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Abstract

This article examines the growth of the higher education industry and specifically the expansion of private companies in the higher education sector. The higher education industry consists of diverse, multiple and variegated markets. Much of the literature concentrates on markets in which universities are increasingly sellers of products and services. This article contributes new knowledge to the field by focusing on the other side of the industry, namely on how universities are increasingly buyers. It specifically focuses on the market-making processes in the time of market emergence or initial market construction and argues that trust is a key constitutive element of market relations. Empirically, it analyses private companies' strategies of penetrating the higher education sector to establish a market and network relations with public universities through trust-building activities. Twenty-two interviews with representatives of private companies from eight countries selling products and services in higher education were conducted. The analysis shows companies have developed three

groups of sophisticated strategies to produce their trustworthiness: signalling similarity and integrity, exhibiting competence and commitment and forming an emotional connection. Through these, they aim to advance their markets and consequently contribute to the construction and expansion of the global higher education industry. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) j.komljenovic@lancaster.ac.uk