



Public Policy and Inequality in Higher Education

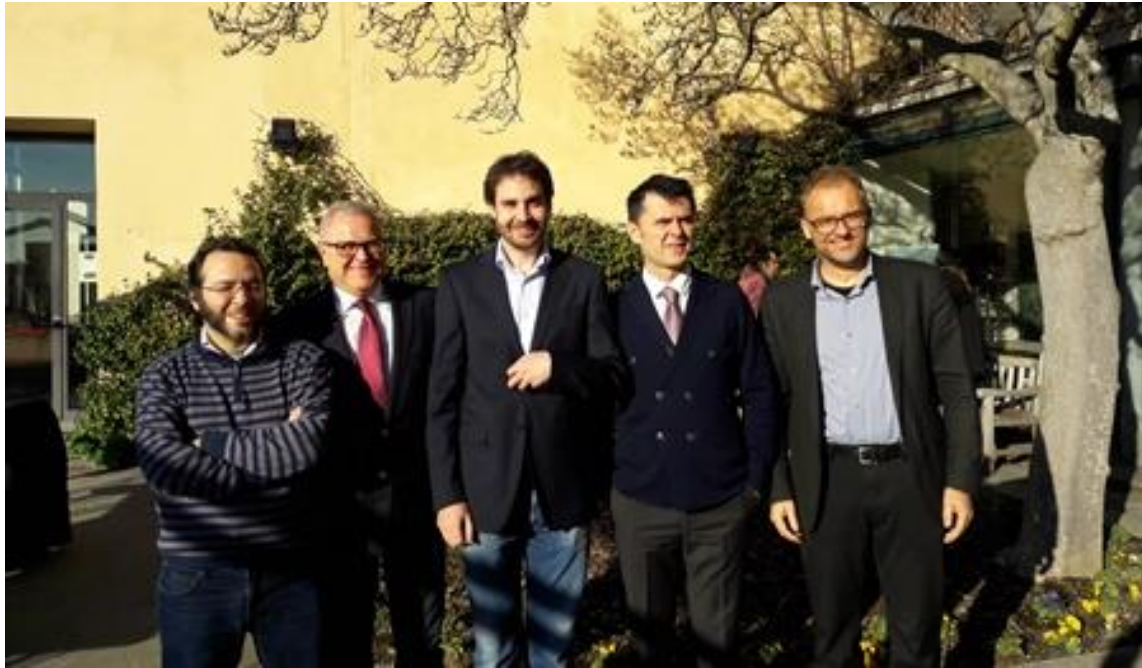
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Abstract

Policy-makers are increasingly looking for ways to reduce inequality in higher education. But what is the size of this problem? How does public policy affect inequality, if it at all? And what actually works to reduce inequality? In this thesis, which combines four empirical papers around this topic, I define inequality as the parental background effect on access to and completion of higher education. The broad goal, then, is to better understand how public policy affects intergenerational inequality.

I use a variety of data sources and research methods to provide an answer. Cross-sectional population surveys are analyzed to provide a descriptive picture of inequality in Europe. I also use research findings as data, by doing a systematic literature review on the current state of the evidence. I analyse government register data to better understand the effect of policy changes in England. To analyse the dynamics of completion, I use administrative data as well as the administrative archives from the European University Institute.



Jury: Prof Carlo Barone (Sciences Po Paris), Prof Hanspeter Blossfeld (EUI/University of Bamberg, supervisor), Koen Geven (candidate), Prof Fabrizio Bernardi (EUI), Prof Herman van der Werfhorst (University of Amsterdam)

Bio

Koen Geven is an Education Specialist (Young Professional) at the World Bank in Washington DC. At the Bank, he works on higher education reforms, measuring service delivery in education, and teacher professional development. Previously, Koen worked for Education International, the Open Society Foundations and consulted for various governments on education reforms across Europe. Koen has an active research interest in quasi-experimental research, research methodology and leveraging data to change public policy. He holds a master's degree in Public Policy (with distinction) from Central European University and the University of York, as well as a BSc in Political Science from the University of Amsterdam.