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**Abstract**

This paper addresses the issue of substructuring from the perspective of middle managers as they act as institutional mediators between governance and the academic fabric. On the basis of data gathered in eight European countries we discuss the tension between the need to tightly manage the university and the processes and structures of decision-making at the Faculty level. This tension introduces elements of governance that nuance the motto 'managers must manage' and suggest to university leadership the promotion of enablement skills allowing substructuring in terms of internal articulation of organisation, and ensuring motivation through ownership. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)