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Disseminating the right information to the right audience: cultural determinants in the use (and misuse) of rankings / Leon Cremonini, Don Westerheijden and Jürgen Enders

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Abstract

Rankings and league tables, or Report Cards (RCs), of Higher Education Institutions have become a global phenomenon. Their purpose, it is claimed, is to help ?student-consumers? make informed decisions. Yet the degree to which RCs succeed in helping students in their college choice is disputed. Even though RCs are intended for all, which information is sought and how it is used may differ between potential students hailing from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds. In particular, RCs may neglect certain cultural determinants that influence students? college choice behaviour. The article reviews the literature on the cultural determinants of college choice and especially the use of RCs in the ambit of cultural determinants. In the United States, possibly because of evident educational gaps between ethnic groups in society, the issue of cultural perceptions in college choice has been addressed, albeit scantily. In Europe, this field of study is virtually non-existent, despite increasing indications that second and third generation immigrants still lag behind in terms of higher education participation and graduation rates. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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