

ICHEM, School of Management, University of Bath

Competition in Higher Education – A Research Agenda

Georg Krucken

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'The Edge' Management suite, Level 1, Room 1.04

Competition plays an increasingly strong role in higher education, at different levels and in different national systems. However, the phenomenon is not well understood. Therefore, my presentation is mainly conceptual, though empirical data from different areas are used for illustration. It draws in particular on more recent conceptualizations of competition in sociology, economics, management studies and higher education research. As a result, competition is neither a natural relation which automatically sets in when resources are scarce, nor is it restricted to (modern) economies. Instead, it results from ongoing construction processes which also shape higher education. Therefore, one has to analyze carefully how settings are constructed in which competitive behavior can evolve. Competition is related to the rise of new governance schemes in higher education. As such, the role of the state is highly important for the construction of competitive settings. Though competition and markets are different governance schemes, the role of the latter has to be explored, too. Competition in higher education generates a variety of unintended consequences. These consequences will be discussed from an international comparative perspective

Georg Krücken is Professor of Higher Education Research and Director of INCHER-Kassel, the International Centre for Higher Education Research, both at the University of Kassel (Germany). He received his Ph.D. in sociology from Bielefeld University in 1996. From 2006 to 2011 he was a full professor at the German University of Administrative Sciences. From 1999 to 2001 and in 2011 he was a visiting scholar at Stanford University (Department of Sociology and School of Education). He taught as a guest professor at the Institute for Science Studies, University of Vienna, and at the Centre de Sociologie des Organisations, Sciences Po, Paris. He is president of the "Gesellschaft für Hochschulforschung" (Society for Higher Education Research) in Germany and spokesman of the international research network "New Institutionalism". His research interests include higher education research, organization studies, and neo-institutional theory.

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