



# Futures scenarios for higher education

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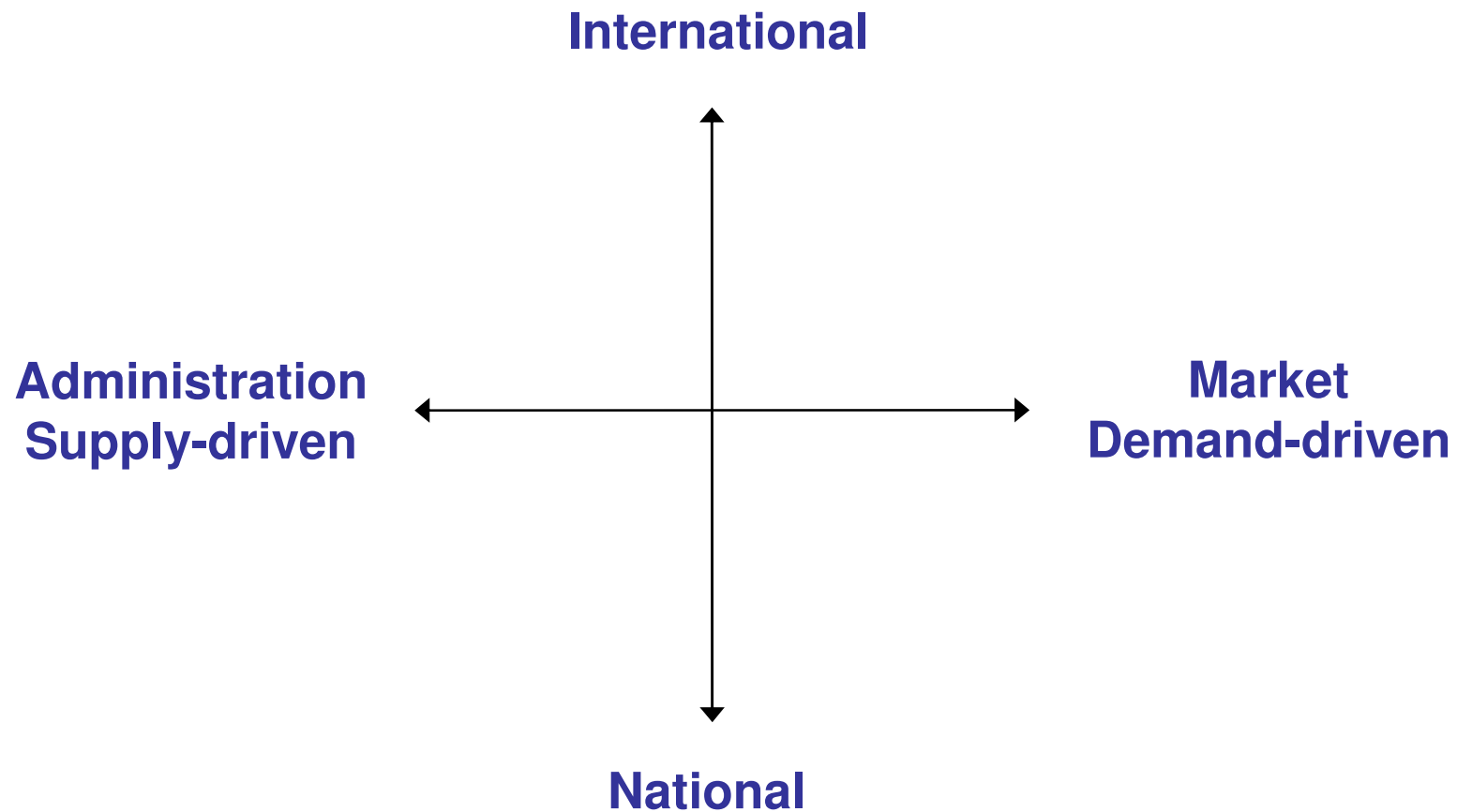
Centre for Educational Research  
and Innovation



# OECD Project on the Future of Higher Education

- Trends analysis
  - Demography
  - Technology
  - Globalisation
  - Academic research
  - Labour market
- Futures scenarios

# Scenarios for higher education systems





## 4 scenarios

- Open networking
- Serving local communities
- New public responsibility
- Higher education, Inc.

# Scenario 1: Open Networking

## Drivers

- International cooperation & harmonisation of systems
- Technology
- Ideal of open knowledge

## Related developments

- Bologna process, international academic partnerships and consortia,
- Increasing computing power and culture of openness challenging traditional intellectual property rights

## Features

- Intensive networking among institutions, scholars, students (& industry)
- Modularisation of studies under academics' control
- International collaborative research
- Strong hierarchy between networks but quick spillovers
- Lifelong learning outside the HE sector

# Scenario 2: Serving local communities

## Drivers

- Backlash against globalisation
- More geo-strategic sensitivity in research
- Cost efficiency

## Related developments

- Anti-globalisation movements
- Crisis?

## Features

- (Re)focus on national and local missions
- Public funding and control of the academic profession
- Convergence between universities and polytechnics
- Elite universities struggle to stay more internationalised
- Less research, mainly on humanities
- Big science relocated to government sector (more secretive and less internationalised)

# Scenario 3: New public responsibility

## Drivers

- Pressure on public budget (ageing, public debt, etc.)
- Diffusion of governance structures based on new public management

## Related developments

- Autonomy given to HEIs (sometimes legally privatised)
- Debates on cost sharing
- Encouragement of competition between HEIs

## Features

- Mainly public funding but autonomous institutions controlled at arm's length (incentives + accountability)
- Mixed funding: new markets + more tuition fees (income contingent loans)
- Demand-driven system with more marked division of labour (specialisation but most HEIs continue to do some research)
- Research funds allocated through domestic competitive process (except for Europe)

# Scenario 4: Higher education, Inc.

## Drivers

- Trade liberalisation in education (GATS, bilateral)

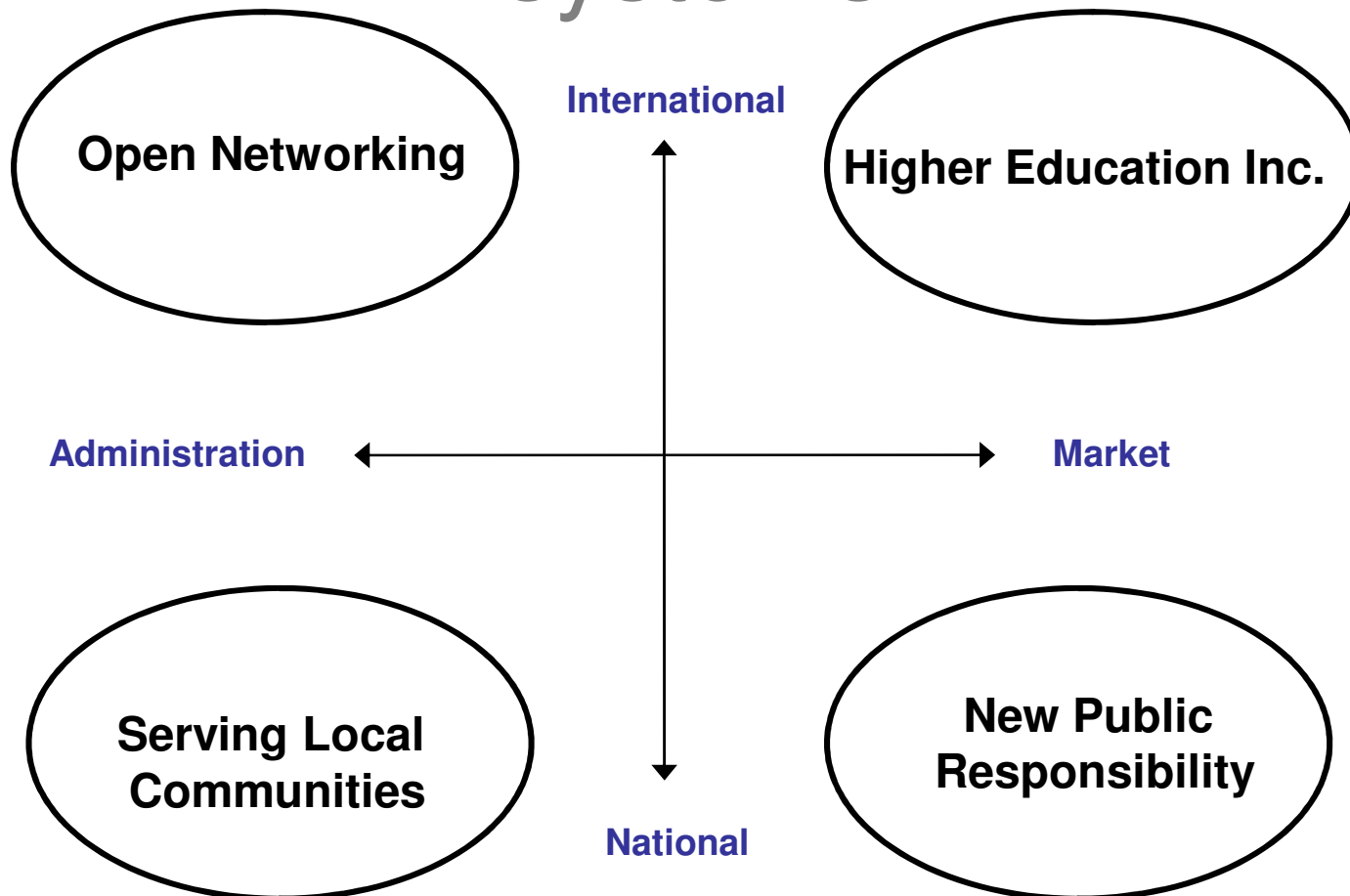
## Related developments

- Rise of trade in HE & inclusion of education in trade negotiations
- International competition for students
- Increase of cross-border funding of research

## Features

- Global competition for education and research services
- Public funding for non-commercially viable disciplines exclusively
- Segmentation of the education and research market
- Vocational higher education: important share of the market
- Strong (international) division of labour according to competitive advantage
- Concentration of research and worldwide competition for funding
- English as main language of study

# Scenarios for higher education systems



# A few questions

- **Scenario 1:**
  - Sustainable in a knowledge economy?
  - In what geo-strategic context?
  - What are the incentives to ensure the networks do not serve the interests of their members only and reproduce the national hierarchies at the global level?
  
- **Scenario 2:**
  - Would this lead to greater inequalities within countries?
  - What would happen to the progress of scientific research?

# A few questions

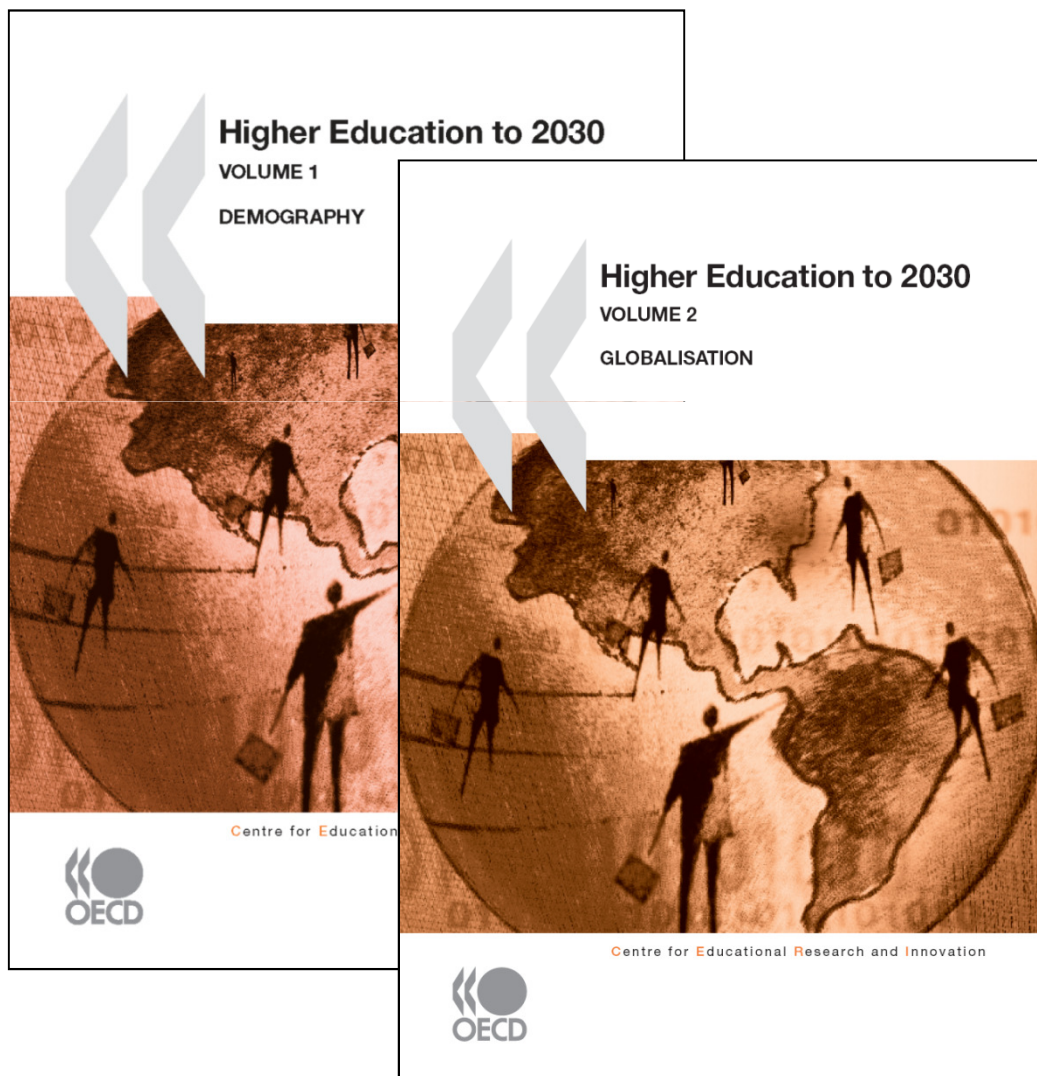
- **Scenario 3:**

- Is there a tipping point after which real markets replace quasi-markets, and governments lose some or most of their control over the system?
- To what extent should the concentration of research be encouraged?
- Could this model allow systems to be more responsive to the diversity of individual, social and economic needs?

- **Scenario 4:**

- Will all countries be able to retain some national educational and research capacity?
- Are all systems equally equipped to compete?
- What would happen to areas of human knowledge that are not commercially viable?

# New publications: Higher education to 2030

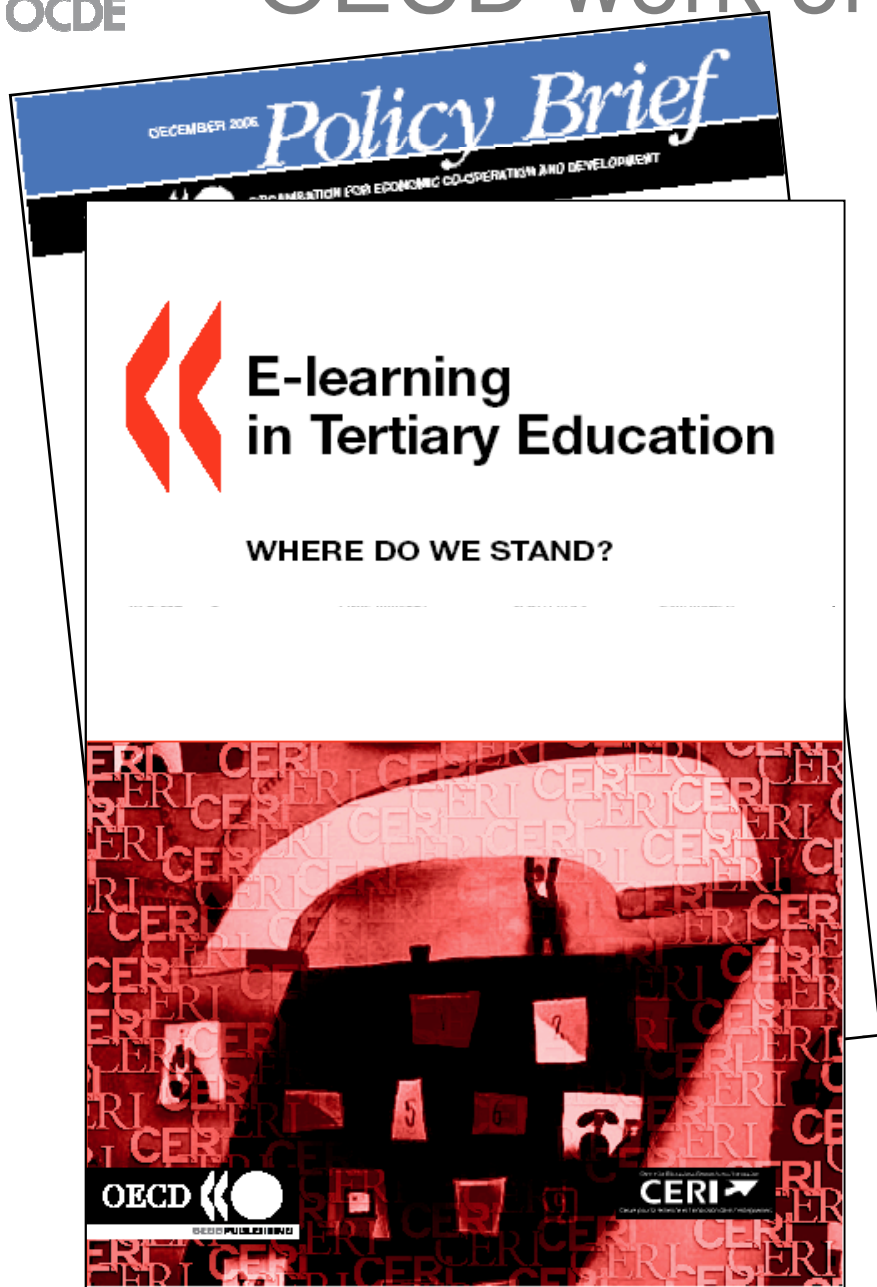


Forthcoming:

- Volume 3: technology
- Volume 4: Scenarios



# OECD work on technology in HE





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