

Abstract:

The argument developed in this chapter is that the institutional level implementation of the Bologna process and of the Lisbon strategy, supported by international benchmarking, may contribute to promote a competition paradigm. On the other hand, the traditions of academic disciplines and subjects, deeply rooted in normative and cultural insights, could favour a move towards a cooperation paradigm. The implementation of the Bologna process may challenge the traditions of higher education institutions by changing the balance between the competition and the cooperation paradigms.

An attempt is made to use the grid-group cultural theory to better understand both the course of the changes at organisational level and the behaviour of different institutional actors in Portugal, as the Bologna process moves into the implementation phase. However, the pressure from the political time is giving priority to the form of the Bologna process rather than to its substance. It could be argued that substance will follow the definition of the form, but there is an obvious danger that both the academics and the politicians will be satisfied with compliance to form.