

Abstract

Despite efforts to increase enrollment and democratize public tertiary education in Mexico, educational inequality persists. Students from families with higher incomes remain the primary beneficiaries of tertiary education. The Universidad Autónoma Chapingo (UACH) is an exception to this trend, its equity policies have helped low-income and indigenous students access and succeed. Although there are reports and evaluations of these policies, no research explains why they were implemented at the UACH, especially when other public universities in Mexico took a more meritocratic approach. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the variables that led to implementing equity policies at the UACH. The research finds that the beliefs and ideas of the actors inherited from the history of the institution are the most significant explanatory variable. In combination with other factors, including stable parameters, external events, long term coalition opportunities. The study also highlights the leadership role played by a policy entrepreneur at the UACH and how his coalition implemented a unique approach to reform university admissions policies. The study shows that the success of equity policies at the UACH was not due to a single variable but a combination of circumstances, strategies, and access to key resources adopted by an advocacy coalition. Overall, this research provides valuable insights into how educational institutions in Mexico can work towards implementing equity policies that facilitate access and success for low-income students in tertiary education and into the challenges and difficulties that arise from this experience.