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**Title**

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**Abstract**

The main research question of this book is the question of what has happened to European universities as organizations after several decades of university reform. To what extent are European public universities still decentralized, loosely coupled organizations as opposed to the centrally managed organizations controlled by a powerful central leadership that reformers have aimed to develop? What are the effects of higher education policies on individual university institutions? This chapter develops the conceptual approach for the book by discussing how leadership control of universities as professional organizations has changed, suggesting the concept of penetrated hierarchies as a new conceptual understanding of current universities as organizations. It also suggests how public European universities are shaped by national political administrative regimes as well as sectoral higher education policy regimes. The last part of this chapter outlines the content of the individual chapters of the book. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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