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**Abstract**

In recent years, new models of governance have led to a more diversified higher education sector in Germany, but also to rapid fragmentation. Preoccupation with rankings and the direct adoption of elements of foreign systems of higher education have led to rival alliances, such as university cartels, which threaten to ultimately split the German university system. In the long run, this situation is expected to have extremely detrimental and long-lasting effects. The question arising is: Are these cartels helping to reform the university system or are they in fact accelerating its breakdown? (HRK / Abstract übernommen)