

## A canonical approach to government and the case for variable case

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Government is most often understood as a dependency relation, whereby the governor obligatorily requires a certain governee and determines case marking. However, variable case marking with verbs and/or with adpositions challenges the view that government relations imply obligatoriness. Especially with adpositions, variable case marking is often at odds with obligatoriness of the governee: in German, for example, one can say *Ich fahre in die/der Stadt*, but not *\*Ich fahre in*. On the one hand, the preposition necessarily needs a complement, on the other hand, it only partially determines case marking. Remarkably, the German example fulfills the definition of ‘government’ in Moravcsik (1995: 708): “constituent A governs constituent B if the syntactic function of B depends on A”, in spite of not featuring obligatory case marking. Such and more complex patterns are available from various languages, and suggest that government should be better understood as a scalar (or gradient) notion, as argued in Luraghi (2009). In this talk, I regard strict definitions of government implying the highest degree of obligatoriness as ‘canonical’ (in the sense of Corbett 2004), and explore various non-canonical instantiations, including different types of heads: adpositions, verbs, and nouns/NPs.

### References

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