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**Title**

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**Abstract**

In this conceptual contribution to the study of university governance the authors will approach potential patterns of behavior of key decision-makers at central university level, i.e. roles of governance actors, as well as the set of factors that shape and constrain the governance actor's room of manoeuvre and provide avenues to explain varying role enactments through an actor analysis of members of the newly introduced university boards. In a first part the introduction and empowerment of university boards in European higher education institutions is described as a building block of the transformation of university governance. In the second part the main hypothesis derived is that, in governance practice, board members enact roles which are not only shaped and constrained by formal institutions, as given by the organizational context and regulatory structure, but also by conformable, appropriate and legitimate role expectations of central role senders. As a showcase analysis, the roles of university board members are conceptually explored. Especially in the context of recent reform

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processes, board members who tend to have a varied status set, very often find themselves in a troubling situation of conflicting role expectations, leading to high levels of role conflicts and role ambiguity. It is the aim of this paper to sketch and examine the factors that contribute to the different roles university board members may take (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Kretek, Peter M., E-Mail: pmkretek@gmail.com