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**Author**

MARGINSON, Simon

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**Abstract**

The 'World Class University' (Liu et al., Paths to a world-class university. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, 2011) or 'Global Research University' (Ma, High Educ Policy 21:65-81, 2008) project has common features everywhere: the central role of scientific research; global networks, mobility and engagement; global referencing and branding of the institution within the framework of worldwide comparisons and ranking; and national focus on the role of universities in enhancing innovation. Some work suggests also that there is a plurality of pathways to the WCU (e.g. Salmi, The challenge of establishing world-class universities. The World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009). Arguably, the dynamic Confucian or post-Confucian higher education systems in Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan China and Singapore are shaped by family/education/state relations, different from those of North America and Western Europe. These systems rest on the comprehensive East Asian nation-state and its institutionalization of Confucian learning. Modern higher education, everywhere, is a tool of nation building. In studying variations in the traditions and forms of nation-state, we can

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better understand the variations in national higher education systems and WCUs. (HRK / Abstract  
übernommen)

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