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Abstract

The article discusses comparative organizational studies, focusing on change in higher education institutions, and in particular (but not only) on studies that compare organizations in different national settings. It first presents and discusses different approaches to comparison based on a couple of typologies that have been developed to identify different research strategies (cf. Page in Public Adm 73(1):123-141, 1995; Skocpol in Vision and method in historical sociology. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980: 356-391). It focuses on comparative strategies, and distinguishes between different strategies based on how issues of causality and generalizability are addressed. It illustrates how strategies may be used and combined with examples from comparative research projects, in many of which the author has participated. The second part deals with the current status of comparative research in higher education, and argues that a move in the direction of more rigorous, systematic comparisons is not just a question of quantification, but of conceptualization, and in particular that there is a need for concepts that can travel in meaningful ways. The experiences of one

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large comparative project, TRUE, are drawn upon in order to demonstrate how some of the challenges mentioned above, may be dealt with. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Bleiklie, Ivar, E-Mail:

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