In the Shadow of Celebrity

World-class university policies and the higher education system

Presentation for the ASHE Special Interactive Session 1: Dimensions of Quality

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ASHE

THE WCUP RHETORIC

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

WHY WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY POLICIES?

- More investment in research
- More research output
- Better educated labour force
- Promote knowledge transfer

It is about being globally competitive as a system and improving national wellbeing
REFLECTING ON THE EFFECTS OF WCUPs

- World class universities owe their status to high private paybacks of higher education and are thus very attractive
- Governments invest in WCUs, expecting high public returns and externalities
- In a global context

Do world-class universities make the higher education system better?

- HEIs may produce more outputs which benefit the nation (e.g. knowledge, infrastructures, talent etc)
- WCUPs can change the relationship between HEIs within the system
- The policies have effects on the resources for other providers

POSSIBLE SPILL-OVER EFFECTS ON THE SYSTEM (II)

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

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

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<th>Countries</th>
<th>More exogenous resources</th>
<th>More endogenous resources</th>
<th>System improvements (i.e. more efficient use of public moneys)</th>
<th>New products (e.g. Graduate Schools)</th>
<th>Reputation</th>
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DISCUSSION

About a world class higher education system?
- About horizontal diversity and pathways within the system
  - System permeability
  - Heterogeneity of student body
- About antecedent conditions
- Does money do it all?
- Does reputation do it all?
- About aligning optimally private and public returns of higher education
  - ...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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