

Transformation of university governance: on the role of university board members

Peter M. Kretek · Žarko Dragšić · Barbara M. Kehm

Published online: 18 October 2012
© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2012

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 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.

Keywords University boards · Governance · Decision-making · University reform · NPM

Introduction

For about two decades, public universities in Europe have been going through a profound process of organizational transformation. The most significant driver in this process is higher education (HE) reform, mainly based on the well-known ideals of New Public Management (NPM) (Bleiklie 1994; Kogan et al. 2000; Paradeise et al. 2009). Above all,

P. M. Kretek (✉) · Ž. Dragšić · B. M. Kehm
International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER), University of Kassel,
Mönchebergstraße 17, 34109 Kassel, Germany
e-mail: pmkrettek@gmail.com

these reforms cover and change modes of steering and control of higher education institutions, also discussed as a change to modes of governance at all levels of the HE system (Scott 1996; De Boer et al. 2007b; OECD 2003), and re-arrange not only the authority relationships between the ministries and the universities, but also governance structures within universities, such as the authority relationships between university presidents and academic self-governing bodies in central decision-making processes (Kehm and Lanzendorf 2006; De Boer and File 2009).

In this context, Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersson (2000) argue that in the course of these reforms, the university is constructed as transforming from an “incomplete organization to a more complete organization” by developing its rationality through formalization and standardization, strengthening its internal hierarchies, and fostering its individual organizational identity. Other scholars affirm that the university was basically in the process of becoming a more corporate-like organization which is more autonomous, entrepreneurial, competitive, or which is endowed with strategic capability and “actorhood” (Krücken and Meier 2006; Meier 2009; Clark 1998; De Boer et al. 2007a; Amaral 2008). Simultaneously with their increased autonomy, universities are more explicitly than previously faced with environmental expectations, e.g. to meet their responsibilities towards their owners (the state or the society) who expect more “value for money” from their investments (tax money) (Ferlie et al. 2008).

In almost all European countries, the transformation of the university towards the envisioned complete organization involves reconfigurations of internal governance structures. Accordant with organizational archetypes from its environment which are deemed “efficient”—the corporations—the state government prescribes stricter hierarchies, a more powerful chief executive (university presidents/rectors), as well as the introduction of boards of directors (university boards). This latter body is mostly composed of external members and is formally involved in decision-making processes at central university level. In light of more autonomous universities these university boards are supposed to take over tasks that formerly had been performed by the Ministries, e.g. the appointment and close supervision of the university leadership. Despite the differences in detail, across Europe university boards are more and more expected to be key actors in the reconfigured university governance structures, ideally on par with the university leadership, with a subordinate role of the collegial decision-making bodies (Senates). While the formal changes to authority relations at central university level, or formal governance *structures*, can be regarded as a well-studied topic (see e.g. for Germany: Bogumil et al. 2007; Hüther 2010; Burgi and Gräf 2010), the governance *practices* and the *de facto roles* in university governance processes are still to regarded as a “black box”. But in order to accurately understand the transformation of the universities in Europe in the last two decades, it is necessary to light up, firstly the actual room of manoeuvre of the governance actors involved, and secondly predominant patterns of actor behavior within these spaces, or in other words drawing a map of the institutional contexts and barriers to action and resulting patterns of action, embodied in actor roles.

Consequently, in this conceptual contribution to this study of actor roles in university governance the authors will approach

1. potential patterns of action, i.e. roles of governance actors, as well as
2. the set of factors that shape and constrain the governance actor’s room of manoeuvre and explain role enactments

through an actor analysis of members of the newly introduced university boards. The main hypothesis derived, is that in governance practice, actors enact roles which are not only

shaped and constrained by formal and informal 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 processes, very often those individuals who tend to have a varied status set, find themselves in a troubling situation of conflicting role expectations, leading to high levels of role conflicts and role ambiguity. It is the focus of this paper to examine the factors that contribute to this situation and which roles as university board members these persons can enact.

Comparing university boards across Europe: patterns and trends

Before we proceed, a short introduction to university boards as well as the respective regulatory frameworks in European university governance regimes shall give an impression of the actor context. As part of the European reforms of university governance structures, we can observe the following patterns:

- *Diffusion/isomorphism*: The idea of having a decision-making body which is composed of internal and external members, or external members only, and in its main functions is akin to boards of directors of business companies is spreading across the continent. By now, most of the European HE governance laws provide for this kind of a university body (Estermann and Nokkala 2009).
- *More authority*: We can also observe a gradual (and in some cases more abrupt) strengthening of these internal bodies in terms of formal decision-making powers. Where these bodies existed before and had only advisory functions, they can now be considered as formally being key decision-makers on central university level, in some cases on par with the university leadership. In contrast, academic senates are gradually losing formal power and in some cases it is those traditional collegiate bodies that are being subordinated to a more advisory function, especially in strategic decision on structural planning, university development and budgetary allocation while university boards have been gaining veto-powers over those objects of decision-making.
- *Criticism*: Where university boards have been introduced or have gained formal power through a reform of the HE law, we can observe an accumulation of criticism and even resistance to this change, especially from students, but also from representatives of the scientific community. This has recently happened, for example, in some German Länder, where in addition to legal concerns, major actors call for the abolition of university boards.¹

The following Table 1 shall give an overview of the various governance structures on central university level in a number of European HE systems. Despite the different nomenclature, by and large, we can observe a similarity of the general setup of formal governance structures with only few variations. In line with neo-institutionalist assumptions about institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), there seem to prevail transnational models of “rational” university governance structures which are being embodied in the local translations of these legitimizing models.

¹ E.g. in North-Rhine-Westfalia and Baden-Württemberg.

Table 1 University governance structures (central university level)

Country/land or canton—example university	University leadership	(Traditional) collegiate decision-making body	University board
Germany/Hessen—e.g. U Kassel	Präsidium/Rektorat	Senat	Hochschulrat*
Austria—e.g. U Salzburg	Rektorat	Senat	Unirat*
The Netherlands—e.g. U Maastricht	College van Bestuur	Universiteitsraad	Raad van Toezicht*
Switzerland/St. Gallen—e.g. U St. Gallen	Rektorat	Senat	Universitätsrat*
Italy—e.g. U Cagliari	Rettore	Senato Accademico	Consiglio di Amministrazione*
United Kingdom—‘Old universities’—e.g. U Belfast	President/Vice-Chancellor	Academic Council	Senate*
United Kingdom—‘New universities’—e.g. U Wolverhampton	Directorate/Vice-Chancellor and his team	Board of Governors*	
Norway—e.g. U Tromsø	Universitetsledelsen	Universitetsstyret*	
France—e.g. U Lille I	Présidence	(1) Conseil d’Administration* (2) Conseil des Etudes et de la Vie Universitaire* (3) Conseil Scientifique*	
Portugal—e.g. U Porto	Reitor/Equipa Reitoral	(1) Conselho Geral* and/or (2) Conselho de Curadores*	

The bodies marked with an asterisk are in part or in whole composed of external members

Source: Information acquired through official websites. Example universities have been selected randomly

Despite the different labels for the governance bodies, there is a dominating pattern of structures on the central level of European universities, consisting of a university leadership headed by a president or rector, an academic senate and a university board. The so called ‘New Universities’ in the U.K. and the Norwegian universities have two major decision-making actors at central university level: the university leadership and a mixed university board. Without going into detail on the rules and regulations for the appointment of board members, one can state that there are noteworthy differences in the selection procedures which matter for the actual governance practice, too. While in some regulations, the Academic Senates are supposed to be involved in the selection process of board members, in others it is the university leadership and the ministry who are authorized to select and appoint university board members. In France and Italy there are even specific quotas for certain categories of external members. The general share of external board members varies between 13 % (at an Italian university) and 100 % (e.g. in some German, Swiss cases). The large range shows that there is no dominant university board model with regards to the share of external board members—at least at this stage of the reform process in European higher education systems (see Table 2).

Regarding board composition and its effects on governance practice, business studies literature claims that the number of external board members matters. Fama (1980), Fama and Jensen (1983) as well as Beasley (1996) have found that having a higher percentage of external directors increases the board’s effectiveness as a supervisor of the management. These authors suggest that, the higher the proportion of external members on the board of directors, the lower the probability of financial statement fraud of the organization. Thus, it

Table 2 Examples of composition of university boards

Country (State)	University	Name of Board	Total no. of members	Percentage of external members (total no.)
Germany (Baden—Württemberg)	Tübingen	Universitätsrat	11	54.5 % (6)
Germany (Berlin)	HU Berlin	Kuratorium	9	77.7 % (7)
Germany (Thüringen)	Jena	Universitätsrat	10	70 % (7)
Switzerland (St. Gallen)	St. Gallen	Universitätsrat	11	100 % (11)
Norway	Oslo	Universitetsstyret	11	36.4 % (4)
The Netherlands	Maastricht	Raad van Toezicht	5	100 % (5)
	The Hague	Raad van Toezicht	7	100 % (7)
Portugal	Porto	Conselho Geral	23	17.39 % (4)
		Conselho de Curadores	5	100 % (5)
	TU Lisbon	Conselho Geral	27	29.63 % (8)
Italy	Cagliari	Consiglio di Amministrazione	22	13.63 % (3)
United Kingdom	Belfast	Senate	26	53.84 % (14)
	Wolverhampton	Board of Governors	24	54.17 % (13)
Austria	Salzburg	Unirat	7	100 % (7)
France	Lille 1	Conseil d'Administration ^a	28	25 % (7)

^a The Conseil d'Administration can be considered as the main university board despite the fact that there are three *conseils*

Source: Information acquired through official websites. Example universities have been selected randomly

is plausible to conclude, that the external members of boards have an important role in controlling the management.²

Looking at the assigned level of formal authority, there are also significant differences across HE systems which have major effects for governance practice. As Hüther (2009, 2010), (Bogumil et al. 2007) as well as Burgi and Gräf (2010) have found for Germany, the decision-making powers of university boards as provided by the HE laws in the 16 different German Länder vary greatly. While, for example, boards in universities across Baden-Württemberg and Hamburg have veto-powers over strategic plans, internal budgetary allocation and changes to university bylaws, their counter-parts in Sachsen-Anhalt or Hessen have only limited formal authority, constraining the board to an advisory function in almost all matters to be decided at central university level. There are also differences in the extent of detail in legal regulation. While the German, French, Austrian as well as some Swiss cantonal HE laws provide for a detailed description of decision-making issues and powers of the bodies at every level of the university, other HE laws, such as the Norwegian HE law is rather vague in comparison.

² Pearce and Zahra (1991 as quoted in Pettigrew 1992) suggest that boards through their external members acting in the interest of the organization provide business contacts and thus contribute to the overall performance of the company. From the perspective of shareholders, boards are regarded as necessary to ensure the protection of shareholder interest.

However, if we look at any sort of formally stipulated involvement of university boards in decision-making at university level, in the majority of cases, HE laws assign at least the following two core functions to these bodies (see also de Boer et al. 2010; Dragsic et al. 2011): (1) Involvement in decisions regarding (a) structural/developmental/strategic planning, as well as (b) budgetary allocation, and (2) involvement in the selection/appointment process of the university leadership. The degree of the involvement varies from the right to comment on a plan or proposal made by the leadership or the Senate to the full authority to veto a plan/a decision. Looking at the power of the boards over university leadership, the boards are often involved in the selection processes, but in most cases cannot dismiss the president or any member of the presidential team.³ In a recent empirical study Dragsic et al. (2011) have found that the formal authority of university boards in Europe is low to non-existent in

- decisions related to the appointment of key academic staff, i.e. chairs,
- decisions on the admission of students and respective regulations, and other students-related decisions, as well as
- decisions on teaching programmes.

This means, boards have little authority to directly affect teaching contents, the structure of study programmes or changes to the degree awarding schemes, and thus, they are only indirectly capable to affect the university's core technology "teaching", mainly through decisions on strategy, development and structure which sometimes include plans to change the study programmes offers, or, of course, major structural decisions, e.g. to close down whole departments.

Corporate models of boards of directors from the U.S. provide for quite similar functions to boards as described so far for university boards but with an overall higher degree of authority and a remarkable difference on the latter issue. Business studies literature (Cadbury 1990; Pettigrew 1992) tells us that corporate boards typically have the following duties:

- Define the company's purpose and direction
- Approve of the strategies and plans for achieving that purpose
- Establish the company's policies
- Appoint/dismiss the chief executive and review his or her performance
- Approve of budgets and financial statements.

Above all formal powers, boards have an important role in ensuring a good organizational performance. Many studies have shown that the better the board's performance in their tasks, the better the performance of the whole organization (Bradshaw et al. 1992; Green and Griesinger 1996; Herman and Renz 1998; Jackson and Holland 1998). It is plausible to conclude that university board performance will potentially affect university performance as well.

Compared to this briefly sketched corporate model of boards, most European university boards can be regarded as infant versions of those. From this perspective, European university governance structures seem to be in a state of transition. As noted further above, we can clearly see that the reform trends favor an increase of authority for university boards, indicating a convergence towards corporate board models. A still remaining and crucial difference between university boards and corporate boards is that, in most cases, university leaders are not accountable to their university boards. The latter cannot dismiss the former

³ One of the exceptions are Austrian university boards (De Boer et al. 2010).

as a consequence of poor performance or misbehavior. By and large, university boards also do not grant bonuses on the basis of assessments of the leadership's performance or provide for any sort of sanctions in the case of non-compliance with target setting agreements.

To sum up, to this date university boards have been introduced in most of the university governance structures in Europe and—if the trend continues—these bodies are gradually becoming more similar to their counterparts in the corporate world with regards to formal authority, composition and functions. The implementation of university boards, which in most cases are a novelty to university governance regimes, is part of the politically intended transformation of universities towards a more complete, more autonomous and more efficient organization. From the perspective of HE policy makers, who care about the progress and success of “their” universities, it is a logical step to translate legitimated governance structures from a neighboring system, the corporate world, into the higher education context, which is deemed to having to become more alike to business enterprises (competitive on quasi-markets, efficient). The major driver of these reforms to governance structure are global models of organizational governance, which are based on myths of rationality and provide a high degree of legitimacy to the universities embracing them—and especially for the reformers situated outside the universities, namely in the ministries, the main reference for an efficient, competitive and autonomous organization with strategic capabilities is the corporate enterprise.

But we are also observing skepticism and resistance to the introduction/empowerment of university boards, especially targeted at models with all-externally composed boards. This points to obvious discrepancies in the understandings of what a *legitimate* governance structure entails and what it does not.

Actors holding fast to the ideals of the Humboldtian *Wissenschaftsideal* and who believe in the self-regulation of the scientific community (*academia*), naturally disapprove of any external intrusions into matters of science (research and teaching), especially from individuals belonging to a quite different realm (e.g. corporate world). It is the very university boards that provide for the formal inclusion of such external actors in university decision-making, a big portion of them being primarily employed in the private sector (for Germany: Nienhüser 2011). External board members are seen as an embodiment of this intrusion. This group of critics also tends to oppose recent NPM reforms in general, i.e. the whole range of NPM instruments and their targets. As a result, those university members share certain role expectations of university boards that are mostly negative, e.g. University boards shall not exert influence on core operations of the universities (matters of research and teaching).

Also more specifically, from the perspective of all organizational members of the university (mostly academic staff and students), the formal establishment of a powerful board is an unwelcome change since it constitutes a disturbance to well-established decision-making processes and internal power balances. History matters for any organizational process (Krücken 2003)—it matters for university governance, too. Moreover, in contrast to societal stakeholders and policy-makers, these critics tend to oppose the notion that the university has got to adopt governance models from the corporate world in order to be legitimate. Holding fast to this notion, they draw a line of delineation, basically stating “We are not a business company! We are a university!”—and in these conceptions university governance works fine with a strong academic senate and without university boards.

Contrary to these convictions, some critics from the private sector claim that university boards have to look even more like their counterparts in corporations. These critics mainly

disapprove of university boards without any formal authority and rather favour the abolition of the senates.

The role of university board members in university governance: what are the factors shaping governance practice?

As already stressed in the introductory section, in many studies of HE institutions, university governance is often boiled down to the formal structures, instruments and regulatory underpinnings of decision-making processes. We argue that actor behavior in the day-to-day activities in decision-preparation and –making processes in universities are still not adequately understood while it certainly is core to the concept of governance since clearly the multitude of governance actors and their individual contributions matter for governance outcomes. In this section we would like to present a conceptual approach to university board members' behavior patterns which reflect certain roles.

Governance practice is generally assumed to be decoupled from the formal structures as defined by HE laws and university bylaws in order to keep the university both, legitimate and efficient (Meyer and Rowan 1977). But what are the factors that shape the actual activity structures? What kinds of roles do university board members take and thereby define the whole board's role in university governance? Are they pro-active manipulators or rather indifferent and passive outsiders? And which factors contribute to their different role enactments? While those questions are primarily of empirical nature,⁴ it is nevertheless of crucial importance to conceptualise potential actor roles in the light of contextual factors, local conditions and expectation patterns. These factors include formal institutions as given by the formal structure, informal institutions as they evolved path-dependently and perceived role expectations of positive or negative kind from various intra- and extra-organizational actors.

But let us first look at role models of managers and directors as studied by scholars in organizational and business studies. The presented role models can also be understood as role dimensions which can be enacted by a person in a given governance position. Every role entails different predominant patterns of behavior. Mintzberg (as quoted in Bogumil and Schmid 2001) groups managerial behavior in three different groups, providing for ten managerial roles:

- *Interpersonal roles*: As a *figurehead* the actor must carry out social, inspirational, legal and ceremonial duties, is a symbol of the organization and must be accessible to inside and outside actors who prefer to approach him/her because of status and authority. In the role of the *leader* the actor defines structures and strategies, shapes working environments, supervises processes and directs, encourages and alerts. As a *liaison* the actor is functioning as a communication centre maintaining ties to internal and external networks, exchanging information.
- *Information processing roles*: In these kinds of roles the manager is functioning as a *monitor/supervisor*, an *active disseminator* or *spokesman* and thereby basically seeking/receiving information from many sources to evaluate the organization's performance and position in the field. Monitoring of internal operations, external events, ideas, trends are also counted to his duties. He's there to detect changes, problems and opportunities and to construct decision-making scenarios. Furthermore

⁴ An analogous empirical study is currently being conducted by the authors to provide for empirical results.

she brings external views into her organization and facilitates internal information flows between subordinates. In the role of the spokesman, the manager informs and lobbies others (external to his/her own organizational group). Key influencers and stakeholders are kept informed of performances, plans and policies. For outsiders, the manager is an expert in the field in which his/her organization operates

- *Decision roles:* As an *initiator/changer* the actor designs and initiates the organizational change. Gaps are identified, improvement programmes defined. The manager initiates a series of related decisions/activities to achieve actual improvement. The *disturbance handler* is a generalist role i.e. taking the initiative when the organization is in an uncertain or dangerous situation and there is no clear programmed response at hand. Disturbances may arise from staff, resources, competitors, the state or innovation has unexpected consequences. As a *resource allocator* the manager oversees and adapts the allocation of all resources (money, personnel, reputation). The managerial task here is to ensure the basic work system is in place and to programme staff overloads—what to do, by whom, what processing structures will be used. The *negotiator* takes charge over important negotiating activities with other organizations.

The managerial roles presented here were initially intended to group role dimensions of persons occupying positions in the management of an organization and not for board members. However, given the different context and regulatory framework, it is plausible to conceptualise these role dimensions as potential roles of university board members. All managerial roles require considerable time investments outside the board room.

Closer to our objects of analysis, Cornforth (2003) suggests different perspectives on boards in non-profit organizations. While these perspectives are supposed to be views from different theoretical angles and ways of looking at university boards, it is also plausible to summarize them as different role models of board members which are defined by predominant patterns of behavior. This means, following the suggestions from literature on non-profit boards, university board members can enact the following roles in university governance:

- *The state's agents/supervisors:* In the role as state's agents, university board members act in the interest of the owners of the universities, i.e. the state and respective government. In this role board members ought to supervise university planning and strategy-making as well as performance and assess it in the light of target settings with the state. Thereby, university boards are a counter-weight to the university leadership on crucial issues, controlling and potentially objecting university leadership's plans as well as communicating expectations from the state. While enacting this role, university board members clearly see themselves as government's agents and supervisors and base their action on the role expectations from the state government/ministries. With regards to board activity, they critically assess strategic and budgetary plans to ensure an efficient and effective utilization of state resources and might even openly oppose the university leadership in the case of non-compliance with government expectations.
- *Societal/private stakeholders:* University board members are often nonchalantly characterized as stakeholders (see e.g. Amaral et al. 2002). But we argue that in order to describe them as stakeholders they must show certain patterns of behavior: In the role of societal/private stakeholders university board members represent legitimate interests and expectations from the environment, mostly from private organizations such as businesses and corporations, employers in general as well as stakeholder groups from different parts of the society. The problem is that there are various groups of stakeholders who have legitimate interests in the development and the "output" of a

university: parents, employers, corporations, research organizations, unions, etc., and it all depends on the personal background of the board member which stakeholders he or she potentially represent. As societal/private stakeholders university board members have a more political role to communicate and represent these potentially divergent interests. The board itself could then be anything between a kind of a societal parliament to an old-boys club serving narrow business interests of a couple of corporations. More often than not, university boards across Europe are not composed of a representative sample of the various stakeholders of the university and thus one might ask if university boards potentially over represent particular interests from the corporate world, for instance, as Nienhüser (2012) indicates for Germany. With regards to board activity, the stakeholder board members will regularly voice legitimate claims from the stakeholder groups and try to influence university plans and decisions accordingly, or at least they would try to monitor university plans to ensure stakeholder interests are respected. In the situation of conflict of stakeholder interests and university plans, board members tend to criticize university leadership and ask for reviews.

- *Stewards/partner*: Enacting the role of a steward, university board members show patterns of behavior commonly associated to someone called a partner or close advisor. In this case they are primarily partners to the university leadership and support them with their issue-related expertise or their experience in decision-making processes, especially in strategic and budgetary decisions. A university board dominated by board members who take this role, is neither a supervisory board nor a critical assessor and normally will never openly veto the university leadership's proposals since it has already contributed to these proposals earlier in the process. In this role board members have strong ties with the university leadership and almost never openly oppose the rector's positions. Rather, steward board members see themselves as sounding boards for the university leadership and show patterns of communication that is equally focused on this central actor. Rytmeister (2007a, b) as well as Marshall and Rytmeister (2007), for example, have found for Australian universities that board members and university leadership tend to relate to each other more like partners rather than opponents in decision-making processes.
- *Rubber stamps/legitimisers*: The role of a rubber stamp is more of symbolic and ceremonial nature. In this role board members are passive or even indifferent and occupy the position for abstract reputational reasons or because they were asked to. They rarely spend time with reading university leadership's proposals and very often do not show up at board meetings. For the university leadership a rubber stamp board is instrumental to its own power since the rubber stamp board's primary function is to legitimize university leadership's plans and decisions and not to be actively involved. This role is often enacted by very busy board members whose attention levels are generally low due to their large status set. These actors show the least engagement in the university, fulfill only their formal obligations and do not communicate with other actors but the university leadership. They don't engage in negotiations or potentially conflictful conversations with other governance actors (Table 3).

Now, the crucial question is which factors contribute to the individual enactment of one or more of these roles? Or, to put the question differently, what constrains and shapes actor behavior in university governance? A clear picture of these factors is necessary for an accurate understanding of governance practice, since without a good grasp of contextual factors, one might perhaps be able to identify governance roles but one will not be able to explain them. In the following we will focus on three identified categories of factors impacting on the governance activities of university board members:

Table 3 Potential roles of university board members

Role/role dimension	Predominant pattern of behavior	Predominant level of board activity
Managerial roles	Interpersonal roles, information-processing roles, decision roles: In all of the ten managerial roles, board members are actively engaged in university management and show typical patterns of <i>university managers</i>	High—Pro-active to active
The state's agents/supervisors	Supervisors ask for independent measurements of university performance and outputs; produce skeptical reviews and assessments of leadership's plans and proposals; strong involvement in budgetary allocation and university strategies; more time-consuming decision-making processes; show eventually open opposition to the leadership; Regular reporting and strong ties to the ministry; Communication of governmental interests and strong representation of the ministry's preferences	High to medium—active to passive
Societal/private stakeholders	Representation of legitimate interests of societal groups and private organizations; Skeptical reviews of university leadership plans; “audible voice from outside”; discussing and negotiating of divergent interests from different stakeholders; eventually opposition to the leadership; attempts to influence decision in favour of stakeholder interests; potentially divergent stakeholder interests in one board; potentially narrow interest-seeking behavior of business enterprise representatives	High to medium—active to passive
Stewards/partner	Close collaboration and partnership with the university president/rector; support and advice to the university leadership on issues of strategy and development; mainly providing external expert knowledge and ideas; “sounding board” for the rector; little communication with other university actors; little involvement in matters in which leadership is not expecting support/advice; little opposition to university	Medium to low—passive to responsive
“Rubber stamps”/legitimisers	No critical assessment or opposition; no vetos to plans or proposals; almost no substantial contribution during the decision-making process; sporadic attention of board meetings; little time investment; ceremonial fulfillment of formal obligations; communication almost exclusively with university leadership if any outside the board meetings; mostly only legitimating university president's/rector's decisions	Low—passive to indifferent

- Organizational factors
- Factors resulting from the design of the formal position
- Factors resulting from various role expectations and role conflicts.

Organizational factors

The university board members and the roles they take are embedded in the context of a public, non-profit and specific (Musselin 2006) organization. This kind of organization is mainly funded by tax payer's money and regulated by the state through HE laws. From these organizational features we can deduce the following factors which are contextual

factors/conditions, to a high extent relevant for every governance actor involved in the university, not only for board members:

- *Limited organizational coupling (steerability)*: Despite the reform efforts the university remains to be a specific organization whose core technologies are poorly understood and cannot be steered easily from a central level (Musselin 2006). Furthermore, by and large it remains to be a loosely-coupled system (Weick 1976) which also complicates top-down steering efforts. Thus, albeit in many European cases university boards might be endowed with a lot of formal authority, the degree of their actual power is limited by the organizational specificities of the university.
- *Financial dependence (financial autonomy)*: Most public universities in Europe are public corporations, i.e. they are owned and controlled by the state. The vast majority of funds universities acquire are derived from tax money. Even so called third-party funds from national research councils like the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), are in most cases tax money, too. Contrary to corporate boards of directors, university boards will not have the same space of manoeuvre simply due to this financial dependency from the state which involves pre-defined funding mechanisms or formulas. The actual money university leadership and university board can allocate freely in a top-down manner is generally quite low. This has an impact on the board member's motivation to engage in the hereby constrained steering processes.
- *Exogeneity of governance structures (polity/policy autonomy)*: In contrast to business companies, most European universities are still not free to choose their own governance structures. In most European cases HE laws define details of governance bodies, decision-making processes and other relevant procedures for all public universities in a particular state. While these politically implemented structures have a high legitimacy in the environment, the intra-organizational levels of legitimacy are assumed to be lower since organizational actors are mostly not involved in the policy-making process. As a consequence, such a profound reform of the governance structures like the establishment of a whole new body will face more skepticism and disapproval from internal members than it would have, if this change would have resulted from a decision made by organizational governance actors.
- *Stability of governance structures (path length)*: It is also affecting the roles of university board members that the exogenously designed governance structures are being reformed quite frequently. This is mainly a result from divergent views in the polity on the best way forward in terms of university governance. Guy Neave (1994: 315) points to this problem of HE reforms in stating about governance structures that, "their prime characteristics lie in their being in a state of permanent flux. Or, to put matters differently, in state of continual provisionality." When governance structures are regarded as provisional, then governance actors such as board members have little motivation as well as available time to develop a thorough self-understanding.

All four of the above mentioned factors have taken a different local development in any given HE system and are thus to be regarded as only relevant to a varying case-specific extent. In other words, every factor is required to be scaled from low to high relevance for every HE system. For example, the factor "provisionality" has low relevance for university governance practice in a country in which the frequency of HE reforms is low and high relevance for university governance practice in which reforms of governance structures are very frequent.

Factors resulting from the design of the formal position

University board members occupy a formal position in an individual university. This position is designed by the policy-makers who made the changes to the HE laws or internal committees who made changes to the organizational bylaws. As part of the formal governance structure this formal design contains details of the position such as rights and obligations, formal accountability, salary, etc. These details can also be understood as the positional factors shaping the governance role. Some of the implications of the existing designs of university board member position are explained below:

- *Level of attention (involvement)*: In most European cases, university board membership is designed as a side job that does not require much attention. In many German cases, for instance, university board meetings take place only two times per year and board members receive only little financial recompensation. Furthermore, very often external board members are busy professionals with little time to spend for university decision-making. Attention levels are assumed to be lowest in systems where (financial/reputational) incentives to be actively engaged as university board members are low.
- *Degree of accountability*: If the board as a whole or the university board members individually are not formally accountable to anyone (as in most German cases), then incentives are rather low to be actively engaged in the role of a board member. Moreover, where no accountability mechanism exists, the probability of abuse of the position is much higher. Furthermore, accountability entails a feedback mechanism which is important for role clarification and role affirmation. A low degree of accountability is assumed to contribute to higher levels of role ambiguity.
- *Infrastructure (informational independence)*: In part connected to the first factor is the problem of an asymmetric distribution of information, or informational dependence. One can assume that university board members' role in governance practice will be less independent where other governance actors have got a large advantage in terms of information about the organization, the agendas, plans, etc. A structural disadvantage on part of the university board members can be detected where boards are not supported with their own administration/agency. Without such a support unit of the university board which collects, prepares and forwards information on decision-making issues, university development, actor interests and preferences as well as other relevant day-to-day activities, the board members potentially get caught in dependencies, mostly from the university leadership which typically provides the university board with information and thereby is able to withhold or distribute information selectively.
- *Formal powers (authority)*: Of course, formal powers/authority is of major importance for the role of university boards. It's not only important in which objects of decision-making (strategic plans, budgetary allocation, study programs, etc.) the boards are involved, but also the degree of their formal authority: the right to comment on a proposal, the right to propose a plan, the right to demand changes to a plan, the right to veto/block a plan. Where higher education laws or university statutes give insight into the details of authority configurations, it's possible to identify and group formally powerful boards and formally less powerful boards. Formally more powerful boards are assumed to produce more active board members due to motivational reasons.
- *Composition and size of the board*: Equally, the board configurations in terms of size and composition rules matter for governance practice and role enactment. Mixed boards with a share of internal and external members have the advantage that the whole board is more informed while at the same time providing for an unequal distribution of

information among board members. It is an open question if mixed boards are thus more active than all-external boards but individual engagement might differ considerably.

As with the organizational factors, the factors resulting from the board configuration as explained above take different forms in different universities. An example: Where board members are supported with well-trained and loyal staff, board independence is high, and thus we can expect to observe a more informed role of university board members in governance practice.

Factors resulting from various role expectations/role conflicts

Role theory approaches⁵ stress the importance of role expectations that are communicated to a person in a given formal position (status). Although every person, who is being employed in any given organization, has to deal with different role expectations, the situation for university board members is more difficult. Firstly, some factors resulting from the design of the formal position as described above contribute to board members' role ambiguity and inhibit role affirmation (e.g. lack of feedback mechanism in the form of an accountability system and frequent governance reforms). Second, in most cases externally composed university boards are an institutional innovation in the university context.⁶ External board members have no adequate role archetypes in their local environments nor have they experienced other persons in similar positions during their life time who could function as blueprints for their governance role enactment. One might argue that corporate boards of directors offer role archetypes for university board members but due to the organizational and positional factors described above, these archetypes do neither fit the situation board members find themselves in, nor the various role expectations they are confronted with, which will be discussed below.

Role expectations can be positive (“Behave this way!”) or negative (“Do not consider behaving that way!”) and are normally communicated, both formally and informally, from a variety of role senders to the role receiver (university board member) and count as precepts and guidelines for the action of the individual actor in the specific governance position. Moreover, the role senders differ in their communication in terms of the level of clarity and the level of frequency with which expectations are communicated, and thus role expectations can differ in their level of salience, only because of these sender issues. Furthermore, the role receiver has his or her own set of beliefs, opinions and ideas about the occupied position and legitimate roles, as well as personal needs (which will be discussed further below). For university board members, this constellation of expectations may lead to the following role conflicts:

- *Intra-sender conflict*: This type of a role conflict occurs when a role sender requires a role receiver to perform contradictory or inconsistent roles. This applies to university board members, for example, if the university leadership requires the board members to voice diverse external interests as societal stakeholders in university decision-making processes while requiring them at the same time to simply approve of the proposals the leadership makes.

⁵ For the following sections the following references have been used as a basis: Merton (1957), Kahn et al. (1964), Wiswede (1977).

⁶ There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, e.g. U.K. universities.

- *Inter-sender conflict*: A role receiver experiences this type of conflict if the role behavior demanded by one role sender is incongruent with the role behavior demanded by another role sender. This type of a role conflict is probably the most common one for university board members who are exposed to divergent role expectations from a variety of role senders: the state, societal stakeholder groups, their home organization, the university leadership, the academic senate, the students, etc.
- *Intra-role conflict*: This type of conflict occurs if two dimensions of a role are not compatible in practice. For university board members this conflict occurs where they are e.g. required to supervise/control the university leadership on the one hand and being close consultants on the other.
- *Inter-role conflict*: This type of conflict occurs if an individual occupies two or more positions and there takes roles which are in all in conflict with each other. This entails conflicts of interests. Board members who are in the position of a CEO elsewhere and are expected to maximize profits of their company may get into a situation as university board members in which they are required to make a decision that would be good for the university but would negatively impact on the profits of their home organization.
- *Person-role conflict*: This type of role conflict occurs if the role expectations are incongruent with the board member's beliefs, attitudes, values and convictions.

For detailed analyses and cross-country comparisons of role conflicts of board members, one must clearly have a sufficient picture of the different role senders (other actors) and various forms of role sending. Some role expectations are kept implicit and are not explicitly voiced:

- The *state government and relevant ministries* who are in many cases responsible for the design of the formal positions of university board members express their expectations through the most formal mode of communication, namely by law. For the university board member, this form of role sending is potentially the most solid one, because as a legal norm it embodies the most basic and most transparent way of communicating obligations and requirements. State government often attaches more detailed role expectations in the official announcements of the respective HE law which can also serve as a guideline for the board member.
- At *university level*, *university statutes and charters* contain role expectations which are equally formal. These documents are in most cases only local adaptations of HE laws but sometimes provide for local interpretations of certain provision.
- At *individual and group level* there are to be found the most relevant role expectations sent from a variety of central actors. In their explicit form, in minutes of *Senate or Rectorate* meetings dealing with the expectations towards the university board, or in the direct communication with the board, these intra-organizational actors consciously or unconsciously send their role expectations to the board members. Perhaps the most influential role senders are *university presidents and rectors*, especially within such configurations of formal structures that provide for the involvement of the university leadership in the selection of board members or provide for informational dependencies. Formal hierarchies in general are important devices with which role expectations can achieve a higher level of salience.
- Another potentially influential role sender is the *home organization* of the university board member. The board member is not necessarily exposed to expectations from his or her home organization. But we assume that, *if* the home organization expresses clear and unequivocal role expectations and those expectations are not incongruent with the personal attitudes and beliefs of the board member, these expectations will have a

priority—the simple reason is that the person values his or her organization of primary employment the most.

- There are a range of other rather diffuse role expectations from role senders in the environment of the university, among others, from stakeholder groups, including employers, associations, civil society groups, media, political parties, etc. Those expectations gain salience if the board member is a representative of any of these groups. Moreover, expert groups such as HE researchers, HE managers and HE consulting agencies, are considered to be role senders affecting university board member roles and potentially communicate role expectations.

To sum up, a wide range of actors express or implicitly have role expectations towards university board members. The centrality of the role senders to the university board clearly matters for the importance of the respective expectations. Some of these expectations are formal requirements and obligations, others are communicated informally. But what is giving weight to the expectations, is the ability of the role sender to sanction non-compliance. As long as there is neither a social nor legal sanction to non-compliance with a certain expectation possible, salience is assumed to be low. Thus, *hierarchization* of role expectations is necessary. The main procedure to handle the many expectations is a cognitive hierarchization process: Like any other person, board members cognitively create an internal rank order of all those expectations. This order is mainly determined by two factors: the *personal needs* (Maslow 1970) of the board member and the perceived *legitimacy of the role expectations*. It is expected that especially busy professionals as university board members in an unattractive setting of organizational and positional factors would invest little time and attention in their role since other personal needs are prevailing. Expectations that would require a huge investment of personal resources will be ranked lower than expectations which can be met with a little investment of resources. Furthermore, it is assumed that the level of legitimacy of expectations correlates with the centrality and level of authority of the role sender. Thus, role expectations voiced by journalists in newspapers will be ranked lower than expectations communicated by the university president.

Another role conflict processing device is *solidarizing*. University board members typically solidarize with each other across universities. An interesting example for such a “self-help-group” is the “Forum Hochschulräte” in Germany, organized and funded by two expert groups in cooperation with a national science foundation. In this forum university board members meet twice a year and exchange their experiences of role conflicts and discuss potential reforms. One of the main outputs of this solidarizing process among German university board members is a guidebook on the potential roles as university board members (Meyer-Guckel et al. 2010).

While attending one of the meetings of the solidarity group of German university board members, it became clear how diverse self-understandings of university board members despite the same national context can be. While one group of board members saw themselves in the role of a “sounding board”, a steward for the university leadership, another group expressed more pro-active attitudes. Some internal board members claimed that their board was a rubber stamp unit. The board members were of course all from different German Bundesländer. It is not surprising that the different self-understandings seem to be dependent on some of the formal designs of organization and positions as mentioned further above.

Conclusion

As this conceptual contribution has shown, the predominant patterns of behavior of university board members can be grouped into certain roles. Board members' role enactments are shaped by given organizational factors, factors resulting from the design of the formal position, i.e. board configurations, and a hierarchized perception of a range of role expectations which board members are confronted with.

The following overview shall give an overview of these factors (Table 4).

The roles that board members choose to take are reflected in the patterns of their actions and non-actions and at the same time function as containers for their room of manoeuvre in the university governance regime they are part of. These role enactments are dependent from the locally different organizational characteristics of the university, from the locally different design of the formal position as well as legitimate expectations from role senders in the intra- and extra-organizational environments.

In some cases we can observe symptoms of role ambiguity and role conflicts (solidarizing), often resulting from intra-sender or inter-sender, inter-role and personal-role conflicts. Role ambiguity is assumed to impact on board member's activity and overall performance of the board. If role conflicts remain unresolved, even formally very powerful boards with many veto-powers will exert little influence on university decision-making and board members will rather enact a stewardship or a rubber stamp role.

With the help of the conceptualized map of factors it is more feasible to grasp and explain differences in governance practice. For example, a university with a high degree of organizational coupling, a high financial and polity/policy autonomy as well as high path

Table 4 Overview of factors impacting on university board members' roles

Organizational factors	Organizational coupling	Scope of strategic capability/steerability
	Financial autonomy	Impacting on attractiveness of position as board member
	Policy/polity autonomy	
	Path length	Stability of governance structure; Impact on level of role ambiguity
Factors resulting from the design of the formal position/board configuration	Financial incentives/frequency of board meeting/overall structural involvement	Level of attention (Involvement)
	Accountability	(A)symmetrical distribution of information
	Infrastructure/informational independence	Level of responsibility over specific objects of decision-making
	Composition and size of the board	Board independence and freedom
	Formal powers/authority	
Role expectations	Role conflicts, role overload; coping with role ambiguity	Priority of certain actor's expectations
	Personal needs	Negative expectations potentially constrain room of manoeuvre (Legitimate behavior)
	Perceptions of legitimate expectations	Level of role ambiguity/role conflicts impacting on board activity

length, a high level of board independence with many formal powers and clear accountability mechanisms as well as a little level of role conflicts or ambiguity is supposed to come with an overall more active, a more responsible and also more powerful board. On the opposite, a university which is only loosely-coupled in all respects with low autonomy levels, exogenously induced and continuous changes to its governance structures, with highly asymmetric distribution of information among governance actors, no accountability mechanism as well as a wide range and variety of demanding role expectations is assumed to come with a toothless and inactive rubber stamp board with passive and indifferent board members showing a very low level of engagement and involvement. The repercussions of these different role enactments of board members on the power of the university leadership are obvious. A rubber stamp board is likely to increase the university president's power and decrease the level of conflict between the university board and the leadership in decision-making processes. On the other hand those board members will be less engaged for 'their' university and thus provide only little value-added in this sense. A more managerial or a stakeholder board is likely to be an active and influential player in university decision-making and provide for a more political form of interaction between the president and the board including bargaining, threats of veto-playing, etc.

Crossing role theory approaches and organizational theory approaches is of great help in analysing university governance practice in terms of predominant patterns of actor behavior. Patterns of practice which are decoupled from formal governance structures have been widely overlooked in contemporary discussions on university governance. With this conceptual foundation and the map of relevant factors impacting on governance practice, empirical studies could identify case-specific configurations of these factors and accompanying role enactments and test the hypotheses stated above. Further empirical research is also needed to make explicit the differences and the similarities between the roles of corporate directors (Adams et al. 2008) on the one hand and the roles of university board members on the other. Moreover, research on the effects of governance could benefit from this more practice-focused governance perspective. So far, most studies dealing with governance effects on the core technologies of universities, teaching and research, or the effects on university performance have employed formal governance structure models as their independent variable. In contrast, we propose to identify local patterns of governance practice with the respective actor roles and to clearly assess the different factors involved in shaping actor behavior in university decision-making processes.

Acknowledgments This paper has been developed within the EUROHESC framework in the Collaborative Research Project: "Transforming Universities in Europe" (TRUE). We are grateful to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and the European Science Foundation (ESF) for their support. We would also like to thank our project partners, the editors of the special issue and the reviewers for their critical assessments of our drafts. Finally, we extend our gratitude to Ms. Yemisrach Negash and Ms. Katharina Stenzel for their outstanding support in the preparation of this paper.

References

- Adams, R., Hermalin, B. E., & Weisbach, M. S. (2008). The Role of Boards of Directors in Corporate Governance: A conceptual framework and survey. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 48(1), 59–108.
- Amaral, A. (2008). Transforming higher education. In A. Amaral, et al. (Eds.), *From governance to identity. A Festschrift for Mary Henkel* (pp. 81–94). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Amaral, A., Jones, G. A., & Karseth, B. (Eds.). (2002). *Governing higher education: National perspectives on institutional governance*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

- Beasley, M. S. (1996). An empirical analysis of the relation between the board of director composition and financial statement fraud. *The Accounting Review*, 71(4), 443–465.
- Bleiklie, I. (1994). *The new public management and the pursuit of knowledge. Notat 9411*. Bergen: LOS.
- Bogumil, J., Heinze, R. G., Grohs, S., & Gerber, S. (2007). *Hochschulräte als neues Steuerungsinstrument? Eine empirische Analyse der Mitglieder und Aufgabenbereiche*. Düsseldorf: Hans-Böckler Stiftung.
- Bogumil, J., & Schmid, J. (2001). *Politik in Organisationen. Organisationstheoretische Ansätze und praxisbezogene Anwendungsbeispiele*. Opladen: Leske & Budrich.
- Bradshaw, P., Murray, V., & Wolpin, J. (1992). Do nonprofit boards make a difference? An exploration of the relationships among board structure, process, and effectiveness. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 21(3), 227–249.
- Brunsson, N., & Sahlin-Andersson, K. (2000). Constructing organizations: The example of public sector reform. *Organization Studies*, 24(4), 721–724.
- Burgi, M., & Gräf, I. (2010). Das (Verwaltungs-)organisationsrecht der Hochschulen im Spiegel der neueren Gesetzgebung und Verfassungsrechtsprechung. *Deutsches Verwaltungsblatt*, 125(18), 1125–1134.
- Cadbury, A. (1990). *The Company Director*. London.
- Clark, B. R. (1998). *Creating entrepreneurial universities: Organizational pathways of transformation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Cornforth, C. (Ed.). (2003). *The governance of public and non-profit organizations: What do boards do? Routledge studies in the management of voluntary and non-profit organizations*. London: Routledge.
- De Boer, H. F., Enders, J., & Leislyte, L. (2007a). Public sector reform in Dutch higher education: The organizational transformation of the university. *Public Administration*, 85(1), 27–46.
- De Boer, H. F., Enders, J., & Schimank, U. (2007b). On the way towards new public management? The governance of university systems in England, the Netherlands, Austria and Germany. In D. Jansen (Ed.), *New forms of governance in research organizations. Disciplinary approaches, interfaces and integration* (pp. 137–152). Dordrecht: Springer.
- De Boer, H. F., & File, J. (2009). *Higher education governance reforms across Europe (MODERN project)*. Brussels: ESMU.
- De Boer, H. F., Huisman, J., & Meister-Scheytt, S. (2010). Supervision in ‘modern’ university governance: Boards under Scrutiny. *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(3), 317–333.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147–160.
- Dragsic, Z., Kretek, P. M., & Kehm, B. M. (2011). *University boards: Formal authority and accountability in five countries*. Paper presented at 33rd Annual EAIR Forum, Warsaw 2011.
- Estermann, T., & Nekkala, T. (2009). *University autonomy in Europe I*. Brussels: Exploratory study.
- Fama, E. F. (1980). Agency problem and the theory of the firm. *Journal of Political Economy*, 88, 288–308.
- Fama, E. F., & Jensen, M. C. (1983). Separation of ownership and control. *Journal of Law and Economics*, 26(June), 301–325.
- Ferlie, E., Musselin, C., & Andresani, G. (2008). The steering of higher education systems: A public management perspective. *Higher Education*, 56(3), 325–348.
- Green, J. C., & Griesinger, D. W. (1996). Board performance and organizational effectiveness in nonprofit social services organizations. *Non-profit Management and Leadership*, 6(4), 381–402.
- Herman, R. D., & Renz, D. O. (1998). Nonprofit organizational effectiveness: Contrasts between especially effective and less effective organizations. *Non-profit Management and Leadership*, 9(1), 23–38.
- Hüther, O. (2009). *Hochschulräte als Steuerungsinstrument. Beiträge für Hochschulforschung*, 31(2), 50–73.
- Hüther, O. (2010). *Von der Kollegialität zur Hierarchie? Eine Analyse des New Managerialism in den Landeshochschulgesetzen*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.
- Jackson, D. K., & Holland, T. P. (1998). Measuring the effectiveness of nonprofit boards. *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 27(2), 159–182.
- Kahn, R. L., Wolfe, D. M., Quinn, P. R., Snoak, J. D., & Rosenthal, R. A. (1964). *Organization stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity*. New York: Wiley.
- Kehm, B. M., & Lanzendorf, U. (Eds.). (2006). *Reforming university governance. Changing conditions for research in four European countries*. Bonn: Lemmens.
- Kogan, M., Bauer, M., Bleiklie, I., & Henkel, M. (2000). *Transforming higher education. A comparative study*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Krücken, G. (2003). Learning the ‘new, new thing’: On the role of path dependency in university structures. *Higher Education*, 46(3), 315–339.
- Krücken, G., & Meier, F. (2006). Turning the university into an organizational actor. In G. Drori, J. Meyer, & H. Hwang (Eds.), *Globalization and organization* (pp. 241–257). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Marshall, S., & Rytmeister, C. R. (2007). Studying political tensions in university governance: A focus on board member constructions of role. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 13(4), 281–294.
- Maslow, A. (1970). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Meier, F. (2009). *Die Universität als Akteur. Zum institutionellen Wandel der Hochschulorganisation*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.
- Merton, R. K. (1957). The role-set: Problems in sociological theory. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 8(2), 106–120.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 340–363.
- Meyer-Guckel, V., Winde, M., & Ziegele, F. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbuch Hochschulräte. Denkanstöße und Erfolgsfaktoren für die Praxis. In Zusammenarbeit mit CHE, Stifterverband der Deutschen Wissenschaft*. Essen: Heinz-Nixdorf-Stiftung.
- Musselin, C. (2006). Are universities specific organisations? In G. Krücken, A. Kosmützky, & M. Torca (Eds.), *Towards a multidiversity, universities between national traditions and global trends and national traditions* (pp. 63–84). Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.
- Neave, G. (1994). On looking both ways at once: Scrutinies of the private life of higher education. In P. A. M. Maasen & F. A. Van Vught (Eds.), *Inside Academia. New challenges for the academic profession*. Utrecht: CHEPS.
- Nienhüser, W. (2011). Ressourcenabhängigkeit und Hochschulräte. Eine empirische Analyse. In: *Hochschulwesen*, 59. Jg., H. 6, S. 199–204.
- Nienhüser, W. (2012). Academic Capitalism - Wirtschaftsvertreter in Hochschulräten deutscher Universitäten. Eine organisationstheoretisch fundierte empirische Analyse. In: U. Wilkesmann & C. Schmid (Hg.), (pp. 89–112). Wiesbaden: Hochschule als Organisation.
- OECD. (2003). Changing Patterns of Governance in Higher Education. In *Education policy analysis, Chapter 3*. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/0/20/35747684.pdf>. Accessed 20 January 2010.
- Paradeise, C., Reale, E., Bleiklie, I., & Ferlie, E. (Eds.). (2009). *University governance: Western European comparative perspectives*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Pearce, J. A., II & Zahra, S. A. (1991). The relative power of CEOs and boards of directors: Associations with corporate performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 12(2), 135–153.
- Pettigrew, A. M. (1992). On studying managerial elites. *Strategic Management Journal* 13, Special Issue: Fundamental Themes in Strategy Process Research, 163–182.
- Rytmeister, C. R. (2007a). *Working together in governance? The construction of common purpose amongst university governing body members*. Paper presented at the Australasian Association for Institutional Research 2007 Forum.
- Rytmeister, C. R. (2007b). *Governing university strategy: Perceptions and practice of governance and management roles*. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the European Association for Institutional Research (EAIR), Innsbruck, 26–29 August 2007.
- Scott, P. (1996). University governance and management: An analysis of the system and institutional level changes in Western Europe. In P. A. M. Maasen & F. A. Van Vught (Eds.), *Inside Academia. New challenges for the academic profession*. Utrecht: Cheps.
- Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21(1), 1–19.
- Wiswede, G. (1977). *Rollentheorie*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.