
This article investigates the form of European universities to determine the extent to which they resemble the characteristics of complete organizations and whether the forms are associated with modernization policy pressure, national institutional frames and organizational characteristics. An original data set of twenty-six universities from eight countries was used. Specialist universities have a stronger identity, whereas the level of hierarchy and rationality is clearly associated with the intensity of modernization policies. At the same time, evidence suggests limitations for universities to become complete, as mechanisms allowing the development of some dimensions seemingly constrain the capability to develop others.