



Seminar Series 2018-19

Making higher education markets: trust-building strategies of private companies to enter the public sector

Presenter: Dr Janja Komljenovic, Lecturer in Higher Education, Lancaster University

Tuesday 28th May 2019, 12.30 – 14.00, St. Andrews Building, Room 432

Abstract

This talk focuses on the growth of the higher education industry and specifically the expansion of private companies in the higher education sector. The higher education industry consists of diverse, multiple and variegated markets. Much of the literature concentrates on markets in which universities are increasingly sellers of products and services. This research contributes new knowledge to the field by focusing on the other side of the industry, namely on how universities are increasingly buyers. It specifically focuses on the market-making processes in the time of market emergence or initial market construction and argues that trust is a key constitutive element of market relations. Empirically it analyses private companies' strategies of penetrating the higher education sector to establish a market and network relations with public universities through trust-building activities. Twenty-two interviews with representatives of private companies from eight countries selling products and services in higher education were conducted. The analysis shows companies have developed three groups of sophisticated strategies to produce their trustworthiness: signaling similarity and integrity, exhibiting competence and commitment and forming an emotional connection. Through these, they aim to advance their markets and consequently contribute to the construction and expansion of the global higher education industry.

Dr Janja Komljenovic is Lecturer in Higher Education at Lancaster University. Her academic interests broadly concern higher education policy and governance, the political economy of higher education and the digital economy. She has written a number of journal articles and book chapters on these topics and co-edited a special issue of the *Globalisation, Societies and Education* journal on higher education markets and trade. She is a co-Director of the Centre for Higher Education Research and Evaluation at Lancaster University. She is also part of the Centre for Global Higher Education – a research partnership of international universities and based at the Oxford University and UCL Institute of Education. Before embarking on the academic career, Dr Komljenovic was actively involved in higher education policy-making in Slovenia and in Europe. She is still active in policy as a member of the Council of the Magna Charta Observatory, an evaluator of national quality assurance agencies for ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), and a member of the Appeals Committee for the EQAR (The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education). Dr Komljenovic has participated in several EU Educational reform projects and participated in numerous events and conferences on higher education across Europe.

All are welcome. A Sandwich Lunch will be served at 12.30

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