



# Transforming Higher Education in Whose Image? Exploring the Concept of the ‘World-Class’ University in Europe and Asia

Rosemary Deem<sup>a</sup>, Ka Ho Mok<sup>b</sup> and Lisa Lucas<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

<sup>b</sup>Faculty of Social Sciences, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong, China.

E-mails: ka-ho.mok@hku.hk, jkhmok@hkucc.hku.hk

In order to enhance their global competitiveness, governments in Europe and Asia have started to conduct comprehensive reviews of and implement plans to restructure their higher education systems, with attempts to transform their higher education systems in the image of ‘world-class’ university. With strong intentions to perform well in the Global University Ranking, universities in Europe and Asia have adopted different reform measures to enhance their research performance. Central to the quest for the world-class status, we have witnessed the emerging global model (EGM) of the research university in the 21st century, a description of the top stratum of research universities worldwide. It is against this particular context that different forms of university research networks, university alliance or international research consortia have evolved to promote international collaboration aiming at higher ranking in the global university league. The principal goal of this article aims at critically examining the notions and practices of what it means to be a world-class university in the context of Europe and Asia, especially attempting to examine the impacts of the quest for the world-class status on higher education in Europe and Asia.

*Higher Education Policy* (2008) 21, 83–97. doi:10.1057/palgrave.hep.8300179

**Keywords:** world-class university; Europe and Asia; policy learning or copying; zero-sum game; changing university governance

---

## Introduction

Globalization, rising costs of public services in general and the evolution of the knowledge-based economy have caused dramatic changes to the character and functions of higher education in many countries around the world (Burbules and Torres, 2000; Mok and Welch, 2003), although the local dimension also remains important (Deem, 2001; Marginson and Sawir, 2005).<sup>1</sup> Higher education systems in both Europe and Asia have recently been going through significant restructuring processes to enhance their competitiveness and hierarchical positioning within their own countries and in the global market



place. One major consequence of this is the intensified competition among universities to prove their performance through global university league tables or ranking exercises (Dill and Soo, 2005; Guarino *et al.*, 2005; Liu and Cheng, 2005; Merisotis and Sadlak, 2005; Marginson, 2006). University ranking and league tables, including various measures of quality that are increasingly used in other kinds of organizations too (Jarrar and Mohamed, 2001), are becoming highly influential in shaping how contemporary universities are governed and what core activities they undertake, especially as many universities worldwide come under pressure to become more entrepreneurial (Clark, 1998; Marginson and Considine, 2000; Anderseck, 2004; Mok, 2005; Zaharia and Gibert, 2005). This paper aims at critically examining the notions and practices of what it means to be a 'world-class' university in the context of Europe and Asia, especially attempting to examine whether and how the quest for the 'world-class university' status would really promote academic excellence in Europe or Asia. More specifically, this article begins with a discussion of the concept of a world-class university. Against the background of the debates and the quest for the world-class university status, we will examine what strategies and how universities in Europe and Asia have adopted in asserting themselves as leading institutions in the Global University Ranking exercise. The paper will also discuss the impacts of transforming higher education in the image of world-class university.

## **The Concept of a World-Class University**

The notion of a world-class university is not particularly new in itself but in recent years it has become a concept much invoked by governments and also by universities themselves in many countries and is an idea now firmly embedded in the higher education policies and strategies of a range of nations. Clearly the worldwide market for students and the ceaseless search for research funding and prestige are crucial elements in this fascination with the idea of a world-class university, as well as the desire of governments for universities to contribute to their national economies. But what does the concept actually mean? Altbach writing in the *Journal of the American Association of University Professors*, notes, 'Everyone wants a world-class university. No country feels it can do without one. The problem is that no one knows what a world-class university is, and no one has figured out how to get one. Everyone, however, refers to the concept. A Google search, for example, produces thousands of references, and many institutions — from modest academic universities in central Canada to a new college in the Persian Gulf — all themselves "world-class". We are in an age of academic hype in which universities of different kinds in diverse countries claim this exalted status-often with little



justification' ([www.aaup.org/publications/Academe/2004/04jf/04jfaltb.htm](http://www.aaup.org/publications/Academe/2004/04jf/04jfaltb.htm)). Altbach suggests his own criteria, which would include excellence in research, academic freedom and an intellectually stimulating environment, internal self-governance by academics over key aspects of academic life and adequate facilities and funding.

David Watson, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Brighton in the UK, has suggested that '“world-class” is one of those things which apparently, you know it when you see it' (Watson, 2006, 13). Watson also notes, as do Shattock (2003) and others before him (Guena, 1998) that well-established institutions have a greater possibility of being regarded as world-class than newer ones. Watson (2006) also cites a document published by a UK government department in 2004 *Putting the World into World Class Education* ([www.globalgateway.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=624](http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=624)), which suggests that in order to have a world-class education system, three main things are involved: 'understanding the world in which we live: the values and cultures of different societies ... and the ways in which we all, as global citizens, can influence and shape the changes in the global economy, environment and society of which we are part'; 'knowing what constitutes world-class educational standards, measuring ourselves against them and matching them'; and finally 'being a global partner overseas' ([www.globalgateway.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=624](http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=624)). Only the second of these three obviously relates to league tables and few of the suggested actions in the document relate to higher education except: 'To benchmark our own performance against world-class standards, drawing on best practice everywhere ... To develop our capacity to engage strategically with a wide range of partners across the world ... realize the Lisbon goal that the EU should become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world” ... To promote the role of our universities as international hubs for learning and research' ([www.globalgateway.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=624](http://www.globalgateway.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=624)).

The concept of world-class higher education can easily collapse into meaning no more than 'international' or become disguised as a meaningless search for excellence even where none exists. It can also, as we argue later in the paper, focus so much on international (and particularly Anglo-Saxon) criteria for excellence that the role of universities in their host country becomes completely neglected and publishing in English-language journals comes to dominate over almost everything else. Yet the popularity of the concept is evident everywhere, from Taiwan and China to the UK. Despite or maybe because of the lack of a clear definition of the concept, the 'world-class' notion has become everyday language in many universities. The meaning of the concept is then somewhat fluid, dependent on the context and also, if as is often the case, related to league tables, the indicators used. For the USA, since the international league tables are dominated by their institutions, and since their citation indexes dominate



the metrics, it is probably much less of a driving force for higher education policy and change than for many other countries, although the USA like other countries does have internal league tables as well. This article has chosen a focus on Asia and Europe because universities in these two regions are getting increasingly concerned with the university ranking and many universities have tried very hard to improve their performance in the university league. The following parts will critically examine those major strategies that universities in Europe and Asia have adopted to enhance their 'world-class' status.

## **University Responses and Coping Strategies in Europe and Asia**

### **The European experiences**

The quest for world-class status of universities has been a particular driver of activity in connection with higher education at European Union (EU) and European Council (EC) level in recent years. There have been two particular areas of activity directed at developing and improving higher education in member countries and thus raising the status and visibility of European universities. The first of these mainly concerns the quality of research undertaken in European universities and is part of the so-called 'Lisbon strategy' first set out by the EC in Lisbon in March 2000. The Lisbon strategy aims at making Europe and the EU the world's 'most dynamic and competitive economy' and in respect of higher education it has particularly focused on the knowledge and 'learning' economy, though a second aim of the Lisbon strategy is innovation that also connects to research and development activities in the EU. More recently university reform *per se* has also come onto the agenda (European Commission, 2006; European Commission Representation in UK, 2006) and a Commission proposal for the establishment of a cross European Institute of Technology (European Commission, 2006a) has also been receiving a lot of attention. A document on university reform published in May 2006 noted that:

With 4,000 institutions, over 17 million students and some 1.5 million staff — of whom 435,000 are researchers — European universities have enormous potential, but this potential is not fully harnessed and put to work effectively to underpin Europe's drive for more growth and more jobs...Continuing globalization means that the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area must be fully open to the world and become worldwide competitive players ... Universities are key players in Europe's future and for the successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society ... However, this crucial sector of the economy and of society needs in-depth restructuring and



modernization if Europe is not to lose out in the global competition in education, research and innovation (European Commission, 2006).

The main aims of European university reform are argued in the May 2006 document to be as follows: Breaking down the barriers around universities in Europe; ensuring autonomy and accountability for universities; providing incentives for partnerships with business; providing 'the right mix' of skills and competencies for the labour market; reducing the funding gap and making funding work more effectively in education and research; enhancing inter-disciplinarity and transdisciplinarity; facilitating the interaction of knowledge and society; rewarding excellence; making the European higher education area and the European research area 'more visible and attractive in the world' (European Commission, 2006a). These are quite ambitious undertakings and it remains to be seen how feasible it will be to achieve such goals in countries whose own reforms are currently at such a wide range of stages.

However, the EC proposals are very clearly aimed at capturing the world-class label for European universities. At a Commission seminar held in London in June 2006, it was argued that positioning of European universities *vis-a-vis* USA, China, India and the Times Higher/Shanghai league tables was a central aim of the reform process and it was also suggested that the European target for HE GDP investment per country needed to be in excess of 2% per annum (it is currently well under 2%) in the future. Odile Quintin, Director General for Education and Culture, EC said at the conference that there was a need to define what excellence means in European universities and she singled out three aspects of the modernization document. These were: Give European universities the capacity to run their own lives with less bureaucracy and using block funding; be more flexible and competitive about bidding for research funding; increase the scale and global scope of European universities. At the conference, which was focused on the UK, there was considerable disagreement about what needed to be done both in the UK and in other European countries. There was also far from a consensus that the proposals for a European Institute of Technology were a sensible way forward (European Commission Representation in UK, 2006).

The second area of EU activity that is relevant to the world-class quest concerns learning and teaching, in the form of the Bologna process (van der Wende, 2000; Neave, 2003; Kwiek, 2004; Litjens, 2005) that pays particular attention to how degree-level study is organized and certificated and to the outcomes of such study, with the aim of achieving some degree of 'harmonization' of higher education across all European countries. In 1999, the ministers of education of 29 countries and European university heads met to discuss the future development of higher education in Europe and then issued the Bologna Declaration, with the goal of achieving a European Higher



Education Area by 2010. The reforms have since been extensively developed and elaborated, most recently at Bergen in May 2005 ([www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bologna)). The Bologna reforms aim at harmonizing or even unifying three different levels of study, for Bachelors, Master and Doctoral awards, across all member countries, with the associated aims of raising standards, sharing common systems of quality assurance, encouraging inter-country cooperation and facilitating student mobility. There has, however, been some resistance to Bologna from a number of countries and some changes delayed until the last possible year specified under the agreement. Nor is it clear how Bologna, other than providing a very skeletal benchmarking and some measure of uniformity in qualifications, learning outcomes and quality assurance, will actually help individual institutions to raise their standards. Furthermore, Kwiek argues from the perspective of Poland and other countries that have recently joined the EU, that the Bologna reforms are inward looking and do not fully address wider issues of globalization and internationalization (Kwiek, 2004), fail to take fully into account the effect of the General Agreement on Trade and Services negotiations on higher education (Barblan, 2002; Nunn, 2002; [www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/academicschools/socsi/news/events/globalhe/seminar1/litjens.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/schoolsanddivisions/academicschools/socsi/news/events/globalhe/seminar1/litjens.html)) and focus on public rather than private institutions. Kwiek contends that Bologna and other EU higher education reform such as the development of a unified European research area may not succeed in central Europe, partly because of the considerable under-funding of public universities in those countries and the changing status of universities *vis-a-vis* other public services (Kwiek, 2005). We now turn to examine some examples of what is happening in some individual Asian countries that may be relevant to the world-class status quest.

### **The Asian experiences**

With strong intentions to enhance their global competitiveness, governments and universities in Asia have taken university-ranking exercises very seriously. Recent studies have repeatedly shown that universities in East Asia are increasingly under pressure to compete internationally and research has obviously become one of the major yardsticks in measuring university performance. University leagues are not only popular in the USA and the UK; various Asian university systems have also launched their own university ranking movements (Liu and Cheng, 2005; Research Center of Chinese Scientific Evaluation of Wuhan University, 2005; Zhejiang University, 2006).

Positioning itself as a regional hub of higher education, Hong Kong has placed heavy weight on research performance as such an importance has been reflected in the research performance-led funding formula adopted by the government. Since the 1990s, Hong Kong higher education has gone through



several research assessment exercises (RAEs), modelling the UK approach to monitoring research performance. Universities in Hong Kong have gone through major review exercises and they have been asked to differentiate themselves in terms of roles and missions, identifying major strengths and developing their centres of excellence. Academics currently working in Hong Kong are confronted with increasing pressures from the government to engage in international research, commanding a high quality of teaching and contributing to professional and community services. As Hong Kong universities have tried to benchmark with top universities in the world, they are struggling very hard to compete for limited resources, just as are universities in central Europe (Kwiek, 2004). Under a 'publish or perish' context, academics in Hong Kong are becoming more 'instrumental' when choosing publication venues and therefore international Social Science (SSCI) and Science Citation) indexed journals are major targets for getting their works published; while university presidents/vice-chancellors in the city state are concerned with their institutions' ranking in the global university league (Mok, 2005; Chan, 2007).

In Taiwan, the government has realized that globalization has accelerated competition among higher education institutions globally. With intentions to improve the global competitiveness of Taiwan institutions, the Executive Yuan set out a policy target to develop at least one university in Taiwan as one of the top 100 universities in the world and at least 15 key departments or cross-university research centres will become the top in Asia within the next 5 years (Lu, 2004). With these policy objectives, the Ministry of Education and the National Science Council have jointly launched the 'Programme for Promoting Academic Excellence of Universities', primarily aiming at improving universities' infrastructure and invigorating research (MOE Taiwan, 2000). Well aware of the importance of its international position, higher education institutions in Taiwan have attached far more weight to university ranking exercises. For instance, the Research Institute of Higher Education at Tamkang University has conducted university assessment studies in the last few years. University league tables have been produced and subsequent reports have aroused lots of debates in Taiwan (Lo and Weng, 2005; Research Institute of Higher Education and University Evaluation, 2005; Lo and Chan, 2006). Similar to Hong Kong, research assessment has dominated academic life in Taiwan. Despite the fact that the university sector in Taiwan has established the Taiwan Social Science Citation Index in order to counter balance the pressures to publish only in SSCI journals, academics confront the reality that special weight is still attached to international publication venues in terms of promotion and research evaluations (Chen and Lo, 2007).<sup>2</sup>

In order to enhance the international competitiveness of Chinese universities in the globalizing world, the Chinese government has implemented a few major projects such as the '211 Project' and the '985 Programme' to enable some



higher education institutions to become 'world-class universities' (see also Mohrman *et al.*, this issue, pp 5–27). For the '211 Project', the government has attempted to develop 100 key universities and key disciplines in the 21st century with additional funding allocated to institutions of higher education to improve their teaching and research facilities, while the '985 Programme' is to transform Beijing University (Peking University) and Tsinghua University, to be world-class universities by 2015 and 2011, respectively. Realizing the intensified global competition among leading universities and feeling the pressure for better ranking in global university league, the Chinese government has strategically identified key national bases for humanities and social sciences research and major national laboratories have been established to promote scientific research (Huang, 2006). More recently, a research institute of higher education based in Shanghai has recently published a report on *The Academic Ranking of World Universities*, which has drawn a great deal of attention and sparked considerable debate among academics in China (Liu and Cheng, 2005). In the context of questing for world-class universities in China, other research institutions in China like the Research Centre of Chinese Scientific Evaluation of Wuhan University and College of Education, Zhejiang University have also conducted research of similar kinds to promote university assessment and performance (Research Center of Chinese Scientific Evaluation of Wuhan University, 2005; Zhejiang University, 2006). Most recently, Ngok and Guo have critically reviewed the quest for world-class universities in China, pointing out the gap between the government policy goals and the reality. In their article, they report some malpractices and even corruption among the academia resulting from the strong drives for obtaining the world-class status (Ngok and Guo, 2007).

In Japan, academics are becoming increasingly aware of the ranking exercises and therefore they have launched a *Flagship Universities* project to identify a few major Japanese universities and develop them as 'world-class universities'. According to Yonezawa (2006), consistent and protracted development of Japan's higher education system has long been driven by strong national initiatives since the late 19th century (Yonezawa, 2006). Heavily invested in its university systems, Japanese universities dominated the top echelons in *Asia Week's* annual *Asian University Ranking*. Nonetheless, Japanese universities have only found their declining positions in both the regional university league and the global ones. After benchmarking with the world university rankings, the Japanese government has become very concerned about how to reposition Japanese universities in the rapidly changing global environment. Therefore, the government has devolved additional resources to promote internationalization and students and academics are strongly encouraged by the government to engage in international collaborations and exchanges (Furushiro, 2006; Yonezawa,



2006). Similar situations can be found in other Southeast societies like Singapore and Malaysia by strengthening their links and benchmarking with overseas institutions (Mok and Tan, 2004). More overseas academics will be appointed to the system and international collaborations with overseas institutions in terms of research and teaching has received strong support for the state (Interviews with Professor S. Morshidi and Mr. Abdul Razak, April 2006, Malaysia).

## **Impacts of 'World-Class University' on National Higher Education Systems**

### **A zero-sum game**

What is the consequence of this drive for restructuring and ultimately, world-class status, something that can only be achieved by, as Altbach (2004) points out, a very small number of institutions within each country? As well as a few winners, there are inevitably going to be a lot of losers. In the UK, there have been department closures in different disciplines (particularly but not exclusively, in the laboratory-based disciplines) at various universities as a consequence of low RAE grades or the struggle for funds to maintain them (Jobbins, 2005). In the Netherlands, the Dutch higher professional education institutions that are responsible for professional education have struggled to keep pace with the reforms to higher education institutions. In countries like Germany it seems inevitable that students in publicly funded institutions will lose their right to free tuition, as they already have in many countries (European Commission Representation in UK, 2006). We have also noted the wholesale extent of restructuring and reform particularly in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands as well as in other EU countries. In Europe as a whole, we have observed that the EC has been discussing ways in which European universities can compete worldwide collectively as well as individually, so as to raise the overall profile. In East Asia, several countries have engaged in wholesale restructuring of their higher education systems in the search for world-class positioning and engaged in a series of internal benchmarking exercises in order to strengthen their global positioning.

Concentration of research funding (as a means of ensuring 'world-class status' for the few) has implications for the development of national higher education systems in many ways. The national role of universities may be ignored in favour of the international role (as in East Asia where publication in English language journals has taken precedence over publication in other languages). There may develop a related quest for an international academic labour market. Kwiek has noted the problems faced by the central European universities in funding the enlarged mass public higher education systems



(Kwiek, 2004). A report for UK Universities on 'Funding Research Diversity' included a comparison of regional differences across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland ([bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/funding\\_tech.pdf](http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/funding_tech.pdf)). Using RAE grades, citation indexes, publication rates and rates of staffing, the report was able to demonstrate the disparities across these various regions in England and also Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and to investigate how further concentration of research resources might affect levels of research achievement. The report found overwhelmingly that the three regions in the South-East of England, including London, had the highest density of departments rated 5/5\* in the RAE (5/5\* stands for the outstanding performance in the research assessment exercise (RAE) conducted in the UK for quality assurance purposes). If further concentration of research resources from the RAE continues then universities in these areas will be set to gain more funding whereas places such as Wales and the East Midlands would be set to lose dramatically and places in the West Midlands and the North East would suffer less harsh losses ([bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/funding\\_tech.pdf](http://bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk/downloads/funding_tech.pdf)). The substantial losses of some regions would result, they argue, in 'reduced regional research capacity (that) will have knock-on effects for regional economic performance and the capacity for technology innovation' (Adams and Smith, 2004, 12). The negative consequences of further concentration of research resources cannot be over-stated in this regard ([www.aut.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=591](http://www.aut.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=591); Adams and Smith, 2004).

Such a situation is also likely to be the case for other countries too. So while the governments of many European and East Asian countries may believe that only their quest for world-class status matters, some of the institutions may beg to differ. At the same time, it is often difficult or impossible for institutions in any one country to opt out of the quest altogether as 'At some stage and for some important purpose, every institution is going to rely on the strength and reputation of the system as a whole' (Watson, 2006, 15). For each country involved in restructuring of its higher education systems, there is also an issue about where such ideas come from and how well they work in different contexts.

### **Policy copying but not policy learning**

Evidence presented in this article so far indicates how educational restructuring reforms taking place in Asia have been significantly influenced by Western new managerial-oriented doctrines and neo-liberalist ideologies and practices. Responding to the growing impact of globalization, all the South East Asian states considered here have reviewed their education systems and launched reforms along the lines of marketization, privatization and corporatization with the intention of improving their governance and management (for details,



see Mok, 2006). In addition, international benchmarking and intensifying competition for ranking in the 'global university league' has inevitably influenced the way that Asian universities are governed. We should not simply understand 'internationalization' in Asia as merely as following the American or Anglo-Saxon standards and practices. Although the academic communities in Europe and the United States have been regarded as more 'advanced' than the Asian counterparts, higher education institutions in general and academics in particular must critically reflect on to what extent and in what way the so-called 'good practices' identified from the West can really integrate well with non-Western education systems.

Despite the fact that many of the Asian societies discussed here were 'de-colonized' after the Second World War, many of them have not really 'de-colonized' in practice, since most of them have been influenced strongly by Anglo-Saxon standards or ideologies. A number of Asian countries have just followed the academic practices dominated by the Anglo-Saxon paradigms. The introduction of English as the medium of instruction, the adoption of curricula from Australia, the UK and the USA, sending home students to study overseas and establishing international exchanges, coupled with the quest for the world-class universities as predominately defined by the Anglo-Saxon world, have not only created a new 'dependency culture' but also reinforced the American-dominated 'hegemony', particularly in relation to league tables, citation indexes and the kind of research that counts as high status. Asian societies seem to have treated 'internationalization' as 'westernization' and 'modernization' or 'Americanization' since the 19th century (Mok, 2006).

Analysing such 'internationalization experiences' in the light of Kazuhiro Ebuchi's (1997) framework, 'internationalization' could be interpreted as an 'intransitive verb' or a 'transitive verb', the concept of 'internationalization as a transitive verb' in English 'is a historical concept, which emerged from a nation with "hegemony" in the international order, while that of "internationalization as an intransitive verb" is one from a "smaller nation" which was forced to follow a "larger nation"' (Ebuchi, 1997). Thus not only European but also Asian states should be aware of the differences between policy learning and policy copying. If we copy policy practices without proper adaptation and careful contextualization, we might easily encounter problems, including in Asia, a process of re-colonization, resulting in reproducing learning experiences that do not fit the specific cultural and political environments in the East. Therefore, we need to critically examine the following questions when attempting to internationalize universities: can the standards and practices commonly available in the West be coherently adapted to Asian traditions and cultures? Would the adoption of such western practices be distorted especially without properly contextual analysis? Most important of all, would there be only one 'international standard' as defined solely by or



even dominated by, the Anglo-Saxon paradigm? Who should be involved in defining the 'international benchmarks'? Without proper contextualization, the adoption of such 'global trendy strategies' or 'global reform measures' may be proved to be counterproductive in terms of public sector reforms (Fukayama, 2005).

## Conclusion

In this article, we have examined some of the reasons why the quest for world-class status of universities (Mok, 2005) is so alluring to governments and universities in both Europe and Asia. We have looked at the developing discipline of world rankings of research and other performance indicators and some of the problems involved in such rankings. If research in universities is not to be reduced to a form of game-playing (Lucas, 2006) and if all teaching is to be organized in similar ways, what happens to system and institutional diversity? Does it become simply a consolation prize for those who have no chance of achieving world-class status? We examined recent attempts at reform and restructuring of higher education in the context of increased global competition for research success, students and academic labour in both Europe and East Asia. We drew attention to some of the less desirable consequences of the search for world leading research and teaching for those systems and institutions that are not successful. We also noted the tendency for developments to be copied slavishly in many countries, without necessarily paying attention to the local contextual factors that may affect implementation (Deem, 2001). Globalization processes are very complex, often contradictory and do not lend themselves easily to over-simplification. The quest for world-class status in higher education is clearly not going to disappear but we should not underestimate the social and political costs of higher education's engagement in globalized policy copying.

## Notes

1 Part of the materials of this article are adopted from a recent conference paper coauthored by Rosemary Deem, Ka Ho Mok and Lisa Lucas entitled 'East Meets West Meets "World-Class": What is a "World-class" University in the Context of Europe and Asia and Does it Matter?', presented at the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers Conference, Kassel, Germany, 7-9 September 2006.

2 During Mok's various field visits to Taiwan, he got the chance to talk to many university academics and they generally feel intensified pressure on research and international benchmarking being imposed on them in the last few years, especially when the Ministry of Education is keen to position Taiwan's universities in higher global ranking. Thanks to Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for supporting Mok's fieldwork in Taiwan.

## References

- Adams, J. and Smith, D. (2004) *Research and the Regions: An Overview of the Distribution of Research in UK Regions, Regional Research Capacity and Links Between Strategic Research Partners*, Oxford: Higher Education Policy Institute.
- Altbach, P. (2004) 'The costs and benefits of world class universities', *Academe* January/February, <http://www.aaup.org/publications/Academe/2004/04jf/04jfaltb.htm>.
- Anderseck, K. (2004) 'Institutional and academic entrepreneurship: implications for university governance and management', *Higher Education in Europe* 29(2): 193–200.
- Barblan, A. (2002) 'The international provision of higher education: do universities need GATS?', *Higher Education Management and Policy* 14(3): 77–92.
- Burbules, N.C. and Torres, C.A. (eds.) (2000) *Globalization and Education: Critical Perspectives*, London: Routledge.
- Chan, D. (2007) 'Global agenda, local responses: changing education governance in Hong Kong', *Globalization, Societies & Education* 5(1): 109–124.
- Chen, D.I.R. and Lo, W.Y.W. (2007) 'Critical reflections of the approaches to quality in Taiwan's higher education', *The Journal of Comparative Asian Development* 6(1): 165–186.
- Clark, B. (1998) *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation*, New York & Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Deem, R. (2001) 'Globalization, new managerialism, academic capitalism and entrepreneurialism in universities; is the local dimension still important?', *Comparative Education* 37(1): 7–20.
- Dill, D. and Soo, M. (2005) 'Academic quality, league tables, and public policy: a cross-national analysis of universities ranking system', *Higher Education* 49: 495–533.
- Ebuchi, K. (1997) *Study of the Internationalization of Universities*, Tokyo: Tamagawa University Press.
- European Commission. (2006) 'Delivering on the modernization agenda for universities; education, research and innovation COM 208', European Commission, Brussels, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/lisbon\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/lisbon_en.html).
- European Commission. (2006a) 'The European Institute of Technology: further steps towards its creation', European Commission, Brussels, accessed August 2006, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eit/comm\\_8\\_6\\_06\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eit/comm_8_6_06_en.pdf).
- European Commission Representation in UK. (2006) 'Delivering on the modernization agenda for universities; education, research and innovation', Report on seminar, 29 June 2006, London.
- Fukayama, F. (2005) *State Capacity*, London: Profile Books.
- Furushiro, N. (ed.) (2006) *Final Report of Developing Evaluation Criteria to Assess the Internationalization of Universities*, Kwansei: Osaka University.
- Guarino, C., Ridgeway, G., Chun, M. and Buddin, R. (2005) 'Latent variable analysis: a new approach to university ranking', *Higher Education in Europe* 30(2): 147–165.
- Guena, A. (1998) 'The internationalization of European universities: a return to medieval roots', *Minerva* 36(3): 253–270.
- Huang, F.T. (2006) 'Difference in the Context of Internationalization by Region: China', in N. Furushiro (ed.) *Final Report of Developing Evaluation Criteria to Assess the Internationalization of Universities*, Kwansei: Osaka University, pp. 56–70.
- Jarrar, Y. and Mohamed, Z. (2001) *Becoming World Class Through A Culture of Measurement*, Bradford: Bradford University Management Centre.
- Jobbins, D. (2005) 'Moving to a global stage: a media view', *Higher Education in Europe* 30(2): 137–145a.
- Kwiek, M. (2004) 'The emergent educational policies under scrutiny: the Bologna process from a central European perspective', *European Educational Research Journal* 3(4): 1–24.
- Kwiek, M. (2005) 'The university and the State in a global age: renegotiating the traditional social contract?' *European Educational Research Journal* 4(4): 324–342.



- Litjens, J. (2005) 'The Europeanization of higher education in the Netherlands', *European Educational Research Journal* 4(3): 208–218.
- Liu, N. and Cheng, Y. (2005) 'Academic ranking of world universities', *Higher Education in Europe* 30(2): 127–136.
- Lo, Y.W. and Chan, D. (2006) 'The impact of globalization on higher education in Taiwan and Mainland China', paper presented at the International Conference on GDPism and Risk: Challenges for Social Development and Governance in East Asia; 12–13 July 2006; Bristol, UK.
- Lo, Y.W. and Weng, F.Y. (2005) 'Taiwan's Responses to Globalization: Decentralization and Internationalization of Higher Education', in K.H. Mok and R. James (eds.) *Globalization and Higher Education in East Asia*, Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, pp. 137–156.
- Lu, M.L. (2004) 'The blueprint and competitiveness of Taiwan's higher education', paper presented at Cross Strait Seminar on Review and Prospect of the Policy of University Excellence; 25–26 March 2004; Taiwan.
- Lucas, L. (2006) *The Research Game in Academic Life*, Maidenhead: Open University Press & the Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Marginson, S. (2006) 'Dynamics of national and global competition in higher education', *Higher Education* 52(1): 1–39.
- Marginson, S. and Considine, M. (2000) *Enterprise University in Australia. Governance, Strategy and Reinvention*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marginson, S. and Sawir, E. (2005) 'Interrogating global flows in higher education', *Globalization, Societies and Education* 3(3): 281–310.
- Merisotis, J. and Sadlak, J. (2005) 'Higher education ranking: evolution, acceptance, and dialogue', *Higher Education in Europe* 30(2): 97–101.
- Ministry of Education [MOE] Taiwan. (2000) *List of Projects for the First Round of the Program for Promoting Academic Excellence of Universities*, Taipei: Ministry of Education.
- Mohrman, K., Ma, W.H. and Baker, D. (2007) 'The research university in transition: the emerging global model', *Higher Education Policy*, in this issue.
- Mok, K.H. (2005) 'The quest for world class university: quality assurance and international benchmarking in Hong Kong', *Quality Assurance in Education* 13(4): 277–304.
- Mok, K.H. (2006) *Education Reform and Education Policy in East Asia*, London: Routledge.
- Mok, K.H. and Tan, J. (2004) *Globalization and Marketization in Education: A Comparative Analysis of Hong Kong and Singapore*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Mok, K.H. and Welch, A. (eds.) (2003) *Globalization and Educational Restructuring in the Asia Pacific Region*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Neave, G. (2003) 'The Bologna declaration: some of the historic dilemmas posed by the reconstruction of the community in Europe's systems of higher education', *Educational Policy* 17(1): 141–164.
- Ngok, K.L. and Guo, W.Q. (2007) 'The quest for "world class universities" in China', *Journal of Comparative Asian Development* 6(1): 21–44.
- Nunn, A. (2002) 'GATS, higher education and "knowledge based restructuring" in the UK', *Education and Social Justice* 4(1): 32–43.
- Research Center of Chinese Scientific Evaluation of Wuhan University. (2005) *How Do We Rank the Scientific Research Competition of the World Universities?*, Wuhan, China: Research Center of Chinese Scientific Evaluation of Wuhan University.
- Research Institute of Higher Education and University Evaluation. (2005) *University Rankings in Taiwan*, Taipei: Tamkang University.
- Shattock, M. (2003) *Managing Successful Universities*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- van der Wende, M.C. (2000) 'The Bologna declaration: enhancing the transparency and competitiveness of European higher education', *Journal of Studies in International Education* 4(2): 3–10.

- Watson, D. (2006) 'UK higher education: the truth about the student market', *Higher Education Review* 38(3): 3–16.
- Yonezawa, A. (2006) 'Japanese Flagship Universities at a Crossroads', in N. Furushiro (ed.) *Final Report of Developing Evaluation Criteria to Assess the Internationalization of Universities*, Kwansai: Osaka University, pp. 85–102.
- Zaharia, S. and Gibert, E. (2005) 'The entrepreneurial university in the knowledge society', *Higher Education in Europe* 30(1): 31–40.
- Zhejiang University. (2006) *A Report on the First Session of the International Academic Advisory Committee for University Evaluation*, Hangzhou: Zhejiang University.