

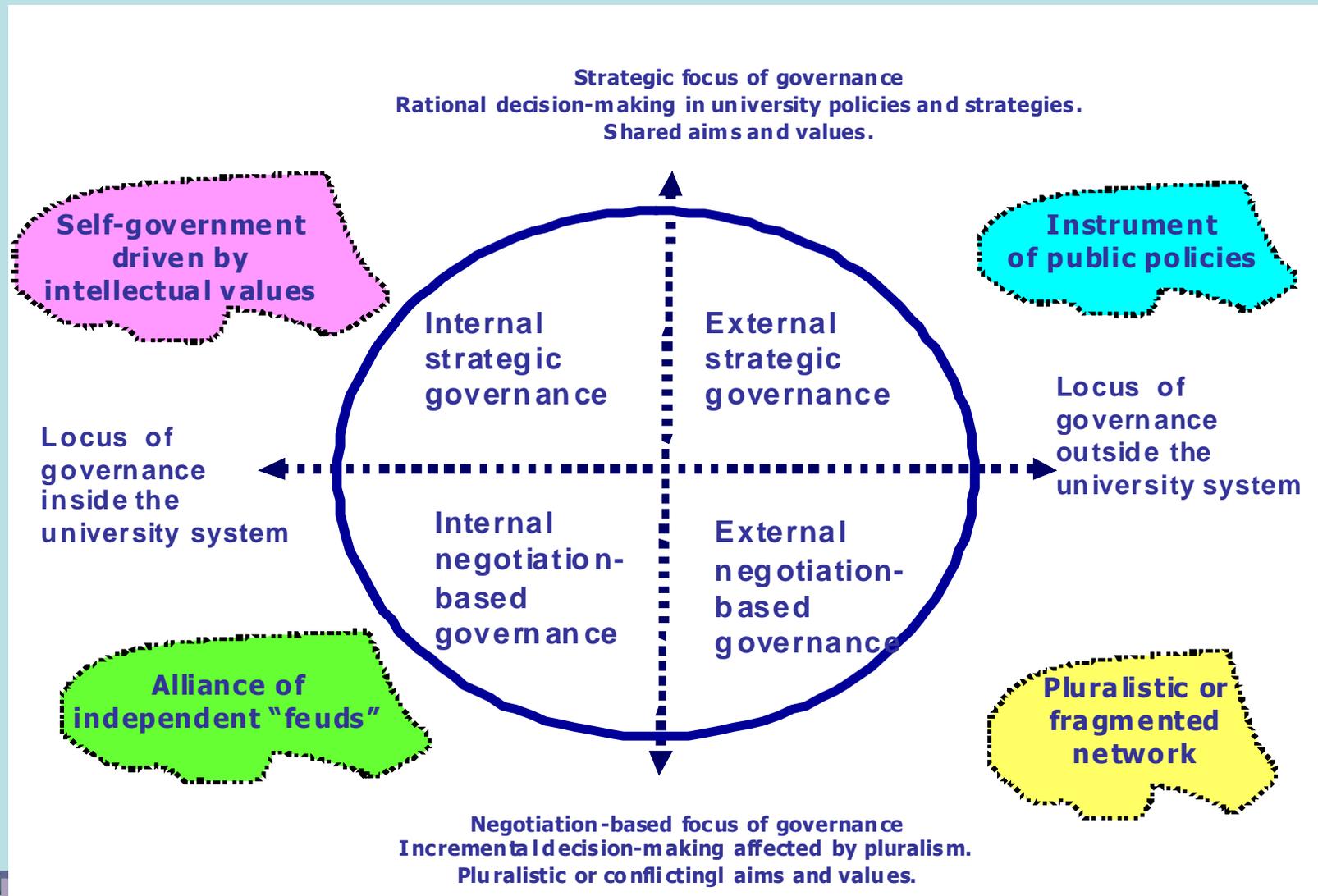
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Government and evaluation in the Italian University system: an analysis of the Italian experience

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Four patterns of system governance in higher education



Prior to 1989: alliance of independent “feuds”

- *Locus of governance* was inside the university system which was governed by an alliance between the ministerial bureaucracy and the centres of university power, thus perpetuating the Italian university tradition
- *Focus of governance* was characterised by decision-making aimed at the search for consensus through negotiation, settlement of conflicts and agreements between central and local powers



In this kind of governance there was no room for evaluation

1989-1998: the drives towards external governance and the birth of evaluation

- the *locus of governance* started to move towards the outside of the university system
 - Reform with more autonomy
 - Academic entrepreneurship
 - External partners
- *The focus of governance* was not significantly different from the previous period and was still characterised by the prevailing incremental decision-making based on negotiation.

1994: birth of the National Observatory for the evaluation of the university system and of evaluation boards in universities

1999 - 2006: Fragmentation of the system and the growth of evaluation

- **1999: two important measures that supported the drive for autonomy but also facilitated the subsequent drift towards a more marked fragmentation of the system.**
 - new laws decentralising the appointment of professors to the individual universities
 - teaching systems reformed with the adoption of new undergraduate and post-graduate curricula
- **More evaluation but without consequences (funding...)**
 - National Committee for the Evaluation of Universities (CNVSU) was responsible for the evaluation of teaching and for guiding the university evaluation units which were made compulsory even in private universities
 - Research was evaluated, too. The Italian Committee for the Evaluation of Research (CIVR) was set up for assessing the quality of research and carried out from 2004 an important three year exercise (2001-2004)

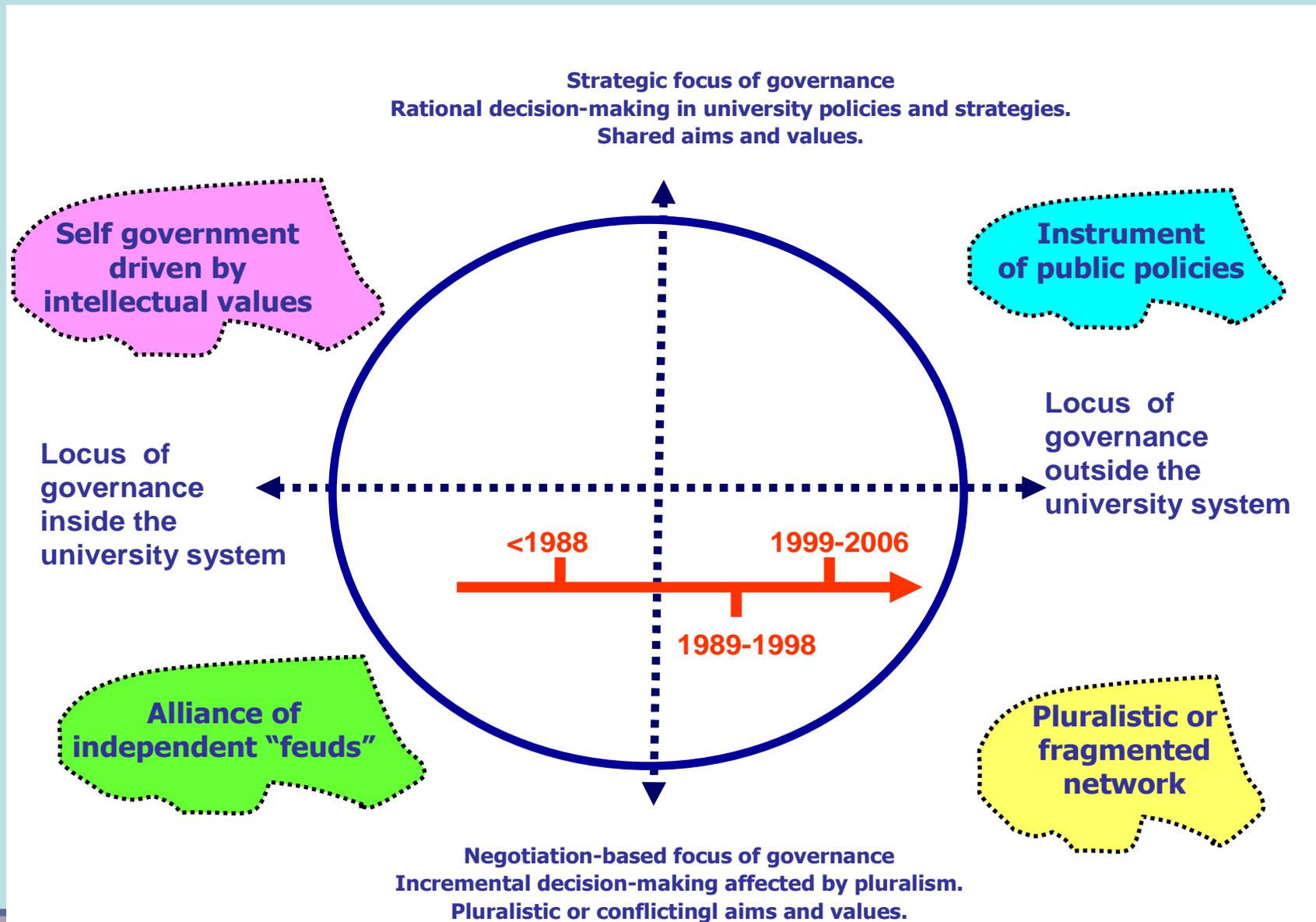
Autonomy without responsibility: Pandora's box

- *Locus of governance*: shift towards the outside that had already begun in the previous period. University autonomy opened up the way for an indiscriminate search for any kind of possible support rather than opening up only to the market
- The *focus of governance* remained incremental and negotiation-based with an increased conflicting charge. The opening up to the outside did not improve internal cohesion as the development of initiatives highlighted internal divisions and conflicts

The growth of the universities

| | n. Universities | | Students | | | Professors | |
|------|-----------------|-----------|---------------------------------------|---|---|-----------------|--|
| | State | Non state | % on 19 years old | Total n. | Graduates | Full/associates | Adsistants |
| 1965 | 32 | | 9% <small>(1960)</small> | 402.938 | 29.054 | 17.496 | |
| 1980 | 40 | 11 | 28,4 | 1.060.274 | 73.927 | 8.122 | 16.411 <small>(assistenti, ...)</small> |
| 1989 | 45 | 10 | 36,5 | 1.362.734 | 85.811 | 28.182 | 14.495 |
| 1999 | 57 | 13 | 43,3 | 1.673.960 | 152.341 | 30.945 | 19.556 |
| 2006 | 67 | 27 | 56,1 <small>(a.a. 2005/06)</small> | 1.823.886 <small>(aa. 2005/06)</small> | 301.298 <small>(aa. 2005/06)</small> | 38.928 | 23.046 |

Our path



Which future: pluralism or fragmentation?

- **2006 - 2007: waiting for decisions**
- **2008: new government**
 - New financial and administrative limits
 - Waiting for new rules
 - The New Evaluation Agency, established by a law of 2006, was stopped

Conclusions and scenarios for the future

National bodies can support a pluralistic system of universities in three ways:

- to establish a threshold in order to prevent the diffusion of too weak higher education initiatives
- to provide rules that university leaders (rectors, deans and the various coordinators of teaching activities) can use in order to validate and strengthen their strategic choices and their government structure
- to allocate resources in order to stimulate and to reward the entrepreneurial drive of both state and private university .

Thank you for your attention!

