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Breakneck expansion and quality assurance in Ethiopian higher education : ideological rationales and economic impediments

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**Abstract**

The rapid quantitative growth of higher education in Ethiopia has triggered considerable concern for quality. The present paper analyses why expanding the higher education subsector took precedence over quality against the backdrop of the current Ethiopian political discourse. This article argues that the growing public demand due to globalization and the changed local realities, the ideology of social inclusion and distributive justice, and poverty reduction rationales are the main forces driving the unprecedented growth. Further, the study examines the current state of quality assurance at system and institutional levels and their potency to maintain the equilibrium between quantitative growth and quality enhancement based on data obtained through interviews, analysis of relevant policy documents, and government statistics. Finally, ways of redressing existing quality gaps in the higher education subsector are discussed. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)