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# Freedom of Research - Manifest and Latent Threats

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Who should decide a scientist's research agenda? The scientist him- or herself? Superiors, such as science ministries or university management? Sponsors, such as funding organizations or industry? Interest groups, such as churches, political parties, animal rights organizations or patient initiatives? What is the right balance between the scientist's autonomous decision on the one hand and the other players' interests on the other? I propose an analytical framework that conceptualizes the thematic autonomy of science as a gradual interplay of individual choices of research topics made in the context of the respective scientific community, on the one hand, and external constraints, on the other. This framework will be applied to the current state of German professors' freedom to choose their research agenda.