

Mapping the field of higher education industries and choosing case studies

Higher education has become an industry subject to both world trade and the accumulation of capital. It is also the product of a changing global political economy, which has inevitably influenced HE, given that universities and HE are by no means isolated from society. Neoliberalism, the knowledge economy, globalisation, new regionalisms and the role of higher education in cultural diplomacy are the main processes that are transforming the role of universities in social life. They are promoted by global actors (the World Bank (WB), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) and others), and supported by a variety of technologies (e.g. rankings, benchmarks, international comparisons), methods (e.g. WTO negotiations, or open method of coordination) and other tools (e.g. aid-programmes).

This has changed and continues to change the role of higher education and its previous associations with elite formation and social mobility. It has also led to the rescaling of higher education governance and shifted it to private actors and dynamic structures spreading across spaces, raising questions of public accountability and scrutiny of higher education policies. Robertson and Dale point to the **constitutionalising of neoliberalism** as a prominent factor in the rescaling of HE governance in particular regions of the world.

Rescaling of HE governance means that funding, provision, ownership and regulation of HE is no longer decided or provided predominantly by (sub)nation states, but by new and dynamic structures which spread across spaces and include a multitude of new actors alongside the state. New actors (for profit and not-for-profit) have thus entered the higher education field, operating at different scales and contributing to the lively dynamics within the higher education sector. Although some research has already been carried out, little is yet known about these new actors, namely, who they are; their interests and projects; the activities they carry out; their level of influence on higher education policies and governance; their effects on existing higher education institutions, students, academics, and societies at large; and their contribution to the re-purposing of higher education.

New regionalism theory sees the world order to be in transformation. It introduces multilevel pattern of governance and positions globalisation and regionalism as relational and key phenomena. Europe is a clear example of regionalism successfully transforming the HE sector. In other parts of the world one can observe evolving regionalisms that encompass HE as well (e.g. MERCOSUR, ASEAN, East African Community etc). It is not yet found in what way is HE constitutive of particular form of regionness and positioning of the regions.

The main aim of the research project is to look into '**higher education resectoralisation**' generally and **map higher education industries** specifically by using multi-scalar analytic. The research project will find new cases and scales that are used to progress higher education projects and look into different regionalisms by developing regional mappings/typologies of higher education industries.

The proposed research questions and outputs are as follows:

1. How is HE transforming globally in the sense of 'resectoralising'?
2. What is the relationship between the changing HE sector and constitutionalising neoliberalism?
3. What are the dynamics analysed in questions 1 and 2 within different regionalisms like EU/EHEA, EAST ASIA, NAFTA, MERCOSUR, East Africa community etc.