

Tsinghua University, Beijing, 3 November 2016

Clark Kerr, the Master Plan and the Evolution of the California Higher Education System

Implications for the United States and for China

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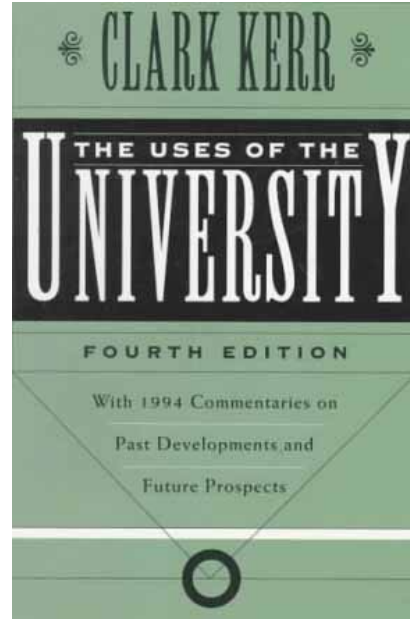
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Idealism of the American 1960s: the positive role of government

“Today the eyes of all people are truly upon us—and our governments, in every branch, at every level, national, state and local, must be as a city upon a hill—constructed and inhabited by men aware of their great trust and their great responsibilities.”

~ John F. Kennedy, 9 January 1961, address to the General Court of Massachusetts, just before formally assuming the presidency





Time cover story on Clark Kerr and the California Master Plan for Higher Education, 1960

The Master Plan negotiations in 1959

“The strategy of the University [of California] was clear. Our three new campuses ... along with the expansion of programs at Davis, Santa Barbara, and Riverside, were adequate to fill an anticipated void in facilities for training PhDs and conducting research and in the political map of fast-growing population areas without a UC campus. We did not want to share resources with sixteen additional ‘university’ campuses (the twelve established state colleges and four more then being developed) who would then claim lower teaching loads for their faculties and higher research subsidies at greater cost. And we did not want to watch the state colleges abandon their highly important skill training functions for teachers in the hot pursuit of the holy grail of elite research status. The state did not need a higher education system where every component was intent on being another Harvard or Berkeley or Stanford. An upward drift was desirable in quality but in the direction of several models. What we needed were three improved models—the open-access model, the polytechnic model, and the research university model. If the state colleges ‘went university’, some new colleges would have to be founded to serve the polytechnic role.”

~ Clark, Kerr,. *The Gold and the Blue: A personal memoir of the University of California, 1949-1967. Volume 1: Academic Triumphs. University of California Press, Berkeley, p. 178.*

California Master Plan 1960

- Excellence combined with access in a three-tier system, in which upward educational mobility was meant to be increased by student transfer between the tiers
 - University of California research campuses (top 12.5% of school leavers)
 - California State University campuses (top 33% of school leavers)
 - two-year Californian Community Colleges (everyone, open access)
- Principle of universal access, a world first, was fundamental
- Clark Kerr's comprehensive multi-disciplinary multi-purpose research 'multiversity' positioned at the top of the hierarchy
- Sustained politically by fast-growing middle class, but depended on continued taxpayer consent to growing funding of higher education, and on a system of public schooling that would be competent in all districts and for all social groups

The public mission



The excellence objective

<i>[Data from Leiden ranking 2016]</i>	All WofS journal papers 2011-14	Proportion of papers in top 10% 2011-14	Total top 10% papers 2011-14	World rank top 10% 2011-14	Total top 10% papers 2006-09	Change in top 10% papers in five years
UC Berkeley	12,764	20.9%	2669	5	2270	+ 17.6%
UC Los Angeles	13,994	17.3%	2424	8	2263	+ 7.1%
UC San Diego	11,916	17.8%	2126	15	1813	+ 17.3%
UC San Francisco	10,179	19.6%	1990	17	1747	+ 13.9%
UC Davis	10,797	13.7%	1479	29	1322	+ 11.9%
UC Irvine	6295	15.2%	957	75	910	+ 5.2%
UC Santa Barbara	4266	20.5%	876	84	809	+ 8.3%
UC Riverside	3071	14.6%	449	216	454	- 1.1%
UC Santa Cruz	1996	18.5%	368	265	305	+ 20.7%
Stanford U	14,615	22.1%	3223	2	2560	+ 25.9%
Tsinghua U	12,690	11.3%	1453	31	830	+ 75.1%

It is possible to sustain equality of opportunity in elite universities

- University of California Berkeley's intake is as academically strong as that of the Tier 1 private universities. But between them UC Berkeley and UCLA have more PELL grant (low income family) students than the top **16** private universities.
- Under UC Berkeley's progressive tuition policy, 40% of undergraduates pay no tuition, and 65% of UC Berkeley students receive at least some financial aid
- Half of all of Berkeley's students graduate with no debt. The average debt of \$19,000 is just over two thirds of the national average of \$27,000 (2013)



The access objective

- Higher education enrolment outstrips Master Plan forecasts
- Places in research universities shrink as a proportion of all places, and labour market value of 2-year diplomas declines
- Public schooling struggles to bring the growing number of immigrant students through to higher education
- Social consensus on taxation and public good financing of higher education breaks down (Proposition 13, 1978)
- Accumulating reductions in state spending on higher education and major cuts following the 2008-2009 recession
- Loss of guaranteed public access. Both State University and community colleges turn students away. Poor completion rates and transfer rates in both tiers. Tuition in colleges increases

The importance of taxation

“Taxation is perhaps the most important of all political issues. Without taxes, society has no common destiny, and collective action is impossible.”

~ *Thomas Piketty, Capital in the Twenty-first Century (2014), p. 493. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.*

The 'greed is good' American 1980s

“Government is not the solution to our problem;
government is the problem.”

~ Inaugural Address as President by Ronald Reagan, 20 January 1981



Income shares top 1% and bottom 50%

Adapted from Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-first Century*, 2014

	EUROPE 1910 High inequality	SCANDINAVIA 1970s/1980s Low inequality	EUROPE 2010 Medium-high	United States 2010 High inequality
TOP 1% share of labor income	6%	5%	7%	12%
TOP 1% share of income from capital	50%	20%	25%	35%
TOP 1% share of total income	20%	7%	10%	20%
LOWER 50% share labor income	n.a.	35%	30%	25%
LOWER 50% share capital income	5%	10%	5%	5%
LOWER 50% share total income	20%	30%	25%	20%

The new ‘meritocratic hierarchies’: The case of the United States

“What primarily characterizes the United States at the moment is a record level of the inequality of income from labor (probably higher than in any other society at any time in the past, anywhere in the world, including societies in which skill disparities were extremely large) together with a level of inequality of wealth less extreme than the levels observed in traditional societies or in Europe in the period 1900-1910.”

~ Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-first Century*, 2014, p. 265



Access to U.S. higher education hierarchy is income-stratified

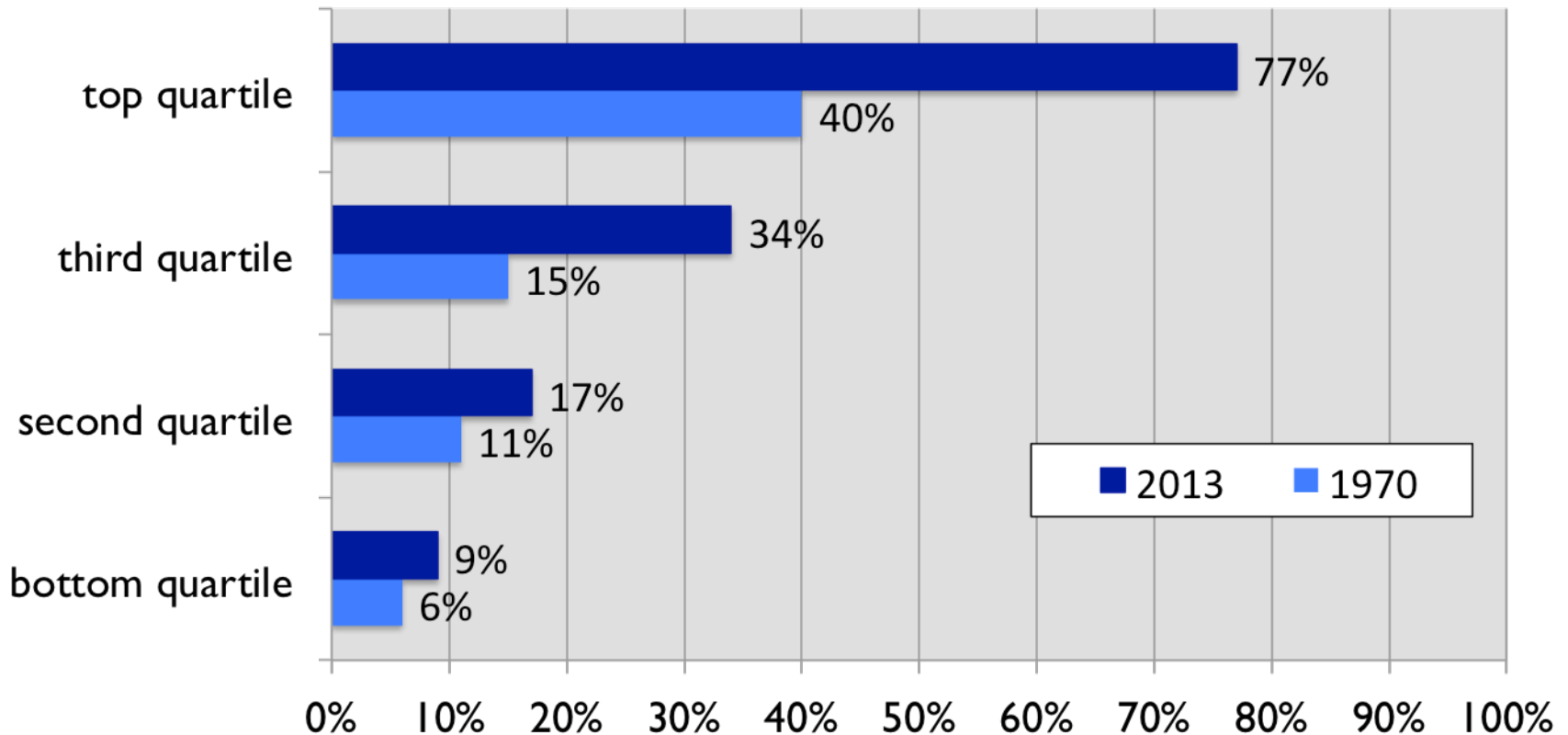
Data from Soares (2007), p. 167

Category of institution	Proportion of all students drawn from the top 10% of American families in terms of family income (1988-2000 data)
Tier 1	64%
Tier 2	44%
Tier 3	32%
Tier 4	21%
Tier 5	20%
Tier 6	11%
Tier 7	11%
University of California, Berkeley	28%

Social inequality in achieved college degrees, USA 1970/2013

Achieved bachelor degree by age 24, family income quartile

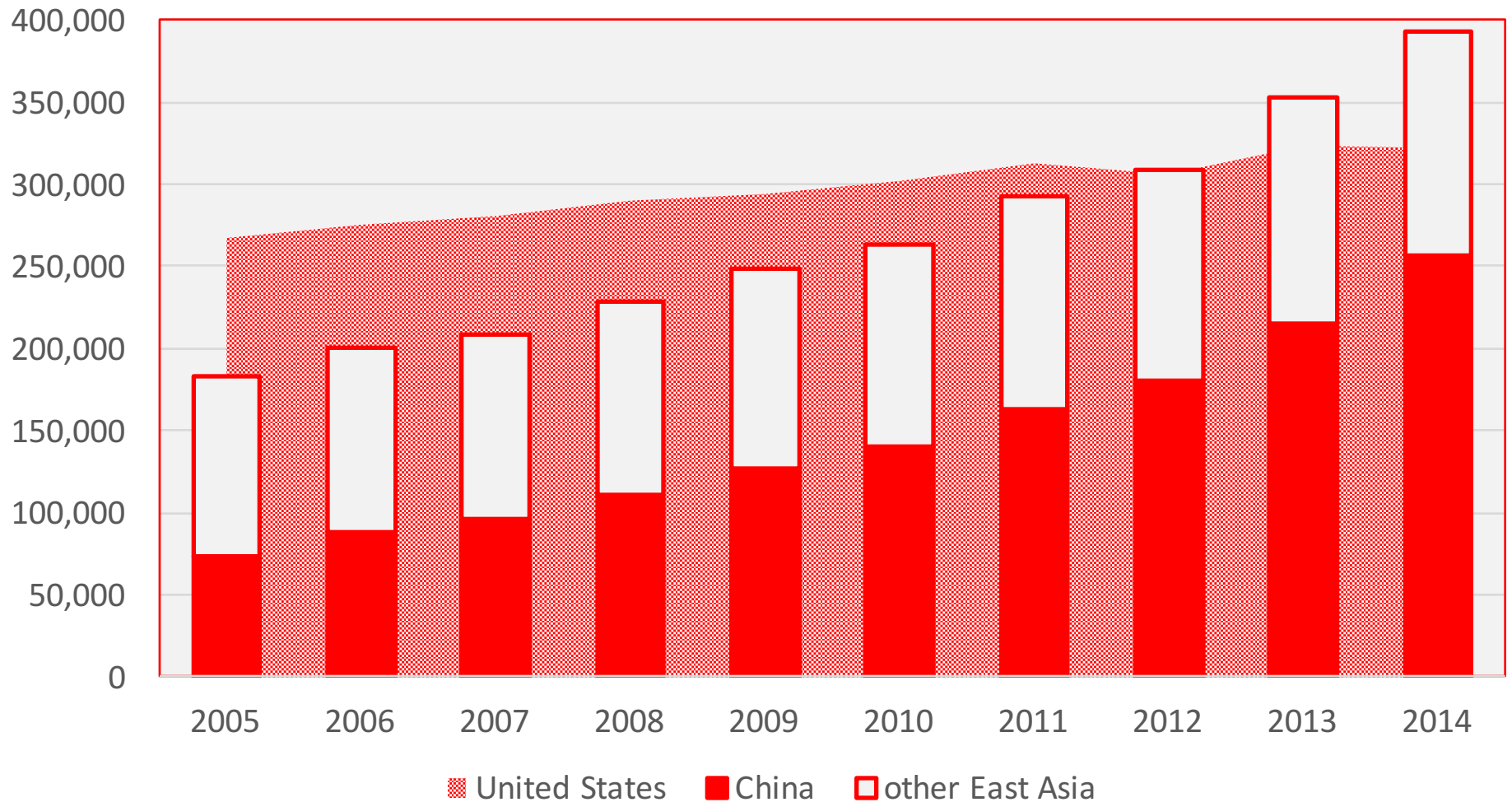
Source: The PELL Institute and Penn Ahead, 2015



Number of science papers 2005-2014

USA, China, other East Asia

Thomson-Reuters/UNESCO data. Papers include reviews and notes. Other East Asia = Japan, Korea, Singapore, Vietnam



California and China

	California Master Plan for higher education	Post-Confucian higher education (Marginson, 2011)
Funding	Federal research funding, student aid, state tuition	National funding for leading universities
Growth trajectory	Rapid, concentrated in lower tiers	Even more rapid, concentrated in lower tiers
System structure	Three hierarchical tiers fix missions, strictly maintained	Missions fixed by classification, minor upward drift
World-Class University development	Highly successful	Becoming successful
Mass higher education	Deteriorated significantly over time	Too early to determine. Vocational sector is promising
Family engagement in public higher education	Not a funder. Motivated middle class, can go private	A funder. High motivations throughout population.
Social-political base	Initial support for public good agenda eroded	State dependent but needs long-run popular consent