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**Abstract**

This paper attempts to propose an alternative policy frame for higher education policy by demonstrating the inadequacy of the market approach adopted by the 2011 English higher education policy in addressing the economic and social agenda, and by reframing higher education as a mechanism that selects and distributes talents to vocational sectors in a way that achieves socially optimal outcomes. The paper shows why government control is more appropriate than market mechanism in managing higher education cost, how effective screening and distribution of talents can be achieved through deliberation among epistemic community members and how the alternative policy frame supports a social justice agenda. The idea of a meritocratic epistemic community for screening and educating talents is central to this new frame as it facilitates the creation of a common space where competing stakeholders of one vocational sector gather together to deliberate on the merits of the future workforce.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)