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Institutional change of universities as a problem of evolving boundaries

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Abstract

This paper examines institutional change in universities from the perspective of the notion of 'boundaries'. The paper asks: how can some of the most important regulatory and administrative changes in universities be understood in the framework of evolving boundaries? Two areas are studied empirically. First, the third mission of universities is examined. In Finland, as in other OECD countries scientific research and its applications outside the universities have reformed the ways in which universities are perceived as organizations. Moreover, the reactions of universities to expectations where they are assumed to promote and nurture regional competitive advantages are studied. Second, resource allocation and performance evaluation practices have been under constant change. The paper analyzes the impact of the conception of boundaries on the reforms of resource allocation and performance evaluation systems. It is posited that the analysis of boundary evolution can contribute to the theoretical understanding of universities, knowledge production in society, and the regulation, control and evaluation of those activities in society. Theoretical discussion could

27.3.2026

benefit more from the institutional theory approach. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)