

# *China's Higher Education in Global Perspective: leader or follower in the world-class movement?*

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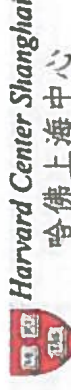
# China and the World-Class Movement

China is building the world's largest higher education system

Following successful Western (mostly US) models and good practices

By adopting these by “creative adaptation” and with “Chinese characteristics”.

It is time to view China not just as a *follower*, but also look at its (potential) role as a *global leader* in higher education.



# China as an Object & Subject of Globalization as a Follower & Leader in Higher Education

*“Not all universities are (particularly) international, but all universities are subject to the same process of globalization – partly as objects, victims even, of these processes, but partly as subjects, or key agents of globalization” (Scott, 1998).*

*“After three decades during which observers have watched how the world impacted China, it is now necessary to understand how China is impacting the world” (Schumbaugh, 2013)*



*“With China and globalization, we should not choose between thinking of the Chinese state as only either being reshaped by international forces or itself reshaping the global structure. We are instead better off drawing from all of these perspectives at once” (Wasserstrom, 2014)*

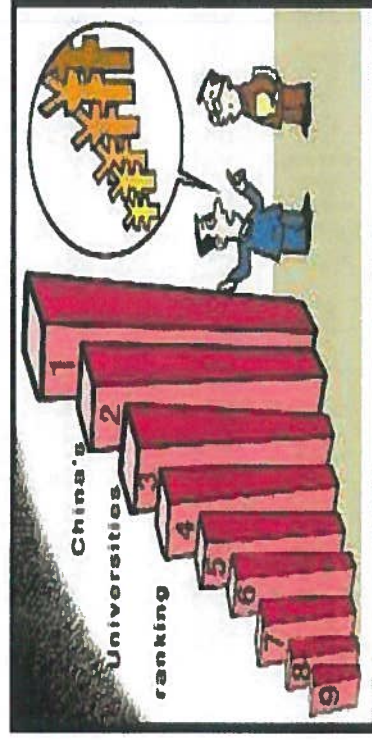
# Research Questions

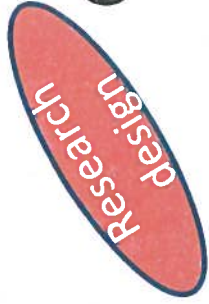
How are China's higher education and R&D policies inspired and fuelled by the **Chinese perspective** on globalization?

What will be China's role in creating **global public goods**, such as knowledge (HE & RD) and educational opportunity?

What is China's **capacity** to become a global HE leader; what are the key **conditions**, choices and strategic partnerships to become a true **global leader** in higher education?

What is China's role in the globalization of higher education, i.e. its **global agency and impact** in HE, as part of its **soft power**, its **New Silk Route** (One Belt One Route) policy perhaps?





# Conceptual Framework: Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education

## The Development of China's Higher Education in Response to Globalization

- Growth and Beyond: New Challenges and Persistent Concerns
  - Quality
  - Graduate unemployment
  - Inequality
  - Academic freedom
  - Institutional autonomy
- Policy Paradoxes

## China's Global Agency and Impact in Higher Education

- Global Public Goods and Soft Power
- The Chinese Diaspora
- Confucius Institutes
- The Shanghai Ranking and the Word-Class University Movement
- China's New Silk Route: A New Epistemic Route?

Desk research, expert meetings, multi-stakeholder interviews

# China's Role in Global Higher Education: a Leader *and* a Follower

- China's higher education focus is shifting;
- widening and diversifying
- engaging in a new role as a higher education leader
- along its New Silk Route
- primarily the developing countries
- in its neighboring region
- Diversification of economic growth policy (Industry 4.0)
- balance a high-end R&D intensive knowledge sector with innovation of its large-scale manufacturing sector
- China's WCUs continue to engage with their top-tier counterparts in the west
- German type *Fachhochschulen* as a model for its universities of applied science in the second-tier



# China's Role in Global Higher Education: a Leader *and* a Follower

- China's achievements on PISA
- Shanghai no 1 in STEM
- Global example
- Leadership
- Consulted for best practice in math teaching
- Teacher training programs
- Scope for mutual learning
- Still sending and losing its own elite - top students abroad
- Not able to attract foreign elite - top students
- Growing interest for education abroad at secondary and even primary levels
- China remains an important basis for talent recruitment by the US and Europe



# China's Role in Global Higher Education: a Follower *and* a Leader

China's global agency in higher education

- The Shanghai ranking
- Defining the global order & model of the WCU
- World-Class Movement followed in a range of countries
- Boosting global competition to which Chinese universities are subject

- (Re-)confirming the Anglo-Saxon comprehensive research university model
- Rather than imposing a model "with Chinese characteristics"

Challenges to become a real global leader in higher education:

- Internal culture of excellence in research
- Reform of teaching methods and curricula
- Matching skills demand and supply
- Modernization of governance
- Effectiveness in attracting, retaining global top talents and regaining its diaspora
- Effectiveness in soft power through HE:
  - Low for CIs
  - Potential of NSR / OBOR







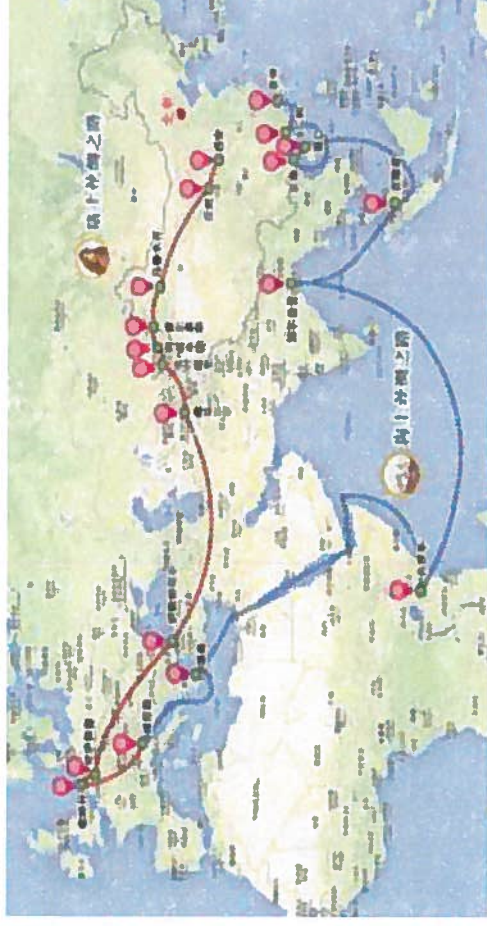
# Policy Paradoxes

- Fostering an innovation-based economic growth model
- Restricting institutional autonomy and academic freedom and pushing for standardization
- Concerns that China produces fewer innovative and creative thinkers than its global competitors
- Impeding reform for modern teaching and learning approaches.
- Internationalization , boost global competitiveness and develop international talent
- Safeguarding national heritage and educational sovereignty against risks of globalization
- Sending millions of students and faculty abroad
- Concerns about western imperialism and infiltration of “western values” via textbooks and the Internet
- Sino-foreign cooperation, foreign branch campuses
- Legal restrictions on foreign NGO’s

# New Silk Route - One Belt One Route

A New Epistemic Route Between China and Europe? (Welch, 2013)

University Alliance of the New Silk Route  
Internationalization, exchange, scholarships



## Opportunities

- Foreign investment (AIIB)
- Trade
- Technology transfer
- Skills gaps & the Chinese diaspora
- Bi- and multilateral cooperation frameworks (Erasmus Mundus, ERC) opening up to China

## Challenges:

- Coordination Issues
- Immigration issues
- Conflict areas
- Internet openness
- Foreign NGOs
- Human rights

# Global Perspectives for China

*“To make world-class universities in China, they must have “Chinese characteristics”*

(PKU Party Secretary Zhu Shanlu, quoting Xi Jinping (Febr 3, 2015)

Could such WCUs with “Chinese characteristics” could become global leaders?

*“This is an open question if they are to exist in a politically illiberal system at all.*

*And a comparative question: who leads whom and for how long will the US still be leading?”*

(Bill Kirby, Harvard, 2014).



# Leader & Follower

A leading role in the region, while still an important basis for talent recruitment by the US and Europe.

The balance between US and Europe may change with the NSR (OBOR).

Chinese universities thrive in cooperation and in competition with WCUs worldwide.

New playing fields and complexities require a next level of strategic university management

And new governance models;  
beyond the state – market dichotomies



# A World-Class System for China

*“A truly Chinese model should demonstrate a more egalitarian development towards a diversified world-class system, rather than aggressively creating WCUs at the expense of other HEIs.” (C-ACAD)*

*“Instead of aggressively creating WCUs at the expense of other HEIs, China should as a socialist country be able to demonstrate a more egalitarian development towards a world-class system”. (C-ACAD)*

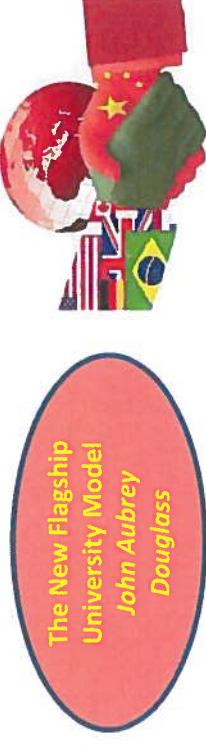
China needs a World-Class System; a diversified system of higher education institutions catering for a range of different demands with each a strong mission and quality profile and ample possibilities for students to transfer within the system at large.

International dialogue and mutual learning.

More focus on public higher education systems

- differentiation & deregulation
- autonomy & accountability

Not only on big brand private institutions!



**Thank you!**

# A Chinese Model for HE?

- *We know this: China's expansion and rise in rankings is unmatched anywhere. Its problems in access, equality and governance are shared everywhere (Kirby, 2014)*
- *“Higher education seems to be the slowest sector in China to completely open up to globalization and consequent reforms” (I-Business)*

