

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/isomorphic-tensions-and-anxiety-in-uk-social-science-doctoral-provision/>

This video discusses the rising trend of doctoral production globally and in the UK, with a significant increase in the number of individuals pursuing doctoral degrees, driven by factors such as international competition and funding opportunities. The conversation highlights a variety of related themes, including the competitive nature of funding, accountability within academia, and the strategic importance of doctoral programs to universities.

In the UK, there has been a 40% increase in doctorates from 2008 to 2018, leading to changes in how institutions manage doctoral programs, often through the establishment of doctoral training centers. However, there is an uneven distribution of funding and recognition that disproportionately favors higher-status institutions, exacerbating inequalities among universities.

The discussion categorizes universities into three groups based on their access to research funding: insiders (established universities that consistently receive funding), leavers (institutions that lost funding but managed to regain it), and outsiders (those that have never had such funding). Each group's response to funding dynamics affects their capacity to graduate doctoral researchers and maintain scholarly standards.

The report emphasizes the importance of understanding underlying factors influencing organizational behavior in educational institutions, such as coercion (policy-driven changes), emulation (copying successful models), and normative practices (historical traditions). It concludes that while there are observable trends in doctoral education, the impact of policies is uneven across institutions, necessitating careful consideration of how policies are designed to avoid perpetuating existing inequalities.