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Abstract

Drawing from a seminal article by Burton Clark that appeared in 2004 in Higher Education Policy, this paper examines the influence of organization studies in higher education policy research over the last 25 years and highlights the potential contributions for future inquiry. It argues that analysis has mainly tackled policy reforms and their impact on universities and colleges. In so doing scholars have focused on external drivers of change, specifically on policy change, and on their structural impact. Hence research in higher education has somewhat neglected the complex reality of the university as an organization possessing its own structures, cultures and practices. This implies that national policy agendas have dominated organizational research in higher education, while the views of practitioners such as institutional managers and administrators have not been sufficiently addressed. By calling for an increased focus on the university as an organization, the article discusses the need to systematize organizational research around distinctive analytical dimensions. It finally proposes a research agenda tackling various aspects of organizational change in higher education. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)