



Higher Education in the UK and the USA since Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan: Converging Models?

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Education Markets in English and American Universities

Abstract:

The paper examines the fundamental differences in the way higher education markets work in England and America, differences that underscore the limited utility of the idea of an "Anglo-American model of higher education." While there are certainly some similarities between the two higher education markets, the differences are more compelling.

One of the most obvious differences is the size and importance of the private sector in the two countries. Many of the most prestigious institutions of higher education in the U.S. are private, whereas the private institutions in England are fewer and much less significant.

However, the main focus of the paper is on differences between the American public higher education sector and its English counterpart. These differences reflect the multiplicity of government agencies that play a role in American public higher education as contrasted to the much more centralized system in England. The result is very different policies in the two systems.

By close examination of the very different higher education markets, then, we argue that the two systems are so distinct that the concept of an "Anglo-American model" of higher education obscures rather than clarifies the relationship between the two systems.