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Abstract

Higher education had a predominant national and institutional focus for a long time. In Europe, supra-national political activities played a major role for increasing the interest in comparative research. Comparative perspectives are important in order to deconstruct the often national perspective of causal reasoning, for proving benchmarks, for theory-testing, for opening up the horizon for potential reforms, and for the analysis of the growing internationality of higher education. However, many practical factors make comparative research on higher education vulnerable: decentralized funding, coincidental compositions of participating countries, difficulties of reaching a conceptual and methodological consensus in multicountry research teams. Often, comparative research projects take quite a long time, before the major findings are published eventually. Moreover, often data are presented across countries without sufficient explanations of the respective context. Comparative research on higher education, thus, often does not fulfil the initial hopes, but obviously is such an important approach that efforts are indispensable to cope with the challenging

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