The current state of governance research

„Governance“ has become the synonym for specific ways and methods of analyzing the control and regulation of public and private organisations. However, the term “governance” itself is ambiguous. It is open for a variety of meanings and gives ample scope for many different approaches towards and understandings of “governance”. For example, in the field of constitutional and administrative law “governance” is seen as a new way of describing and analyzing state-citizen relationships.

For that reason, the picture of academic research on “governance” is not monochrome but quite colourful. There are different branches of governance research that focus on different subjects and have different research interests. Therefore, governance research unfolds itself currently in a variety of areas such as “public governance”, “corporate governance”, “educational governance” and “local governance” – to name just a few.

The opening speech of the conference on “Governance: Universal challenges, local solutions” gives an introduction into the field of governance research. It presents an overview of main themes of the academic discussion and analyzes the strengths and flaws of different approaches towards the idea of governance.