academics had been so widely breached that their integrity could not be maintained as paid rates awards (AIRC, 26 October, 1989). There is, however, no evidence of breaches of paid rates awards in mainstream public employment, even taking into account the deregulation of executive remuneration in government commercial enterprises. It cannot be expected, however, that the Departments of Finance and Industrial Relations would foster a wholesale conversion of public sector paid rates awards to minimum rates awards. Indeed there is some evidence that the Department of Industrial Relations declined to support a proposed approach to the Commission by academic employers to seek such a conversion (*Financial Review*, 8 September 1989).

What is more likely is that the government will seek to extend the principle of performance pay to the upper levels of the administrative service officer structure of the Commonwealth Public Service. Indeed this was proposed as part of the award restructuring negotiations with the Public Sector and Broadcast Union although it was dropped by a Cabinet decision following stop work action by Commonwealth public servants. As wage adjustments become more based on productivity bargaining, it is to be expected that performance based pay will be revived. Indeed the New South Wales Teachers' Federation had to agree to discuss performance appraisal linked to incremental progression for public school teachers in exchange for the first three per cent under the existing wage guidelines (*SMH*, 25 November 1989).

The current models of productivity bargaining being pursued under the structural efficiency principle, are, nevertheless, based upon assumptions about work organisation more relevant to the private sector than to the public sector. The push for award restructuring has come from unions in the manufacturing and traded goods sectors.

The trade-off in a productivity bargaining mode of industrial relations is between the establishment of career structures linked to training for industrial workers in exchange for such measures as rationalisation of classifications structures, broadbanding and multi-skilling (ACTU, 1989).

Indeed commitments to multi-skilling and broadbanding have already been made in public sector contexts as part of second tier wage negotiations. In the Commonwealth Public Service a major process of office restructuring has been undertaken in the last eighteen months. It is not possible to trade-off more than once, modes of work organisation which have already been conceded in principle in earlier negotiations. The difficulties faced by teachers in New South Wales and elsewhere in maintaining established working conditions, when the scope for the restructuring of existing career structures is limited, also illustrates this point.

Public sector workers, therefore, find themselves at a disadvantage when modes of work organisation which are regarded as appropriate to the private sector, are translated into the public sector. Indeed the push for award restructuring has been largely driven by pressures within the manufacturing sector, it is not necessarily appropriate to the public sector. It reflects the relative lack of influence of public sector unions within the ACTU.

In the context of the fiscal crisis of the state, governments have sought to increase efficiency in public sector employment through subjecting that sector to some of the practices and disciplines of the private competitive market sector. Any deficiencies in legitimation that may have resulted in such a process has been met by an attempt to redefine the concept of public service to that which is appropriate to "customers" or "consumers". The discourse of public sector efficiency has been legitimised by a discourse of "effectiveness" and "equity" being redefined along private sector lines.

Models of corporate managerialism derived from the private sector have been adopted in the public sector, including the public higher education sector. Aspects of public sector work have been subjected to a number of measures ranging from privatisation, to commercialisation to the promotion of entrepreneurial modes of reward structures and work organisation.

It is, therefore, an error to see higher education as a particular target of the structural adjustment policies of modern liberal democratic governments. Indeed the refusal of many academics to see themselves as public sector workers involved in more conflictual and less collegial relations with their employers is a barrier to the making of appropriate alliances with other parts of public sector to resist or modify the process of structural adjustment.

There are sufficient contradictions involved in subjecting public sector employment to private sector modes of work organisation, reward systems and management models that even governments have some difficulty containing them. In an industrial relations context, both at the level of central regulation and at the "enterprise" level, these contradictions need to be exploited, otherwise the use value of service provision in the public sector will be converted to the exchange value of services provided in the private sector.

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Access to university education in Australia 1852-1990: Changes in the undergraduate social mix*

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In the course of expansion during the later 20th Century Australian university education changed from an elite to a mass system. In 1921 1.4 per cent of 17 to 22 year olds were university students; 60 years later 12 per cent were. In 1990, thanks to expansion, but also to a redefinition of university to include Colleges of Advanced Education, the proportion is over 20 per cent. Until after World War II growth was slow, scarcely keeping pace with population increase. (See Figure 1.) Then suddenly in the mid-1950s a surge in demand started which ever since has caused the university system to grow at a faster rate than the population of school-leavers.

Not all new students are young school-leavers however, and, due to mature age enrolment, the fraction of the population getting a university education at some time or other in their life is considerably higher than the above proportions. The first quantification of "life-time" participation was made 30 years ago by Borrie (1962, p. 57) who estimated that, of those who reached the age of 16 in 1961, one boy in 6 and one girl in 14 would enrol in university by age 30.

And the Martin Committee, writing in 1963, expected that "by 1975 one-third of males and one-sixth of females will enrol sooner or later during their lifetimes at a (higher education) institution." (p. 35). These were startling figures at the time. In the event the gross estimates were close to what happened, although the 1960s forecasters underestimated women and overestimated men.

Today about 11 per cent of the Australian adult population has a bachelor's degree or equivalent; among those born after 1960 about 16 per cent have degrees. (See Figure 2.) Among those of retiring age (born before 1926) about 5 per cent have degrees. The dip in the curve for the youngest group is due to persons in their 20s, many of whom are yet to graduate. Later in the paper these trends are analysed in order to see which social groups have had greater access to university education at different times in the 20th Century.

In the post-war development of universities the years 1957 and 1964, when the Murray and the Martin Reports came out, are regarded as pivotal. The idea that universities should be restricted to a small intellectual elite had some currency in the 1950s, but it was not entertained by the Murray Committee. Rather, observing the strength of demand, they advised against controlling numbers with tougher selection and said that universities should be put in a position to accept all qualified applicants and give them a good education. (p. 2). (The UK Robbins Committee took an identical stance using similar phrases in its report. That was in 1963. (p. 8). If Murray had been 5 years after Robbins rather than before would we have said that Murray was influenced?)

The Martin Committee accepted without qualification that the capacity of higher education must be vastly increased. It

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recommended that this should occur in a structure of two distinct parts: universities and technological colleges (later named colleges of advanced education). The Committee justified its expansionary vision by pointing out that there was an under-tapped pool of ability which included the children of working-class families. The Committee cited Radford (Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research), who had informed it of gross disproportions in university participation from social classes. Radford reported that:

it is highly improbable that less than 2 per cent of sons and less than 1 per cent of daughters of unskilled or semi-skilled fathers have the ability to do university work, as against 36 per cent of the sons of university professional fathers and 24 per cent of the daughters of university professional fathers, or 30 per cent of sons and 14 per cent of daughters of those engaged in higher administration. (p. 43)

Although we are inclined to think of the Murray and Martin Reports as setting the stage for expansion, a glance at Figure 1 shows that the transition from an elite to a mass system of higher education had really started before Murray. In 1956 total student numbers increased 12 per cent over the previous year — nothing like that had happened before except in the catch up years immediately after the First and Second World Wars. Rising demand was superimposed on rapid population growth as, probably for the first time in history, a majority of citizens were coming to see more education as the chief means of advancing their life chances, or at least those of their children. The two reports recognised the social trend, recommended to governments that they foot the bill so that the masses could be educated decently, and recommended co-ordinating structures that endured for 30 years.

A young person's family or social class environment is of course not the only constraint on access to university. Native ability has something to do with it and so does the quality of schooling and individual purposes and ambition. Access is also a function of the number of places that are available and whether these are within reach financially or geographically.

This paper explores the social map, looking for regions which are inhabited by students and potential students. The social class of students' families of origin is the main focus with some references to sex, religion, residential location, and age. In addressing the question "who gets university education?" I will draw together scraps of evidence from different periods since the University of Sydney was established in

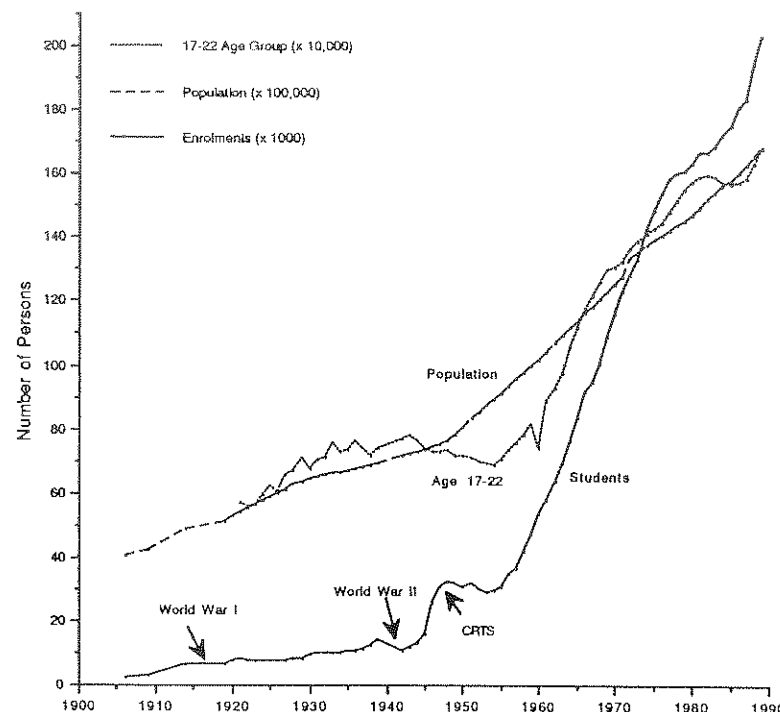

Figure 1: Number of Students at Australian Universities, 1906-1989 Compared with Population.

Sources: For 1906-45, Australian Commonwealth Year Books; for 1946-74, Universities Commission, 1975; for 1975-, ABS Universities Bulletins and ABS *Estimated Age Distribution of the Population, States and Territories of Australia.*

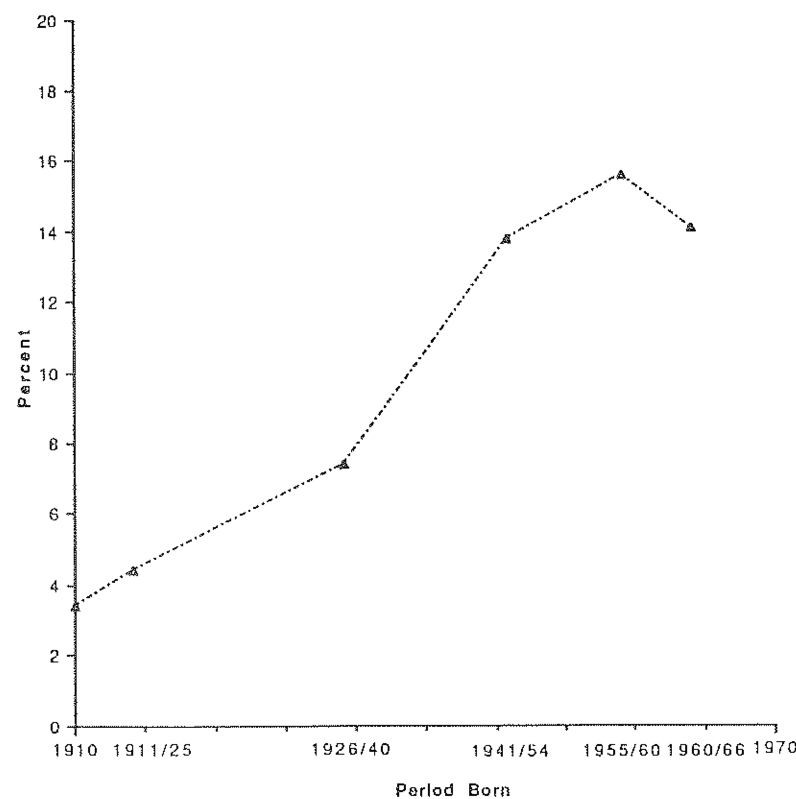

Figure 2: Per cent of Graduates in Population by Age: Australia

Source: National Social Science Survey, RSSS, ANU.

1852. At the end I will take a quick glance at where Australia stands on an international league table of democratisation of higher education.

Social class and improving access 1852-1945

Students rarely seem to get a guernsey in their universities' histories. Reading the Scott (1936) and Blainey (1957) histories of the University of Melbourne, or the histories of Western Australia, Queensland or Adelaide, doesn't give one much feeling for who the mass of students were, or whether the great men who stride through the pages had any interest in their students' origins (although Alexander (1963), Thomis (1985) and Duncan (1973) all devote chapters to what students get up to on campus).

This is an unfortunate omission because students are the human connection between universities and the society that sustains it. Universities are supported by the public because it is believed that they will be of general service to the community and of particular service to the young. But it is only for recent times that we have reliable accounts of which sectors of society supply the children who get a university education.

I don't know if it is unusual for the generality students to be omitted from historical accounts of universities. In the history of the University of Uppsala — and I confess that it is the only history of a non-Australian university that I have ever read — Sten Lindroth (1976) has something to say, in his account of each main period, about students and where they come from. This enables him to conclude with an observation about the slow and incomplete democratisation of the Swedish universities in the latter 20th Century and to reflect that in the feudal society of the 17th Century:

when the clergy hand-picked gifted peasant boys, about the same percentage of students from the lower classes probably attended the University of Uppsala as in the 20th Century. The comparative lack of success of the modern democratic policy with regard to universities . . . has hardly even succeeded in reducing the antagonism between manual workers and intellectuals in Swedish society. (pp. 245-246)

Macmillan's (1963) account of the origin of the University of Sydney (written in the first issue of the now defunct The Australian University) gives some prominence to the conflict between the small group of founders sharing the same conservative political ideas and the faction led by Parkes. The conflict appears to centre around elitist and egalitarian views. Parkes is quoted by Macmillan as writing:

It may seem . . . that the founders of the University have no wish to limit its advantages to a class — our decided persuasion is to the contrary and that the whole matter wears an air of aristocratical predilection with which public money ought not to be indulged. (p. 30)

Parkes was to soften his opposition under the influence of John Wooley, Sydney's founding professor of classics. Nevertheless concern about social exclusiveness continued. Macmillan informs us that early on in Sydney's history (1865) a reform group was established with the principal aim of opening "the doors of the university to the intellect of the whole country" (p. 30). Linked with the democratisation of access was a press for a more utilitarian curriculum. Sheridan Moore, founder of the reform group, deplored what he saw as Sydney's slavish imitation of the two ancient universities of England saying that it was utterly unadapted to the colony's educational wants. "The education of the great universities in the Mother Country is eminently unpractical — is not at all in accord with the spirit of this mechanical age."

Despite the protestations of the likes of Parkes and Moore the social composition of studentry at Sydney in its first decade seems to have embraced a pretty fair scattering of the social spectrum. Macmillan searched the archives of matriculated students at Sydney, and found fathers' occupations for more than half of the 129 students who enrolled during the first eleven years: Commerce comprised the largest group, there being 21 sons of merchants and 8 sons of retailers ranging from butchers and publicans to bakers and an ironmonger.

Next in order came the sons of lawyers, the sons of pastoralists, the sons of government officials, the sons of ministers of religion and of builders. Somewhat surprising was the large group of students (nine ascertainable), who were the sons of artisans, ranging from carpenters to a coppersmith, a caneworker, glazier, and a book-binder (pp. 57-58).

Not in the list are the sons of what today we would call semi or unskilled workers, and who, in those days I suppose would have constituted a substantial majority. A surprising omission from the perspective late in the 20th Century is any sons of schoolteachers. Women are absent too but that is not surprising since they were not admitted to Sydney until 1882 (or Melbourne until 1880). This social roll call may show, as Macmillan suggests, that the class of traders and business people were beginning to replace the pastoralists and landowners as the most powerful political section in the colonial community.

It also suggests to me that university education may not have been particularly valued as a means of cementing one's position in the social order, or at least not university education in Australia. Rather it was a means of career and social mobility upwards for a handful of young men from the middle and lower middle classes.

The other history which records some interest by the founding fathers in having a university open to all classes is Alexander's on Western Australia. According to Alexander, Hackett, who was chief among the moving spirits, was determined that the new university should be available to the sons of the poor, "for whom, indeed, Hackett regarded the new university as primarily, if not exclusively, intended."

Free tuition, which Hackett and his commission successfully fought for, and which Western Australia had from the beginning in 1913, was seen by the founders as a necessary condition for democratising participation. Fees remained minimal until 1989 when tuition fees were introduced Australia-wide by Minister John Dawkins. So far as I know, no one has studied the effect of Western Australia's free tuition on the social mix — whether the founder's hopes were realised, and whether the impression one has is correct, that easier financial access led to a disproportionate number from the West among a generation of Australia's leading public intellectuals.

In the early days apparently both Sydney and Melbourne found it hard to attract many students. After 20 years fewer than 200 had graduated from Sydney. According to Macmillan, Melbourne was more successful than Sydney in the range of its curriculum — the utilitarians seem to have been more successful — and in attracting a wider range of students, although I cannot find the source of evidence for the latter.

Melbourne's Council made concessions enabling students who worked to qualify for a degree without attending lectures. From this it may be inferred that a university education (of sorts) at Melbourne was not overly dependent on family wealth. Blainey, however, observes that few students used this privilege (p. 22); which is perhaps what might be expected since they still had to sit for examinations in all subjects.

But Melbourne historian Graham Fendley, in an unpublished paper, reports an opposite response by students. By 1864, he says, students enrolled as not attending lectures might account for more than half a year's enrolment. He observes:

Under these conditions to combine employment and University study was common. Young men from schools and solicitors' offices trudged to the University in odd hours conceded by their employers, or helped by the notorious tendency of some courses to fossilize, read the set text books at their leisure and saw the University only on examination day.

It was more than 50 years, however, before the part-time system as we know it emerged, the early Melbourne professors being adamant that the curriculum could not be fragmented and that piecemeal study was unthinkable. According to Fendley, follow-

ing financial difficulties, and a chronic inability to attract students, plus pressures from existing students, the University introduced evening lectures in 1904.

Two years later students in the Faculty of Arts who were "engaged in full and regular work of a calling or profession" were allowed to enter for and pass subjects two at a time, but they were not to be "eligible for any Prize or Exhibition or Scholarship or for inclusion in any Class list . . ." Among the first dispensations under the regulation were 49 students of whom 43 were teachers (six from "convents", 21 from state schools, one private tutor and 15 unspecified), the remaining six being a compositor, a stipendiary reader, a librarian, a clerk and two clergymen.

Queensland had no such qualms about students not being on campus and external students were enrolled from the start in 1911. The feeling was strong that the new university should be for Queensland, not just Brisbane, and, according to its historian Thomis, one of the early bills actually specified that students need not attend lectures.

Queensland, and later on the university college at Armidale, must have offered among the earliest programmes available anywhere for off-campus undergraduates external studies. But somehow, when external or open university education became an international vogue in the 1960s, Australia did not capitalise on its achievements in distance education which were, at that time, ahead of anything in the UK or USA.

During the 20th Century the part-time provision became a distinctive feature of the Australian university system. Early figures are not available but in every year bar one since 1949 more than one-third of all undergraduates have been enrolled as part-time students. The peak year for full-time was 1951 with 66.6 per cent. The Murray Committee hoped "that this liberal policy will continue and be extended." (p. 33).

Despite this endorsement being part-time is, for many, a miserable way to study, the part-timer having to put up with university arrangements designed for full-timers and, at the same time, manage the not entirely compatible roles student, worker and, for many, spouse/domestic. The part-timer is portrayed as a serious but colourless individual; a shadowy figure not taking much part in student affairs, spending any spare time in the library if it happens to be open after hours, and not much noticed by officials, or historians.

The drop out rate among part-timers has always been high, often well over 50 per cent. But those who remain do as well as the full-timers, although they are rarely among the very top performers. Despite its shortcomings the part-time system has enabled thousands of young people, mainly from public schools and families of modest means, to obtain a university education.

The part-timer has often worked a few years full-time as a school teacher or public servant before commencing studies. The university experience is not one that is remembered with much affection by former part-time students. Some of the anti-academic sentiments found in public service and other sections of the community might well originate in the experiences of so many graduates who studied part-time.

The importance of the part-time provision in the development of Australian (and New Zealand) university education is, I believe, not fully appreciated. It is unusual in Anglo-American university systems. In the UK the opportunity to study part-time has been pretty much confined to London; and in the USA is found mainly in community colleges, not in the major universities as is common in Australia.

Because attendance at a non-Catholic private school has been strongly associated with family position in the social order it can be used as a proxy for class. Using this method John La Nauze (1943, p. 47) analysed the origins of men who graduated from the University of Adelaide in the decade 1927-37 and concluded that there was considerable bias: "men from state schools, who comprise nearly 90 per cent of the school population at age 13-14 . . . are only 40 per cent of all graduates . . ."

A similar study at Melbourne just before World War II revealed even bigger disproportions — 76 per cent of graduates for the year 1939 were ex-private school (in medicine it was 90 per cent) although three-quarters of the school population was public (Henderson, 1942). These two reports are of interest because, as far as I know, they are the first we have since Macmillan's retrospective of Sydney's originals which show the social make up of an entire population of students (albeit males in the case of Adelaide).

The reports are also novel because they were used to argue for a more equitable admissions policy. It was not until the 1950s that there was a more general renewal of the interest in the inequalities associated with participation in university education which had engaged some of the founding fathers.

Towards the end of World War II a series of studies starts which, for the first time, gives us a reasonably detailed account of the social mix of studentry. At first these enquiries were motivated by considerations of economic efficiency — how to identify potential human capital for the war effort and for post-war reconstruction.

Later, considerations of equity and social justice became important. Most of these studies originate in Melbourne, with some from South Australia and Western Australia. There seems to have been less interest in the question of equality in New South Wales and Queensland. For a detailed account see Anderson and Eaton (1982).

At the behest of the Commonwealth Universities Commission (not to be confused with the later Australian Universities Commission) the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) started a follow up study of the 1943 and 1944 entrants to the University of Melbourne — all highly selected academically, especially the 1944 group — to see how well examination marks and some psychological tests predicted subsequent academic performance (Hohne, 1951 and 1955).

The results are of interest, not least because they showed that neither school examination results, nor IQs, nor personality tests were much good for predicting success. They also revealed high failure among what was arguably the best group of students ever to be admitted to the University. Furthermore it was reported that the academically better 1944 intake did worse than the 1943 entrants. University teaching was blamed, and the author speculated that a law of equilibrium operated in universities such that any change is absorbed with minimum impact so that the status quo is soon restored — in this case an intake of considerably brighter students had little discernible influence on the examination pass rate.

The same observation, of independence between standards of entry to university and subsequent pass rates, was to be made by a number of researchers in the coming decades. Reviews of the literature by Sanders (1958, 1963) and Hammond (1962) reveal, as Hammond put it:

that each research worker finds that his results lead him to deny the common assumption that raising university entrance requirements will lead to a corresponding rise in university pass rates. (p98)

While the ACER research did not contain much joy for the psychologists who devised admission tests, the sociologists fared better. Among statistical associations reported were that students from better off families performed above the average, and that students of similar ability and school achievement from non-Catholic schools achieved better in their university studies than those from public schools who, in turn, did better than those from Catholic schools.

I have it on good authority that the report stung the Catholic authorities into action, including a massive survey conducted by Fr Noel Ryan for a doctoral thesis at Monash. Hohne's report also, one suspects, led to renewed efforts by the Catholic authorities to obtain state aid for their impoverished schools. (The reports were published in the early 1950s, just before the long-standing opposition of governments to state aid for private schools ended.)

The prevalence of ex-private school students at university was even greater at Melbourne in 1943-44 than La Nauze had reported for Adelaide in the 1930s. Furthermore the statistics are reported in sufficient detail to show that sex and social origin interact with faculty. Ex-private school females actually form a majority of the women in both the science based faculties and in Arts. Private school men, if they entered Arts at all, were more liable than other students to enrol in honours than in pass.

Serle (1971) found much the same for history at Melbourne in the 1930s. La Nauze reported it for science as well as Arts at Adelaide, and the pattern was still there when I surveyed Arts students at Melbourne in the 1960s. Other students — men and women — participated in Arts roughly according to statistical expectations, but in pass rather than honours. Ex-Catholic school women however were rarities in the science-based faculties.

Other studies of the period 1939-44 reveal that biases in the social mix of studentry generally were nation-wide. (See Sanders, 1948; p. 127).

Another bit of interesting information from the Melbourne survey of 1943-44 concerns the intellectual standing of students in science. IQ tests were given to all entrants, and science students — both physical and biological — came out on top, ahead of medicine and engineering, Arts, agriculture and dentistry. Their matriculation entrance scores were also the highest of all science-based faculties.

By 1960, if not before, science had dropped to nearer the bottom of the league table of intelligence and admission cut-off scores and has remained there ever since. Murray was alarmed at science's declining share of enrolments at school and university (p. 26), and so was Ramsay (1963) who, 6 years later, reported on the development of higher education in Victoria. The drift from science (at least away from the planners' expectations of where it should be) was illustrated by Monash University which was conceived of as a technological university, but, by the time it opened its doors for business, had a preponderance of students in humanities, social science and law.

Interventions 1943-1974

Countervailing forces shaped the social mix of studentry during the decades after World War II. Rising demand was fuelled mainly by the ambitions of families already well positioned in the social order. Obviously there was more room for bright and motivated young people from working class families in a system which doubled in size between the early 1940s and early 1950s and doubled again by the early 1960s. But, as Radford's meticulous documentation revealed, the social imbalance remained with the lion's share of additional places going to a small fraction of the population.

This fraction was comprised of families where the parents were relatively well educated and understood the advantages of higher education, where the costs of good schooling and university fees could be afforded, where there was ample cultural capital, and where the children's vocational preferences were for the professions.

At the same time democratising influences were at work. The rapid expansion of public secondary schools after the War meant that many able students of modest means could at least get to the starting gate for the competition of university entry. (After 1945 the number of public school students exceeded private school students at matriculation level.) Furthermore a series of interventions, mainly by governments, reduced the extent of financial barriers to participation.

These were, in the approximate order of their introduction: the war-time scheme of financial assistance for students entering science based courses, the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme for returned service personnel, the studentship schemes of the 1950s and 1960s operated by state education departments and others and the Whitlam Government's abolition of tuition fees and scheme of means tested tertiary living allowances.

At the height of World War II the Curtin Government took steps to make sure that the demands of the armed forces for recruits did not cause the supply of university trained persons to dry up. Engineers, scientists and medical personnel were needed for war service in the military and as civilians; and, in the longer term they would be needed for post war reconstruction. Consequently, in 1943, scientific and technical faculties were declared to be "reserved" which meant that students in them could not be called up or allowed to join military or other national service.

Reserved students from poorer families were assisted financially. In order to reduce wastage, which was considerable, entry to reserved faculties was regulated by quotas, entry to which was determined by an adequate level of performance on the matriculation examination. It was the students admitted to the University of Melbourne under these arrangements who became the subjects of Hohne's ACER research.

This wartime scheme must have enticed many students of modest social origins into university education. But the impact would have been minor with what was to come. In 1945 the first trickle of ex-service men and women appeared on the campuses of Australia's six universities commencing a flood which was to bring enrolments to a peak of 32,453 in 1948, a level not exceeded until 1956.

The generous CRTS scheme of educational preparation and financial assistance opened doors of opportunity to thousands who, under normal circumstances, would not have completed secondary school. The precise extent to which access was broadened will not be known until a historian or sociologist sifts through the archives of universities and the Commonwealth.

As we have seen, the ex-service students had scarcely departed when a new wave of young students took over the campuses. These newcomers represented an escalation of demand that has been maintained until the present time. Somehow room had been found for the former servicemen and women, but the number of qualified young applicants from the mid 1950s on were more than the universities were prepared to take and it was decided that the new flood should be controlled.

The first "quota" was, as far as I know, (apart from World War II) placed on entry to second year medicine at Melbourne about 1953. This meant that some students who had passed first year were "stood down" not being allowed to proceed, at least for a year. This created a ready made group of agitators with time on their hands. There was something of a public outcry at this, helped along by the now defunct Melbourne daily newspaper, The Argus which gave the issue front page headlines.

The University medical authorities, who, with some justification, had thought that deferring entry to second year was fairer than not admitting qualfied applicants at all, retreated. Quotas were soon placed on admissions to first year.

This was the beginning of the end of open admission for qualified students to the course of their choice. In the early 1960s first Melbourne, and then other universities, placed quotas on popular courses, and eventually on all courses. To the surprise of some, Arts was one of the faculties where there was keen competition for places and where quotas had to be applied. Without much fanfare during the 1960s a fundamental change occurred in access to universities — from accepting all qualified applicants to accepting all for whom there was room.

After some experimenting with tests and interviews universities administered the competition for a place in the meritocracy by constructing what were called euphemistically "order of merit" lists. These were constructed from students' aggregate marks achieved in external examinations. There was little enthusiasm for the British "rite of passage" which required that students should travel to a distant university town for interview by old men of the tribe, or the American combination of scholastic aptitude tests, school reports and alumni interviews.

Such was the intensity of competition for entry to the prestige faculties, especially medicine, that stories of bribes and other subterfuges began to circulate. If you hadn't made it at the first attempt, one legitimate

way of advancing your position in the order of merit list was to return to school for a second year in sixth form.

Private schools encouraged this practice and perhaps one-fifth of Melbourne's entrants from private schools were second-timers. Because results from a second attempt at the matriculation examination were found to unduly inflate the probability of subsequent success at university examinations, in 1964 Victorian universities adopted an admissions formula which scaled back results from a second attempt. Despite initial protests from private schools the practice lasted for 25 years.

The second great democratisation of studentry occurred in association with the 1950s expansion because of a demographic quirk. The post-war baby boom generation had reached the schools and state education departments desperately sought additional teachers. They recruited using a package of incentives including free tuition, a salary, additional tutorials, counselling and accommodation for country students.

There were bursaries inducing high school students to sign up in 5th form (Year 11). The social mix of Arts and Science faculties changed as students were attracted from poorer families, the female sex and the country — all categories that had been substantially under-represented.

At Monash and Melbourne, and I imagine elsewhere, the state education department had a substantial presence in the form of a director and staff who kept an eye on their charges, checked attendances, supervised progress, gave supplementary tutorials, influenced subject choices and issued pay cheques. "Teaching" subjects and pass rather than honours courses were preferred. The Murray Committee called the scheme a necessary evil. There are contemporary reports of teacher trainees being reminded that they were public servants and being restrained about what they could say in public.

In Arts faculties at the time a majority of students were destined for school teaching and staff disliked being reminded that the faculty was really a huge teachers' college. Nevertheless the erosion of autonomy caused by the education department was tolerated.

In return for their benefits an education department studentship holder had to sign a bond agreeing to work for their employer for a number of years equal to the length of their course. As with the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS), the education studentship schemes await a historian.

There were also in the 1950s and 1960s shortages of scientific and engineering professional person-power in public service and industry and bonded studentships were offered by government, the military and private firms for courses in engineering, science and medicine.

By the late 1960s equality of opportunity was a dominating theme in social research and reform. The Whitlam Government in 1974 hoped that, by making tuition free, access for bright children from working class families would be facilitated. Apart from the Curtin Government's war-time scheme of means tested allowances this was the first attempt by a government to democratise university admissions. There was some disappointment among supporters of the Government's interventions when evaluations of fee abolition reported little change in the social mix. (See Anderson et al., 1978)

There are three comments worth making on the apparent ineffectiveness of free tuition in facilitating entry by students from poorer families. The first is that there may well have been opposing trends which concealed a real impact of fee abolition; in particular by 1974 the education studentship schemes were coming to an end and free tuition is likely to have prevented a social regression that may otherwise have occurred.

Second, a simple intervention at one point in a complex social process — the point of entry to university — is certainly not a sufficient means to get more kids from poor families into the academy. For one thing they have to get to the starting gate and the evidence shows that most social selectivity and attrition occurred before students reached year 12 of secondary school. The more recent policies which have led to a doubling in a decade of retention to year 12 are likely to be more effective in the longer run.

Thirdly, when the prize is substantial, like getting into a prestigious profession, those well positioned in the social hierarchy will redouble their efforts to maintain their advantage against intervention on behalf of the disadvantaged.

I have not come across a clear account of the Whitlam Government's objectives for abolishing fees. There are some statements about equal representation of the children of workers, but that appears to be about all. This is odd because equal participation by social classes, or any other grouping, does not make an exclusive system more equitable for all individuals. Those who do not get in, be they poor or rich, black or white, male or female, miss out on a substantial public subsidy.

There are two public interest arguments for broadening the mix. One is that recruiting students from under-represented social classes will tap new reservoirs of talent, the assumption being that talent is more or less independent of social origin. Martin used this argument.

The second is that educating students from disadvantaged groups will produce leaders who will help their people. The assumption here is that graduates will identify with their group of origin. Somewhat similar thinking appears to have influenced some of the founding fathers — if we have to put up with democrats we'd better educate them.

More recently it has been suggested (e.g. Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, 1984) that the legal profession would be a more effective advocate for the poor and dispossessed if its membership was less biased towards the upper strata of the social order; and that the social sensitivity of medical practice would be enhanced if practitioners as a group were more representative of society as a whole.

While the suggestions may be countered with the observation that many socially upwardly mobile students seem to adopt the values and behaviours of the elite group which they are joining, programmes for specific minorities are clearly successful. Perhaps the most successful of all have been intervention to raise the educational attainments of Aborigines.

Winners and losers since the 1960s

With these interventions in higher education and all the changes in Australian society and education since 1945 — migration, enormous growth in the provision for education, population shift to the cities where there is easier access to university, the shift from a resource based to an industrial economy — a more socially representative body of school leavers might have been expected in higher education. It is hard to find the evidence.

Radford's 1960 account to the Martin inquiry of the gross over-representation of the professional and business classes and under-representation of the manual working classes echoes the accounts from the 1930s and 1940s. Evidence from more recent times suggests that the balance overall has changed only a little. The graphs in Figure 3 have been drawn from Radford's two surveys of school leavers and a more recent national survey conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research.

By splitting the samples of leavers, ranked on father's occupational status, into three equal parts and comparing participation in university from each of these thirds at the different periods it is possible to quantify moves towards or away from equality. The graphs indicate that, in the decade following 1960, there appears to have been a move to a marginally more equal system as higher education expanded to absorb almost 50 per cent more school-leavers. Thereafter participation by school-leavers declined and inequality between the top third and the lower two-thirds of the youthful representatives of the social order actually increased.

School leavers are not the only source of recruits for higher education; and in recent times they have not been the major source. If we accept the Department of Employment Education and Training definition of a school leaver entrant as one who enrols within a year of leaving school, and a mature age student as one who enrolled after a gap of more than a year, then mature age entrants were in the majority for most of the 1980s. (DEET 1990b).

In response to such evidence of persisting inequality the Hawke Government has announced a policy of intervention which is more detailed in its objectives and strategies than anything attempted before. Despite the radical transformation of the student social mix that is intended, this policy has received little public attention and is the least publicised of the Government's many interventions in higher education. The policy document (*A Fair Chance for All*, DEET, 1990a) sets out "a coherent set of national objectives, targets and strategies for ensuring that the benefits of higher education are within everyone's reach."

The trend to mature age study had started by 1961, probably earlier. (Sufficiently detailed statistics of students' ages became available only when the Australian Universities Commission was established and set about systematic collection of statistical information.) Between 1961 and 1980 the proportion of all students who were aged 23 or more and were full-time rose from 16 per cent to 23 per cent; and those who were part-time rose from 50 to 81 per cent. (Anderson and Vervoorn 1983, p. 37).

Students staying on to do higher degrees were responsible for part of this, but increasing numbers of older persons deciding to return to education were the main cause. Among the latter were some whose circumstances had precluded them from continuing on with university study after school, and others who had never entertained the idea when young but whose interest and preferences had changed.

A Monash study of the reasons given by mature age students for their delayed entry revealed that, for every older entrant whose early high aspirations had been frustrated by personal handicap, there were at least two others who had not thought of higher education while at school. (Hore and West, 1980, p. 118).

Does greater participation by older students broaden the social mix because they belong to under-represented classes? There is a modest correlation between greater age and lower socio-economic status. For example a national survey of new students in 1976 showed that among the younger entrants (less than 22 years) the proportion with fathers who were professionals was more than double the proportion whose fathers were manual workers, but that among the older entrants professionals and manual workers were equally represented. (See Table 1).

TABLE 1

Age of New University Students (1976) by Father's Occupation
Per cent whose fathers are professional or manual workers

	Father's Occupation	
	Professional	Manual
Age 17-21	34	16
Age 22+	22	23

Source: Anderson, Boven, Fensham and Powell, 1980, p. 106

Note: In the entire sample of 5080 new students 29 per cent had professional fathers and 19 per cent had manual fathers. (Manual includes foremen, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers.) Comparison with census data shows the extent to which the university intake is biased: in 1971 the male work force aged 35-54 included 9 per cent who were professionals and 52 per cent who were manual workers. (Op. cit, p. 29)

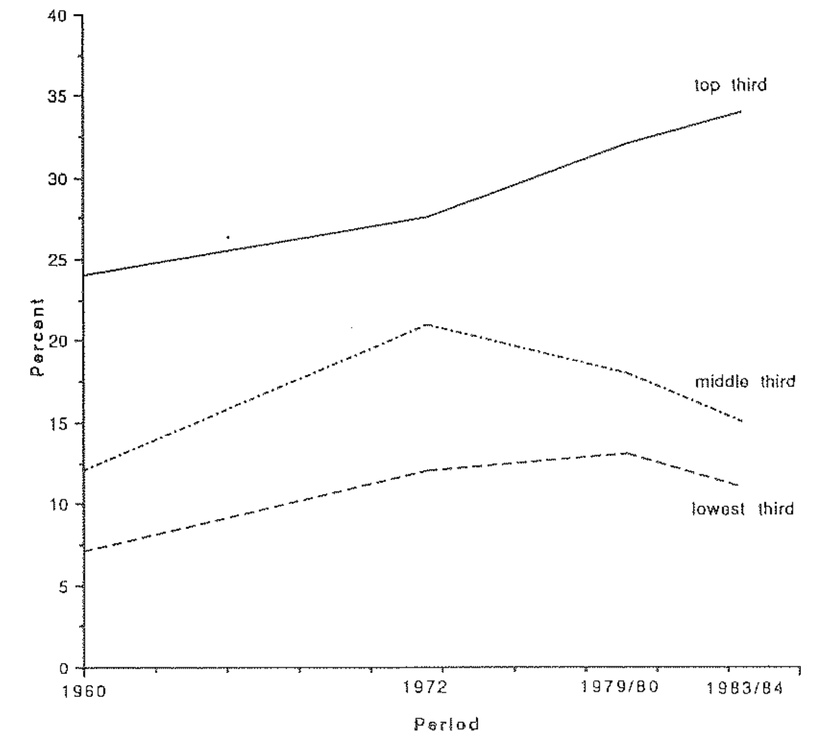

Figure 3: Participation in Higher Education by Period of Attendance: Social Class. Australian School Leavers 1960-1984.

Sources: 1) Radford, W.C. (1962) *School Leavers in Australia, 1959-1960* Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
2) Radford, W.C. and Wilkes, R.E. (1975) *School Leavers in Australia, 1971-1972* Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
3) Australian Council for Educational Research: Youth in Transition Study.

Gross aggregates such as those presented in Figure 3 and Table 1 conceal a great deal of variation. For example at the lower end of the distribution are the children of unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers who remain under-represented by a factor of about 5 compared with the professional and managerial classes. There are also regional variations across cities because occupational status is closely related to residential location and because access to university and suitable preparatory schools is a problem for residents of many working class suburbs.

Young people who were people living in the working class suburbs of Bankstown or Sunshine at the time of the 1986 Census were about 6 times less likely to have been at university than residents of more salubrious Woollahra or Kew, and about six times less likely to attend non-Catholic private school. The accompanying maps of Melbourne and Sydney, based on the 1986 census, portray the extent of regional variations of participation in non-Catholic private school and university. (Figures 4-7).

The Government says that this will be achieved by changing the balance of the student population to reflect more closely the composition of society as a whole. All in-

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Figure 4: Students aged less than 24 years attending Universities as a percentage of all persons aged less than 25 years.

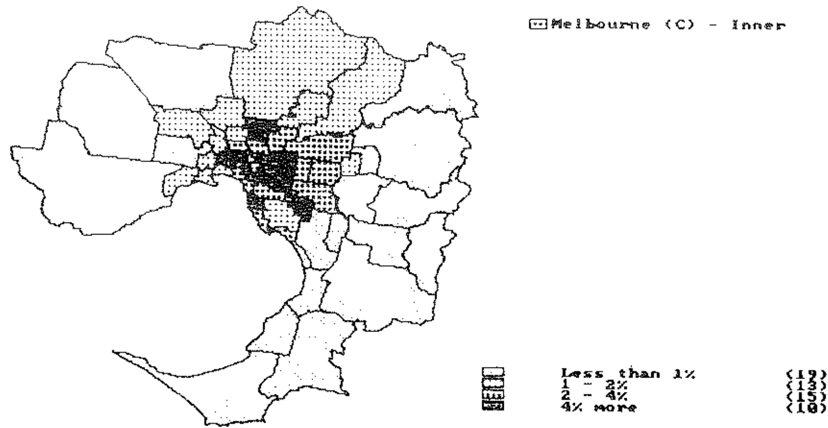
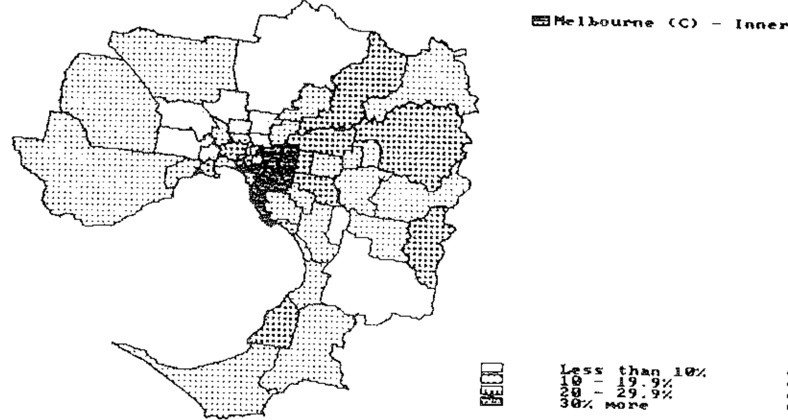


Figure 5: Non-Catholic students In Non-Government Secondary Schools as a percentage of Secondary Students.



stitutions have been requested to develop special entry arrangements for socially disadvantaged groups by 1992. Numerical targets to be achieved by 1995 have been set for certain categories: an increase of 50 per cent in Aboriginal enrolments in higher education; an increase in the proportion of women in engineering from 7 to 15 per cent, and to at least 40 per cent in other courses that have not been much frequented by women; and doubling the present enrolment of persons with disabilities.

No target is set for the participation by students to be recruited from working class families but, as part of their equity plans, institutions are to examine the composition of studentry in relation to the make-up of their wider community and concentrate efforts on groups that are not well represented. Annual reports are to be made on progress towards achieving equity objectives.

The following paragraphs examine the changing fortunes of Aborigines, women, students from private schools, Catholics and children from working class families. Except for Aborigines, who are insufficiently numerous to be caught in the coarse net of a social survey, information from the National Social Science Survey (Kelley, Cushing and Headey, 1987), is used to graph trends in participation from the 1920s to the 1980s.

Members of the Aborigine population of Australia were strangers to higher education, or indeed to anything much more than basic primary education until the 1960s. Subsequently, in response to public and private initiatives (including "Abschol" established by the National Union of Australian University Students) some Aborigines completed secondary education and a trickle entered higher education. It is not possible to be precise because at that time most state departments did not record or publish statistics on the enrolment of Aboriginal students.

Since 1973 the number of Aborigines in higher education has increased 30 times, from 110 to 3300. During the 1980s the Aborigine proportion of all students more than doubled to 0.7 per cent in 1989. While there is still a long way to go, there are now graduates with professional qualifications in leadership positions in numerous professions and policy areas. Contrast this with the introductory sentences to the chapter on Aborigines in Access to Privilege written less than 10 years ago:

> *In the voluminous material published on Aborigines higher education is seldom mentioned. The reason is dreadfully simple: very few Aborigines ever reach a position where they can realistically consider education at a higher level. (Anderson and Vervoorn, 1983, p. 120)*

It was more than a quarter of a century after the first students attended the first lectures that females were admitted to university studies; this was at Melbourne where, in 1880, an act of Parliament entitled women to all of the corporate privileges of the University, except the privilege of studying medicine. By the turn of the Century, as observed in Access to Privilege, women were eligible for all courses but remained a small minority.

In 1907 the authors of the Commonwealth Year Book included a couple of footnotes to the effect that in 1906 the 1054 students at the University of Sydney included 142 females, and that among the University of Melbourne's 853 students were 233 females. That the reader's attention needed to be drawn to these exceptional statistics by means of footnotes says much about attitudes at the time to women undertaking university studies, although they fared better than "aboriginal natives" who, the constitution declared, "shall not be counted".

In 1979 the number of female school leavers commencing higher education exceeded males for the first time. The trend continued throughout the 1980s and by 1989 the female proportion of commencers was a record 54.5 per cent.

Information from the National Social Science Survey shows how the proportions of men and women in the population who have graduated has changed over a fifty year period. (See Figure 8). Most of the oldest members of the sample (born before 1910) who graduated — just over 3 per cent all told — would have attended university some time during the 1920s. The rate for men is more than 50 per cent greater than that for women.

In the generation whose attendance would have been mainly during the post World War II decade the overall graduation rate is about

7.5 per cent and it is of interest that women almost caught up. Thereafter, in the period of rapid growth, women slip back relatively. The most recent period reflects the rise in participation by young women during the 1980s. Among the generation born 1960-66 the proportion of women in the population who are graduates exceeds the proportion of men.

The statistical categories of "family wealth", "private school" and "university" overlap one another, as has been reported in innumerable studies and as may be inferred from in the maps. Many private schools, especially non-Catholic private schools, have specialised as academic preparatory institutions, schooling their pupils for university entrance examinations.

Since the 1960s, when the information was first collected, these schools have retained more than three quarters of their students to year 12, a rate which was three times the Australian average in the 1960s and 1970s. The retention rates for Catholic schools used to be close to those for public schools but, since the mid 1970s, the gap has widened. For example in 1980 the apparent retention rates to year 12 for public, Catholic and other private schools were 28, 45 and 88 per cent respectively.

These trends are reflected in Figure 9 which shows the proportions of former public, Catholic and other private school students who are graduates. The time period is the same as for the previous graphs of the sexes. In the pre World War II period there was no significant difference between public and Catholic schools; thereafter however former Catholic school students began to graduate at a greater rate than public.

Throughout the entire period other private students graduated at a far higher rate, and, in the most recent period, the gap has widened. This latter trend may be due to the fact that many Catholic and public school students delay their entry to higher education, enrolling perhaps in their mid 20s as part-time students.

Attendance at a Catholic school is not necessarily an accurate indication of the educational whereabouts of Catholics in the community because, according to census and other sources, the proportion of Catholic children who attend Catholic schools is a little over 50 per cent. The trends shown in Figures 9 and 10 show the categories "Catholic School" and "Catholic" as similar until the most recent period when the graduation rate for Catholics overtakes that for non-Catholics.

One likely explanation for this is the advancement of Catholics in the social order from a large working class position in the earlier part of the Century, and, linked with this, a trend for upwardly mobile Catholic families to send their children to non-Catholic private schools. (A 1980s study of where professionals went to school and where they intend sending their own children reveals a substantial inter generational flow to non-Catholic private school from both public and Catholic.) (Anderson, 1988).

Figure 6: Students aged less than 24 years attending Universities as a percentage of all persons aged less than 25 years.

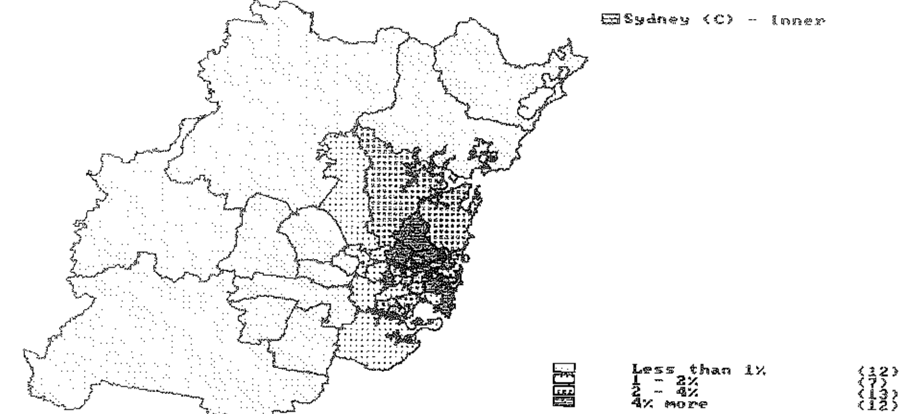
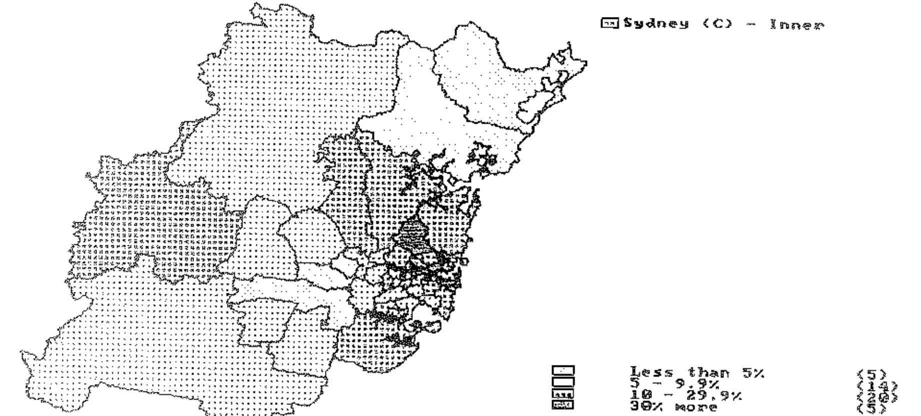


Figure 7: Non-Catholic students In Non-Government Secondary Schools as a percentage of Secondary Students.



Whereas Aborigines, women and Catholics have all advanced from less than average positions in the participation stakes, the gap between the social classes remains refractory to interventions intended to make access more readily available to all social groups. Figure 11 shows the graduation rates for the top 11 per cent and the bottom 14 per cent of the population ordered according to father's occupational prestige.

In the early years 15 to 20 per cent of the top group graduated compared with a negligible fraction from the bottom. With post World War II expansion graduation from both groups accelerate, but the top group improved its position at a greater rate than the lower group.

There appears to have been a shift towards equality during the 1960s and 1970s, but, as the graphs show, this trend sharply reverses in the most recent decade. There may be some catching up later on as persons from lower class backgrounds start their studies after a period in the labour force.

The same trends — a persistent gap between the classes, and a brief move to more equal participation — were seen earlier (Figure 3) in the graphs compiled from surveys conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). In that case the population is of young school leavers enrolling in higher education (not of graduates among various age groups) and the comparison was of the top, middle and

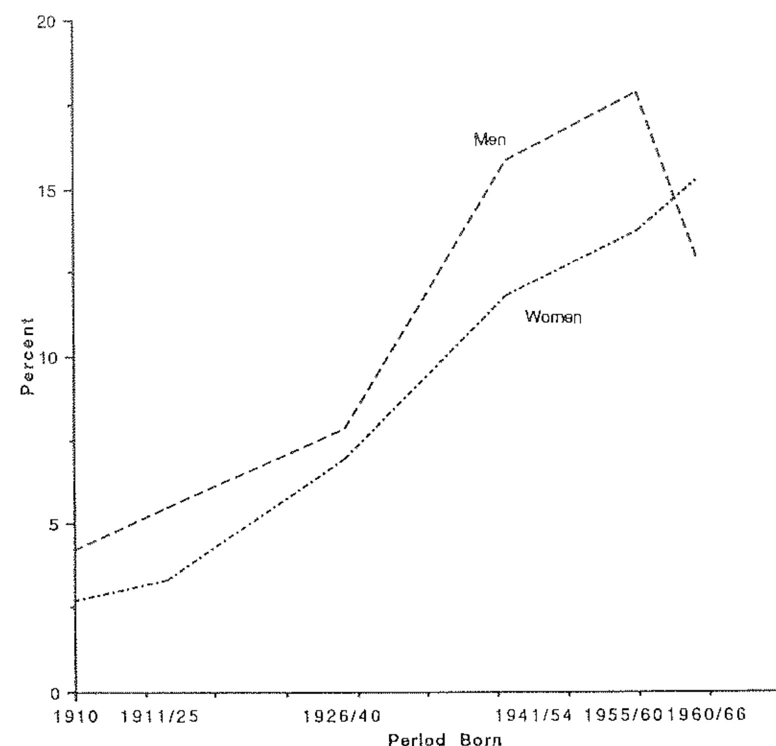


Figure 8: Per cent of Graduates in Population by Age: Men and Women
Source: National Social Science Survey, RSSS, ANU.

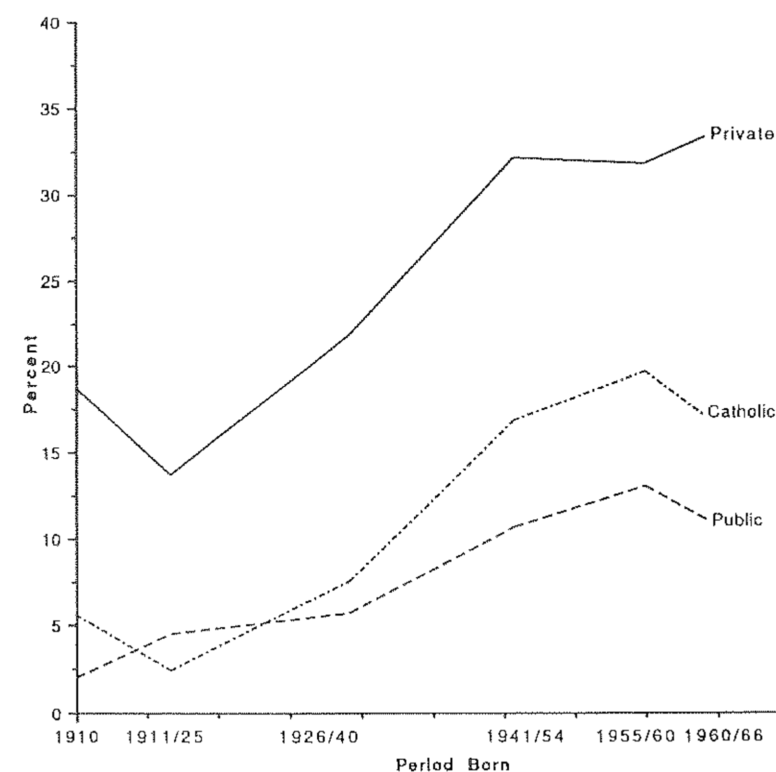


Figure 9: Per cent of Graduates in Population by Age: Type of School.
Source: National Social Science Survey, RSSS, ANU.

bottom thirds of the social order.

The most plausible explanation for the period of more equal representation followed by regression to the more persistent pattern of inequality is that access was less competitive in the 1970s as the number of new places kept pace with demand, but that in the 1980s the system again became highly competitive and, under these circumstances, the prizes went to those already well placed in the social order.

The general phenomenon is universal — in other countries of the West and in the former socialist countries, universities are inhabited in disproportionate numbers by children of the educated, the wealthy and the powerful. Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, inequality in Australia is less stark when viewed in an international context.

Australia compared

Of all the Western industrialised countries Sweden has made more determined efforts through government intervention to create a more equal society, including one where access to higher education is even across several groups. I was able to obtain some statistics of Swedish enrolments for the post World War II period corresponding roughly to the ACER data for Australia used in Figure 3.

The graphs for participation in higher education by members of the top, middle and bottom thirds of the Swedish social order (based on father's occupational prestige) are in Figure 12. It appears that the pessimistic comments of Sten Lindroth about the failure of democratisation of participation in Sweden are not unjustified. The graphs show an expansion of youthful participation in the late 1960s but that the lion's share of the new places is taken by the upper third. That trend is reversed towards the end of the 1970s; the overall impression however is of a persisting inequality.

The remaining four sets of figures are from surveys of the adult population in the United Kingdom, the USA, Poland[1] and Australia. In each case the equal thirds method has been used and the rate of participation in higher education for each is plotted for three time periods, or five in the case of Poland. Because definitions vary of what it means to participate in higher education detailed comparisons are out of order; the general trends do however suggest that the access gap between the top third and the rest is greater in each overseas country than it is in Australia.[2]

Participation in the United Kingdom became a bit more equal in the 1970s but the gap between the top third and the two lower thirds remains substantial (Figure 13).

The same gulf is apparent for Poland and appears to persist from the 1940s to the 1970s (Figure 14). Whatever equalising effects the socialist period may have had in Poland since 1945 they do not appear to have touched higher education.

In the USA overall participation in higher education is of course much greater than in most other countries (partly because of definitions). Nevertheless the same pattern exists as in Sweden, England and Poland. There is a gulf between the top third and the rest; and inequality between these sectors seems to have become greater since the 1960s (Figure 15).

The meaning of higher education is not identical for all social groups, and, in the case of USA the sort of college likely to be accessible to the middle and lower orders is very different from that which can be realistically aspired to by the top. Thus the near identical levels of participation by the lower two thirds in the USA may reflect differing interpretations of the importance of college attendance for career advancement. In particular, those in the middle group who did not make it to prestige institutions may have preferred opportunities in business or the labour force not available to those from less well placed families.

The final set of graphs portrays participation rates for Australia from the 1920s to the 1960s. As a check against possible unreliable quirks in data from one survey, I have used a different source from those of the previous Australian graphs. The data are from two national surveys of the adult population carried out in the 1970s by Aitkin (1977) at ANU.

The graphs show rate of attendance for three age groups whose approximate period of participation would have been the 1920s and early thirties, the later 1930s and 1940s, and the 1950s and early 1960s. The picture remains the same. There is substantial inequality between the occupational classes, and it appears to increase in the post-war period (Figure 16).

But there is not the persistent gap between the participation rates of the top third and the rest that we saw for Sweden, England, Poland and USA. Or to put it another way, if you are born into a family of low to modest status in Australia your chances of getting a higher education are certainly lower than those of one higher born, but the difference is nowhere near as great as in the other countries we have examined.

Equity or equality: Summary

Compared with USA and several European countries the social mix of Australian studentry has been much more representative of the population at large, particularly of families of modest means and educational attainments.

Access in Australia since World War II has been facilitated by a combination of measures found in few other countries. These include the low cost of tuition, special arrangements for adult entry, opportunities

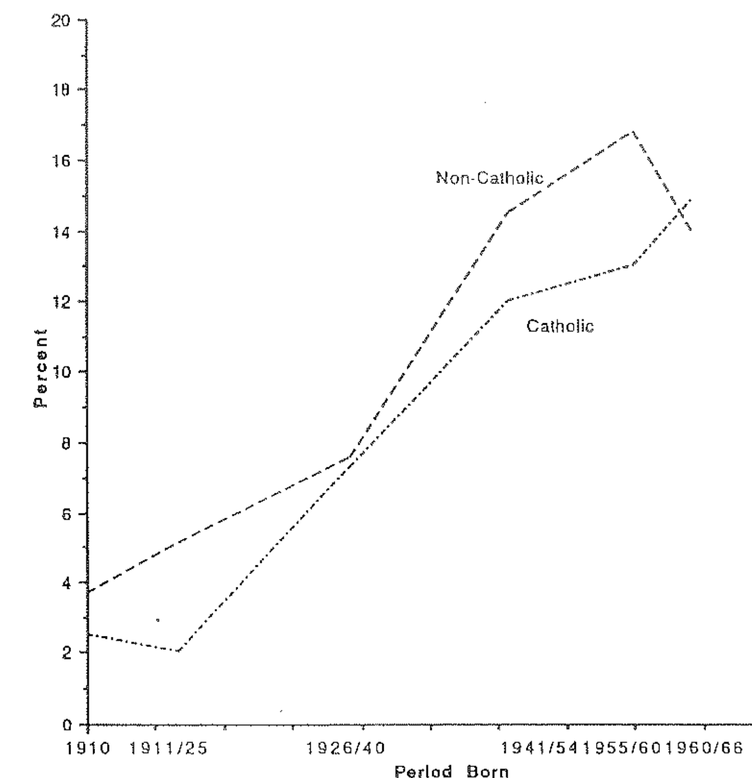


Figure 10: Per cent of Graduates in Population by Age: Religion.
Source: National Social Science Survey, RSSS, ANU.

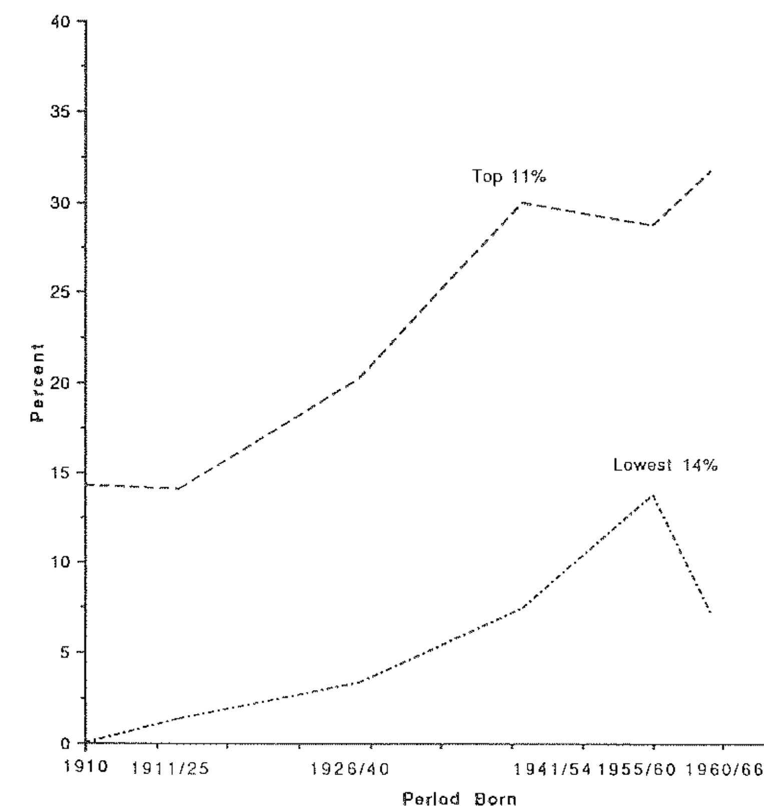


Figure 11: Per cent of Graduates in Population by Age: Social Classes.
Source: National Social Science Survey, RSSS, ANU.

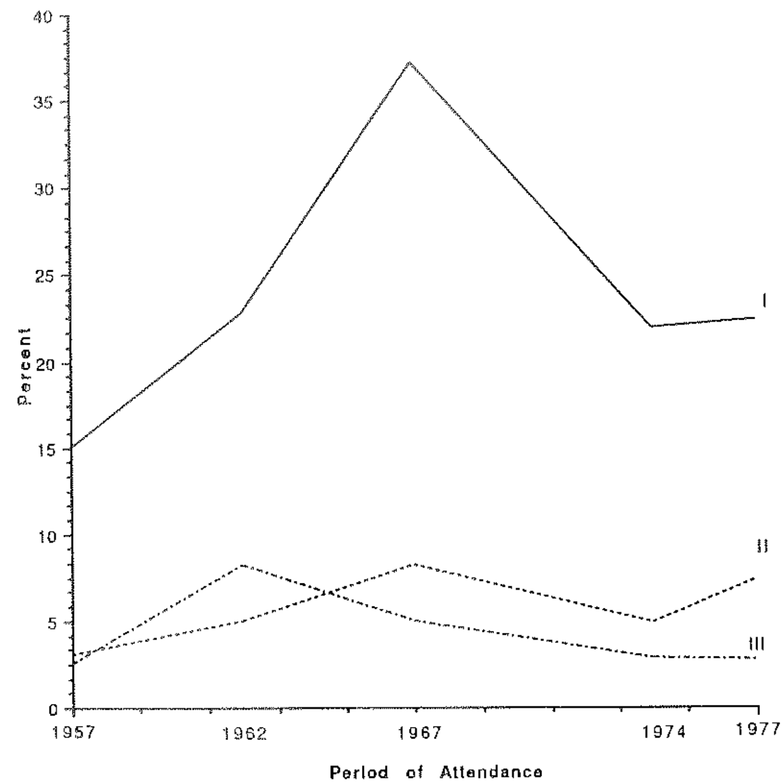


Figure 12: Participation in Higher Education by Age: Social Class I, II, III. Sweden.
Source: Reworked from statistics in Lillemor Kim, *At valja eller valjas* Sweden: Stockholm UHA, 1983.

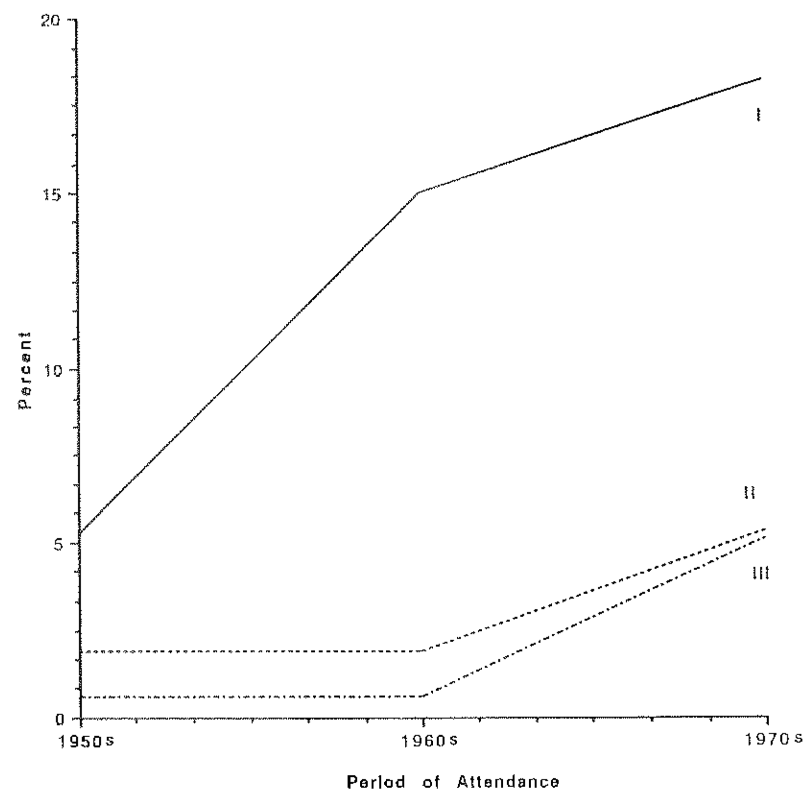


Figure 13: Participation in Higher Education by Age: Social Class I, II, III. U.K.
Source: See footnote 1.

for part-time and external study, and the tradition of young students continuing to reside in their parents' homes.

Although tuition fees were not abolished until 1974 a majority of students before that time in the post World War II years did not pay fees (which were never substantial anyway) and many received financial help in addition. In the latter years of the War and subsequently students in courses regarded as being of national importance received free tuition and allowances. Men and women who had returned from the armed services were recipients of free tuition, living allowances and tutorial assistance.

In the 1950s a generous scheme of Commonwealth Scholarships was introduced together with means-tested living allowances. But shortages of engineers, doctors, scientists and teachers led to additional aid schemes under which employers paid tuition costs and living allowances to selected students who placed themselves under an obligation to work for the sponsor.

Not unnaturally prospective employers required their recruits to study courses and subjects which were going to be "useful". The largest of such schemes by far were those run by State Education Departments for teacher trainees.

Arrangements for part-time and external studies originated in the need to entice school teachers into higher education. Part time study goes back to the late 19th Century when, in order to keep numbers up, universities relaxed rules which had required students to sit for examinations in all of the subjects set for a course in a particular year. This allowed teachers to attend lectures after work, and in just one or two subjects.

Subsequently the part-time system was extended so that students were not required to turn up on campus for lectures, notes being sent to them in the post. The chief beneficiaries of external study were country school teachers who were able to upgrade their qualifications by correspondence.

The part-time system (about one third of undergraduates are part-time, most of them being in full-time employment) encourages students and employers with utilitarian intentions. Studying part-time while employed is not the easiest or most satisfactory way to do a university course and students are inclined to choose those subjects which will advance their careers.

And employers are more likely to approve time off for lectures if the subjects are "relevant" to students' subsequent work tasks, or rather, what employers think will be relevant. The Commonwealth Public Service, probably the single employer with the largest number of part-time students, now makes approval for study conditional on its perceived usefulness.

These innovations, which have made higher education accessible to a broad spectrum of social classes in Australia, have had the effect of strengthening those parts of the curriculum regarded by students and employers as of immediate and practical value. Studentships steered students into professional and vocational courses — even school teachers were discouraged from honours courses or "useless" subjects like philosophy or the classics.

Most undergraduates continue to live at home with Mum and Dad, commuting to the campus on the days when they have classes. This tradition, made possible because the Australian population is concentrated in a few urban conglomerates, has facilitated access for students who otherwise would have been impeded by the costs of living away from home.

Furthermore some parents, not having experienced higher education themselves, have heard tales of university life which makes them dubious about their sons and daughters, especially their daughters, leaving home for the purposes of higher education. But if their children continue to live at home then parental anxieties are lessened and it is still possible to check that Mary is home and in her own bed by 11 o'clock.

The traditions of the commuter student and part-time student have also contributed to the utilitarian nature of the undergraduate curriculum. The extra curricula life of student communities is part of general education — in politics, the arts and in mixing in a group much more diverse than that of school of professional faculty.

The commuter student is, however, likely to socialise in the suburbs rather than around the campus, not participating much in student affairs, and turning up at university mainly for formal classes. In a study of University of Melbourne undergraduates in the 1960s Graham Little (1970, p. 99) found that students who lived in residential colleges participated much more in clubs, meetings and student culture than did students who lived at home with their parents.

In the development of education policy there is a trade-off between equality and liberality. A utilitarian curriculum is part of the price Australian higher education has paid for equality in access. Perhaps even Sheridan More, who wanted the 1865 University of Sydney to be more practical, "in accord with the spirit of the mechanical age" would have been surprised at the extent of it.

[1] The data in the graphs for U.K. and U.S.A. were made available by the Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung. The data for "Political Action — An Eight Nation Study" were originally collected by independent institutions in each country. Neither the original collectors of the data nor the ZA bear any responsibility for the analyses or interpretation presented. For Poland see Krystzof Zagorski, "Transformations of Social Structure and Social Mobility in Poland", *International Journal of Sociology*, Fall-Winter, 1977-78, pp61-80.

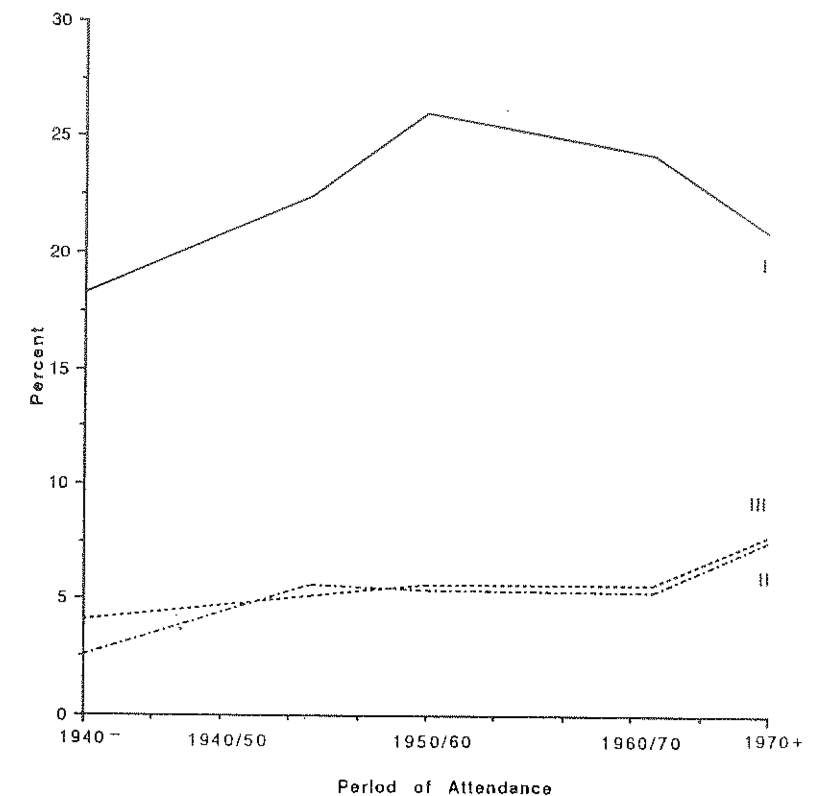


Figure 14: Participation in Higher Education by Age: Social Class, I, II, III. Poland.
Source: See footnote 1.

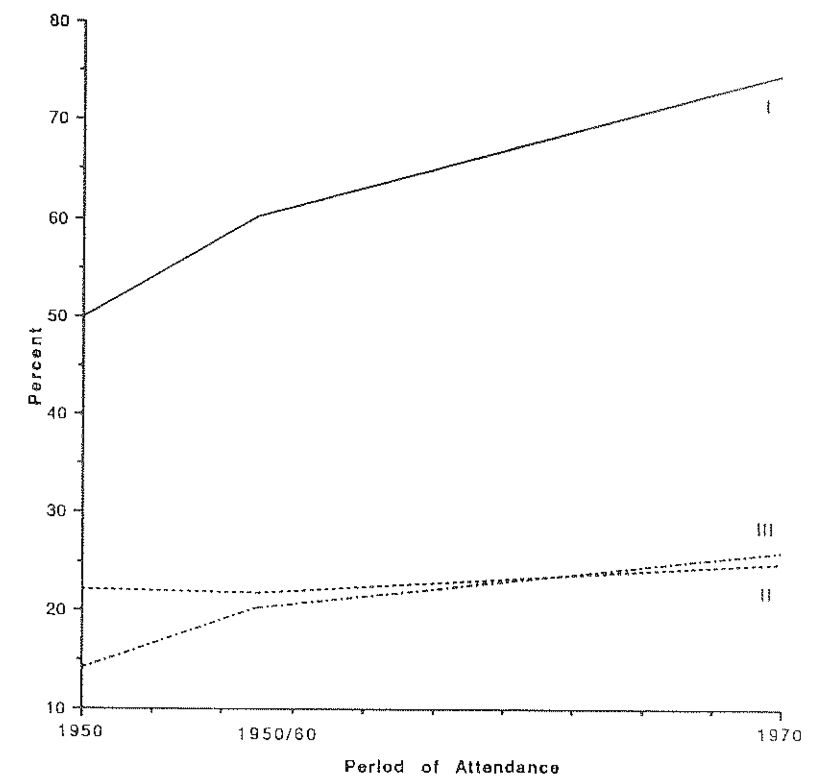


Figure 15: Participation in Higher Education by Age: Social Class I, II, III. United States.
Source: See footnote 1.

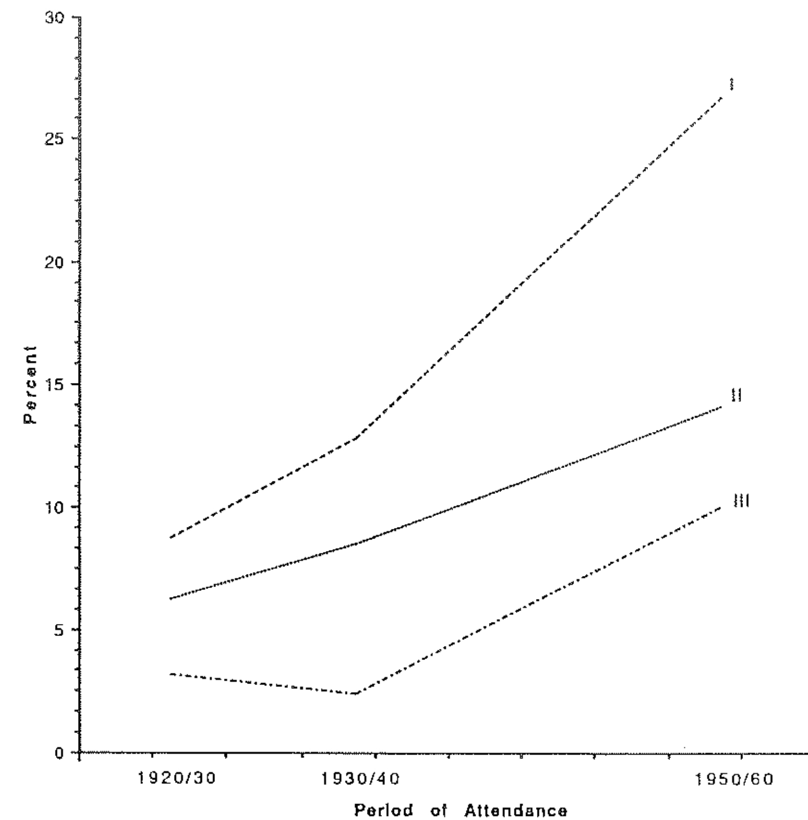


Figure 16: Participation in Higher Education by Age: Social Class I, II, III. Australia.
Source: Compiled from archive data *Stability and Change in Australian Politics*. (See Aitkin, 1977)

[2] Making comparisons between the changes in participation rates of different groups — within the one country over time, or between countries — is a complex exercise and the results are very sensitive to the method used. A technical discussion of the problem and an account of the methods used in this paper may be found in: D.S. Anderson, *Changes in the Social Mix of Higher Education: Some Cross Country Comparisons*, Working Papers in Sociology, RSSS, ANU, 1988.

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The Courts and the Universities

The Honorable Mr Justice Richard E. McGarvie

There are similarities between the positions of courts and universities in a democratic community of the 1990s. Many of the challenges and many of the solutions apply to both.

Universities share a number of features with the judicial system. Each is inspired by a basic aspiration. Universities aim, by learning and research, to seek knowledge and pass it on to the rising generation and the general community by teaching, writing and speaking. Courts seek to resolve disputes within the community by giving fair trials according to law. Each must preserve the principle and practice which the centuries have shown to be essential, while continually modifying the inessential so as to achieve effectively its basic aspiration in a rapidly changing world. Both need independence yet depend on governments for finance.

Our courts and universities are part of a modern democracy. That is significant. Professor Weeramantry, formerly a Supreme Court Judge in Sri Lanka, has spoken of the changes required of that court system upon independence. While a colony, the confidence of the community was not essential to the effective operation of the courts. They made their decisions and the colonial power enforced them. In an independent democracy it became essential for judges to act with the strength, independence and impartiality which earns the community's confidence. Only then will members of the community accept and comply with court decisions, with actual enforcement seldom necessary. By building that confidence the courts create the condition which Kenneth Clark identified as essential to a civilisation – confidence in its law. Consistently with this, conduct which is judicially unethical, serious breaches of which justify the removal of a judge by parliament, is conduct which forfeits the confidence of the community in the judge.

Universities depend on the confidence of the community for their standing, their student enrolment and their funds.

Community confidence is mainly earnt by the institutions doing consistently well their staple and undramatic work. As Sir Zelman Cowen said in his centenary oration at the University of Tasmania recently, the primary function of a university is to teach undergraduates and to teach them well. The staple task of judges is to hear and decide fairly and well the numerous cases that excite no attention in the media or the law reports.

Not so very long ago, the hypothetical visitor from Mars would have been astounded to find that, unlike primary and secondary teachers, university teachers were required to do no training in how to teach: and judges received no training in how to judge. Fortunately in both areas training is now available but there is a long way to go.

Ours is a pluralist democracy. Power is dispersed and there is no uniformity of philosophy or culture. If the cargo cult ever existed for courts and universities, it has no place today. It is not enough for either institution to do its work well and expect that to guarantee its resources and welfare. In maritime terms, the future of each depends on its running a tight ship, making good decisions as to the directions in which it is steered and ensuring that it is provisioned and is protected from the perils of the sea. The capacity of those institutions in self-government, self-administration and in bringing influence to bear in public life to ensure that the resources they need are provided and the organisational and statutory framework within which they operate is consistent with the achievement of their objectives, will determine whether and how they survive and operate.

That observation stems from no cynical view of the community. Ours is a good democracy. The claims on governments, however are many and beyond available resources. Governments themselves do not derive direct benefit from either courts or universities. Governments have more incentive to keep in good shape the public service departments on whose effective functioning the government's re-election depends.

Because of their functions and independence, courts and universities are often a thorn in a government's side.

Universities and courts must operate efficiently so as to mount a persuasive case for the provision of funds. They must also make it understood that their efficiency can not be assessed in the same way as that of a manufacturing business. They have values which are higher than producing a product at the lowest cost. The attainment of justice often requires a court to take the course most inefficient in the use of resources, such as granting an adjournment or ordering a new trial. Among the most valuable benefits conferred by universities are those which cannot be measured by a double entry accounting system.

Courts and universities must make well and quickly the collegiate decisions necessary for their administration and operation and their position in the community. This involves delegation and trusting others to make decisions. Universities are rapidly improving this capacity. The Supreme Court of Victoria has made more changes in this direction in the last six, than in the previous sixty years. Responsibility in these areas now rests finally with the monthly meetings of the Council of all the judges. Between meetings, power to make decisions, other than the most important, is delegated to an Executive Committee of the Chief Justice and six elected judges. Each elected judge is allocated an area such as staff, computers or buildings and facilities, in which responsibility for administration is exercised on behalf of the court.

Neither academics nor judges can afford to retreat from active responsibility for the running of their institutions. Both are tempted to concentrate only on their professional work which is familiar and agreeable to them: judges to confine themselves to hearing and deciding cases and leave the running of the court to others: academics to devote themselves only to teaching and research and leave administration to the administrators. If they are to retain independence in their judicial and academic functions and maintain the values of their institutions, that division of labour is not open to those who are the main repositories of the judicial or academic values of the institutions. Within a court the judges have overall control of the court's administration. With a university academics must be influential in sustaining, protecting and advancing their departments and schools and their university.

While remembering their traditions and principles, both institutions must guard against a modern tendency. A phenomenon of the last half century has been public institutions set up to serve the public rather than a private interest, but instead serving the interests of their employees.

Courts and universities need acceptable ways of bringing proper influence to bear on governments and the community. Most courts and universities are those of a State. Usually they have effective ways of influencing and interacting with State Governments. Today the bulk of university funding comes from the Commonwealth. Much Commonwealth Legislation, such as that for the trial of federal offences, impinges on the courts. After almost a century of federation neither the universities nor the courts of the States have developed very effective ways of in-

* This is the text of the Graduation ceremony address of 17 March 1990 at the University of Melbourne. The Honorable Mr Justice McGarvie is the Chancellor of La Trobe University.