This volume brings together selected articles published in *University World News* (UWN) and *International Higher Education* (IHE) between 2011 and 2016. Researchers, policy makers, and practitioners alike further the development of higher education as a field of study through public and ongoing conversations. It is news, analysis, and commentary publications like UWN and IHE that facilitate this dialogue and keep pace with the most up-to-date developments in the field. Together, the articles included in this volume—alongside the section introductions—offer a rich and relevant picture of the dynamic state of higher education globally. While both publications are freely available online, this book provides a thematically coherent selection of articles, offering an accessible and analytic perspective on the pressing concerns of contemporary higher education.
Understanding Global Higher Education
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON HIGHER EDUCATION

VOLUME 37

Series Editors:

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Scope:

Higher education worldwide is in a period of transition, affected by globalization, the advent of mass access, changing relationships between the university and the state, and the new technologies, among others. Global Perspectives on Higher Education provides cogent analysis and comparative perspectives on these and other central issues affecting postsecondary education worldwide.

This series is co-published with the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College.
Understanding Global Higher Education

Insights from Key Global Publications

Edited by

Georgiana Mihut, Philip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit
Center for International Higher Education, Boston College, USA
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This book emerged from the collaboration between International Higher Education, the quarterly publication of the Boston College Center for International Higher Education and University World News, the weekly on-line publication. Both publications provide news and analysis to the higher education community worldwide. We have selected for this book some of the most relevant articles over the past five years on topics of lasting interest. A second book will focus on news and analysis on internationalization in higher education.

We are indebted to our colleagues at UWN for their continuing collaboration. Brendan O’Malley, Mandy Garner, and Karen MacGregor have been especially helpful. At the CIHE, we thank Salina Kopellas for her continuing staff support and Lisa Unangst for editorial assistance. We thank Peter de Liefde of Sense Publishers for his ongoing support to the Book Series on Global Perspectives in Higher Education, in which this book is published as number 36.

Georgiana Mihut has taken the main responsibility for selecting and organizing the articles included here and for drafting the introductions to the sections.
INTRODUCTION

This volume brings together selected articles published in *University World News* (UWN) and *International Higher Education* (IHE). The articles are logically organized by key themes that reflect the most central issues facing global higher education. While both publications are freely available online, this book provides a thematically coherent selection of articles, offering an accessible and analytic perspective on the pressing concerns of contemporary higher education.

Researchers, policy makers, and practitioners alike further the development of higher education as a field of study through public and ongoing conversations. It is news, analysis, and commentary publications like UWN and IHE that facilitate this dialogue and keep pace with the most up-to-date developments in the field. On 8th of July 2012, Jordi Curell, then the head of the higher education division in the European Commission’s (EC) education and training directorate DG-EAC, was interviewed by *University World News*. The interview focused on the recent EC proposal to bundle its many distinct programs focused on education and training into a single streamlined program (Jongsma, 2012). That proposal became what is currently known as Erasmus+, an initiative allocating a record 14.7 billion Euro to support international mobility. In the last five years, among many other developments, UWN covered the harmonization deal reached by Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda in 2014 (Nganga, 2014), continuously monitored the evolving higher education landscape in Myanmar following internal conflicts, and analyzed policy shifts in Chile after dramatic student protests. At the same time, *International Higher Education* offered sharp, comprehensive, and accessible analysis on both highly visible and less known trends and activities in the world of higher education. The publication produced myriad articles discussing and debating the phenomena of university rankings, the internationalization of higher education, and access and equity issues.

*Understanding Global Higher Education: Insights from Key Global Publications* draws on the contributions of both IHE and UWN to highlight major trends in higher education in the last five years, and may be best understood as an exercise in curation. With few exceptions, articles published between the 1st of January 2011 and 31st of May 2016 were considered for inclusion. Our philosophy in selecting articles was to prioritize breadth of content and perspective. As editors, we tried to select works that are insightful, clear, and representative—we have not necessarily attempted to select the best published articles in the respective publications. We have grouped the articles across themes that are recurrent in both publications—and that we feel have a continued relevance and importance to higher education worldwide.
The themes themselves were chosen after a qualitative analysis of 1,897 published pieces in UWN and IHE. At the end of the exercise, we decided to publish the selected articles in two distinct books. This volume centers around general topics of interest in higher education around the world. The second book focuses specifically on issues relevant to the field of internationalization of higher education. Most themes included in this book will be familiar to higher education readers, but some will seem less obvious. In order to help the reader make sense of our selected articles, each section of the book will start with a brief introduction that aims to tie together the articles included.

WHAT PROMPTED THIS BOOK?
An established tradition in the field of higher education seeks to map activity and important developments within the field as a whole, often reflected in published surveys of higher education publications and websites. It is likely the disparate views and approaches to higher education as a field that draw researchers to review and analyze the products of their own discipline.

Indeed, higher education, by most standards, is a new field of inquiry. The field itself is very diverse, prompting Macfarlane and Grant (2012) to describe it as a “multiple series of intersecting cognate fields” (p. 1). Philip Altbach considered the emergence of the field and provided a sense of its history and current status (Altbach, 2014). Tight (2012) defines the field of higher education in relation to the very themes it approaches, the methods it uses, the theories it employs, and the levels of analysis at which research is conducted. To support his definition, which resulted from a similar mapping exercise as the one on which this book is based, Tight (2012) engaged in an analysis of the academic articles and books published in the field of higher education. Similarly, Horta and Jung (2014) engage in an indexing exercise of internationally published higher education articles for the purpose of mapping the research approaches employed and the common themes. At the end of the process, the authors were able to illustrate that publications by Asian higher education researchers cluster around one of two themes: policy or teaching and learning. Later, Jung (2015) replicated this methodology to analyze the research output of South Korean higher education researchers, identifying a predominant theme of national-centrism. Using a similar thematic and longitudinal approach, Kehm (2015) mapped the research activity of the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers members, one of the largest communities of higher education researchers. The results of this research illustrate an increased focus on governance, management, and organizational issues in the field of higher education. Other attempts at defining the field focus on mapping the curriculum taught to PhD students in higher education, specifically in the United States. This analysis reveals that while the focus on administration, leadership, and organization seems common across all reviewed programs, topics such as community colleges and multiculturalism receive see less representation across PhD studies curricula (Card, Chambers, & Freeman, 2016).
INTRODUCTION

However, similar exercises have not been conducted on news and editorial publications relevant to the field of higher education. Importantly, these publications often include broad scope and up to date analysis, which more formal academic literature does not offer. The Boston College Center for International Higher Education has a strong tradition of mapping the field of higher education and is well positioned to fill this gap. Its most prominent mapping exercise to date is the Worldwide Higher Education Inventory of research centers, academic programs, and journals and publications. The most up to date edition of the inventory was published in 2014 (Rumbley et al., 2014), and an interactive online version is available on the center’s website.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITY WORLD NEWS

*International Higher Education* (IHE) is a quarterly publication published by the Center for International Higher Education which offers contributions from authors worldwide who address local, regional, and global issues in the field of higher education. It is currently translated into 6 languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese). In addition, IHE is also published in English as a supplement to the *Deutsche Universitatszeitung*, the main magazine focusing on higher education in German-speaking countries.

*University World News* (UWN) is the oldest and most comprehensive global news outlet for the field of higher education. The publication provides reporting, and commentary on developments in higher education and related issues of concern. It also reports on international conferences of higher education and holds webinars with a view to provoking debate and sharing opinion and expertise globally. UWN distributes its e-newspaper weekly to higher education professionals worldwide, most of them senior academics, university leaders, higher education managers, and policy-makers. UWN is read in 150 countries and enjoys a strong readership base in all regions, particularly in Europe, North America, and Africa. The e-newspaper has gained a reputation as a high-quality publication, was the sole media partner of the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (2009), and has had media partnerships with OECD, the Talloires Network, British Council, CHEA and the MasterCard Foundation, among others. Launched in 2007, *University World News* has nearly 50,000 readers who receive its weekly global edition newsletter, and nearly 27,000 subscribers to its Africa edition weekly newsletter; its website has 1.5 million hits a month and the publication has 14,000 twitter followers as well as 16,000 Facebook “likes.”

While IHE includes standardized articles in terms of length and structure, UWN is more flexible in the type of pieces published. However, both publications encourage a diversity of authors, topics and perspectives and frequently include short pieces about relevant research published in the field, as well as book reviews, analysis of policy initiatives and debates on different topics. The two publications also closely
collaborate: UWN publishes IHE articles on a regular basis. In addition, as of 2017 the two publications are working together as partners. Thus, through an analysis of these publications we may derive insights about higher education research and practice.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Before introducing the sections of this book, we offer a few observations about the reproduction of the articles from IHE and UWN in book format. First, we note that the UWN articles included were retrieved from the UWN website. Online articles traditionally have different layout standards than printed materials, particularly with respect to paragraph structure, which tends to be shorter, sometimes comprised of one sentence alone. Being cognizant of the reader’s experience, articles included here have been re-formatted to stop at a logical point. Another distinct feature of online news articles is the use of hyperlinks as opposed to traditional referencing systems; in this book, hyperlinks representing relevant content references were transformed into in-text citations following the American Psychological Association referencing system. Hyperlinks that linked the name of an organization to the corresponding website were excluded during this process. Lastly, while UWN is published in British English, IHE uses American English, and reproductions in this volume match the original language versions of each publication.

This book is structured in nine distinct sections, each of them addressing a major theme resulting from a coding process including all articles reviewed for this publication. These themes are by no means exhaustive, but do capture the main areas of focus in both IHE and UWN. Each section includes a different numbers of articles. Generally, a section begins with a global focus, followed by articles addressing regions and then country-specific pieces. Each section of the book is accompanied by a brief introduction that aims at bringing the selected articles together. The titles of the articles include a note pertaining to the geographical unit of focus of the article. If an article has a global focus, “Global” appears at the beginning of the title. The country or region of focus is similarly labeled.

The first section of the book includes articles centered on issues of access and equity, gathering articles that look at different groups experiencing marginalization on a global, regional, and national scale. Related phenomena, such as massification and affirmative action, are also represented. The second section of the book groups articles that discuss diversification, rankings, and stratification in higher education. This topic has gained substantial attention in the field of international higher education in recent decades and is expected to shape future dialogue. Issues of finance in higher education are highlighted in section three. We include regional and country based perspectives on the challenges higher education systems and stakeholders have faced in increasingly constrained resource environments. Section four discusses the classic triangle in higher education formed by universities, the state, and the market (Clark, 1983). Articles that discuss broader policy issues and economic implications
of higher education are grouped in this section. Perhaps one of the least expected (yet exceedingly important) topics facing higher education today is discussed in section five, which addresses external threats to higher education such as war, terrorism, violence, and natural disasters. Section six highlights distance education and information & communication technology as well as the perennial debates on the roles and implications of distance education for higher education. Section seven provides a more reflective discussion on the mission(s) of higher education and its institutions. Section eight introduces facets of the academic profession and student experience, including issues such as academic freedom, faculty mobility, and student activism. The book concludes with a selection of articles on unethical behavior in the education sector, reminding readers of the potential pitfalls of higher education, and what various stakeholders need to guard against.

This book brings together not only articles written by authors located in different geographic regions, but also from diverse professional backgrounds. Contributions from journalists, doctoral students, higher education researchers, and higher education practitioners are included. Together, the articles included in this volume—alongside the section introductions—offer a rich and relevant picture of the dynamic state of higher education globally.

REFERENCES


PART 1
ACCESS AND EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION
INTRODUCTION

This first section discusses one of the most crucial aspects of education worldwide: access and equity. If education is meant to ensure social mobility, then it must pay attention to those that have systematically been marginalized. However, increasing access to education is not a simple feat. The articles selected discuss some of the important aspects of this ongoing conversation and the related policy challenges.

Elaine Unterhalter engages critically with the normalization of global inequalities in higher education, as a stepping stone in what should become a collective effort to address it. The article written by Laura Dudley Jenkins and Michele Moses presents an overview of the state of affirmative action across the world. Their piece illustrates the diverse use of affirmative action as a limited, yet important remedy to address inequalities between social groups based on criteria beyond race. In an article that offers a nuanced understanding of the role of higher education expansion on social mobility broadly and income distribution specifically, Martin Carnoy shows that massification may have perverse effects, different than what higher education professionals expect. Carnoy shows that in BRIC countries, income distribution became increasingly striated concurrent with more students accessing higher education through the massification process. The next two articles highlight some of the access challenges faced by groups that are less discussed in the broad literature on higher education access. Wagdy Sawahel discusses how higher education can and should be made accessible to prison populations. William New brings attention to a particularly timely and essential conversation regarding access in the European context, addressing the needs and dire prospects of Roma students. The section concludes with an article focused on the negative effects of massification on inequality in the Chinese context, written by Qiang Zha.

Together, the articles highlight the need to further address barriers to access, the diverse needs of the populations higher education should best serve, and also urge caution with respect to the possible limitations of current approaches to improving access and equity.
Virtually all the discussion of collective good associated with the debate about the increase in university tuition fees in England has been framed by national concerns to ensure Britain’s universities remain ‘world-class’. The term ‘world-class’ denotes intrinsic achievement. But it also implies rank order and attendant inequalities. What forms does global inequality in higher education take and what’s wrong with it?

Global inequality in higher education is enmeshed with wider dimensions of global inequality, particularly poverty and vast discrepancies in income. Common measures of poverty indicate that nearly two billion people live in conditions of grave inequality. Responses to this range from the minimal humanitarian to the maximal egalitarian. Maximal egalitarians argue for a substantial provision of public goods by national and international agencies in relation to education, health and social development to establish the conditions for decent life.

INEQUALITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is an important component of this, but inequalities in income are compounded by inequalities in higher education systems. These include inequalities of distribution. Although the numbers of students have increased worldwide, they have proportionally grown least in low-income countries. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest participation rate for higher education in the world (6%). But for some of the countries with the lowest levels of human development this is even lower.

Generally, students come from families that have historically had access to higher education. Thus, while there has been some expansion of opportunities for lower socio-economic groups to participate in higher education in richer countries, these chances are virtually non-existent in the poorest countries in the world, where arguably the expansions of higher education might make an enormous difference.

There are also inequalities in resources. Nearly half of those teaching in higher education worldwide possess only a bachelor degree. In many countries class sizes have increased and students receive little personal guidance. Academic salaries have deteriorated and many academics hold more than one job and have few opportunities to undertake research. In addition, there are inequalities in status and esteem,
exemplified by league tables in which universities in developing countries barely feature.

The fourth kind of inequality is that between higher education institutions that have some orientation to global inequalities and those that ignore them. This ignoring can take many forms, ranging from an almost exclusive focus in curriculum and pedagogy on economic, social and political processes that heighten inequality and lack of dignity for the poorest, to casual treatment of their concerns.

There are some inequalities that appear neutral. For example, in our society it does not make much difference what colour one’s eyes are, but a great deal of research suggests it still does make a difference what colour one’s skin is. This, often in association with socio-economic conditions, affects whether or not one gets good school-leaving results, which university one attends and whether one will become a professor. Thus some inequalities are neutral and some, through no fault of the individual or her family, carry harsh penalties. These penalties within a particular wealthy country like the UK are amplified enormously if one happens to be born in a poor country.

Some inequalities are historical and these matter in different ways because they mean there is no level playing field. This is tied in with histories of colonialism, the uneven development of capitalism since the 1970s and the pervasiveness of discriminations associated with gender, race, and particular ethnicities over centuries.

Inequalities in one space, for example the level of esteem given pure mathematics in different well-funded higher education communities, may not be the same as inequalities in another, for example the numbers of well-taught primary health care workers who are able to work with the poorest. But the inequalities in the different spaces have different consequences.

The global inequalities in higher education I am concerned with are those that limit capabilities, the ways in which unequal higher education institutions may contribute through omission or commission to limiting the chance of lives with dignity for the poorest and might foreclose on the building of what Professor Darrel Moellendorf, director of the Institute for Ethics and Public Affairs at San Diego State University, has called the principle of associational justice, a concept which emphasises the interdependence of national and global realms of justice.

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR GLOBAL INEQUALITIES

Three kinds of justifications for global inequalities between universities are generally offered. Firstly, the competition argument is made. By this analysis there is nothing morally problematic about opening up higher education to a range of providers, a range of fee structures, and a range of delivery mechanisms, and encouraging every kind of exchange. Secondly, a diversity argument acknowledges students and higher education institutions are different. Here the notion is that as long as we respect different cultures of learning, teaching and research in higher education, inequality
GLOBAL: WHAT IS WRONG WITH GLOBAL INEQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

is not in itself problematic. A third justification is a version of national or community or family ‘desert’ [merit].

I rebut these three arguments regarding why global inequality in higher education is not problematic since they rest on a number of presuppositions, notably that competition, difference and desert are neutral. I show that competition, diversity in this banal form and desert cannot build Moellendorf’s associational justice, or even the conditions that might allow this principle to be reviewed. Arguments for competition have merit, because they emphasise freedom. Arguments for difference must be acknowledged, because they recognise diversity. Arguments for desert cannot be completely ignored, because they do give credit to hard work, enterprise and risk. But making these arguments only in relation to these abstracts and failing to contextualise them undermines their salience.

Inequality in higher education capabilities for institutions and individuals tends to undermine investigation into global public goods. That such questions of global public good are ignored has something to do with the way global inequalities in higher education are taken for granted. Naming these inequalities and questioning their foundations is an important project.
Is affirmative action in higher education on its way out? If you take a global perspective, the answer is “no.” In April 2014, the US Supreme Court’s decision in Schuette v. Coalition to defend Affirmative Action reinforced a common perception that affirmative action will not be around for much longer. Schuette makes it even more difficult for some American colleges and universities to engage in affirmative action by affirming the constitutionality of state ballot initiatives that ban affirmative action programs. Yet about one quarter of the countries of the world have some form of affirmative action in student admissions into higher education, and many of these programs have emerged over the last 25 years.

This is just one of the findings drawn from a new country-by-country database on affirmative action for students in higher education worldwide. Three significant patterns emerge from these data. First, as noted above, affirmative action policies have expanded globally in the last quarter century. A second finding is the salience of gender. Gender is the most prominent demographic category used for eligibility for affirmative action, rivaling race, ethnicity, and class/income. A third trend is that institutions of higher education and governments have been experimenting with race-neutral affirmative action policies or multifaceted notions of disadvantage, in response to legislative threats, legal challenges, or social criticism.

COUNTRIES THAT HAVE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

About one quarter of nations across the world use some form of affirmative action for student admissions into higher education. Although these policies go by many names—affirmative action, reservations, alternative access, positive discrimination—all are efforts to increase the numbers of underrepresented students in higher education. Various institutions or governments on six continents (Africa, Asia, Australia/Oceania, Europe, North America, and South America) have programs to expand admissions of nondominant groups on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, class, geography, or type of high school.

Several combine these categories. These combinations show that policies to offset racism or other forms of xenophobia can complement policies to fight economic
disadvantages. Although some nations—such as India, Tanzania, and the United States—have had affirmative action policies and programs for a longer time period, most programs for students in higher education started in the 1990s or 2000s.

GENDER A POPULAR POLICY TARGET

Another finding is the popularity of policies targeting women. These policies may get less attention in some cases than those targeting underrepresented racial or ethnic groups, but they increasingly dominate the affirmative action landscape. Programs that started more recently are more likely to include women. Even more countries have programs to advance schooling for girls. More countries have gender-conscious affirmative action than any other type of policy target. When women are overrepresented in colleges and universities, some of these affirmative action policies are specific to certain fields in which women remain underrepresented.

The next most popular foci for affirmative action efforts are ethnicity (including policies organized by ethno-regions) and class (which is also sometimes conceptualized by residence, namely areas determined to be underprivileged). Less prevalent are policies based on race or disability, and rarest of all are caste-based policies, although their implementation in India means that the population of students eligible for caste-based affirmative action is substantial.

BEYOND RACE

Programs in several countries target multiple forms of social inequality and avoid solely race-conscious policies. Brazilian affirmative action is race-conscious but also includes other students considered to be disadvantaged, such as graduates of government secondary schools or students with low-family income. Even South Africa, only free from apartheid for two decades, has some alternate access programs that have begun admitting disadvantaged white students, and other admissions programs consider a range of socioeconomic indicators related to housing, schooling, and family circumstances.

Some policies attempt to combine poverty with other indicators of disadvantage to select students, such as French policies prioritizing and recruiting from low-income neighborhoods or schools, based in ZEPs (Zones d’Education Prioritaire, or priority education areas). An inverse strategy to achieve similar ends excludes the wealthy, as in India’s policy of skimming the economic “creamy layer” of more prosperous individuals from eligibility for reserved seats for the groups officially designated as “Other Backward Classes”—a category that already combines both caste- and class-conscious criteria. Israel has successfully integrated ethnicity/nationality and socioeconomic status as targets of affirmative action programs aimed at diversifying selective higher education institutions. Admissions categories focus on the structural challenges students face based on living in disadvantaged neighborhoods and attending low-quality secondary schools.
GLOBAL: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION INITIATIVES AROUND THE WORLD

IMPLICATIONS

What are the implications of these international policy examples for countering social inequality in higher education? Affirmative action is not a comprehensive solution for poverty or discrimination, but systems of higher education can provide more equitable chances for impoverished or underrepresented students to attend selective colleges and universities. Indices, zones, and other measures are not replacing the role of race, ethnicity, or gender in well-designed affirmative action programs but are increasingly combined with these categories.

So long as past or present racism, casteism, sexism, or other barriers shape opportunities in a particular society, equity policies can be better designed to reflect and counteract the way multiple forms of disadvantage intersect in the lives of students. Whether motivated by a desire to increase access, expand diversity, or simply recalibrate existing policies in response to court rulings or state referenda, administrators and policymakers should look abroad for ideas. Affirmative action is alive and well—and indeed increasing—around the world.
3. GLOBAL: DOES HIGHER EDUCATION EXPANSION EQUALIZE INCOME DISTRIBUTION?

International Higher Education, Spring 2013, Number 71

A widely-held belief about the benefits of expanding access to education is that greater access extends social mobility and income equality. In the case of higher education, as enrollments expand, bright youth from lower-income families are more likely to enter and complete universities. In theory, this should increase the chances of such individuals to move upward economically, by making them more able to compete for higher-paying jobs associated with a higher degree. Further, with rapid increases in the number of higher education graduates, their relative earnings may fall, eventually making overall income distribution more equal.

This belief runs up against a contrary reality. In many countries where the number of secondary and higher education graduates is expanding at high rates, income distribution is becoming more unequal and, in some cases, social mobility is at a standstill.

Recent research, by a group of international scholars, studied this phenomenon empirically, trying to understand whether educational expansion creates greater income equality. This research focused on Brazil, Russia, India, and China, known as the BRIC countries. The BRICs have 40 percent of the world’s population and, in the past 15 years, have managed an enormous leap in their higher education enrollment.

MODELING EARNINGS VARIATION

Traditionally, economists have modeled earnings variation as a function of the level of schooling in the labor force, the dispersion (variance) in the number of years of schooling in the labor force, the economic payoff to a year of schooling (the rate of return to schooling), and the dispersion of rates of return to different levels of schooling. Economists have usually assumed that as levels of education in the workforce increase to fairly high levels, the payoff to schooling falls, and the dispersion in years of schooling also declines. This is quite logical, given economic theories about competitive labor markets and the fact that schooling seems to expand much more rapidly than employer demand for more schooled labor.

On the other hand, it has been observed that even as school systems expand, including the rapid expansion of university graduates for the labor force, the payoff
for these graduates does not fall, and even tends to increase relative to the payoffs for secondary school graduates.

Why does this happen? There are many possible explanations. One is that higher educated labor can be substituted for lower educated labor. Thus, this tends to drive down the wages of the less educated. Even if the wages of the higher educated stay fairly constant—as they did, for example, in the United States in the 1980s—the wages of secondary school graduates tend to fall, as that market becomes increasingly “crowded” with the less educated. A second possible explanation regards the expanding knowledge intensity of production and services, the demand for higher educated workers grows faster than the higher education system expands. A third possible explanation is that countries pursue fiscal policies that favor higher-income individuals, anti-union policies that put pressure on the earnings of lower-educated workers. Such policies would have increased income inequality.

OUR RESEARCH FINDINGS

Whatever the explanation, even as higher education expanded apace in the four studied countries, it appears that the payoff for university graduates tended to increase (not decline) in the past decade, and it tended to expand, relative to the payoff for secondary education. This also raised the dispersion in rates of return among levels of education. Together, these “payoff effects” contributed to the rising inequality of earnings and tended to offset whatever equalizing effect the higher level of education and the declining variance of years of schooling in the labor force.

Thus, these results for the BRICs show that in the past decade, higher education expansion and the associated change in the rates of return to education seemed to maintain or broaden income inequality. In Brazil, two opposite forces in education affected income distribution: the increase in the variance of the rate of return to education times the rising average level of education contributed to increased income inequality. However, countering that tendency, the falling average payoff to education in Brazil, combined with the increased variance in years of education in the labor force, helped decrease income inequality. In China, the rate of return to education and the growth of the years of education in the labor force especially contributed to higher income inequality. In India, inequality probably rose, due to factors outside the rapid rise of education levels in the labor force. Finally, in Russia, it appears that education expansion contributed in a small way to higher income inequality, despite small changes in the rates of return to education. In Russia, as in India, the main change in income inequality probably was due to other unobserved factors.

Two other factors may be contributing to the rising income inequality in China, Russia, and India or, as in Brazil, to keeping income inequality steadier than it might have been otherwise—in the face of more general income redistribution policies. The first of these factors is the increased differentiation of spending on elite and mass higher education institutions in Brazil, China, and Russia (not evidenced in
India. Over the past 5–10 years, spending has increased per pupil in elite institutions, whereas mass institution may even face decreased spending per pupil. Since higher social class students more likely dominate elite institutions, they disproportionately benefit from this differentiation.

The second factor is the distribution of overall public spending on higher education. This public spending—even in a country such as Brazil, where 75 percent of students attend private universities not subsidized by the government—is skewed heavily toward students coming from the highest 20 percent of income families. Higher-income students in Brazil, China, India, and even Russia, approaching almost universal attendance in postsecondary education, are the ones heavily subsidized by the state.

The enormous expansion of higher education in the BRICs has, therefore, not been effective in equalizing income distribution. The implication of these results is that, without powerful fiscal and social spending policies aimed directly at reducing income inequality, it will remain high and may even continue to rise.
4. UNITED STATES: BEYOND BARS—BOOSTING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR PRISONERS

University World News, 26 August 2012, Issue 236

Universities and governments must not lose sight of the higher education needs of the world’s 10 million detained people. Access to education should be improved and technology harnessed to deliver cost-effective, quality programmes, to enhance prisoners’ chances of rehabilitation, employment and reintegration into society. A 2012 study indicated that unemployment levels among released offenders are higher than among other members of society, due to inadequate education and job skills. The five-year follow-up study revealed that recidivist offenders were likely to be unemployed or under-educated. Most importantly, the study showed formal education is an important element for re-entry into society, impacting on both post-release employment and recidivism.

PEOPLE BEHIND BARS: WORLDWIDE VIEW

Over 9.25 million people are detained globally, either as pre-trial detainees or as sentenced prisoners. Almost half of these are in the US (2.19 million), China (1.55 million) or the Russian Federation (870,000). And prison populations are on the increase in an estimated 73% of the world’s countries, according to a 2009 UN report titled The Right to Education of Persons in Detention.

Women represent a small proportion of the global prison population; available figures suggest the rate is between 2% and 9%, with the global average at roughly 4%. “Nearly seven in 10 formerly incarcerated persons will commit a new crime, and half will end up back in prison within three years. Given that roughly 95 of every 100 prisoners will eventually rejoin society, policy efforts to decrease the likelihood of recidivism are important on both social and economic grounds,” according to the May 2011 report, Unlocking Potential: Results of a national survey of postsecondary education in state prisons.

John Daly, a science and technology consultant and former director of the office of research at USAID, told University World News that in the US, prisoners are incarcerated for longer periods and for less serious offences than elsewhere. He pointed out that adding a criminal record to the problems that led initially to crime makes it doubly hard for such people to get decent jobs and rebuild their lives when
they are again free. He argued that higher education programmes that help prisoners obtain skills and certification seem to pay off, by allowing them to work on release: “Graduates of these programmes have lower recidivism rates.”

SIGNIFICANCE OF BOOSTING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR INMATES

Aileen Baumgartner, director of the Bedford Hills college programme at the US-based Bedford Hills correctional facility, told University World News: “Practically speaking, college degrees help people—and inmates—procure viable employment in hopefully more fulfilling jobs... employment drastically diminishes the recidivism rate, which is good for all of us since incarceration is very expensive for the taxpayer.”

Rebecca Ginsburg, director of the Education Justice Project at the US-based University of Illinois, highlighted similar benefits: “By significantly lowering recidivism rates, prison education saves taxpayers money and increases public safety.” Research has demonstrated that college-in-prison programmes reduce arrest, conviction and re-incarceration rates among released prisoners more than any other prison-based intervention.

Those interviewed also mentioned the combined intellectual-community value of higher education. “College students (not all of course, inside or outside) learn there are many roads to conflict resolution, and that facts and research matter in such resolutions, and that violence is a sign of failed communication,” said Baumgartner. She also spoke of the “ripple effect” of offering education to prison inmates. “Most of our students are mothers. Now they are in college, they want their children to attend college, and they dedicate themselves to the fulfilment of that goal. What did not seem to be a possibility, in short, now does.”

PROBLEMS OF UNIVERSITY ACCESS

On the question of the value of a higher education for prisoners, Baumgartner suggested that the question itself indicates societal ambivalence about spending “scarce resources” on the incarcerated—despite statistics indicating that such investment will be returned in lower incarceration costs.

Ginsburg agreed that the primary obstacle to increasing educational access to prisoners was not cost. “The biggest obstacle is the widespread sentiment, in the United States, that education is a private good, that in educating incarcerated people we are rewarding them, and that prisons should be uncomfortable, punitive sites of vengeance. The political will to critically address such attitudes is weak, since being seen as ‘soft on crime’ is something American political leaders try to avoid.” She suggested that this problem could be overcome by a range of approaches: political courage; studies that demonstrate the cost-effectiveness and safety-effectiveness of prison education (which would make it easier for public officials to come out in favour of them); and a “shift in public sentiment away from the vengeance and retribution model towards rehabilitation.” She also emphasised the importance,
for reducing high incarceration rates in the US, of a commitment to addressing the roots of violence: “Poverty, disenfranchisement, poor public education systems, and historic patterns of racism.”

Hilmi Salem, an international higher education consultant and the director general of applied sciences and engineering research centres at Palestine Technical University, told University World News that for political reasons and in countries under occupation, many prisoners have restricted access to higher education. For example, since June 2011, the Israeli prison service had decided to stop all Palestinian political prisoners from studying higher education courses in Israel’s Open University, Salem indicated.

According to a 5 July report (Matar, 2012), despite the fact that some 1,550 Palestinian prisoners had ended their month-long collective hunger strike in May, in exchange for a series of steps promised by Israel to better their conditions, the ban on their access to higher education continued.

One of the reasons for the strike had been the prevention of higher education within prisons for Palestinian inmates only. Salem argued that this is “a violation of the right to education for persons in detention”, and urged human right associations and educational organisations to stand against such violation.

ENHANCING EDUCATION FOR PRISONERS

Ginsburg said there are already several models for providing low-cost, high quality education to the incarcerated. “The problem is not the lack of models, but the lack of discussion about these models, and retreat from rehabilitation as a goal of incarceration,” she said. A partial assessment of 17 prison higher education programmes in the US was published in an October 2010 report produced by the Education Justice Project. Ginsburg indicated that universities could make a difference in several ways. These include campus curricula that critically examine criminal justice and incarceration. Such courses can be found in departments of sociology, African-American studies, anthropology, criminology and law.

Universities could also support engagement efforts with local departments of corrections. Such engagement can take the form of facilitating faculty teaching in prisons or students offering workshops or tutoring sessions. In addition, universities—particularly public universities—could advocate publicly for greater access to higher education for all, including the incarcerated. Furthermore, universities could build coalitions across institutions that support prison higher education, so the provision of educational programmes to incarcerated populations in the community becomes an expected part of the task of American universities.

According to a May 2012 report, Online Education for the Incarcerated, many organisations are working to increase education opportunities through online programmes, which may cost less and therefore be more affordable for prisoners. The University of Utah was among the first to offer online courses for inmates. “With computer—and internet-mediated educational services such as those being
used successfully for remedial education in some community college programmes, offering education to prisoners should be both affordable and effective,” concluded science and technology consultant Daly.

REFERENCE

It is always necessary to begin with the question ‘Who are the Roma?’ They are paradoxically the most visible and the most invisible of minority populations. There seem to be ‘gypsies’ everywhere, visible where they are least wanted, and neither the public nor the politicians understand much about where they come from; they only know they’d like their gypsies to disappear.

From the standpoint of ethnic history, the Roma are the descendants of several waves of slow migration from India to Europe (and then to the Americas). The first report of Roma in Europe comes from 10th century Byzantium: after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Roma population expanded quickly to the north and west. Many Roma joined in the mass emigrations to the Americas in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Roma brought from India a distinctive culture and an Indic language—Romany—but not all Roma today hold to Roma customs or speak Romany. The extent to which this relatively small group—between 10 and 15 million in Europe today—has ‘resisted’ assimilation and remained a recognisable, autonomous cultural group for several hundred years is testimony both to Roma cohesion and gadje (non-Roma) discrimination and exclusion.

The history of the Roma in Europe is one of pervasive and destructive racism that has in many places intensified over the past 20 years. Perhaps 250,000 Roma were victims of Nazi genocide: one of the first internment camps for Roma was established in Salzburg in 1938. The largest Roma populations currently reside in the post-communist countries of Central Europe: they constitute approximately 10% of the populations of Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, though official censuses are notoriously unreliable as ‘Roma’ often don’t self-identify as Roma. Populations within and between countries are very diverse, owing partly to longstanding internal divisions and partly to the vagaries of migratory history.

It is, though, a young, growing, and mobile population, which has heightened the apprehension of many in the majority cultures. Historically the Roma have lived on the outer margins of national societies in most places, with ongoing and frequent interaction with majority populations. Prior to World War II, there was minimal participation of Roma in any formal education, although there were some exceptions among Roma groups with higher degrees of social and economic integration.
The present state of Roma education is generally desperate: for example, in the Czech Republic, only 1.2% of eligible youth graduate from high school, while the school completion rate for Czech students is close to 100%. A majority of Roma youth across the region do not complete eighth grade and more than half are functionally illiterate.

THE SITUATION FOR ROMA STUDENTS

The current condition for Roma youth across Europe is encapsulated in the phrase ‘social exclusion’. Understanding the provenance of this term is useful in understanding the ‘life world’ of the Roma, because the ways in which the Roma are understood by majority society and policymakers determine to a large extent the possibilities open to them in most government—and even many NGO—policy documents.

Roma are not referred to as Roma (that is, as an ethnic minority), but rather are referred to as a ‘socially excluded population’ whose plight is often perceived to be their own fault. In other words, racial reasoning is preserved in full force by evacuating race from the identifying terminology. Social exclusion as a concept originated in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a means of describing the outcome of globalisation, privatization, and the shrinking of public investment in social services for those least able to compete in the free market. This has had devastating consequences for the quality of life of Roma people: they are unable to find employment, unable to live anywhere but the least desirable locations, and social benefits have decreased substantially. Social exclusion has both economic and social dimensions, linked to the ubiquitous and all-encompassing discrimination and hostility that characterises the Roma experience across Europe.

In Hungary, it is estimated that more than 70% of adult Roma are unemployed, and more than 90% in some areas of the country. The adult Roma population is generally uneducated and unskilled (with respect to the official economy) so the work Roma do manage to acquire tends to be low paying and insecure. Roma are highly dependent on social welfare and benefits have steadily shrunk over the past 20 years, leaving them deeper in poverty. Many rural settlements in Slovakia and Hungary give the appearance of refugee camps in war zones or slums in ‘undeveloped’ parts of the world. There is little opportunity for positive social or economic interaction with the mainstream society or economy from this position.

Roma children usually attend highly segregated schools or classrooms. In rural areas with large Roma populations, ‘Roma schools’ tend to exist, though there are very few Roma teachers. In Slovak villages, it is not uncommon to see Roma and Slovak schools in close proximity. In urban areas, where Roma children are in a minority, they are often shuttled into one or another kind of ‘special class’, making it difficult to transition to regular educational settings.

The living conditions in Roma homes, of course, affect the ability of Roma children to prosper in schools. For youth in Slovakia and Czech Republic, there has
been a rapid language shift away from Romany and toward Czech/Slovak, but their Czech/Slovak is identified as a ‘Roma ethnolect’ which further handicaps them in school and the workplace. These phenomena can be observed in other countries as well, though the dynamics vary considerably.

Over the past 10 years, several school segregation cases have been decided in the European Court of Human Rights in favour of Roma plaintiffs, which has resulted in the perceived need to promote fuller integration of Roma children in schools; but to date there has been a great deal of renaming of institutions without meaningful structural changes and a good deal of frank resistance on the part of national and local governments to implementing reform.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE SUPPORT FOR ROMA STUDENTS

It is, of course, important for universities and colleges to assist those few Roma students who do manage to matriculate to succeed. The lack of a Roma intelligentsia is debilitating in every respect for progress toward Roma self-determination. But this goal probably cannot be approached directly, because so few Roma scholars complete secondary education and only a small percentage of those are prepared to attend college.

The greatest need is in the area of teacher education, leadership and curriculum development. Because all central European education systems are highly centralised, with university ‘faculty’ and ‘institutes’ playing a major role in the development of curricula and policy, it is important that work at this level targets Roma education and anti-racism.

In broad terms, there are two major decision points in Roma education where current default conditions do not favour these children. First, there seems to be almost universal agreement that better pre-school education is the sine qua non to improving school integration. Roma children, like many children from minority cultural and linguistic backgrounds, are not prepared to engage successfully in the academic, national language curriculum that meets them on the first day of primary school.

Pre-school education and the related community and family support are at best inconsistent and often completely lacking. There is a lack of qualified or committed personnel to do this work, though programmes in early childhood education and social work in the university tend to give greater attention to cultural factors than is the case with general teacher education.

The second decision point, a decision point shared with all European schoolchildren, is the bridge between primary and secondary school. Very few Roma students cross this bridge into gymnasia, the only path toward university study. But, perhaps more pressing at this moment, is the fact that a majority of Roma students don’t cross this bridge at all, and many who do don’t last long, even in technical or vocational high schools.

Simply put, universities in post-communist countries are not committed to preparing teacher candidates for teaching Roma—or any other minority—students.
There is some discussion around intercultural literacy, but often this has more to do with teaching mainstream students how to speak English or German and how to interact in the ‘global knowledge economy’.

If Roma students are to cross the bridge from primary to secondary school and then continue on to graduation, then they cannot arrive in seventh grade illiterate and innumerate, alienated from majority society. These necessary changes in professional preparatory programmes are unlikely until the ethnocentric, anti-Roma atmosphere of European universities is addressed in some way, from top to bottom.
The last decade witnessed China’s dramatic move to mass higher education. In particular, 1999 saw an abrupt jump in new enrolments, with 1.59 million new students, up from 1.08 million the previous year, or an annual increase of 47.2%. The fast expansion continued until 2004, when higher education enrolment at all levels reached 20 million, double that of 1998.

After 2004, enrolments continued to rise but at a relatively slower pace. The number of regular higher education institutions also grew dramatically over the same period of time, from 1,022 in 1998 to 2,263 in 2008, an increase of 121.4%. If the provision for students in non-formal and private institutions is factored into the statistics, China’s tertiary student population reached nearly 30 million by the end of 2008, accounting for 24.2% of the 18 to 22 years age cohort, and making China’s higher education system the world’s largest in absolute numbers. The participation rate was raised by 15% in 10 years, from around 9% in 1998. By contrast, it took the United States 30 years (1911 to 1941), Japan 23 years (1947 to 1970), and many European countries 25 years to make the same journey.

How this has been achieved is interesting. It has involved a clear vision for expanding higher education, action plans and decentralizing, and opening up higher education to the private sector since the government realised it did not have the capacity or ability to support a mass higher education system with the state purse. Decentralisation in a true sense started in 1998, when a push came from the nationwide restructuring of government. Except for the Ministry of Education, central ministries were no longer permitted to run higher education institutions. Most formerly ministry-run institutions were transferred to local administration and had to find their own means of survival.

Another crucial policy change that propelled massification has been the adoption of a fee-charging policy. From the 1950s up to the early 1990s, university admissions were tightly controlled with quotas set by the state, and students paid no fees and were assigned jobs on graduation. Officially from 1997, all higher education institutions started charging student fees. The fees level has been rising dramatically ever since. Once tuition fees were charged to all students, the justification for the previous policy of setting enrolment quotas effectively disappeared. Instead, enrolment was driven by the social demand for education.
Other changes have revolved around funding which is now done using a formula-based approach comprised of two parts: a block appropriation based on enrolment and an appropriation for special items, with the former accounting for the largest share. The major allocation parameter is now the number of full-time equivalent students. The state also created mechanisms that motivated institutions to expand, such as the 1999 Higher Education Law, which gives universities greater autonomy in several areas and makes them more able to respond to market needs.

They must also raise an increasing proportion of their operating funds from non-governmental and market sources. So, while enjoying unprecedented expansion, Chinese higher education’s share of public education expenditure has actually been going down, from 24.2% in 2000 to 20.8% in 2006.

Now that it has been released from its role as sole patron for higher education, the state can focus its attention and concentrate its resources on national universities, and in particular a small number of elite universities, in an effort to raise China’s global competitiveness. The most elite universities have also been protected from over-expansion so as to focus on achieving global excellence. Expansion mainly took place in the lower echelons, such as the newly created higher vocational colleges which now account for 52% of all higher education institutions and accommodate nearly 30% of enrolments. Institutional stratification has characterised the massification of higher education in China. With this approach, China has been able to establish and maintain the world’s largest higher education system and still nurture several dozen players at the global level.

This ‘success’ is, however, at the expense of equity in terms of institutions’ operating conditions. There is a widening gap between institutions at different tiers in the hierarchy and concomitant differences in students’ learning experiences. Put in another way, a majority of Chinese students now have to pay relatively more for educational opportunities and learning experiences of much lower quality. Following the same rationale, the Chinese government recognised that public provision alone could never meet the exploding demand for higher education. The state thus deliberately crafted a policy encouraging non-state sectors to engage in education provision. In addition, the Chinese educational authorities have encouraged public universities to run second-tier colleges since 1999. This trend was criticised by fully private institutions, which saw it as unfair competition.

Private institutions, most of which focus on vocational education, now constitute 28% of all higher education institutions in China, with an enrolment of four million students, representing 20% of the entire enrolment in the regular higher education sector. However, they face financial constraints since 80% of their revenue comes from tuition and fees. Despite their merit in widening access to higher education private institutions serve, to a certain extent, to enhance the inequity problems facing Chinese higher education in the expansion process, given that they charge much higher tuition rates but offer educational programmes of much lower quality.

In sum, China’s move to mass higher education has resulted not only in rapid expansion of enrolment size, but also systemic differentiation. In this, it follows a
CHINA: MASSIFICATION HAS INCREASED INEQUALITIES

model which is different from many of its international counterparts but bears most in common with the East Asian model of massification, which includes a strong sense of ‘state instrumentalism’, a focus on elite universities, increased tuition fees borne by families and rapid growth in higher education participation, which occurs mostly at lower reaches of the system.

As an emerging economy in the region and the world, China has been obsessed with a kind of ‘catch up’ mentality, which in turn pushes for the ‘state instrumentalism’ embedded in the East Asia or Confucian model. In a certain sense, this ‘state instrumentalism’ leans towards neo-liberalism, despite its emphasis on central control. It shows some merit in terms of efficiency with respect to meeting the challenges of global competitiveness and an increasing social demand simultaneously. This is clearly evident in China’s extraordinarily fast move to mass higher education and in its accelerated research performance.

Perhaps two things may better exemplify how China has pushed the boundaries of the East Asian model. One is the Chinese government’s practice of labelling major initiatives aiming to achieve research excellence as this or that ‘project’. The overarching rationale behind such practices is that knowledge production can be managed by the state, which functions like a corporation in this context, and sets out goals and conditions for higher performance and efficiency. The other is the introduction of independent colleges to the system. This policy initiative is seemingly aimed at tapping private resources into public institutions and so increasing higher education supply in a more efficient way. But it is often implemented as an investment strategy by the public patron university.

Operated as a private institution, the independent college often takes advantage of its patron university’s reputation and prestige to attract students while charging them tuition fees at a rate two or three times higher than those regulated by the state for the public university. Thus, China’s success in the move to mass higher education should not be taken at face value.

Indeed, the Chinese approach has started to show its inner constraints, in particular the downsides for social equity in participation and consequently in the students’ lifetime opportunities. There is also a potential for state interference into knowledge production and academic freedom.

Research confirms that students from upper socio-economic status (SES) families tend to be favoured for access to more selective universities. One survey of 14,500 students from different SES backgrounds at 50 institutions across 10 provinces found that those from governmental officials’ families were 18 times as likely as those with unemployed parents to gain access to national elite universities. The only place that showed no significant difference in accessibility among all socioeconomic groups was the newly emergent higher vocational colleges, which cluster at the bottom of the hierarchy. This is where those from low-SES families would most likely be concentrated.

Even worse, those high achievers who, on average, take advantage of their high-SES family background, would continue to be favoured in terms of financial support
after entering the selective universities. In general, students in more selective universities receive three times as much financial aid as their peers in less selective universities and higher vocational colleges. Given the enormous difference in study experiences, resulting from the huge gap in terms of faculty qualifications, research facilities and per student expenditure (widened by two-fold between 1998 and 2006) between selective and less selective intuitions, students in lower echelon institutions will suffer from very limited chances for mobility within the system and later in the society at large. In other words, this social inequity may accompany them throughout their lifetime.