UK	175
India	49
USA	47
Hong Kong	46
Malaysia	36
S Africa	29
W Germany	25
Canada	25
Philippines	20
France	20
Others	162
Total	634

We were unable to obtain detailed figures for 1983-84, but our estimate is that 600 computer specialists immigrated in that year. For 1984-85, detailed figures are not yet available, but the total number was 536 — 347 programmers, 189 systems analysts. The quota for that year was 550, and the quota for the coming years is believed to be 500.

Conclusion

The development of computer technology depends heavily on a highly skilled and innovative workforce. The computer industry as a whole is labour-intensive, and what is required for its development is not the significant use of materials or energy but the deployment of skilled people (and sufficient capital). Barry Jones, noting the need for investment in research and development, emphasizes that this requires sustained provision of high-level educational and training programs.[23] The present situation is problematic for at least two reasons. Labour turnover is extremely high in the industry, partly because of employers' constant emphasis on the need for experienced staff. Our survey of the workforce showed an annual turnover of 33% for systems analysts and 50% for programmers. Turnover at this rate creates continuing shortfalls of staff. The second reason, related to the first, is that the demand for experience is in conflict with the need to develop the highest levels of intellectual and conceptual ability. Flexibility, innovativeness and versatility are of the greatest importance. On the whole, this has been recognized by the universities, which continue to resist demands from industry to meet immediate needs. Our studies suggest a continuing gap between the industry's needs and the availability of high-level specialists — a gap which constitutes a significant impediment to the development of information technology in Australia.

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The traditional structure of the university market in Australia

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In the years before the Second World War a very close relationship existed between Australian universities and private grammar schools. Both were exclusive fee-charging institutions, their curriculum was continuous, and staff passed easily between them. So closely did the two institutions resemble each other in their physical and social architecture that it was difficult to know where one began and the other ended. The universities, undersubscribed and inefficient for much of their history, depended on the grammar schools for survival, while the latter depended on the universities' public examinations and professional schools for their status. The private costs of secondary education, the low level of state provision, and the close functional and cultural ties between universities and private schools ensured that the latter tended to monopolize places in higher education. If, during this period, only one in four primary school children attended private schools, only one in four university graduates had attended public schools.[1]

With the explosion of enrolments in the decades after the Second World War, the role of public secondary schools greatly increased. On the other hand, rapidly rising costs, restricted geography, and selective admissions policies led to a sharp contraction in the place of the private schools. In Victoria, for example, the elite private non-Catholic schools saw their share of post-compulsory school places halved by 1970.[2] Other developments menaced the position of the private schools. A weakening of the universities' statutory control over the secondary school curriculum, major increases in spending on public schools, and the abolition of university fees (1974) threatened to end the historical monopoly of higher education enjoyed by the users of the private sector.

However, despite these developments, several studies have shown that the traditional structure of the university market has remained substantially unaltered, especially in the most prestigious faculties. For example, while less than one-third of all students in secondary education in Victoria in 1980 were found in private schools, graduates from these institutions took up 56% of first-year places at the University of Melbourne.[3]

To explain why private schools continue to dominate the university market, two basic factors must be taken into account: the resumption in growth of private secondary schools (financed through state aid) and the higher success rate of these schools at the qualifying exams for university admission (the Higher School Certificate — HSC).

In part, these success rates involve statistical effects which give an inflated view of the efficiency of the private sector — poor students are counselled not to sit exams or are weeded out altogether, the incidence of grade repeating has historically been higher, some good students from public schools transfer to private schools. But these activities cannot explain the magnitude of differences in success rates.

"... the traditional structure of the university market has remained substantially unaltered, especially in the most prestigious faculties."

There are two basic sources of difference in academic performance between school sectors: the individual characteristics of students and the resources, organization and curriculum of schools. The higher social composition of private schools (especially non-Catholic schools) is well-documented. For every 100 children in high-fee private schools in Victoria, only 10 come from homes in which the occupation of the father could be described as lower middle class or working class — office employee, sales representative, skilled worker, unskilled worker.[4] The educational level of private school parents is correspondingly higher. There is ample evidence that private school students have more positive attitudes towards school and that they have higher educational and career objectives in which success at school is a key factor.

But to translate the cultural and material advantages of individual students into examination results and university shares, a certain density in these characteristics must be achieved within the framework of the individual school and there must be high levels of human, organizational and material resources to exploit this base. Location, selection policy and long waiting lists permit private schools to achieve the level of cultural homogeneity necessary for academic focus and competitive performance. Fees and public subsidies ensure a high level of resources. Specific organizational features, such as the "house system" and prefects, and a supplementary curriculum rich in sports and the arts, contribute to the cohesion of the private schools and the level of academic culture. With this concentration of resources, private schools are able to carry their organization to its final point, that is, academic specialization and technical proficiency in the assessment programme.

Several recent studies have shown that private school students are more highly prepared for managing the technical demands of the HSC exams than they are for performance in a university course. A given HSC score will predict higher university performance on the part of a public school student than a private school student.[5] In other words, the focus of private school training appears to be on the initial reservation of university places, as distinct from assuring the quality of academic performance once those places are occupied. Less technically trained around the conventional requirements of the HSC examinations, the public school student performs at a superior level once at university and displays qualities related to the effect of over-selection, as documented by Bourdieu and Passeron in the French context.[6]

The curriculum of the private schools can be regarded as the key mediating factor explaining their differential success. For, as we shall see, students at these schools select with much greater frequency than their peers in public schools subjects that are the most culturally rich, the most legitimate (the hard options consecrated by universities), and the most susceptible of fine grading or intuitive teacher judgement, depending on the nature of the subject and the type of examination. Academic specialization is arguably what finally determines the

social characteristics of students in private schools. For, in the first place, the logic of subject-choice can be shown to lie in the professional and higher education trajectories representative of middle and upper middle class families and of private rather than public school students.

But social selection on the basis of the curriculum takes place not only through the mediation of objectively probable life-chances and through the institutionally prescribed options (curriculum streams and subject combinations) which secure these chances. The intellectual behaviours demanded by academic success are in themselves culturally selective. They act as filters in a general way across all elements of the academic curriculum, whether mathematics, modern languages, sciences or economics. Success in all these particular fields calls for theoretical appreciation, sensitivity to the properties of materials (word, number, symbol), respect for validation rules, and recognition of the manifest and latent requirements of the assessment procedure itself.

But for success to be achieved at a high level and to be diffused through the ranks of a school's intake, year after year, requires more than individual aptitude and the cultural advantages on which this is founded. It is for this reason that the specific and authoritative formulation of academic demands into subjects is so important. For it is through the syllabus that stability and predictability are achieved, and therefore the routinization of the teaching process and technical proficiency on the assessment programme. It is through this process of institutionalization that a particular establishment can offer success, not meritocratically to a chosen few, but to the majority of its intake. Equally, it is through routinization on a subject-content repeatedly examined that teachers can recognize the marks of ability and, paradoxically, of distinction from routine learning — "originality" in English, "confidence in discussing the style of . . . masterpieces of art", recognition of the presence of "a legal problem", or the use of mathematical techniques to achieve an "elegant conclusion to theory" — in every case, the distinguishing breach of routine which, year after year, is assimilated to routine.[7]

The institutional proximity which private schools achieve with universities through academic specialization becomes quite evident when we compare the relative frequency with which students from public and private schools choose HSC subjects specifically required or preferred by universities, particularly by the most prestigious of them.

To illustrate this, we have selected some key elements from the science, arts and economics HSC curriculum. We have deliberately focused on subjects which the administration of the University of Melbourne regards as "statistically good predictors of first-year university performance"[8]. The list is very limited and excludes subjects like Biology, General Mathematics, Legal Studies and Australian History which attract very large numbers of students. On the other hand, it includes subjects which attract comparatively few students, e.g., French, German, Latin.

". . . the focus of private school training appears to be on the initial reservation of university places, as distinct from assuring the quality of academic performance once these places are occupied."

The list describes what the HSC curriculum would look like were it to contain only those elements deemed capable of predicting success at the examinations held at the end of the first year of university. These subjects provide the basis for any school aiming to secure university places for its intake. This is not only because they are often legally prescribed for entry to particular courses, and therefore, taking account of the needs of many students, must be offered as a group. It is also because subjects with high predictive value for success at first-year university exams are also predictive of initial entry to university — though to a significantly different degree, depending on whether a school is public or private, as we have already seen. Consequently subjects like Physics, Chemistry and French provide the basic menu for establishments which act as feeder schools for the universities. It is important to stress that outside of this menu there are other subjects which, while not having the same discriminating value, are regularly chosen together with elements from the main menu to optimize results over the four best subjects aggregated in the HSC score. For example, while less demanding than Pure or Applied Mathematics — and therefore relatively less discriminating of future university performance — General Mathematics plays an important strategic role. It is a way of satisfying faculty entrance requirements (e.g., for the prestigious medical schools), while permitting a more effective spread of effort over the best four. Differences in subject-choice on this secondary menu are not reported below, nor are elements from the main menu where the frequency counts are too low (Latin) or relate too specifically to one course (Music A). We consider that differences in subject-choice on the main menu, a list which is conservative even in the words of its authors, are indicative of the comparative institutional proximity of public and private schools in Australia to the university market.

Figure 1 shows the intended choice of these most consecrated subjects by male students planning entry to the final year of secondary school. Boys from both public and private sectors rarely plan to take the most specialized parts of the Arts curriculum, that is, languages deemed by the university's Selection Procedures Committee to be the most scholastic (French, German and Latin). Instead they locate themselves in the Science curriculum, taking the hard options of Physics and Chemistry (the soft option is Biology, for which 70% of HSC candidates are girls). Many also plan to take Economics. The pattern for Mathematics conceals an underlying differentiation of strategy which becomes clear from the actual patterns of choice in Year 12. The intention to study both Pure and Applied Mathematics is equally strong amongst boys from public and private schools. But the actual pattern of HSC subject-choice shows that selection of these two subjects together is much more frequent amongst public than private school boys (33.6% as against 24.7%). Boys in private schools are much more likely, instead, to choose General Mathematics from the secondary menu (38.6% as against 23.9% amongst public school boys). Thus, taking all strategic aspects into account, it is boys from private non-Catholic schools who exploit to the greatest degree the consecrated roles for male entry to higher education.

Figure 2 shows that girls take scholastic languages relatively more often than boys. But this is due to the choices of girls in private non-Catholic schools. Similarly, when girls enter the male-stereotyped domain of the hard sciences (Physics, Chemistry), this occurs with relatively greater frequency in private schools. The private non-Catholic school thus presents itself both as the repository of the most traditional academic curriculum for girls and the site where the greatest deviation from this tradition has occurred. It must be stressed, however, that gender counter-selection in the sciences through private schools is based upon prior social selection, and secondly that the benefits which it represents must be weighed against the social costs of structuring educational opportunity — including the opportunity of girls — around a powerful and unrepresentative private sector.

The patterns of differential subject-choice and, beyond this, of differential access to university suggest that within the Australian educational system more broadly the private schools and the

universities form a kind of micro-ecology. That is, they constitute a specialized environment of activities and demands which each institution creates, as it were, for the support of the other. It is a pattern of exchange which leads to the social and cultural interpenetration of the two institutions.

The basis of this exchange relationship is the autonomy of each institution within the field of education as a whole. The legal power of universities to control their own selection permits them, de facto, to enforce curriculum requirements on schools — subjects with an approved content and method of assessment. Historically narrow, the approved curriculum for university admission can remain narrow when demand for places exceeds supply, when the universities are free to limit the number of available places (quota-controlled entry), and when the qualifying credential for admission becomes inflated (i.e., non-discriminatory, either because of the excessive number of holders of the credential or because of the penetration of other credentials). With each university free to determine its own selection criteria without reference either to other higher education institutions or to the teachers in secondary schools who in practice must enforce university curriculum requirements, severity of selection increases as a function of the demand for the most prestigious courses in the most prestigious universities.

On the other side of the exchange relationship, the legal power of private schools to control their own selection permits them to restrict entry to pupils with certain social characteristics, to restrict the curriculum to the likely educational and occupational needs of these pupils, to control the quality and tenure of teachers, and to accumulate private and public funds in proportion to need.

The legal autonomy of private schools is one of the key conditions which permit universities to maintain selective admissions policies based on the most scholastic curriculum and on the rank order of aggregate scores at the HSC examinations. Matching the freedom of the most influential universities to set market-like standards of competitive entry is the freedom of the most influential sectors of schooling to emulate these standards through restrictive admissions based on social criteria, to recruit talented pupils from other sectors through scholarships, to prune out uncompetitive students, etc. These market freedoms in turn permit university administrators not only to feel confident in raising competitive standards of entry during periods of high demand for places, but lead to the benevolent illusion that this is actually required by social justice. It is in this context, for example, that administrators seek to give special weight to subjects which are good predictors of academic success and to oppose more qualitative assessments of student potential. It is not necessary to posit any conspiracy to account for the durability of the private school monopoly in university places. The origin of this phenomenon lies in the mutually conditioning liberties of the two institutions[9].

Here it is only possible to give two specific examples of the exchange relationship between universities and Australian private schools. We have chosen two gender-differentiated domains.

The cultivation of Foreign Languages is an important way in which universities justify student selectiveness and their own academic authority as repositories of higher learning. There must exist two environments in order to defend the place of Foreign Languages as a mechanism of selection: the teaching department of the university, where authority is conserved, and certain schools where the demand to

Figure 1

Intended choice of most consecrated subjects on entry to final year of secondary school — males.

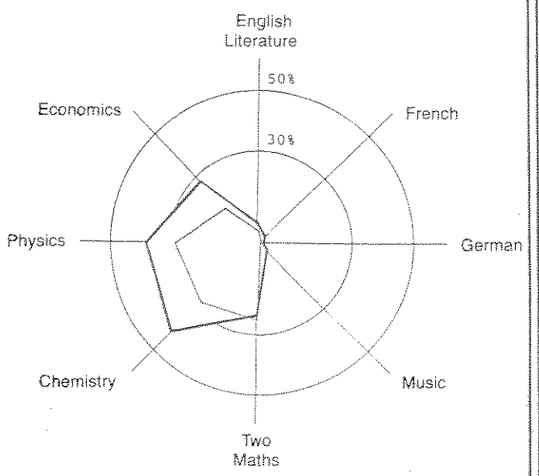
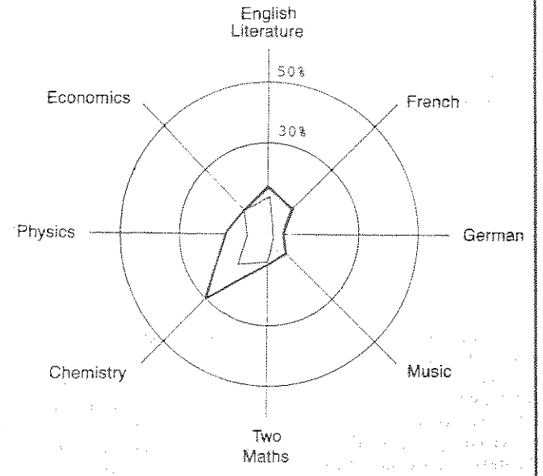


Figure 2

Intended choice of most consecrated subjects on entry to final year of secondary school — females.



study Foreign Languages is high enough to justify the employment of staff. To the extent that a university succeeds in imposing certain Foreign Languages on the school curriculum (e.g., French, German) and in retaining its authority to examine students on these languages, it provides a point of continuous academic organization — susceptible of routinization — for those schools which can recruit a sufficient number of language students. In Australia, it is above all the private schools which meet this requirement, thanks to the cultural characteristics of their intake and the gender segmentation of the academic market. Thus, on a national level, 42.8% of private non-Catholic schools teach French (as against 16.7% of Catholic schools and 13.8% of public schools); German is taught in 32.4% of private non-Catholic schools, but in only 5.3% of Catholic schools and 10.1% of public schools; the figures for Latin are, respectively, 13.4%, 1.1% and 0.9%[10].

In this exchange, what the private schools receive is a legitimate curriculum which defines their specialized competence and establishes their market role. This curriculum answers, in a global fashion, the status needs of their clients, that is, the joint satisfaction of academic and moral security, the provision of intellectual, ethical and aesthetic training in a socially filtered environment. What the university receives is a flow of students whose apparently objective measured distance from the rest of the school population is the basis of the university's relative prestige and of its authority over student selection[11].

The Foreign Languages example involves curriculum specialization on a narrow social base. If Foreign Languages are studied by 16% of Year 11 students, many of these languages are not the legitimate languages consecrated by the universities as truly scholastic. On the contrary, only 4% of students take French and 1.8% German. However, the exchange relationship between universities and private schools can be illustrated equally well from specialization on a broad base.

Physics and Economics are subjects which much larger numbers of students take in Year 11 (22.5% and 16.5% respectively). As success in these subjects does not depend to the same degree as the Arts curriculum on literary or verbal accomplishment, as the learning criteria can be methodically enunciated, and as both occupy an important place in professional or managerial training, these subjects lack the qualities of exclusiveness which make Foreign Languages (especially the most consecrated ones) so important for private schools. At the same time, the fine grain assessment, the methodical organization and theoretical qualities of these subjects make intense competition possible within a framework of exactly scaled performances and of tests whose overall level of difficulty can be pre-set to fail as many as half the candidates. It is precisely these subjects which offer the most favourable terrain for utilizing the high resources, selective intake and technical routinization of private schools. Moreover, these subjects are often taken together with other relatively specialized subjects which also lend themselves to methodical discrimination, e.g., Chemistry and Mathematics. This drives up the total effort required to obtain a place in University through the proliferation of exact academic requirements on which selection is based.

"The intellectual behaviours demanded by academic success are in themselves culturally selective."

The university benefits even more from this exchange relationship than in the case of Foreign Languages. For with Physics and Economics (though to different degrees), the connection between scholastic attainment and the status culture of middle and upper middle class families is less overt. The mathematically-based physical and social sciences present a culturally neutral aspect, reinforced by assessment techniques, such as multiple choice tests, where content is narrower and the internal reliability and homogeneity of test items is measurable. The scholastic environment represented by these tests, just because it is devoid of the more direct tests of social origin which the literary-based curriculum displays, can attract the most intense investment of private resources — from pre-natal enrolment of children in private schools to coaching colleges, summer schools, grade repeating and private tuition — and the most methodical application of these resources. It is also an environment which, because of its apparent objectivity and indifference to social influences, will be resolutely defended as the only path to academic justice which the school system can provide. The university administrator, faced with the paradox that this path is occupied so disproportionately by private school students, ends up declaring it a mystery — "It appears that there are unknown factors in the advantages gained by the independent schools that are not fully accounted for and may not even be related at all to any general trend in the social composition of students qualifying for entry."[12]

These exchange relationships form what we have described as the micro-ecology of universities and private schools. Like the eco-systems of the natural world, this system relies on the reciprocal action of the different organisms and their joint adaptation to the wider environment in which they are located and from which they shelter each other. But could it not be said that the very cultural completeness of these educational institutions — the very intensity of the transactions between them and the dependence that this implies — impedes and distorts not only their own development, but the growth and vitality of the education system as a whole?[13]

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Selection into higher education

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The Federation of Australian University Staff Associations, Federation of College Academics, and the Australian Teachers' Federation share a common commitment to an increase in the quantity of participation in higher education and a broadening of access, by which is meant a more equal distribution of higher education places between social groups. They also agree than an expansion in the number of places should be accompanied by adequate public financing, so that growth does not occur through the super-exploitation of those working in higher education and at the expense of the quality and the breadth of the education received by each student.

1. Importance of socio-economic composition of higher education

The socio-economic composition of higher education has become more equal since the abolition of tuition fees but all the data confirms that it remains markedly skewed in favour of higher income and occupation families. For example, although in 1979 only 14 per cent of the labour force worked in professional occupations, 31 per cent of university students and 19 per cent of CAE students were drawn from families in which the father worked in a professional occupation. While 31 per cent of the overall labour force worked in trades and manual occupations, only 19 per cent of university students and 26 per cent of CAE students came from families in which the father worked in such occupations.[1] Within the universities the high-income earning professions of medicine and law are also the most socially exclusive.

Despite the expansion of higher education since World War 2, despite increased school retention, and despite periodic attempts to implement policies that would encourage greater 'equality of opportunity', distributional changes have been marginal. Existing patterns of privilege are continuously reproduced. The educational system has not been sufficiently reorganised to prevent prior social inequalities from becoming inequalities of educational attainment, and subsequent social inequalities in the distribution of credentials. Notwithstanding the expectations of fairness and upward social mobility created by the 'meritocratic' education system, we still send students into the labour market on terms that are profoundly unequal. This is a source of massive popular disillusionment with public education, a disillusionment that increases in proportion to the competitiveness of the labour market.

Despite their role in formal credentialling, education institutions do not have the power to shape the demand for labour or the sectoral location of new jobs. But reform to education can alter the terms of labour supply. There are two choices — to continue to operate an education system which directly reproduces social inequalities and mirrors the competitive labour market, with its class and gender biases, or to provide all students with the personal development, the knowledge and the credentials that they need. But to achieve the latter involves challenging some of our own deepest preconceptions about the internal structuring of the education system. It is now urgent to formulate and implement policies that will overhaul the socio-economic composition of higher education.

First, the fees debate has made it clear that many people, even in the labour movement, see the present socio-economic inequalities as fixed and inevitable and support the imposition of fees as a redistributive fiscal measure. Unless there is a solid set of reform proposals that would markedly change the socio-economic composition then this 'left' argument for fees (which nonetheless has its roots in the assumption that higher education is a privilege and a luxury) may carry the day at the next National ALP Conference. A more egalitarian socio-economic composition is necessary to, and consistent with, the maintenance of free public higher education.

Secondly, increased school retention is now placing very great demand pressure on higher education institutions, and this pressure can be expected to increase. The *Quality of Education Review Committee Report* suggest that retention to Year 12 of secondary school (which was 36 per cent in 1982 and 45 per cent in 1984) will rise to 65 per cent by 1992. The Report envisages a rise of 36,000 in the number of Year 11 students and 48,000 in the number of Year 12 students, a total increase of one third in the number of upper secondary students by 1992.[2]

Traditionally, most of these students would not have aspired to enter higher education. Now an increasing number will do so, but if present entry policies are maintained they are likely to be streamed into a narrower range of pre-vocational training options. This would further undermine taxpayer support for free public higher education.

2. Weakness of past reforms

The 1970s saw a quantitative expansion of higher education, the abolition of fees and the introduction of the TEAS scheme, a new system of Commonwealth schools funding based on the principle (not carried through in full) of equal measured resources for every child and