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# COLONIAL LEGACIES IN 'ACADEMIC QUALITY' STRUCTURES: A MISSING COMPONENT IN THE DECOLONIZATION DEBATE?

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# SETTING THE CONTEXT

- The current focus of calls to decolonize teaching and learning in higher education => curricula, personnel, pedagogy
- Geographic specificities and contours





# DEFINITIONS OF QUALITY

Quality as exceptional (exceeding standards)

Quality as perfection (zero-errors)

Fitness for purpose (fitness of purpose)

Value for money

Quality as transformation

\*Harvey, L. & Newton, J. (2007). Transforming quality evaluation: Moving on. In D. Westerheijden, M. Rosa & B. Stensaker, (Eds), *Quality Assurance in Higher Education Trends in Regulation, Translation and Transformation*. Springer.



# SIGNALING INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY: RANKINGS



Higher Education Commission, Pakistan



HEC / SERVICES / UNIVERSITIES / QUALITY AND RESEARCH BASED RANKING OF PAKISTANI HEIS



‘The discourse on higher education quality improvement continues with the adoption of the *Royal Decree on Professorial Ranking* ...the *Royal Decree* aims to improve the quality of higher education through assessing the qualifications of faculty members and ranking them accordingly’ (Sen, 2019, p. 520).



# CERTIFYING INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY: ACCREDITATION

‘One of the things that characterises America as a country, and that characterises regional accreditation, is, in fact, the differences among the regions of the country ... having a centralised approach was antithetical to the very norms and values that underscore both America and also regional accreditation’

‘We were founded as an American institution... being American but off-site in a foreign country, it [SACSCOC accreditation] would guarantee that the titles and degrees were valued in the U.S.’

(Barrett, et al., 2020)

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# MEASURING STUDENT "QUALITY": ASSESSMENT





# IMPLICATIONS AND WAYS FORWARD

- Colonial/neo-colonial quality structures as impediments to innovation and student learning
  - Danger of a “single story” of what quality can look like in higher education
  
  - Ways forward?
    - More challenging
      - Thinking about quality is not in itself a problem (Are we suggesting that we simply do away with all measures and assessments of quality?)
      - We also should not romanticize everything “indigenous” as automatically better
    - Locally-informed measures of quality
    - Who is responsible for taking this forward?
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