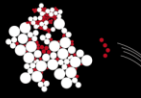


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Reconciling National Higher Education Educations with Global Excellence



Presentation for the CEPS Sympoision

Ljubljana, 23-25 November 2011

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Normative Positions

- WCUs are a vital element of a competitive higher education system. Supporting élite universities creates a wider set of societal benefits and returns
 - *Stemming from this belief a policy rhetoric has emerged across very different countries, leading to WCUPs worldwide (see next slide)*
- The notion of WCU is focused on a limited range of variables emulating the so-called "Stepford University"
 - *Stemming from this belief critiques against global rankings have emerged, attempts to develop better rankings*

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2

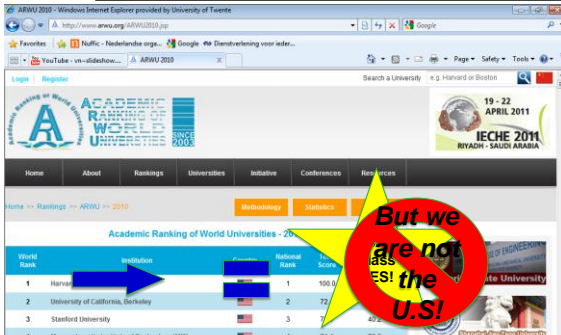


"Which" is a WCU ?

World Rank	Institutions	Country	National Rank	Total Score
1	Harvard University	USA	1	100.0
2	University of California, Berkeley	USA	2	72.4
3	Stanford University	USA	3	72.1

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Normative Positions in Fact



The WCU Policy Rhetoric

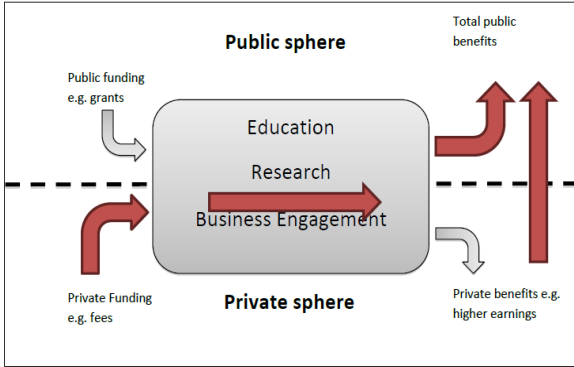
- Building world-class universities has been the dream of generations of Chinese [...] not only for pride, but also for the future of China
- The government wants a national innovation system in which universities and research organizations attract the best minds to conduct world-class research, fuelling the innovation system with new knowledge and ideas
- Top level research to make Germany a more attractive research location
- Aalto University is born to be one of the leading institutions in the world [...] by 2020
- Place France among the highest ranking international universities

This Presentation

An objective framework by which the public benefits of WCUPs can be understood, and against which the claims by interested parties may be tested, is needed. The presentation covers:

- The public value of HE
- Possible system effects of WCUPs
- Example of France
 - Inherent problems and attempted solutions: what role for WCUPs?
- Conclusions

Figure 2 A world-class universities programme increasing higher education system efficiency





The System Effects of a WCUP (I)

- Increased exogenous resources
 - Additional staff, students and research funding from outside the country/ higher education system which spill-over to other higher education institutions
- Increased private endogenous resources
 - Resources that would have either not been spent in the country's universities, or gone to other universities, go into the sector, which spill-over to other higher education institutions



The System Effects of a WCUP (II)

- More efficient use of public resources
- New products (e.g. Graduate School trajectories)
- Reputational benefits
 - All national universities benefit from a higher external awareness/ reputation from the presence of one or more world-class institutions in the system

The Tensions of WCUPs: from Individual to System Benefits

- WCUP must demonstrate WCUP's aggregate public benefit if they are to become a tool used by public investment
- For each of the five variables, "world-class" might get stronger *at the expense* of the system, e.g.
 - Create barriers between the "haves" and the "have-nots"
 - Act as a kind of enclave for global actors exploiting the best of the country's resources
 - Beggar-thy-neighbour effect

Can World Class University Programmes Produce Clear Public Benefits for National Higher Ed?

We look at how one WCUP attempted to solve an identified systemic problem, i.e. the segmentation between the elite Grandes Écoles and the mass university system in French higher education

Values in French Higher Education

- Unselective University Sector
- *Grandes Écoles* cater for an elite minority
 - Research intensive HEIs (universities) are less prestigious than vocational ones (*Grandes Écoles*)
- Equality vs. equity

Conclusions (I)

- Part of wider transformation process in French public governance
- ARWU crisis did have key effects:
 - Government could advance a new administrative paradigm into the French Higher Education sector
 - Expectations of transformation
- Some system improvement, e.g.
 - Widening participation
 - Internationalization
 - More investments

Conclusions (II)

- Role of WCUP not straightforward
 - Emerging at the end of a wider shift
- Key challenges remain
 - Revitalizing the university sector
 - Reconciling the tension between resource-rich Grandes Écoles and the underfunded universities
 - System improvements must involve improving student experience in a mass university system very different from the Anglo-American university model

Conclusions (III)

- Apparently no *intrinsic* benefits of WCUPs
 - Advantages have come where WCUP activities have played to existing strengths in the system or concentrated resources on achieving difficult changes
- There seems to have been a sincere effort to address the system's problems rather than concentrating resources on the Grandes Écoles to increase the number of French universities in the rankings
 - WCUPs have been one element of those efforts

Cautionary Remarks on WCUPs

- Useful in persuading governments of the value of:
 - Investing in Higher Education
 - Profiling their nations more aggressively internationally

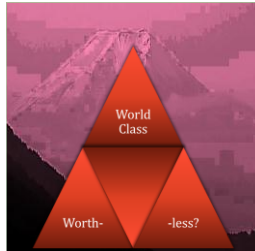
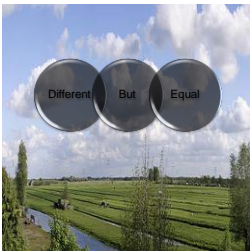
- Nuance needed in (at least) three areas:
 - Definition of WCUP should include , excellence in national impact
 - Outcome over volume and resource metrics
 - More nuanced understanding of national higher education system conditions

A World-Class Higher Ed System?

We need an "all encompassing quality"

- ~~Make~~ **horizontal** diversity and pathways within the system
 - ~~Access~~ **System permeability**
 - ~~Close~~ **Heterogeneity of student body** in academic and professional education antecedent conditions
 - ~~Must be~~ **internationally attractive**
 - ~~Does money do it all?~~
- Therefore: **Differentiation**
- Does reputation do it all?
- ~~About~~ **aligning** optimally private and public returns of higher education
 - ~~Prefer~~ **rationally** focus on research to be top-X ranked
 - Variety of provision

A World-Class Higher Ed System?





Thank You For Your Attention

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