

# Multiple Competitions in Higher Education

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## Introduction and Structure

- Multiple Competitions: Embeddedness of Different Actors in Different Competitions for Scarce Goods in Higher Education
- Four Causes and Interrelated Dynamics of Multiple Competitions
- Social Construction of Competitive Actors
- Three Implications of Multiple Competitions

Krücken, Georg, 2019: Multiple Competitions in Higher Education: A Conceptual Approach. In: Innovation: Organization & Management. First published online. DOI: 10.1080/14479338.2019.1684652

Hüther, Otto/Krücken, Georg, 2018: Higher Education in Germany—Recent Developments in an International Perspective. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2018 (Higher Education Dynamics, 49).

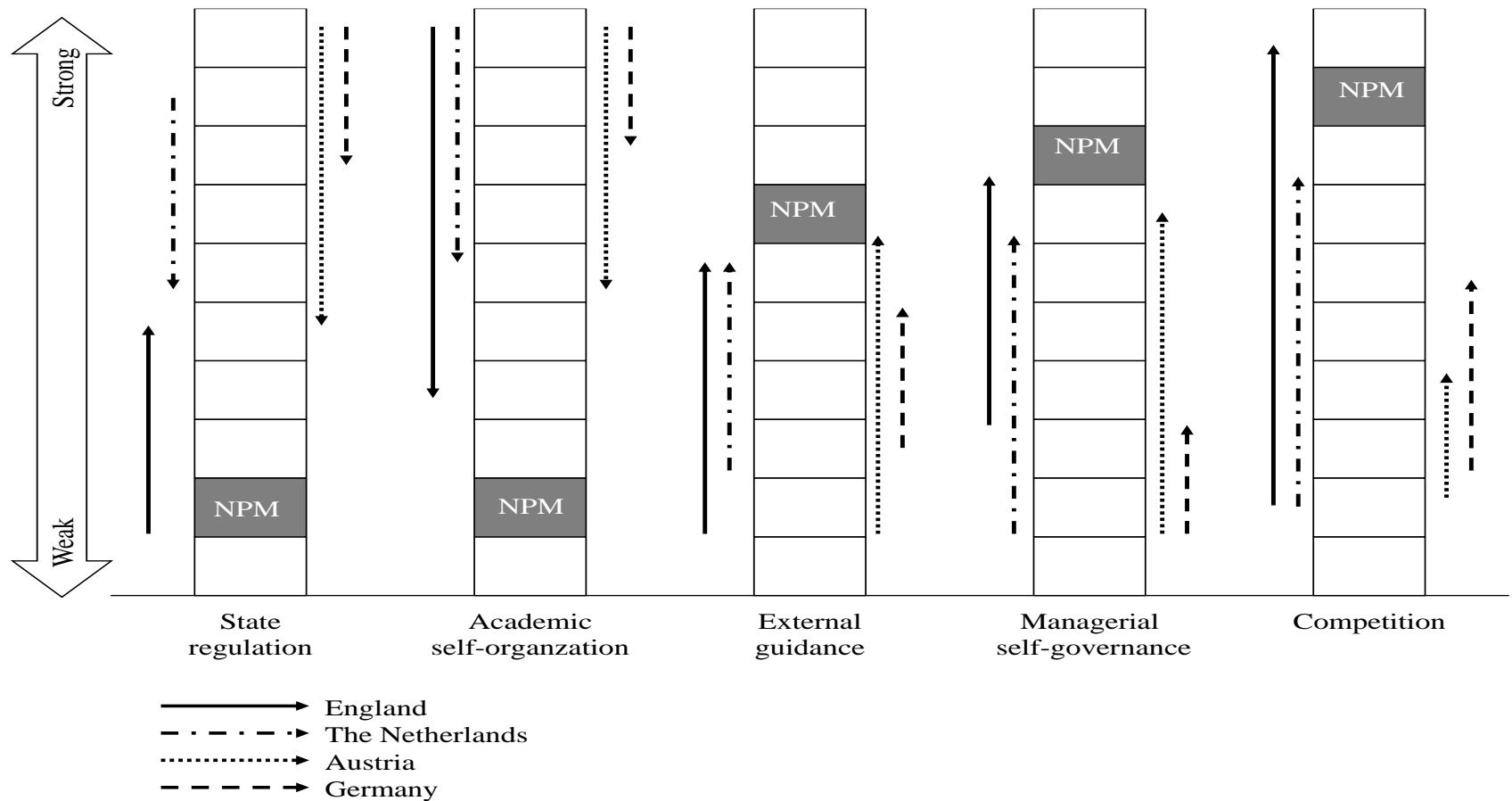
# Multiple Competitions Based on Intertwined Causes and Dynamics

- State and Supranational Actors
- Transformation of Universities into Competitive Actors
- Increasing Competition within Science System
- Metricization as Overall Trend

## State and Supranational Actors

- From Framework for Competition to Imposition of Competition (Naidoo 2016: Competition as Unquestionable Orthodoxy and Natural Order of Things)
- High Legitimacy of Competition in Different National Systems (Paradeise, Reale, Bleiklie & Ferlie 2009; Bleiklie, Enders & Lepori 2017)
- New Public Management Reforms as a Worldwide Trend (Pineda 2015; Jung, Horta & Yonezawa 2018)
- Supranational Actors and Funding Environment: EU, Foundations
- Competition Breeds Competition at Different Policy Levels (EU/National Level, Federal/State Level etc.)

# Governance Equalizer



In: Hüther/Krücken 2018: p. 116 (Based on de Boer 2007)

## Universities as Organizations: Traditional Accounts

- State (Hierarchy) und Academic Self-Organization Decision-Making Bodies (Community) as Traditional External and Internal Governance Actors, not the University as an Organization
- In Higher Education and Organization Research: Universities as
  - Loosely Coupled Systems (Weick 1976)
  - Professional Organizations (Mintzberg 1989)
  - Organized Anarchies (Cohen, March, Olsen 1972)
  - Specific Organizations (Musselin 2007)

# Comparative Analysis of Universities and University Systems in Europe Showing Strong Differences, but also a Common Characteristic ...

## France

- “Nowhere was a university considered as an entity” (Musselin 1999: 45)

## Germany

- “corporatist principle of collegiality among departments” (vom Bruch 1999: 40)
- “oligarchy of scientific seniors” (Teichler 1981: 108)

## Great Britain

- “strong authority at the bottom” (Clark 1983: 128)

## Italy

- Prime example of “academic oligarchy” (Clark 1983: 143), exercised by “baroni”

## Universities as (Competitive) Organizational Actors

- Standardized Performance Measurement and Comparison (vs. Black Box of Expert Organization)
- Individual Organizational Identity (vs. Universities as an Institution)
- Hierarchical Decision-making Structures (vs. Professional Self-Organization)
- Organizational Accountability (vs. Organized Anarchy)
- Openness to External Advice (vs. Church-like Character)
- Elaboration, Expansion and Differentiation of Formal Structures (vs. Lean Structure)
- Professionalized Management, Training and Networks

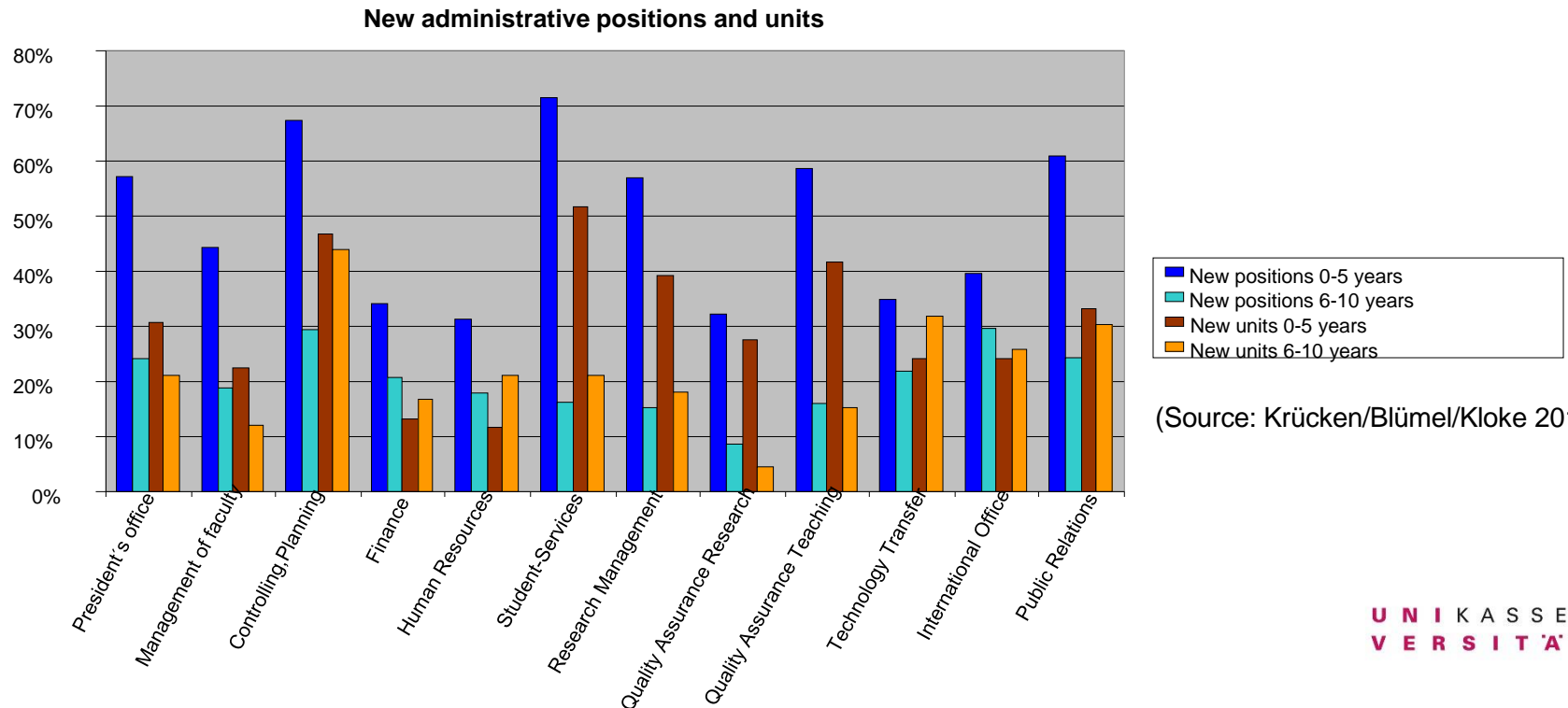


# Universities as a Competitive Organizational Actors

## Development of Formal Structures

In what functional areas within your university administration have new full time positions for administrative personnel / new organisational units been established during the last

5 / 10 years? (Yes Answers by Heads of University Administration in %)



## Increasing Competition within Science System

- Competition Among Individuals Deeply Embedded (Hayek 1968; Merton 1973; Bourdieu 1975) as Compared to Organizational Level
- Growth of the System and Scarcification of Competitive Goods
- Increasing Overall Relevance, Most Notable Change Concerning Junior Scholars
- Multiplication of Dimensions (Publications, Citations, Third-Party Funding, Societal Impact, External Research Stays etc.); not just “Publish or Perish” (Merton 1968; Garfield 1996)
- Construction of Individual Profile and Identity (Reckwitz 2020: The Society of Singularities)

## Metricization as Overall Trend

- General Trend in Society (Health, Welfare, Firms, Consumers etc.; see Mau 2019)
- Affecting States, Universities as Organizations, Individuals in Science and Higher Education through Rankings, Data Banks, and Networks
- Systematic Internal and External Measurement and Comparison of Individual Units
- Construction of Competitive Actors, not Simply 'Out There'

## Social Construction of Competitive Actors

- Competition Not Anthropologically Given, Important Social Conditions Necessary
- Framing Processes (Goffman 1974), US Team Sports as Historical Example (Leifer 1988)
- Competition vs. Direct Conflict (Simmel 1903: Consumers as “Third Parties”)
- „Third Parties“ in University Field: State, Funding Agencies, Evaluators, Rankings, Data Banks, and Networks
- Dialectics of Individualization and Social Integration through Competition: Increasingly Global Horizon and Comparing the Hitherto Uncomparable
- Mutual Reinforcement and Dynamics of Competitions and Competitive Actors

## Multiple Competitions: Definition and Analytical Distinctions

- Definition: Embeddedness of Individual and Collective Actors in Different, Nested and Interdependent Competitions for Scarce Goods
- Actors: States, Organizations (Universities), Other Collectives (Groups, Disciplines, Research Clusters), Individuals (Academics)
- Scarce Goods: Attention (In General), Resources, Reputation, Talent/Employment (More Concretely)
- One Research Hypothesis: Tension between Isomorphic Tendencies and Differentiation
- Research Group at the Interface of Sociology and Economics

# Implications of Multiple Competitions I: Creativity and Innovation in Higher Education

- Traditionally in Sociology and Economics of Science: Positive Effects of Competition; Here More Cautious Approach
- Temporal Structure of Multiple Competitions (Future/Present): Highly Dynamic System, but Increase of Risk, Uncertainty and Stress among Individuals and Organizations
- Increase of Tensions between Organizationally and Individually Motivated Competitive Strategies; Large, Visible, Collaborative Units vs. “Small Is Beautiful” for Scientific Breakthroughs
- Competition as Status Competition: Increase of Incremental Improvements, Decrease of Deviance?

## Implications of Multiple Competitions II: Higher Education Governance

- No Zero-Sum Game between Competition and other Governance Forms
- Ambivalent Relations between Competition and Community; Increasing Relevance of Cooperation
- Increasingly Strong Relations between Competition and Hierarchy
- Open Research Questions Concerning Competition and Market
- Multiple Competitions between Societal Coordination and Individual Strategies: How Is Governance Possible?

## **Implications of Multiple Competitions III: Higher Education Research**

- Interdisciplinary Research and Linking Higher Education Research and Science Studies
- Need for More International, Nested and Embedded Comparative Studies
- Competition and/or Market Based Systems: Similarities and Differences
- Beyond Higher Education Research: Relevance for Other Societal Fields



Thank you for your attention.