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Title: Access-quality trade-offs in policy design - Evidence from 'Education for All' in sub-Saharan Africa

Abstract:
This paper contrasts mainstream microeconomic theory and New Institutional Economic theory in respect to their consequences for policy design. In traditional microeconomic theory markets are perfect and thus behaviour of individuals is optimal. Therefore the value of a policy is determined by its effect on a chosen economic indicator. On the other hand from a New Institutional Economic perspective the ideal policy manipulates relevant 'institutions',the rules of the game according to which 'organisations' – groups of individuals bound by a common purpose – interact, in order to maximise its impact. This paper analyses the effect of a sudden demand shock to regional education systems in Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar and Zambia and focuses on access to school resources versus 'qualitative' factors such as household behaviours. It finds that the effect of school resources is driven entirely by asymmetric distribution and that households adapt their supportive behaviour according to the school attended by the pupil. The latter mostly being to the disadvantage of the pupil.