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The Widening Space of Postsecondary Education

Dirk Van Damme

Abstract
Massification of postsecondary education participation has been predominantly met by expanding higher education institutions. But the risk of over-schooling and the demand for increasingly diversified skills now require postsecondary education systems to expand vocational and subdegree programs. At the same time, bridging the divide between the higher and further education subsectors will lead to a more integrated but diversified postsecondary landscape.

A silent revolution is taking place in the industrialized world, one with huge consequences for the future of our nations and economies. In 2020, the share of 25–34 year-olds with a tertiary qualification in the OECD countries exceeded the tipping point of 50 percent. This means that in high-income countries, over half of the young age cohorts are now holding a qualification from a postsecondary institution. This percentage will continue to grow, although the rate of growth will probably slow down.

Academic Drift

This silent revolution is increasingly challenging the architecture of our postsecondary education systems, designed several decades ago in completely different environments. In most countries, research universities have been expected to absorb the ever-rising numbers of students, causing huge challenges with regard to funding, infrastructure, the workload of staff, and teaching and learning practices. Despite those pressures, few research universities openly questioned the idea that postsecondary massification necessarily meant providing a university education to everyone. Putting a question mark behind that idea was perceived to be at odds with equity and fairness.

However, there are pressing signs that high levels of university attainment do not have only positive effects on societies and economies. Graduate underemployment, overqualification, mismatches, and substitution effects are examples of such perverse effects. Substitution of middle-skilled jobs by master level qualifications, even when the task input has not dramatically augmented, contributes to labor market polarization, squeezing out the middle-class and rising levels of social inequality. In several countries, policy makers are starting to question whether we really need an endless increase in university graduates.

There are pressing signs that high levels of university attainment do not have only positive effects on societies and economies.

Technological change is pushing skill demand in developed economies beyond the level represented by secondary education qualifications. However, the changing skill demand is not one of "more of the same," but one of increasingly diversified skill sets. Postsecondary education landscapes will need to transform to meet the changing skill demand.

Different Pathways

Systems with more institutional diversification, like in the United States, potentially have better cards to address this challenge, but the recent decline in the intake of community colleges suggests that this is not happening automatically. Some countries, like the United Kingdom after 1992, have unified their postsecondary system, but suffer from a generalized academic drift and a lack of perspective for universities that are not at the top of the research hierarchy. Such systems stick to only one archetype of academic success. Other countries, like the Netherlands or Sweden, have resisted unifying their postsecondary landscape and maintained a binary system (see also H.F. de Boer, "From Expansion to Academic Drift and Declining Student Numbers: The Dutch Case," in this issue). Against all criticisms, binary systems seem to hold the advantage in that there is at least a minimal level of diversification in the landscape.

Countries like Germany have followed a different path. The rate of massification of university participation has been much lower in Germany, a European country with still relatively low levels of university attainment. Many see this as a major shortcoming of the German education system. However, the skill demand of its highly developed industrial infrastructure is well served by an excellent vocational training system that expands well into the postsecondary space. The highest vocational qualifications have now received equivalence to academic master degrees. Whereas in many countries professional and

vocational programs and qualifications are still seen as the second-best choice, Germany has successfully achieved filling the reputation gap between academic and vocational postsecondary trajectories. Inspired by the German example, policy makers in many countries now start realizing that the missing link in the postsecondary landscape is a high-quality vocational sector.

Extending the Qualification Ladder

After Bologna, the bachelor/master/doctorate ladder became the universal qualification framework for the postsecondary education space. However, this implicitly signified that the entire postsecondary education space was defined by the higher education subsystem. In consequence, a huge gap was created between a secondary education qualification and the nearest postsecondary one, the four- or three-year bachelor degree. All students with postsecondary aspirations were thus forced into bachelor-level degree programs, and too many failed. The higher education system's ambition to impose an academic definition of the postsecondary space involuntarily caused a lot of social hardship.

It is interesting to see developments in many countries toward expanding subbachelor degree, "short-cycle" programs, such as "associate degrees"of typically 120 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits. The European qualifications framework (EQF) luckily foresaw this development by including an EQF5 level, meant to fill the gap between secondary education qualifications and the bachelor degree. Yet, lack of reputation, reticence among employers, limited institutional offerings, a too strong link to bachelor degree programs, and low student demand still prevent a breakthrough of this segment of the postsecondary space.

More promising seems to be the rapidly expanding interest in short programs and nontraditional certifications such as microcredentials. Subdegree certificates are hardly new to the United States, but technologies such as digital badging and blockchain create opportunities for solving recognition and credibility challenges. In Europe, with the support of the European Commission, microcredentials seem to be a promising new segment of the postsecondary landscape. Many higher education institutions, mostly in the professional education sector, are experimenting with these new certificates.

After a long period during which higher education was mainly interested in expanding the top of the qualification ladder, the PhD degree, more political interest is now going toward extending the lower rungs of the ladder. This coincides with a renewed political interest in more equitable postsecondary participation, in shorter trajectories, in higher success rates, and in meeting the skill demand of occupations just below the high-skilled ones.

Bridging the Higher and Further Education Divide

However, as promising as such developments are, a genuine transformation of the postsecondary landscape will not happen unless countries are willing to face the challenge of bridging the divide between higher and further education. The further education sector, serving the post-16 population with mainly vocationally oriented programs, is institutionalized in countries such as Australia (with the Technical and Further Education [TAFE] system), Ireland, and the United Kingdom. Those offerings exist as well in many other countries in less institutionalized forms, under the labels of "continuing education," "adult education," or even "lifelong learning." In colleges, training centers, or through many different kinds of providers, sometimes even outside the education sector, various types of programs are offered to young or older students.

In most countries, further or adult education is traditionally not seen as part of the postsecondary landscape. But this is starting to change. In the United Kingdom, the government has initiated several policies to modernize further education and to bring it closer to the higher education sector. In Ireland, the education minister has recently published a white paper calling for "a unified tertiary system for learning, skills and knowledge" (see Hazelkorn and Boland, "Ireland: Toward a Unified Tertiary Education System," in this issue). And in Australia, strong voices have argued for an integration of the higher and vocational education sectors into one integrated postsecondary education system. Similar developments are taking place in many other countries.

Prospects
Landscapes of postsecondary education are changing and that is a positive evolution. The expansion of student demand after finishing school has led to massification of higher education participation. But both the changing skill demand and diverse student needs now ask for a wider and more diverse educational response. The challenge seems to be to strengthen the postsecondary education system that falls outside higher education. ◢

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Ireland: Toward a Unified Tertiary Education System

Ellen Hazelkorn and Tom Boland

Abstract
Ireland is aiming to develop a strategy for a unified tertiary system for learning, skills, and knowledge. Why, and what are the challenges it faces?

For Ireland, focus on higher education attainment has led to social and economic success. But it has also led to an imbalance in the postsecondary system and other challenges. Higher education (HE) is seen as the primary route to personal and career success while further education and training (FET) is seen as second best. The policy response is to develop a strategy for a unified tertiary system for learning, skills, and knowledge, whereby, irrespective of where learners enter FET, HE, or a research career, they are in a single system that responds to individual talents, ambitions, and motivations.

A National Policy Focused on Higher Education Attainment…
Ireland is typical of what Dirk van Damme, in his article in this issue, refers to as high-income countries where over half of the young age cohorts hold a qualification from a postsecondary institution. Indeed, Ireland in many ways leads this field. Ninety-one percent of students complete secondary-level education, one of the highest shares among high-income countries according to the OECD, and approximately 66 percent of school leavers participate in higher education. According to The Educational Attainment Thematic Report for 2022, 63 percent of the 25-to-34-year age group in Ireland have higher education qualifications. Ireland ranks third in the OECD and second in the European Union for tertiary education attainment.

In contrast, we estimate that only about 20 percent of school leavers attend further education. The NEET (not in employment, education and/or training) rate (15–24 years) is about 13.4 percent, which places Ireland above both the EU rate and the OECD average.

Along with membership of the European Union, this level of participation in higher education has led to the dramatic transformation of Ireland's economy. From having been heavily dependent on protectionist policies and agriculture, Ireland now has one of the most open economies in the world and one of the best performing in the European Union. Without question, adoption of the knowledge economy paradigm has transformed Ireland, with huge implications for tertiary education. The implications for Irish society have also been profound, with the move from a highly conservative, inward-looking society to one characterized by a more open-minded, liberal democratic ethos.

Over the decades, the big story has been massification; quite simply, for a country lacking natural resources, the aim has been to get more people well educated. Since 2012, that process has been supported by the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, which supported strategic steering and shaping of the higher education landscape

to create a coordinated and "coherent" system of larger and more diverse HE institutions, referred to as "directed diversity."

... But One Leading to Imbalance in the Postsecondary System and Other Challenges

There is a realization that overfocusing on growing the level of higher education attainment has resulted in hollowing out the FET sector.

But increasingly, there is a realization that overfocusing on growing the level of higher education attainment has resulted in hollowing out the FET sector. This has created a culture, especially among young people and their parents, where university education is regarded as the only route to personal and professional success. This biased view, that FET is a second-best choice and primarily for lower socioeconomic groups, has also been fed by how secondary schools are regularly ranked by the media according to the proportion of students who transfer to higher education.

At fault too is national policy and investment. For example, while higher education campuses have enjoyed significant investment in landmark buildings, the FET sector has made do with port-a-cabins and poor equipment.

HE graduate economic returns remain significant. But, as Dirk van Damme notes, there is growing evidence of perverse effects of high attainment rates. For instance, the graduate premium cloaks underemployment and labor mismatch. According to a recent study, in 2019 approximately 333,500 workers, or 15 percent of the labor force, were overqualified graduates. Of the new jobs created in the period from 2008 to 2019, almost three-quarters were filled by graduates underutilizing their skills. Women are most likely to be overqualified, comprising 56 percent of all overqualified workers. The most significantly overqualified workers studied in four broad areas: business, administration and law; arts and humanities; engineering, construction and manufacturing; and health and welfare.

Labor market polarization is also a current reality for Ireland. Despite high levels of employment (unemployment registering 4.3 percent in January 2023), there are major skills shortages in key areas, such as all health professions, finance, teachers and educational professionals, bus drivers, construction and engineering professionals, etc. There is a real concern that Ireland does not have the range of knowledge and skills to meet future challenges and opportunities. This polarized skills structure can, as noted by van Damme, lead to growing income inequality. As yet, this has not translated into significant levels of social tension, but such inequality, combined with the level of unfulfilled ambition of graduates, shortage of housing, high rents, and the rising cost of living poses a threat to the social contract.

Ireland's demographic profile is also changing. While it still has a relatively young population, it is aging faster than anywhere else in Europe, putting pressure on the health service but also raising questions about the education and training system. Like many countries, Ireland has a linear educational structure whereby students progress from primary to secondary to tertiary and then into work—but the fact that people are living longer and that the requirements of the labor market are increasingly volatile requires a different, more flexible education and training system. Yet only 12.6 percent of adults aged 25–64 years participate in learning, which is below the EU target of 15 percent.

The Policy Response

In May 2022, the minister of further and higher education, research, innovation and science (DFHERIS) published a Policy Platform: Progressing a Unified Tertiary System for Learning, Skills and Knowledge. A strategy is to be published during 2023–2024.

The objective is to create a system whereby, irrespective of where learners enter FET, HE, or a research career, they are in a single system that responds to individual talents, ambitions, and motivations. The system should provide opportunities for reskilling, upskilling, and repurposing qualifications best suited to the learner's age, stage of development, interests, and life circumstances. All institutions in such a system would be differentiated according to their mission, role, and responsibilities, but would work collaboratively within a single knowledge, skills, and innovation system.

Thus far, attention has been focused on creating greater connectivity between the FET and HE sectors. However, attention to pathways (such as enabling students to begin their studies in FET colleges and then to transfer to universities) simply reinforces

the view that a university education is the main goal. In addition, the creation of thousands of new university places has led to a sharp fall in FET enrollment.

As more focus is placed on skills, developing work-based learning, and undertaking more applied research, there is growing competition for students and investment between FET colleges, technological universities, and research-intensive universities. At the system level, this is creating potential tensions around mission clarity and boundaries.

Ireland has positioned itself as a high-skills economy, but it will need to develop, fund, and implement a more balanced education and skills strategy for the future. In particular, more attention will need to be placed on strengthening FET, addressing the skills imbalance, as well as challenging deeply ingrained cultural biases. ◢

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From Expansion to Academic Drift and Declining Student Numbers: The Dutch Case

H.F. de Boer

Abstract
Universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands have undergone a stormy process of development since the 1980s. Subsequently, a number of issues related to this growth have emerged and are currently the subject of reflection and discussion, in particular academic drift and recently declining student numbers.

Higher vocational education in the Netherlands has undergone a stormy process of development since the early 1980s. While, until then, it had been part of secondary education, within a few decades the sector developed into a fully fledged part of Dutch higher education (HE). This strong growth forced universities of applied sciences (UASs), like similar institutions in Europe, to develop into resilient, mature, and manageable organizations and to reflect carefully on their responsibilities within higher education. The growth of UASs is not only visible in the enormous increase in student numbers, but also in the expansion of their mandate. In relation to this expanded mandate, key issues for Dutch UASs today are academic drift and a recent decline in student numbers.

Characteristics of UASs in the Netherlands

The Dutch HE system has 14 publicly funded research universities (including the Open University), 36 publicly funded UASs, four publicly funded philosophical universities, and some private higher education providers. In this binary system, the research university and UAS sectors are referred to as "equal but different," indicating that they are both part of HE but that each has its own mandate, focus, history, and culture. It is important to stress that the UAS sector is very heterogeneous. There are, for example, 10 UASs with more than 20,000 students as well as 10 institutions with less than 1,000 students (mainly in arts and teacher training).

In 2021, approximately half a million students studied at the UASs, of which 85 percent were registered full time. Over 100,000 students enroll annually, of which about 10 percent come from abroad (75 percent of those come from Europe). In contrast to many other European HE systems, the majority of HE enrollments, about 60 to 65 percent, are in the UAS sector.

The 1980s as a Tipping Point

In the 1980s, the foundation was laid for the UASs as they are known today. First, the ministry granted more autonomy to the UASs. This was a radical change because until then, UASs had been tightly controlled, especially compared to research universities. Second, reference should be made to institutional merger processes. In 1983, the ministry aimed

to substantially increase the average size of UASs and to reduce their number. As a result, the number of UASs declined from 375 in 1983 to 36 today. Third, the Higher Vocational Education Council was established in 1975 as their collective advocate and central contact point for the ministry. It proved to be an important factor in emancipation and policy-making and definitely left its mark on development in the sector.

The Sustainability of the Binary System

Over the past 40 years, the "binarity" of the HE system has been the subject of much debate.

Over the past 40 years, the "binarity" of the HE system has been the subject of much debate. From the 1980s onward, the government has always defended the position of "equal but different" and has laid down this view into legislation. Both HE subsectors have their own legal mandate. In this way, the ministry wants to underline the widely supported belief in the virtues of a differentiated HE system (different institutions with their own distinctive profile).

However, reality does not easily allow itself to be squeezed into a legal straitjacket. In practice, we witness processes of academic drift at some UASs and of vocational drift at most research universities, which means that the boundaries between the two subsectors are gradually blurring. This has tempted many in the past to predict that it would be a matter of time before the binary system would implode. For now, however, there is no sign of this happening in the near future.

Issues Regarding the UASs

A number of issues are related to the broader mandate that the UASs have managed to acquire. This concerns the expansion of their functions, the expansion of the range of degree programs offered, and the change in the composition of their enrollments.

The UASs have a threefold function: teaching, practice-oriented research, and knowledge exchange with society. The research function is relatively new and shows the development that Dutch UASs have undergone. Unlike research universities, UASs did not have an active research function until the turn of the millennium. By introducing a new staff category in 2001—the *lector*, also known as UAS professor—an attempt was made to establish this research function. The main task of a lector was to carry out practice-oriented research with a group of colleagues (collectively, the "lectorate"), which was also meant to give significant impetus to teaching, so that UASs would train "reflective practitioners." This research position has since then been further institutionalized, for example, through acquiring national funding (via the national research council), the introduction of quality control systems, and a strong connection with centers of expertise.

There are now almost 700 *lectors* active in the Netherlands, a small number considering the total number of employees. But since a "lectorate" not only consists of one or more lectors but also includes "teacher–researchers" and PhD students, the number of employees involved in practice-oriented research exceeds 700.

Although considerable steps have been taken in the establishment of the research function, UASs remain primarily educational organizations. Despite its annual growth, the size of their research income is modest, namely 6.3 percent of all financial resources. In comparison, 60 percent of the funds at Dutch research universities in 2019 were spent on research.

The type of programs that UASs offer has increased considerably over the past decade. After the introduction of "Bologna" in 2003 (an ongoing process at the European level aimed at establishing a European Higher Education Area, among other measures, by creating a similar degree structure throughout Europe), UASs were in principle only allowed to offer four-year bachelor degree programs. Nowadays they also offer two-year associate degree programs and one- or two-year master programs. These UAS programs are vocationally oriented rather than theoretically focused. In contrast to research universities, UASs do not have the right to offer PhD degree programs (*ius promovendi*). However, they want to start their own doctorate programs: the professional doctorate (PD). In doing so, they want to push the boundaries in professional practice. This will enable a learning continuum from a bachelor via a master degree to a doctorate. The PD aims to be of a level equivalent to a university PhD, but has a different character; internationally, its title, the PD, is recognized differently.

Over the past four decades, enrollment in Dutch higher vocational education has grown strongly, from just over 300,000 in 2000 to almost 500,000 in 2020. This has put UASs under considerable pressure (growing pains), but recently a turnaround seems to be visible. The market share of the UASs vis-à-vis research universities is decreasing. While a few years ago, more than 65 percent of HE students opted for a UAS program, now that percentage is below 60 percent. In particular, the number of Dutch students opting for UASs is declining (a drop of 10 percent in 2021 compared to 2020), although not equally strongly in every region. In some regions, these declining numbers are likely to cause serious problems.

The decline in the overall number of UAS students is somewhat masked by the still rising number of international students, although far less than in the research universities. Currently, there are approximately 35,000 international students enrolled in UASs, corresponding to 7 percent of the total UAS enrollment.

International Relevance

Like its counterparts in other European countries, the Dutch UAS sector is undoubtedly facing exciting times. On the one hand, we see a persistent academic drift that translates, among other things, into a further development of the research function and the possible introduction of the third cycle (with the PD degree). As a result, the "binarity" of the system will remain under pressure. On the other hand, we see a decline in student numbers. The tension created by growth and shrinkage will require a strategic reorientation at many UASs. ◢

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US Community Colleges: Innovators and Influencers

Richard R. Hopper

Abstract

US community colleges are scrappy, agile, and adaptive. Some recent innovations have been workforce development and microcredentials; a diversification of cost-sharing arrangements for professional development; transition of traditional remedial education toward developmental education; a simplification of administrative hurdles to speed up graduation via guided pathways; and college credit to high school students who take college-level courses through dual and concurrent enrollment. These innovations have influenced the university sector to embrace similar changes.

Community colleges are sometimes viewed as the bedrock of the US higher education landscape, and at other times as the stepchild. They are not often regarded as the trendsetter or the bellwether of change for the entire tertiary education sector that they are. Enrolling approximately 34 percent of undergraduate students, the sector should be central to any analysis of US higher education overall. These nearly 1,100 institutions are perceived simultaneously as an extension of secondary education, a low-cost option for the first two years of university education, and a trustworthy delivery mechanism for postsecondary vocational education and training (VET). Today, reacting and adapting to social, economic, and political events, these institutions are driving some key transformations that we see in overall US higher education.

Genesis of the Practical, Nonelite Sector

By the early twentieth century, private junior colleges offering two-year associate degrees were originally intended as finishing schools for young women or as a generic transfer opportunity to four-year colleges. Yet by the 1950s, thanks to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (G.I. Bill), the federal government offered tuition reimbursement to thousands of returning World War II soldiers. To accommodate the demand, there was a rapid expansion in the number of public two-year colleges, such that the public sector quickly eclipsed the private sector. Public community colleges thus grew and developed

as open-access entry points to higher education, meaning that any high school graduate could (and still can) gain admission. In a nutshell, US community colleges have evolved admirably to serve local needs without the barrier of elitism.

Community colleges have also artfully melded liberal arts with career and technical education, often leading to essential licensure in many technical professions. Many in the population find the shorter and often more vocational community colleges to be better suited to develop rapid skills for employment or transfer. While 80 percent of community college students state that they wish to transfer to a four-year college or university, only 30 percent on average do so. This sector of US higher education has fully embraced adult education and workforce development while maintaining a core focus on equity and access. The university sector has attempted to evolve in similar ways, engaging in efforts to open doors to opportunity and embracing competency-based education. But community colleges have proven to be the most agile and adaptable segment of US higher education.

Emphasis on Shorter (and Shorter) Programs

There has been remarkable growth in shorter, applied, credit-bearing programs at community colleges. This started with the advent of specialized one-year professional certificates in technical fields. Such one-year certificates are generally eligible for federal financial aid. As US degree-seeking enrollment has declined, there has also been a marked uptick in even shorter nondegree (noncredit) technical training and professional development programs offered by community colleges. The catch: Students in such nondegree programs are not eligible for federal financial aid. The emergence of microcredentials—codification and recognition of technical competencies through short nondegree programs—has led to the practice of badging, whereby participants who demonstrate technical competency are awarded a credential or "badge" that memorializes their acquisition of specific skills and knowledge. Universities are waking up to microcredentials, but with less vigor than the community college sector.

Because such training is not eligible for US Title IV federal financial aid, these programs operate completely on a cost-recovery basis, with the participants, the state government, and local industry typically sharing the cost. There is now discussion at the federal level of broadening student financial aid to include reimbursement for nondegree workforce training programs. Such an expanded opportunity for student subsidy would be a game changer, taking the nondegree and workforce badging out of the shadows and prominently onto the balance sheets. There are a handful of visionary philanthropists grasping the importance of noncredit workforce development, providing important financial support at a critical time. If charitable giving for workforce training grows, it could alter the US human development landscape more quickly than government, improving life chances and livelihoods nationwide for generations.

Things That Matter to Communities

While rankings have recently been vilified as gaming the higher education system, there is one league table that stands out as genuinely helpful: the Aspen Institute ranking of the top 120 US community colleges. This ranking has been most palatable as it focuses on verifiable data on the issues of equity, access, retention of degree-seeking students, degree completion, and transfer rates to four-year colleges. Absent are the more subjective competitiveness measures used in the various rankings of four-year institutions, which tend to be based on nebulous admission criteria, test scores, research productivity, and other perceived prestige factors. The very local emphasis of community colleges means that few students will choose a college far from home, so the Aspen Institute ranking of this sector is helpful mostly by showcasing the institutions that excel in their very noble equity mission.

Community colleges have equity at their core, but have also redoubled their efforts to break down barriers to access, affordability, student retention, racial diversity, and degree completion.

Community colleges have equity at their core, but have also redoubled their efforts to break down barriers to access, affordability, student retention, racial diversity, and degree completion. Concerns about college readiness have grown, with institutions shifting their interventions from remedial education of underprepared students to concentrate instead on developmental education offered in a *corequisite model* nested with parallel student supports. The intent is to ensure that students make progress toward

their degrees from the very start of their academic trajectory, thereby compressing the time to completion. There is strong evidence that this shift to corequisite developmental education is more effective. As four-year colleges and universities are competing with community colleges for enrollment, they are also experimenting with effective corequisite developmental education to increase matriculation; such practices, however, tend to erode the precious veneer of elitism.

In parallel, community colleges are looking inward at their own administrative apparatuses to identify burdensome policies and practices that have grown in number and complexity; the goal is to identify ways in which institutional operations can get in the way of student enrollment and progress. This requires institutions to conduct frank internal assessments of admission, registration, and degree requirements so that they can clarify and simplify *pathways to guide students* in meeting their academic goals without bureaucratic tripwires, byzantine "requirements," and circuitous routes to degree completion.

As enrollments decline in the United States, colleges are seeking creative ways to reverse the trend. Engaging high school students directly in college-level coursework has grown in popularity not only as a recruitment tool, but also as a way for prospective students to save time and money toward degree completion. *Dual and concurrent enrollment* programs for high school students are proliferating; these are often labeled as "early college" or "bridge" programs. Today, many community colleges have significant portions of their headcount in dual and concurrent registrations, thereby masking the much steeper decline in traditional enrollment. In some states, dual enrollment is free-of-charge to high school students, essentially an unfunded (costly) endeavor. Other states reimburse colleges for tuition and fees of dual-enrolled students, thereby helping support college budgets. Also concerned about enrollments, state and private universities are now endeavoring to compete with community colleges by launching and promoting their own early college initiatives.

US community colleges have evolved as scrappy, agile, and locally revered organizations doing yeoman's work. Their recent innovations ensure that the sector will remain a bulwark against inequity while bolstering the vital workforce development goals of diverse communities across a vast country. ◢

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Differentiation and Diversification in Emerging African Higher Education

Patrício V. Langa

Abstract
This article examines the differentiation and diversification processes in African higher education and their implications for further research and policy. These processes are perhaps among the most well established concepts to help understand social and organizational change in African higher education systems and institutions. Founded in social theory, they shed light onto mostly tacit, rather than institutional, social and policy practices by different African higher education stakeholders, while guiding change toward increased democratic governance.

With a few exceptions—that of South Africa and of some North African countries—most newly independent African nations inherited a single national, or just a few higher education institutions (HEIs) from their former colonial masters in the 1960s and 1970s. In the aftermath of independence and the subsequent six decades, albeit at different speeds, higher education systems experienced unprecedented changes, particularly marked by the establishment of new HEIs.

Government-Steered Differentiation and Diversification

Exercising their newly acquired political sovereignty, African governments were the main driving force behind the increase in the number of HEIs, based on policies to expand access and participation. This expansion was done with caution, due to limited resources.

These expanding policies envisioned higher education as playing an instrumental role in accelerating socioeconomic development through training manpower, mainly to operate the state apparatus and steer economic development through rapid industrial revolution—which, however, never took place. From being single-tier/monoinstitutional at independence, many higher education systems evolved to accommodate a constellation of different HEIs with some degree of (often) limited diversification in their courses and program offerings.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, national governments played a significant role in steering policies to maintain national universities and establish a new set of (a few) public HEIs, to cater to the national development agenda. Although not always explicit in their goals, the national policies of differentiation and diversification influenced what kind of HEIs could be established, including structures, governance bodies, study programs, and degree types.

Until the end of the 1980s, which could be considered the first period of politically sovereign African countries, these policies of differentiation and diversification followed the nationalist agenda of newly independent African nations.

In some cases, a massive exodus of academics almost brought the national (single) HEIs to closure. Hence, despite the need to broaden access and participation, establishing new HEIs was not an option. Only a few decades later, with an increase in numbers of high school graduates and the limited government capacity to attend to growing demand, was the pressure to expand access coupled with the need to differentiate and diversify higher education.

Financial Crises and Short-Lived Policy Sovereignty

The financial downturn of the 1970s, a result of oil shortage in the West and price hikes, prevented significant expansion and almost led to the closure of the single (or the few) operating national HEIs, due to severe national budget deficits. The 1980s witnessed African states negotiating their adherence to corrective fiscal programs by the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), not only to salvage their collapsing economies, but also to prevent the closure of public HEIs.

As the policies driving differentiation and diversification in higher education had to be subjected to fiscal disciplinarian measures prescribed by the WB, the political sovereignty of African higher education governance was short lived. For most of the 1980s and the following three decades, the WB literally "called the shots," becoming the key policy stakeholder steering differentiation and diversification in African higher education,

based on a free-market neoliberal ideology. Privatization, followed by marketization and commercialization, became the order of the day, in a process of commoditization of higher education—which generated some discontent.

According to the WB, higher education was on the one hand a luxury private good generating rates of social return that were too low to justify public investment. On the other hand, it generated relatively high returns to the direct beneficiaries, justifying cost sharing. In other words, public financing of private students in public institutions equated funding an elite with the public purse. Facing stiff resistance from vice-chancellors threatening to close public universities, the WB resorted to prescribing policies to restructure higher education toward a more market-driven logic of supply and demand.

Almost six decades into postcolonial African higher education, it is reasonable to ask: Quo vadis, *differentiation and diversification?*

In Search of a Policy Principle

Almost six decades into postcolonial African higher education, it is reasonable to ask: *Quo vadis*, differentiation and diversification? There is overwhelming evidence that African higher education systems have expanded, differentiated, and diversified. This change is demonstrated by the distinct types of HEIs that have progressively emerged in response to various national strategies to increase the number of educational programs providing diverse types of skills and knowledge to a wide range of students with divergent interests and abilities.

While this is true, there is also a striking absence of concerted national, regional, and even global policies to advise processes of internal and external, institutional, and systemic functional differentiation among HEIs in Africa. The predominant trend is based on branding strategies and *nominal* differentiation (based on naming), not on *functional* differentiation (with HEIs performing different functions within a coordinated and integrated system).

Current developments signal the advent of multiple forces introducing and driving differentiation and diversification in African higher education systems. Implicitly or explicitly, these forces steer differentiation and diversification to expand the range of choices available to various types of students, improve efficiency in the provision of education, and enhance the set of skills and competencies that are in high demand in the labor market.

To conclude, here are some trends driving differentiation and diversification (further research and policy are required for a more comprehensive list). To begin with, *international rankings* are driving some HEIs in Africa to find ways to distinguish themselves from the dominant trend of teaching-based and teaching-oriented practice, by finding a distinctive niche and profile. Despite all that can be said about their methodological flaws, rankings are drivers of differentiation.

Further, the *quest to attain a research-intensive status and profile* and the global discourse on research excellence initiatives are also driving differentiation and diversification through specific programs and actions of stakeholders, e.g., the WB-funded centers of excellence coordinated by the Association of African Universities, and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)'s Centres of Excellence for Africa's future program. Those centers, especially the public African flagship national universities, are all in search of research niches to distinguish themselves from the bulk of teaching-oriented and profit-driven private and public HEIs. The establishment of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) is evidence of this trend.

Competition for students is also driving nominal—more than functional— differentiation, with private HEIs intensifying their marketing and branding strategies, including through making (not always accurate) claims of excellence. Not least, and though incipient, *internationalization*—the introduction of English in non-English-speaking African countries as a medium of instruction in some courses and programs to attract international students and funding, is another visible trend influencing the diversification of programs. Lastly, *national politics* are also a driving force of differentiation and diversification. Politicians make campaign promises to bring higher education to their communities, which often result in the establishment of new institutions—a far cry from a coordinated, integrated, and system-wide approach for equitable and sustainable provision of higher education. ◢

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Safeguarding Sound International Collaboration

Ingrid d'Hooghe and Jonas Lammertink

Abstract
Countries from around the world have developed national approaches to address risks of international academic collaboration. Based on an analysis of nine approaches, we found that engaging the higher education and research community, facilitating support and coordination between the sector and the government, and identifying opportunities for safe collaboration are crucial. This allows for the mitigation of risks while protecting the academic values of autonomy and freedom, which helps to get the community on board.

Geopolitical developments pose new and increased challenges to open international collaboration in science and technology. In particular, the tech rivalry between the United States and China, and to a lesser extent between other OECD countries and China, have led to increased awareness of potential risks of such cooperation. This includes unwanted transfer of knowledge and technology, breaches of academic freedom, and unethical use of research, for example, for military or political monitoring purposes. Though often propelled by concerns regarding China, such risks exist in academic collaboration with countries from around the world.

As a result, a growing number of countries feel the need to defend their science and technology and develop approaches to mitigate risks. Our recent LeidenAsiaCentre study, How National Governments and Research Institutions Safeguard Knowledge Development in Science and Technology, looks at nine national approaches to strengthening knowledge security and the forces that drive them. These approaches are not always welcomed by researchers, many of whom feel restricted by new rules and regulations. They, in turn, feel the need to defend an open academic environment and the independence of the research community and argue against securitization of research collaboration. Others indicate that they would welcome even more coordination with, or clearer instructions from, the government, through intermediating organizations.

This raises the question of how to find a balanced approach that encourages sound and safe international collaboration, but also recognizes and addresses the concerns of researchers about academic values of openness and independence. In our study, we identified several inspiring practices from among the nine national approaches. These best practices are: active engagement of the research sector; government support for the implementation of risk assessment and mitigation; and attention for opportunity management.

Engagement of the Research Sector
Most national approaches are primarily initiated by government actors with varying levels of input from the higher education and research sector. In some cases, the government has opted for a top-down approach consisting of guidelines, regulations, and sometimes legislation. However, in other countries, the sector plays a relatively large role in shaping the national approach. For example, in Germany, where the federal government does not have competency in the area of education, large associations of universities or research institutes took the lead in developing knowledge security guidelines and information brochures and are actively involved in raising awareness.

Another example is provided by Finland, where the government organizes a China roundtable as part of a country-specific approach. This is a very informal, bottom-up meeting between representatives of the international offices of Finnish universities, China scholars, and multiple ministries. Generally speaking, academics appreciate such bottom-up approaches and are sometimes critical about legislation, which is considered by some as too politically motivated or cumbersome.

Support and Coordination between Government and Sector
Developing and implementing measures to safeguard international collaboration is challenging for universities and research institutes, which often lack manpower and the specific knowledge to assess and mitigate risks. Some countries have established special organizations that facilitate direct communication and coordination between government actors and the sector. This gives scholars and universities access to expertise

from government agencies (such as security services) and provides them with the opportunity to demonstrate to the government their capabilities to self-regulate.

In the United Kingdom, the Research Collaboration Advice Team, a collaboration between the department for business, energy & industrial strategy and academia, provides the sector with a first point of contact for official advice about national security risks linked to concrete international research projects, while also improving government actors' understanding of the needs of researchers. The Netherlands has established a similar organization, the National Contact Point for Knowledge Security, which provides advice about risks and practical matters with regard to concrete (plans for) research collaboration. In Australia, the University Foreign Interference Taskforce allows for direct communication between high level representatives of the sector and the government.

Opportunity Management

The focus of most national approaches is on managing risks, while identifying opportunities for safe collaboration hardly receives any consideration. This is in particular the case for collaboration with countries that are considered both risk sensitive and important academic partners, such as China. Researchers call upon governments and higher education policy makers to invest more in creating opportunities and identifying safe areas of research and forms of collaboration, e.g., through providing "green lists" of low-risk research topics. Integrating risk and opportunity management into one approach may make security policies more attractive to the sector.

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Setting International Standards

Science has no borders, and many international collaboration projects involve researchers from multiple countries. Therefore, common principles, standards, and procedures with regard to knowledge security are needed. Many countries are already organizing meetings to share and discuss their approaches, experiences, and best practices. Of particular interest are the efforts by countries such as Japan and Germany to invest in global coordination with regard to developing principles and measures that address infringement of scientific research security through the G7 Working Group on the Security and Integrity of the Global Research Ecosystem.

Conclusion

Countries from around the world have developed national approaches to safeguarding international knowledge collaboration. Among these approaches, we found that engaging the higher education and research community, facilitating support and coordination between the sector and the government, and paying attention to, and identifying, opportunities for safe collaboration are important aspects. This allows for mitigating risks while protecting the academic values of autonomy and freedom, which helps to get the community on board. ◢

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Knowledge Diplomacy: Findings, Misunderstandings, and Challenges

Jane Knight

Abstract
Knowledge diplomacy is a collaborative approach, based on values of reciprocity and mutual benefits, aimed at strengthening relations among countries through international higher education, research, and innovation. It is often confused with soft power and cultural, science, and public forms of diplomacy. This article clarifies similarities and differences among the different approaches and identifies current challenges.

There is no doubt that the landscape of international higher education (IHE) is changing, as is the world of international relations (IR). But the intersection of these two phenomena is vastly understudied. A comprehensive and interdisciplinary review of research on the role of IHE in building relations between and among countries and addressing global challenges reveals a number of important findings, misunderstandings, and challenges.

Terminology Chaos
Across the two disciplines, there are more than a dozen terms being used (and confused) to describe the relationship between IHE and IR. They include soft power, cultural relations, and many different types of diplomacy such as science, public, education, cultural, and citizen exchange, among others. Many of the terms are quite specific and do not fully capture the breadth of contemporary IHE developments or the reality that nonstate actors such as universities, research centers, and think tanks play a key role in IR. For example, the most frequently mentioned IHE activities in IR are traditional ones such as student mobility, scholarships, and bilateral institutional events and agreements. This ignores recent developments such as knowledge cities and hubs, centers of excellence, international research networks, international joint universities, education–industry partnerships, and others. A comprehensive review of the academic literature from both IHE and IR fields of study revealed that the importance of research and innovation in IHE's role in IR has not been adequately acknowledged, except by the concept of science diplomacy, and that is most often in the context of science and technology.

Knowledge Diplomacy
Therefore, the term IHE is deliberately expanded to IHERI (international higher education, research, and innovation) to acknowledge the importance of "research" and "innovation" in strengthening IR and addressing global challenges. This leads to the introduction of the term *knowledge diplomacy* as a way to capture the breadth and importance of IHERI in IR. The proposed definition of knowledge diplomacy, "the process of strengthening relations between and among countries through international higher education, research, and innovation," is purposely generic in order to apply to a diversity of geopolitical situations, issues, and sectors. This definition does not include rationales, activities, and values that are intentionally used in a description such as "knowledge diplomacy involves diverse state and nonstate actors involved in collaborative education, research, and innovation initiatives, which are based on mutual benefits and reciprocity and designed to build and strengthen relations between and among countries to increase mutual understanding and address global issues."

Misunderstandings about Knowledge Diplomacy and Soft Power
The misunderstanding of the intentions, values, and outcomes of soft power vs. diplomacy, especially by the higher education sector, needs to be addressed. The term soft power is essentially understood as the use of persuasion and attraction in international relations to achieve self-interests and competitive advantage through compliance or cooption.

The misunderstanding of the intentions, values, and outcomes of soft power vs. diplomacy, especially by the higher education sector, needs to be addressed.

Countries strategically use IHERI in a soft-power approach, but it should not be portrayed as a way to build trust and mutual understanding, which many IHE leaders,

researchers, and policy makers believe in and promote. While IHERI actors and activities may be the same in soft power and knowledge diplomacy approaches, the values, modes of operation, and outcomes are strikingly different. Diplomacy in general, and knowledge diplomacy in particular, is about finding common ground, collaboration, negotiating conflicts, ensuring mutual but different benefits for partners, while still aiming to meet national self-interests. This differs substantially from soft power. While both approaches exist in using IHERI in IR, it is important to recognize that they have very different motives, values, strategies, and outcomes.

Is Knowledge Diplomacy the Same as Cultural, Science, and Public Diplomacies?

While the difference in using IHERI in a soft power approach versus a knowledge diplomacy approach is clear, distinctions between the role of IHERI in knowledge diplomacy and related diplomacies such as cultural, science, and public diplomacy are subtler.

Cultural diplomacy is primarily oriented to international exchanges and events in all fields of the arts, education, sports, and other cultural expressions. The goal of cultural diplomacy is to enhance cross-cultural awareness, trust, and relations between and among countries. When IHE is referred to as cultural diplomacy, the most common activities cited are student/scholar exchanges, language learning, joint conferences, and cultural events. While cultural diplomacy includes a wide range of people-to-people education and cultural exchanges, it is not broad enough to include the central elements of IHERI such as research and innovation.

A frequently asked question is whether science diplomacy and knowledge diplomacy are not one and the same. This question is worthy of consideration and depends on how broadly science is defined and used. If science is broadly interpreted to mean knowledge as in the Latin word *scientia*, then there is a close relationship. But, traditionally, science diplomacy has been seen in terms of natural sciences and, more recently, it has been placed within the framework of science and technology. There is no doubt that this reflects the centrality of science and technology in today's knowledge economy and the number of global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, biodiversity, and water security, among others. However, one must ask if the focus on science and technology excludes, to a large extent, other sectors and issues. For instance, it is unlikely that science diplomacy initiatives or negotiations would include social or humanitarian issues such as migration, aging, refugees, gender, social justice, inclusion, poverty, or human rights initiatives. Thus, while full acknowledgement is given to the importance and role of science (and technology) diplomacy, it does not exclude the necessity of knowledge diplomacy, which is a more inclusive concept in terms of the production and application of knowledge to a wide range of global issues.

Public diplomacy has been described as a country's efforts to create and maintain relationships with publics in other societies to advance policies and actions. It is often linked to the idea of reputation building. This involves a wide range of state and nonstate actors and can be applied to an equally broad spectrum of issues. There is no doubt that public diplomacy can include IHERI related actors, issues, and activities, but it is a wide umbrella concept, and the term knowledge diplomacy is more focused on specific state and nonstate actors and their activities related to international higher education, research, and innovation.

Current challenges

Knowledge in its broadest sense is a critical resource in addressing the diversity of national, regional, and global issues. But it comes with many challenges. Knowledge security, as in protection from undesirable transfer and use of sensitive knowledge and technology, including international espionage, is increasingly at risk. Another concern is the politicization of knowledge to suit self-interests by a wide range of actors including politicians, academics, and researchers. The democracy of knowledge, as in widening and respecting different types and producers of knowledge, is yet another challenge facing countries in both the Global North and South. The risk of knowledge diplomacy being seen as "social washing," as in a disconnect between perceived commitment to issues and genuine action and reciprocity, also needs monitoring.

IHERI faces the harsh realities of the more competitive, nationalistic, and turbulent world in which we live. However, we must ask whether we can afford to ignore the potential of using a knowledge-diplomacy approach to IHERI to contribute to the resolution of national, regional, and global challenges and to strengthen relations between and among countries. ◢

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The (Other) Race Problem with US Academic Mobility

Gerardo L. Blanco

Abstract

The Fulbright Program is emblematic of the ideals of internationalization and of US engagement with the world. What is little known is that Senator Fulbright opposed racial integration during his entire legislative career. Students at the University of Arkansas called for the removal of his name and statue, but no similar effort has taken place within the international education community. Considering racial justice, is Fulbright a good brand for US international student and scholar mobility?

Higher education in the United States has multiple race problems, as a special section of *International Higher Education* documented in 2020. Some of these problems include a significant racial participation gap in education abroad programs and reoccurring hostile political discourse, sometimes fueled by geopolitical tensions. Ever since the COVID-19 pandemic, increased anti-Asian racism targeting Chinese and other international students has emerged as another challenge.

Despite these problems, the United States has remained attractive as an academic destination, as the recovery in international student enrollments illustrated in the 2022 Open Doors data makes evident. However, in the United States, internationalization continues to be overreliant on incoming mobility, and revenue considerations often guide the interest in international student recruitment. The United States, as an academic destination, and US universities benefit from having strong and resilient brands. The Fulbright Program is one of the most visible brands associated with US academic mobility.

Honoring a Segregationist

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of the University of Arkansas is named after J. William Fulbright, one of the most prominent Arkansans in the state's history, and his statue is prominently displayed on the campus, where he also served as university president. In 2020, a group of Black students at the university demanded the removal of his name from the College of Arts and Sciences, and of his statue, given his well-documented record opposing the integration of African Americans in schools and public spaces in the United States. These student protests were reminiscent of movements making similar demands of the University of Oxford and in universities across Africa, which honored the colonist Cecil Rhodes. The Rhodes Scholarship is one of the most prestigious awards for academic mobility. J. William Fulbright was a Rhodes scholar, the first one in

his home state's history, and it is believed that this experience inspired him to create an academic mobility program in the United States.

At the University of Arkansas, a commission debated what to do in relation to Fulbright's legacy and recommended the removal of his name and statue. However, the University Board of Trustees decided instead to keep both, citing state legislation prohibiting the removal of monuments from public spaces.

In contrast to the vigorous and open debate led by students at the University of Arkansas, the international education community in the United States seems to have taken little notice of the student protests and the findings of the commission at the university. There have been no public discussions among the international education professional organizations, or public statements made regarding this issue. The website commemorating the 75th anniversary of the program has removed all references to J. William Fulbright, and a website of the Department of State acknowledges that "his voting record on civil rights contributed to the perpetuation of racism and inequality in the United States." While accurate, this statement does not suggest any implications.

Not Only a Woke Problem

In Issue # 110 of *International Higher Education*, Carel Stolker discussed the perils of wokeness in academia and argued against a so-called cancel culture. Regarding the issue at hand, it is important not to confuse critical analysis grounded in historic evidence with cancel culture. Exploring honestly and transparently the legacy of J. William Fulbright does not constitute an attempt to cancel him. Rather, it provides an opportunity to face not only his "mixed legacy," but also that of the professional field of international education, along with potential contemporary complicities with racial injustice. In short, analyzing Fulbright's legacy is much more about our professional field's values than his.

The official brand and visual identity guide for the Fulbright Program focuses on "Building Lasting Connections for a More Peaceful World" as the program's core brand formula, but it lacks any meaningful reference to J. William Fulbright or his controversial legacy. This, along with his disappearance from plain sight on the 75th anniversary website, which instead highlights prominent Black figures like Maya Angelou, Nelson Mandela (not a Fulbright recipient), and even UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the first nonwhite head of government in that country, amounts to an effort to paper over or whitewash a complex reality that merits, if not soul searching, at least critical analysis. A recent article described the current brand status of the Fulbright program as having moved away from Fulbright and toward Fulbrighters instead. Of course, honoring diverse Fulbrighters, whose legacy should not be undermined due to the program founder's character shortcomings, is appropriate. However, in making this transition, an important step is to acknowledge not only Fulbright's personal legacy, but also the program's early history, which largely ignored the Global South, especially Africa.

The Way Ahead

This article is not a call to remove Fulbright's name from the flagship academic exchange program in the United States. Doing so would likely whitewash the racial injustice that Fulbright used his senatorial office to uphold. Given the surprise that seems to characterize those who learn about Fulbright's segregationist background, even among international educators and Fulbright recipients, a first step, and one consistent with academic values, is learning about Fulbright's vision of the world, which also included insightful discussions of American arrogance when engaging with the world.

This article is not a call to remove Fulbright's name from the flagship academic exchange program in the United States.

A good place to start is for scholars and practitioners of internationalization, and for international education academic and professional associations, to learn from, and disseminate, the evidence and analysis collected by the commission that recommended removing Fulbright's name and statue from the University of Arkansas. Also important is to hold discussions about student movements like #RhodesMustFall and more broadly about decolonization of the university. A very practical consideration would be to consider the perils of naming programs and buildings after individuals, a common practice in higher education.

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Finally, despite some dark aspects in its past, the Fulbright program has a diverse alumni network, which has organized around informal groups like Fulbright Noir, for Black scholars, and Fulbright Latinx. Supporting these groups and bridging existing participation gaps by race should become priorities for the work of this academic exchange program.

Cities for Talent: Medium-Sized European Cities Are Becoming More International

Willem van Winden and Marian Counihan

Abstract
Medium-sized cities across Europe are increasingly and actively attracting skilled migrants. How can stakeholders in these cities best manage the challenges of internationalization? The authors combine academic findings with policy reflections to provide a uniquely interdisciplinary guide for academics, policy makers, and professionals in local governments, universities, human resource management departments, for successfully coordinating international talent management.

In the past decades, European medium-sized cities have become active attractors of skilled migrants. Universities have been the prime drivers, luring international students both from EU and non-EU countries benefitting from growing international student demand. Moreover, European economic integration has caused a growing influx of international professionals (expats, independent workers) in these cities. Universities and urban policy makers have come to hail skilled internationalization as a way to boost revenues, increase diversity and cosmopolitanism ("we are not a provincial city"), or as a way to counter the trend of a declining home market due to an aging population.

This article dives deeper into the internationalization wave in medium-sized cities as they are playing out across Europe today, combining analytical contributions with policy perspectives and good practices from a number of European cities.

Skilled Migration into Medium-Sized Cities

Skilled migration processes play out differently in different types of cities. Highly ranked university cities, such as Heidelberg, Leuven, Lund, or Oxford have developed internationally oriented knowledge-based economies around their universities, with start-up ecosystems and science-based businesses. They attract not only international students but also large numbers of scientists and knowledge workers from abroad. By contrast, cities in Central Europe, such as Debrecen or Timisoara, have seen a large influx of foreign direct investment from European and Asian multinationals. Rather than large numbers of international students, they attract medium- and highly skilled engineers to build and run the factories.

Each medium-sized city has its own mix of factors that produces a unique skilled migration picture, but they share some common challenges. Unlike capitals or international hubs, medium-sized cities do not have large international labor markets, making it harder for skilled migrants (and their partners!) to plan a career, leading to lower retention rates. These cities also lack the variety of migrant and expat organizations that may help provide a soft landing for migrants; moreover, city services are less prepared to cater for a more diverse clientele, and compared to larger cities with a long history of immigration, host societies of smaller cities tend to be less receptive to migrants.

How Cities and Their Stakeholders Deal with Skilled Migrants

Five key themes elaborate on a specific aspect of skilled migration and related policies.

- City branding: Cities and universities tend to position themselves as attractive, international, and outward-looking places for international talent, following a logic of

competition for the best brains. But these shiny marketing campaigns do not always resonate with the everyday experience of students and residents. How can cities brand themselves well? And how can stakeholders collaborate effectively?

- Sociocultural integration: Skilled migrants are flocking to medium-sized cities in growing numbers and for various reasons. But after they have arrived, how do they integrate into the local community (if at all), what barriers do they face, what conflicts arise, and what policies do cities put in place to increase integration and avoid the emergence of parallel societies?
- Internationalization in higher education: In most medium-sized cities, the university is the largest driver of internationalization. Universities have always been internationally oriented, but over the past decades, they have attracted steeply growing numbers of international (both exchange and degree-seeking) students and staff, and they have internationalized their curricula. What drives this trend, and how do stakeholders collaborate?
- Labor market integration: The integration of international students and other skilled migrants into urban labor markets comes with its challenges, especially in medium-sized cities, which do not have a long history of skilled migration. International student retention rates tend to be low. Many small and medium enterprises have difficulty adapting to a multilingual and multicultural workforce. And career trajectories do not always work out as planned; deskilling is endemic. Moreover, remote working in a (post) COVID-19 world is changing workplace practices, with possibly far-reaching implications.
- Urban governance: Urban stakeholders face the challenge of how to coordinate their actions to attract and/or incorporate skilled international migrants in the city, addressing the challenges outlined above. In our book *Cities for talent: Good practices for internationalisation in medium-sized European cities*, various models of "coordinated international talent management" are identified, based on practices in European cities.

Some Key Findings on International Higher Education

First, in most cities, policies to attract international students and other skilled migrants are scantly evidence based and fail to define specific target groups or track how their international population fare in the city. Online communities contain a wealth of first-hand qualitative information on how skilled migrants feel, how they appreciate the city, and what their problems and challenges are, but city and university administrations are slow to use these free sources of rich qualitative data to inform their policies or to actively engage with students and other skilled migrants on these issues. Effective coordinated talent management is needed, which should include the collection of intelligence about the well-being of skilled migrants in the city and region.

Second, internationalization is not just about facilitating the everyday life of international students and other skilled migrants. It implies a shift in orientation for a city as a whole, including local institutions, organizations, and residents. It will have impacts that are broadly felt and need to be managed actively. This applies to local organizations, which need to be equipped to provide services to a wider range of residents. Some cities, exemplified by Groningen or Leuven, have taken a more strategic and collaborative approach. Such approaches require solid and long-term funding and capacity building, rather than one-off projects here and there. Moreover, cities are wise to codevelop an integrated vision on internationalization that goes beyond migration, taking not only local but also regional, national, and supranational levels into account.

Finally, internationalization in higher education could fruitfully bring cities and universities together around major societal challenges. Some European university alliances are leading the way, developing programs in which students work on societal challenges with urban stakeholders in different urban contexts, leading to a rich learning and exchange experience for the students as well as valuable policy input for cities. ◢

Second, internationalization is not just about facilitating the everyday life of international students and other skilled migrants.

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What Is a PhD Useful for?

Cláudia S. Sarrico

Abstract
More and more people are getting PhDs. This growth is being driven by government policy, changes in academic work, the demand for doctoral researchers, credentialism, and the import of international talent. There is no longer room in the traditional academic career for all PhD holders. Many become "permadocs," lingering in an academic precariat; others must transition to jobs outside academia. Doctoral education needs to change to better prepare PhD holders for diverse careers.

Doctoral level attainment has been growing fast in high-income economies and, more recently, in lower-income ones as well. In 2019, the average share of 25–64-year-olds with a PhD across the OECD was around 1 percent. If the trend continues, 2.3 percent of today's young adults will enter a PhD program at some point in their life. Why is this expansion taking place, and what is a PhD useful for today?

The Number of People with a PhD Has Been Growing Fast

Concerns about the number of PhD holders dates back to the beginning of the 1980s in the United States, but the preoccupation has not dampened growth. The continued expansion has raised the question of the return on investment in the doctorate for individuals and for society.

The expansion of the doctorate follows from the general expansion of higher education from an elite to a mass pursuit, discussed by Martin Trow in the 1970s, and the generalization of high-participation higher education systems across the globe.

The expansion of doctoral education, whose primary aim is to train people to conduct research, is a well-established phenomenon in OECD countries, where research activity was traditionally concentrated, but nowadays research capacity is spreading to more countries, with the notable rise of China.

The numbers are telling. According to the World Bank, in 2020, only 36 countries had a doctoral level attainment above 0.6 percent in their population, with only a few outside the OECD. In the OECD, the number of new doctorates awarded practically doubled in the two decades prior to 2017 (from 140,000 to 276,800). By comparison, gross domestic spending on R&D grew only by 18 percent during 2000–2020. This means that many doctorate holders will not be involved in research activities.

The growth in doctoral level attainment is much faster than general tertiary education attainment: Between 2014 and 2019, in the OECD, doctoral education grew by 25 percent (0.93 to 1.16 percent), while tertiary education grew by 12.7 percent (33.65 to 37.90 percent).

Why Are So Many PhDs Being Awarded?

Governments have been encouraging the production of more PhDs in the hope of developing knowledge economies to spur growth and prosperity. Research funding rewards institutions directly for producing more PhDs, more postdoc positions, and indirectly for the publications and citations that they are instrumental in producing. Most of the additional research funds made available are for fixed-term projects employing postdoctoral researchers on fixed-term contracts. The expansion of doctoral education ensures a constant supply for these postdoctoral positions.

Increased availability of research funding has also generated demand for an academic career from university graduates, especially from those with a "taste for science." In some fields, these PhD holders are also valued outside academia, by employers who appreciate their technical and transferable competences. This is more likely in science ecosystems, where there is cooperation between universities and the world outside, and where the technology intensity of businesses and the degree of development of the economy is high.

Some individuals may also be using the PhD to differentiate themselves in saturated markets for graduates in high-participation systems of higher education. This credentialism is more likely to take place in professional fields such as business, public administration, and health, and it is more about increasing someone's status than a response to labor market needs. Arguably, some of these "professional doctorates" are not compliant with the traditional and accepted international definition of a PhD: the result of substantive original research work. In the United States, the National Science Foundation

in its Survey of Earned Doctorates uses a stricter definition of "research doctorate" than does the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, and few EdD (doctorate in education) and DBA (doctor of business administration) programs meet the standard.

Another extreme example of credentialism has been demonstrated by several public figures, often politicians, losing their PhDs because of plagiarism. It denotes that the pursuit of knowledge was not their goal. Instead, they used the PhD to boost their career and social status.

The import of talent is another major driver of PhD production. More than one in five PhD students in the OECD are international students (compared to only 4 percent at the bachelor level). In most countries, English has become the *lingua franca* at this level to attract the best foreign talent, including outside the English-speaking world. Many countries rely on these migrants to feed their research systems.

What Happens to PhD Holders after Graduation?

Although many will try, most PhD holders will not be able to enter the traditional academic profession, becoming "permadocs" for a long time, taking a succession of fixed-term contracts before transitioning to a job outside academia, some in research, most in nonresearch activities.

Although many will try, most PhD holders will not be able to enter the traditional academic profession, becoming "permadocs" for a long time.

Insecurity has always characterized the early stages of an academic career, but with the rise in numbers of PhD holders, younger cohorts are faring less well in transitioning to an indefinite contract within academia. Those that do need to be geographically mobile and self-confident, devote a lot of energy to research and networking, and be prepared to endure a long period of precarity.

Precarity raises serious issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, as those from privileged backgrounds are more likely to be undeterred by it. As for women, they are now on par in most fields in doctoral education. But they are still underrepresented in tenure-track positions, in the higher echelons of the academic career, and in fields that offer better opportunities outside academia, such as engineering. The international mobility required of an academic career is another deterrent that women face, especially those with children.

The danger for academia is that it can no longer attract and retain the most talented, as jobs beyond academia offer indefinite contracts earlier, as well as better earnings and better prospects for career progression. And although the intellectual rewards are perceived to be better in academia, PhD holders in other jobs tend to be satisfied with their situation. Academia must offer better working conditions, otherwise the quality of science is likely to suffer. There is already anecdotal evidence that, in some fields, postdoc positions are becoming harder to fill.

Moreover, if PhDs continue to be produced at a rate that the academic career cannot absorb, then doctoral education ought to better prepare candidates for diverse career options in higher education, business, government, the private nonprofit sector, and self-employment.

What Does This Mean for Doctoral Education?

The growth of doctoral education has resulted in more formal, structured, and regulated programs of study. It has also brought more diverse approaches, balancing the tension between the traditional disciplinary research doctorate with the need to prepare PhD candidates for productive jobs beyond academia.

Concern about the value of the doctorate beyond academia has become common in all disciplines. New collaborative PhD programs in cowork environments have emerged with public and private institutions. They are meant to have the same status as the traditional PhD, are still considered "research doctorates," but pursue applied rather than theoretical knowledge. They place new demands on both parties, with different cultures and different priorities. They also raise questions of academic integrity and freedom in collaborative arrangements, which need to be dealt with.

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Doctoral candidates have also become more diverse: Some do not come straight from previous studies, are older, and have professional experience. This means that a single model of doctoral education is no longer fit for purpose and a diversity of offers is necessary.

Doctoral education needs to prepare graduates for jobs outside academia, but also for broader academic career requirements, such as research, education, societal engagement, and leadership and management tasks, i.e., diverse careers within and beyond academia.

Rethinking Tertiary Education in Africa: Policy Reform and Implementation

Wondwosen Tamrat

Abstract
The need to respond to past unaddressed educational issues and new realities such as equity, quality and relevance, employability, and digitalization is becoming a component of national development strategies and policy reforms of the tertiary education sector across Africa. This article explores the need to learn from past weaknesses and understand the nature of evolving demands, which is key to readying the African higher education system for a challenging and complex future.

Africa has exhibited remarkable economic growth over the past decade and half, with half of the fastest growing economies located in the continent. However, this growth has not translated into enough employment for the soaring youth population. Creating jobs for the 10–12 million youth leaving the various levels of the education system has become a strenuous task for many African countries.

A Need to Focus on Skills and Job Creation

Unlike in the past, it takes years for young graduates to get employed. Skills mismatch and a low percentage of graduates in science and engineering is common. The ensuing frustration has led to low self-esteem, desperation, permanent migration abroad in search of better prospects, and increased rates of crime, posing a serious threat to social cohesion and national stability.

As a consequence, the acquisition of relevant skills and job creation are unavoidably becoming a component of national development strategies and policy reforms of the tertiary education sector. This is largely reflected in the skills development strategies that individual governments are developing and in regional initiatives such as the Continental TVET Strategy and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025, developed by the African Union (TVET stands for technical and vocational education and training). African governments are expected to address the need for an appropriate tertiary system that is relevant to the demands of the labor market and can stem the rising unemployment across the continent.

The African population is expected to grow from the current 1.4 billion to 2.5 billion in 2050 and 4.3 billion by 2100. The estimated 364 million between 15 and 35 offer immense opportunity and challenges for investing in the tertiary sector, which is key to socioeconomic development through developing human capital and knowledge creation and dissemination. Currently, 9.4 percent of the relevant age cohort in sub-Saharan Africa access tertiary education, compared with the global average of about 38 percent. The region spends 21 percent of government education expenditure on tertiary education, 27 percent on secondary education, and 43 percent on primary education.

Responding to the evolving tertiary education needs of the youth will take a Herculean effort from governments, institutions, and other stakeholders.

Responding to the evolving tertiary education needs of the youth will take a Herculean effort from governments, institutions, and other stakeholders. The policy reform history of this subsector is, however, replete with ups and downs, misconceptions, and

unhealthy influences that affect the many assumptions and directions set by national governments. Learning from past weaknesses and understanding the nature of evolving demands is key to readying the African higher education system for a challenging and complex future.

Past Influences and Lessons

Africa's colonial history is known for its several damages, including the alienation of the youth from its historical, cultural, religious, and linguistic roots. The impact of colonialism is still evident in the isomorphic tendencies and dependencies of African higher education institutions (HEIs) toward institutions of their former colonizers.

During the postindependence period of the 1960s and 1970s, African HEIs assumed the grand responsibilities of nation building, enhancing economic growth and Africanizing the system, but their success was limited. During the 1980s through the 1990s, additional demographic, sociopolitical, and economic challenges reduced government income, resulting in inefficient governance and management systems, poor infrastructure, dwindling quality, and meager research output. These challenges were exacerbated by policy prescriptions from influential donors like the World Bank, which, among other measures, deemphasized higher education in favor of primary education, promoted privatization and marketization within a mostly public system, and diversified funding strategies, which included cost-sharing schemes. Most of these prescriptions were not aligned with African needs and realities, leading to a variety of repercussions.

The reemphasis on African higher education since the mid-1990s is pushing African tertiary institutions to reposition themselves as engines of economic development and growth. In addition to discrete governmental actions, Africa has embarked on various regional and global commitments and initiatives that enhance the recovery and revitalization of its tertiary education system. Current needs for policy reforms continue to be driven by old and emerging themes including employability, digitalization, quality and relevance, and equity and inequality.

Digitalization

Africa needs to benefit from the use of digital technologies, often described as the most rapid paradigm shift ever seen in education. There is an urgent need to invest and modernize the digital infrastructure, which is inhibiting access to reliable internet. Exorbitant costs, a lack of skills and awareness, and cultural acceptance are also key barriers that need to be addressed.

Institutions need to embed digital transformation in their strategic planning, organizational structures, and operational processes. Without a change in policy, practice, and perspective, it will not be possible to address the impending challenges of digitalization.

Equity and Inequality

Despite significant gains at the primary level, tertiary enrollments in Africa lag far behind the rest of the world. The continent's tertiary education system is characterized not only by the lowest rate of participation, but also by its considerable failure in addressing the question of equitable access for students from low-income groups, women, and disabled and refugee students.

While countries should improve their policies toward inclusive growth, African tertiary education institutions must equally make issues of equity and inequality their top priorities in order to promote social cohesion and mutual growth.

Quality and Relevance

Tertiary education in Africa faces severe constraints in its overall quality and performance. The increasing rise in student population has been a major factor contributing to the deterioration in quality of higher education. The relevance of programs remains problematic, as evident in failures to link TVET and higher education with socioeconomic development, and persistent mismatches between tertiary education and the demands of the job market.

The average percentage of academics with a PhD in public higher education institutions in Africa is estimated to be less than 20 percent. Senior professors are rare and

fast retiring. Low salaries of faculty, lack of research funding and equipment, as well as limited institutional autonomy trigger many scholars to leave their country for greener pastures.

Enhancing the quality of graduates entails creating favorable learning and working environments, strengthening available infrastructures, and developing formal quality assurance systems to enhance new initiatives in the area.

Conclusion

The tertiary education system in Africa provides opportunities to translate the continent's population growth into a demographic dividend. The sector is often regarded as key to poverty eradication, technological development, and social and political cohesion. The Declaration and Action Plan of the First African Higher Education Summit held in Dakar, Senegal, in March 2015, envisages the African higher education landscape for 2050 as an improved system on par with the rest of the world. This is assumed to be achieved through increasing access; creating a financially sustainable, efficient, and globally competitive system; a comprehensive system characterized by diversification, differentiation, harmonization, relevance, flexibility, and resilience; and capable of producing highly skilled, innovative, employable, ethical, and civic-minded graduates.

In view of these aspirations, the process of policy making must provide for sufficient rethinking on the responsiveness of the tertiary sector to current challenges and emerging realities. African tertiary education institutions should particularly justify their relevance to the economy and the demands of society and local communities. Particular attention should be given to factors inhibiting the transition from policy to desired outcomes, since this is a serious bottleneck across the continent, and critical to addressing the immense challenges and evolving realities within the tertiary education sector. ◢

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The Transformation of Post-Soviet Higher Education Systems

Dana Abdrasheva and Emma Sabzalieva

Abstract

In the future, higher education will be student centered and at the service of society, according to global research on the futures of higher education led by UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education (UNESCO IESALC) in 2021–2022. This article focuses on the implications of these findings in the post-Soviet space, where such transformations are not currently the reality.

Conducted within the framework of UNESCO's broader Futures of Education initiative, a recent UNESCO IESALC research project studied future pathways for higher education development. The two-year project was informed by consultations with 25 higher education experts based in 22 countries, a public consultation completed by 1,199 individuals in 97 countries, and workshops with 150 youths in 43 countries. While there is no single route to achieving higher education that is better for all, two of the key findings of this research support a future scenario that is on the one hand student centered and on the other hand at the service of society.

This article discusses the transformations that may need to take place for these two key shifts to become a reality in the post-Soviet space, a region where the imprint of the Soviet Union on higher education remains evident more than three decades after its collapse.

The Soviet Union was an enormous state with multiple cultural, socioeconomic, and political contexts leading to a governance structure with central command and an overarching ideology. Such shared principles of vertical governance and one-man rule were

integrated into the content of education, resulting in an organization of knowledge where the teacher was an unquestionable authority. Rigid reporting lines to the authorities left little space for engagement with society, because higher education mainly fulfilled top-down expectations.

Can Pedagogical Authority Give Way to Student-Centeredness?

Soviet education was shaped by the ideas of communism. The state relied on the unquestionable authority of the teacher to promote these ideas in society. For the state authorities, teachers were a means to ensure the spread of communist ideas, classroom after classroom. The post-Soviet countries inherited this strongly established teacher-centered higher education system, where the educator is the key source of information.

In contrast, participants from all over the globe in UNESCO IESALC's public consultation commented on the need to put students, not teachers, at the center, and to reflect a diversity of opinions in the higher education classroom. Participants explained that student centeredness makes students cocreators of their own learning, enabling them to develop their own trajectories depending on their personalized expectations.

This finding resonated among participants from post-Soviet countries. As a participant from Tajikistan noted, higher education in 2050 could be "flexible and less standardized," with a participant from Kazakhstan adding that in general higher education could be "more inclusive, based on diverse teaching methodologies."

Student-centric higher education, in the future, would also make higher education more relevant for employment and individual/societal wellbeing. As a Russian respondent in the public consultation recorded, "I expect higher education to provide not only theoretical knowledge but, to a greater extent, help students acquire hands-on experience."

Over the past 30 years, with the delegitimization of communist ideology and the unfolding of independent economic and political development trajectories in post-Soviet countries, gradual moves toward more student-centered approaches in higher education have been observed, and pockets of innovation and creativity flourish. However, there is no indication that systemic transformation has taken place: For the most part, power and authority within and beyond the classroom remain top-down.

Socially Engaged Higher Education Systems

Respondents in UNESCO IESALC's public consultation recognized higher education's social responsibility, its significance within local contexts, and its larger global function of contributing to knowledge. In the future, participants noted, higher education institutions should become hubs for knowledge production and research that is supported at local, national, and global levels through active engagement to meet local needs.

Such a construct jars against the Soviet system, for which the set purpose of education was to serve the economy as delineated by the expectations of the central government. Links with communities, as understood by the "third mission" of higher education, were not prioritized. This was reflected, for example, in highly standardized curricula through which students from across the vast Soviet Union were taught the same content despite wide-ranging societal differences.

Nevertheless, research respondents from the post-Soviet space expressed hope that higher education could have wider benefits in the future by looking at both local and broader contexts—as one participant from Kazakhstan proposed, "by increasing its role in the development of local society; by enhancing the impact of research and projects for the benefits of everyone; by further strengthening the international cooperation among higher education institutes." Greater engagement with communities would also have a domestic orientation, as recorded by a respondent from Kyrgyzstan, who stated that "higher education should contain concepts that overcome the existing situation of social tension."

To do this, higher education would need to be a "place of free debate and scholarly inquiry," according to another participant from Kazakhstan, and be "fully autonomous from the Ministry of Education," in the words of a participant from Tajikistan. As the research was conducted before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we also include the views of a participant from Russia, who poignantly noted the role of higher education in "conveying the ideas of human treatment [and] equality regardless [of] race [or] origin."

More than 30 years have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, yet many of the higher education systems in the post-Soviet space are still characterized by a high degree of centralization and control.

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Concluding Remarks

More than 30 years have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, yet many of the higher education systems in the post-Soviet space are still characterized by a high degree of centralization and control. Academic freedom is curtailed, students typically have limited course choices, and claims of a mismatch between what is taught and what is needed in society abound. Because students are viewed as silent consumers rather than active participants of learning, they lose their ability to bridge external realities and the learning process.

Given this reality, the calls for a more student-centered approach and greater engagement with communities—irrespective of the root causes—clearly demonstrate a desire for improved human experiences, as we collectively look ahead to 2050 and beyond. In a region where geopolitical challenges have a global impact, it becomes ever more urgent for higher education systems to seek ways to incorporate these messages and respond to people's hopes for a better world. ◢

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Thirty Years of Transformation in Post-Soviet Higher Education: Outcomes and Lessons

Anna Smolentseva

Abstract
This article provides an overview of the transformations of higher education in 15 post-Soviet countries since 1991. Post-Soviet transformations were part of the global shift that prioritized individual goods/values over collective goods/values, and a natural and spontaneous economic order over political action. Neoliberal transformations have contributed to social inequalities in post-Soviet societies and higher education systems. The commodification of knowledge has led to the erosion of its intrinsic value.

After Russia started a full-scale war in Ukraine, it became obvious that we need to reflect more on the nature, outcomes, and lessons of post-Soviet transformations. Higher education is only part of the picture; it does not explain everything, nor does it work independently from other social and political institutions. But as it deals with knowledge, social norms/values, and social value, its contributions to society are important to understand. This article discusses main developments in higher education in the post-Soviet period and how, despite the growth of participation in all 15 countries of the region, these developments have limited the potential contribution of higher education to post-Soviet societies.

Denial of the Soviet and Advancement of the Neoliberal

The global rise of neoliberalism and the gradual dismantling of the Soviet system started at approximately the same time, in the 1980s. The late Soviet leadership attempted to revive socialism by using political and economic liberalization and market mechanisms. Post-Soviet neoliberal reforms were built on that late Soviet legacy.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the socialist past was rejected as a "tragic experiment," a dead-end leading away from "normal" development. With it, ideas of the larger common good in society went down as well. Instead neoliberal individuals appeared, working for themselves and their families, focusing on themselves, making free consumer choices, investing into their higher education, and choosing their higher education and career pathways based on perceived labor market outcomes. Reduced public funding, market mechanisms, and competition were part of the neoliberal model that was implemented to various degrees in most post-Soviet countries. Reforms in higher education happened alongside many other socioeconomic reforms that had high human costs, and were associated with political turbulence and military conflicts.

System-Level Transformations

Thirty years of transformation in post-Soviet countries have shaped 15 formally different national higher education systems. All 15 systems evolved from the same Soviet model, which restricted the number of institutional sectors and their reputational aspirations. Unleashing positional competition-based markets in the 1990s helped to strengthen the advantage of those educational institutions that were strong before, and to increase the gap between top- and bottom-tier institutions. In that sense—in terms of institutional stratification—post-Soviet systems are comparable to other marketized systems.

The state further shaped differences, both vertically and horizontally: institutional classification systems; degree systems; range of providers; institutional rankings; sectoral subordination; performance-based funding; and the classification of students based on a national admission test and other means. Maintaining or reducing system hierarchies was also a political choice, and as most countries rejected the Soviet egalitarian ideal, there was no policy commitment to overcoming social inequalities. In a few countries, participation rates and participation of women in higher education decreased compared to the Soviet period.

Institutional-Level Transformations

Marketization took place largely within the dominating public sector and contributed to system inequalities, not only at the institutional level, but also at the intra-institutional level. The so-called dual-track tuition fee system divides enrollments in each public institution into state-funded and privately funded segments. The shift from Soviet free to fee-based higher education had foundations in the later Soviet period. That helps to explain why the same model was adopted in all 15 countries. In 13 countries, half or more of the student population in the public sector pay fees (in Armenia, Georgia, and the Kyrgyz Republic, the share of fee-paying students is over 80 percent). The other students in the public sector receive state-funded education. Unlike all other international funding models, this system does not apply the same rules to all students, maintaining double standards of social value (money/merit).

Marketization took place largely within the dominating public sector and contributed to system inequalities, not only at the institutional level, but also at the intra-institutional level.

Although money is decisive, it legitimates and fosters inequality. It is characteristic of post-Soviet societies that the system is almost never questioned. It reproduces a cultural divide between Soviet values of higher education as a common good and commitment to egalitarianism, and the post-Soviet ideas of higher education as a private good, consumer choice, and normalized inequality. But wherever the state intervenes, it can reduce built-in inequality, like in Estonia, where the dual-track system was canceled in 2012 for students progressing normally.

The Purposes of Higher Education

Neoliberal reforms became foundational in refocusing higher education toward labor market needs and outcomes. For post-Soviet systems, such "vocationalization" was easier to adopt because it echoed the Soviet orientation toward the needs of the national economy. The Soviet system saw higher education as an instrument of both social and economic development, to train cadres for the national economy and to form a new individual for the collective good of socialism, an egalitarian society free of exploitation.

Perestroika, which tried to overcome the Soviet biases, highlighted the intrinsic value of higher education as a full development of personality, prioritizing the humanistic purposes of education. Based on human capital theory and the neoliberal imaginary, post-Soviet higher education reduced higher education to an instrument of economic development. It focused on the labor market and on employability, but this time for the sake of the individual, not the collective good.

Commodification of Knowledge

Perhaps more importantly, marketization affected the core of higher education: knowledge—which lost its intrinsic value. Knowledge became a commodity, which could take various forms. In a situation of underfunding, described as "diversification of funding sources," all higher education could do was to sell "knowledge." Here, the model of the "entrepreneurial university" was very handy to ensure that the state did not have to do anything and the institutions would have to raise funds themselves, which they did. The first form of "knowledge" that was sold were higher education degrees, which was facilitated by the dual-track tuition fee model.

Giving access in exchange for payment to those underperforming at the national test legitimized nonexcellence in higher education. It contributed to the understanding that higher education is just a commodity to be bought, with no intrinsic value, rather than demonstrating a triumph of individual free choice. For the academic profession, undermined by decades of low salaries, insecure employment, lack of social status, and stratification, the commodification of knowledge resulted in erosion of the academic core of higher education. This led to prioritization of applied knowledge, applied research, and consultancy work, to complement low public funding.

Commodification also facilitated the development of a large-scale market in constructed academic papers, including doctoral dissertations, student essays, and journal articles. Everything has become for sale. Academic values and academic freedom have never been strong and have not received any grounding in the post-Soviet period, being further undermined by external political pressures.

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Contribution of Higher Education to Society, and Its Limitations

The bitter part of the post-Soviet experience is that the nature and implications of the marketization and commodification of higher education were not unknown at the beginning of the reforms; this was discussed in international literature. Post-Soviet transformations were part of the global shift that prioritized individual goods/values over collective goods/values, and a natural and spontaneous economic order over political action.

While higher education expanded over the last 30 years and we saw some good institutional examples of higher education development, the contributions of higher education to society can be only considered successful if realized on a systemic and global level. That has not happened. Competition, a fetish of the neoliberal perspective, divides and diverts individual academics, students, institutions, national systems, politicians, states, and societies from combining their efforts in achieving common goals such as peace, tackling climate crisis, handling pandemics, pursuing justice and others. That could and should change. ◢

The Crisis of Predatory Publishing in the Post-Soviet Space

Ikboljon Qoraboyev

Abstract

Integration into the global knowledge economy through internationalization was believed to be a major factor for transformation of higher education systems in the post-Soviet space. Transition and transformation were major paradigms through which we analyzed higher education developments. Instead, we witness the emergence of two parallel research cultures. The issue of predatory publishing helps us to see this phenomenon more clearly. Predatory publishing is transforming into a self-perpetuating culture.

What we are witnessing, more than 30 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, may be the emergence and consolidation of two parallel research cultures, where the old and the new seem to coexist for a longer time than we expected. The issue of predatory publishing helps us to see this phenomenon of parallel research cultures more clearly.

While it is a global problem, predatory publishing takes an outsized dimension in post-Soviet countries, where we witness a proliferation of article mills operating through websites and, increasingly, online messaging apps like Telegram. Rather than just being a temporary problem and part of the "transition costs," predatory publishing is transforming into a self-perpetuating culture. With the emergence of AI-based tools like ChatGPT, which have already been used to write journal articles or to pass law school exams, the problem of predatory publishing in lower- and middle-income countries, including in the post-Soviet space, will only worsen. One of the features that helped to discern whether a text was predatory or not was low quality, "broken English." With ChatGPT, predatory publishing entrepreneurs will certainly appeal more to researchers struggling to publish articles internationally.

The Rise of Predatory Publishing in the Former Soviet Space

There is a preponderance of low-quality research outputs (articles mostly published in Q3 and especially Q4 journals in Scopus) in post-Soviet countries (see A big picture: Bibliometric study of academic publications from post-Soviet countries). Predatory publishing is a global phenomenon: According to *Nature*, predatory publishing practices, including paid-for coauthorship, have turned into a multi-million dollar trade and are spreading globally. Predatory publishing is taking an outsized dimension and is having a major impact in post-Soviet countries.

According to Andrei Rostovtsev, the founder of Dissernet, a famous Russian scientific project that detects and publicizes cases of academic plagiarism in Russia, turning to

predatory publishing became widespread and systematic after a goal to increase Russian scholars' outputs in journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science was introduced in 2012. Thousands of Russian scholars started publishing in predatory journals following a "pay-to-publish-anything" logic. Usually, these texts were English translations (using online translators) of articles written by others and originally published in other languages, with these predatory authors inviting other colleagues to join in as coauthors to share publication costs. Rostovtsev and his colleagues refer to this phenomenon as "a catastrophe that has become a norm." In 2021, a study by Uzbek researchers found that the introduction of publish-or-perish logic led to a situation where Uzbekistan was leading the list of countries with the highest ratio of articles published in journals discontinued by Scopus—these journals usually turning out to be predatory. According to Bulat Kenessov, a professor at Kazakhstani National University, predatory publishing worsened further during 2022: Kazakhstan occupied the second place in terms of the ratio of scholarly articles appearing in suspicious journals that were discontinued from indexing in the Scopus database.

Predatory Publishing: A Temporary Phenomenon Linked to Transition?

In this context, should we see the rise of predatory publishing as a temporary phenomenon necessarily brought upon by transition, and expect it to fade away with the successful integration of post-Soviet researchers into the global research landscape? From this perspective, the increase in predatory publications is explained by the lack of experience of post-Soviet researchers in publishing in international journals. This lack of experience is due to the isolation of Soviet research from the global scientific community. Linguistic barriers also aggravate the problem. An absolute majority of WoS and Scopus journals are published in English, while Russian remains the *lingua franca* of the post-Soviet region, including in higher education.

Should we see the rise of predatory publishing as a temporary phenomenon necessarily brought upon by transition, and expect it to fade away with the successful integration of post-Soviet researchers into the global research landscape?

As a result, researchers in post-Soviet countries need time and resources to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and socialization to be able to publish in high quality international reviews. During this process, it is normal that many aspiring researchers get lured into the aggressive marketing nets of predatory publishers. Thus, predatory publishing can be seen as one of the many costs of the post-Soviet transition.

Predatory Publishing as a Self-Perpetuating Pervasive Culture?

Another approach is to consider predatory publishing as a lasting phenomenon, which inevitably penetrated the post-Soviet region as a result of its exposition to globalization, and has been largely embraced and widely practiced by local actors.

Predatory publishing, in combination with other forms of academic misconduct (plagiarism, data fabrication, ghost writing, etc.), is widely used to inflate the research performance of academics, to help individuals acquire a PhD degree that they will use as a status symbol, or to enable faculty move up the ladders of academic promotion. For example, PhD degrees are attractive among Russian political elites as a status symbol, which generates a pressure for a large number of bureaucrats, politicians, and executives to chase after a PhD (Abalkina & Libman, 2020).

This versatile use of academic publications and degrees in post-Soviet society leads to the emergence of a substantial industry of entrepreneurs specialized in predatory publishing. We are facing a multiplication of serial entrepreneurs and intermediaries offering would-be authors and scientists authorships and coauthorships in articles published in journals indexed in international databases. Anna Abalkina analyzed the case of "International Publisher," a company offering post-Soviet researchers authorships in WoS and Scopus indexed journals, estimating fake authorships obtained through this company in the hundreds, with a turnover of USD 6.5 million in the period 2019–2021. There are also many Telegram channels with names such as "Wos-Scopus," "International articles," "Conferences, journals," etc., offering authors opportunities to publish their articles with fake indexes. Even if they are not Scopus indexed, they can still serve as qualifying metrics to secure positions, titles, and promotions.

From this perspective, predatory publishing should be seen as part of a self-perpetuating culture of academic misconduct supported by an industry of predatory publishing. The inclusion of scientometric targets in regulatory documents is creating specific

demand–supply chains where (co)authorships in international journal articles are monetized, where costs can vary from several hundreds or even thousands of US dollars for Web of Science or Scopus articles to just a couple of dozens of US dollars for articles published in self-proclaimed "international" online journals with fake indicators.

Conclusion

The protracted transition in research and higher education, 30 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, has led to the emergence of parallel research cultures. On the one hand, a smaller number of researchers, mostly educated and trained in the West, participate in collaborating projects with international (mostly Western) counterparts. This group of researchers have a better score in terms of high-quality international publications. On the other hand, a larger group of researchers, employed by local universities and research institutes, face a similar pressure to publish, but they lack resources, training, and collaborative support to publish in decent international journals. Instead of real transformations, what we are witnessing are institutions and researchers adapting to new realities and pressures introduced by globalization, to survive the perils of "publish or perish."

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Realism about Indian Higher Education

Philip G. Altbach

Abstract

Indian higher education is opening to the world, but there are many aspects of the world's second largest system that need to be understood by the global community. A stress on expansion has prevented the emergence of world-class universities. At present, Hindu nationalism and politicization are important forces in India. Academia has traditionally been highly bureaucratic. These are among the underlying realities of one of the key national academic systems in the global landscape.

Indian higher education has suddenly become "hot," with delegations of global university leaders and politicians flocking to the country—the latest group from Australia. Governments and universities from around the world are signing memoranda of understanding with Indian counterparts and making big plans for research collaboration, joint degrees, and other initiatives. Recent regulations for setting up international branch campuses in Gujarat and the interest expressed by some foreign universities in doing so is the latest trend.

This is not surprising. India is now the world's second largest higher education system, with around 38 million students in 50,000 academic institutions (including 1,057 universities) and a goal of doubling gross enrollment rates from the current 26.3 percent to 50 percent by 2035. Further, India is the second largest source of international students (after China) globally. Interest is also stimulated by the National Education Policy (NEP) released in 2020, which promises major investment in postsecondary education and significant improvement in India's top universities, with an emphasis, for the first time, on internationalization. Importantly, the NEP promises to open up a highly regulated and largely closed academic system to the world. The traditional *swadeshi* (encouraging local products) ideology will, it is proposed, be replaced by an open door. Skepticism about China, especially in Western countries, its "zero COVID" policy, and a modest decline in the number of internationally mobile Chinese students have also stimulated interest in India.

Indian higher education has suddenly become "hot," with delegations of global university leaders and politicians flocking to the country.

While there is enthusiasm, little is known about the realities of Indian higher education, and data are limited. It is worth looking at some of the challenges that international partners will face in India. This brief discussion on these challenges is intended as a contribution to a realistic approach to future collaboration and partnerships. Of

course, there are tremendous opportunities for those who engage realistically with understanding of the context.

Populism and Politics

Indian higher education today exists in a highly toxic political and societal environment—as is the case in many countries—and this has fundamental implications for how academic institutions from other countries should consider possible collaboration and involvement. A few examples illustrate the point. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party government's *Hindutva* ideology, especially its anti-Muslim rhetoric and activism, is without question a hindrance to global higher education collaboration. There are numerous examples of visa denials, such as the case of a University of Sussex professor, an expert on Kerala, who was refused entry at the Thiruvananthapuram airport and was deported on his way to a conference, with no explanation provided.

Academic freedom issues in India as reported in the international media are all problematical. Indeed, reports of academic freedom threats are common. There were reports that government interference led to the resignation of an eminent professor, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, from Ashoka University, a private institution. The recent proposal by home minister Amit Shah to emphasize Hindi in the central universities and in the Hindi-speaking states will similarly be seen as a turn toward nationalism. Promoting pseudoscience in the name of promoting Indian knowledge systems in prominent institutions, promoting Hindi for medical degrees in the state of Madhya Pradesh, etc., can be harmful for the country's higher education system in efforts to compete globally.

Complexity and Bureaucracy

Without question, India has one of the most complicated higher education systems in the world. Most undergraduate students study in private colleges of diverse quality. Of the 1,057 universities that mostly offer graduate programs, around 450 are private. Most higher education institutions are under the jurisdiction of India's 28 states and 8 union territories. The highest quality public universities and research institutes, about 7 percent of the total, are central government institutions. There is also a small recently established high prestige private university sector. There is a complex arrangement for quality assurance, through the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) for colleges and universities and through the National Board of Accreditation for assessing the quality of engineering and technology, management, pharmacy, architecture, and several other fields. But only a minority of institutions (around 14 percent of colleges and 35 percent of universities) have undergone accreditation by NAAC.

The country is known for its bureaucracy, inherited from British colonialism and ingrained in independent India. Rules and regulations, often inconsistently or slowly applied, cover many aspects of higher education. Internal bureaucracy combines with cumbersome governmental regulation. The constitution of India allows both the central government and state governments to enact laws related to the higher education sector. This division of powers has often led to confrontation between central and state governments. The confrontations between the centrally appointed governors and the state governments of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Punjab on matters related to vice-chancellor appointments, including the mass firings of nine vice-chancellors in Kerala, are recent examples.

Underfunding

Indian higher education, at both state and central levels, has been dramatically underfunded for decades. Much of the significant expansion of recent years has been in colleges that receive no direct government funding, although a small proportion of students in select institutions are eligible for need-based assistance or scholarships based on caste or other status. The private university sector has witnessed significant growth in recent years. But most of the private universities are only "big colleges" in terms of student enrollment and physical infrastructure. The NEP 2020 promises a major infusion of funds for higher education and research, but significant allocations have not yet been distributed. And the NEP mainly covers standards and procedures governed by

the central government and does not affect the states much—where the bulk of higher education governance resides. Without question, neither significant improvement in quality nor the planned massive enrollment expansion can be achieved without much enhanced funding from both the central and state governments.

Good (in Part) but Not Great

While India wants to partner with world-class universities in other countries, it cannot claim to have any world-class universities of its own, at least as measured by the 2023 *Times Higher Education* rankings. India's highest ranking institution is the Indian Institute of Science, which is in the 251-300 range. India does have 75 universities included in the rankings, but rather far down on the lists. The country does have a number of outstanding specialized institutions, including the Indian Institutes of Technology (especially the original five IITs located in Delhi, Mumbai, Kanpur, Kharagpur, and Chennai), the Indian Institutes of Management, and several research institutions.

India also has some excellent public universities with globally recognized postgraduate programs in selected fields. Further, an Institutions of Eminence (IoE) scheme was launched in 2017, with the goal of identifying 20 universities to achieve "world-class standards." Although each public institution selected under the scheme is eligible for around USD 122 million over a period of five years, only less than half of the originally sanctioned amount has been released for the eight public institutions recognized under this program. Poor project implementation and absorption capacity of beneficiary institutions are the main reasons for the underutilization of funds. By August 2022, only eight public and three private institutions were approved by the government under the scheme, including Jio Institute, a not yet established new university in the "greenfield" category. Only public institutions are eligible for receiving funds from the government under this program. The IoE scheme is, therefore, very much a work in progress.

Approximately 20 of India's 54 central universities and 20 of its 126 "deemed universities" meet reasonably good standards and some, such as the Indian Institute of Science Bangalore, Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research–Mumbai, and Tata Institute of Social Sciences–Mumbai, are excellent. Most of India's 28 states have at least one comprehensive university with some research focus that is of reasonable quality. Some of the oldest universities, such as the University of Mumbai, the University of Calcutta, and the University of Madras are sponsored by the state governments.

There is also a large and growing private sector. Around 78 percent of India's colleges are in the private sector (government-aided and unaided together) and they constitute around 66 percent of total student enrollments in the country. There are around 450 private universities, most of which are of poor quality and have marginal reputations. However, there is a small but growing number, perhaps a dozen, high quality, nonprofit, and well-resourced private universities. These new institutions, which have earned high status in a short time, largely serve undergraduate students.

India has more than 100 research laboratories in diverse areas sponsored by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and other central government agencies. Some are outstanding in terms of their research contributions.

From the perspective of overseas universities seeking partners in India, a rough estimate of the number of appropriate partner Indian universities may be around 50, based on overall quality. It is important to plan both an institution-specific and a department-specific strategy for identifying potential partners in India. As elsewhere in the world, some second-tier universities have a few departments that are at par with peer departments of top-rated 50 universities, even if the entire university is not top quality.

The Academic Profession

At the heart of university quality and culture is the professoriate. The Indian academic profession is perennially troubled. Subject to strict bureaucratic rules, with many staff subject to extensive teaching responsibilities at the undergraduate level and often lacking adequate facilities to teach STEM and other fields, the profession now faces significant shortages. In much of the system, up to 38 percent of the posts are lying vacant. Around

33 percent of the 18,905 academic positions in central universities were vacant last year, and the situation is worse in state institutions. Staffing at the IITs is particularly problematic, as top talent can earn much more in the booming tech sector, both in India and abroad. The result is that 2,231 academic posts within the IITs of Delhi, Mumbai, Madras, Kharagpur, and Kanpur were recently vacant. While there have been efforts to increase the proportion of total faculty with doctorates, many academics do not hold a terminal degree. And more concerning still, many of India's top researchers work overseas.

Internationalization

The NEP has placed emphasis on internationalization, particularly on increasing the small number of international students in India, as well as building links and programs with top-ranking foreign universities, setting up international student offices in institutions, and attracting foreign branch campuses. But the fact is that India has never had an international academic strategy and has been a largely closed system for a half-century. The infrastructure and policies necessary for effective internationalization are lacking. Few universities have professional staff prepared to deal with foreign collaboration or significant numbers of international students. Government regulations on everything from financial regulations to visa policy will need to be significantly changed—and this is not easy in the Indian context. The NEP recommendation that only universities in the top 100 of the global rankings will be welcome is entirely unrealistic and bad policy as well (this recommendation is being rethought). The NEP will no doubt give a boost to higher education internationalization, but without major reforms and significant investment by both universities and government, success will be impossible.

These developments are both encouraging and discouraging. The recent Central Regulations *"International Financial Services Centres Authority, (Setting up and Operation of International Branch Campuses and Offshore Education Centres) 2022"* allows both "top 500" universities and "other foreign institutions" to establish campuses and offer programs in financial management, fintech, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in the "GIFT City" in Gujarat. These regulations allow only foreign campuses to be established on that specific site. How this will affect other parts of the country is unclear. The clauses of these regulations also allow "Foreign Educational Institutions" other than universities to establish campuses. This might allow the entry of fly-by-night operators.

In sum, the global academic community will need to examine the realities of Indian higher education before pursuing any level of involvement in the world's second largest academic system. ◢

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Private Higher Education in Taiwan: From Prosperity to Adversity

Angela Yung Chi Hou and I-Jung Grace Lu

Abstract
Demographic changes, underenrollment, the COVID outbreak, and growing geopolitical tensions pose many challenges to the private higher education (PHE) sector in Taiwan. This article discusses the state's governance model relating to the underenrolled PHE sector and analyzes the pluralist-market oriented strategies adopted by semielite private institutions, in a context of local and global competition.

Taiwan's higher education has experienced substantial changes in policy orientations over decades. Like in other East Asian countries, the system was highly regulated by the state. During the 1980s, following a process of political democratization and economic development, the Taiwanese government was pressed to provide students with more opportunities for higher learning.

Taiwan's Private Higher Education

As a result, the higher education system, especially its private sector, was expanded significantly and rapidly both in terms of institutions and of student enrollments. By the late 2000s, private higher education (PHE) institutions in Taiwan had by far outnumbered public institutions. In 2020, 102 out of 149 higher education institutions were private, with an enrollment of 1,244,822 students, equal to 68.5 percent of the total student population.

Taiwan's PHE institutions are diverse and follow patterns observed in East Asia and beyond. As in Japan and South Korea, where PHE has also held the majority of enrollment, types of private institutions range from religiously affiliated, entrepreneur-funded (associated with enterprises and industries), and philanthropic (family donors). The first private university, Tunghai University, was religiously affiliated, reestablished in Taiwan by the United Board for Christian Education in China in 1953. Currently, most private universities and colleges in Taiwan are characterized as "demand-absorbing" institutions: They depend principally on tuition income and focus primarily on teaching-heavy programs, while receiving only limited donations. In fact, approximately half of the "demand-absorbers" focus on vocational programs.

Only a small portion of Taiwan's private universities—such as Chang Gung University, Taipei Medical University, and China Medical University—can be categorized as semielite. These institutions are well connected to industry, normally own a medical school, and offer a handful of STEM programs. In general, they are regarded more highly than second-tier public institutions.

The State-Steering Governance Model in Taiwanese PHE

The distinction between the public and private higher education sectors (intersectoral distinctiveness) in Taiwan is insubstantial. Under the Private Higher Education Act 1974 and the University Act 1994, private and public institutions are subject to the same regulations concerning varying important aspects, including establishment, appointment of presidents, program development, financial management, faculty and staff recruitment, student enrollment, tuition schemes, etc. For example, after having been selected by the institutional committee, a president of a private university needs to be approved by the ministry of education (MOE). This procedure is basically the same for the public sector. In a similar vein, the Teachers' Act hardly distinguishes the two sectors when it comes to the appointment, promotion, suspension, and dismissal of faculty members. Moreover, both public and private universities must be accredited based on the same quality standards, by the same quality assurance agencies.

An intriguing aspect of limited intersectoral distinctiveness, and of substantial state control, relates to tuition policy. On one hand, the MOE provides headcount-based subsidies to private universities to protect students from receiving low-quality education as well as to ensure the accountability of private institutions. Between 2014 and 2019, the total value of this fund increased from USD 750 to 877 million—or 17 percent. Currently,

MOE subsidies account for more than a fifth of the regular income of private institutions. On the other hand, all private institutions, whether they receive MOE subsidies or not, have been prohibited from raising tuition and fees. Although intermingled with political complexities, this tuition-ceiling policy poses a threat to institutional governance, financial sustainability, quality maintenance, and global competitiveness.

Across the PHE sector, the governance of Taiwan's PHE has changed from a "state-steering" to a "pluralist-market" model. For example, the revised Private Education Act of 1997 stipulated that private universities and colleges would have autonomy in the operation of their governing board and the execution of faculty promotion. However, the MOE still keeps a close check on quality via a variety of external reviews and assessments.

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The State's Role in an Era of Demographic Changes

In 2022, the fertility rate in Taiwan fell to a historic low of 0.89. Fifty-one universities, including 29 private universities, together had a deficit of 14,000 students, while the acceptance rate, at 98.94 percent, was the highest recorded. Demographic changes and underenrollment appear to have caused a dual reaction from the state.

On one hand, the MOE passed the "Act Governing the Closure of Private Educational Institutions," for the purpose of protecting students' learning rights and teachers' interests. Through this "exit plan" scheme, the MOE intends to resume its control upon underenrolled private universities. For instance, in 2022, 12 private institutions that met less than 60 percent of their recruitment target were forced to close down. In fact, for a long time prior to the enactment of the exit plan, the MOE had been closely monitoring the academic and administrative aspects of underenrolled private institutions.

On the other hand, to be able to cope with the dramatic drop in local student enrollment, semielite private institutions are encouraged to foster and consolidate their international outreach and simultaneously become more responsive to the labor market. A couple of private universities with longer histories (hence, sufficient resources and network heritage), a strong academic focus and professional performance, or running a medical school (in pursuit of global rankings with advanced research and publications) started to transform into research-oriented universities seeking academic excellence. Two private institutions, Chang Gung University and Yuan Ze University, were successfully awarded MOE Research Academic Excellence Initiatives (AEI) from 2005 to 2016. Several semielite private institutions awarded with Teaching AEIs have attempted to strengthen their industry linkages and engage students through offering a variety of internship programs. The partnership between Yuan Ze University, a private institution, and Far Eastern Group, an international telecommunications and manufacturing conglomerate, is a telling case. Another strategy, currently adopted by Feng Chia University, I-Shou University, and Fu Jen Catholic University is to seek international partners in order to offer collaborative cross-border programs and recruit more fee-paying international students. In general, the "exit plan," together with the AEIs, has created both pull and push factors that help transform many semielite private universities, some of which outperform public universities in global rankings.

Despite the public's persistent discriminatory attitude, Taiwan's PHE institutions have made great efforts to demonstrate their accountability and to gain public confidence. However, demographic changes, underenrollment, the COVID outbreak, and the region's growing geopolitical tensions have posed many challenges to the sector. In that context, the Taiwanese state has departed from the state-steering model to instill a pluralist-market one. ◢

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