

27.5.2025

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Title

Not all markets are created equal : re-conceptualizing market elements in higher education / Jens Jungblut ; Martina Vukasovic

Publication year

2018

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education. - 75 (2018) 5, S. 855 - 870

Inventory number

46934

Keywords

Hochschule und Staat : allgemein ; Hochschule und Wirtschaft

Abstract

Increasing reliance on market mechanisms in higher education is analysed both as one of the approaches to steering as well as in relation to the consequences of markets for quality and accessibility of higher education. This article goes beyond the normative considerations of market elements as inherently good or bad and the economic theory-guided focus on freedoms of users and providers, by presenting an alternative conceptualization. The conceptualization adapted from studies of markets in other parts of the welfare state to the context of higher education is based on two dimensions: (1) who effectively controls production of certain goods and services and (2) how access to and funding of these goods and services are regulated. It focuses on interests of three main actors—the state, the users (students) and the providers (higher education institutions). This leads to six conceptually distinct markets, whose key characteristics are illustrated by examples from Denmark, England, India, Norway, Portugal and Serbia. The key message is that this alternative conceptualization allows identifying variance in marketization of higher education with regards to (1)

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which actors are empowered, (2) who are the likely winners and losers and (3) what might be the risks of introducing specific market elements in a higher education system. More generally, a more nuanced analysis relying on this conceptualization can potentially contribute to a deeper understanding of political and policy dynamics in higher education.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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