

ABSTRACT

**University bubble?
On the supply and popularity of educational programmes
in an era of prosperity**

This article poses the question whether the changes in the Icelandic economy and job market, from the 1990s onwards, stimulated a certain kind of expansion in Icelandic higher education that mimicked the logic of the economic bubble that eventually led to the crash of 2008. The point here is not to draw up a step-by-step analysis of how this may have happened, but rather to provoke a questioning of the current shape of Icelandic higher education and how fit it may be for the needs of post-2008 rebuilding and an emerging discourse of Icelandic entrepreneurship in which information and communication technologies, software, and gaming have featured prominently. In 2008, Icelandic graduates from tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6) clustered in the social sciences, business and law, along with education, and this clustering persists in more recent figures on student registrations. The question is whether this concentration indicates a structural bias towards the social sciences, business and law. Does Icelandic HE, by way of that bias, still retain the shape of the job market as it was in the bubble, the ghostly outlines of a vanished prosperity?

Keywords: Higher education, policy, crash of 2008, public good, private investment, social science, business, law.