

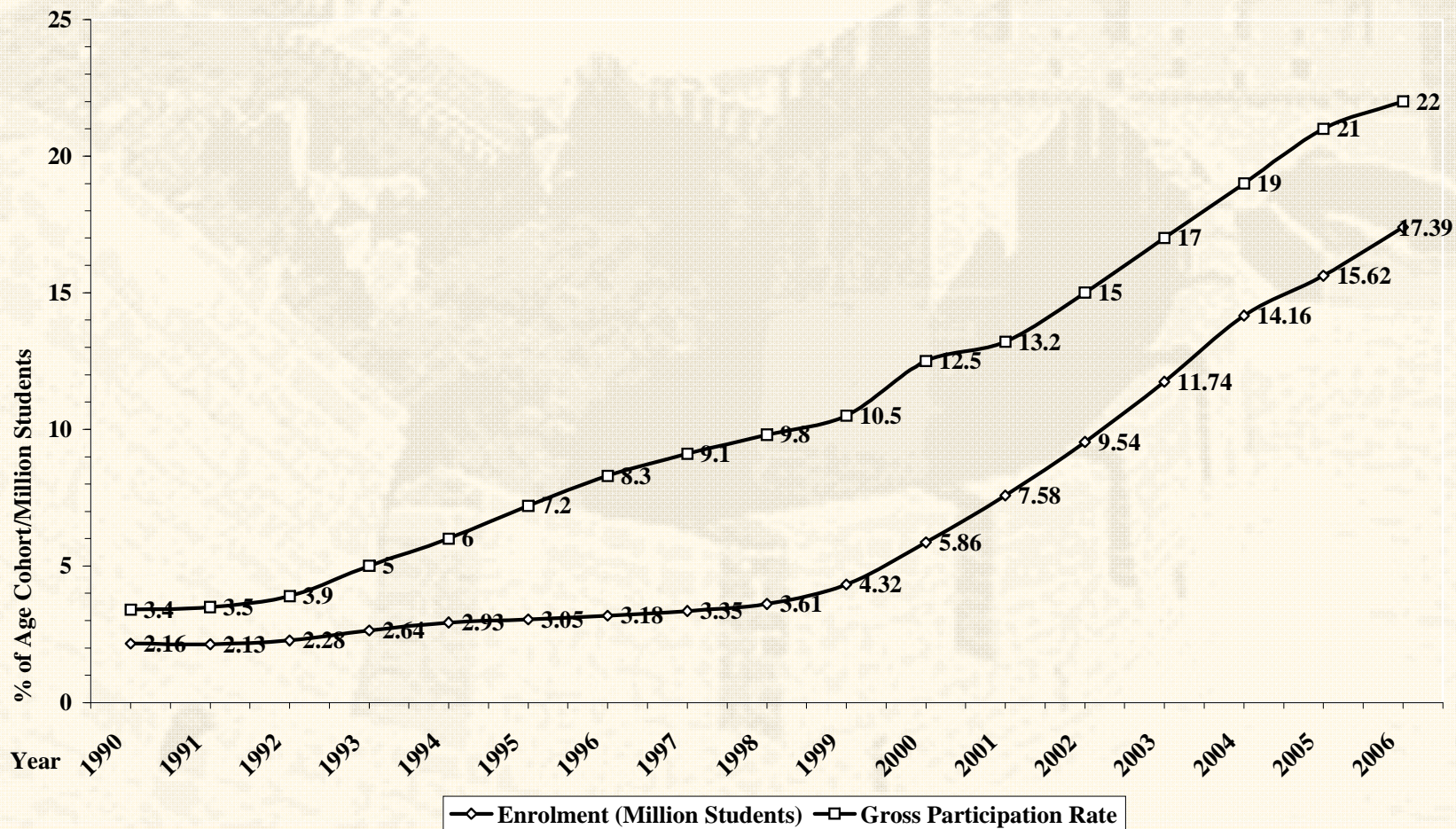
China's Move to Mass Higher Education: The Policy Process

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Higher Education Enrolment and Participation Rate Increase: 1990-2006



A Trajectory of China's Move to Mass Higher Education: from the policy perspective

Policy Papers	Goals Set	Expansion Scenario
<i>The Outline for Educational Reform and Development in China (1993)</i>	- to expand size of higher education considerably to meet the needs of accelerated reform and opening-up and the modernization drive	- regular higher education enrolment increased from 2.06 million in 1990 to 9.1 million in 2000 and 17.4 million in 2006
<i>Some Opinions of the State Council on Implementing "The Outline for Educational Reform and Development in China (1994)</i>	- to expand the higher education enrolment size to 6.3 million by 2000 - to raise the participation rate of the 18-21 age group to 8% by 2000	- the number of regular institutions changed from 1,075 in 1990 to 1,041 in 2000 and then to 1,867 in 2006 - the average institutional size increased from 1,916 in 1990 to 5,289 in 2000 and 8,148 in 2006
<i>The Ninth Five-Year Plan & Plan for Educational Development by 2010 (1996)</i>	- to increase higher education enrolment size and participation rate to 6.5 million and 8% respectively by 2000 - to increase the enrolment size and participation rate further to 9.5 million and 11% by 2010	-the student/teacher ratio rose from 5.2:1 in 1991 to 16.3:1 in 2000 and 17.9:1 in 2006
<i>Action Plan for Vitalizing Education for the Twenty-first Century (1999)</i>	- to increase higher education enrolment size and participation rate to 6.6 millions and 11% respectively by 2000 - to raise the average institutional size to 4,000, and student/teacher ratio to 12:1 by 2000	- the enrolment size of all forms of higher education reached 12.3 million and gross participation rate to 12.5% by 2000, and 25 million and 22% in 2006
<i>Decision on Deepening Educational Reform and Pressing Ahead Quality Education in an All-Around Way (1999)</i>	- to raise the higher education participation rate to 15% by 2010	



People tend to ask...

- ⌘ **Why and how did it happen in such a short timeline?**
- ⌘ **Was it another “Great Leap Forward” in higher education, or based on a rationale?**

Further, we want to ask...

- ⌘ **What are the political, economic, and social motivations behind the higher education expansion in China? What are the major objectives of the expansion?**
- ⌘ **Are there any issues of equity and equality as well as quality in the process of higher education expansion?**
- ⌘ **Which international models have had the greatest influence?**
- ⌘ **How has the employment of graduates been affected?**



Our approaches...

- ⌘ **Policy problems**
- ⌘ **Policy objectives**
- ⌘ **The normative basis of a policy**
- ⌘ **Policy instruments--“NATO-scheme”**
- ⌘ **Policy linkage**

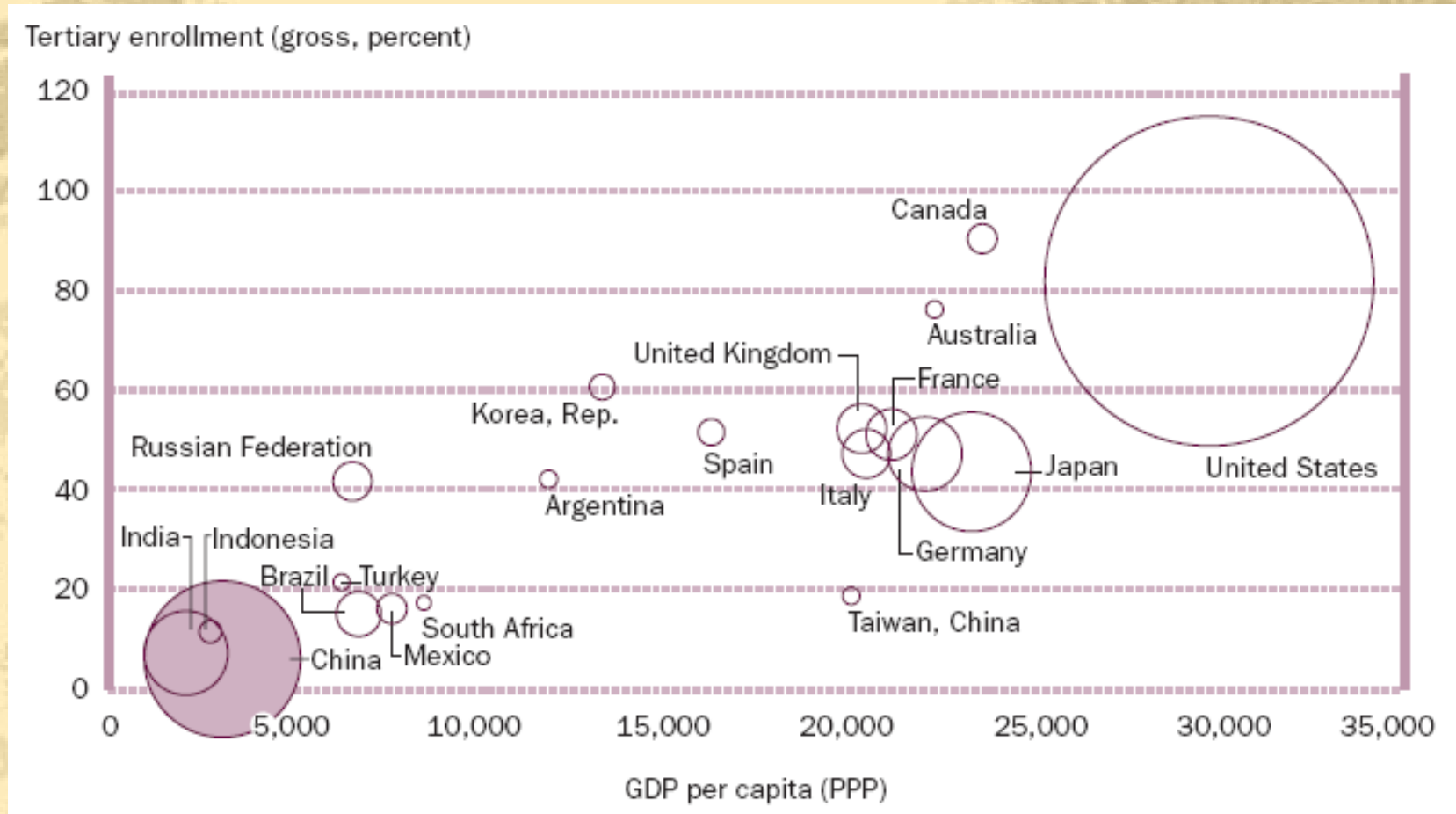
Our data collection...

- ⌘ Interviews with 4 officials in the Ministry of Education
- ⌘ Interviews with 4 policy makers with education authorities in Shanghai and Guangxi
- ⌘ Interviews with 5 scholars in Peking University, Beijing Normal University and Xiamen University

Reflection on the Policy Problems

- ⌘ **On the political and social side, a tension emerged between the social demand and the limited capacity of the higher education system, e.g., 51% of junior high school leavers went on to senior high school in 1998, contrasting 9.8% participation rate in higher education in the same year.**
- ⌘ **On the economic side, the rapid growth of the Chinese economy called for a better educated work force to support its transition to a knowledge-based economy.**
- ⌘ **China's demographic change added fuel to this urgency for higher education expansion: 2000 census revealed senior age group (65+) accounted for 6.96% of the population, which is projected to be doubled by 2020.**

Comparisons of Major Countries by Economic Size and Higher Education Participation Rates (1998 PPP)



SOURCE: Dahlman, Carl J., and Jean-Eric Aubert. *China and the Knowledge Economy: Seizing the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Institute, 2001, p.11.

The East Asia Financial Crisis in 1997 triggered more immediate problems

- ⌘ Deflation in the market met a recipe calling for expanding higher education enrolment plus charging fees, which could raise China's annual GNP growth by over 0.5% .**
- ⌘ Disturbing unemployment rate (7.9% to 8.5%) embraced a “reservoir” theory: 22.9 million Chinese youth deferred their entry into job market between 1998 and 2005.**

Reflection on the Policy Objectives

- ⌘ **Strengthening China's global competitiveness: best exemplified by the revival of the elite university schemes, e.g., Project 21/1 (108) and Project 98/5 (39)**
- ⌘ **Addressing social demand: best exemplified by the emergence and growth of vocational colleges (from less than 100 in the mid-1990s to 1,147 in 2006)**
- ⌘ **“Walking on Two Legs”: Global Excellence and Local Expansion--there emerged an increasingly stratified and hierarchical system that serves both to improve China's global competitiveness (by elite universities) and to meet domestic needs (by local universities and vocational colleges).**

A Snapshot of China's Elite Universities: The Library of Peking University



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A Snapshot of China's Elite Universities: A Teaching Building in Fudan University



A Snapshot of China's Elite Universities: The Campus of Xiamen University



Things to note...

- ⌘ **With this approach China seems to be able to maintain the world's largest higher education system, and nurture a few players at the global level.**
- ⌘ **This pyramid-shaped arrangement implies China has completely shifted away from the Soviet patterns of higher education, which had their root in the continental European tradition, and moved towards an American model, which is the world's first mass higher education system.**



Evaluation of the Policy Impact: Reflection on the Normative Basis of the Policy

- ⌘ **Economy of scale**
- ⌘ **Comprehensiveness of curricular offering**
- ⌘ **Tiered structure**

Quality, Equity and Employment Issues

Coming to the Fore

- ⌘ **Research points to a decline in education quality since the expansion, and the reported mutual complaints between the students and teachers indicate the tensions brought in by the over speedy expansion itself.**
- ⌘ **Students from upper class families tend to be favored for access to elite universities.**
- ⌘ **University graduates are now facing employment challenges: the “educated unemployment” rate at over 35% 2003-2005, which made the students and parents keen to seek access to the elite national universities, whose students are highly favored in the job market.**

Role of Government and Role of Scholars: Reflection on the Policy instruments in the Implementation Process

- ⌘ Nodality: Government Propaganda Drawing on Scholarly Inputs**
- ⌘ Authority: Government Policy Papers Having Legislative Power**
- ⌘ Treasury: Adoption of an Enrolment-Based Financing Mechanism and a Fee-Charging Policy**
- ⌘ Organization: A Decentralization of the System Urging Institutions to Strategically Plan for Their Future**

Theorizing Patterns of Education Policy Making in China

- ⌘ **China's policy decision on expanding higher education appeared to feature a rational model at the beginning, aligned with a utilitarian approach.**
- ⌘ **It has been gradually shifting towards an incremental model, with increasing components of an egalitarian approach: a lot of adjustment or even correction measures being taken to address the emerging and pressing issues as to quality, equality, equity as well as employment that are embedded in the newly massified Chinese higher education system.**



Thank You!