Growing Gaps: Educational Inequality around the World

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The last half century has seen a dramatic expansion in access to primary, secondary, and higher education in many nations around the world. Educational expansion is desirable for a country's economy, beneficial for educated individuals themselves, and is also a strategy for greater social harmony. But has greater access to education reduced or exacerbated social inequality? Who are the winners and the losers in the scramble for educational advantage?

In *Growing Gaps*, Paul Attewell and Katherine S. Newman bring together an impressive group of scholars to closely examine the relationship between inequality and education. The relationship is not straightforward and sometimes paradoxical. Across both post-industrial societies and the high-growth economies of the developing world, education has become the central path for upward mobility even as it maintains and exacerbates existing inequalities. In many countries there has been a staggering growth of private education as demand for opportunity has outpaced supply, but the families who must fund this human capital accumulation are burdened with more and more debt. Privatizing education leads to intensified inequality, as students from families with resources enjoy the benefits of these new institutions while poorer students face intense competition for entry to under-resourced public universities and schools. The ever-increasing supply of qualified, young workers face class- or race-based inequalities when they attempt to translate their credentials into suitable jobs. Covering almost every continent, *Growing Gaps* provides an overarching and essential examination of the worldwide race for educational advantage and will serve as a lasting achievement towards understanding the root causes of inequality.

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