
Massification and Equality of Opportunity in Access to Chinese Higher Education

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Introduction

Chinese HE has experienced radical expansion after 1998. the gross enrollment rate was 22% at the end of 2006.

This presentation includes four main parts:

- Theoretical Framework
- Methods
- Findings
- Conclusions

Research questions

This study seeks to explore the situations of equality of opportunity in access to HE measured by variables of:

1. gender
2. community type---rural and urban areas

and the opportunities in access to different institution type---public and private universities

Theoretical frameworks

Conflict perspective

Specific theories linking education expansion and equality of opportunity:

1. Maximum maintained inequality (MMI)
2. Effectively maintained inequality (EMI) if considers qualitative difference.

Opportunities are equalized, but disparities still exist

Female students account for 53.5%

Rural students account for 52.9%

Students from advantage status (culturally, socially and economically) have more opportunities in access to HE

Disparities still exist—parent education background and opportunities in access

| | illiterate | elementary | Junior H | High school | college | university | Above U |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Father's (B) | 2.3 | 11.3 | 26.4 | 35.1 (cp75.2) | 11.2 | 11.3 | 2.3 |
| Population (A) | 44.1 | | 36.6 | 14.3 | 4.4 | | |
| Rate B/A | 0.31 | | 0.72 | 2.45 | 5.64 | | |
| Mother's (B) | 8.1 | 18.2 | 25.6 | 31.7 (cp83.5) | 8.4 | 7.3 | 0.8 |
| Population (A) | 65.6 | | 22.9 | 9.5 | 2.0 | | |
| Rate B/A | 0.40 | | 1.18 | 3.34 | 8.25 | | |

Parent occupation background and opportunities in access

| | Job hunter /retired | farmer | worker | Service industry | Office worker | professional | Administration /manager | other |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Father's occup | 7.6 | 26.9 | 18.1 | 10.0 | 3.6 | 15.2 | 14.8 | 3.8 |
| Mother's occup | 19.4 | 19.3 | 33.1 | 7.1 | 11.5 | 3.7 | 16.3 | 5.2 |
| In population | Job hunter 4.8 | 42.9 | 17.5 | 11.2 | 7.1 | 4.6 | 3.7 | |

Gender differences (1): differences in study fields

| | NS & Eng. | Social science | Humanities |
|--------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| Female | 25.5 | 37.0 | 37.2 |
| Male | 52.0 | 30.9 | 17.1 |

Gender differences (2): parent education and occupation background

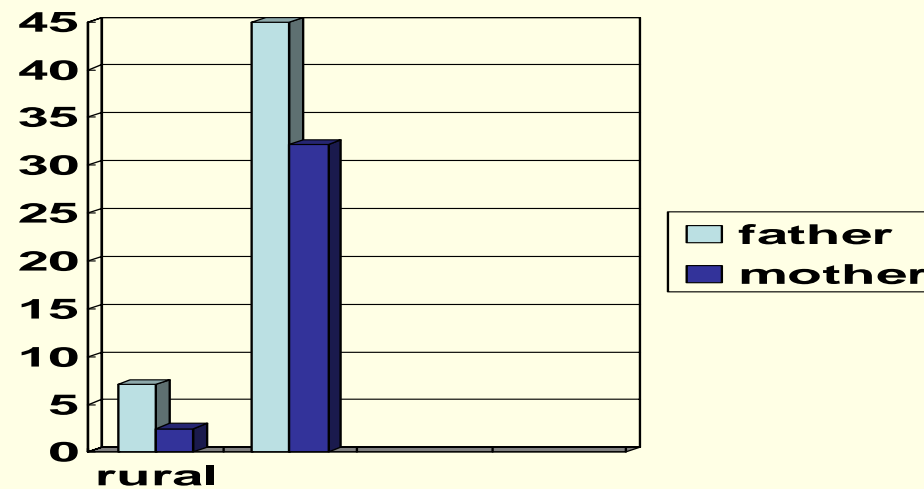
| Education background | Father accessed HE | Mother accessed HE |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Female | 27.2 | 19.0 |
| Male | 22.1 | 13.8 |
| Occupation background | Father's occupation is professional/administrator | Mother's occupation is professional/administrator |
| Female | 33.4 | 24.6 |
| Male | 26.2 | 17.9 |

Gender differences (3):

- Our dataset suggest that higher percentage of students in access to HE. However, compared with male students, less female students enroll in nature science and engineering program, more in humanities programs.
- It is likely that urban females from advantage stratum with higher patents' education level and higher family income have more opportunities in access to HE.

Disparities between rural and urban residents (1)

- Parent education and occupation background



Disparities between rural and urban residents (2)

- Parent's occupation background

| | | Job hunter/ retired | farmer | worker | Service worker | Office worker | professional | Adm.& manager | other |
|--------|-------|---------------------------|--------|--------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|-------|
| Father | rural | 5.9 | 49.4 | 18.2 | 8.7 | 1.4 | 8.5 | 5.0 | 3.0 |
| | urban | 9.3 | 1.8 | 17.9 | 11.5 | 6.2 | 22.8 | 25.9 | 4.7 |
| mother | rural | 15.3 | 59.7 | 6.4 | 9.3 | 0.6 | 4.8 | 1.4 | 2.3 |
| | urban | 24.0 | 3.1 | 8.0 | 14.1 | 7.1 | 29.2 | 9.1 | 5.2 |

Disparities between rural and urban residents (3)

- Family income

| | Less than 8,000 | 8,000-25,000 | 25,000-45,000 | 45,000-60,000 | Above 60,000 |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Rural | 34.0 | 45.8 | 12.1 | 3.6 | 4.4 |
| Urban | 9.7 | 34.3 | 26.1 | 12.2 | 17.3 |
| Cp of rural | 34.0 | 79.8 | 91.9 | 95.5 | 99.9 |
| Cp of urban | 9.7 | 44.0 | 70.1 | 82.4 | 99.7 |

Disparities between public and private universities (1)

- **There are higher percentage of female students in public universities (55.9%) than in private HEIs 44.6%).**
- **More students from rural areas in private HEIs (68.1%) compared with 49% in public universities.**
- **Parent education background**

| | Father accessed HE | Mother accessed HE |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Public university | 27.8 | 19.0 |
| Private university | 13.6 | 6.9 |

Disparities between public and private universities (2)

- Parent occupation background

| | | % farmer and worker | % of professional and administrator | other |
|---------------|----------------|----------------------------|--|--------------|
| father | Public | 24.4+17.6=42.0 | 17.1+15.6=32.7 | 3.4 |
| | Private | 36.7+20.0=56.7 | 8.0+11.4=19.4 | 5.3 |
| mother | Public | 19.8+29.4=49.2 | 18.8+5.6=24.4 | 3.2 |
| | Private | 47.2+6.6=53.8 | 6.4+3.4=9.8 | 5.5 |

Disparities between public and private universities (3)

- **Family income**

| | Less than 8,000 | 8,000-25,000 | 25,000-45,000 | 45,000-60,000 | Above 60,000 |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Public | 22.5 | 37.6 | 19.7 | 8.5 | 11.5 |
| Private | 23.7 | 50.1 | 14.7 | 5.7 | 5.5 |
| Cp in public | 22.5 | 60.1 | 79.7 | 88.3 | 99.8 |
| Cp in private | 23.7 | 73.8 | 88.5 | 94.1 | 99.6 |

Disparities between public and private universities (4)

- Rural students have less opportunities in access to public universities than their counterparts from urban areas.
- It is likely students from lower socio-economic status (measured by parent's education and occupation backgrounds and family income) have more opportunities in private universities than public universities.

Conclusions

- Higher percentage of female students enroll in HEIs, but distribution in study fields is different from that of male students.
- In general, urban students from advantage groups have more opportunities in access to HE. Rural female students have the least opportunities.
- Private universities play more important role in equalizing opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

Thank you!

Any questions, suggestions, and comments?