Tradition and Transition:
The International Imperative
in Higher Education
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Volume 7

Higher education worldwide is in a period of transition, affected by globalization, the advent of mass access, changing relationships between the university and the state, and the new technologies, among others. Global Perspectives on Higher Education provides cogent analysis and comparative perspectives on these and other central issues affecting postsecondary education worldwide.

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This series is co-published with the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College.
Publication Series
Center for International Higher Education


Tradition and Transition: The International Imperative in Higher Education

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January 2007
# Table of Contents

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**
ix

**INTRODUCTION**
xi

**GLOBAL ISSUES**

1. The Logic of Mass Higher Education 3
2. Globalization and the University: Realities in an Unequal World 23
3. Academic Freedom: International Realities and Challenges 49
4. Comparative Perspectives on Private Higher Education 67
5. Peripheries and Centers: Research Universities in Developing Countries 85
6. Higher Education’s Landscape of Internationalization: Motivations and Realities (with Jane Knight) 113

**THE ACADEMIC PROFESSION**

7. Centers and Peripheries in the Academic Profession: The Special Challenges of Developing Countries 137
8. The Deterioration of the Academic Estate: International Patterns of Academic Work 159

**THEMES AND VARIATIONS**

9. The Past and Future of Asian Universities 183
10. African Higher Education: Challenges for the 21st Century (with Damtew Teferra) 203
11. Doctoral Education in the United States 233
12. Research and Training in Higher Education: The State of the Art 251

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**
275
Acknowledgments

This book is part of the research program of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College. The Center receives funding from the Ford Foundation and the Lynch School of Education. Edith Hoshino and Laura E. Rumbley provided editing assistance. Salina Kopellas and Louise Nally assisted in the preparation of the text. I appreciate the colleagueship and collaboration of Damtew Teferra and Jane Knight, who have coauthored chapters in this book. I am indebted to the publishers that have permitted the use of previously published materials—all of the chapters in this book are reprinted with the permission of the publishers and journals involved. All have been revised and updated for this book.


Introduction

This book examines some of the central issues affecting higher education worldwide. A comparative perspective can illuminate central themes and contribute to our understanding of trends. While it is seldom possible to transplant academic models from one country or system to another, we can learn lessons from the experiences of other countries. The title of this book highlights contemporary realities. Academe worldwide is bound by tradition—a history of more than eight centuries in the West and the impact of the European academic model on the rest of the world. Such tradition may inhibit reform, but it is a valuable reminder of the core values of the university in a period of profound change. The beginning of the 21st century is also a time of considerable transition in academe. Mass enrollments have created changes in the administration, orientation, and financing of higher education worldwide. Technology is a new force that is challenging the traditional university. The worldwide knowledge economy and the pressures of globalization create further tensions. This book shows the interplay between tradition and transition—examining the established norms and values of the university and the forces of change in the university of the 21st century.

The focus also concerns the international imperative—to understand academic change from a comparative and international perspective and the growing international forces that are influencing higher education. While universities in the Middle Ages were international institutions, using Latin for instruction and attracting students and teachers from many countries, the current period has seen a resurgence of internationalism. There is a significant international flow of both students and professors and a growing trend to offer degrees and other academic programs “off-shore” through a variety of transnational educational enterprises. While English has not become “the Latin of the 21st century,” it is without question the dominant language for communicating science and scholarship; and it is increasingly used as a language of instruction, even in non-English-speaking environments.

Global Issues and Explanations

Globalization explains everything and has thus lost much of its explanatory power. The world economy is increasingly affected by international trends, and the knowledge economy of the 21st century is quintessentially global in scope and impact. Other aspects of modern society are also increasingly affected by international trends—including higher education. Yet, many analysts attribute all developments in
higher education to the impact of globalization, thus forgetting that academic institutions are embedded in national systems and respond to national authorities and local market forces. Global trends are certainly a key variable, but they are by no means the only one. It is important not to exaggerate the idea of globalization in context. The complex interplay between national, regional, and local realities, on the one hand, and broader international trends on the other is central to any effective analysis of the contemporary university.

The pressure to expand enrollments and provide access to wider segments of the population can be observed everywhere, but such developments are more the result of realities within nations and societies than dictated by international agencies or the dominant economic powers. Somewhat more difficult to analyze is, for example, the trend toward the privatization of public higher education and the growth of private higher education in much of the world or the concept of higher education as a “private good” rather than a “public good.” It can be argued that the World Bank and its related agencies have pressed an agenda that includes increased private funding for higher education, propelled by their overall economic perspective, but the paucity of funding at the national level is of even greater importance.

The “logic” of higher education expansion stems from local demand as well as from the needs of increasingly sophisticated economies. Academic institutions and governments have had to accommodate the imperative of mass enrollments. Not only is the United States perceived as having a successful academic system, but it was also the first country to cope with mass higher education. Such developments as differentiated academic systems, a public-private mix, charging tuition for study, accreditation systems, and the like are all necessary adjustments to increased access and mass higher education.

This book also focuses on several other elements of the new global reality. Academic freedom is central to the success of any academic institution or system, but it has been largely ignored in current debates. The focus here relates to the topic’s relevance and its complexity in the new environment. Academic freedom includes the freedom to teach and learn, as well as to conduct research and communicate knowledge and analysis through publication, without restriction. Academic freedom continues to be contested terrain. In a few places, there are direct restrictions on teaching and research. Professors, and sometimes students, may suffer consequences—including being fired from their posts or occasionally being jailed or worse. In some countries or universities, certain topics, especially in the social sciences, are banned. In others, specific interpretations may be unacceptable. Subtle threats to
academic freedom are more widespread. Corporate involvement in university research has sometimes determined the direction of research and restricted the dissemination of results. Ownership of databases and scholarly journals by multinational media firms has introduced commercial considerations into knowledge dissemination. Academic freedom is occasionally threatened by the academic community itself—by professors or sometimes students who wish to control the intellectual climate on campus. Thus, academic freedom remains part of the agenda for higher education worldwide and requires constant reinterpretation and vigilance.

In many countries, the expansion of the private higher education sector accompanies massification. Private higher education is now the fastest-growing sector. In many countries once dominated by public higher education systems—such as several in Latin America—more than half the students attend private institutions. Private sectors have emerged in places, including a number of African countries, where public higher education once constituted the sole institutional pattern. Public universities have been privatized to some extent and are expected to generate more of their own income, through tuition charges as well as other revenue-generating activities. These are all elements of new global reality discussed in this book.

The research university, invented by the Germans in the 19th century and expanded in concept and size in the United States, is at the pinnacle of academic systems worldwide. It is now a key part of the new knowledge economy, and most countries seek to build one or more research universities in the struggle to compete in higher education worldwide. For developing countries, the challenges of building and sustaining research universities are difficult.

The Academic Profession
The academic profession is much affected by both tradition and transition. Discussion of the future of higher education often ignores the professoriate. It is incorrectly assumed that well-qualified teachers will always offer instruction and researchers will undertake the cutting-edge basic research so necessary for 21st-century economies. While it is true that teachers can be found to fill classrooms, it is not assured that they will be of adequate quality or well trained. In many countries, most academics do not hold a doctorate and many have only a bachelor’s degree. Part-time instructors are the fastest-growing segment of the academic labor force—in Latin America a large majority of the academic profession consists of part-time instructors; and the proportions are growing everywhere, even in industrialized nations. In much of the
world, a full-time academic salary is inadequate to support a middle-class family, and thus many university teachers must hold more than one job.

At one time, at least in most industrialized nations, an academic career offered high status, adequate (if modest) income, and a substantial degree of employment security. This is no longer the case for a growing number of academics even in industrialized nations. Terms of employment have been changed in a number of countries. For example, tenure has been abolished in the United Kingdom, and in much of Europe the traditional civil service status of professors is being eliminated or redefined. There are fewer full-time, career-ladder positions everywhere. The attractions of an academic career are being diminished.

In developing and middle-income countries, the situation is even more dire. Never highly attractive, academic careers are becoming increasingly problematic, especially in comparison with other options in growing economies such as India and China. In Russia and other countries of the former Soviet system, which at one time provided relatively attractive academic careers, the terms and conditions of academic work have deteriorated and opportunities for highly educated people have flourished outside the universities.

The results are already evident—enrollments in doctoral programs have declined in many fields in numerous countries, and the qualifications of people seeking advanced degrees are lower. The “best and brightest” are simply no longer interested in an academic career. The implications of dramatic changes in the structure and conditions of the academic career will in a few years be experienced worldwide. Will the next generation of academics retain the ability and motivation to perform the best teaching and research? It is unclear whether the terms and conditions of the academic career will provide the opportunities for the best-quality work.

There is also an unprecedented international flow of academic talent—typically from poor to wealthy countries. Many of the most talented academics leave their home countries to work where they can earn the highest salaries and enjoy the best working conditions. This trend inevitably weakens academic systems in developing countries. What constituted in an earlier period a “brain drain” with talent being permanently lost to the country of origin is now a much more complex relationship with scholars maintaining links with their home countries, contributing expertise, and sometimes returning.

The situation of the academic profession is complex and, in general, problematic. A combination of factors contributes to deteriorating
working conditions and low morale. The future of higher education depends on the academic profession, and one cannot be optimistic about the future in light of the circumstances of the professoriate.

These are among the themes analyzed in Tradition and Transition. The goal is to analyze in a comparative context some of the central challenges facing higher education. The relationship between societal pressures such as mass access in a context of public underinvestment in higher education is but one of these problems. This book seeks to link societal challenges and institutional responses.
Global Issues
Mass higher education had become the international norm by the end of the 20th century. Today, most countries have large academic systems that educate a growing number of young people and require substantial resources. China and India, which enroll, respectively, 21 and under 15 percent of the relevant age group in postsecondary education, have large academic systems. China now enrolls the world’s largest student population, at 23 million; the United States is second with 17 million; and India follows, with about 10 million. Worldwide, there are more than 70 million students in postsecondary education. The Vancouver-based Commonwealth of Learning estimates that 150 million students will be in need of postsecondary education by 2020. Virtually all industrialized and many middle-income countries have built mass higher education systems, enrolling more than a quarter of the age cohort. Most are moving toward enrolling 40 percent or more, and a few now enroll half of that population sector.

We refer to “massification” as the process by which academic systems enroll large numbers—and higher proportions of the relevant age group—of students in a range of differentiated academic institutions. Even countries that until recently have had small and elitist academic systems are facing pressures for expansion. There is no country that is immune from the pressure for massification.

The United States, which enrolls more than half of the age group and has traditionally permitted nontraditional students (older individuals and others without standard academic credentials) into postsecondary education, is the leader in terms of access. However, both
Western Europe and a number of Pacific Rim countries in Asia are approaching American participation rates. Academic systems have expanded for several reasons. A degree from a postsecondary educational institution is increasingly seen as a prerequisite for economic success. The skills imparted through university or other postsecondary study are in demand for the increasingly complex and technology-based economies of the 21st century. The certification provided through a college or university degree is important in modern society. University degrees are also seen as essential for social mobility.

In most parts of the world, higher education was limited in size and scope until the 1960s. Sociologist Martin Trow, writing in the early 1970s, divided the world’s academic systems into three categories—elite (under 15 percent of the relevant age group participating in postsecondary education), mass (between 20 and 30 percent), and universal (above 30 percent)—arguing that higher education was inevitably moving toward universal access (Trow 1973). He argued that the traditional university structure in most countries could accommodate up to 15 percent of the age group, but that a higher percentage would require structural changes. Trow proved to be both too optimistic and too pessimistic. The countries at the upper end of the scale, such as the United States and Canada, stopped expanding higher education and currently enroll slightly more than half of the age group. Countries that Trow identified as moving toward mass higher education at the end of the 1960s have dramatically expanded—most of Western Europe now enrolls more than 30 percent of the age cohort—and some have reached a 50 percent rate of inclusion. Most dramatically, a few Latin American countries; such Asian nations as South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines; and some countries in Central and Eastern Europe are expanding rapidly and are close to universal access.

The 1990s saw the emergence of mass and universal access in many parts of the world. All the larger Western European nations—Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy—have expanded significantly, and all now enroll 30 percent or more of the age cohort. Higher education expansion in Central and Eastern Europe slowed in the aftermath of the fall of communism, although growth is again beginning to take place in this region. The Asian middle-income countries that had been experiencing rapid economic growth were hit by economic problems in the late 1990s. In general, economic cycles have not significantly affected expansion either in this part of the world or elsewhere. Expansion has been growing rapidly in most of the developing world—including China and India (which now have the world’s first- and third-largest student populations) and Latin America (which has seen dramatic
growth). Only in sub-Saharan Africa, beset by severe long-term economic and political crises, did growth slow significantly in some places. Despite some regional variations, the 21st century continues a pattern of expanded access to higher education.

While confirming global expansion and the creation of mass systems of higher education, it is important not to overgeneralize these trends. Some academic systems have already reached a level of maturity or are subject to social or economic conditions that will stymie expansion. Japan, for example, already has a high level of participation in higher education and is experiencing a drop in the university-age population, and it suffered through a long economic downturn during the 1990s. Experts predict that total student numbers will decline modestly, and some less prestigious private colleges and universities will fail as a result of an enrollment slump. By way of comparison, the United States, which also has a high rate of participation, is currently experiencing expansion due to short-term demographic growth in the 18- to 22-year-old population. Nontraditional students—older people who may have been unable to obtain a degree when they were young or who see the need to upgrade their skills—are demanding access to higher education, and most countries have moved to accommodate them.

The mass higher education systems emerging worldwide have an inherent logic that will characterize key elements of academe in the coming decades. Traditional patterns of organization and governance will, of course, continue to exist; universities are highly conservative institutions, and change comes slowly. But the logic of mass higher education will affect all countries and academic systems.

The American higher education system serves as a kind of model for the rest of the world in an era of mass higher education, given that the United States was the first country to experience mass access to higher education—beginning in the 1920s and dramatically expanding in the 1950s. The patterns and structures that evolved in the United States have provided models for other countries to examine—and in some cases emulate—as they confronted expansion (Altbach 1998a). Most other academic systems were elitist until the middle of the 20th century or even thereafter and thus did not need to cope with large numbers of students. As they grew, these systems were forced to adapt to new realities, which often proved to be a difficult task. Italy, for example, still relies on a traditional academic organizational structure that does not function well with larger enrollments. Britain restructured its academic system in the 1980s to deal with larger student numbers. In developing countries, the elite models imposed by colonial rulers have remained basically unreformed and no longer work well. Many of the
world’s academic systems are groping for new models that will operate effectively in the context of mass higher education.

This chapter discusses some of the central realities of the “massification” of higher education worldwide (Academic Reforms in the World 1997). The following topics are central to the phenomenon of mass higher education in the 21st century:

- the challenge of funding;
- new sectors of higher education, including private higher education, for-profit higher education, and new vocational institutions;
- distance learning as a means of coping with demand;
- the differentiation and complexity of academic institutions;
- the managerialization of academic institutions and creation of the “administrative estate”;
- the nature of the academic profession; and
- diversity of students and student culture.

The Challenge of Funding

Higher education is expensive. The cost of providing instruction, libraries and laboratories, and the other accoutrements of higher education has grown dramatically (Financing Higher Education 1998). Libraries and laboratories in particular now require major investments of resources. The new communications technologies, as well as keeping abreast of the dramatic growth in knowledge, are also costly.

Significant changes in attitude on the funding of higher education have evolved since the 1980s. Earlier, in most countries a consensus existed that higher education was a “public good” contributing significantly to society by imparting knowledge and skills to those who were educated at universities and other postsecondary institutions. Since higher education was considered a public good, it was agreed that society should bear a large part of the cost. In the 1980s, with the World Bank and extending to many governments, higher education began to be viewed as mainly a “private good,” benefiting the individual more than society as a whole (World Bank 1994). The logic of this change in thinking places more of the burden for financing higher education on the “users”—students and their families. In many countries, policies require students to pay a growing proportion of the cost of postsecondary education.

Many countries have experienced a significant change in attitudes with regard to public spending. The 1980s witnessed a gradual breakdown of the consensus built up following World War II on the role of the state in funding not only higher education but public services in general and an accompanying policy of high taxes to pay for these state
services. The administrations of Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the United States had a major impact in this area. Even in Sweden, the Social Democrats lost their majority for a time, and the welfare state was to some extent weakened. The collapse of the Soviet Union and of state socialism in Eastern Europe further strengthened conservative thinking. Finally, the impact of world economic trends and competitiveness placed pressure on many governments to trim public spending (Kuttner 1997). In the wake of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and the advent of euro-based economic policies in the European Union, public spending growth has been limited and in some countries cut. Australia and New Zealand have also been at the forefront of this trend. One of the countries that have moved most rapidly from state support to a market model is Chile (Brunner 1997). Although initiated by a military regime, Chile’s subsequent democratic governments (both center-right and left) have retained similar economic policies. Other Latin American nations have moved in this direction as well—although market-oriented neoliberal approaches remain controversial. Many analysts have related these policies with globalization and the neoliberal policies stressed by the World Bank and other international agencies and have linked them to the continuing funding problems faced by academic systems everywhere (Stiglitz 2002).

Thus, at the same time that higher education is faced with significant expansion in the number of students, the government—the traditional source of funding in most countries—is less willing to invest in postsecondary education, placing significant pressure on systems of higher education. Expansion cannot be halted because public demand is immense, and many European countries guarantee access to those who pass secondary school examinations. Higher education institutions and systems have had to accommodate more students with fewer financial resources.

In much of Western Europe, including the United Kingdom, expansion has continued or has even accelerated because government policy has remained committed to increased access. In Germany, France, and Italy higher education remains essentially free while at the same time government funding has not increased to match enrollment growth. The result has been overcrowding at the universities and a deterioration in the conditions of study. In Germany, student discontent resulted in the largest demonstrations since the 1960s. After major political turmoil, fees were introduced in Britain for the first time as a way to provide funding to handle increased enrollments and reduced government allocations. Introduced by the Conservatives, fees were supported by the Labour government now in power. Indeed, Labour legislated
“top-up” fees, giving academic institutions for the first time the power to set their own fee levels. In other parts of the world—such as in Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and parts of Asia—private initiative has been encouraged as a way of serving increased demand for postsecondary education, and private higher education is increasing its share of total enrollments.

**New Sectors of Higher Education**

As higher education expands, traditional institutions such as universities grow. In addition, new types of institutions are inevitably added in order to serve larger numbers, and also to provide more diverse education and training for a more disparate clientele. The university remains at the core of an expanded higher education system. Other forms of postsecondary education provide both expanded access and diversity. Because of the financial pressures discussed earlier as well as private institutions’ ability to respond more rapidly to new demands, private higher education has quickly expanded.

Nonprofit private universities and colleges now constitute a significant part of the postsecondary systems of many countries. Such schools are beginning to emerge in countries where the private sector has not previously been active (e.g., Malaysia, Hungary) (Geiger 1986; Altbach 1999). Private sectors can be quite diverse in terms of quality, orientation, and focus, as well as sponsorship and financial aspects. Religious institutions are a significant part of the private higher education sector in many countries. In Latin America, where the Roman Catholic Church established many of the oldest and most prestigious universities, religiously sponsored higher education is especially influential.

These nonprofit institutions have been overshadowed—at least in terms of numbers—by newer, more entrepreneurial private universities and by specialized institutions, many of which are of questionable quality (Altbach 1998b). A similar phenomenon exists in Central and Eastern Europe, where there has been a proliferation of private institutions established to serve specific segments of an expanding market for higher education. Many of the newer private institutions have scarce resources, and most focus on fields of high demand—such as management studies, computer science, and information technology. Private institutions may also offer instruction in fields that are inexpensive to teach, such as some arts and social science subjects that require no laboratory facilities or other costly equipment. The newer private institutions are often entrepreneurial—they take advantage of “market niches,” advertise their “products,” and operate much like private businesses.

The private higher education sector enrolls a majority of students in
many countries. It has traditionally enrolled 80 percent of the student population in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines. More than half the students in Indonesia now attend private institutions. Similarly, the private sector now enrolls more than half the students in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and several other Latin American countries and is a growing sector in Central and Eastern Europe. In the United States, private enrollments have remained steady at around 20 percent of the total for a half century or more, and Western Europe has not seen dramatic growth. Clearly, private higher education is the fastest-growing segment of postsecondary education, and it has provided the capacity to serve growing demand.

While for-profit private postsecondary schools have long existed in many countries, they have seldom been considered as a legitimate part of the academic system. In the past several decades, the for-profit sector has grown rapidly in many countries—depending on whether legal and regulatory systems permit such institutions—and now constitutes a significant part of the postsecondary system. Traditionally, the for-profit sector consisted mainly of small vocationally oriented schools that provided specific job-oriented skills. In many countries, these schools were not formally recognized and could not award degrees. The quality of the for-profit sector varied tremendously, and often there was no way of assessing standards or quality. For students, it was an environment of “caveat emptor”—let the buyer beware. In the United States, this sector consisted almost exclusively of trade schools offering specialized instruction in highly applied fields. Some of these schools were able to take advantage of government-sponsored loan programs. In Japan, schools preparing students to take university entrance examinations, the yobikos and the jukus, are a central part of the for-profit sector. In the Philippines and a number of other countries, some colleges and universities operate on a for-profit basis.

In the past decade, there has been dramatic growth of the for-profit sector. In the United States, the University of Phoenix, which has the ability to offer degrees and is accredited by one of the regional accrediting agencies, has pioneered degree-granting activity in the for-profit sector (Sperling and Tucker 1997). This institution, with branches in a dozen states, is now the largest private university in the United States, and its stock is traded on the stock exchange. It offers vocationally tailored degrees in such fields as management studies by using information technology and part-time faculty. In many other countries, new for-profit schools have been established, mainly in high-demand fields. For example, schools specializing in computer science and information technology are widespread in India, which has a major software and
computer industry. These for-profit schools cannot offer degrees, are largely unregulated, and are of varying quality. In India, as well as in other countries, there are significant problems of measuring the quality and effectiveness of this new sector and ensuring that students have reliable information concerning the institutions.

While the traditional university remains the central institution in postsecondary education worldwide, the university represents a small part of the total postsecondary enterprise. Higher education is becoming increasingly vocational in focus, and the institutional mix of higher education reflects this interest. In the United States, the community college sector has grown in size and importance. These two-year institutions, which are mainly vocational in focus, now enroll 25 percent of American students (Cohen and Brawer 1996). Similar accommodation to vocational interests can be seen in other countries. Examples of such vocationally oriented nondegree schools in Europe are the Fachhochschulen in Germany, the HBO institutions in the Netherlands, and similar institutions in other European countries. Much of the growth in higher education in Europe and in some other countries is taking place in the nonuniversity sector.

**Distance Higher Education**

Mass higher education has stimulated an interest in distance education. The advent of new technologies has permitted distance education to develop in new and unexpected ways. In fact, the evolution in distance education is still in its early stages. Distance education is not, of course, a new idea. Correspondence courses and other methods of delivering education without bringing students together have long been in existence. The University of South Africa, for example, has for more than a half century mainly offered academic degrees through correspondence. The pioneering contemporary distance education effort, the British Open University, also started in the 1960s, before the advent of the new technologies. It began its educational programs with a combination of written course materials, television, and direct meetings with course tutors in small group settings. While the Open University is somewhat less expensive than traditional higher education, it is not dramatically cheaper. Now, with more reliance on purely distance methods, costs have been reduced (Mason 1998). Increasingly, distance education providers rely on the Internet for all instruction and evaluation—with the concept becoming almost synonymous with the use of Internet-based technology.

This decade has seen the development in many countries of distance higher education that makes use of the new technologies. By 2000, 8
of the 10 largest distance–higher education providers were in developing or middle-income countries, with the largest, Adadolu University in Turkey, serving 578,000 students and China’s TV University following with 530,000 (Task Force on Higher Education and Society 2000, 31). In Japan, the University of the Air uses a range of methods for delivering instruction, including television. Everyman’s University in Israel has also built up a clientele for its services. The most dramatic expansion of distance higher education has been in several developing countries. Thailand has two large distance education institutions offering degree programs throughout the country, enrolling more than a half million students. The Indira Gandhi Open University in India offers instruction to even larger numbers in most of the country’s states.

Distance higher education is still in the process of development (Van Dusen 1997). Few studies have been undertaken on the effectiveness of the instruction provided through distance education. The financial conditions are also not clear, although the limited existing data show that costs are lower but not dramatically so. The mix of computer-mediated instruction, direct contact with an instructor (perhaps through video-conferencing, Web-based communication, or e-mail), and reading material is part of a powerful combination of instructional techniques that are in the process of being molded into an effective tool for learning.

Many questions remain concerning the true costs, the appropriate use of technologies, and issues related to monitoring. Many have rushed to use distance education as a “quick fix” to provide access, hoping that the technologies will catch up with the demand. Too little attention has been paid to effectiveness and quality (Robins and Webster 2002).

Distance education is ideally suited to the international delivery of educational initiatives. It is easy to send educational programs across borders, and there are already many Internet-based educational offerings. Questions of control and cultural or other biases that may be part of cross-border education have yet to be answered. There is much to be learned about how the process of teaching and learning works in cross-cultural contexts.

Already, millions of students are participating in this sector worldwide, the large majority of them in developing countries. Distance higher education allows students to be admitted without the construction of expensive campuses and libraries or the hiring of teachers to put in individual classrooms. While distance programs may not result in dramatic savings in direct instructional costs, they do eliminate construction and other infrastructure expenditures.

In the industrialized nations, however, distance higher education
has not always proved financially successful, nor has it consistently attracted large enrollments. The British Open University, for example, established an American branch that proved to be unsuccessful and was closed. The Western Governors University, organized by several public-university systems in the western part of the United States, did not attract many students and was also eliminated, as was a distance initiative by a consortium of prestigious American private universities.

Distance higher education is an integral part of a mass higher education system (Brown and Duguid 1996). It can serve students in remote locations, permits rapid expansion, and is flexible in implementing rapid changes in curriculum. However, it remains unclear if the best-quality education can be delivered in remote locations without providing students access to libraries or to direct contact with instructors. Theoretically, at least, distance higher education at its best could provide a quality education. Whether the kind of programs now offered in countries such as Thailand or India can truly achieve excellence remains an open question.

The Diversity and Complexity of Academic Institutions

Not only do new institutional types and ways of delivering instruction form part of mass higher education, existing universities also are changing. In most cases, institutions are growing in size and in the diversity of programs offered to students. Clark Kerr’s description of the multiversity in the United States is relevant internationally (Kerr 1995). While universities retain their basic core functions and governance structure, departments, faculties, and schools grow in size and number. Whole new institutes or other academic units may be added. The very mission of the university may also expand. The traditional dedication to teaching and research may extend to direct involvement with industry and other institutions in society and service to many constituencies. In most cases, growth takes place by accretion—by adding on new functions and responsibilities and increasing the size of existing units without changing the basic structure of the institution.

This pattern of institutional growth has been both a strength and a weakness. It has permitted universities to expand to meet society’s needs and to maintain their centrality in the higher education system. At the same time, it has made universities more difficult to manage and has severely damaged traditional patterns of governance. The size and complexity of the modern university has increased bureaucracy, alienated both faculty and students, and undermined the ideal of participation and shared governance. The tradition of control by the professors, enshrined in the medieval University of Paris and protected through
the centuries, may be facing its most serious threat in the current period. It is worth keeping in mind that the concept of shared governance and a strong element of faculty control originated in the German Humboldtian ideal in the 19th century and was adapted later in the American university model in the early years of the 20th century (Ben-David and Zloczower 1962). As universities have grown larger, it has been very difficult to maintain traditional forms of governance. Institutions have necessarily become more bureaucratic, and direct faculty control or even significant faculty participation has declined.

In this respect, Western Europe is moving closer to the United States in terms of basic institutional control. The Netherlands is a leading example of this trend in governance reform. In the United States, the traditional power of the faculty has been eroded by administrative control due in part to the logic of expanding institutions and in part to demands for accountability, although professorial power remains stronger in the research universities than in other institutions (Hirsch and Weber 2001).

Not only has governance changed as the result of institutional expansion, the work of the university has also expanded; and new offices, departments, schools, and other structures have emerged to take on these new functions. In the United States, the proliferation of organized research units, often called centers or institutes, reflects the expanded research role of the leading universities. These research units often have a good deal of autonomy, especially when they are funded by external agencies. Links with industry are considered a central part of the contemporary mission of many universities, and administrative offices have been established to facilitate university-industry relationships. Public service has grown in importance as well, with offices being established to administer this area. As student numbers have grown, universities have often added staff to deal with students. In all cases, the increase has meant more administration and control.

As the curriculum has expanded, new departments and institutes have been created. Interdisciplinary teaching and research have also grown in importance, and academic units have been established to foster interdisciplinary work. Entire new fields have emerged in the past several decades. Computer science and informatics, for example, did not exist several decades ago. Now, these fields are among the most important in academe. The field of management studies has gained in importance, as have fields such as international trade. New discoveries in the biomedical sciences have led to new departments, institutes, and centers.

The logic of mass higher education has induced significant changes in the universities. There are some discernible worldwide patterns,
although approaches differ according to national circumstance and the history of universities. The universal reality constitutes a decline in professorial power and the growth of academic bureaucracy. Administrators, increasingly career-track professionals, have increased in number and hold enhanced power in the modern mass university.

There are a number of approaches to differentiation of higher education worldwide. A few examples will illustrate patterns. In the United States, higher education does show differentiation of public higher education within the states. While California is the best known and perhaps the most effective example of a statewide system in the public higher education sector, multicampus systems exist in almost every state. The traditional American pattern of boards of trustees and a strong president accountable directly to the trustees is generally compatible with the expansion of universities.

In Western Europe, universities are experiencing governance reforms. The Dutch have pioneered the trends that will likely occur in other countries: enhancing the influence of the administration, requiring greater direct accountability to government, the diminishing of professorial power, and the elimination of meaningful student participation in governance. Changes in the British higher education system during the Thatcher regime in the 1980s also brought significant alterations in governance. Vice chancellors and other executives were given greater power. Higher education was made more directly accountable to government with the abolition of the University Grants Committee. The elimination of the “binary” structure that separated the universities and the polytechnics into two separate categories also made the system more closely linked to government and increased competitiveness (Warner and Palfreyman 2001; Williams 2003).

The Rise of the Administrative Estate
Administrative power was pioneered in US universities, which have traditionally carried out a strong executive function in higher education. College and university presidents are appointed by the board of trustees rather than elected by the faculty; and senior administrators, such as vice presidents and deans, are in turn appointed by the president, generally with the advice of relevant faculty. Senior administrators control the budget, academic planning mechanisms, and the other levers of institutional power. Institutional patterns vary, with the most prestigious universities having a greater degree of professorial power and autonomy than those lower in the academic hierarchy (Youn and Murphy 1997).

As their functions expand and diversify, universities add administra-
tors to deal with them. In the United States, the fastest-growing sector in higher education is academic administration. While the number of faculty members has remained fairly steady, administrators have increased in number (Shattock 2003). The new functions are usually too complex for faculty members to handle on a part-time and nonexpert basis. They require full-time attention and specialized expertise in accountancy, law, management, health services, statistics, and other types of expertise required by the contemporary university. The demands for accountability have also added to the number of administrators needed to generate the statistics, reports, financial documentation, and other data for government authorities, trustees, and accrediting bodies. Pioneered in the United States, the field of “institutional research,” which is focused on providing internal statistics and other data and analysis for the internal use of academic institutions, has reached Europe and will inevitably spread to other parts of the world. Legal officers manage the university’s legal relationships with external groups as well as with students or professors. The legal staff may also have responsibility for patents and licenses produced by university researchers. Administrators have little direct relation to the professoriate and do not owe their jobs to the faculty. They have become a new “estate” of the university—a self-perpetuating group central to the operation of the institution.

The American model is one approach to handling the administrative functions of institutions. In Germany and some other European nations, universities have a dual administrative structure, with an elected rector presiding over the academic functions of the university and a government-appointed administrator (the chancellor), who has responsibility for the purely administrative aspects of the institution. The chancellor is a civil servant and not an academic, and he or she typically stays in the position for an extended period while the academic rector serves for a two- or three-year term. As the administrative structure and budget of the university have grown, the power of the chancellor has increased. At the same time, the German Länder (states) and governments in some other countries have devolved part of their budgetary and other controls to the academic institutions, giving the institutions more autonomy. Academic institutions have become more complex but in some ways more autonomous.

**The Academic Profession**

As noted, the academic profession has lost some of its power and autonomy within the university. Academic work, for a growing number of people within the profession, is changing. Indeed, the academic pro-
fession itself is adapting to the new realities. New types of academics are taking their places in the universities and colleges—clinical professors, research professors, part-time and adjunct academic staff, and others are all part of the mass system. The professorial ideal of autonomy to teach without much control from external authority is less often achieved. In many countries, workloads have increased and class size has grown.

Academic work is to some extent becoming more specialized. Growing numbers of teachers are hired only to teach and not to engage in research or contribute to the growth of scholarship. Elite professors, employed by research-oriented universities, produce the large proportion of published scholarship and obtain most of the research grants but are becoming more of a minority within the academic profession. In the United States, it is estimated that fewer than one-fifth of the professoriate is in this "research cadre" (Haas 1996; Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). The rest of the American professoriate engages mainly in teaching rather than in research and service. While the professoriate in most European countries, as well as Japan and South Korea, expresses a high degree of interest in research, a relatively small portion of the profession is actually producing published scholarship (Enders 2001).

Significant structural changes are taking place in the academic profession. In many countries, the proportion of full-time academics is declining as part-time teachers grow in number. This is true in the United States, where it is estimated that more than 30 percent of teaching is now carried out by part-time faculty. The number of full-time but nonpermanent faculty members has also increased. These teachers often carry a higher teaching load than permanent staff members and cannot obtain regular professorial positions. In Latin America, part-time faculty are the norm, although some countries have sought to increase the number of full-time professors because of the assumption that part-time faculty lack loyalty or commitment to the institution at which they are teaching. Other parts of the world are moving toward the Latin America case without anticipating the inevitable repercussions.

These changes in the nature of the academic labor force will have significant implications (Altbach 2003). Fewer well-qualified young people will be attracted to academe once they realize that they cannot expect a full-time career. Average salaries will drop as the profession increasingly consists of part-time and temporary junior staff. Research orientation and productivity will decline as fewer professors are focused on research. Institutional loyalty and commitment will dissi-
Widespread criticisms have been voiced of the permanent employment status of the professoriate in most countries. Faculty members, especially senior professors, hold “tenure” in most countries—their jobs are for all practical purposes guaranteed until the age of retirement. Permanent appointment status protects the academic freedom of the professoriate, and it is a way of attracting the highest-quality individuals to the profession. In many countries, permanent status was traditionally awarded after a few years of probationary employment. In the United States and some other countries the evaluation process for tenured appointments comes after six years of service and is generally quite rigorous in nature. In some countries, permanent appointment is anticipated but not strongly protected. While patterns of appointment and promotion vary, the standard system begins with probationary appointments and ends with a permanent position.

Critics argue that permanent appointment precludes regular evaluation and prevents accountability. It is also thought to place too great a burden on academic institutions, denying them the flexibility to reduce staffing in some fields while expanding in others or to adjust to changing financial circumstances. Tenure, it is argued, promotes “deadwood”—unproductive professors undeserving of their positions. In Britain, traditional tenure was abolished for new appointees in the 1980s, although academic staff have remained de facto permanent employees. In the United States, while no basic change has taken place, “posttenure review” that includes accountability for professors but stops short of limiting tenure is more common. In Germany and most other European countries, fewer initial appointments are being made to “tenure-track” positions, although the traditional ironclad tenure system remains.

Mass higher education has reduced both the power and the autonomy of the professoriate. The “traditional” professor is no longer the standard for academic appointments. Alternative academic career paths now exist, most of which are not as favorable to the professoriate as in the past. The terms and conditions of academic work are being changed to reflect the realities of mass higher education. These changes are perhaps inevitable, but they also create problems for the future of the university. Will the most qualified individuals be attracted to academic careers under the new circumstances? Will the universities be able to produce the research that increasingly complex societies and economies require? Will a sufficient portion of the professoriate be committed to the ethos and governance of the university? These and
other questions are of considerable importance as the formal principles of mass higher education affects the professoriate.

**Students**

Of course, students are at the heart of the mass university. The growth in numbers of students completing secondary education, interest in social mobility, the needs of industrial and postindustrial societies, and the emphasis on obtaining diplomas and degrees has contributed to the rising demand for higher education. In many countries, including some developing countries, a university degree is a requirement for a middle-class occupation. Student numbers have risen dramatically from the 1960s to the 1980s, when some countries saw a reduction in growth. For most developing countries, expansion did not stop—it continues unabated. Even in the United States, Germany, and much of the rest of Europe, where there is little or no rise in the university-age population, a combination of increasing graduation rates from secondary education and demand from nontraditional age groups has kept up the pressure on universities to expand access. As mentioned earlier, nontraditional students refer to those who are older or who may lack standard secondary education credentials. In only a few countries, such as Japan, has demand for higher education stagnated, mainly because of the decline in the number of university age students; and even in Japan demand would experience growth if access were opened to nontraditional age groups. In a number of European countries, including Russia, population declines will mean fewer students going on to postsecondary education, assuming that access remains relatively stable.

The composition of the student population has changed with the advent of mass higher education. In the industrialized countries, higher education has been dominated by the middle classes for a century or more; and as the middle class has expanded, the universities have grown. Access for the working class is now widespread. In developing countries, higher education is increasingly available to the middle classes and even to working-class young people. In many countries, nontraditional students are gaining access to higher education. The proportion of women students has dramatically increased: in the United States and most European countries, women comprise at least half the student population, with major variations by field of study. This increasingly diverse student population means a breakdown in a common student culture.

Students also differ more in their academic abilities and interests, and this too has had an impact on the university. In differentiated academic systems, students are selected into different types of institutions
according to their interests and abilities. New types of institutions have
been created for students who may not be suited for traditional aca-
demic study. For example, in the United States, the two-year vocation-
ally oriented community colleges require only graduation from second-
ary school for entry. They are “open door” institutions. There is consid-
erable interest internationally in the concept of relatively open-access
community colleges as a way to increase access and provide postsec-
ondary education at a relatively low price.

Students are less carefully selected, contributing in part to the large
numbers who drop out of postsecondary education or take a longer
time to complete their academic degrees. This “wastage” has financial
and other implications but is part of the reality of mass higher educa-
tion. Academic systems that traditionally had a laissez faire approach to
study and degree completion are tightening up requirements and insti-
tuting accountability measures for students. Students who do not make
satisfactory academic progress are given deadlines and then terminat-
ed. Many countries are moving toward an American-style course-cred-
it system because it provides regular assessment of students and a way
of monitoring academic progress.

Students are increasingly looking at postsecondary education as a
way to enhance employment opportunities, income, and social mobili-
ty. They are less interested in the intrinsic values of higher education.
Students see themselves as consumers of educational products. This
change has significant implications for student attitudes, the relation-
ship between students and academic institutions, and the way the uni-
versity and other postsecondary institutions relate to students.

Conclusion
Mass higher education has also brought with it significant changes in
how academic institutions relate to society. When higher education
served an elite, universities were small and the budget for postsec-
ondary education was relatively modest. A general consensus existed
concerning the role of the university in society, and considerable auton-
omy was granted to universities. Higher education is now central to all
societies. Universities provide the essential training for virtually all
occupations necessary for technologically based societies and for the
business and government sectors as well. Universities provide new
knowledge through research. Higher education is a matter of major
concern for large segments of the population because sons and daugh-
ters attend postsecondary institutions. Further, higher education is now
expensive, both in terms of the government budget and increasingly
the direct costs to individual students and their families. For many
countries, higher education comprises a significant part of the state budget, which makes governments more concerned about the performance and policies of postsecondary education (Neave and van Vught 1994). As higher education has moved from periphery to center, it has naturally received more attention from society, resulting in more accountability.

In many countries, mass higher education has been forced on the universities. In much of Europe, access is guaranteed to students who complete their secondary school examinations; growing numbers passed these examinations and chose to enter the universities. Governments in general did not, however, provide the funding needed to produce a quality education for these students, and as a result, the conditions of study have deteriorated. In many developing countries, the rise of a middle class and a growing economy increased the demand for access; and higher education was forced to accept growing numbers of students, again often without adequate funding. In the United States, where expansion first took place, a combination of increased public funding, an active private sector, and the growth of a highly differentiated academic system with institutions of varying quality and purposes led to the development of a reasonably effective mass higher education system.

The challenges are tremendous. The emergence of a for-profit sector in many countries, the continuing deterioration of standards, the problems of institutionalizing a differentiated academic system serving varied purposes, and the difficulties of funding mass higher education have all contributed to current tensions. One thing is, however, certain: mass higher education is a permanent reality of higher education throughout the world.
References


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Globalization and the University: Realities in an Unequal World

Since the 1990s, globalization has come to be seen as a central theme for both society and higher education. Some have argued that globalization, broadly defined as largely inevitable global economic and technological factors affecting every nation, will liberate higher education and foster needed change. Technological innovations such as the Internet, market forces, the expansion of the private sector in higher education, and massification will permit everyone to compete on the basis of equality. Knowledge interdependence, it is explained, will help everyone. On the other side, critics claim that globalization strengthens worldwide inequality, fosters the franchising of higher education institutions, and tends to keep academic power in the hands of the wealthy universities of developed countries. All contemporary pressures on higher education, from massification to the growth of the private sector, are characterized in general as resulting from globalization. There is a grain of truth in each of these positions—and a good deal of misinterpretation as well. This essay will seek to “unpack” the realities of globalization in higher education and to highlight some of the impact on the university.

Academe around the world is affected differently by global trends. The countries of the European Union, for example, are adjusting to new common degree structures and other kinds of harmonization that are part of the Bologna process and related initiatives. Countries that use English benefit from the increasingly widespread use of that language for science and scholarship. Of special interest here is how globalization is affecting higher education in developing countries, which