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Rethinking International Fees and Global Partnerships

Adam Habib

At the Universities UK conference in September 2022, there was a panel discussion comprising experts from Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom who reflected on the financing and spiralling costs of higher education and the importance of rethinking the mix between student fees and public subsidy. There were also valuable suggestions on reforming the payment regime for graduates who had taken loans to finance their higher education.

A Business Model Built on Exploitation

During the debate, there was acknowledgement that the burden of the cost of higher education had fallen too heavily on the fee element of the financing equation, and most participants supported the need to rethink the balance in favor of a greater subsidy to universities. But I also suggested that a deeper deliberation on international fees was required as part of this review of the financing of higher education. After all, there was widespread recognition that the fees charged to international students were excessive. In the case of one UK university, SOAS University of London, the actual cost of delivery of a doctoral degree was calculated to be about GBP 4,600 per annum per student. SOAS fees for international students are about GBP 20,000, a markup of about 400 percent. This excessive markup would not be tolerated in most private companies. How then can public universities have such fees when they claim a public good and social justice mandate?

The response was interesting. Most of the audience either avoided the question or justified the business model on the grounds that students were attracted to the research brand of universities in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and Canada. This is a common justification for the high fees charged to international students, but there is very little empirical evidence provided to support the assertion.

Are there great research universities in these countries? Absolutely! Is this the driver for international student mobility to these countries? Probably not. The principal driver is the desire to access jobs in the global job market through degrees from these countries. The motivation driving international student mobility is, effectively, inequality.

Consequences for Our World

One vice-chancellor in the audience argued that the costs of higher education were way above the public subsidy and the fees charged to domestic students in the United Kingdom. He held that excessive international fees were necessary if UK universities were to survive financially. He effectively voiced the implicit consensus of most at the conference: Leave international fees be as they are.

This is because the business model underlying higher education in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and Canada has at its heart a dual cross-subsidization. Firstly, research is significantly cross-subsidized by the income generated from teaching and learning. Secondly, the costs of the teaching and learning enterprise itself are cross-subsidized by the astronomical fees charged to international students across universities in the Anglosphere. Without this, most of these universities would not break even. This business model is increasingly being consolidated and expanded by both government policy and university executive acquiescence to this agenda. In the United Kingdom, at the prompting of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), international student recruitment to universities has grown from 480,000 to just over 600,000. A Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) report on this recruitment trumpeted it as an

Abstract

There is widespread recognition that the fees charged to international students in a number of countries are excessive. Is there a need to think through the consequences for our world? This business model is also negatively impacting human capabilities and institutional capacities in low-income countries by accelerating the brain drain. What is critical now is a collective ownership of the problem, to ensure the legitimacy of our institutions and the university system as a whole.

The stance adopted by university executives that managerial decisions are conditioned by the current policy environment is essentially a cop-out.

unqualified good, with some GBP 28 billion in earnings that benefit towns and communities across the country. While this is a necessary corrective to the right-wing fearmongering of the anti-immigration lobby in the United Kingdom, is there not a need to think through the consequences of this business model for our world?

This business model is negatively impacting human capabilities and institutional capacities in low-income countries by accelerating the brain drain that inevitably arises from the focus on recruiting young students from these places. It is also imperilling the collective ability to address the transnational challenges of this historical moment, such as pandemics, climate change, migration, poverty, and political and social polarization. These challenges require the deployment of both global science and technology, and local knowledge. This requires an engagement between knowledge systems across the world, which is not possible through a global model of higher education essentially organized around the establishment of northern enclaves of teaching, learning, and research. These universities are effectively pursuing short-term financial strategies that could compromise the global community's collective long-term future.

Adopting a Radical Pragmatism

This recognition need not lead to a right-wing, anti-immigration, and nationally chauvinist stance. Neither does it need to lead to the adoption of an unrealistic understanding of what is managerially possible in a constrained and adverse policy environment stewarded by conservative governments. The stance adopted by university executives that managerial decisions are conditioned by the current policy environment is essentially a cop-out. It is true that there are constraints, but university executives also have relative autonomy to mitigate the worst excesses of this truly exploitative business model.

On the fees front, this would involve a recognition that there are systemic policy drivers that force universities to charge excessive international fees. But there should also be a commitment to do everything possible within our constraints to mitigate the consequences. At least, this should involve including international fees as part of the broader deliberation on the financing of universities. This would allow university executives to think through the challenge. Could there be a sliding scale of payments for students funded by governments vs. those whose costs are borne by families? Should students from different countries be subject to differential fees? Given that the governments of China, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have generous scholarship schemes for their students to study outside those countries, would it be possible to charge those students higher fees?

On the need to enable an engagement between knowledge systems, would it be possible to think through transnational education partnerships between universities in the North and South? This would have to be done carefully, and with attention to the quality assurance mechanisms on both sides. But it could lead to codeveloped, cotaught, and coaccredited academic programs that would mitigate the need for students to leave their home countries to earn university degrees that open up the global job market to them. It would have the added benefit of providing graduates with knowledge and skills that are not only academically excellent, but also contextually relevant. Given the reduced labor costs resulting from the sharing of academic duties, these programs could be sustained with lower fees.

Some of the suggestions advocated here may be partial solutions that require more work. And there may be other possibilities that have not been considered. But what is urgently required is collective ownership of the problem of an expensive and exploitative business model of higher education in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.

Taking collective ownership will demonstrate that universities recognize the problem and are doing as much as can be done within the constraints that they confront. This is important for the legitimacy of the institutions and the university system as a whole. University leaders cannot invoke social justice for domestic students and not do so for international students. Similarly, they cannot speak of the importance of addressing global challenges like pandemics and climate change, and simultaneously adopt business models that undermine the collective ability to address these crises. University leaders must challenge their selective morality, and begin putting in place better business models that can be deployed more widely as and when political circumstances change. ▲

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Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education

Jamil Salmi

Despite the spectacular expansion that has occurred in many parts of the planet in the past 60 years, severe disparities persist in higher education. A disproportionately high share of students enrolled in higher education still comes from wealthier segments of society. Structural inequality and disparities exist across groups and societies, often due to historical discriminatory norms around economic class, gender, minority status based on ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural characteristics, and disabilities. Even when they gain access, students from underrepresented and traditionally excluded groups tend to have lower completion rates. They are often tracked into less prestigious higher education institutions and face reduced, lower-quality labor market opportunities as a result.

Drivers of Inequality

Around the world, many children face challenging circumstances beyond their own control—due to discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, geographical origin, socioeconomic background, or other attributes, which drastically affect their opportunities to go to school, stay in school, and complete secondary education. At the tertiary level, young people encounter additional barriers reflecting the direct opportunity cost of studying, lack of social capital, insufficient academic preparation, low motivation, and lack of access to information about labor market prospects. The need to achieve greater equity and inclusion in higher education responds to a strong social justice imperative, as reflected in target 4.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Scope of Disparities?

Efforts to measure equity in higher education assume that the proportion of target equity groups should be equal to their share in the general population. In practice, however, the choice of indicators to measure disparities in higher education has been heavily influenced by the availability of data to analyze the situation of each equity group. Household surveys available for 64 countries reveal large gaps in participation rates among income groups across all levels of enrollment, from the poorest nations with the lowest participation rates to countries with much higher average participation rates.

Gender balance in higher education has improved substantially in the past two decades. Today, women represent the majority of enrollment in higher education in most countries, except for South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Across sub-Saharan Africa, women represent only 42.3 percent of all students. In South Asia, their proportion is 47 percent. However, significant gender inequalities persist in access to STEM institutions and programs. Data from 18 countries across the world shows the rate of female graduates in STEM varying from a low of 11 percent in Switzerland to a high of 47 percent in Argentina.

Less data is available to assess differences in access to higher education across ethnic, racial, or religious minorities. Where it exists, data reveals vast disparities. For instance, in South Africa, despite the increase in overall enrollment in higher education, less than one in five Black South Africans access it, compared to 55 percent among whites. Similarly, in Vietnam, enrollment rates of the dominant Kinh/Hoa group are four times higher than those of ethnic minorities living in remote parts of the country. Among the world's more than 82 million refugees, the UNHCR estimates that only around 5 percent of the relevant age cohort have access to tertiary education, whereas comparative enrollment figures for primary and secondary education are 68 percent and 34 percent, respectively.

Abstract

Around the world, many young people face challenging circumstances beyond their own control, due to discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, geographical origin, socioeconomic background, or other attributes, which drastically affect their opportunities to access higher education and graduate successfully. This article reviews the scope of disparities, assesses the equity impact of COVID-19, and outlines the main elements of effective national- and institutional-level equity promotion policies.

Efforts to measure equity in higher education assume that the proportion of target equity groups should be equal to their share in the general population.

People with disabilities, often called the “invisible minority,” are also widely underrepresented in higher education. In Thailand, for example, less than 1 percent of youths with disabilities have access to higher education. In South Africa, they represent 0.6 percent of the total student enrollment, compared to an estimated disability prevalence of 3.5 percent within the corresponding age group.

Furthermore, it is important to note high degrees of intersection among these dimensions as disparities usually have an overlapping and cumulative effect across equity groups. Gender discrimination tends to impact girls from low-income groups more prominently. For example, in Peru and Mexico, where female enrollment is lower than male enrollment—contrary to the general trend in Latin America—the difference between low-income and high-income students is striking. In Peru, the enrollment rates of girls from the poorest and richest groups are 13.3 and 24.9 percent, respectively; in Mexico, they are 9.1 percent and 37.4 percent. Several studies have documented how poverty, ethnicity, and rurality are also closely linked in North and South America, as well as in Australia and New Zealand. Similarly, poverty amplifies the obstacles encountered by people with disabilities, girls with disabilities having a lower probability of entering higher education or completing a degree than boys with disabilities.

Impact of COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education institutions and students experienced unprecedented disruption and new challenges. Severe reductions in financial resources, the digital gap, and the lack of preparation of instructors exacerbated disparities in access and success, and created emotional and social distress, especially among vulnerable students. Countries and institutions must therefore accelerate efforts to remove barriers to quality higher education for all learners from underrepresented groups.

Equity Promotion Policies

The higher education ecosystem includes the following key elements specifically influencing the equity situation and results in any country: admission policies; pathways and bridges; quality assurance framework; government subsidies for institutions and students; tuition fees; and financial aid. The state can define policies and measures to improve equity in higher education along all these dimensions.

Within higher education institutions, several measures can help boost the access and success of students from various equity groups: outreach activities; targeted admission policies; retention programs; and additional financial aid.

To be effective, equity promotion policies must be defined in a comprehensive way, taking both financial and nonmonetary aspects into consideration, coordinating actions at the national and institutional levels in a complementary manner, and putting as much emphasis on completion as on access, which has traditionally received more attention. A long-term view is key to guaranteeing continuity and consistency in effective equity promotion policies, which require well-established information systems to identify all equity groups, measure equity gaps, and assess progress in terms of access and graduation.

Seventy years ago, Tawney wrote about equality of opportunity as being “the impertinent courtesy of an invitation offered to unwelcome guests, in the certainty that circumstances will prevent them from accepting it.” Today, equity in access and success at the higher education level cannot be regarded anymore as a luxury or an afterthought. The need to achieve greater inclusion in higher education responds to a strong social justice imperative. Higher education systems in which opportunities are equally distributed are the basis for sustainable development and the construction of fair and democratic societies. ▲

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This article is based on a background report prepared by the author for UNESCO's third World Higher Education Conference, May 2022, Barcelona, Spain.

International Collaboration with Russia and China: Researchers Face Difficult Choices

Jonathan Adams, Jonathan Grant, Jo Johnson, and Daniel Murphy

Today's global research networks evolved from a more "national" system. The research world of 1980 was dominated by the G7 and the USSR, changed relatively slowly, and maintained a broad balance from year to year. That was changed by better communications, cheaper travel, and the internet. Growing awareness of the central role of R&D in stimulating economic competitiveness and technological capacity led to greater research investment in many countries. New research powers appeared in Asia and the phenomenal growth of China's research base disrupted the hierarchies of research excellence.

Improved communications had another profound effect. In the 1980s, countries collaborated internationally on barely 5 percent of the articles that they published in journals indexed by the then Science Citation Index. By 2010, that figure passed 50 percent of articles indexed in the Web of Science and was still climbing steadily. The cutting edge of research had shifted from an academic occupation, via a national priority, to become an international effort. The most highly cited research is now an activity shared between leading universities across many countries.

The Challenge

It is excellent news that countries share the burden of responding to severe, global crises such as climate change, pandemic disease, an aging population, food and water security, and energy supply. It is a foundation of traditional research culture that knowledge is openly shared, with data made available through publications that are clear, complete, and truthful. Such conventions form the bedrock that "goes without saying" in research training.

It is therefore a significant challenge to traditional ways of thinking and of working when global connections are stressed by abrasive regimes in collaborating countries. Our new report "[Stumbling bear, soaring dragon](#)," the fourth in a series by King's Policy Institute and affiliates of the Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government at the Harvard Kennedy School, focuses on this question. Our discussion is applied particularly to Russia and China, but the scope is a wider global challenge.

Leading research institutions in Europe and North America, along with their historical partners in other regions, have sustained an open, collaborative network. Those that do not invest in international partnerships, or are thrown out of them, lose access to leading research and related opportunities for knowledge transfer. The cutting edge of innovation relies not only upon tangible resources (because such research is unaffordable for any one group), but on a synergistic concentration of ideas and competence.

As that global research network expands and diversifies, drawing in new partners with a shorter research history, it also engages with regimes that do not share the same political perspectives and, in some cases, foster a very different approach to the traditionally collegial research culture. How should we maintain and promote international collaboration when these approaches clash?

Russia and China

It is simplistic to focus on Russia and its war in Ukraine. Compared to the heyday of the Soviet research machine, the contemporary Russian science system is weak, deteriorating, and increasingly marginalized. In the 1980s, the USSR was the world's fifth most prolific research publisher, even without accounting for its Russian language journals. Russia today is 16th for research output among 30 leading nations, with barely 3 percent

Abstract

The global research network has evolved enormously over the past four decades, but the increasingly open and collaborative system could be threatened by recent political changes. The contrasting examples of Russia and China illustrate a dilemma that must be negotiated and to which researchers in higher education cannot be blind. Higher education institutions must acknowledge and negotiate their course with care if the fruits of shared knowledge and innovation are to continue to be harvested.

China has over the past 20 years become much more important to Russia and will likely now overtake the United States and Germany to become its single most important partner.

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of papers indexed in the Web of Science publication database. It invests barely 1 percent of GDP on R&D, compared to an OECD 2020 average of 2.7 percent; its researcher workforce has fallen by 20 percent since 2000; half of its international collaboration is concentrated in the highly multinational programs of astronomy and nuclear/particle physics.

This means that, except perhaps in these disciplines, the West can shut Russia out without weakening its own science. Even in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia is the most frequent collaborator only with Belarus and ranks among the top 10 research partners with only four others. In Central Asia, it has been displaced by Turkey in Kyrgyzstan and China in Uzbekistan.

Russia is only China's 19th most significant partner, however, a position in which it has remained for the past 10 years. Put simply, China has over the past 20 years become much more important to Russia and will likely now overtake the United States and Germany to become its single most important partner, but Russia remains no more important to Chinese science than many other Belt and Road Initiative countries.

With China, the simplistic reactions that might be adopted in the context of Russia break down. Marginalizing Chinese science would have dramatic negative outcomes, as those who have proposed this have then realized. It has become the world's biggest spender on R&D; its indexed research output in Anglophone journals exceeds that of the United States; it is now the first or second most frequent research partner with most of the G7; and it is a leading collaborator as far afield as the Scandinavian and Baltic states, Australia, Singapore, and South Korea.

China's research has not emerged from bare ground, but from a transformation out of a demand economy with specialized institutions targeting research in specific industrial and military sectors. Institutions have consolidated into multifaculty universities, and research training on a Western model has hugely expanded. The transformation has been disruptively fast for the global research landscape (journal publications have grown 25-fold since 2000) and, while impressive research structures are now in place, research culture cannot transform overnight.

For example, unlike most countries, China is far less collaborative and highly bilateral in the collaborations that it does have. About three-quarters of its Anglophone journal papers are purely domestic, with no international coauthor, and only 7 percent are multilateral compared to around 30 percent for most of the G7. There is a pattern of selectivity, both in partnerships and in the economically vital technologies in which collaboration is concentrated, which poses problems for research managers and constrains the flow of emerging knowledge.

In acknowledging this as an issue, we need to be clear that the United States and the United Kingdom have been dilatory not only in overseeing these relationships but also in promoting their own engagement with Chinese research. How many Western scientists can speak or read a word of Mandarin? Many more need to be able to do so. The flow of information requires a two-way channel, and the costs of isolating China would be orders of magnitude greater than those of banishing Russia.

The Wider Global Network

Harsher geopolitics could disrupt the expansion of scientific internationalization. Recent events will have lessons for Western collaboration, not only with China, but also with other authoritarian regimes that pursue policies at odds with mutual knowledge exchange and an open, inclusive society.

Russia and China are not alone in posing such questions. Egypt, Israel, and Turkey have all recently raised, for different reasons, questions of the ethics of research and cultural engagement. Responses have been confused and inconsistent. The Middle East is a network of expanding scientific investment, and this is often in collaboration with China and Russia, driven by authoritarian regimes. All may raise challenges to equitable collaboration.

We cannot circle the wagons and adopt needlessly risk-averse policies that cripple science. Globalized networks would wither if nations fell back on domestic priorities. Nor can we sleepwalk into providing know-how, legitimacy, and support for the technological capabilities of countries with interests fundamentally inimical to our own. No one size fits all; with the right safeguards, some collaboration may be pursued; but whatever we do must be properly informed, considered, and specific to each situation. ▲

The US “CHIPS and Science” Act Launches Industrial Policy as Counter to China

Steven Brint

US science and technology (S&T) policy languished for more than a decade following the “America COMPETES Act” reauthorization in 2010. That changed in August 2022, when President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. signed the “CHIPS and Science Act” into law.

A Shift Toward Industrial Policy in the United States

The sprawling 1,000-page bill authorizes USD 280 billion in new spending for science and technology, a significant portion of which would be directed to university research. The bill is notable both for its explicit embrace of industrial policy and for its clear intent to counter Chinese advances in S&T.

The new law represents a repudiation of the market-oriented neoliberal consensus that held sway in Washington for four decades. Since the late 1970s, American politicians have been willing to encourage S&T partnerships between industry, government, and academe, but they have, with rare exceptions, been averse to “picking winners” through designated funding streams for frontier technologies. With the signing of the “CHIPS and Science Act,” that now changes.

The precise impact on US higher education cannot yet be estimated. But US research universities are certain to benefit from R&D funding related to the nearly two dozen technologies designated for further development in the bill, including quantum communications technologies, artificial intelligence, robotics, clean energy, climate change research, bioenergy, and cybersecurity. The law authorizes USD 81 billion to the National Science Foundation (NSF) and establishes a new directorate at NSF to accelerate use-inspired research and technology development and to translate basic science findings into practical applications. The Office of Science at the Department of Energy will also see a greatly expanded budget, a large part of which will filter into university-based R&D. Billions are also allocated in the law for STEM education.

If the authorized funding is realized in the Congressional appropriations process, the NSF budget would grow by 8 percent in the next fiscal year and by USD 36 billion over five years. The Office of Science at the Department of Energy is slated for a USD 30.5 billion increase over the same period. The impact on universities would be two pronged: Most of the funding—at this point no one knows how much—would go for research projects in designated areas and the rest for STEM education, including an increase in Graduate Research Fellowships, from 2,000 to 3,000 a year.

Higher education is not the biggest winner in the new bill, however. The semiconductor industry is the recipient of USD 52 billion in subsidies and tax credits for US-based manufacturers. US policy makers have come to regard chip makers as critical for US national security because their silicon wafers help run everything from cars and computers to smartphones and home appliances. Universities will, however, also benefit from the infusion of chips funding. As US-based manufacturers ramp up production, universities located nearby will have an incentive to add training programs required for the expanded labor force.

The Question of Appropriations

The “CHIPS and Science” bill seemed destined for collapse as conferees attempted to reconcile large differences between a House bill that deferred most decision-making to the US science agencies and a Senate bill that was far more prescriptive. In the end, most features of the Senate bill prevailed. However, few of the Senate’s policies to

Abstract

In an effort to counter Chinese advances in science and technology, the United States has adopted legislation that supports semiconductor manufacturing and identifies frontier technologies for R&D investments. The Act creates a new directorate to facilitate science applications at the US National Science Foundation and potentially adds tens of billions of dollars in funding to two US science agencies.

The sprawling 1,000-page bill authorizes USD 280 billion in new spending for science and technology, a significant portion of which would be directed to university research.

control intellectual property theft or limit the influence of specific Chinese companies made their way into the bill that President Biden signed.

Even so, the intent to counter China is clear. The leading Republican sponsor of the bill, Senator Todd Young of Indiana, said the bill would “put America in a position to outgrow, out-innovate, and out-compete our leading geopolitical foe.”

It is not clear whether the new law will be sufficient to realize Young’s prediction. Authorizations for funding often do not end up as allocated dollars in the United States. Chips funding appears to be secure, but other authorizations may not be. A Government Accountability Office review of the 2007 America COMPETES bill and its 2010 reauthorization found, for example, that only one of 28 new programs in those measures was fully funded and implemented.

Chinese Assets and Challenges

China’s commitments and momentum also should not be underemphasized. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, China has caught up and surpassed the United States in the production of scientific papers, and its scientists have begun to compete with the United States in average citation impact and top one percent citations. During the same period, China has also quadrupled its investments in R&D, closing the gap between its total R&D expenditures and those of the United States.

Through these investments, the Chinese state has leveraged its assets to achieve or share global leadership in areas such as supercomputing, materials science, stem cell research, and low-carbon and sustainable energy. It is now making rapid strides in artificial intelligence. China’s assets include steadily increasing public investment in research and world-class universities; competition between Chinese cities and regions to meet and exceed Central Committee S&T goals; the speed with which venture capital also moves in accordance with state S&T priorities; highly competitive national examinations that sustain the strongest universities while channeling family effort in the direction of educational success; state and family encouragement for study in science and engineering fields leading to a four-fold advantage for China in annual tertiary level graduation rates in STEM fields; and the reintegration of Chinese nationals educated abroad through state inducements and improved research opportunities.

Potential long-term weaknesses in the Chinese system include the government’s restraint on freedom of expression, which has been an impediment to scientific creativity; the tendencies toward inefficiencies and corruption that may be endemic to politically directed capitalist development; and the complex local, national, party, and network ties that scientific researchers must negotiate in order to move projects forward.

Ironically, the most recent Chinese policy initiative, “Made in China 2025,” adopts many practices that have been regarded as traditional US strengths, including a comprehensive approach to advanced industrial production and greater use of market mechanisms—and it does so at precisely the same time that US policy is beginning to mirror Chinese practices from previous decades by identifying frontier technologies and promoting state investment in them.

A Distinctive Approach in the European Union

Over the last decade, Europe too has moved in the direction of state-led S&T planning. The “Horizon Europe” Plan for 2021–2027 allocates nearly EUR 100 billion to meet S&T goals. As compared to US and Chinese plans, the European Union’s emphasis on societal adaptation and environmental sustainability is noteworthy. The largest chunk of this funding—more than half of the total—will go to support five mission areas: adaptation to climate change; maintaining healthy oceans; developing smart cities; curing cancers; and maintaining soil health and food supply. ▲

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Decoupling from the West Will Be Hard on China's Higher Education

Philip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit

Academic relations between China and the Western world are deteriorating. While China is criticizing its Western partners for imposing their values, governments and universities in those countries are becoming more skeptical about the way the Chinese government is controlling academic cooperation and critical thinking and its one-sided use of cooperation for its own interests. What might be the negative implications of these increasing tensions for China's higher education?

China's internal realities and geopolitical posture have significantly changed in recent years. Since Xi Jinping rose to power in 2013, China's foreign relations have become more assertive in the Asian region and globally, and its internal governance more controlling. Most recently, the perennial "Taiwan problem" has been exacerbated by the visits of congressional leader Nancy Pelosi and other US officials. Additionally, China's posture relating to its immediate neighbors (Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and others) has changed the views of many countries from a willingness to accept China's commercial—and political—leadership to significant skepticism and growing opposition.

Of great importance is the mainland's "takeover" of Hong Kong in violation of the "one country, two systems" commitment. The reaction in Taiwan, where support for collaboration with the mainland has largely disappeared and has been replaced by fear and opposition, was conspicuous in this respect. Repression of the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang is widely criticized and sanctions, which have significance, have been imposed by several countries. Many now consider China's multibillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative as a kind of neocolonialism, linking partner countries to China through huge debt and questionable infrastructure projects. China's draconian, and in the long-run unsustainable, COVID-19 policies have created problems for the economy, the global supply chain, and China's population—and have decimated China's international student population.

Mainland Chinese public opinion, if one can gauge this by social media, has moved in a nationalist direction—with many demanding an invasion of Taiwan. Even the government's ever-efficient censors have had to tamp down the internet. A surprising opinion article in August 2022 in the *New York Times*, "[Why China's people no longer look up to America](#)," by Wang Wen, formerly an editor of the nationalist Communist Party's *Global Times*, is indeed a sign of the times. On Chinese campuses, students regularly report professors who seem too "liberal." Anti-Asian incidents that have taken place in Western countries are widely reported in Chinese media. Universities have been significantly affected, with increased surveillance, limitations on access to information from abroad, and tighter control by Communist Party authorities.

China Skepticism

"China skepticism" has been significant for some time in the United States and increasingly in other Western countries, and it is growing dramatically. Most of China's Confucius Institutes, once 118 in the United States at their peak and now only 14 as of June 2021, have disappeared from much of the United States and Europe—in the United States more for reasons of geopolitics and assumed espionage, and elsewhere more for concerns about academic freedom.

Government restrictions and legal actions relating to intellectual property theft are increasingly evident. A few prominent researchers with ties to China (both ethnic Chinese and others) have been put on trial. The *CHIPS Act*, recently passed by the US Congress, which provides USD 280 billion to strengthen the US technology industry, has

Abstract

China is engaged in a geopolitical conflict with the West, especially with the United States, and this has a significant impact on Chinese higher education. Collaborative research will decrease. China-funded Confucius Institutes have been closed. Within China itself, there are more restrictions on universities. Is a new "academic cold war" looming between China and the West?

"China skepticism" has been significant for some time in the United States and increasingly in other Western countries, and it is growing dramatically.

an openly anti-Chinese focus (see also [Steven Brint, “The US “CHIPS and Science” Act Launches Industrial Policy as Counter to China,”](#) in this issue). Collaboration with China will be banned from the USD 52 billion allocation to research, much of which will go to US universities, making them even more cautious about working with Chinese partners.

In Europe and Australia, governments and higher education institutions are increasingly concerned about connections with China. In the Netherlands, for instance, the minister of education, culture and science has declared that national security stands above academic freedom and that the country will impose strict regulations on how higher education institutions guarantee and carefully monitor compliance. In March 2022, in Australia, a parliamentary joint committee on intelligence and security published a report titled [Report of the Inquiry into National Security Risks Affecting the Australian Higher Education and Research Sector](#), with recommendations for more control and oversight. Other countries and the European Commission have followed suit. Knowledge security has become a key issue for the United States, Australia, the European Commission and its member states, and their universities.

The Academic Impact

Universities, perhaps especially in the United States, but increasingly in the Anglosphere and in Europe as well, will be significantly affected. Without question, current geopolitical realities, which will only deteriorate in the immediate future, create unprecedented problems. Fundamentally, there is already a decoupling of the deep links forged over a half-century between Chinese science and higher education and the Western system, and particularly the United States.

The future of student mobility from China to the West is somewhat hard to predict, but it is quite likely that numbers will decline (see Qiang Zha, [“Will China Remain a Top Player in the International Education Market?”](#) in *IHE* #112). Even prior to the current crisis, it was clear that the boom of recent decades was coming to an end. The decline will be gradual and the impact will be different by country and by (type of) institution. This will have related positive effects by making countries and institutions less dependent on the income from Chinese students and creating more diversity. The negative impact will be felt at the graduate and in particular at the doctoral level, where Chinese students have been present in large numbers and excelled in almost all disciplines, and within research collaboration and innovation. There will be less university-to-university collaboration and a reduction of research work with Chinese colleagues. As noted, surveillance by government authorities will be ubiquitous.

Some analysts have argued that the current geopolitical tensions between the West, in particular the United States, and China result from an arrogant dominance by the West. We do not deny that this is indeed an important factor, but in these kinds of tensions, both sides share the blame and will be affected.

The Impact on China

For China, the impact will be significant. China’s academic progress has been impressive and the quality of its top universities is world class. Yet research, and especially the culture of innovation, still lags behind Western institutions. A decrease of academic contacts will be detrimental. Chinese students will have fewer opportunities for overseas study. The future of the many Western branch campuses operating in China will be called into question, and the number of Western scholars and researchers willing to work in China will decrease.

Chinese universities have spent much effort to foster critical thinking skills, establishing some liberal arts programs and in general stressing innovation. With an increased emphasis on courses on political orthodoxy and greatly expanded external control, the atmosphere in Chinese academe will inevitably change.

Certainties and Questions

We are in the midst of a sea-change in China’s relationship with the rest of the world. China’s internal policies are increasingly nationalistic and its foreign relations increasingly assertive. These realities will have an impact on both China’s higher education relations and on the quality of its education and research.

China has benefited enormously from its opening to the world, its research collaboration with Western partners, and the education that many of its students did abroad. In the years ahead, R&D will suffer a critical setback as a result of isolation and restrictions on academic freedom.

Some things remain unclear. Will there be a full-scale “academic cold war” between the West and China, harking back to the years of minimal scientific and intellectual contacts between the West and the Soviet Union in the post-World War II period? Will Russia join a China-led scientific system? How will the Global South react? Will the world’s second largest higher education system, India, step in to play a role? Will the situation improve after Xi Jinping starts on his third term as China’s leader in November 2022?

There are many questions, but it is clear that China’s role in the world is at an inflection point, and higher education and science will be significantly affected, globally, and without doubt in China itself. ▲

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The Argument for Academic Engagement with China

William C. Kirby

We live in a world of interconnected universities. Institutions known as universities are medieval in origin, but the modern research university is in historical terms quite new and inescapably international. Universities were reimagined, first in Germany, and then on German models, across the globe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Why else is Stanford’s motto in German? (*Die Luft der Freiheit weht*—“The wind of freedom blows.”) How else did the great president of Peking University, the German-educated Cai Yuanpei, make “Beida” a bastion of the liberal arts and sciences during China’s cultural renaissance in the first quarter of the twentieth century?

My new book, *Empires of Ideas*, asks this question: If German universities defined global standards in the nineteenth century; and if US universities—building beyond the German experience—came to lead all global rankings by the end of the twentieth century; are Chinese universities—having taken lessons from both Europe and America—poised today to lead the twenty-first century?

China’s Ascent

Today, as Germany reimagines its universities through its Excellence Initiative, and as the United States disinvests, at least from its public institutions, China has shown an unmatched ambition to build more world-class universities than anyone else. For this effort, Chinese universities have access to more of the best human capital—Chinese scholars at home or in the diaspora—than any university system on Earth. The 2023 QS World University Ranking places Beida University ahead of all but one of the US “Ivy League” universities, with Tsinghua University right behind; five of its top 50 are Chinese institutions. In the coming years, innovative universities such as Southern University of Science and Technology, Westlake University, and ShanghaiTech seem poised to make their mark. Within China, cooperation with US institutions has founded ambitious enterprises like NYU-Shanghai, Duke Kunshan University, and Schwarzman Scholars at Tsinghua University.

True, the United States remains home to more world-class universities than anywhere else. This is due in good measure to our global recruitment of faculty and graduate

Abstract

In education as in other areas, the US and Chinese governments privilege self-interest over shared concerns. Mutual paranoia takes precedence over reciprocal benefit. This places at risk the robust—and successful—collaboration between Chinese and US universities, which has been a powerfully positive force for both countries. Now is the time to remain engaged—indeed to deepen our engagement with our Chinese partners, for history tells us the perils of academic self-isolation.

students. US research universities have been strengthened greatly by Chinese doctoral students. Our faculties, too, have recruited extraordinary Chinese scholars. In 2018, 26 percent of US internationally coauthored articles in science and engineering included researchers from China.

US Challenges

Yet the United States' status as the preferred destination for overseas talent is fragile. As Chinese President Xi Jinping told his US counterpart, Donald Trump, "If you restrict Chinese students from going to the United States, you are doing a great favor to Europe." A 2022 report from the Center for China and Globalization, a Beijing think tank, anticipated that "more Chinese students may switch to countries in Europe and Asia where the study environments and visa policies are friendlier." In the first six months of 2022, the number of US student visas issued to Chinese nationals had decreased by more than 50 percent, compared to pre-COVID levels.

We restrict these students and colleagues at our peril. But as Philip Altbach, Xiaofeng Wan, and Hans de Wit have shown, US campuses are increasingly perceived as violent, politicized, and unwelcoming to overseas students. Trumpism and the pandemic brought out the worst of US insecurities and racism. Deteriorating US-China relations and the high-profile arrests in the United States of prominent Chinese-born scientists have fed anxieties on both sides of the Pacific.

Adding to the United States' challenges is the systematic disinvestment in public higher education in 44 of 50 US states. I write this article from the campus of the University of California, Berkeley, the flagship of the University of California system, which has been the greatest system of public higher education in the world. In my book, the chapter on Berkeley is titled "Public Education, Private Funding." UC-Berkeley is a case study of great US public universities in systemic financial peril. And our more well-endowed private universities suffer not from competition with China but from what Richard Brodhead, the former dean of Yale College and president emeritus of Duke, calls "the inertia of excellence."

US universities, public or private, came to lead the world by learning from others. But when was the last time you saw a US university president or dean look abroad for new models for research, teaching, or anything? Leadership, we must remember, is a comparative concept: The story here is not only about China's rise in the world of universities, but also about the potential for US decline.

Reactions and Counterreactions

In education as in other areas, the United States and China today seem to privilege self-interest over shared concerns. Mutual paranoia takes precedence over reciprocal benefit. In 2018, faculty members at Cornell University forced the suspension of a program with Renmin University after Renmin disciplined students who had formed independent Marxist reading groups and advocated for workers' rights. But Cornell's self-righteous faculty did not know how hard Remin's leaders tried to protect these students—or indeed how proud they were of these idealistic youths. By cutting ties to their universities, we hurt the people who share the values of university leaders the world over. The grandstanding of "sanctions" is easier than the hard work of empathy.

There are pressures to decouple in China, too. As a result of China's zero-COVID policy, in-person international academic exchange within China has dried up. In the classroom, there is pressure to critique Western political theory (except of course Communism). This global pandemic could have been an opportunity to strengthen US-China collaboration. Ever since the two nations signed the US-China Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology in 1979, scientific cooperation between Chinese and US scholars has produced breakthroughs in the development of cancer treatments, AIDS research, influenza tracking, and climate change technology. Much of this collaboration is now on ice.

Intertwined Histories

Tsinghua University was founded in 1911 as a prep school to send young Chinese to US colleges. It would rise to be China's leading research university by the 1930s. It was, in the words of a famous memorial still on its campus, home to "Spirits Independent and

*In education as in other areas,
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Minds Unfettered” (*duli zhi jingsheng, ziyou zhi sixiang*). My mentor in Chinese history, John K. Fairbank, the father of modern China studies in the United States, learned his Chinese history at Tsinghua under the great historian and later diplomat Jiang Tingfu, who himself was educated at Oberlin and Columbia. Fairbank told me that one of his greatest regrets was the cutting off of academic ties with China in the 1950s, in an earlier era of mutual isolationism. These ties have taken decades to rebuild.

Earlier this year, under great political pressure, three Chinese universities withdrew from global rankings to pursue “education with Chinese characteristics.” But there is no such thing as a “China model” for universities. Over a century and a quarter, Chinese universities have grown on international models and in partnership with their European and US counterparts. They have risen to the first ranks in science and engineering, while—whenever political circumstances have permitted—promoting the values of open inquiry that have marked the world’s leading universities. They have seen political campaigns come and go. They must take the long view. So should we. ▲

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Abstract

With their policies of internationalization, higher education institutions have increasingly begun to develop diaspora strategies to take advantage of the cultural diversity and transnational connectivity of their international students and faculty. This article shows how the idea of diaspora is now understood and deployed by higher education institutions to foster competitive advantage.

HEIs have now begun to develop what they sometimes refer to as their “diaspora strategies.”

Internationalization of Higher Education and the Advantage of Diaspora

Fazal Rizvi

International mobility of students and faculty has transformed the demography of higher education institutions (HEIs) in many parts of the world, leading to transnational networks becoming a key feature of their internationalization policies. Increasingly, HEIs recognize how these networks can be helpful in working toward their strategic goals. Realizing that their international faculty and students reside in complex systems of transnational relations, they have begun to consider the potential uses of these relations to advance their interests. As a result, HEIs can be viewed as an important site for the formation and cultivation of new diasporas.

Shifting Meanings of Diaspora

While the traditional notion of diaspora implied suffering, loss, and victimization, and referred to communities in exile, its recent meanings are much broader. In popular discourses, it is now linked to a broader politics of transnational experience. Under the contemporary conditions of globalization, the appeal of the concept of diaspora is perfectly understandable since it no longer refers exclusively to ethnicity and migration, but increasingly to transnational networks of many different kinds. It highlights the diversity and dynamism of various communities, the capacity to become “embedded” simultaneously within multiple locations, as well as the ability to forge and retain transnational systems of ties, interactions, and exchange. It also allows for an element of choice in the decision to self-identify as a member of a diaspora community, as a way of maintaining and exploiting ongoing links with others, so long as they are accepted as having common origins and interests.

For contemporary diasporas, mobility across national boundaries does not mean abandoning traditions and links, but acquiring new ones and using transnational networks as a major source of advantage. From this perspective, belonging to a diaspora, forged through mobilities across borders, becomes an advantage, as transnational networks can be exploited as a source of commercial opportunities and political claims, both nationally specific and global.

Diaspora Advantage

This realization is not lost on HEIs, especially in light of the new neoliberal conceptualizations of internationalization, which have unleashed a culture of entrepreneurialism centered on, among other developments, a global competition for international students. To recruit students, an administrative technology has emerged, with certain rules of operation that incorporate knowledge of market segments, as well as a symbolic language about the distinctive benefits of internationalization. In developing strategies of recruitment, it is increasingly assumed that the local knowledge of educational markets that many international students and faculty have is most helpful. Accordingly, HEIs have now begun to develop what they sometimes refer to as their “diaspora strategies.”

For countries in the Global South, such diaspora strategies are of course not new: They have long pursued attempts to harness the knowledge and skills of their citizens who live and work abroad. In more recent years, however, diaspora strategies have also become common in the more established systems of higher education, such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, even if their approach is much more complex, focused not so much on aspirations of national economic development as on

attempts to reposition themselves within an increasingly competitive global market in higher education.

As international students become a major source of revenue, and with the globalization of the academic labor market, HEIs in the Global North have begun to consider ways in which they can derive benefits from their staff and students who have multiple ethnic and national affiliations. Leading universities now seek to formally identify and mobilize diasporic scientists, researchers, and scholars to create global knowledge networks, activating academics with multiple ethnic affiliations to advance their strategic agenda, including attempts to recruit highly skilled researchers from around the world. They underline the importance of diaspora research networks in the production of new knowledge, as well as in its utilization and commercialization.

In the area of teaching, too, diaspora strategies are developed to forge various modalities of academic links, for example, by promoting student exchange. International students and faculty are thus positioned as potential “knowledge brokers,” able to forge productive links across cultural and national borders, taking advantage of the opportunities spawned by globalization.

Mobilizing the Diaspora

To realize this potential, however, HEIs cannot simply assume that such groups already exist, whose resources can be easily tapped into and who are already motivated to act as knowledge brokers. A great deal of work has to be done to bring together groups of people from various origins and interests into the service of strategic objectives. Diaspora academics are hence identified, encouraged, cultivated, and supported so that they are willing to perform the brokering function. While some academics and students are reluctant to be so “diasporized,” others perceive great value in diaspora strategies. They readily become active participants in the formation of new diasporas in light not only of the interests of their institutions, but also of their own.

In this sense, the interests of higher education institutions and international students converge, as my own research on Chinese and Indian students in Australia has demonstrated. Many international students, especially those enrolled in business degrees in Australian universities, are convinced that their transnational connectivity represents their “diaspora advantage,” enabling them to make a significant contribution to the economies of both Australia and their country of origin. They believe that this advantage lies in their linguistic skills, cultural knowledge, and ethnic diaspora networks across the globe. They insist that their knowledge of multiple markets makes them both useful citizens of a globalizing community, as well as more innovative, flexible, and enterprising.

The valorization of globalization that now mostly underpins policies of internationalization of higher education is thus aligned to the emerging understanding of diaspora and its various advantages. The contemporary view of diaspora is consistent with the attempts by higher education institutions to internationalize their curriculum with the goal of preparing students to meet the shifting requirements of the economy, transformed by digital technologies and global capitalism, developing in them a positive attitude toward global competition.

In this way, international higher education may be viewed as an ideological site for the cultivation of diaspora networks, which encourages students to develop certain sensibilities and capabilities relevant to participating effectively in a globally networked economy. Dispositions of innovation, enterprise, and entrepreneurialism, consistent with a neoliberal view of globalization, are deeply meaningful to many, if not most, international students—many of them already regarding higher education as an investment in human capital formation. At university, they learn to recognize the importance of creating and maintaining transnational connections, as a way of securing advantages associated with transnational networks. ▲

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International Students and Diaspora Roots/Routes

Annette Bamberger

Abstract

A study of French Jewish students in Israel revealed that their mobility was motivated by the pursuit of cosmopolitan skills for a global knowledge economy, as well as a deeper connection to an ethnic identity and a “homeland.” Diaspora is a timely lens to understand international student flows, and much empirical work remains to be done, across contexts and levels, to understand its implications for international higher education.

International student mobility (ISM) tends to be portrayed as the rational pursuit of primarily economic advantage through the acquisition of academic qualifications, language skills, international social networks, and multicultural attitudes, which are rewarded in global and local labor markets. Alternative narratives of ISM, such as the desire to enrich an ethnic identity and engage with a “homeland,” have been particularly underdeveloped. Yet, there appear to be many nations in which student mobility flows are linked to ethnic identities and diaspora roots/routes. Recent studies have indicated diaspora trajectories in ISM to China, Cyprus, Ireland, Israel, Korea, Morocco, and South Africa, suggesting that a student’s desire to connect with, and enrich, an ethnic identity and ties with a “homeland” may contribute to mobility.

French Jewish Students in Israel

International students in Israel have historically been Jewish students who possess an ethnoreligious connection to the country. They flow from more affluent countries offering better academic credentials and are better placed in the global hierarchy, with the United States and Europe (particularly France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom) being the largest source countries.

Based on a study of French Jewish international students in Israel, I explored the roles of, and interaction between, both the pursuit of cosmopolitan skills and attitudes and ethnic identity influences on the nature, trajectories, and purposes of ISM. The analysis revealed that for these students, ISM was motivated by both the pursuit of cosmopolitan skills for a global knowledge economy and the pursuit of deeper understanding of, and connection to, an ethnic identity and a perceived homeland. Students’ choice was expressed as a package of an academic program, international institution, English language skills, international social networks, and destination country. This indicates that some forms of ISM are more than the pursuit of cosmopolitan skills and attitudes for economic advantage. Rather, ISM may comprise the blending of cosmopolitan and ethnic identity pursuits within the framework of an international higher education (HE) program, to gain economic advantage and foster ethnic identity. This provides several important insights.

First, it shows that ISM serves as the expression of multiple and hybrid identities. In this case, the pursuit of cosmopolitan skills and attitudes within the framework of an international program in Israel asserted affiliation not only with a particular transnational ethnoreligious group and a diaspora homeland, but also with a globally mobile cosmopolitan group of international students. Second, it suggests that this dual pursuit could, in certain instances, disrupt the global hierarchy of HE destinations. In this case, students from France (a more affluent and “center” country) studied in Israel (less affluent and “peripheral”). Third, this study illustrates a trajectory of ISM that follows diaspora routes and social and emotional connections with “homelands,” indicating the relevance of diaspora beyond academic mobility and knowledge production. This demonstrates that ISM allows for a multitude of practices and identities that at times align and meld with, but extend beyond, purely economic considerations. ISM should be understood as a complex assemblage in which multiple intentions and identities are interwoven with economic, political, social, ethnic, and cultural concerns. This resonates with scholarship that rejects the dominant economic advantage narrative and instead views HE and student mobility as a process of “self-formation” or “becoming.”

Beyond Student Perspectives

The connection between diaspora and ISM deserves further exploration. However, it would be a mistake to focus only on international students and their motivations/experiences. To gain a holistic and critical understanding of diaspora and international HE, the investigation of not only the individual but also the institutional, national, and supranational levels is needed. A recent research project that I undertook with colleagues analyzed the social media marketing of Israeli universities toward international students. It indicated that some universities are actively tailoring their marketing efforts toward attracting diaspora students. Universities may also be tailoring their curricula and program offerings to such students—in some cases, as part of political programs of nation-building from afar. For instance, Jinan University in China caters to (ethnically Han) Chinese diaspora students and provides a curriculum rich in Chinese history and language, Confucian thought, and, significantly, Chinese Communist Party ideology.

States have identified international HE as a way to engage “their” diaspora youths and create or renew bonds, often with aims to bolster allies abroad to advocate for the homeland and provide economic assistance and remittances. With these aims in mind, Morocco inaugurated the Summer University program for second generation Moroccan students living abroad. However, Rilke Mahieu’s 2019 study revealed that the program was so warped in its optimistic presentation of the country that many diaspora youths were instead disillusioned by the experience. This suggests that while a desire to connect with a diaspora identity and homeland may spur some ISM and shape the desired experience (i.e., diaspora international students may wish for deeper ties with local communities, be more interested in local languages, histories, cultures, and religious practices), students may also be more critical of their “homelands,” as their greater knowledge and understanding of the society—stemming from perhaps previous trips to the country, family ties, and exposure to diverse international media sources—may undermine states’ attempts at nation-building through ISM.

More transactionally, diaspora students have been identified in national internationalization policies and programs as “low-hanging fruit” in an increasingly competitive international student market, with the expectation that they would be easier targets for recruitment, given the possibility of extended family support in the homeland and supposed positive associations with the country (and presumably its HE system). Israel and Korea’s recent national internationalization policies take these approaches.

The “diaspora option” has likewise been advocated by international organizations such as the OECD, the World Bank, and UNESCO as a viable development strategy—particularly to combat brain drain and promote brain circulation. Thus, the institutional, national, and supranational levels shape the field with their different perspectives and interests. Diaspora is a timely lens to understand international student flows, and much empirical work remains to be done, across contexts and levels, to understand its implications for international HE. ▲

Diaspora is a timely lens to understand international student flows.

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Abstract

With rising numbers of international academics, the discussions around the possible benefits that they provide to their fellow nationals and home country are well documented in the literature. However, there has been little attention as to how their diasporic engagements reinforce the internationalization of higher education while supporting fellow nationals. Taking UK-based Turkish academics as an example, this article sheds light on the relationship between the academic diaspora and the internationalization of higher education.

This academic diaspora supports internationalization in many ways.

Academic Diaspora and Internationalization: UK-based Turkish Academics

Tugay Durak

Over recent decades, the United Kingdom has become a global hub for international scholars from around the world. Statistically speaking, in 2021, more than 70,000 international academic staff were employed at UK higher education institutions, accounting for nearly one-third of the UK academic workforce. While the United Kingdom benefits substantially from its international academic workforce, the homelands of these international scholars pay a high price for losing such talented minds to the United Kingdom.

However, there are ways to improve the effects of brain drain and even benefit from such academic diasporas. In this article, I use evidence from research on the Turkish academic diaspora in the United Kingdom to show how the diasporic engagements of international academics support internationalization of higher education in both sending and receiving countries. This case sheds light on the myriad ways in which academic diasporas deliberately support fellow nationals (e.g., by establishing transnational research collaborations and hosting fellow nationals), and by doing so, reinforce the internationalization of higher education in both their home and host countries.

Turkish Academic Diaspora in the United Kingdom

Traditionally, the United States has been the most popular destination for Turkish international students to study and for Turkish researchers to work. (Although continental Europe, notably Germany, is the “home” of millions of Turkish migrant workers, it has been a less popular destination for academic migrants). However, this is now starting to change, with the United Kingdom rapidly becoming a new trendy academic hub, attracting thousands of Turkish students and scholars in recent years. In the past five years, while the number of Turkish students in the United Kingdom increased by 30 percent and peaked at 4,135, the number of Turkish academics working at UK higher education institutions (HEIs) more than doubled, reaching 815 in 2021.

Academic Diasporas as a Source of Knowledge

This academic diaspora supports internationalization in many ways. Many UK-based Turkish academics give seminars at Turkish universities and NGOs in Turkey, and even offer master-level courses at Turkish universities during summertime. Due to COVID-19, the virtual participation of UK-based Turkish academics in such activities has skyrocketed. In most cases, thanks to such contributions, students and junior researchers from Turkey contact UK-based Turkish academics to ask for their help, such as feedback on their PhD application proposals or scholarly articles. UK-based Turkish academics further provide tacit knowledge about the UK higher education system. This tacit knowledge includes strategies for students to improve their chances of getting scholarships from UK universities and sponsoring bodies, and for junior researchers to excel at job interviews at UK HEIs. Providing such tacit knowledge to fellow nationals is regarded as a responsibility thrust upon the Turkish academic diaspora.

Academic Diasporas as Hosts

Further, most UK-based Turkish academics act as hosts for fellow nationals, notably students and junior researchers from Turkey. Once they hold permanent positions or have administrative roles at UK HEIs, they welcome and even encourage academic visitors from Turkey. In some cases, these academic visits turn into long-term research partnerships.

Academic Diasporas as Transnational Research Partners

UK-based Turkish academics, particularly social scientists, easily engage in bi/multinational research projects with fellow nationals, with collaborations occurring thanks to improved information and communication technology and easier travel. The United Kingdom's generous funding opportunities to promote partnerships with low-income countries are widely used by UK-based Turkish academics to collaborate with Turkey-based academics. Since research funds, such as the [Global Challenges Research Fund](#), mostly require knowledge spillover, the Turkish academic diaspora produces vital knowledge likely to support Turkey's development.

In particular, the United Kingdom's flagship binational research partnership fund with low-income countries, the [Newton Fund](#), is an effective tool for UK-based Turkish academics to build binational partnerships with Turkey-based researchers, as it overcomes bureaucratic challenges and exclusively supports binational partnerships with specific countries, including Turkey. In most cases, these research partnerships lead to coauthorship in scientific papers between UK-based Turkish academics and Turkey-based counterparts. (It is worth noting that establishing transnational research partnerships without funding is a near impossible task because of the heavy workload at UK universities.) Lastly, Turkish academics working on permanent contracts at research-intensive UK universities find it easy to build transnational partnerships, as their positions require them to focus more on international projects than on teaching, and they do not have to spend time job hunting.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

These diasporic engagements directly and indirectly reinforce the internationalization of higher education in the United Kingdom, as they involve facilitating international movement of Turkish students and researchers, establishing transnational research partnerships and coauthorships with (Turkey-based) international academics. It is therefore of great benefit for institutions in the United Kingdom to support bi/multinational research projects and mobility schemes in which academic diasporas can take an active role in building bridges—hence, in supporting internationalization of higher education.

In addition, such engagements play a vital role in supporting the development of the home country (in this case, Turkey), for instance by establishing transnational research partnerships, transferring knowledge, and hosting fellow nationals, although these benefits are more limited due to the lack of binational funding, bureaucratic challenges, heavy workloads in Turkey and the United Kingdom, and the absence of formal knowledge diaspora networks.

One particular challenge in the Turkish case is that Turkey does not have a formal program to create a network for academic diasporas that could serve as an essential source of information for both academic and policy making purposes. This negligence is at odds with other countries, which have specifically chosen to consider the presence of their nationals abroad as a strength to be maintained and nurtured. Turkey could benefit further from its academic diaspora by establishing an official knowledge network that could facilitate partnerships with other academic diasporas and look for binational research partnerships with UK funding agencies, hence mitigating the consequences of losing their talents.

As a final remark, many UK-based Turkish academics are critical of the incumbent Turkish government and criticize the declining academic freedom in Turkey; in fact, this disapproval is one of the main reasons behind their decision to work in the United Kingdom. However, they make a distinction between the people of Turkey and the government and keep supporting their fellow nationals for the sake of solidarity. ▲

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Metatrends in Mobility: Education Hubs and the New Multipolar Structure of International Student Mobility

Chris R. Glass and Natalie I. Cruz

Abstract

A network analysis of UNESCO student mobility data from 210 countries over a 20-year period (2000–2019) indicates long-term structural shifts in the shape of international student mobility, with a more diverse set of core countries exerting influence.

The number of internationally mobile students experienced an almost three-fold increase from 2 million in 1999 to 6 million in 2019. In 2020, international student mobility ground to a halt with the COVID-19 pandemic, creating much uncertainty about the future of cross-border mobility. The best indicators of the shape of international student mobility to come may lie, not in the disruptions of the pandemic, but in the long-term shifts that occurred in the 20 years prior to it. These long-term trends indicate a new multipolar structure for international student mobility, as new education hubs begin to exert greater influence.

Our network analysis of 20 years of UNESCO student mobility data from 210 countries suggests that the *structure*, not simply the size, of international student mobility marks a fundamental shift. While core-periphery dynamics in international student mobility persist, over 20 countries joined the core set of countries, which is now composed of a larger and more geographically diverse subset of destinations, as education hubs exert ever-increasing influence. The new multipolar structure marks a fundamental shift away from traditional East-West patterns that existed for decades. The new core-periphery structure has significant implications for the future of international student mobility.

A Denser Network

Our network analysis indicates that not only has the number of international students tripled; it became three times as dense. While only 14 percent of all possible country-to-country links existed in 1999–2000, by 2018–2019, the number of actual country-to-country links was almost one-half, 48 percent, of all possible country-to-country links. A denser network means that there are not just more international students, but that more countries are exchanging more students with more destinations at more even rates. International student mobility is more evenly distributed than it has ever been anytime in its history, as inbound mobility to new destinations has increased at a faster rate relative to growth in traditional destinations. For example, while sending countries like China, Russia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates received few or no inbound students in 1999, each received more than 150,000 inbound students in 2019.

A Larger and More Multipolar Core

Influence is also more widely and evenly distributed among a larger number of core countries within the network. Core-periphery dynamics remain, but the composition of the core countries has both expanded and diversified. In 1999, five countries composed the set of core countries in the network (the United States in North America; France, Germany, and the United Kingdom in Europe; and Australia), accounting for over 50 percent of the total number of mobile students. Our analysis indicates that a more multipolar network structure emerged in the past 20 years, with new educational hubs exerting increasing influence in the network in Africa (e.g., South Africa), Asia (e.g., China, Japan, and South Korea), Eurasia (e.g., Russia and Ukraine), Latin America (e.g., Argentina and Brazil), the Middle East (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates), and North America (e.g., Canada). Although the top destinations still dominate, their relative influence within the core has waned, as influence is more evenly dispersed among a larger set of

Core-periphery dynamics remain, but the composition of the core countries has both expanded and diversified.

countries. Twenty countries are major inbound destinations for three-quarters of the total number of mobile students.

Implications for the Next 10 Years

At the current rate, the number of internationally mobile students is projected to reach 12 million by 2030. We believe that the most important shift shaping the future of international student mobility is not its size, but its structure. What are the implications of a more multipolar network structure for the future of international student mobility?

- Options abound. More countries will become destinations due to increased capacity, national infrastructure, and regional and cultural proximity to international students. International students will continue to have more options to choose from, and all signs suggest that they will take advantage of them. Affordability and postgraduate work opportunities are driving the decisions of new generations of middle-class international students more willing to consider alternative destinations. Traditional destinations that are expensive without clear labor immigration policies will be the most impacted, especially as students have more options in geographically and culturally proximate destinations. The expanded set of core countries and a denser network indicate that countries will exchange more students at more even rates in the years ahead.
- Education capacity-building has come of age. Many countries, like South Korea, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, have invested significant capital to build educational capacity and establish themselves as attractive destinations for international students. Our analysis indicates that government investment to build educational hubs (e.g., Education City in Qatar, Incheon Global Campus in South Korea, EduCity in Malaysia) as part of a national economic development strategy has resulted in restructuring traditional patterns of mobility. The attractiveness of these destinations will only be heightened by their cultural, linguistic, and geographic proximity, as well as a growing number of internationally ranked universities. The growth and diversification of the core countries in the network will coincide with an expansion of planned educational hubs, while the doubling of global student mobility every ten years will result in greater intra- and cross-regional exchange.
- Going forward, delivery may matter as much as destination. The growth of remote and online learning will necessitate a broader definition of who counts as an “international student.” It also requires better definitions and data practices so that data can be disaggregated and compared. UNESCO defines international students as “students who have crossed a national or territorial border for the purpose of education and are now enrolled outside their country of origin.” However, this definition fails to capture the increase in virtual student mobility during and after the pandemic. It undercounts the influence of countries that have few degree-seeking international students but have significant international enrollment in credit-based online courses or short-term exchange programs.

Even with the pandemic grinding international mobility to a temporary halt, there is no reason to believe that international student enrollment will not continue to increase in traditional destinations. However, our analysis indicates that a significant shift is underway, in which planned and emerging hubs exert greater influence in a more multipolar network structure. ▲

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US Instability: Challenges for Inbound Student and Faculty Mobility

Philip G. Altbach, Xiaofeng Wan, and Hans de Wit

Abstract

The United States is seen by many around the world as a significantly unstable society with an uncertain future. Trumpism, safety concerns, racism, and politicization of US higher education are the main concerns. This perception, based largely on reality, has, and will continue to have, implications for US higher education attractiveness and relations with the rest of the world.

The fact is that the United States is seen by many around the world as a significantly unstable society with an uncertain future.

At the 2022 NAFSA–Association of International Educators conference in San Diego, there was much discussion about global instability and what this means for international higher education. Clearly, geopolitical tensions, the diminished but by no means ended implications of COVID-19, the climate crisis, and, most recently, global inflation and related economic challenges, all weigh heavily on student and scholar mobility and on broader aspects of internationalization. But one aspect that did not seem to get much attention from the largely US audience was the key challenge of the instability of the United States in a more diverse and competitive global higher education environment.

The fact is that the United States is seen by many around the world as a significantly unstable society with an uncertain future. This perception, based largely on reality, has, and will continue to have, implications for US higher education attractiveness and relations with the rest of the world.

It is worth examining the nature and possible implications of this instability. The argument here is not that US higher education is collapsing, or that the United States will not continue to attract the world's largest international student population in absolute numbers, or that it will not continue to be an attractive environment for postdocs or international faculty—but rather, that there are, and will be, significant headwinds and a decreasing relevance and market share. It is worth examining the largely ignored, but serious challenges that are increasingly evident to students and academics outside the United States.

The Past and Perhaps Future of Trumpism

The direct impact of the Trump administration and the ideas and practices that underlie it have been influential, and are by now part of the way that US higher education and society are perceived around the world.

The overall nationalistic and populist ideology that characterized the Trump years and continues to have a significant influence on a large segment of the American population, in particular the Republican Party, also plays a role. Many in the United States and around the world are concerned about a second Trump presidential term—or about someone like him getting elected as president, although the results of the midterm elections show a positive sign in the opposite direction. The recent highly conservative decisions of the Supreme Court, outlawing abortion and expanding the use of guns, and the controversy surrounding these decisions, have also received much negative coverage outside the United States. All of these trends are especially evident in “red” (conservative) states, and universities in those states may be negatively affected. It is in those states that the public higher education sector is already facing severe budget cuts and lower local and international student numbers. The private, not-for-profit higher education sector is less known for its international reputation and quality in red states than in “blue” (Democratic) ones.

Is the United States Safe?

Mass shootings (some 300 in 2022) and other gun violence, and steady media reports of crime are on the minds of students and families as they think about options on where to study. It becomes particularly relevant when international students fall victim to gun violence.

The tide of racial tensions and incidents of racial hate, stimulated in part by Trumpism, cause potential international students and staff to question whether they will be welcome in the United States. Violence against Blacks and Asians, including, but by no means limited to, the senseless shooting of six Asian women in Atlanta, is widely reported—and of special relevance to the preponderance of students coming from East Asia, still the largest region sending students and academics to the country.

The Politicization of Higher Education

This phenomenon will affect graduate students, postdocs, and prospective international faculty hires rather than undergraduates. A steady stream of stories about state government interference in university affairs, including forbidding teaching about critical race theory in a number of “red” states, debates about “wokeism” and “cancel culture,” and other political issues may deter some graduate students and professionals, in particular those who want to escape from authoritarian regimes and a lack of academic freedom in their own countries (for instance, Russian students and faculty after the invasion of Ukraine and related academic restrictions in Russia).

The “China Problem”

Chinese students have long seen the United States as a primary study destination. Their overall enrollment increased fivefold between 2000–2001 and 2021–2022. However, geopolitical tensions between the United States and China in recent years, during which Chinese students and researchers have repeatedly been used as “political pawns,” have turned the United States into an unwelcoming study and work destination. The surge of anti-Asian hatred toward Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) communities and rampant gun violence have intensified the concerns of Chinese families. The 15 percent drop in Chinese student enrollment during the pandemic was a clear signal that interest in the United States among Chinese students significantly declined. Mobility data for 2022 show a further decline. The perception of Chinese students that they are viewed simply as “cash cows” does not help US higher education institutions to create an inclusive environment. On the one hand, Chinese families still see the United States as a sought-after destination for their children’s college education; on the other, they are increasingly wary about sending their children to a country where they may be in harm’s way. A direct result of this dilemma is the recent trend of Chinese students applying to colleges in multiple countries instead of primarily the United States. This directly threatens the future mobility of Chinese students to US colleges, potentially weakening the strength of innovation and global competitiveness of US higher education.

Other Concerns

Difficulties obtaining visas (greatly exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis) also enter into the thinking of potential students and scholars. Recent research notes that the United States is among the main receiving countries with the longest delays in issuing visas for international students and researchers. High inflation in the United States is not helping either. High tuition fees were already a barrier, but increasing costs of living will become even more of a challenge for international students. And while Europe, China, and Russia are looking at Africa as a new source of international students and faculty, the United States is rather absent in that region.

Conclusion

Several of the challenges and concerns mentioned here (racism, rising costs, geopolitical tensions with China, politicization) also apply to other leading countries, in particular the United Kingdom and Australia, but that is not an excuse for the United States to ignore them. It will remain the country with the largest number of highly ranked universities, an overall effective higher education system serving many different constituencies, and a sophisticated, productive, and reasonably well-funded research system. But the instability and challenges discussed above are accelerating the United States’ decline as the undisputed global academic leader. ▲

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Ethiopia: Infusing Local Perspectives in Internationalization Policy

Wondwosen Tamrat

Abstract

With the development of its internationalization policy in 2020, Ethiopia has joined the list of a number of African countries that have such a policy. Aimed at comprehensive internationalization, the document's goals and components manifest conscious efforts to infuse local perspectives and dimensions in the policy. Implementation will require more effort in terms of addressing past deficiencies, emerging challenges, and the ambitious components of the new policy.

In Ethiopia, the internationalization of higher education (IHE) has been recognized as an important undertaking in promoting teaching and research collaboration, faculty and student mobility, mobilization of international resources, and enhancement of academic quality and standards.

The sector has been functioning without a national policy showing how IHE should be planned, directed, supported, and implemented. With the issuance of Ethiopia's first ever such policy in 2020, the principles, rationales, and focus areas upon which IHE efforts are set have been clearly outlined. As argued below, deliberate efforts have been made to infuse local interests and system advantages in the policy.

Goals

The policy identifies academic, economic, political, and sociocultural rationales as the four broader goals for engaging in IHE. The academic rationales, identified as the main ones, focus on improving quality, relevance, knowledge creation, and advancement in the sector. The emphasis on academic rationales is a clear indication of how internationalization can be used as a critical tool to address deficiencies of the higher education system in Ethiopia and perhaps in most developing countries as well.

The economic rationales of the policy are new and envisage income generation, using activities such as quality programs, scientific patents, and innovations. If pursued with excessive commercial interest, this can have negative repercussions and suggests the need for mechanisms addressing this concern.

The political rationales focus on using IHE as a component of Ethiopia's soft diplomatic power and enhancing peaceful coexistence in the region and beyond, while the sociocultural rationales focus on promoting cultural understanding and exchange with the outside world and addressing global challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals. These rationales are relevant given Ethiopia's role as the seat of the African Union and its commitment toward addressing national, regional, and global challenges. Main policy directions and strategies are outlined below.

Internationalization of Research and International Cooperation

The policy emphasizes that research and international cooperation should enhance the introduction of new approaches to teaching and learning, the development of curricula, transmission of knowledge, acquisition and utilization of facilities and equipment, and improving the quality of education—which again corresponds to the academic rationales identified above.

Furthermore, the policy recognizes the need for creating mechanisms facilitating access, for international scientists, to research opportunities and facilities in Ethiopia. In addition to involving the Ethiopian diaspora in the internationalization of research and international cooperation, emphasis is given to prioritizing relations with the Global South, which has always been a neglected area given the sector's dominant engagement with the Global North.

Institution and Program Mobility

The new policy direction reaffirms Ethiopia's commitment toward ensuring the relevance of foreign programs offered in the country and deterring unscrupulous providers. Unlike other countries where such providers enjoy free rein and cause havoc, since 2012,

Ethiopia has been known for instituting a regulatory mechanism to control transnational education, which is maintained in the new policy.

The policy also stipulates that programs offered abroad by Ethiopian higher education institutions (HEIs) should be approved by the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (now Education and Training Authority). This has not been the case in the past, despite the presence of some Ethiopian providers operating in neighboring countries. Equal consideration is given to recognition of foreign qualifications and authentication of Ethiopian qualifications.

The policy further suggests the need for establishing an information and data management system on IHE with appropriate structures, budget, and resources. This has been one of the most common gaps in the system, both at the national and institutional levels.

Mobility of People

Recent information from UNESCO's Institute of Statistics shows that the number of outbound students from Ethiopia stood at 7,626, dispersed in smaller numbers across many countries. The United States is the most popular destination, accounting for 29 percent of enrollments among Ethiopian students seeking to graduate abroad. Ethiopia is among the countries with the highest number of Erasmus staff and students going to Europe. Within the Asian continent, India is one of the main scholarship providers to Ethiopian students. Turkey and China have lately joined the list as popular foreign destinations.

The 2019–2020 data from the ministry of education indicates that there were 1,816 foreign students pursuing bachelors (76 percent), masters (22 percent), and PhD degrees (2 percent) in Ethiopian HEIs. A significant number of foreign students in Ethiopian HEIs are attracted by scholarships offered to refugees from countries such as Congo Brazzaville, Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen.

To facilitate academic exchanges and enhance the success of inbound students, the new policy emphasizes the need to coordinate national immigration requirements and study and work permit procedures for foreigners working at Ethiopian HEIs, giving priority to nationals from neighboring countries and the Global South. Changes in this direction are expected to address the hitherto lack of organized assistance provided by the government to outbound and inbound students who require various types of help to facilitate their mobility. However, implementation will be dependent on the level of cooperation received from pertinent government organizations and ministries that are responsible for, and can facilitate, the task.

The policy also encourages the participation of foreign nationals and the Ethiopian diaspora in activities such as knowledge transfer, knowledge generation, and capacity building. Perhaps a reflection of Ethiopia's ongoing commitment to refugee education, the policy similarly recognizes refugees' access to higher education, based on the stipulations laid down in the national refugee proclamation.

The policy also encourages the participation of foreign nationals and the Ethiopian diaspora in activities such as knowledge transfer, knowledge generation, and capacity building.

Internationalization at Home (IaH)

The new policy emphasizes the need to bring globally focused content and perspectives into the classroom and coursework, as well as in learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of programs of study through the development of appropriate curricula. It underscores the need to align students' mastery of indigenous knowledge with the development of global competences and knowledge through IaH.

HEIs are encouraged to ensure faculty and student appreciation of international diversity and intercultural exchange. In addition to the curriculum, the policy takes foreign language learning as one mechanism to promote IaH and encourages teaching foreign languages. These aspirations appear to be logical, given the sector's broader objectives of creating a higher education system that aspires to train "internationally competitive graduates."

Implementation Challenges

Ethiopia's new IHE policy reflects conscious efforts to develop plans and strategies that address local needs and aspirations. A rare exercise in the context of Africa, the policy provides a practical model to advance internationalization in lower-income countries.

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Aimed at comprehensive internationalization, the policy can have immediate impact by setting a strategic direction for Ethiopian HEIs, whose internationalization efforts lacked clear guidance in the past. It can also promote a synergy between institutional, national, regional, and global strategies and procedures. However, the immediate translation of policy aims into actions may not be easy, given past achievements, emerging challenges, and the ambitious plans envisaged. Over the past few years, the internationalization activities of Ethiopian HEIs have slumbered as a result of the multifarious impacts of COVID-19 that needed to be addressed. This is further compounded by the current civil unrest in the country, which continues to affect overall institutional operations. The number of HEIs that have developed their own internationalization policy and strategy based on the national policy is still vanishingly small.

While national policies will always be useful in navigating the IHE maze, implementation will remain demanding, given the local challenges and the historical trajectory of internationalization in an unequal world, where attending to local needs and priorities may be fraught with a variety of complexities and frustrations, requiring careful planning, negotiations, and, at times, compromises. ▲



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IAU 5th Global Survey

by Giorgio Marinoni

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Abstract

Ever more systems globally are tying the distribution of core public funds to performance indicators and objectives. This article describes the landscape of performance-based funding in Europe and offers some insights into its positive impacts and unintended consequences. Using the experiences of European systems, it also provides some recommendations for systems considering implementing or expanding performance-based funding.

Does Performance-Based Funding Work? A European Perspective

Ben Jongbloed and Ariane de Gayardon

Performance-based funding (PBF), i.e., the distribution of funding to higher education institutions based on their outcomes and outputs, has gained momentum globally as a mechanism to distribute public core funds. But does paying for results actually work? There is little evidence so far of the impact of PBF, either at the state level, or at the university level. One reason is that performance-based systems differ widely in how they are shaped and implemented by funding authorities. Another reason is the causality question: The performance of a higher education system is impacted by many external factors within and beyond the funding system. Success has many fathers, as they say.

At the request of the European Commission, we analyzed the use and impact of PBF in the European Union's higher education systems and drew up some lessons.

The Rise and Forms of Performance-Based Funding

In 2021, 21 of the 29 European higher education systems that we analyzed (25 national systems, the two regions of Belgium, and two states in Germany) used some type of PBF for the basic, core funds allocated to their institutions. However, the designs of these PBF systems vary considerably. The systems differ in the significance that they give to performance as part of the overall funding system: Some have sharper teeth than others. Less than a third of the systems have a particularly high level of performance orientation, meaning that more than 60 percent of the public core funding is driven by performance criteria. Most other systems have a moderate performance orientation (15 to 60 percent of core funding depends on performance). In the past decade, 17 systems increased their attention to performance in core funds, mirroring a global trend toward more paying-for-results.

European PBF systems also differ in their design: Some use particular performance indicators in their funding formulas, others negotiate funding agreements with individual universities and include performance elements in the contractual agreements. Many European countries actually use a mix of formulas and agreements. In our study, we found that over the past decade, dialogue-based performance agreements were introduced in several countries, showing a shift from uniform and numbers-oriented systems to mixed systems that allow for more institution-specific and mission-oriented flexibility. These mixed systems provide space for qualitative institutional ambitions. Examples are the *Leistungsvereinbarungen* in Germany and Austria and the performance agreements in Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands.

What performance actually means is also very much a country-specific issue that dictates how performance is included in performance-oriented formulas and funding agreements. Obviously, the national (funding) authorities set the objectives and broader performance targets. These differ across countries because each faces its own challenges. However, some commonalities can be observed: In funding formulas, frequently used education-related indicators include the number of degrees awarded by a university or its graduation rates. For research performance, the most frequently used indicators are the volume of competitive research grants earned by a university, or the number of doctorates that it has awarded. In negotiated performance agreements, popular education objectives include the goals of better addressing student demands and attending to labor market needs, increasing internationalization efforts, and encouraging diversity and study success. These agreements also frequently stress the acquisition of competitive research projects and excellence in research. Overall, the common goals of

European PBF systems are to improve study completion, increase external revenues for research, and encourage internationalization.

Performance-Based Funding Impacts

The study found that European PBF systems have worked quite well. Positive impacts of PBF can be found in increased study progress, lower time-to-degree, improved quality of teaching and learning, and more attention for student mentoring and guidance. Some countries experienced improvements in research quality, more PhD degrees, and increased internationalization. This suggests that PBF can help reach the results at which it aims. It incentivizes a more strategic performance orientation in universities. Compared to traditional, less output-oriented funding systems, PBF provides more legitimacy for the public funds invested in the higher education sector. It offers a transparent way of distributing core funds to universities. European countries see performance agreements as particularly useful, because they enhance the dialogue between universities and their funding authorities.

However, there is always another side to a success story. The European experiences also point to some unintended consequences that may result from PBF. At the individual level, researchers might be tempted to change their publication strategy because of the specific quantitative (bibliometric) indicators used for rewarding their institution's research performance, and they may prefer publishing in English rather than publishing in their native language. At the institutional level, increased accountability regulations and the complexity of PBF arrangements sometimes increases the administrative burden. At the system level, the often quite persistent inequities that exist between universities risk producing a Matthew effect: Already well-performing and well-endowed institutions end up becoming richer and less wealthy ones feel left out. Such inequities are often linked to the size of a university, its regional location, or its specific disciplinary profile and mission. Thus, there is a risk that some universities perceive the performance indicators/objectives driving their core funds as conflicting with their institutional mission and autonomy.

Recommendations

Experiences in Europe show that PBF systems can have a positive impact, but that funding authorities need to be aware of potential side effects. Therefore, our study lists the following recommendations for policy makers/funding bodies who consider introducing or expanding PBF for their universities:

- Before implementing or reforming a PBF system, the responsible authorities should set out the performance/broad goals that they aim to achieve with PBF.
- PBF systems need to be based on SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) performance measurement systems.
- PBF systems need to be designed in collaboration with stakeholders in the higher education sector.
- Funding authorities should carefully consider attributing a relatively high share of core funding to measures of performance.
- Universities should have some degree of choice and flexibility within the PBF system and associated indicators/objectives to express their individual missions and ambitions.
- PBF is best established in the context of increasing (i.e., extra) higher education funding.

The study illustrates that the design of funding systems—in particular PBF—is a delicate balancing act that is best performed jointly with the higher education sector. It will often take a few iterations and revisions to get the system's incentives and indicators right, with careful monitoring of PBF's impacts over time. In that respect, funding experiences from Europe can teach us a few lessons on how PBF can act as positive behavior facilitation. ▲

Experiences in Europe show that PBF systems can have a positive impact, but that funding authorities need to be aware of potential side effects.

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This article is based on a recent report for the European Commission entitled "Study on the state and effectiveness of national funding systems of higher education to support the European Universities Initiative."

Abstract

The European Universities Initiative is the European Commission's ambitious strategy to integrate universities across the region into transnational alliances centering on common organizational, thematic, or challenge-focused missions. Over consecutive rounds beginning in 2019, the now 44 selected alliances are forming deep institutional partnerships, supported through an uneven patchwork of funding from the Commission, national governments, and institutions themselves, which appears to intensify inequalities in the European higher education landscape, pitting aims of excellence against inclusion.

These inequalities across the sector remind us that the European higher education landscape is a highly uneven terrain, with differing levels of resourcing and experiences of regional integration.

The European Universities Initiative: Championing Excellence and Inclusion?

Lee Rensimer and Rachel Brooks

The European Universities Initiative, or EUI, is a novel policy instrument championed by the European Commission to establish closely integrated alliances between its universities. Initially limited to universities within the European Union and Erasmus+ participating countries, and now broadening out to the 49 countries currently in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the EUI accelerates the internationalization of universities' teaching, research, and civic activities by funding the formation of "European Universities," typically made up of six to 10 higher education institutions across Europe. Through separate rounds of competitive selection between 2019 and 2022, there are now 44 alliances that collectively involve 340 universities, alongside a much larger number of civic, private, and nonprofit organizations and authorities across 31 countries.

The EUI's mission to foster "excellence, innovation and inclusion in higher education across Europe" is seen as an extension of the region's previous higher education integration initiatives including the Bologna Process (leading to the establishment of the EHEA) and Erasmus+ (the primary mechanism for international student and staff mobility within Europe). Both previous initiatives laid the policy groundwork, with Bologna increasing the international compatibility of qualifications and credits across European institutions, enabling closer cooperation and increasing the circulation of students and staff across borders. The EUI effectively intensifies this cooperation—often through preexisting Erasmus+ partnerships or university associations—by clustering institutions thematically (e.g., an alliance of social science and business schools), organizationally (e.g., "young" research-intensive universities), or around an interdisciplinary challenge (e.g., universities concentrated on coastal sustainability). Participating universities prioritize mobility, exchange, and collaboration within their alliance, consolidating resources while innovating and reshaping the face of European higher education through joint qualifications, mobility opportunities, and influence as policy actors.

More critically, we argue the EUI also extends institutional inequalities introduced through previous initiatives. The transformation of higher education systems in Eastern Europe and the European periphery stemming from Bologna has had mixed outcomes, while the imbalance between mobility to and from major Western European countries is well documented. The emergence of university associations or networks further stratifies universities into respective tiers, consolidating members' profiles and reputations. These inequalities across the sector remind us that the European higher education landscape is a highly uneven terrain, with differing levels of resourcing and experiences of regional integration. If the Commission's stated objectives of the EUI include both excellence and inclusion, we question whether this initiative can advance both simultaneously. With its competitive tendering and one-size-fits-all funding, the EUI appears poised to advance institutions with existing advantages, consolidating their positioning in the European institutional hierarchy and widening the gap between selective and less selective universities.

Geographical Imbalances

With occasional exceptions, alliances typically include one university per country. However, with an average of eight universities per alliance, their composition is a reflection of strategic decisions made at their inception—or decisions already made in the cases of alliances stemming from university associations. While their membership takes into account the mandate for a broad geographic spread, the collective composition of

universities and countries across the 44 alliances is predictably weighted toward Western Europe, particularly German and French universities, which feature in a strong majority of alliances. The coordinating university responsible for shaping and steering each alliance, especially at the inception stage, tilts equally in favor of Western Europe. This imbalanced representation of national systems reinforces existing asymmetries in European higher education, with countries already on the geographical and political periphery of Europe having considerably fewer universities participating in the initiative and enjoying its benefits.

Varying Financial and Political Support

A critical element of the EUI's funding architecture is the need for participating universities to cofund their alliance activities. The amount required varies by alliance size and scope, but can be prohibitive for many lower-tier and less-resourced universities. In the 2019 and 2020 pilot rounds, the Commission provided each approved alliance the same fixed sum of EUR 5 million for partnership-building activities and a further EUR 2 million for joint research over a three-year period. Some of the alliance leaders whom we interviewed expressed their concerns over the financial burdens that members experienced differently, and how this structured their alliance's choice of partners, its overall size, and the scope of each member's involvement.

Another factor complicating resourcing is the uneven political commitment of national and subnational governments to financially support the EUI, with some national governments supporting their participating universities with unconditional grants of varying amounts. In the case of Germany, federal government support only funded new, add-on activities within its participating universities' alliances, while some state-level governments provided further funding without conditions. Several countries did not offer any funding for EUI involvement, with the Netherlands taking a view that the EUI was an "elitist initiative" fueling internationalization at the expense of Dutch higher education more broadly. As the Dutch government indicates, this highly variable cofunding privileges certain universities, reinforcing existing financial inequalities across national systems and the region as a whole.

Appetite for Risk?

Given the resource commitment required to participate, universities in alliances take on financial and reputational risk without guarantee of further support from the European Commission. Naturally, universities calculate risk differently depending on their financial and positional circumstances; in extreme cases, like UK universities, participating in an alliance poses a means of mitigating geopolitical risks associated with being outside the European Union. The alliance leaders whom we interviewed across Europe described in contrasting language their motives for forming or joining an alliance, the relative importance of the alliance for their international portfolios, and the consequences of failure. For some, the EUI served as a "laboratory for experimenting new ways of cooperating" and operated alongside other major international collaborations. Other alliances saw it as a vital opportunity to transform their institutions and elevate their position, with the express aim to ultimately merge into a single university across multiple campuses. While signaling different appetites for risk, these statements also reflect universities' abilities to take risks and their capacities and autonomy to do so.

The EUI is a new and evolving initiative, with its most recent round creating four new alliances and providing existing alliances with EUR 14.4 million each for four further years. While the Commission highlights the sustained opportunity provided for the now 340 participating universities, it is, in the end, an initiative serving only around 7 percent of the European higher education landscape. The concentration of resources to predominantly Western European universities with existing international partnerships consolidates the advantages of selective and relatively resourced universities, putting the EUI's aim of excellence before inclusion. ▲

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Reforms in Japan's Private Universities

Jeremy Breaden and Roger Goodman

Abstract

The private sector in Japan constitutes close to 80 percent of all universities, and recent debates about their governance demonstrate interesting tensions between “global” models of higher education governance and “local” practices. Key to understanding these debates is the fact that around 40 percent of Japanese private universities have been defined as what Altbach et al. have called FOMHEIs (Family-Owned or -Managed Higher Education Institutions).

Private higher education is the fastest growing sector of higher education (HE) globally, with especially rapid growth of what Altbach et al. (2019) have called FOMHEIs (Family-Owned and -Managed Higher Education Institutions). As they summarize in a previous IHE article, while such institutions carry with them considerable risks (abuse of funds, nepotism, and infighting), they also have considerable potential strengths (flexibility, personal investment, and continuity). Recent events in Japan—which has both one of the largest private HE sectors in the world and, within that sector, one of the largest number of FOMHEIs—have led to some of these tensions coming to the surface, in particular in relation to how such institutions are best governed.

In December 2021, an unusually dramatic report was issued by a working party commissioned by the Japanese ministry of education, culture, sports, science and technology (MEXT) to look into the need for major reform in the governance of school corporations that manage private universities in Japan. A summary of the report started as follows: “In recent years, a number of management scandals have occurred in school corporations operating universities which have led to Board Chairs serving prison sentences and other Board Members being arrested on charges of breach of trust, creating a major social problem ... Inadequacies in the governance system of the school corporation—which receives preferential treatment in the tax system (tax expenditure) as well as large direct subsidies from the state—have been repeatedly pointed out.”

Just four months later, in March 2022, a second MEXT committee produced a separate report on the same topic of school corporation reform, which was introduced rather differently: “Private educational institutions underpin public education in Japan, and for them to gain society’s trust and advance further, it is essential to pursue “workable reforms” of the school corporation system. This must be done in a manner that is sensitive to the history and diversity of school corporations and responsive to society’s needs, as well as [by] incorporating measures to prevent recurrence of the scandals that have occurred thus far.”

How should we understand these radically different views on the need to reform the governance of private HE in Japan, which appeared within a few months of one another, under the auspices of the same ministry?

Most obviously, the differences in the two committees’ reports can be explained by their membership. The first committee was composed by business managers, lawyers, and other experts in corporate governance and almost devoid of members from the private higher education sector. The second committee’s membership was dominated by representatives of the sector itself.

We suggest, however, that taken together these two reports highlight a tension between “global” (Anglocentric, neoliberal) models of HE governance and “local” (historically bound, culturally driven) practices, which is playing out in Japan but has echoes of similar debates in many parts of the world.

Sharpening the Focus on Private Higher Education

The Japanese case is particularly interesting since, in terms of total financial investment, Japan has the second largest higher education system in the world. Accounts of Japanese higher education, however, have historically been focused on national universities. A large amount was written about their governance reform process in the early 2000s (see Goodman, 2005), but actually such institutions constitute just 10 percent of all universities in Japan.

The Japanese case is particularly interesting since, in terms of total financial investment, Japan has the second largest higher education system in the world.

The private sector, operating as so-called “school corporations” (*gakkō hōjin*), constitutes almost 80 percent of universities, enrolling the vast majority of all students, but has hardly been studied as a system in its own right, something which our 2020 book, *Family-Run Universities in Japan*, has tried to rectify. The title of the book reflects the fact that around 40 percent of the private universities (and well over 30 percent of all universities) in Japan can be defined as family businesses.

Scandals Reignite Debate over Governance Models

Debates about governance reform of school corporations have been bubbling in Japan for many years, but the specific context for the establishment of the first committee was a series of major scandals that had severely shaken public trust in these corporations’ ability to govern themselves. A scandal involving Nihon University in 2021 was a watershed moment in terms of public awareness of school corporation governance problems, since it involved the misuse of breathhtaking amounts of money at Japan’s largest university in terms of student numbers (77,000) and alumni (over 1.2 million). Much of the analysis of the case focused on the fact that while the egregious behavior of the chair of the board, who had been responsible for most of the problems, had been well known within the organization, there had appeared to be a complete lack of checks and balances for other members of the organization to do anything about it.

The first MEXT committee sought to address these problems by recommending a complete ban on family members and other “special interests” in the membership of the *Hyōgiin-kai* (board of councillors) and giving this board ultimate veto power over the currently much more powerful *Rijikai* (executive board). The aim was to separate day-to-day decision-making processes from the personal, in particular financial, interests of the owners and bring them more into line with best governance practice elsewhere.

The second committee was set up following protests from the powerful private university lobby that had not been represented in the first committee. It argued that the first committee had not understood the historical development of private higher education in Japan or its distinctive strengths in terms of long-term investment (financial, personal, emotional). We describe these strengths in the subtitle of our book as “sources of inbuilt resilience,” which enabled private universities to survive, against all predictions, the enormous drop (40 percent during the period 1992–2010) of 18- and 19-year-olds, who make up 95 percent of their entrants.

To protect the status quo power of the founding authorities, the second committee effectively affirmed the strengths of existing structures, recommending that the *Rijikai* and the *Hyōgiin-kai* should work in “constructive collaboration” to resolve any conflicts. It proposed that any limits on the numbers of family members on boards be determined in a way that took into account the “processes leading to the corporation’s establishment and its founding spirit.” In total, the report uses the term “founding spirit” (*kengaku no seishin*) no fewer than seven times.

Reassessing Global Paradigms of HE Governance

Most accounts of university governance seem to take it for granted that the separation of strategic and operational responsibilities, the professionalization of trustee skills, and the involvement of disinterested external members are the only ways to protect the interests of consumers, staff, and investors. As Austin and Jones (2016) point out, while this approach threatens to distort the unique characteristics that differentiate higher education institutions from other institutions in society, very few people have been prepared to counter this dominant narrative for fear of being characterized as out of touch with current best practice. The second committee report, therefore, might be one of the first nationally produced reports (certainly in a major OECD nation) that has challenged the paradigm of neoliberal governance. ▲

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Abstract

Deep economic decline and a prolonged political crisis in Venezuela have had a negative impact on higher education institutions. The main public universities, in particular, have paid a heavy price as a consequence of their defense of democratic values and academic freedom, as they have been defunded by the government. Amid severe brain drain and political and economic distress, some positive signs provide reasons for hope, but no recovery can be anticipated.

Indicators like those mentioned above speak of nothing short of a collapse of public higher education in Venezuela.

Venezuela: Universities at Risk in a Failed State

Juan Carlos Navarro

Venezuela has been in the headlines for quite some time given a succession of several rather extreme events. Within a few years, over 6 million migrants—out of a population of 30 million—have exited the country. The percentage of the population living in poverty estimated by international institutions stood at no less than 85 percent in 2018. Hyperinflation has settled as a routine for a good number of years. The government is considered illegitimate by almost all liberal democracies around the world, including most Latin American countries. GDP estimates point to one of the steepest economic declines on record. The list could go on. The combined effect of developments like these have landed the country in the short list of fragile or failed states collected by organizations such as the World Bank, the Fund for Peace, and the OECD.

Such a damaging combination of economic and social decline, as well as political strife, has had a severe, albeit far less publicized, impact on institutions of higher education.

The Depth of the Crisis in Venezuelan Higher Education

Systematic information on all aspects of Venezuelan society is hard to get. The government has stopped publishing basic economic and social indicators for over a decade. But looking at some proxies may help document such impact. A fully credible estimate, several years old, was able to establish that more than half of the scientific researchers active in Venezuela, the vast majority employed at universities, had left for other countries. Another independent report asserts that the proportion of faculty members at public universities who have emigrated abroad or moved to private universities reached 40 percent by 2018. Although more recent estimates are not available, the situation has likely worsened, since the average monthly salary of a university professor in public universities was USD 15 per month in 2020. According to a rare official government document dated 2022, enrollments in public institutions of higher education (including universities and short-program technical institutes) registered a 25 percent decline by 2018, compared with its peak in 2008, in spite of the fact that inclusion in higher education is a top stated policy priority.

Indicators like those mentioned above speak of nothing short of a collapse of public higher education in Venezuela. The main traditional public universities, Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV), Universidad del Zulia (LUZ), Universidad Simón Bolívar (USB), Universidad de Los Andes (ULA), and others still, have been for years the targets of large reductions in budget allocations, in favor of a new batch of massive new universities created by the successive Chavez administrations, with enrollments of over 100,000 students. Under the umbrella of the government initiative known as *Misión Sucre*, these new institutions were built with little regard for academic standards but were generously funded, while resources were being denied to the crown jewels of higher education in the country, home to the overwhelming share of STEM research. Overall enrollments grew rapidly between 2005 and 2012, only to decline afterward as the new universities revealed their weaknesses as vehicles for the labor market, and public universities reduced their academic offerings as a result of the lack of funds and a massive brain drain.

In addition to the loss of a critical mass of faculty mentioned above, the outcome of the crisis has been the ruin of physical infrastructure and the acute deterioration of teaching and research activities: There were never more than a few Venezuelan universities included in the *THE* ranking, but the single one remaining in the latest exercise (2021), ULA, lost about 400 places in the last four years. That same university was recently the subject of an article in *The New Yorker*, “Aging and Abandoned in Venezuela’s Failed State,”

showing photos of emaciated senior professors whose salaries and pensions were insufficient for them to eat decently.

The Political Roots of the Crisis

From afar, it can be hard to understand how such unparalleled destruction of highly valuable academic assets could take place. On the ground, in Venezuela, the explanation is clear. Early in the first Chavez administration (inaugurated after a national election, in December 1998), universities gained prominence as sources of resistance to the gradual onset of authoritarian rule. In 2007, Hugo Chavez convened a national referendum for the reform of the constitution, most notably aimed at designating Venezuela as a socialist state. The government lost the referendum and students were at the forefront of the campaign to defeat the reform. Later, they would lead national street demonstrations against the Maduro administration in 2014 and 2017. At the same time, faculty, even if not united in opposing the regime, leaned clearly against the plans of the government and systematically elected university authorities not favored by the government authorities and committed to preserving academic freedom and political independence. All along, the regime's response was to consider universities primarily as part of the opposition, and then proceed to defund them. This stand-off continues today.

Venezuelan universities have thus paid a very heavy price for their defense of institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and democracy.

Reasons for Hope

Yet, against all odds, public universities are still open, although they have not been able to keep up their historic levels of graduates and research output and have had to close quite a few programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Most of them have remained politically independent, i.e., academically and in terms of self-government and administration. The overall goal of the regime, taking over the reins of the main institutions, has proved elusive to this day. Meanwhile, expatriate researchers, some of them working at top level research laboratories around the world, have connected with their colleagues back home and provided support for remote advanced training and research.

Last, but not least, several private universities have preserved their academic and financial viability through strong support from private sponsors, without renouncing their autonomy. As in the case of leading institutions such as the Catholic University Andrés Bello (UCAB) or the Metropolitan University in Caracas (UNIMET), they have proactively adapted to the challenging environment by finding ways to retain academic talent, recruiting and financially supporting ever larger numbers of students in need of assistance, diversifying international alliances, and enhancing their engagement with their communities through innovative programs for K-12 schools, nontraditional students, and young entrepreneurs. They have also, to some extent, filled the vacuum of public statistics by becoming a key source of systematic information about the state of the country through social, economic, and political surveys.

In sum, the sharp economic decline and democratic backsliding in Venezuela have had a very negative effect on higher education, which seriously compromises the country's capabilities to face development challenges. This is happening at a time when advanced human capital is considered more important than ever before to secure economic growth, innovation, resilience in the face of emergencies—such as the recent pandemic, and equal opportunity for the new generations. While a vibrant discussion takes place around the world about the future of higher education in the digital age after the challenges represented by the pandemic, barely anybody at the major public universities in Venezuela has the time or the resources to get engaged—further amplifying the gap that separates them from universities in other countries.

Recovery will not be quick or easy. There is no sign, unfortunately, that it has even started, or that the current Maduro administration has any plan other than staying the current damaging course. ▲

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