

ans migrate to the US and elsewhere because they believe that, by doing so, they and their families will be better off, and they will not return to India unless and until they believe, in a subsequent stage of their lives, that it is in their interest to do so. Such belief may arise from real or perceived differentials in real income, availability of job or advancement opportunities, ability to utilize one's professional skills, family's flexibility in adapting to another cultural setting, and a myriad of other factors, some easily quantifiable, others not; some affecting specific individuals, others of collective nature; some operating in the short run, others in the long run.

A continuous net out-migration flow suggests the permanent presence of employment, technological, and psychological bottlenecks in the integration of knowledge workers into the Indian economy. Simply put, prospects for many knowledge workers are better outside India than at home. Thus, lamenting the loss of humanpower, quantifying it, or conjecturing about what might have happened are topics of peripheral inquiry, largely devoid of relevance to policymaking. Needed here is a comprehensive model that identifies the alternative applications of human capital (i.e., job opportunities) available domestically and estimate their opportunity cost (i.e., their rate of return vis-à-vis similar and accessible alternatives abroad), as well as the discounted family costs of migration and the investment in physical capital necessary to meet knowledge workers' reasonable expectations regarding access to infrastructure comparable to what is available in other countries.

Only then could the ultimate question be addressed properly: What is more socially desirable and economically feasible for India—continue losing knowledge workers to foreign labor markets, reduce investments in education to boost wages and conform to a much smaller rate of growth of domestic job vacancies, or devise and implement a plan of substantial investments in physical capital designed to increase out-migration opportunity costs and provide knowledge workers in India with an acceptable infrastructure? Insofar as the book fails to address these critical issues, perhaps it can be best summarized in terms of Shakespearian economics: “Much Ado about Nothing.”

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PII: S0272-7757(02)00014-6

**The states and public higher education policy: affordability, access, and accountability**

Edited by Donald E. Heller. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001. pp. ix+271. Price: \$38.00 (cloth).

This book consists of nine essays that deal with the issues of affordability, access and accountability in public higher education. The book begins with the issue of affordability and provides an important set of facts: (i) There is clear evidence that the explicit costs of attending college increased dramatically over the last three decades. (ii) College enrollment continued to expand at a rapid pace despite these cost increases. (iii) The relative costs may have increased even more for minorities and the lowest socio-economic groups. (iv) These same groups experienced the most impressive enrollment gains over this period. The bottom line is that college enrollments have continued to increase, especially for low income and minority students, despite rising costs. The general explanation is that the private returns to education were increasing at a higher rate than the increase in private costs.

While the essays on affordability present the facts concerning college costs and enrollment, the later discussions sometimes lose sight of these facts. For example, the later essays are critical of trends in education finance (e.g. increased merit aid, higher tuition, smaller appropriations) that are perceived to decrease access for lower income and minority groups. However, the authors fail to fully delve into the factors that have resulted in the enrollment gains experienced among these groups. Reading these chapters in isolation would leave one with the mistaken impression that access and enrollments have declined among these groups. Similarly, much of the book criticizes the trend towards relying more heavily on tuition and student loans. Education has private benefits to the students and public benefits for society. Given the increasing personal rewards to education that are noted throughout the book, the authors should not be surprised that the individual's share of the total cost has risen. The important issue of balancing public and private costs is never fully addressed.

Despite an intelligent discussion of both the importance of controlling college costs and the current lack of incentives to control costs, the authors also fail to relate cost controls to other issues. A failure to control costs may be as significant a barrier to educational access as changes in public financing. The authors focus almost exclusively on the effects of changes in public education finance on access. One potential blow to access for minority students has been the weakening of race based

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admission policies. The authors suggest that this will have negative long term effects on minority enrollments. However, the outlook may not be as bleak as suggested. As noted in the discussions of California and Texas, the respective state governments and public universities have responded with plans for guaranteeing admission to the top graduates of every high school and have weakened other admission criteria that could reduce access for minority students. While it is still too early to draw strong conclusions, the net effect of these changes may be to create increased access in a manner that has the support of both the courts and the voters. The section on access seems to be driven by the premise that access for minority and low income groups has and is likely to continue to decrease. This view is often at odds with the facts.

The final set of essays deals with issues of accountability in higher education. Two of the essays provide an overview of recent trends in creating accountability measures, provide examples from specific states and present a basic discussion of the pros and cons of such plans. The remaining essay provides a compelling argument in favor of a 'student choice' model of accountability where states would pay more attention to the backgrounds and motives of the students when designing the appropriate model of accountability. One important aspect of the discussion is the focus on improving employment outcomes. As the author notes, schools rarely attempt to effectively measure student career outcomes, whether these outcomes are related to the students' education or whether these outcomes are consistent with the students' aspirations. While many academics would prefer to focus on the value of education and knowledge and eschew such vocationalism, the fact remains that one of the benefits of higher education is its ability to increase career opportunities. To measure accountability, we must understand the reason students choose to attend and withdraw from college.

Despite a wide range of issues, the editor manages to organize the material in a manner that provides a useful introduction to each topic area and stimulates the reader to seek more detailed data and analysis in each area. The strength of this volume is that it forces the reader to recognize that there are many issues that are critical to the future success of public higher education, the weakness is that the individual issues are often considered in isolation.

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### **Catholic schools: private and social effects**

William Sander. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001, xiv + 138 pages. Price \$100.00 (hardback).

Three attributes of William Sander's new book about US Catholic schools should attract a wide readership of those interested in either policy issues surrounding the relative effectiveness of public and private schools or those with a more general interest in Catholic schools: (1) the book is quite short; (2) it explores comparisons between Catholic and public schools from a variety of perspectives; and (3) the author bases his conclusions on empirical evidence drawn mostly from two important and nationally representative data sources. This slim volume should draw readers interested in how Catholic schools influence those who attend them. The issues the author explores represent a veritable tour de force for public/private comparisons: Catholic elementary schools, how Catholic schools and their effects may have changed over time, Catholic schools in urban and rural locations, religiosity as an alternative explanation for the now widely accepted positive effect of Catholic schools on school completion and academic achievement, how Catholic school effects may be explained by the quality of public schools available, rural or urban location, whether competition from private schools influences public school achievement, and several non-academic outcomes that capture lifestyle.

Although this breadth of issues suggests a wide audience, I wonder what audience the author actually intended for his book. The two likely audiences mentioned above—those interested in educational policy surrounding public and private schools and a general readership interested in Catholic schools—would find the book quite inaccessible, despite its breadth and brevity. The author is an economist; his intended audience seems to be composed of his fellow academics, mostly those who are familiar and comfortable with the quantitative research methods typically used by economists: OLS regression, selection bias corrections with two-stage least squares, and probit analysis. Almost all the chapters report, without editorial change, articles previously published in scholarly journals intended for economists. Thus, the actual audience might already know this work. Moreover, some of the introductory sections to those chapters are quite repetitive, mainly because the chapters actually were originally crafted to stand on their own. Books intended for a broader audience must be written with that readership in mind, with technical details in footnotes, the major text concentrating on the substantive meaning of the analyses, and with a whole book in mind (so repetitiveness should be eliminated). In these ways, the book falls short of its promise.