Title: University and College Admission Policies and Practices in Hong Kong: Opportunities and Challenges in Moving from Secondary to Tertiary Education

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University and College Admission Policies and Practices in Hong Kong: Opportunities and Challenges in Moving from Secondary to Tertiary Education

Anatoly Oleksiyenko
Kai-ming Cheng
Vivian Lee
Shuangyuan Tang
HK: Basic Facts

- 1997 - reintegrated into China, but retains jurisdictional autonomy as SAR (including independent education system)
- Intensity of global flows and networking (3rd in the GAWC)
- 7 million people and 13% of youth in the age of 15-24 years old
- Declining youth population and increasing immigration (mainland and Asia)
- 3M households (a world’s most expensive real estate)
- GDP per capita = approx. $40,000USD
HK: Basic Facts

- c. 1,100 schools (governmental, direct subsidy, catholic, international)
- 12 universities (8 UGC funded) and 21 [community] colleges (12 university-affiliated)
HK: Changing Context

- Highly competitive exam-oriented education system with a mega private tutoring sector
- Cultural predispositions for higher learning (Confucian cultural heritage) and competition (Marginson 2013)
- Global network of cities - high income jobs and social status require multimodal competencies (e.g., multi-lingual, multi-cultural)
- In a move from elite to mass higher education – making local educational industry (hub) more internationalized to increase quality and reduce the outflow of local talent
- 33,000 young people leave HK annually to study abroad
HK: Changing Context

**HK Education System, Before 2012**
- Degree, 3 yrs., 19%
- Sub-degree/Higher Diploma, 2 yrs., 41%
- S6-S7: 2 yrs., 40%
- S4-S5: 2 yrs., 100%
- S1-S3: 3 yrs., 100%
- Primary: 6 yrs., 100%
- Kindergarten: 3 yrs., 95%
- TVET, 1-2 yrs., 5%

**HK Education System, After 2012**
- Degree, 4 yrs., 19%
- Sub-degree/Higher Diploma, 2 yrs., 41%
- S4-S6: 3 yrs., 100%
- S1-S3: 3 yrs., 100%
- Primary: 6 yrs., 100%
- Kindergarten: 3 yrs., 95%
- TVET, 1-2 yrs., 5%
How does HK higher education system use admission policies and practices to mitigate tensions between elite and mass higher education?

What do universities and colleges gain and lose while trying to reconcile these tensions?
Research: Data

- Current literature
- Institutional materials (admissions web-sites)
- Participants’ (co-authors’) observations (teachers, students; local, international)
## Research: Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES</th>
<th>UNI-AFFILIATED COLLEGES</th>
<th>HKU SPACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Hong Kong</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hong Kong University of Science and Tech</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese University of Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lingnan University</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES</th>
<th>INDEPENDENT COLLEGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open University of Hong Kong</td>
<td>Caritas Institute of Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hang Seng Management School</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Current Pressures

Where do students come from?

EMI vs. CMI (Cantonese and Mandarin)

British & Chinese heritages, and US-ranking generated pressures

Uneven opportunities: school autonomy and differences in curricula, resources, governance, cultures

HKDSE as a unified graduating exam (away from HKCEE and HKALE): 4 core – English, Chinese, Mathematics and Liberal Studies, and 1 elective - Economics, Geography, Biology
Findings: Admissions Eligibility

**UGC-FUNDED and PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

**Scores:**
- Level 3 – English and Chinese
- Level 2 – other subjects
- Differentiated elective scores (decided by schools and programs)

**Qualities:**
- Leadership
- Communicative Skills
- Creativity
- Interactivity

**UNI-AFFILIATED COLLEGES**

**Scores:**
- Level 2 – English and Chinese
- Level 2 – other subjects

**Qualities:**
- Less important
- Second chance – mature students

**INDEPENDENT COLLEGES**

**Scores:**
- Level 3 – English and Chinese
- (transition to Bachelor’s)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings: Application Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online JUPAS and non-JUPAS (December)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainland China applicants (early June – gaokao)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNI-AFFILIATED &amp; INDEPENDENT COLLEGES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online “E-App” Walk-In Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment events in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July –mid August (after HKDSE results) and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“First come-First served”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Screening Mechanisms

UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES

Highest scores = scholarships

“First Choice”

Follow-up interviews

Focus group discussions

UNI-AFFILIATED & INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

Interviews (with second chance)

Immediate offers at the recruitment sites

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

More flexible
Findings: Admission Notifications

**UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES**

Can be immediate

January – August (some in December)

JUPAS main round – early August and confirm - by end August

Mainland China - July

Appeal to HK Examinations and Assessment Authority

**UNI-AFFILIATED & INDEPENDENT COLLEGES**

No specific schedules

Self-financing/ongoing process

**PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

More flexible
## Findings: Race or Balance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UGC-FUNDED UNIVERSITIES</th>
<th>UNI-AFFILIATED &amp; INDEPENDENT COLLEGES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rankings vs. Fairness</td>
<td>No rankings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scores vs. Personal Qualities</td>
<td>No competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasingly, leadership predispositions</td>
<td>Emphasis on professional skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced messaging of expectations</td>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing scholarships and self-financing</td>
<td>Self-financing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging ambitious students with disabilities</td>
<td>Disability students are cautioned about facility capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No rankings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emphasizing service to professional communities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Dilemmas and Further Research

- **Scores vs. Qualities**: institutional variability in admissions (across public/private research and teaching universities; sub-degree colleges; faculties, departments, programs)

- **Institutional** capacities, missions and resources vs. **students’** capacities, expectations and resources

- **Admission** numbers vs. **employability** results

- **Student mobility** vs. retention of local talents at the time of global **competition** for talent

- The increasing need for more **sophisticated** student advising centers, career counseling services, and alumni networks at universities and colleges
THANK YOU!

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