The Contributions of Higher Education

What are they, how are they valued, and how can their value be enhanced in Russia?

Simon Marginson
University of Oxford, UK
NRU Higher School of Economics
1. The contributions of higher education (CHE)

2. Problems of existing ideas about CHE
   - Limits of the dominant economic model
   - Limits of a state-centred approach
   - Problems of the WCU movement

3. How ideas about CHE vary according to the political culture: America, China, Russia
   - CHE in Russia
   - CHE that are common to different political cultures
1. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Multiple contributions of higher education: Individualised and collective

**Individualised**

1. **Individualised national goods**
   - Greater agency freedom
   - Better social position
   - Augmented earnings and employment rates
   - Lifetime health and financial outcomes, etc

2. **Individualised global goods**
   - Cross-border mobility and employability
   - Communications facility
   - Knowledge of diverse languages and cultures
   - Access to global science

**Collective**

3. **Collective national goods**
   - Ongoing development of professions/occupations
   - Shared social literacy, opportunity structure
   - Inputs to government
   - Stronger regions, cities

4. **Collective global goods**
   - Universal global science
   - Diverse knowledge fields
   - Common zone of free critical inquiry
   - Systems for exchange, collaboration, mobility
1. Individualised national-local goods
   goods of self-formation in shared national society
   [bold = measurable]

- Augmented earnings and employment rates
- Better social position
- Lifetime health outcomes
- Capability in personal financial and career management
- Greater agency freedom, the capacity for confident autonomous action
- Capability in negotiating states, markets, institutions
- Augmented social-relational capabilities – capacity to communicate, use technology, understand and tolerate cultural difference, trust other people
- Augmented political participation
Greater individual capability and agency freedom gained in higher education lasts a lifetime.
2. Individualised global goods
Goods of self-formation in global society (global knowledge and mobility)

- Greater agency freedom, the capacity for confident autonomous action, in global society
- Capacity for cross-border mobility
- Negotiation of unfamiliar sites and institutions
- Global employability and augmented earnings
- Facility in cross-border communications and cooperation
- Knowledge of diverse languages and cultures
- Other global competences including understanding, tolerance and negotiation of cultural difference
- Access to global science and other knowledges
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3. Collective national-local goods
Goods that are jointly consumed (some of which are jointly produced)

- Shared social literacy
- Nationally-specific knowledges (e.g. in professional fields such as law)
- Higher education as an opportunity structure which [is meant to] deliver just outcomes
- Academic inputs to government policy and regulation
- Economic, social and cultural building of localities, cities, regions [but unequalising]
- Ongoing development of the professions/occupations as cooperative social activity
- Graduate work as constituting common social benefits (e.g. health care, education)
In most countries it is becoming harder for the poor bright student to enter elite universities
4. Collective global goods
Goods that are jointly consumed (some of which are jointly produced)

- Global knowledge, in diverse fields especially in science [but biases, omissions]
- Systems of universal global science, including publishing, certification protocols
- Fostering of global cooperation in research including that on common global problems
- Common global zone of free critical inquiry, sustained by cross-border disciplinary networks
- Systems for international collaboration, exchange, mobility between universities (recognition protocols, Erasmus, etc)
The global research system is growing more rapidly than national research systems. Increasingly the global system sets the scientific agenda.
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CHE: We need

1. A robust theory of CHE in society
2. An explanation of cultural variation in CHE that distinguishes between CHE that vary by country and CHE that are common across the world
3. Reliable metrics of CHE that can be used for comparison, including the monitoring of improvements over time
2. PROBLEMS OF EXISTING IDEAS ABOUT CHE
THE DOMINANT ECONOMIC MODEL
Western political imaginary 1

SOCIETY

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY
Western political imaginary 2

SOCIETY

state

market

civil society
Western political imaginary 3

SOCIETY

state

market

civil society

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY
Western concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’

• **Analytic:** public versus private

• **Communicative:** public networks private

• **Universal:** public contains private
CHE must be one or the other?
Public and private goods as zero-sum
What kind of benefits for individual students does higher education create?

Bildung
Immanuel Kant 1780s

Human capital
Gary Becker 1960s
Bildung: Education as self-formation

- In Bildung the role of education is to cultivate the inner self in intellectual and ethical terms, to form citizens in public rationality for the emerging civil society. Kant emphasised that Bildung would not occur by itself, it required education.
- The aim of education is “the active autonomous person within the framework of social life”, a rational subject who uses reason in a public way and “lives in the public sphere among other individual beings.”
- Here education helps students/graduates to form themselves. This connects with the Confucian idea of self-cultivation.

THE STATE-DOMINATED APPROACH
The state as sole custodian of the public good?
Beyond the state-centred understanding of public good

Common goods in and from higher education

• Common goods are collective, relational social goods. They are about shared community, e.g. social solidarity, equality, human rights and self-determination, social and geographic mobility (free movement), shared knowledge and conversation

• They can only be produced jointly. Some are experienced by individuals (e.g. human rights) and some by groups (e.g. laws)

• ‘The shared action is intrinsic, as well as instrumental, to the good itself and ... its benefits come in the course of that shared action. Goods of that kind are, therefore, inherently common in their “production” and in their benefits’

PROBLEMS OF THE WCU MOVEMENT
WCUs often empty out the value of other institutions
3. HOW IDEAS ABOUT CHE VARY ACCORDING TO THE POLITICAL CULTURE
Intellectual and policy judgments about CHE vary across the world, according to

- the underlying assumptions, for example the meanings of ‘public’, ‘public good’, ‘common good’ and such terms in other languages - which often have rather different meanings
- political culture, including the role of state/government, scope for the individual, responsibilities of higher education
  - Differing national political cultures lead to divergent ideas about CHE, between countries, in some areas, e.g. the degree to which institutions directly follow state agendas. However, in some other areas the different countries have similar views e.g. the value of free scientific research
Western political imaginary

SOCIETY

state

market

civil society

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY
Post-Confucian political imaginary

tianxia
all under heaven

state/
society

family

individual
Russian political imaginary?

- Individual
- Family
- Civil society
- State
CHE IN RUSSIA
GLOBAL COMMON GOODS IN HIGHER EDUCATION
What in higher education might be common across the political cultures?

- Nation-building role of higher education
- Networked global research system
- Partial institutional autonomy
  - Norms of freedom of research and scholarship
  - Norms of freedom to teach and learn
- Cross-border academic and student mobility
  - Norms of free mobility
- Definition of ‘higher education’
  - Norms of adequate quality higher education
- Social equity in access to higher education

[common definition is a challenge]
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