

Research Project

eli

- Issues facing universities
 - Increase in demand, massification
 - Less funding, less government support
 - Competitive environment
 - Need to admit more and more students vs needing to deny more
 - Quota systems that can introduce bias
- Why people go to universities
 - Economies now need knowledge AND skills
 - Hope to gain competitive advantage from degree
- Increase in for-profit universities
 - Pushes rest to become entrepreneurial if they want to attract students
 - Degrades practices and standards of scholarships
 - Push toward degree factories
- World of status, reputation, quality, and privilege
- Questions of relevance - what are universities for?
 - Most pressing social/cultural/economic issues can be debated
 - Perceived to be an engine of development
 - Use of public funds implies societies believe they are meant to increase society as a whole and individuals
 - Why do we publically fund anything? Infrastructure, parks, transportation, police/fire departments?
- Note - higher education not well defined, curriculum can be different across different institutions. There is some general agreement on what secondary institutions provide though. Supposed to "develop inquisitive and open minds in the search of truth." What is "truth"? Go to university to find out! (Philosophy class)
- Africa
 - After apartheid, wanted to redefine higher education - saw university as ivory tower that the fledgling countries could not afford.
 - Criticism was that it was irrelevant to the needs of these new nations (hierarchy of needs)
 - Believed systems were a legacy of colonial past
 - Reform in the past 2 decades, call to call upon indigenous knowledge
 - Many different countries, so many different ideologies informing these decisions
 - Two categories: either conforming to the standard model, or deviating
 - Influence of external sources of funding, credit card syndrome
- Globalization
 - Favors open markets, free trade, deregulation, privatization

- All benefit wealthy nations, leads to greater wealth and cost of inequality
- Widens gaps between upper and lower classes
 - Explain with subsidized housing example
- Homegenizes (at expense of diversity/equity)
- Case Study: China
 - Three categories, based on population participation rates
 - Elite <15%
 - Mass < 50%
 - Universal
 - Before 1970s, China fell into "elite" class, fell into "mass" by 2004
 - Mostly shaped by governmental policy changes
 - Estimated <5% in late 1970s
 - All students taken care of - recruited, posted to jobs related to state quotas and plans. No fees - either paid by state quotas
 - Later opened up to self-supporting students, although needed state approval (i.e. fee paying). Left on their own for jobs though, although some were sponsored by companies
 - By 1989: up to state quota, students were funded (no fees) plus provided free room and board plus living allowances.
 - Changed when 3 government ministries regulated: all higher education is beyond compulsory, and so all students should pay tuition fees. 1997: every student pays. (Right around same time as large economic crisis)
 - Expanded higher education to stimulate economy - became largest higher education provider in the world, with 20m students (~25% of university-age population participated)
 - Done in the name of "socialist modernization", to cultivate human resources to prepare China for the world and the future. Improve quality of labor forces, cultivate talents, support econ/political/scientific reforms, all to serve modernization.
 - Done for social reasons, but examine its effects from the lens of academia: leads to decentralization, financial diversification, pursuit of elitism, and stratification
 - Educational reform encouraged by the World Bank (and other large banks)
 - Symbiotic tie between government and education - adds vertical management structure (does government get much done to begin with?)
 - China previously only had state-run institutions - in 1990s, spelled out laws for private establishment of education institutions
 - Government funding was 97.7% of the source funding for universities in 1984, gone downhill and the government has turned to other sources to fund institutions - taxing companies, public donations, university-affiliated businesses.
 - Start collecting education surcharges from local businesses to support compulsory education
 - Student contribution went from 13% to 34% between 1996 and 2007, government encouraged the use credit systems for tuition fees, leading to commercial student loans at the end of the 1990s and later government subsidized

- China pushes for its universities to become world class, picks and cultivates about 100 universities to support for this goal - received higher funding, placed key national laboratories on their campuses, top 9 universities receive 10% of china's total R&D budget, rest split among several hundred
- Issues
 - Serving social and economically disadvantaged students
 - Gaps in quality of education received (revolving door)
 - Inequity in access
 - International search for identity
 - Decreased power of government to control commodification of education
 - Access to those in rural areas - dropped significantly (1/6 urban go to college, 1/20 rural)
 - Can't afford, despite passing examinations
 - Newness of student loans, groups who need it are the least informed and likely to use it. Steady decrease in rural student population since the 90s
 - Typical student now: born in urban area, parents civil servants or teachers, travelled with parents >1 per year, possibly studying abroad in high school
 - Local governments made responsible leads to qualitatively different educations. due to different financial capacities
 - Pressure at top universities to research and publish large output to increase university's status
 - Labor market can't handle several million new graduates every year, <75% find employment
 - Discrimination against graduates from non-government supported universities
- Author: China jumped on the bandwagon without comprehensive understanding of consequences in the market
- Expanding enrollment without necessarily expanding resources
- Their solution: systems of auditing, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness
- Obligation towards social equality
- Zimbabwe
 - Same story, small to elite over past 30 years
 - More fluid, because of relatively chaotic government - just announced, not documented well, sometimes contradicted/retracted/revised
 - Support from liberation movements abroad (primarily socialist), Socialism abandoned in order to access funds from World Bank
 - Struggled to attract donors to invest in long term payoffs of education, macroeconomy prevents much progress. Multiple domestic currencies, scare foreign currency or investment
 - But govt recognizes that education is a basic human right (declared during independence!), and necessity for economic and social growth, but has scarce resources
 - At indep in 1980, declared all education free - found that this wasn't sustainable. Large fees for books, construction, training, salary - began to levy fees, and began recommending cost recovery methods. All in line with World Bank policies on financing education
 - Before indep (Under British control for 100 years), had hard cap at 12% of population allowed to attend. Removed, but still funding challenges

- Wary of world bank and western countries - neighbors have followed through and wound up poorer and in more debt
- Lack primary resources: facilities, seminar rooms, laboratories, student housing, books, learning resources. One Vice Chancellor announced implementing a new policy and provide the lead for other universities, following national policy - political overtones? Appointments related to politics? What about academic freedom?
- Private initiatives lack cohesion and coordination
- 2008: Switched to only accepting fees in US dollars. Most public servant salaries capped to \$100 per month, while fees range \$400 to \$800. Led to student demonstrations, claimed elitism, clash between students and riot police leading to school shutdowns.
- In most countries, entirely private funding is not feasible any more. Government funds based on number of students (historical data) or measuring output.
- Bottom-up solution: unis start parallel degrees, running at night with same professors. Generated a lot of income for them! But govt has not provided any guidelines for if or how they can/should do this
- Govt program: govt pays fees in exchange for a number of post-grad years of work. Not attractive - barely covered fees + no housing and poor expensive transportation.
- Many lecturers leave the country, causing enrollment drop - govt ministry on record telling universities to let in lower scoring students to fill in the remaining lectures.
- Private sector support: mostly wants skill based classes, make scholarships available but only if they're likely to join the private sector job market afterwards
- 1991, govt opened up campus to food service bidding. Competition led to rise in prices beyond what students could even afford (student protest!). Went back to government funded catering.
- Students were fully funded at first (no fees), but (2000) began to have to turn to part loan/part grant. Other options included more help from private sector loans, increases in fees, or making universities more self-sustaining
- Volatility of government has significant effect - fewer donors, prof feels Zimbabwe is a pariah status and their political turmoil effects the quality.
- Effect: declining standards
- Workaround of one university: one year of job placement in the middle of degree
- Even then, poor salaries and working conditions lead to brain drain - skilled workers leave. Academics have to moonlight to make enough, while depts close to closing due to lack of lecturers. They dropped to hiring Masters (as opposed to only Ph.Ds).
- After diaspora (emigration out of Africa), some skilled lecturers returning
- University actually owed money by govt, unable to admit students due to non-payment. Education minister acknowledges, blames it on Finance Minister ("an unreasonable partner")
- Modern arguments to address lack of resources: distance education, technology, virtual university. Others ask for donor assistance, primarily for human resources

International Imperative in Higher Education

- Two main drivers: massification and global knowledge economy
 - Results of massification
 - Decrease in quality on average
 - Wider access to larger groups
 - Lower average academic preparation and ability

- Less money spent per students
- Deteriorating conditions
- Overall increase in worldwide inequality
- Top universities not effected as much, lower ones are "Demand absorbing"
- Need to serve various needs and populations, leads to need for more variability
- Demand outpacing supply leads to decline in academic profession - larger number of academics without advanced degrees
- Financial pressure makes academic career not attractive to the best and brightest
- Easy for private sector to move in and offer low-quality alternatives
- Results of globalization
 - International networks of knowledge
 - Increasing international student mobility
 - Brain drain expands, flowing from developing countries to main centers in NA and Europe
- Education is in interest of public good, but private good arguments are dominant - public funding is reduced, leading to individuals being asked to pay the cost instead. Inevitable result of massification, as governments become unable to pay the full cost of mass higher education systems
- Universities should be committed to public good, but there is growing commercialism in higher education - most believe that not-for-profit orientation serves everyone best, but for-profit education sector is increasing despite not being in the long-term interest of universities
- Two largest higher education systems: India and China
- English dominant language - see Latin in 13th century, or German up to 1930s. Scholarly communities exist in other languages, but English did not dominate until the 50s
- English speaking leads to hegemony led by main English-speaking academic systems, creates difficulties for others
- Size, wealth, economic status all contribute to academic pecking order. Over 50% of world R&D budget spent by US, English speaking systems host over 1/2 of international students, studies/journals published in English because contributors and editors profs at English-speaking universities. Most academic web sites in English
- More students of English in China than US, more in India than Britain. All African universities have discontinued instruction in indigenous languages
- Everyone else has to conform to interests of journals if they want publications, interests of major contributors continues to deominate, international scientific meetings in English
- Standard Curriculum dominated by English-speaking countries. Eg. MBA is an American invention, now worldwide
- Only internationally circulated publications and journals are English
- Science Citation Index: created to trace how scientific ideas became influential and/or are communicated. Has become a de facto ranking standard to measure scholarly productivity
- Feedback loop of desire to publish in these journals - e.g. Norwegians who publish in recognized English journals are paid fees for their accomplishments, while those who publish in Norwegian are paid less or not at all. Korea has pressure to publish in recognized internation journals, counts more than publishing elsewhere.

- Trend of opening primarily English-speaking universities alongside native ones, calling them "American University of..", sometimes get accreditation from US. Takes advantage of the prestige and popularity of English
- Branch campus movement, displacing native universities, but also exports new ideas into host countries, exports language and curricula
- Most observers see English as a good thing - good to have a single language for common medium of communication
- Downsides of English hegemony
 - Increases influence of already influential institutions
 - Norms, values, methodologies, orientations tend to dominate all others
 - Pressure to serve intl needs; e.g. a publication might be highly relevant to a particular country's needs, but may not be ranked highly by intl community and thus scholars' career or salary suffers
 - Ignoring local topics in order to gain clout, increase impact, advance career - may ignore local history or problems in order to gain intl recognition
 - Many rewards for English - funding, invitations to intl conferences, seen as leaders of communities, increase in intl ranking
 - Decreases diversity of themes and methodologies
- International knowledge network is not only science and scholarship but also people, network operates mainly in English though
- Inevitable outcome, but we must stop to preserve national and local scientific communities
- Avoid having usefulness and prestige judged entirely by foreigners
- US had the first mass education system in the 1920s
- Now, North America, Europe, Pacific Rim nations enroll 60% or more of relevant age group in higher education
- Public good vs private good: should individuals pay for the economic benefits they receive from education? Or does it help society sufficiently that we should all support it?
- Access: Opened doors to previously excluded population groups: women, poor, race, religious, ethnic groups, etc. Still disparities, but access vs no access
- Massification: strains government funding, pushes unis to make their own funds. Collecting fees/tuition, loan programs, philanthropic support, or university generating income
- Old model of quality education (one teacher, low number of students) doesn't scale well - maintaining quality becomes unaffordable, so it declines
- No longer are universities a preserve for the elite, open to many more
- Increasing pressure to participate in global scholarship due to tech advances, despite infrastructure conferring many advantages
- Uniformization + homogeneity of curriculum increases flow of scholars across national lines. 2 millions students studying abroad now, 4x as many by 2025
- But ease of communication and travel plus circulation of talent have not necessarily led to equality - inequalities are greater than ever
- Few American universities have seen international engagements in economic/commercial terms until recently - although some schools rely on global enrollment to hit targets

- At least one large American system has emphasized the advantages of intl activities, and specifically pursuing overseas enrollment. They use for-profit businesses to do recruiting overseas, start pathway programs, etc, all more common now.
- Creates tensions between academic values and financial considerations
 - Does inst cut corners to admit unqualified intl students to hit targets?
 - Are intl students provided with support services necessary (sometimes costly)
 - Does high-paying intl admission squeeze out less lucrative domestic students?
 - Do partnerships follow income-earning routes rather than academic success?
- Many large scale intl initiatives come from one or a small group of faculty at the top, only real opposition is faculty approval/opposition
- Possibility of being short-sighted. Can these programs be supported, long term? Is funding available to not just launch it, but keep it going? Is there enough expertise among the staff, and can they be replenished over time?
- Point: Global engagement, in some form, needs to be a central part of university policy going forward. Now need to think about foreign policy.
- Corruption
 - Overseas degree is valuable for other countries
 - Commercial ventures have capitalized on this
 - Ex: fake unaccredited unis advertising overseas, admitting foreign students ("Tri-Valley University")
 - Did not even make them take classes, just funnelled into labor market
 - Circumvented immigration laws
 - Influences governmental policy, state supports this because it supports the uni bottom line and takes burden off
 - Several public universities have been caught admitting foreign students with substandard academic qualifications
 - Higher education is a multi billion dollar industry now
 - Depends on prestige, income, access, trust, requires commitments to mutual understanding and trust on all sides, built over decades but can collapse
 - Recent example: 2012
 - British agent in China, offering to write admissions essays and offer other "help" gaining admission to British universities
 - Agents receive commissions from the universities! Estimated to be on the order of millions, even the clients pay
 - Ex: Nottingham University, 25% of admissions through agents, and over 1m paid in commissions
 - Incidents of document fraud, tampering with transcripts by agents to ensure students are packaged with impressive credentials. Checking veracity becomes increasingly difficult
 - Goes all the way up - happens with GREs as well. Has resulted in extra scrutiny for everyone (for things like scores, also Visas, H1B1, etc)
 - Incidents make people rely on external indicators for trustworthiness - like Times Higher Education rankings. Unfortunate because many good unis are not included in these rankings, mostly measure intl research productivity

- Lots of misrepresentations - Unis set up impressive website, claim accreditation that doesn't exist, use photoshopped pictures from other unis. Now accreditation mills that charge a fee to issue.
- International higher education is now a big business
- How to fix
 - Recommit to the public good (despite funding challenges)
 - Integrity wrt academic values
 - Transparency concerning use of agents, supervision of external partners
 - Quality assurance systems, careful evaluation, results easily available to public
 - Government's role: standards, protecting image, unified policy
 - Current contradictions: Department of State's Education seeks to protect academic sector, while Department of Commerce sees higher education as an exportable commodity that contributes to GDP. Elsewhere, govt agencies mostly interested in pursuing commercial aspects
 - Consciousness and awareness concerning ethics and good practice, recognition of developing problems
- Access and Inequality
 - Contradiction: Access brings about inequality
 - Catering to mass access yields providing different quality than elite institutions that restrict enrollment
 - In many rich countries, access is over 50%, some over 80%
 - Positive aspects: social mobility, increase in skill levels, expanding knowledge economy
 - Possibly more students studied in 2000-2010 than 1900-2000 combined
 - China enrolls 23% of eligible, India 12%, lowest is sub-Saharan Africa with 6%
 - Before this century: most universities < 5%, but could assume all had good postsecondary education. Now can't assume, so extra money needed for tutoring, counseling, other services
 - Most dramatic different in access: women! Now a majority of enrolled students in many countries
 - Overcrowding, deterioration of buildings, lack of facilities, inadequate libraries, inability to get students into necessary courses
 - Close to half of those teaching only have a bachelors, move towards adjuncts, many hold more than one job
 - Case study: Latin America, private universities started to absorb demand, often only provide degrees and nothing else. High tuition, but less selective, sometimes the only choice for people that can't gain access to public and/or first gen
 - Created new demands for quality assurance and accreditation, slow on the uptake
 - Increased cost, most falls on those who can least afford it, first gen students and lower income families. Govts can't afford to fund increased access plus increased fees
 - Inequality is inevitable, as universities stratify to serve different needs and levels of society, but top unis will always serve elite clientele and have high status and lower ones will cater to those who can't compete
 - Problem only gets worse in some sense - students get more diverse over time, have more needs, so as access expands then inequalities grow. Conditions deteriorate, dropout rate grows, economic benefits decline - so access isn't the only issue to be concerned with, just step one.