WHAT DRIVES GLOBAL SCIENCE? THE FOUR COMPETING NARRATIVES

Short abstract

Since 1990 there has been remarkable growth and diversification of worldwide capacity and output in science, and a distinctive global science system has emerged, primarily grounded in research universities, fostered by Internet-mediated communication and publication in English, cross-border authorship and researcher mobility. While global science overlaps with and is affected by national science systems, it is constituted by pan-national knowledge flows and collegial collaboration and has partial autonomy. Four different interpretive frameworks (narratives) have evolved to explain the dynamics of global science: science as an expanding cross-border network; science as an arms race between competing nations; science as a global market of competing institutions or ‘World-Class Universities’; and science as a centre-periphery hierarchy in which emerging countries are permanently constrained by Euro-American dominance.

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