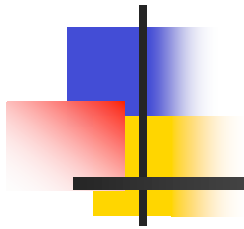


Comment on

Guide to reform higher education: a European perspective

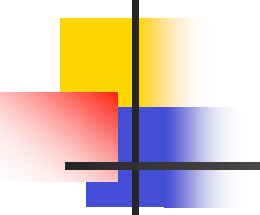


by

B. Jacobs and F. van der Ploeg

Pierre Pestieau

Summary

- 
-
- European HEI dysfunctionings
 - ❖ Inefficiency
 - ❖ Inequity
 - Need of fundamental reforms
 - Implicit benchmark: Anglo-Saxon HEI
 - Recommendations (7): less state, more autonomy, competition, transparency

General comment



- Rich paper. Heavy bibliography. Plenty of facts and ideas.
- Agreement with most statements.
- Pitfall:
 - ❖ Too ambitious: encompassing too many ideas
 - ❖ Neglect of European diversity: big versus small Nordic countries.
 - ❖ Reform at the national or the European level?
- Two biases:
 - ❖ US
 - ❖ Economist

More moderate than The Economist (9.10.05)



■ Secrets of success

- ❖ The first principle is that the federal government plays a limited part. America does not have a central plan for its universities. It does not treat its academics as civil servants, as do France and Germany.
 - ❖ The second principle is competition. Universities compete for everything, from students to professors to basketball stars.
 - ❖ The third principle is that it is "*all right to be useful*". America has always regarded universities as more than ivory towers.
- Europe improving: not likely.

Objectives of HEI

Performance. Best practice

Conceptual difficulty for HEI, university
but also faculty:

- Research
- Community service
- Teaching
- Affordability and accessibility

Measurement of performance



- Multitask models with bias towards what can be measured (e.g. research output, Nobel Prizes).
- Shanghai ranking.

- 
- Other ranking based on accessibility and affordability:

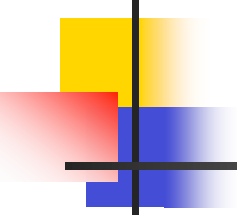
Ranking	Accessibility (13)	Affordability (16)	Shanghai (36)
Netherlands	1	3	9
Finland	2	2	16
France	8	9	6
UK	3	14	2
US	4	13	1

Redistribution issue



- Example of Belgium: HEI affordable but not accessible.
- Effort on basic education.
- Tax system (?)
- Example of Finland: PISA score, affordable and accessible HEI.

American benchmark

- 
- Yes for top graduate schools.
 - Who knows the others?
 - Specificities:
 - ❖ Private contribution (alumni)
 - ❖ Foreign trained graduate students (and faculty)
 - ❖ Non replicable: to brains what Luxembourg is to money.

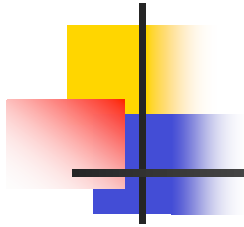


Optimal policy implications

Unconstrained differentiation of
tuitions, salaries, subsidies.

- Political sustainability?
- Transparency?

Rich literature but still missing pieces for comparative analysis



- Return to education
- Performance studies
- Redistributive incidence
- Cost and benefit of brain drain



Conclusion

- Need of reforms
- Clear role for the EU
 - ❖ Indicators of performance
 - ❖ Benchmarking
- Reforms more difficult for large countries
- Read the last paragraph