. Thus, governance bodies are the discernable structures that determine mission, approve strategy, set policy, monitor institutional well-being, and oversee quality and compliance. We focus on those bodies at the institutional not governmental level. The first comparison, Table 18.1, describes the most authoritative (or supreme) governing body for public universities at the institutional level across the set of focal countries. These bodies are identified by a range of names that describe similar but also different bodies; however, they are the senior-most collective or institutional decision-making body. The table also notes where external advisory bodies exist, as described by law or statute.

The most common structure across the fifteen countries is the Academic Council; found in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Academic Councils are

Table 18.1 Primary governing structure

Country	Authoritative external board	Authoritative mixed internal / external board	Authoritative internal body	Advisory external body
Armenia		Board of Trustees		
Azerbaijan			Academic Council	Board of Trustees
Belarus			University Council	
Estonia			University Council	
Gorgia			Council of Representatives / Academic Council	
Kazakhstan				
State universities	Board of Directors			
Nazarbayev University	Board of Trustees / Supreme Board			
Kyrgyzstan			Academic Council	Board of Trustees
Latvia		University Board		
Lithuania		University Council		
Moldova		Strategic and Institutional Development Council (a)	Senate (b)	
Russia			General Conference/ Academic Council	
Tajikistan			Academic Council	
Turkmenistan			Academic Council	
Ukraine	Supervisory Board (a)		Academic Council (b)	
Uzbekistan			Academic Council	Board of Trustees

university-wide decision-making bodies that are composed of members of the academic community and make or validate University decisions. These bodies within and across countries may or may not be identical, but they do share some similar characteristics in terms of academic membership, the focus of their work predominately on academic issues, and their place within the organizational and decision-making structures of the University.

The second most common University governance model across this set of countries are governance bodies that are a mix of University staff (internal members who are employed by the University) and external members who

are not University employees and hold posts external to the University) – found in Armenia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia – or consist of two complementary bodies that include University stakeholders and external individuals such as Moldova and Ukraine.

The third model is limited to Kazakhstan, whose universities have governing bodies consisting solely of external or non-university members, with the exception of the rector's membership. Until recently, this country had a variety of University governance structures, Boards of Directors, Boards of Trustees, Boards of Oversees, each assigned to a different type of University and operating differently and with varying scopes of responsibilities and authority. The law of 2019 created a uniform governance approach, external boards, for all universities regardless of mission or type.

Worth noting is the fact that Moldova and Ukraine both have a dual system of governance that combines the Academic Council with a second governance body comprising University staff and externally appointed members (mixed internal and external) – the Strategic and Institutional Development Council in Moldova and or all external members as the Supreme Council in Ukraine. This is a bicameral governance approach. In a different context, Canada also uses a bicameral, as compared to unicameral, governance structure with a Senate and a Board of Governors with parallel and complementary authorities (see, for example, Shanahan, 2019).

Furthermore, four countries – Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, and Uzbekistan – supplement their Academic Councils with external advisory bodies. These seem to be non-decision-making bodies, offering only insight and perspective. These are structures outside of formal decision-making schema that create opportunities for linkages beyond the campus and government with other universities, the private sector, and other entities invested in higher education and its outputs.

Similar structures have similar as well as different labels, which are reflected in Table 18.1. We use the terminology (often translated) common to each country.

There is tremendous variation within the structure of the different governing bodies. In some instances, the law dictates the size and composition of the body across all universities, such as the Strategic and Institutional Development Councils (SDIC) in Moldova, at nine, and the University Councils in Estonia, at eleven members, respectively. The external boards and the dual external/internal boards are small, such as the two above. The Academic Councils are the largest bodies, with upwards to 100 in Moldova and Belarus (see Table 18.2).

Table 18.2 Size and composition of governing bodies

Country	Size	Composition
Academic Councils (or other authoritative internal bodies)		
Azerbaijan	15–20	rector, vice rectors, deans, directors, department heads; chair of student academic society; members who are elected and appointed by rector
Belarus	Varies	rector; vice Rectors; academic staff; non-academic staff; students (25 percent); union representatives
Georgia		
Academic Council	Varies representative number per faculties	academic staff; members of research units; administrators
Council of Representatives	Twice as many as Academic Council	students must be one-third of the Council
Kyrgystan	20–60	rector, vice-rector, deans, department heads, senior academic staff; trade union representatives; students (20 percent)
Moldova (Senate)	36–101	rector, pro-rectors, deans, directors, academic staff, union representatives, students
Russia	Varies	elected researchers, staff, and students
Tajikistan	Varies	rector, vice rectors, deans and directors, staff
Turkmenistan	Unknown	rectors, vice rectors, deans and directors, staff
Ukraine (Academic Council)	Varies	rector, vice-rectors, deans, director of the library, chief accountant, heads of self-government bodies, elected representatives from trade union organizations, faculty members, students, and representatives from industry; the board must include at least 75 percent faculty members and 10 percent students
Uzbekistan	Varies	rector, vice-rectors, local and foreign scholars and experts, heads of schools and departments, heads of institutions affiliated with the University (e.g., academic lyceum); representatives of trade union organizations; and local and foreign HEIs, students, and academic staff
Mixed Internal/External Boards		
Armenia	20–32	25 percent government; 25 percent external individuals; 25 percent students; 25 percent staff

Table 18.2 (cont.)

Country	Size	Composition
Estonia	11	five appointed by Senate (cannot be senators or senior administrators), one from Academy of Sciences, five from Ministry of Education and Research
Latvia	5–11 (varies based on mission)	40 percent external; 60 percent internal
Lithuania	9 or 11	a combination of individuals nominated by academic staff, one by students, some external members (non-employees) selected by Senate, the remaining selected through open competition
Moldova (Strategic and Institutional Development Council)	9	two teaching Staff, two external experts, appointments by Ministries of Education, Finance and Competence; rector, pro-rector for finance
Authoritative External Board Kazakhstan		
State universities (Boards of Directors)	Up to 15	ministry representatives, private sector leaders, other University leaders, public figures
Nazarbayev University Supreme Board	9	ministry representatives, private sector leaders, other University leaders, public figures, NU president
Nazarbayev University Board of Trustees	7–21	external ministry representatives, private sector leaders, other University leaders, public figures, NU president
Ukraine (Supervisory Boards)	11–15	members external to the University

The membership composition is consistent across the Academic Councils with a mix of University administrators, such as rectors, pro-rectors, deans, and heads of research institutes, and academic staff. Academic staff in such Academic Councils make up at least 50 percent of the Council composition (e.g., in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). Student representation is also present, although it varies in the proportion of student participants from 10 percent (Ukraine) to 25 percent (Belarus) of the body's membership. The internal/external boards as well as the external governing bodies tend to be much smaller in size ranging from five (in some of Latvia's arts and culture and applied sciences universities) to thirty-two (Armenia), with these bodies in

Estonia (eleven), Lithuania (nine to eleven) and Moldova (nine) being small, particularly compared to the Academic Councils. In Kazakhstan the sizes range from eight to twelve members with some of the new boards still forming.

The membership of the internal/external boards varies in the proportion of internal and external members. Armenia's Board of Trustees include 50 percent from campus and 50 percent external members. Estonia and Moldova have equal membership as well. Latvia's boards are approximately 40 percent external appointments and 60 percent internal University members.

The external members tend to be heavily governmental with some evidence of individuals from the private or corporate sector. Kazakhstan includes members of the Ministry of Education and Sciences as well as other ministries on University Boards of Trustees. The two boards of Nazarbayev University are both chaired by high-ranking government officials. These boards also include individuals from the private sector. Moldova's SIDC includes individuals appointed by various ministries and may or may not include members of government. Estonia's University Council includes individuals from the Ministry of Education and Research as well as from the Academy of Sciences. The European Union criticized the highly political nature of Armenia's governing board composition (Smith & Hamilton, 2005). Latvia, in contrast, explicitly prohibits current members of government agencies and elected members of parliament from serving on public University boards.

Most of the Academic Councils are chaired by the rector, which is part of that individuals' official responsibilities. In some instances, such as Georgia and Ukraine, the rector is elected by the body. In other countries, the rector is appointed by the appropriate ministry (Russia and Moldova) or by the president of the country (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and some Russian universities). For those countries with external boards or internal/external boards – Armenia, Estonia, Moldova, Latvia, and Lithuania – the bodies elect board leaders from within their ranks. Latvia specifies that the board chair must be elected from the external board members. In Kazakhstan, board leadership is appointed by the ministries or, in the case of Nazarbayev University, by the president of the country, as is the case for Russian autonomous universities (see Table 18.3).

The scope of work varies based on the type of governance approach. Academic Councils focus on institutional-level governance issues such as approving or discussing the budget and the University's strategic program (for example, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Turkmenistan). They also address traditional academic topics such as curricula, and degree program offerings.

Table 18.3 Governing body leadership

Country	Elected chair	Appointed chair	As part of job duties
Armenia	elected by the board (often held by a government official)		
Azerbaijan			appointed Rector
Belarus			government-appointed rector or the president of the Republic
Estonia	elected by the board		
Georgia			Elected Rector
Kazakhstan			
State universities	elected by the board		
Nazarbayev University		Board of Trustees – appointed by president	Supreme Board – first president of the Republic
Kyrgyzstan			appointed rector
Latvia	elected by the board (from members not appointed by staff or students)		
Lithuania	elected by the Council (from members not appointed by staff or students)		
Moldova	SIDC – elected by members (must be an external member)		Senate–elected Rector
Russia			appointed rector
Tajikistan			appointed rector
Turkmenistan			appointed rector
Ukraine	Academic Council – elected by members	Supervisory Board – appointed by the ministry	
Uzbekistan			appointed rector

In Ukraine, the Academic Council also concerns itself with quality assurance. In Georgia and Turkmenistan, the Academic Council concerns itself with European integration or internationalization; and in Azerbaijan, that body contributes to the development of state educational standards. Academic Councils in Uzbekistan are advisory to the rector. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the Academic Council does not have financial responsibility; and outside of academic issues, its governance activity is to approve the strategic program presented by the rector.

Those countries with external boards or the mixed board of insider and external members do not address academic issues, delegating that responsibility to their own Academic Councils, which are either subservient to the supreme decision-making body or work parallel to it. Lithuania's Councils, in addition to approving the budget and the strategic program, also are responsible for overseeing the rector selection process. Estonia's University Councils do not have this responsibility. In Latvia, the board approves the University's constitution, sets the strategic development plan and monitors its implementation and approves the budget and University policies. The board also nominates candidates for rector and can initiate the rector's replacement.

In contrast, the external boards of Kazakhstan's universities, in addition to budget and strategic programs and to hiring the rector (confirmed by the ministry), also determine tuition fees, address issues of risk management, and set admissions targets and criteria. The latter set of responsibilities are newly devolved; prior to 2019, they were the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education or relevant ministries. In Ukraine, the Academic Council addresses academic issues and makes most of the key financial and strategic decisions. This body works in concert with the Supervisory Board, which is an external body. This second body makes proposals to the University, oversees University management, and considers financing.

The unique division of labor in Moldova between the Academic Senate and the SIDC are worthy of deeper explanation of its design as intended (see the Appendix of Chapter 12 for a side-by-side comparison). The Academic Senate is responsible for academic issues and new degree programs, the University charter, and the rector's annual report and the strategic development plan. It confirms members on the SIDC and develops and approves the admissions framework and research strategy. The Strategic and Institutional Development Council (SIDC) coordinates the strategic development plan and puts it forth for Senate approval. It organizes the rector election, again for selection by the Senate, and it develops the budget and monitors finances, which is approved by the Senate. The two bodies are structured to work in concert with each other. A similar two-body approach exists in the Ukraine with an internal Academic Council and an external Supervisory Board, but those bodies seem to work on issues independently (academic versus finance) rather than requiring sign off by the other as in Moldova.

Of the fifteen countries in this study, eleven have structures – advisory or decision making – that have at least some external (non-university) members. Four countries – Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine – have external advisory bodies but with limited influence and

no bureaucratic or formal authority. Kazakhstan has externally comprised governing boards. Armenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Moldova have bodies that are a mix of internal and external individuals with limited structural authority. The membership of these external bodies is often governmental (except for Latvia), and many have individuals of public renown or leaders from the private sector. The advisory bodies seem to serve as resources for the rector and for those with strong governmental presence, also likely play an accountability function for the state although informal.

18.3 EMERGING MODELS OF GOVERNANCE

The above descriptions point to four university-level governing models across the former Soviet countries. The models reflect a composite of structural elements including the general membership of the body, its leadership and how those individuals obtain that role, the focus or scope of the decisions made, and the extent to which there is a direct role by the government or its branches.

The first is the *academic-focused* model. This approach is common to Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, and in Ukraine and Moldova, for one of their governance dual structures. The elected rector is a first-among-equals coming from the University's academic ranks, serves at the preference of the academic staff, and serves as the body's chair as part of the rector position. The body focuses strongly on academic issues. The membership is dominated by academic staff as well as representatives that include students and members of campus units and trade unions. Key governance decisions beyond academic issues, such as budget and planning, often fall outside of this body and are either made by the rector and his or her staff or are the responsibilities of the ministry.

The second model is *state-extended*. This approach in many ways is structured similarly to the *academic-focused* mode. The essential difference is that the leadership of these bodies is appointed by the government and the scope of responsibilities is limited based on what is delegated to them as compared to what is ministerial responsibility. These models exist in Russia, Belarus, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. This model seems to extend the one-man management model of the Soviet era (Kuraev, 2016) in which the government appoints the rector and holds that person to account. The rector is powerful, with authority derived directly from the State. Thus, the government has a strong role in setting institutional direction and driving decisions

through its appointed institutional head as well as through its control and policy making. This structure limits the scope of institutional-level governance. Ministries remain strong and have direct control of the universities. Azerbaijan, Russia, and Uzbekistan supplement their government-centric approaches to University governance with external advisory boards. The key difference between this model and the *academic-focused* approach centers on the rector. Is that person an academic, elected by and accountable to academic staff or is that person appointed by the government and its agents and primarily accountable to them?

The third approach is the *internal/external* model, which consists of membership from within as well as outside the University. Armenia's Board of Trustees, Latvia's boards, Lithuania's and Estonia's University Councils and Moldova's Strategic and Institutional Development Councils are examples. The Ukraine and Moldova adopt a slightly different approach in that rather than a single body with dual representation, it has two bodies with coordinated responsibilities. One example from the Ukraine is the Academic Council and the Supervisory Board at National Technical University of Ukraine Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. The Supervisory Board consists of individuals external to the University, whereas the Academic Council consists of administrators and representative staff and students. Moldova's Strategic and Institutional Development Councils are themselves the permeable body with a combination of University staff and external appointments.

The final model we label *external civic*, describing the governance structure of Kazakhstan. Here the power center in terms of governance structure, composition, and agendas is located outside of the institution in a public or civic domain. "External members in governing bodies in higher education institutions could be seen as representatives for civil society." (Larsen, Massen & Senker, 2009, p. 8) Thus, the label here is *external civic* to differentiate it from *state-extended* in which the locus of authority is also external but grounded in government. We understand that the term *civic* can be a nuanced term, but we use it to indicate that it is grounded in the community and citizens, even if those citizens are elites but outside of government and the academy – grass tops, not grassroots, so to speak. In the Kazakhstani context, the balance tilts toward governmental members, but participation from the private sector and from other universities does exist. This is a nuanced distinction and an important one in which membership matters. If the *external civic* board members are all more mostly governmental, this module becomes the *state-extended* one and loses the important voice of civic

stakeholders. Having members of government holding the most seats and being most influential is a risk in Kazakhstani universities if the country is to operationalize the design of its governing boards structure.

These boards have broad scopes of responsibilities including hiring, supervising, and firing the rector; determining budgets; setting admissions criteria and targets; and creating partnerships and other entities. Given that the members are appointed by the ministries, they are notable and well-respected individuals by the government, and, in the Kazakhstani context, many notable and influential individuals have strong links to the government. Ukraine's Supervisory Councils also comprise non-university staff. In countries such as Kazakhstan, often highly influential powerbrokers are in governmental positions as compared to the West; whereas, in US boards, the most influential are members from corporate backgrounds and professionally accomplished, if not wealthy, individuals (Chait, 2009; Eckel & Trower, 2018).

18.4 PUTTING THE MODELS IN CONTEXT

If governance is about power and voice (Rosovsky, 1991), these models offer insights into University power dynamics and to ideas about the variation of authority and control between governments and their public universities. The *external civic* and *state-extended* models reflect a locus of power outside of the University. The *state-extended* model places authority in the government, which varies between University presidential and ministerial influence and involvement depending on county and University. Given the composition of the Kazakhstani *external civic* governing bodies, while the structure allows for broad stakeholder influence, currently that influence remains governmental. However, it is different from the *state-extended* model because influence is indirect via appointments rather than through direct ministerial line-management oversight and it has the potential to be balanced with corporate and academic (from other universities) voices. Furthermore, this approach alters governmental influence by sharing power with private citizens and people of eminence from other walks of life in the country. If Kazakhstani boards had fewer governmental members and surrogates, they would be more representative in their composition and thus more civic.

The *academic-focused* model also reflects division of power between government via the ministries and University academics. In the *academic-focused* model, the government devolves or delegates academic decisions to

the University governing body. The level of this delegation is tied to levels of state-granted autonomy.

The final model reflects the most complex of the power dynamics. This model is termed *internal/external* because of its involvement of University and governmental or other external stakeholders and reflects a balance between these stakeholders' influence and aims. In the Moldova structure, for example, there is a differentiated role between the Academic Council and the Strategic and Institutional Development Council, with different stakeholders serving on each and only the rector and pro-rector serving on both bodies. The rector chairs the Academic Council and an external member of SIDC chairs that body and is selected by members of SIDC. Estonia's University Councils include five individuals appointed by the Senate and who are not members of the Senate or serving as senior University administrators, five individuals appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research, and one person from the Academy of Sciences. Latvia's boards balance the interests of internal and external stakeholders and explicitly bans current members of government from serving on boards. The Armenian Boards of Trustees also are designed to be representative across stakeholder groups with balanced representation of governmental members, external individuals, students, and University staff. However, as the European Union analysis suggests (Smith & Hamilton, 2015), examples of governmental influence in the selection of the nongovernmental appointments consolidate its influence.

These four models from post-Soviet contexts connect to but also differ in substantive ways from governance models described in the literature. The three primary ways of understanding governance approaches – both at the state and campus levels – are market-oriented, state-centered, and academic self-rule models (Clark, 1983; Dobbins et al., 2011; Dobbins & Khachatryan 2015) or various deviations of them, such as Humboldtian, Napoleonic, and incorporated models (Shattock, 2014). Trakman (2008) adopt a slightly different focus and describes five models addressing institutional-level governance: academic or collegial governance with its dominance of academic staff; corporate governance that focuses predominately on the business model of universities and efficiencies; trustee governance that relies on surrogates working in good faith to advance institutional interests; stakeholder governance with its representative approach that may include internal and external stakeholders; and an amalgam model, which is a composite of select elements of the other four.

Our *academic-focused* and *state-extended* models reflect Trakman's academic self-rule and the state-centered models respectively. The *internal/*

external model adds detail to Trakman's stakeholder approach by clarifying the composition of and balance among the key stakeholders, which in most instances are individuals representing government interests or with ties to the government, with the exception being Latvia. Trakman comments, "the problem with stakeholder governance is in determining which stakeholders ought to be represented on the governing bodies" (2008, p. 73). Countries in this project address that question in different ways. The *internal/external* model addresses that question from a contextually relevant perspective. The *external civic* model is also different from the market-oriented model above and from Trakman's corporate and trustee models. The participants are not significantly corporate representatives, nor do they serve as trustees solely for a public trust (Trakman, 2008).

The final element of this discussion links these models to various theoretical underpinnings of the different governance approaches. There are three conceptual frameworks typically used to understand nonprofit and University governance: agency theory, stakeholder theory, and stewardship theory (Austin & Jones, 2016; Van Puyvelde et al., 2012), although others exist (Cornforth, 2003; Donina et al., 2015). These approaches are instructive because "they focus on the relationships between a delegator and a delegate [labeled principals and agents], which is the central object of analysis in the design of governance regimes" (Schillemans & Bjurstrom, 2019, p. 651). The delegate (agent) is intended to act in the interests of the delegator (principal). What differs across these frameworks is the nature of that relationship and who is engaged in the relationship. These frameworks are reflected both in the structure of governance but also in the culture of how boards operate (Eckel & Trower, 2018).

Agency theory suggests that key actors are narrowly defined principals and agents who engage in a compliance-based relationship (Eisenhardt, 1989). The principals typically are the owners, such as shareholders in a corporate setting or the government in a state University context. The agents, on the other hand, are those individuals hired by the principals to manage the organization and its well-being. The expectation by principals is that the agents should act in the best interests of the organization. However, the theory argues that agents see their hiring as an opportunity to maximize their own best interests or those of the organization, which may conflict with the wishes of the principals. The result of this drift are goal conflicts (Eisenhardt, 1989; Kivisto, 2008). The misalignment may be because of self-interest or because universities leaders and faculty are pulled toward goals simply different from those of the principals (state or founders)

(Austin & Jones, 2016; Bleikle, 1998; Kivisto, 2008). For instance, universities may pursue a research and graduate agenda in the pursuit of academic prestige when the state prioritizes undergraduate education and workforce alignment. Agency theory may be a tool for countering mission drift (Morphew & Huisman, 2002) and institutional striving (O'Meara, 2007) to align University objectives with those of its principles.

Agency theory suggests that governing structures are created by the principals to set and articulate goals for the agents and then to oversee, monitor, and when necessary, correct their actions when they pursue their own self-interests. "Hence, governance structures are used to minimize the misalignment between the principals' and agents' goals, minimize agency costs, keep agents' self-serving behaviors in check" (Austin & Jones, 2016, p. 35). Governing bodies then act accordingly through the use of extrinsic rewards and punishments to steer the behavior of agents (Davis et al., 1997). This is control-oriented governance (Franco-Santos et al., 2017).

The second theoretical tradition is that of stewardship theory. This theory stems from alternative assumptions to agency theory. Stewardship theory argues that the agents adopt a collectivist perspective, rather than individualistic, and seek to act in the best interests of the organization (Austin & Jones, 2016; Schillemans & Bjurstrom, 2019) either because goals are aligned or because there is greater utility and returns for the agents to pursue principals' goals (Davis et al., 2007; Van Puyvelde et al., 2012). In this framework, agents are committed to the organization and personally identify with it and its goals (Austin & Jones, 2016; Davis, et al., 2007). These notions of affiliation, collective intent, and intrinsic rewards counter those of agency theory with the self-interested agents extrinsically motivated to be compliant. Executives and other agents see themselves as personally connected to the institutions and advancing a shared purpose. There is a moral dimension to this work, grounded in a sense of obligation (Hernandez, 2012) and a level of trustworthiness between agents and principles (Davis et al., 2007). Stewardship suggests significant autonomy for the agents regarding strategic and operational issues (Austin & Jones, 2016).

The work of governance from this theoretical tradition is for the governing body "to support the president's decision-making and to provide advice and counsel to the University's leadership rather than engaging in excessive monitoring behaviors" (Austin & Jones, 2016, p. 39). The governing assumptions are not oversight and compliance but consist of collaboration between principals and agents, self-management and agent discretion, and procedural and substantive independence (Schillemans & Bjurstrom, 2019).

Stakeholder theory, the third tradition, offers yet another perspective on governance by recognizing a broader set of principles. It argues that organizations have an array of stakeholders who have different expectations for, obligations to, dependencies on, and interactions with an organization (Austin & Jones, 2016; Jongbloed et al., 2008), even if they can be challenging to accurately and consistently define (Mitchell et al., 1997; Van Puyvelde et al., 2012).

The primary role of governance via stakeholder theory is to represent the needs and interests of the diversity of stakeholders. These are individuals or collectives of individuals who to some notable extent have a relationship that is influential, legitimate, timely, and salient to the operation of the organization (Mitchell et al., 1997). In a corporate context, this may mean shareholders as well as communities, suppliers, and customers. In a public higher education context, not only government interests matter, but those of employers, students and their families, alumni, donors, academics staff, and trade unions can be defined as stakeholders (Jongbloed et al., 2008).

Governance from this tradition, therefore, is the mechanism to provide voice and lend influence to various stakeholders (Austin & Jones, 2016) and to sort among those voices. A key element of governance is to leverage these stakeholder relationships to secure external resources and ensure the long-term well-being of the organization (Mampaey & Huisman, 2016). A fundamental aspect of governance is increased institutional responsiveness to outside expectations, demands, and opportunities, and to gain and sustain legitimacy of the University (Beerkens & Udam, 2017; Christensen, 2011; Jongbloed et al., 2008).

These three frameworks help ground the four emergent models of post-Soviet States in an explanatory context. While each exist as independent theories, their utility is increased through multidimensional application (Austin & Jones, 2016; Schillemans & Bjurstrom, 2020; Van Puyvelde et al., 2012). The models here, including their compositions of the governing bodies, their scope of work, and their relationship to the ministries – the principals in these structures provide insights into the theoretical underpinnings that illuminate the different approaches (see Table 18.4). One can both identify the framework assumptions from which each structure is designed and the ways in which it seems to operate.

The *state-extended* model reflects the assumptions of agency theory. In these cases, the ministry (the principal) oversees and directs the agents (rector), with a high degree of compliance and extrinsic motivations (rewards and punishments); the role of other stakeholders is minimal or nonexistent.

Table 18.4 Theoretical underpinning by governance structure

Country	Agency theory	Stewardship theory	Stakeholder theory
academic focused: Georgia, Kyrgyzstan		designed and operated	operated
state-extended: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	designed and operated		
internal/ixternal: Armenia, Estonia Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Ukraine	operated		designated
external civic: Kazakhstan	operated		designated and operated

The *external civic* model predominately reflects the ideas of stakeholder theory with broad representation and involvement by a variety of individuals. Depending on the degree of influence of the individuals who serve and how they see their role, they may well work on behalf of the institution to secure needed resources and help bolster its reputation. In the Kazakhstani context, because of the strong presence of government members and their surrogates, the *external civic* model may also serve the goals of the agency theory.

Regarding its connection to the state, the *academic-focused* model reflects the notions of stewardship theory, with its internal representation and focus on academic issues, and a leader elected by the academic staff and the seeming alignment of principals' and agents' goals. However, from an internal or organizational governance perspective, this model may well reflect the stakeholder model, given its broad representation of internal stakeholders (not external principals) and the focus of its work on lending voice to institutional, particularly academic, decisions. The *internal/external* model seems to reflect the stakeholder theory as it gives voice to a range of individuals and recognizes that internal staff too have perspective and important voice in University governance. This structure seems to view academic staff as both principals and as agents.

Finally, what may matter most to understanding the patterns of governance through these theoretical models is not the structures themselves, but how the structures operate. For example, Moldova and Armenia's governing bodies include external individuals (*internal/external* model) as does Kazakhstan (*external civic* model), yet the composition of those external participants is strongly tied to, appointed by, or consist of governmental officials. Because the key stakeholder is the government, these structures may actually operate as an agency model, based on compliance and oversight

rather than cooperation between principals and agents and a level of procedural and substantive autonomy.

18.5 CONCLUSION: QUESTIONS REMAINING

This chapter sought to describe and begin to categorize the different approaches to University governance found across the fifteen post-Soviet countries. What it doesn't accomplish is to describe how these models work or their appropriateness or effectiveness. As the criticism of Armenian University governance demonstrates (Smith & Hamilton, 2015), how these structures are used varies and their operation matters.

The transition to *external civic* boards in Kazakhstan is also a new and relatively novel approach for this part of the world. It is one that differs in key ways from the US, Canadian, and UK models of independent boards because of the composition of these boards with governmental presence. For instance, Canadian law prevents members of government from serving on its public University boards (Shanahan, 2019). While in the United States, state governors often do hold appointments as *ex officio* members of boards, they are rarely active participants (Association of Governing Boards, 2016a). This is not the case in Kazakhstan. These universities seek influential individuals to serve on boards, and for many that means individuals from the government or with strong ties to it.

The next chapters offer further investigation into the efficacy of the models that emerged since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. How well do these models reflect the University governance needs of their respective national contexts? What do we know about what the various structures are able to accomplish given University needs and the contexts in which they operate?