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Title

Less inequality through universal access? : socioeconomic background of tertiary entrants in Australia after the expansion of university participation / Krzysztof Czarnecki

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Abstract

This article investigates the consequences of an expansion of domestic university places in Australia after 2009 for inequalities in access to tertiary education. I focused on how different individual-level socioeconomic factors were influencing not only the likelihood of continuing education at the tertiary level but also a type of institution one studies at. Thus, I simultaneously analyse vertical and horizontal dimensions of inequalities in access. The expansion has not dramatically changed the differentiated access within different socioeconomic groups. However, the influence of parental education and secondary school context on continuing education has weakened. But those who have benefited the most are young people from upper service class. They not only approach near-universal access faster than other social classes but also improve their relative chances to study at the most prestigious institutions. Controlling for academic ability at the age of 15 showed that socioeconomic background continues to matter after that age. This means that student-oriented equity policies undertaken closer to the point of transition to tertiary education have a capacity to decrease

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educational inequalities. Results are discussed against the background of the current higher education policy trends regarding equity in access. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Czarnecki, Krzysztof, E-Mail: krzysztof.czarnecki@ue.poznan.pl