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Abstract

This paper offers an overarching analytical heuristic that takes us beyond current research, anchored in conceptions of national states, markets, and systems of higher education institutions. We seek to shape comparative higher education research with regard to globalization in much the same way that Clark's (1983) "triangle" heuristic has framed comparative higher education research in the study of national policies and higher education systems. Our "glonacal agency heuristic" points to three intersecting planes of existence, emphasizing the simultaneous significance of global, national, and local dimensions and forces. It combines the meaning of "agency" as an established organization with its meaning as individual or collective action. Our paper critiques the prevailing framework in cross-national higher education research, addressing the liberal theory that underpins this framework, the ways scholars address the rise of neo-liberal policies internationally, conceptual shortcomings of this work, and emergent discourse about "academic capitalism". We then discuss globalization and our heuristic. Finally, we provide examples of how states, markets, and institutions can be

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reconceptualized in terms of global, national, regional, and local agencies and agency. (HRK /
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