

## **The Social Implications of High Participation Systems (HPS) of Higher Education**

### **Global expansion**

- Gross tertiary enrolment ratio (GTER) increasing globally from 1990s to present.
- Countries with strong manufacturing sectors tend to be best at providing technical education.
- China's target is 40% participation by 2020; it is currently about 24% (2011 data). Participation is concentrated in urban areas.
- India's participation is currently about 26%, up from 7% in 1995.
- Africa is lagging behind the rest of the world in HE participation.
- Growth in Asian middle class will lead to further growth in participation

### **Drivers of participation growth**

- No clear cut relation to economic demand. Expansion near universal in countries with over \$3,000 USA per capita.
- Social demand trumps human capital theory when explaining expansion. Martin Trow argued that there will always be demand for the expansion of HE, as graduates gain better jobs and the 'educational inflation of occupations' protects them from unemployment.
- Human capital theory and equality of opportunity are policy rationales for the expansion of participation, not drivers.
- Many graduates taking employment in roles that require generic skills
- Demand for HE grows until it is universal or limited by state action
- Stronger correlation between rate of urbanisation and growth of GTER
- In China GTER growth has exceeded GDP growth
- Once states have initiated the expansion of tertiary education, it becomes self-sustaining and difficult to reverse

### **Stratification**

- The expansion of tertiary education often leads to bifurcation. Complicated by a sometimes large middle layer of HEIs
- Many countries are developing research intensive universities and significantly increasing their research output
- The expansion of HE is a Good Thing - more people are receiving a higher level of education. However, stratification can hamper social mobility.
- Some systems, such as in the Nordic countries, manage to maintain a high level of quality across the higher education system.
- Simon advocates the development of measures to regulate the quality of provision and to increase equity in the system. Creating a league table based on the quality of teaching, to sit alongside a table focused on research, may allow less prestigious universities to develop reputations for excellence.