

Multiple Competitions in Higher Education – A Conceptual Approach

The “Betrieb” (organization, firm, establishment, ...) as corporate actor – a theoretical and empirical challenge
Helmut Schmidt-University Hamburg, 29 April 2021

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Introduction and Structure

- Multiple Competitions: Embeddedness of Different Individual and Collective Actors in Different Competitions for Scarce Goods (Attention, Resources, Reputation, Talent/Employment) in Higher Education
- Four Causes and Interrelated Dynamics of Multiple Competitions
- Transformation of Universities into (Competitive) Actors
- Social Construction of Competitive Actors
- Research Perspectives

Krücken, Georg, 2021: Multiple Competitions in Higher Education: A Conceptual Approach. In: Innovation: Organization & Management, Vol. 23, No. 2, 163-181

Multiple Competitions Based on Four Intertwined Causes and Dynamics

- State and Supranational Actors
- Transformation of Universities into (Competitive) Organizational 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 (Kwiek & Kurkiewicz 2012; 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.)

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 ... (vs. Corporate Actor)

France

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

Germany

- “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 **(Krücken & Meier 2006; Kosmützky & Krücken 2015; Whitley 2008; Musselin 2018, 2021)**

- 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

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’ (Brankovich, Ringel & Werron 2018) 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 (Hasse & Krücken 2013)
- 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

Research Perspectives

- Interdisciplinary Research (in particular: Sociology, Economics, Management Studies)
- Linkages to Neo-Institutional Theorizing on Actorhood (State, Organizations, Individuals; Bromley & Meyer 2015; Frank & Meyer 2020; Jepperson & Meyer 2021)
- Need for Comparative Studies (International, Cross-Sectoral)
- Competition and Other Forms of Higher Education Governance (Market, Hierarchy, Community): How Do They Relate to Each Other?
- Beyond Higher Education Research: Relevance for Other Societal Sectors (Public Administration, Nonprofit Sector, Economy)

Thank you for your attention.