PORTUGUESE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS’ COSTS: TWO DECADES VIEW

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Abstract

Based on the Cost-Sharing theory (Johnstone, 1986, 1991, 1992, 2002, 2003), the research on student costs in higher education (HE) plays an important role in the educational policy, namely concerning the equity in cost distribution among students, the State and stakeholders. This presentation is focused on the socioeconomic characterization of Portuguese HE students and on the research of the costs these students support, as well as the remaining stakeholders (families, governments/taxpayers and others), according to Johnstone’s cost-sharing theory (2007) and mobilized the analysis of the results of three nation-wide surveys in the academic years of 1994-1995 (Cabrito, 2000); 2004-2005 (Cerdeira, 2009) and 2010/2011 (CESTES, 2011) to higher education’s students representative sample (universities and polytechnics, public and private institutions). In this paper we will discuss: 1) the contribution of Portuguese higher education students for the HE funding; 2) the analysis of the findings from a nationwide study concerning the student’s role on HE funding, in Portugal; 3) to place those results in a European perspective. From the comparison undergone between the data in the present study and the one in the 2004/2005 Survey (Cerdeira, 2009) on the higher education costs in Portugal, we concluded that between both surveys there was a change on social strata recruitment to HE. In fact, we could realize that the percentage of students coming from rich strata had increased along the period analyzed, fact that can allow us to question about the equity of Portuguese HE System. On the other side, the studies also allow us to conclude that the affordability of Portuguese HE students is minor that homologous indicators taking into account some of EU members.