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**Abstract**

The expansion of higher education systems has often been associated with the need for increasing diversification, namely at the program level, based on the pressures to adapt more general programmes to a more diverse student population and multiple regional, social, and economic needs. This paper explores empirically the question of programme diversity by drawing on the Portuguese higher education? experience, which presented massive expansion during the last decades and significant institutional competition in recent years. The study provides a longitudinal approach and analyzes in detail the evolution of diversification and specialization of the public and private sectors, as well as the university and polytechnic subsectors. The analysis aims at helping to illustrate the relevance of analysing diversity from an empirical point of view and its contribution to our understanding of the complex relationships between competition and diversity in contemporary higher education. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Teixeira, Pedro Nuno, E-Mail: pedrotx@fep.up.pt