

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Segmentation in higher education in Chile: Massification without equality

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Abstract

Fifty years ago, the expansion of access to higher education was expected to result in greater socio-economic equality. Instead, segmentation in mass higher education systems has called into question the effective democratization of access to higher education. This phenomenon appeared first in higher income countries, allowing the identification of some factors that contribute to segmentation. This article seeks to provide evidence from the Chilean case, evaluating how students' social backgrounds affect admission to different types of universities. Data for the study were taken from the applications of 57,780 students admitted in 2019. Multinomial logistic regression was employed. The results showed that, depending on their background, students of the same level of academic performance follow different paths. Students from families with a high level of income or graduated from private secondary school were more likely to be admitted to private universities. Some of the dynamics present in European countries and the United States are also observed in Chile, particularly those related to the segregation of the school system and private provision and funding at the tertiary level.