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The student experience in China's revolutionary move to mass higher education : institutional challenges and policy implications

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**Abstract**

In recent decades, the revolutionary expansion of Chinese universities has emerged as one of the most significant phenomena in the worldwide transformation of higher education. Since 2003, China has become a country with the largest national higher education system in the world, with nearly 31 million students in 2010. What have students' experiences been in the expansion? And how do they reflect students' background characteristics? These are questions of increasing concern in recent years. With an analytical framework adapted from Martin Trow's theory of higher education expansion, this study aims at examining students' perspectives on China's move from elite to mass higher education, based on a nationwide survey conducted in 2007. The findings of this study show that China's expansion policy has brought significant changes to its higher education system, as experienced by students. With some critical reflection on how to adapt and modify internationally used analytical frameworks and how to create new indicators for comparative study in a particular context, this paper suggests several policy choices that would help the worldwide massification of

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higher education move towards a more balanced and open direction in the future. (HRK / Abstract  
übernommen)