

Indeed, the situation is far from static. Germany is working to better integrate the powerful free-standing Max Planck Research Institutes with German universities to capture the dynamism that comes from interweaving teaching and research.

In the United Kingdom, issues of access, affordability, and top-up fees are subjects of intense debate, and visionary activities such as the Cambridge-MIT Institute seek to better couple the stellar intellectual power of British universities to national competitiveness, productivity, and entrepreneurship.

China has committed to transforming several of its universities into world-class research-intensive institutions, as have Singapore, Mexico, and many other nations. The next 50 years should produce healthy competition and progress in advanced learning and research. But cooperation is very important too.

The Internet and worldwide web will make possible global research collaboration, sharing of knowledge and collective creation of educational materials.

Local universities will not be displaced or replaced. Rather, teaching and the creation of knowledge at each university will be elevated by the Linux-like efforts of a multitude of individuals and groups all over the world. The tectonic shift can be thought of as the emergence of the meta-university.

Of course, scholars and teachers have always advanced their work collectively through conferences, seminars, and correspondence. But the scale of participation, speed of propagation, and sophistication of access and presentation that we will see in the coming years are unprecedented.

One catalyst for this new dimension of global cooperation is MIT's OpenCourseWare initiative, which is making the basic teaching materials for virtually all our subjects available on the Internet at no charge to all teachers and learners.

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The residential university will continue to be the best venue for bright young men and women to live and learn among dedicated scholars and teachers. Institutional quality will be raised through competition and adaptation of elements of the U.S. model.

But the meta-university—the electronically enabled global collaboration of teachers and researchers—will rapidly advance and improve higher education everywhere.

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Private Higher Education from Central and Eastern Europe to Central Asia

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Legitimacy in Central and Eastern European Private Higher Education

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The countries in Central and Eastern Europe have struggled with private higher education legitimacy over the last 15 years. Most of these issues exist globally as well but have proven to be starkly problematic in the region.

Belated Rapid Growth

Except for a few religious institutions with limited private character, the region was almost unique for its lack of private higher education before 1989. Much of Asia and virtually all of Latin America had certainly already moved quite far in the private direction. Furthermore, in no other region was the private sector inaugurated by such a singular event as the fall of communism. Within a couple of years most Central and Eastern European countries had a significant private higher education sector. The expansion was particularly rapid in Romania, Poland, Georgia, and Ukraine and more moderate in Hungary, Russia, and the Czech Republic—increasing quickly from zero to 10, 20, or 30 percent. Some of the countries with the most explosive growth of the private sector faced the greatest problems of legitimacy (e.g., Romania). Expansion resulted from many factors, including the low cohort enrollments that had characterized public higher education in the region. Although certain countries had some history of private higher education in the precommunist period, others (such as Russia) basically did not.

In short, factors that have undermined legitimacy globally have been intense in this region. Something new can be perceived as unfamiliar or as strange. Sudden change can provide shock and incomprehension and multiple stereotypes. Another factor involves the lack of central planning, which is especially serious where the population has been nurtured on a culture of planning. Spontaneity and distinctiveness are then met with displeasure.

Norms

The above point about culture illustrates that low rates of legitimacy involve more than just the belated and rapid growth of higher education. In Central and Eastern Europe this new phenomenon largely clashes with traditional norms. To be sure, this trend has occurred in all regions moving away from public-sector monopoly, but usually the pace was slower and involved precedents in the form of private schools or private entities in other socioeconomic spheres.

Western Europe remains the major region in the world dominated by the public sector, with very little private higher education.

Another relevant factor is the broader European context, considering that Central and Eastern Europe, once liberated, naturally looked to its Western counterparts for legitimate norms. First, it should be noted that Western Europe, around 1989, was a region where the dominant, high-status classic university model was strongly public. Second, Western Europe remains the major region in the world dominated by the public sector, with very little private higher education. As in much of the world outside the United States, “nonprofit private” has not been a widespread or well-understood concept in Europe, and private is often associated with business, suggesting an “intrusion” into higher education. As private was a suspect concept, higher education institutions in countries like Poland preferred to be known as “nonpublic.”

The dominance of a public norm was linked to secularism and national centralism. Legitimacy is seen as based on service to broad national public interests, rather than those of religious, ethnic, cultural, and other minority factions. The norm of a single standard of (high) quality—with one set of rules, curriculum, governance, and public finance—remained strong. True, this norm had already eroded in practice in some respects even for public higher education, but private higher education brought about more dramatic and radical changes.

The “highest” legitimate norms in Eastern and Central Europe were thus at odds with many things private higher education institutions would represent and undertake. Indeed, rarely anywhere in the world and almost never in this region did privates even claim to pursue the highest academic levels or comprehensiveness. Instead, they sought to fill specialized niches, very tied to the job market or to the interests of reli-

gious, ethnic, or cultural groups. The “nonuniversity” and commercial orientation is common in private higher education globally but has been accompanied by fewer alternatives in Eastern and Central Europe.

Toward Mixed and Multiple Legitimacies

Private higher education has now existed for some 15 years in Central and Eastern Europe, and the private sector’s unusually weak legitimacy is shifting to a more mixed picture. Unfamiliarity and shock have abated; rapid growth has declined. In the region, no higher education system is more than 30 percent private, whereas outside Europe the private sector often comprises a higher percentage and sometimes a large majority.

Addressing legitimacy concerns and creating stronger institutions has made the private sector look less and less unusual, strange, or illegitimate. The growing acceptance of the privates is related to changes in public higher education itself throughout Europe. Two major financial changes in the public sector are the incorporation of paying students and other nonstate income sources. A shift has also occurred in the direction of somewhat more private managerial norms. At the same time (e.g., in Romania), the state has often installed regulations or accreditation procedures to clean up some of the most illegitimate privates and give a stamp of official approval to other institutions. Some countries in the region now even allow certain forms of state funding of private institutions. And even public higher education sometimes partners with private counterparts (though of course it also often opposes them).

Finally, society and higher education come to accept more notions of multiple or plural legitimacy and ways of doing things—befitting certain groups and values. This means more room for private institutions that serve a particular constituency, even if they do not attempt to serve all sectors of society. Private institutions tied to particular groups, intranational regions, or certain international norms are more likely now to be accepted as legitimate. None of this, however, obliterates the legitimacy issues that were uppermost a decade ago. ■

Legitimizing the Goal of Educating Global Citizens

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The emergence of private sectors in higher education is recognized by UNESCO as “one of the principal developments characterizing a systemic transformation of higher education in Central and Eastern Europe.” After the fall of the Berlin wall,