

The Development of Higher Education Expansion and College Access in California of the United States and its Implications for Taiwan

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Abstract

Expansion of higher education, as predicted by scholars of higher education and sociology, has become a globally homogeneous educational development. Some comparative educators even argue that this trend is even more significant in the East Asian region because of its close connection with the United States and Europe. This study focuses on the relationship between higher education expansion and college access. Several debates have taken place between proponents for education expansion and those for equality of educational opportunities. Some argue that education expansion can help reduce educational inequality, whereas others argue that the gap would become even wider due to the stratification among school rankings. This study collected valid longitudinal data from the Ministry of Education in Taiwan and the Postsecondary Commission in the State of California. This study reviews the development and trends of college access in Taiwan and the State of California and responds to the following research question: Can higher education expansion reduce educational inequality? This study also explores the structure of the higher education systems of these two cases and discusses the differentiation of higher education and their relationship with the topic. This analysis generates two main findings. First, in these two cases, higher education expansion can provide more college access opportunities for all social groups, but consideration for the ranking of universities reveals that the stratification of higher education in these two countries could promote

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inequalities. Second, some features of community colleges in California can reduce the negative effects of higher education differentiation on educational inequality. In the final section of this study, future research and policy implications will be offered.

Keywords: Higher Education Expansion; College Access; Equity of Educational Opportunity; Taiwan; California