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Through the gates: national and regional actors' influence on university governance in Norway, Germany and the UK

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Forms of governance at national, regional and institutional levels and the ways in which they interface with academic life critically shape the culture, creativity and educational outcomes of higher education. Using three national case studies – Norway, Germany, and the UK – the presentation will explore the implications for questions of governance of the interactions between universities, their national governments and their regions/localities. It will address issues such as: the mechanisms and actors – including national governments – that (de)link universities and regions; the ways local/regional factors effect differentiation between HEIs; and the ways university-region(s) relationships have been produced and/or disrupted by institutionally embedded power relationships. It will specifically focus on two facets of the 'regional': a) Regulatory forms and interferences and b) Regional interaction, sense-making and practices. To conceptually and empirically examine the processes that create and maintain ideas of regions, and to identify the mechanisms that disrupt and/or reconfigure symbolic/historical regions, we would use as theoretical frames Paasi's definitions of regions (Paasi 1986), the work of Jayasuriya on 'regulatory regionalism' (2003, 2008), Robertson on 'regulatory state regionalism', and Marginson and Rhodes (2002) on 'glonacal agency heuristic'. The study rests on more than 180 hour-long semi-structured interviews collected over a four-year period for the project entitled The Governance of Higher Education in Europe and the UK, based at the Centre for Global Higher Education, University College London.