



## Editorial

## Editorial for Vol. 69



One article in volume 69 is particularly noteworthy. The Hukou system in China (requiring urban migrants to return to their home districts to obtain social services) is well known as discriminating against rural citizens living in urban areas. The literature, including in this journal, provides abundant descriptions of the negative educational effects of this social policy.

However, in their article titled “Understanding Chinese Rural-to-Urban Migrant Children’s Educational Predicament: A Dual System Perspective,” authors Yanning Wei and Yue Gong argue that the source of the educational problem of urban migrants is not the Hukou system but something which proceeds it. They argue that the educational discrimination would exist even if the Hukou system were eliminated. They point out that the rural school system is divided, that it ‘resembles an apartheid-like dual system system’. A few rural schools move a tiny percentage of students toward urban universities, but the vast majority of rural schools are designed to maintain students in place as low status manual laborers. More importantly they argue that the ‘apartheid-like system’ is no accident; but rather that it is intentional. They point out that rural children in China are ‘stranded ... and are the de facto victims of Chinese development, which has been based on a long-maintained one country, two societies strategy since the 1950s’. The implication of this article is important. We might expect comment, discussion and additional analyses on this topic in the future.

Other articles in Volume 69 address issues of preschool education, the literacy of students with special needs, the question of whether traditional universities can fulfill the social instrument expectations, and the degree of inequality of private educational expenditures.

In the article titled: “Investing in School Readiness: A Comparison of different early childhood education pathways in rural Indonesia” Amer Hasan argues that it is not sufficient to note whether or not a child has experienced preschool education. The real question is the sequence of experiences, from playgroup programs to kindergarten prior to first grade.

While fluent early grade literacy is the goal and the normal subject

of study, it is rare to note the literacy of blind or deaf students. In their manuscript titled: “Measuring Literacy Outcomes for the Blind and the Deaf: nationally representative results from Kenya” Benjamin Piper, Jennae Bulat, Dunston Kwayumba, John Oketch, and Lillian Gangla compare the achievements of special needs students in programs in normal classrooms versus those whose literacy needs were addressed in separate schools. They find that children served by special schools for the blind outperform those attending special units within schools but for deaf students no meaningful differences emerge.

Universities in Europe are noted for long-held traditions. The question is whether they can effectively respond to the demand from modern society that they perform as social instruments. In the article titled: “Strategic Instrument or Social Institution: Rationalized myths of the university in stakeholder perceptions of higher education reform in Poland” Marta Shaw argues that historically-grounded universities cannot necessarily achieve the new priorities expected of them.

While public education expenditures can be controlled through social policy, private education expenditures cannot. This leaves open the question of creating an equality of educational opportunity. This dilemma is illustrated by the article titled: “Spending Privately for Education in Nepal: Who spends more on it and why?” Authors Khondoker Mottaleb, Dil Rahut and Asankha Pallegedara find what one might anticipate. Wealthy urban residents with more education themselves are more likely to send their children to private tutoring and to private schools. They conclude that this ‘resource gap is likely to result in greater inequality of school performance’.

Each article contributes to our knowledge. But the observations about China and the intention of long-standing social policy designed to create two unequal internal societies may have the most profound implications.

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