

# COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

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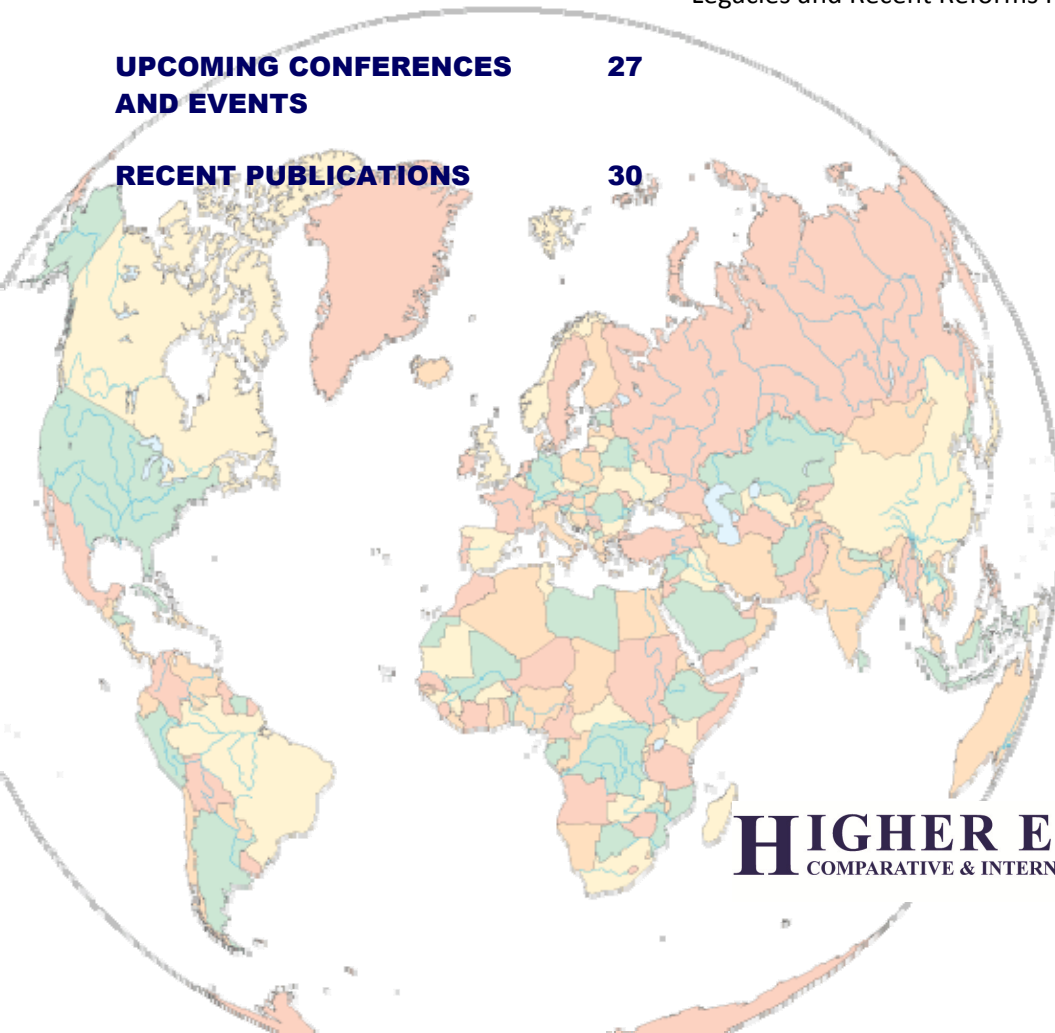
*THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SIG*

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**HIGHER EDUCATION SIG**  
COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SOCIETY

# COMPARATIVE & INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

## Philosophy for *Comparative and Int'l Higher Education*

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## Tertiary Education in Emerging Markets: Fertile Ground for Private Investment

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The interconnectedness of the global community has produced economic, political, and social results ranging from the truly transformational to the curiously unexplainable. As a result of collapsing barriers which previously inhibited the efficient movement of people, capital, goods, technology, knowledge, and opportunity, regions which were previously impenetrable due to organic limitations or those of human construction are now open to prospects of growth. Partnerships have emerged throughout the world, placing into cooperative context parties that bystanders may consider strange, but in reality accomplish far more than either alone could have deemed feasible. And as demonstrated consistently in developing and developed countries alike, the shift toward privatization has transformed the paradigm in many sectors of what was once considered a public good to one that is now, in increasing measures, a private good existing either wholly outside of or peripheral to the state-sponsored medium through which it was historically delivered. Each of these transformations has opened to providers and consumers new channels of fulfillment to be considered and potentially engaged, bringing new challenges, concerns, and outcomes that demand careful review.

One specific area of interest is higher education—specifically business education—in emerging markets and the trend toward such education being delivered by private organizations in contrast to the state-sponsored institutions that previously held a virtual monopoly on higher education. Viewed by multinational organizations as the next step toward achieving a more equitable global economy and opening the doors of globalized

opportunity to more of the world's underrepresented groups, the provision of higher education in business is big business and is increasingly the focus of inquiry on all sides of the debate.

### **Historical Context of Higher Education in Emerging Markets**

Emerging markets represent an enormous challenge—and a great opportunity—facing the global community. The inevitability of globalization, internationalization, massification, commoditization, and interconnectivity of systems and societies stretches not just to economies or free markets, but reaches far into institutions long felt to be the domain of domestic influence. Within the context of higher education, public, private, governmental and transnational organizations are finding the global landscape changed with new priorities and escalating urgencies driving both policy and practice.

Describing the international activities of institutions of higher education as having “dramatically expanded in volume, scope, and complexity during the past two decades” (Altbach and Knight 2007), the distinction between the internationalization of tertiary education and globalization forces pushing societies toward greater interconnectivity is important to understand. Globalization reflects the pressure to establish free markets and knowledge industries, reduce barriers to the movement of human or financial capital, and embrace interdependence; internationalization, on the other hand, represents the activities undertaken by countries, systems or institutions to respond to these pressures (Dixon 2006). In the case of tertiary education, this internationalization takes the form of study-abroad programs, cross-cultural learning, enhanced foreign language pro-

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grams, academic mobility, and as the focus of this review, the “commercialization of international higher education, especially the growing influence of the for-profit, private higher education sector” (Altbach and Knight 2007).

Important also in consideration of the current state of tertiary education in developing countries is an understanding of the pattern of growth, the factors that appear to have driven this growth, and the role these influences may play in the privatization movement. Many developing countries emerged from colonization in the latter half of the twentieth century freed from the mandate to employ the educational policies of their sovereign powers yet inexperienced in the design and development of robust educational systems capable of responding to the needs of a new society and economic entity. As a result, many former colonies clung to “closed corporatist and statist models of society” (Schofer and Meyer 2005) until efforts by the international community led to acceptance of a more open international system focused less on the exploitation of human capital and more on the advantages offered by educational systems that “legitimized schooling” (2005, 903) at all levels. Key among the factors that drove domestic acceptance of these higher education initiatives in emerging markets were four dimensions of a post-Cold War, postmodernist society linked to tertiary education expansion, both public and private:

1. Democratization, liberalization, and the expansion of human rights reinforcing a picture of the rights and capacities of individuals for unlimited amounts of schooling
2. The worldwide expansion of science and increasing scientization of society which has turned schooling into a mainstay of growth and human potential actualization
3. The rise of national development logics, and development of the notion of individual and organizational planning for indefinite growth
4. The structuring of organizations and institutions into a world system designed to serve pro-educational cultural models and discourses (Schofer and Meyer 2005).

Despite both inward progress and outward encouragement, the current inadequacy of institutions of higher education in developing countries must be considered one of the primary contributors to the increasing trend toward private tertiary education. With prevailing world opinion reflecting commentary such as “the current state of higher education in developing countries is quite weak” (World Bank 2000), and “developing countries lack the domestic capacity to meet the demand” (Altbach and Knight 2007) due to “political and cultural reasons beyond underfunding” (Sall and Ndjaye 2007), globalization pressures somewhat naturally fill the void in true neoliberal fashion with both public and private institutions. The vision laid out here is to tie higher education to the labor market and the business community, with public, private not-for-profit, and private for-profit institutions leading the transition in a “coordinated way, guided by a clear, strategic vision” (World Bank 2000).

Despite concern over the loss of domestic influence, there is little argument that the globalization of higher education and the increasing role of private engagement are inevitable. What is under debate, though, is how best to monitor and manage the effects of market driven growth (Hershock 2007), protect social and cultural values (Teichler 2006), ensure academic usefulness to the community and the nation (Sall and Ndjaye 2007), and promote a free trade context that neither blatantly nor subtly reinforces imperialism to the negation of any equity progress that may result for expanded educational opportunities (Altbach and Knight 2007).

### **World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs**

The World Bank, as a dominant lender of funds on a macroeconomic level to emerging market countries, has employed policies that link long-term funding streams to domestic policy reform initiatives in the controversial process known as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Supporters of SAPs argue that “this reorientation [toward SAPs] arose from a growing awareness that developing countries were held back more by poor policies than by a lack of finance for investment” (Dollar and Svensson 2000), whereas critics

decry SAPs as having an unfair detrimental impact on the developing nations' poorest citizens simply because SAPs entail severe reductions in government spending and employment, higher interest rates, currency devaluation, lower real wages, sale of government enterprises, reduced tariffs which may have protected local markets, and liberalization of foreign investment regulations (2000, 894). Ironically, higher education may have unintentionally benefited from SAPs which did not achieve stated goals in a particular country yet opened opportunities for long-term engagement in an area of needed growth where capacity building, economies of scale, reputation and experience, and creative situational application could indeed benefit large segments of the population.

### **Role of the International Finance Corporation (IFC)**

In all but the most developed countries of the world, the state was historically the leading provider, financier, and policy-maker for the entire spectrum of a nation's educational system, defined by "varied structural developments of national education systems [which] should not come as a surprise because education policies were not led by common global assumptions" (Teichler 2006). Despite the protectionist views on the rights to sovereignty over the provision of domestic higher education, many countries also faced the growing budgetary realities of "public expenditures surpassing fiscal and debt-service capacities, slowing growth in the higher education sector even while public demand for more higher education surged" (Maas 2001). Increasingly, educational policymakers, especially those in emerging markets, necessarily adjusted both mindset and practice to embrace a "greater openness in giving the private sector and free markets a chance to prove their efficacy" (Quddus and Rashid 2000) in delivering quality higher education. Certainly this shift toward a more open economic system was and continues to be criticized by those who view this trend as simply a further manifestation of neoliberal ideology "exacerbating inequities, and the unequal distribution of resources to benefit the wealthy" (2000, 489).

Another factor coming into play has been the sociological shift with regard to the overriding purpose and value of higher education in the lives of citizens. Whereas the historical perspective of both former socialist and colonized nations, many of which comprise the vast majority of nations now considered as emerging markets or developing nations, was that education was "a tool to create greater social (class) and economic equality," prevailing opinion has shifted to one that believes "the beneficiaries of university education should shoulder a greater proportion of the burden" and that "higher education is more of a 'private good' with not enough immediate and positive externalities [characteristics of a 'public good'] to justify public support" (Quddus and Rashid 2000). Instead of higher education being considered "the great equalizers" (2000, 490), revised public opinion now suggests that "free access to higher education may worsen the social and income-earning inequities," that "subsidizing university education would in fact worsen the income inequities" (2000, 489), and that "evidence now shows that upper income groups actually received a greater share of the benefits of education" (Shahid 2003), thus negating the perceived benefits of state-sponsored and state-funded higher education.

Despite both public support and state interest to encourage private investment in higher education in developing countries, many would-be investors fear the financial risk is simply too great. Recognizing this need for supranational assurance and support to accelerate private investment, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, began in 1995 to play a leading role in the facilitation and promotion of private investment in higher education in emerging markets. Citing both a push for improved access to higher education and the opening of domestic commerce markets to greater global competition as the factors that have dramatically raised demand for tertiary education—especially business education—in developing countries, the IFC views the private sector as a critical component to meeting this demand (World Bank 2002). Specifically, the IFC offers consulting and financial services to academics, private investors, government representatives, philanthropic organizations, and public sector providers focused upon the education

sector. This influence, and the widespread multinational support that funds and supports it, reinforces the current thinking that international higher education is no longer a public responsibility (Dixon 2006), but instead a “commodity to be freely traded” subject to commercial forces under the “domain of the market” (Altbach and Knight 2007, 291).

It is in the areas of domestic policy reform and growth that the IFC and other multinational organizations are closely working to create a compatible environment where all may benefit from the potential to be realized by privately expanded higher education opportunities. An IFC-organized conference titled “Investing in the Future: Innovation in Private Education” published the following eight policy suggestions with regard to encouraging growth in the private tertiary education sector:

1. Provide a sound policy framework for operating a private education sector;
2. Introduce clear, objective and streamlined criteria and processes for establishing and regulating private education institutions;
3. Allow for-profit higher education;
4. Permit private universities and colleges to set their own tuition fees;
5. Provide incentives and support for private higher education institutions;
6. Furnish parents and students with information to help them select quality private education services;
7. Establish quality assurance and monitoring processes; and
8. Develop the capacity of government to implement policy and manage private education providers (Nuthall 2008).

### **Context of Private Investment in Higher Education**

One of the anticipated benefits of the internationalization of privately funded higher education in emerging markets is the potential for increased participation by businesses, small and large, in global markets. Despite criticism of mass societal Westernization due to the nature of “marketed knowledge” (Dixon 2006), the

prevailing opinion in developing countries is that higher education is key to societal and economic equity and opportunity.

Put at great risk in the Westernization of higher education in developing countries is the rich value of indigenous knowledge and awareness of local resource utilization and market acumen that comes only from an intimate knowledge of the land and culture. Appropriately, the possibility that increased “choice and application [in higher education] will result in adaptation to the detriment or even loss of existing and likely fragile” (Sall and Ndjaye 2007) societal infrastructures in communities, villages, or other marginalized groups is one that must be taken into account both on a domestic policy level as well as by the international community advocating for these open market changes.

Mutual respect, shared benefits, human dignity, and the principles of discovery are features suggested by Durie (2006) as critical to the successful implementation of international higher education without setting the stage for a parallel disintegration of indigenous culture, economy, or social structure. Emphasis on priority areas of varying “ethical and political dimensions” (Sall and Ndjaye 2007) will complicate international investment in higher education systems, especially when developing countries have “an urgent need for individuals with specialized professional skills” (World Bank 2000)—the educational need most often filled by private professional schools. Playing this critical role in national development and occupying such a central place within the structure of developing countries’ higher education systems will likely lead to close inspection of motives and performance, with those schools and programs demonstrating the greatest innovation and that “respond positively to performance-based allocation of local resources, skills, and accountability systems” (World Bank 2000) having the greatest opportunity for success, however defined.

It is understandable to assume that a discussion of private sector involvement in education primarily involves either the takeover of an existing institution by private investors or the creation of a new institutional entity wholly funded, governed, and managed by private interests. Despite the fact that it is this type of in-

vestment program that garners the most visibility and criticism, many of the more successful programs in terms of expanding access to poorer segments of the population are ones where the role of private investment occurs outside of academia. Private participation in higher education comes in many varieties: from the stereotypical “formal” private school designed to prepare elite students, to the Internet-based providers offering “certificates” in every conceivable field of study; and from educational services providers facilitating access to everything from technology to teachers, to the provision of funding via public-private partnerships that allows more students to secure the tuition necessary to participate in higher education programs of higher quality and greater program relevance.

### **IFC Project Analysis: Nigeria**

Nigeria, along with many other African countries, continues to struggle with a “current inadequacy of universities revealed in the wake of the economic crisis in the 1970s and the structural adjustment policies that it brought about” (Sall and Ndjaye 2007). Despite the fact that African higher education has come a long way and “enormous progress has been achieved in quantitative terms” (49), political and cultural reasons behind the inadequacy linger, along with chronic under-funding that has “resulted in the deterioration of social conditions for students and facilities . . . because of the prohibitive costs of purchasing new” (45) technologies or materials. In an example of an IFC project designed to provide support to the education sector without direct investments in institutions themselves,

Nigeria’s SocketWorks has grown in just five years from being a small start-up company to helping 600,000 African university students overcome the digital divide. It is a good example of the way IFC helps meet the growing demand for affordable, high-quality education in sub-Saharan Africa—by strengthening innovative companies that provide essential services to the education sector. (IFC 2007)

With an initial IFC investment of US\$2.5 million and the technical assistance of IFC management and advisory services, Nigeria’s SocketWorks is increasing the efficiency of African universities by making business process automation affordable while at the same time increasing students’ educational opportunities by providing Internet access that would not otherwise be available (IFC 2007). SocketWorks, with the assistance of IFC funding and strategic support, is focused exclusively on higher education as its key market and has developed a sustainable plan that both addresses the needs of African higher education institutions both public and private, and provides employment to students after graduation. IFC provided long-term funding that was otherwise unavailable in Nigeria and recently committed to another US\$4 million loan that will help “finance the provision of education and e-government ICT products to 17 polytechnic postgraduate universities in the country” (3).

### **Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Analysis**

This review of the subject of tertiary private investment in education in emerging markets reinforces the breadth of this topic and supports further research of both private business education and its impact on local, indigenous economic structures. Private higher education in business made available to students in developing countries with the intent to advance the economic and social opportunities of those countries is one facet of a multifaceted solution that offers exciting and far-reaching outcomes. The literature supports that the internationalization of higher education need not negatively impact indigenous, local economies, but this is true only if motives are properly aligned with national needs, cultural mores, and a genuine interest in development for humanitarian as well as economic purposes. Construct of these motives and development of policies, regulations, enforcement and monitoring are all areas requiring further research with an unbiased lens—an important distinction given the enormity of information made available to both public and private organizations which may serve the specific needs of one interested party or another.



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## Branch Campuses in Asia and the Pacific: Definitions, Challenges and Strategies

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The Asia-Pacific Region stands at the forefront of cross-border education. Many new developments have emerged not only in countries which are traditionally identified as education service-receiving or importing countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, China, Thailand, India and Vietnam, but also in exporting countries such as Australia and New Zealand (Knight 2007). As transnational education becomes increasingly popular, the line between importing and exporting countries blurs. For example, Singapore is also actively engaged in exporting education services to Australia, China, Malaysia, Thailand, UK, and Canada. China has increased cross-border education to Thailand. India's higher education sector has been aggressively involved in both importing and exporting programs and services (Altbach and Knight 2006). New Zealand is both a receiving and sending country of cross-border education.

There are three forms of cross-border education activities: (1) student/academic mobility; (2) program mobility; and (3) institution mobility (Naidoo 2006). While the international mobility of students and scholars has traditionally been the primary form of academic mobility, the movement of transnational campuses/institutions has drawn greater attention over the past two decades (Knight 2007). As a matter of fact, Asia is a significant destination for hosting branch campuses. A survey collecting the information on 20 US institutions operating a total of 40 branch campuses abroad indicates that 40 percent of the campuses were in Asia (American Council on Education 2008). China and Singapore were ranked as the world's second and third hosts of international branch campus in 2009 (Becker

2009). These two countries alone make up 16 percent of the total number of branch campus in the world.

Focusing on offshore institutions or campuses, this article discusses its definitions, challenges of institutional sustainability, as well as strategies for sustaining offshore operations.

According to the American Council on Education (2009), a branch campus (a) rents or owns educational facilities in a country outside of the home institution; (b) offers degree courses in more than one field of study and is where students take most of their courses and finish their degree; (c) provides degrees that bear the parent institution's name alone or jointly with a partner institution; (d) primarily provides face-to-face instruction; (e) has permanent administrative staff. The Observatory provides a less stringent definition. A branch campus is described as an "off-shore operation of a higher education institution which is operated by the institution or through a joint-venture in which the institution is a partner and is in the name of the foreign institution. Upon successful completion of the study programme, students are awarded a degree from the foreign institution" (Observatory on Borderless Higher Education [OBHE] 2006). Knight (2005) offers a similar definition as OBHE. Regardless of the differences, these definitions share a common criterion in determining a branch campus. In order to be considered as a branch campus, it has to grant a degree to its graduates bearing the name of the parent institution. This delimiter is a new development of differentiating a branch campus from other transnational education undertakings. Two decades ago, Wagner and Schnitzer (1991) included those off-shore institutions which were non-degree bearing or provided short-term professional development and continuing education courses. Based on a number of refined definitions that have been common-

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ly used in recent years, these campuses that used to be considered branch campuses would not be called such nowadays.

It is predicted that the demand for branch campuses will increase in many countries except Singapore and Hong Kong, where a saturation point might be reached (OBHE 2006). Yet, the prospect for its future development and sustainability is not as predictable. Since 2004, at least 11 international branch campuses have closed. The main reasons for the closures are likely insufficient market research, erroneous estimation of enrollment numbers and operating costs (Becker 2009).

Philip G. Altbach (2010) specifies a number of unpredictable factors that prevent a branch campus from sustaining. First, he argues that branch campuses are a misnomer for the majority of institutions. They are not really campuses, but rather small and specialized academic programs, such as business management and information technology which require low set-up cost and have great worldwide demand.

Second, Altbach indicates that the lack of commitment of professors from the home institution to teach in host countries may pose the biggest challenge to sustainability.

Third, because branches often offer a limited range of academic programs, it is difficult for students to gain real educational experience that replicates that of home campuses. For example, the Michigan State Dubai Campus' failure to operate after two years was partly due to its limited capacity to provide an array of academic programs and student services. Although high tuition and Dubai's economic crisis were direct factors contributing to the close of the Dubai Campus, the situation was exacerbated by the campus not being able to compete with several full branch campuses in the country (Mills 2010). University of Liverpool's joint-venture campus with Xi'an Jiao Tong University in China is another interesting case to review. Rather than being research-oriented and replicating its home institution in the UK, the China-based campus is teaching-intensive because research requires a more long-term investment.

Fourth, in a host country where an increasing number of branch campuses and local universities compete with each other, it may be difficult to sustain the con-

ventional model of only accepting host country students who meet stringent selection criteria set by home institutions, particularly for prestigious institutions which have high enrollment standards (Altbach 2010). For example, the branch campus of the University of South Wales in Singapore demised only after two months of operation (Wilkins and Huisman 2010). The close of the short-lived campus was largely due to two strong local competitors in Singapore: National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University. Most Singaporean students prefer these two prestigious universities over any other education providers.

Fifth, the local conditions make the long-term outcomes of branch campuses unpredictable. Branch campuses may be less attractive in China in the near future given the expanding local capacity at all levels. Likewise, a significant expansion of India's domestic institutions is underway. The plan is to open these institutions to international students for the first time (Altbach 2010). It is difficult to predict the future market for branch campuses as domestic institutions have become increasingly competitive and strategic in luring students. In addition, Wilkins and Huisman (2010) found that for Chinese and Indian students, a university's reputation was more important than the quality of its program.

In studying the cycle of business education in Malaysia, Quraeshi and Luqmani (2008) proposed several business strategies for transnational education providers to enhance their branches' competitiveness. Firstly, home institutions need to make affordability a priority before branch campuses are launched. Tuition, housing subsidies and scholarships are areas that can potentially reduce cost. Secondly, home institutions need to tailor courses to local demand in host countries. For foreign partners, accreditation, clear benchmarks and regular monitoring need to be established for ongoing improvement and enhancing classroom activities. Thirdly, branches need to place emphasis on screening faculty credentials, offering better pay and more manageable teaching loads to ensure faculty long-term teaching commitment in a host country. Well-planned faculty training rather than ad hoc training is desired. Training can focus on cultural differences and the academic

backgrounds of students that may affect classroom performance. Lastly, online tools, alumni networks and employer inputs are all possible approaches to advertise branches. Online outlets, such as blogs and chat sites become influential discussion forums for students in deciding the branch they choose. Therefore, institutions are advised to monitor these sites to obtain first-hand feedback from the students. It is also important to get alumni and employers more actively involved in the recruiting, curriculum design and career development process.

With an increasing demand for cross-border education, branch campuses have become an important form of delivery in the Asia and Pacific region. In spite of the demand, it is a challenging task to sustain branch campuses. In view of the fact that most recent branch campuses were built to generate revenue, much of the research on branch campuses focuses on business strategies. Future research also needs to be done to explore strategies above and beyond a business model to reflect the intrinsic value of higher education serving the public good.

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## Commercialization of Higher Education in Latin America: The Case of Mexico

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It is well known and documented that private higher education is the fastest growing education sector in most global regions. This phenomenon is visible in countries with strong state-funded systems of tertiary education, such as Europe. Even China, with a communist government, is experiencing a flood of new universities over the last two decades (Chapman, Cummings, and Postiglione 2010).

Following this international trend, Latin America is, among developing countries, probably the region that has experienced one of the most rapid and expansive disseminations of private higher education. Given that Latin American governments have been unable to accommodate and absorb the demand for higher education, an exponential number of new private universities have flourished recently (Altbach 2007). Within the last 30 years, private higher education has shifted from being a minority to reach a visible place in most of the region's countries. Brazil and Chile, for instance, have close to 90 percent of the total number of private institutions, enrolling around 70 percent of the total student population. All this is a consequence of several factors that affected this region. Since the 1980s governments of Latin America have faced serious challenges in keeping the model of free tertiary education open to all citizens. Some of the reasons that slowed public funding for education were related to commodities prices, political instabilities, and rampant corruption that eroded decision-making and planning in the midst of debt to foreign banks (Márquez 2004; Ornelas 1995). All this, combined with the growing set of neoliberal international policies of leading economies, prepared the way for regional policies that favored the mushrooming of

private, and especially for-profit universities (Salmi 2007). Many governments saw this new context as an opportunity to divert some higher education funding to other levels of education, such as elementary education, following advice from international organizations like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, UNESCO, and others (Altbach 2007).

Although the expansive growth of demand and supply of tertiary education is generally seen as progress, it has not come without creating negative reactions. The following pages describe some of the trends and challenges that private higher education faces.

### Private Mexican higher education

Private education has been a recent catalyst throughout Latin America involving an increasing number of tertiary-level students. As can be inferred from Figure 1, enrollment in Mexican private higher education has been steadily increasing, especially over the last 20 years. On one hand, this growth can be related to demographics, but on the other to the emerging participation in education that Mexican society is experiencing (Rubio 2006).

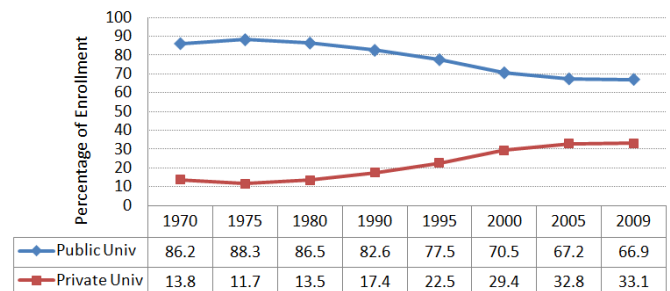


FIGURE 1. Public-Private Participation in Mexican Higher Education, 1970-2009

Source: Secretaría de Educación Pública.

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Of the total enrollment, 33.1 percent attended private universities, comprising 895,783 students. The biggest growth can be seen between 1980 and 2000 when private education more than doubled the students it attracted, reaching roughly 30 percent of students. The total private enrollment for 2008-2009 was distributed among 1,573 universities, representing 65.6 percent of the total number of universities in Mexico.

As Figure 2 shows, private higher education in Mexico has been expanding at a fast rate. For instance, from 1980 to 1990 it grew 245 percent from 146 institutions to 358. A similar increase can be seen from 1990 to 2000 to 2009 with increases of 205 and 214 percent respectively. Private tertiary institutions have grown almost 11 times over the last 29 years, from 146 in 1980 to 1573 in 2009 (1077 percent). Over the same period of time, the public sector has expanded a bit more than five times, from 161 public institutions in 1980 to 824 in 2009 (512 percent). This simple comparison shows the escalating number of new universities over the last 30 years.

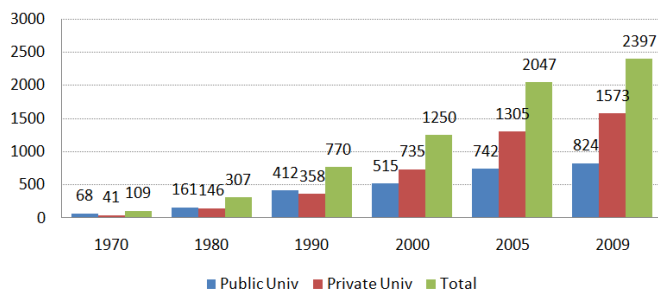


FIGURE 2. Number of Public-Private Mexican Universities, 1970-2009

Source: Secretaría de Educación Pública.

### Demand-absorbing universities

Public versus private is no longer enough to distinguish higher education providers. From the 1980s to today a new sector has created a renewed set of debates around the private sector. For-profit universities or demand-absorbing institutions, according to Levy's classification (1986), is by far the fastest-growing higher education sector in the world (Kinser and Levy 2005). Mexico mirrors this trend but does not have a legal definition of *for-profit* that can screen universities to

determine their *for-* or *not-for-profit* status. Not-for-profit schools do not violate rules by pursuing gains that are redistributed in the same institution through new facilities and payroll. However, if for-profit means distributing income or profits to owners or shareholders (for instance, beyond salary), many universities are actually working as for-profit without the legal recognition or regulation of a business. So, these schools are operating under the legal umbrella of not-for-profit but making money without paying the proper taxes. This loophole in Mexican legislation allows many entrepreneurs to profit from education. Defining for-profit is highly intertwined with what is understood as higher education. Moreover, some public and not-for-profit universities are developing activities pushed through international branch campuses, which are very similar to, if not overlapping with, revenue returns of for-profit schools. As a consequence of this rapid development of entrepreneurial investments in education, legal definition of for-profit higher education is at best uncertain worldwide.

Most of the demand-absorbing universities in Mexico can be classified as for-profit according to their funding and administrative structure. This type of institution is characterized by teaching classes during convenient time periods such as weekends, and through online delivery methods. Also, most of them have contract professors subject to very weak or nonexistent tenure processes. The administration operates as a business with centralized management, reducing collegiality and faculty power. This type of tertiary education has also raised concerns about its quality (Boville, Argüello, and Reyes 2006). Some of these universities are graduating students without rigorous mechanisms to assess quality since accreditations are not enforced in Mexico. Reacting to the commercialization of private higher education, government agencies, even throughout Latin America, are gradually increasing controls over private universities and their academic offerings. Several federal and private accrediting organizations in Mexico are setting higher standards not only to open new programs but to keep them accredited. But still, getting official approval for a new university is very much unregulated and easy. As Didou (2009, 7) asserts, "What is needed

is for general guidelines to be issued to define minimum criteria for quality assurance, and to create some sort of market regulation and protection for the consumer.” In this direction, there have been steps taken by the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) to alert students and families about which universities have an Official Validity Recognition of Studies (RVOE) certificate. Recently, the official website of the SEP published a list of 10 universities that do not have RVOEs yet who are recruiting students (SEP 2010). It is striking how a tertiary school can function without minimum requirements and official controls.

### Final Thoughts

The increase of low-profile private higher education in the region should not be seen as something negative. It is actually a natural consequence of policies, redistribution of governmental resources, and economic conditions that have facilitated entrepreneurial investment (Ilon 2010). Demand-absorbing institutions seem to provide a way out for members of the poor working class that want to be a part of national development.

Among academics there is strong resistance to this new wave of low quality universities. There are good reasons to be suspicious of their quality and final product. But this type of school is here to stay. They actually seem to be growing and multiplying more than ever before. Regulating their creation and quality is a task that Mexican society cannot afford avoiding. At the bottom of this discussion is a conflicting view of what a university is and what its purposes are. Mexican private higher education should be modeled after a pluralistic system to serve different types of students (working adults, young, poor, wealthy, etc.), since society has a wide spectrum of contexts and needs. Being flexible but high quality is probably the most challenging goal for policy makers in Mexico.

In a highly neoliberal economy where private higher education is free to fight and position itself as an alternative, there remains the important issue of quality as a key factor for differentiation in a setting with a growing number of new private universities. There is too much at stake if a country does not have a comprehensive

plan for human resources development. Perhaps this is the most exciting field of research for this century.

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## Democracy through Education Reform in the Republic of Georgia

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Since 2009 I have been involved in coordinating much of the efforts in the USAID Georgia Education Management (GEM) Project. The project aims to build long-term institutional capacity to better manage the education system, and increase effectiveness of education policies on decentralization, finance, and accreditation in the Republic of Georgia. Specifically, my role on the project is to coordinate a team of academic specialists in order to establish an educational leadership masters program at Ilia State University based upon a Western model of decentralized education management and governance. The broader goal of the project is to promote a more democratic environment within the university and the Georgian education system at large through a liberal education curriculum. Future graduates of the masters program will assume leadership roles in schools and other education authorities and will bring to their positions the influences of a Western education that will change the direction of Georgian education policy.

Decentralization is one of the most important phenomena to come to educational planning in the last several decades. Decision-makers raise questions as to why a country should decentralize its education system. Such an inquiry asks fundamental questions on who should control education and what level of government involvement and market efficiency should influence these controls. Under a current wave of neoliberalism, developing countries are under pressure to reduce public spending and increase efficiency in the use of resources, and education decentralization has become a reality in many of these places. Indeed, there are many

reasons to support education decentralization. Sometimes it is a matter of increasing efficiency in management and governance. Where the governing institution seems slow and burdensome, decentralization can allow a faster identification of problems and solutions. Decentralization also helps increase accountability and delineate responsibility among different institutions. In some cases, decentralization allows for mobilization of resources at the local level through special taxes and community participation. Decentralization is also sometimes the natural evolution of political democratization: citizens want to be involved in the decision-making processes that directly concern them.

In the Republic of Georgia, drastic education reforms have been implemented that would make Milton Friedman proud. One reform is the implementation of a national examination system. The national examination requires that all university-bound students must achieve a certain score as a prerequisite to attend university in Georgia. As students aim for entry into graduate programs, they take another examination that determines their eligibility for programs of their choice. When I began working on the GEM Project in the fall of 2009, approximately six thousand Georgian students took the national examination for entry into graduate programs. The highest-scoring two thousand students were guaranteed admission into the programs of their choice. Additionally, the highest-scoring one thousand students received scholarships. The other one thousand students could also receive scholarships if they enroll into less popular graduate programs (education being one of them). This new system reduces opportunity for corruption in schools, especially in a country where it is not uncommon to find teachers who accept bribes in exchange for high grades and other forms of student advancement. In effect, the national examination system

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creates a fair playing field for Georgian students based on their individual merit and not on their ability to make illegitimate payments. Additionally, another reform measure was introduced with the implementation of a school voucher system at the K-12 level. The Georgian government issues vouchers to each student, who can then apply to attend the public school of his or her choice using the vouchers. Each school receives appropriate funding based upon its student population. This would mean that students attend the schools of their choice through a systematized application process. In theory, the best schools will attract the most students and receive the greatest level of funding, creating a kind of meritocratic award system not just for students but for schools as well. These reforms follow the inauguration of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili in 2003 and are part of the Saakashvili anti-corruption campaign. The mission to decentralize the Georgian education system follows the new administration's spirit of liberal reforms that move away from leftover Soviet influences of centralized authority and rampant corruption and move towards a system of greater local participation and better accountability. The GEM Project certainly chose a most fitting site to pursue this mission: Ilia State University refers to itself as "the only higher education institution in Georgia employing principles of liberal education" and is named after the Georgian writer Ilia Chavchavadze who spearheaded the Georgian national movement and awakened Georgia national ideals during nineteenth century Russian rule over Georgia.

Yet Georgia's reform process can arguably be called a form of shock-therapy democracy, where democratic principles are suddenly put into practice in a region without a strong democratic history and tradition. Following Georgian independence in 1991, the Georgian political sphere has witnessed violent coups and bloody wars, particularly over the contested regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia where an ongoing crisis between Russia and Georgia erupted in the 2008 South Ossetia War and continues today. The Georgian government has displayed a strong desire to free itself of Russian influence, and it will use whatever soft means it can in order to do so, including using its education sec-

tor as a tool for political mobilization. We can see this even in recent current events: in 2010 Georgia also changed its national secondary language from Russian to English (while maintaining Georgian as its national primary language). On one level this can be viewed as a way to better engage Georgians in the US-dominated global community; on another level it is a passive-aggressive snub at the Russian imperialists.

The United States has become a key player in establishing a new democracy in the Republic of Georgia, and the education sector has become a way to advance US influence. Some scholars have called such attempted reforms as cultural imperialism, where education reform is an American counteraction against recent Russian encroachment into Georgia through subversive means. In turn, Georgia has mutually looked to the United States to help deflect Russian advancements. While a realist may interpret this as a small state seeking refuge from a powerful neighbor by siding with the opposing superpower for lack of a better alternative, regardless Georgia welcomes an American influence. Against an increasingly aggressive Russian agenda, the United States has a vested security interest to promote a democratic culture in Georgia to offset potentially increasing Russian imperialism. Investing in Georgia's education sector is a way to influence Georgian social thought and culture to be further sided with that of the United States. From an ideological perspective, advancing democracy in Georgia is not without its intrinsic merits. Democracy provides a more accountable government, better security, and greater economic prosperity compared to other forms of government. From a pragmatic standpoint, cultural imperialism is not necessarily an insidious state act if it creates beneficial results for both the state and its "conquest." Georgian education reforms are both warranted advancements on the part of the United States and voluntary domestic executions on the part of Georgia. While they are dramatic in implementation, the attempt to reduce corruption and create a more meritocratic education system is nonetheless refreshing. The 2003 Rose Revolution of the bloodless transition of power from Shevardnadze to Saakashvili perhaps signaled the beginning of a larger transition, one that suddenly transformed a demoralized

society into an energetic and experimental democracy. It is certainly encouraging that a society can summon the courage and wherewithal to transform itself into something more than it is, and such ambitious education reforms cannot be dismissed simply because of their drastic nature or tacit political agenda. Instead, one must examine why the Georgians desire the reforms and how the reforms can be achieved effectively. Context matters.

## Snapshot of an Emerging University Discipline: The Ben-Gurion School of Israel Studies

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Israel studies has been defined as the study of modern Israel and the Zionist movement in the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine (Association of Israel Studies 2008). This definition illuminates the importance of cultural/intellectual history in the absence of the demarcation of clear physical boundaries/borders. The teaching of Israel studies at the university level reflects this definition in terms of the importance of the historical lens and intellectual history, particularly through the focus on the life of David Ben-Gurion as subject matter in the emerging discipline.

An academic discipline has been described as consisting of both a social and an intellectual dimension (Metzger 1987). While comparing structural differences between an academic subject, topic and discipline, it is the social component which emerges as the factor that turns a subject into a discipline. Central to this process is a community of “practitioners” within and outside the academy who derive their occupational identity from it and who try to improve its efficacy and reputation. Surveys involving how academics view territorial boundaries and separations between disciplines also point to the social aspect of a discipline as a defining element (Becher 1989; Becher and Parry 2005).

When the Association of Israel studies was formed in 1985 it provided the social component for an emerging discipline. Scholarly organizations such as the American Studies Association and the establishment of the *American Quarterly* in 1949 have been linked to the growth of such fields as American studies (Hollinger 2007). However, such an organization was particularly incubational for the field of Israel studies, which al-

though omnipresent as a media-based field of inquiry, had been “twice orphaned” as an academic unit in that it was not really welcomed in either of its natural homes, Middle Eastern studies and Jewish studies (Dowty 2006). With the aid of the Association of Israel Studies in terms of unprecedented access to their archives, I used a combination of curricular material, letters, conference programs and memos together with a survey of Israel studies chair holders to form case studies of public and private universities which illustrate an emerging discipline.

An analysis of the social and intellectual development of Israel studies involves shifts in what is considered legitimate knowledge in terms of status and authority (Kook 2003). Even within Israel, it was not easy to create an academic program in Israel studies. The impetus came after the death of the first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion in the early 1970s. Parliamentary (Knesset) legislation to memorialize him included the setting aside of funds for both a physical space to house archival material as well as research positions. This legislation led to the establishment of the *Moreshet Ben-Gurion facility* in *Sdeh Boker*. Ben-Gurion had called for the development of the Negev region of Israel and had made it his home during retirement. The establishment of a significant archival base together with research positions created a precedent in terms of academic focus and facilitated the creation years later of an Israel studies academic program at the nearby Ben-Gurion University. This program was to serve as a prototype in terms of interdisciplinary focus on modern Israel.

An academic school of thought can describe groups of individuals working in the same environment or a distinct approach to a scholarly endeavor (Fine 1995). While analyzing Israel studies scholarship, a Ben-

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Gurion school of thought can be seen. His life and decisions serve as a constant reference and focal point for scholars. Combing the archives for minutes of meetings, diaries, and speeches is characteristic of the historians, old and new, who battle over new interpretations of the past in Israel studies. Even political scientists mine the archives for nuances until now overlooked in his speeches and diaries. One scholar used the first Prime Minister's decisions regarding territorial withdrawal to frame a theoretical construct regarding how states contract (Lustick 1996) while another focused on Ben-Gurion's reaction to the Peel partition plan of 1937 and the acceptance of Transjordan as a separate entity as part of a theoretical construct regarding the mechanisms of border changes (Shelef 2007).

The academic focal point of Ben-Gurion's leadership as a core of Israel studies scholarship is ironic as it continues the complicated relationship Ben-Gurion had with the intellectual establishment during his lifetime. Although often engaged in correspondence and in debates with leading poets and academics, Ben-Gurion's ultimate fall from grace and political office has been connected to criticism from the intellectual sector who resented his political realism (Keren 1983). He was attacked for the weakening of socialist revolutionary universal ideology, as well as for the strengthening of the national defense forces. Ben-Gurion's policy of *mamlachtiut* ("statism") or the strengthening of bureaucratic control over functions previously performed by voluntary, partisan associations (including pre-state militias) was considered to have been facilitated at first by his "towering personality" (Eisenstadt 1967). However, when Ben-Gurion incorporated citizenship courses into the defense forces, which he viewed as an educational vehicle to aid in the absorption of immigrants into Israeli society, he was attacked for blurring the distinction between force and ideology. The recruiting slogan "the good ones to the air force" developed during his leadership was critiqued by a leading philosopher who replaced it with "the good ones to do *good*, the pilots to the air force" (Keren 1983).

Ben-Gurion was the product of diverse educational experiences, such as a traditional East European religious school attended in his youth in the late nineteenth

century, as well as a law degree pursued in 1911 when Turkey/the Ottoman Empire ruled Palestine (which he could not complete due to political circumstances). He viewed education as a bridge between the present and past, particularly important in connecting Jewish history in the land of Israel to the fate of Jews around the world. However, he was attacked for his merging of the fate of Zionism with that of the Jewish people as a whole (to the exclusion of the potential non-Jewish participants in a global Marxist revolution). When Ben-Gurion combined universalist socialist goals with those pertaining to Jewish history/Zionism he was critiqued for the creation of a *shaatnez* type mixture, from the Biblical prohibition of wool and linen (Cohen 2003).

This is most evident in the language of the 1953 Basic Education Law in which he attempted to combine socialist ideals with Jewish history. For Socialist Zionism, the teachers were those responsible for the future. They were expected to act both as avant garde revolutionaries as well as societal partners in the forming of a new type of Jew. The Teachers Federation established in 1903 was one of the first societal pre-state institutions. The ideal socialist educator reflected a Rousseau like image of a child of nature, with education acquired not through books or instruction, but through what the person had decided for him or herself. This concept of informal training was directly opposed to that of the traditional Biblical scholar who had been valued for skills such as textual interpretation and memorization. The 1953 Basic Education Law mandated that the educational process in Israel be based on the foundations of Jewish culture and on the achievements of science, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the state and to the Jewish people. The law also mandated that the educational system promote freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual assistance and love of mankind, as well as socialist training in agriculture and crafts. The wide ranging ideological goals of the legislation made implementation next to impossible (Keren 1983). However the Education law and the concurrent Law of Return (regarding the "ingathering of exiles") were the two pieces of legislation viewed as most indicative of Ben-Gurion's vision of a model state.

Israel studies as an emerging discipline has continued to reflect an impossible educational agenda. While Israel studies relies on a traditional curriculum such as classical languages and interpretations of religious texts to present the history of Zionism, it also relies on complicated political theoretical constructs to understand the Israeli-Arab wars. In addition to classical languages and texts, thousands of years of Diaspora history underpin an understanding of Israeli society. However, the “elephant” in the room has been the continuing Israeli-Palestinian-Arab conflict. Originally coined regarding curricular battles taking place in the humanities, “teach the conflicts” has referred to the addition of multicultural narratives to a European canon (Graff 1993). In the context of Israel studies however, “teaching the conflicts” has reflected a critical theory-based concept of the active role of the intellectual in enacting change regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, “teaching the conflicts” has been complicated by what has been termed “essentially contested concepts” or concepts which do not validate any part of the other’s history or narrative so that there is a complete lack of consensus (Voll 1996). This has made the presentation of multiple narratives regarding the conflict and solutions to the conflict very difficult.

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# The Role of Higher Education in the Arab State and Society: Historical Legacies and Recent Reform Patterns

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*Higher education institutions in the Arab states inhabit a precarious and contested terrain . . . the broader relations linking state and higher education are shaped by contending centers of power, situated within either the state or the society at large.* (Mazawi 2005, 142)

## Introduction

This article examines the historic role of higher education in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region nations, while also offering a typology of recent higher education reform strategies. I argue that MENA Region nations can be classified into two traditional models of higher education: public sponsored mobility, common in nearly all Arab States, and private-based systems, found only in Lebanon and Palestine. Within the subset of public sponsored mobility systems, I argue that these MENA Region nations are all reforming their higher education systems in the name of global economic competitiveness, yet are pursuing distinct models of reforms, namely neoliberal, quality assurance, and internationalization. Finally, I argue that these varied reform patterns imply different roles for the state in structuring youth opportunities amidst an era of globalization and suggest the need to further investigate youth perceptions of these reforms.

## The Role of the State

After World War II, the newly independent Arab States promoted an equalizing nationalist ideology and staked their legitimacy in their ability to foster economic development and provide social welfare to their cit-

izens (Cohen 2004). Education was a central component of the states' nation-building projects. Primary schools were used to instill pro-nationalist ideologies into the population and were symbols of the state's investment in its people. In contrast, higher education became an important means to garnering political support from the upwardly mobile middle classes, while also centralizing state power (Mazawi 2005). During this era higher education was free to all high school graduates and government employment was guaranteed to university graduates (Anderson 1987; Teixeira 2009). Nonetheless, access to university was tightly regulated by strict high school graduation examinations. Free higher education was often a way to train future party elites and state bureaucrats while also helping secure support from the middle classes by promising employment in the prestigious public sphere. Thus, higher education not only helped win support from the nation's petit-bourgeoisie, but also—through its tight links to the labor market—served as an important symbol of social mobility (Cohen 2004).

The two historic exceptions to the state-controlled public university system in the Arab world are Lebanon and Palestine. Unlike other Arab States, political conflict contributed to the fragmentation of state power in both Lebanon and Palestine and in so doing, undermined the ability of the state to develop and maintain a state-controlled higher education system. Lebanon's higher education system was founded by religious missionaries and remains highly fragmented along sectarian and religious lines to this day (El-Ghali 2010). In addition, Lebanon's civil war was devastating to its public higher education system, causing the national university, Lebanese University, to dismember in 1974. In addition, the war also gave rise to many universities that did not exist before, including many private and religiously

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affiliated institutions (Bashshur 2006). This high level of fragmentation and privatization helped shape Lebanon's system of private and decentralized higher education; today, more than half of all Lebanese youth are in private institutions (Nahas 2009).

Palestine offers another counter-factual to the state-dominated higher education system. It was not until the Oslo Accords in 1994 that the Palestinian Occupied Territory was permitted to have a Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Consequently, since its founding, Palestine's higher education system has been essentially private. All higher education institutions determine funding and set admissions standards independently despite efforts of national-level coordination and accreditation (Mazawi 2005; Nakhleh 2006).

These two counter examples are clearly the exceptions to the rule of Arab State control of higher education. Their distinctive historical and political situations suggest that political conflict and fragmentation undermined the state's ability to manage the higher education sector and thereby led to high levels of privatization and decentralization. Comparative research on higher education worldwide has shown that decentralization is a strong predictor of enrollment expansion (Schofer and Meyer 2005), and it seems that the Arab world is no

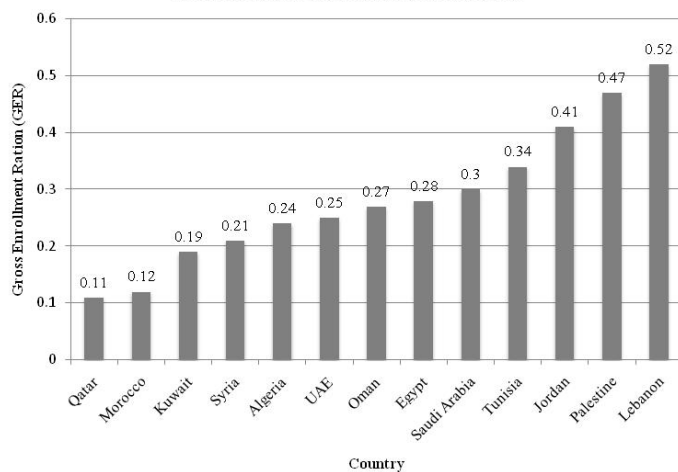


FIGURE 1. Gross Enrollment Ratios in Arab States  
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2005-2010); Syria data from Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010).

exception. If we examine the current gross enrollment rates (GER) of the MENA Region in higher education,

we find that Palestine and Lebanon have the highest GERs.

### Higher Education for a Knowledge Economy

Over the past two decades, however, Middle Eastern states have been pressured to liberalize their economies by their own economic stagnation and the ascendancy of a worldwide model of neoliberal economic globalization. These neoliberal policies promulgated by the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) pushed structural adjustment policies upon many Arab nations. Consequently, state companies have been privatized, public sector employment has been curtailed and expenditures in higher education were re-routed to primary and secondary schooling (Guazzone and Pioppi 2009).

At the same time, as nations worldwide attempt to transition their economies from their traditional agricultural and industrial bases to knowledge economies, the private rate of return to higher education is increasing and populaces and international organizations alike are pressuring Higher Education Ministries to improve the employability of their populations through expanded higher education and higher quality instruction (Altbach and Peterson 2007). Among policymakers expanding higher education is seen as an important means by which the Arab world will successfully integrate its workers into the global economy (Kabbani and Salloum 2009; World Bank 2008). Consequently, student enrollments in higher education have been growing rapidly even in MENA Region nations with historically restrictive tertiary systems (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 1970-2010), as shown in Figure 2.

This rise in university enrollments is not only due to the demographic reality of a larger youth population, often referred to as the "youth bulge," but also reflects explicit policy changes on the part of governments to expand university enrollments. For example, in many states, including Tunisia and Syria, more youth have been tracked into academic pathways which lead to university, and many other countries, from Jordan, Syria and the Gulf nations, have introduced a variety of new university providers and programs to accommodate

expanding enrollments (Abdesallem 2009; Buckner and Saba 2010). These new university providers include private universities, virtual learning, and decentralized campuses, all in line with neoliberal models. Despite the rhetoric, however, we might wonder how such large scale massification, privatization and diversification are really being interpreted and experienced by youth, as they reveal a dramatic departure from prior ways of organizing opportunity structures.

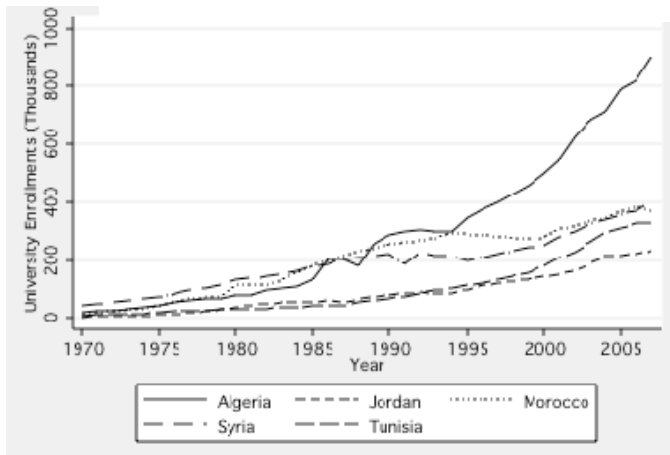


FIGURE 2. The Growth of Higher Education in Arab States  
Source: UNESCO UIS, 1970-2010.<sup>2</sup>

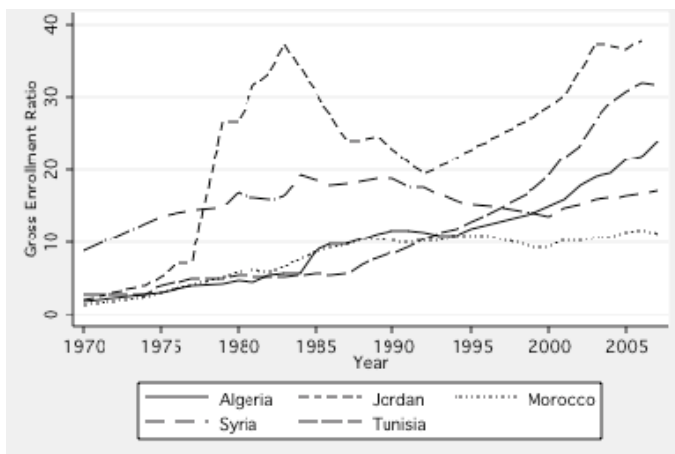


FIGURE 3. Gross Enrollment Rates in Higher Education in Arab States  
Source: UNESCO UIS, 1970-2010.

## Patterns of Reform

Most MENA Region nations' rhetoric about improving access and quality are largely similar, and all emphasize the importance of establishing a knowledge economy and increasing global competitiveness. However, there are a number of important differences in states' reform strategies. I classify states' reform strategies into three major groups: Neoliberal, Quality Assurance, and Imported Internationalization, based on the extent to which Arab States are privatizing the provision of higher education at different levels and the types of private institutions being established.

### Neoliberal Model

Neoliberal reforms aim to expand access to higher education while offsetting costs to consumers and the private sector. This includes the establishment of private universities, and programs such as "Open Learning" and "Parallel Learning" whereby students pay small fees to study programs they could not have gotten into with their grades alone. The two programs differ slightly, as Open Learning (Taleem Maftooh) allows students to take weekend courses leading to a four-year degree, often in applied fields, but does entail the same fee structure, coursework, or lead to the same bachelor's degree as students in traditional programs. In contrast, "Parallel Learning" (Taleem Mowazi) is designed for students who did not have high enough scores on their high school exit exam to be admitted to a first-choice program but are willing to pay extra to enroll in their program of choice. These programs, encouraged by many international donors such as the World Bank, are being pursued by a number of countries, namely Syria, Egypt, and Jordan (Abdel-Wahid 2009; Mazawi 2005).

Jordan was the trailblazer of the neoliberal model, passing a law allowing the establishment of private universities in 1989. Today, the percentage of the age cohort in university in Jordan reaches 45 percent and approximately one third of Jordanians are in private universities (Kanaan 2009). More recently, Syria has followed a similar reform path. After an unprecedented

law to allow the establishment of private universities was passed in 2001, today there are 20 universities in Syria, of which 15 are private, for-profit institutions. While private universities still enroll only 4 percent of total university students, it is Syria's cost-sharing program, known as Open Learning, which allows youth to pursue 4-year degrees by taking weekend courses, and today a full third of Syrian university students are in Open Learning (Buckner and Saba 2010).

Egypt and Tunisia both initiated neoliberal reforms over a decade ago. However, they have not been as successful as Jordan. Today the percentage of youth in higher education in both countries is approximately 30 percent, but the percentage in private universities is only less than 5 percent (Sedrine 2009). This raises the question of why neoliberal reforms take hold in some Arab States but not others. In addition, the general expansion and privatization of higher education raises important questions for scholars about how young people understand the role of tertiary education in their lives, as neoliberal reforms are thought to privatize economic risks and rewards of university. Many have argued that privatizing risk without offering compensating economic opportunities and welfare can trigger youth alienation and radicalism (Yusuf 2008).

### *Quality Assurance*

In contrast to the neoliberal model, North African states are emphasizing the importance of the state in providing higher education while pursuing strategies to strengthen the internal and external efficiency of tertiary education. Morocco has explored joint "private-public" partnerships that take the form of a "contract-training model" where many Moroccans are trained in private companies but receive publicly sanctioned degrees (Mawazi 2005). While this may initially seem to represent a growing influence of the private sector in the public higher education system, Morocco's approach is opposite to that of the neoliberal approach, by inviting the private sector to participate in the public provision of higher education while not passing the cost on to educational consumers. Likewise, Algeria had actually outlawed the private provision of higher educa-

tion until 2008 (Mazawi 2005). Instead of moving towards privatization, it is implementing reforms that emphasize the coordination between the higher education system and the labor market (Ferroukhi 2009).

In addition, in all three Maghreb countries of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, the Ministries of Higher Education have recently pursued large-scale quality assurance programs inspired by the Bologna process by restructuring degree requirements to accord to a Bachelors-Masters-PhD system. This approach attempts to align the higher education curricula with European models and permit the mobility of qualifications and labor cross-nationally. It is no surprise that these reforms are occurring in the North African nations which rely on external migration to Europe; however, the success of these programs at actually improving quality is still unclear (Ferroukhi 2009; Sedrine 2009; Souali 2009).

### *Imported Internationalization*

The third model of higher education policies pursued in the MENA Region is that of Americanization, whereby the desire to "modernize" higher education systems has not only taken the form of extensively privatizing the provision of higher education, like many neoliberal states, but also establishing extensive international partnerships with American and British universities (Mazawi 2005). A number of scholars have examined how these institutions are changing tertiary education in the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi (Middle East Institute 2010).

Although rhetorically, Gulf States are interested in founding a "knowledge economy," I would argue that the need for private universities is less immediate than usually portrayed. Due to their oil wealth, these states' internal legitimacy is based on providing economic welfare directly through cash benefits and government jobs rather than channels of economic opportunity. Consequently, rather than improving the quality of state-run institutions, these Gulf states have invited international universities to set up satellite campuses in their countries, with well-branded names such as Doha's Education City, Dubai's Knowledge Village and

Sharjah's University City. Qatar's Education City has tried to brand itself as the largest concentration of universities in the world—an academic metropolis that spans 14 kilometers, and brings prestigious institutions such as Northwestern University, Carnegie Mellon, Texas A&M, Cornell and Georgetown to Qatar's shores. Similarly, NYU has just built a huge international campus in Abu Dhabi to the pride of the UAE. However, as Stasz, Eide and Martorell (2007) point out, academic standards at these international institutions are very high, and only a small percentage of students actually qualify for them. In fact, Qatar University—the only public university in Qatar—enrolls 91 percent of Qatari students, while the elite universities at the Education City enroll only 9 percent (Stasz, Eide, and Martorell 2007).

We might presume that expensive, private American-style universities' primary role in Gulf states is not to educate Gulf states' students for a knowledge economy, but rather, to bring prestige and international acclaim to the Gulf States. While it is difficult to ascertain the real motivations of Gulf policymakers, Donn and Manthri (2010) argue convincingly that the policy frameworks and much of the Ministerial discourse adopted by the GCC countries regarding the privatization of higher education originates in the G8 nations and are promoted by what they call a "magistry of influence" (141). Don and Manthri are quite skeptical of current privatization efforts, arguing that the G8's particular world vision of what quality higher education entails "is not necessarily one developed in the broader MENA and may not even be appropriate for the region as a whole" (151).

### Conclusion

In summary, this article argues that despite their similar rhetoric, sub-groups of Arab States seem to be pursuing different higher education reforms, focusing on expanding access, improving quality or creating elite international institutions. These differences suggest quite different roles for the state in structuring youth educational and employment opportunities. Although a growing body of literature is emerging on higher educa-

tion in the MENA Region, very little research focuses on why different states are pursuing various policies, or how recent reforms are affecting young people or changing their expectations, options, or experiences in higher education. Considering the importance of youth incorporation, the problem of unemployment in the MENA Region, and the political ramifications of ignoring youth demands as demonstrated by recent riots in Tunisia, Egypt, and Lybia, it is worth investigating which factors shape nations' higher education policies and how youth are responding to these varied reforms.

### Notes

1. Arab nations undergoing SAPs include: Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Sudan, Turkey, Algeria, and Mauritania.
2. Egypt has also seen rapid increases in enrollments, but statistical abnormalities with how UNESCO reports enrollment data make it infeasible to plot here.

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## Upcoming Conferences and Events

### Global

55th Annual Comparative and International Education Society Conference, 1-5 May 2011, Montreal, Canada. Theme: Education is that which liberates. Website: <http://cies2011.mcgill.ca>

### Africa

15<sup>th</sup> Annual International Education Association of South Africa Conference, 31 August-3 September 2011, Durban, South Africa. Theme: The impact of internationalization on the quality of higher education. Website:

<http://www.ieasa.studysa.org/index.php/conference>

5<sup>th</sup> Annual Teaching and Learning Conference, 26-28 September 2011, Durban, South Africa. Theme: Postgraduate teaching & learning, African scholarship, and curriculum innovation in higher education. Website: <http://www.tnlconference.co.za>

International Association of Universities 2011 International Conference, 17-18 November 2011, Nairobi, Kenya. Theme: Strategies for securing equity in access and success in higher education. Website: <http://iau-aiu.net/conferences/upcoming.html>

6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training, 17-18 November 2011, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Theme: Developing eLearning capacities in Africa. Website: <http://www.elearning-africa.com/newsportal/english/news208.php>

Conference on Higher Education in South Africa, 22-24 November 2011, Alice, East Cape, South Africa. Theme: Beyond the apartheid university? Interrogating the transformation of the South African higher education landscape. Website: [http://sanord.uwc.ac.za/usrfiles/users/9174080913/Front\\_Page/UFH\\_GMRDC\\_November\\_2011\\_Conference.pdf](http://sanord.uwc.ac.za/usrfiles/users/9174080913/Front_Page/UFH_GMRDC_November_2011_Conference.pdf)

### Asia/Pacific

OARIC 2011: Educational Leadership, Knowledge & Technology Innovation in Cultural Diversity and Knowledge-based Society, 25-27 April 2011, Patong, Phuket Island, Thailand. Theme: The role of leadership in a knowledge-based economy in assisting communities with diverse cultures to seek cooperation, coordination, and networks in order to compete and function effectively in this age of globalization. Website: <http://www.oaric2011.psu.ac.th>

The National Higher Education Communication Officers' Conference 2011, 10-12 May 2011, The Sebel Surry Hills, Sydney, Australia. Theme: Practical tools and strategic frameworks to advance the effectiveness of communications in higher education. Website:

<http://www.liquidlearning.com.au/llg08/May/the-national-higher-education-communication-officers-conference-2011.html>

National Higher Education Symposium 2011, 22-23 June 2011, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Theme: Corporate strategy & performance management. Website: <http://www.iium.edu.my/csqa>

Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Inc. 2011, 4-7 July 2011, Queensland, Australia. Theme: Higher Education on the edge. Website:

<http://conference.herdsa.org.au/2011/index.html>

Learning in Higher Education 2011 Conference-Australia, 27 November-1 December, 2011, Sydney, Australia. Theme: Transforming university teaching into learning via simulations and games. Website: <http://lihe.wordpress.com/future-events/lihe11-australia>



**Europe**

International Higher Education Congress: New Trends and Issues, 27-29 May 2011, Istanbul, Turkey. Theme: Providing a unique international forum to discuss foresights and new trends related to higher education both in Turkey and in the world. It is also aimed to examine the basic problems and challenges of higher education and bring some proposals regarding to these issues. Website: <http://uyk2011.yok.gov.tr/defaultEN.asp>

Learning in Higher Education 2011 Conference-Europe, 29 May-2 June 2011, Aegina Island, Greece. Theme: Beyond Transmission: Innovations in university teaching. Website: <http://lihe.wordpress.com/future-events/lihe11-europe>

4th UK and Ireland Institutional Research Conference, 16-17 June 2011, London, United Kingdom. Theme: Scanning the horizons: Institutional research in a borderless world. Website: <http://www.heir2011.org.uk/welcome>

Science, Technology, Higher Education and Society in the Conceptual Age, 5-7 July 2011, Krakow, Poland. Theme: Exploring the future of higher education and research in the context of unprecedented progress in science, engineering and technology, and to develop new paradigms for higher education systems. Website: <http://www.sthesca.eu>

Education in a Changing Environment Conference 2011, 6-8 July 2011, Greater Manchester, England. Theme: Creativity and engagement in higher education. Website: <http://www.ece.salford.ac.uk>

Conference on Systems of Innovation and the New Role of Universities, 5-6 September 2011, Bristol, United Kingdom. Theme: Building, managing and supporting universities for high innovation impact; Experiences and perspectives from developed and developing nations. Website: <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/bbs/conferences/cosinus>

**Latin America**

2<sup>nd</sup> International Social Pedagogy Conference, 24-26 March 2011, Caracas, Venezuela. Theme: Praxis, pedagogy, and their impact in society. Website: <http://150.187.142.211/eventos/index.php?id=92>

2011 ICDE International Conference UNQ, 3<sup>rd</sup> International Forum on Higher Education in Virtual Environments, April 13-15 2011, Quilmes, Argentina. Theme: The university and digital technologies, educational and social transformations. Website: <http://congreso-icde.uvq.edu.ar>

First International Forum on Academic Teaching: Social Inclusion and Information and Communication Technology, 3-5 October, 2011, Uberlandia, Minas Gerais, Brazil. Theme: Discussing the challenges of academic teaching in the contemporary world: the social, economic, scientific, and technological aspects that affect the university classroom today and for which it also plays an important role. Website: [http://www.forumdocente.prograd.ufu.br/forum\\_internacional\\_ingles](http://www.forumdocente.prograd.ufu.br/forum_internacional_ingles)

**Middle East and North Africa**

QS-MAPLE (QS Middle East and Africa Professional Leaders in Education) Conference and Exhibition, 1-2 May 2011, Dubai Knowledge Village, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Theme: Addressing the fast emerging globalization of higher education in the Middle East and Africa. Website: <http://www.qsmapple.org/index.php>

International Higher Education Congress: New Trends and Issues (UYK 2011), 27-29 May 2011, Istanbul, Turkey. Theme: Providing a unique international forum to discuss issues, new trends, challenges, and developments in the area of higher education. Website: <http://www.uyk2011.org/defaultEN.asp>

International Conference on Future of Higher Education: Development and Technology, 23-24 November 2011, Manama, Bahrain. Theme: Highlighting developments in higher education internationally to benefit institutions and individuals engaged in higher education in the region. Website: <http://ku.edu.bh>

**United States and Canada**

Canada International Conference on Education (CICE-2011), 4-7 April 2011, Toronto, Canada. Theme: An opportunity for academicians and professionals from various educational fields with cross-disciplinary interests to bridge the knowledge gap, promote research esteem and the evolution of pedagogy. Website: <http://www.ciceducation.org>

The Legacy and the Promise: 150 Years of Land-Grant Universities, 23-24 June 2011, Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania, United States. Theme: The history of land-grant universities and their contemporary challenges. Website: <http://www.outreach.psu.edu/programs/land-grant/index.html>

Great Lakes History Conference, 7-8 October 2011, Grand Rapids, Michigan, United States. Theme: Education and society. Website:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/cms3/assets/3DB97EEA-E9F8-06DF->

2011 Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Conference, 16-19 November 2011, Charlotte, North Carolina, United States. Theme: Higher education: Meeting the challenge of a changing future. Website: <http://www.ashe.ws/?page=728>

## Recent Publications in International Higher Education

### Select Journal Articles by Geographic Region

#### Africa

Coetzee-Van Rooy, Susan. 2011. "Complex systems, multilingualism and academic success in South African higher education." *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 28 (4): 309-321.

Herman, Chaya. 2011. "Elusive equity in doctoral education in South Africa." *Journal of Education and Work*, 24 (1-2): 163-184.

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#### Asia/Pacific

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#### Europe

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- Fumasoli, Tatiana, and Benedetto Lepori. 2011. "Patterns of Strategies in Swiss Higher Education Institutions." *Higher Education* 61 (2): 157-178.
- Karakhanyan, Susanna, Klaas van Veen, and Theo Bergen. 2011. "Educational Policy Diffusion and Transfer: The Case of Armenia" *Higher Education Policy* 24 (1): 53-83.
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