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**China's Higher Education Reforms. Hong Kong SAR's Case.
China's HE Students Abroad, Particularly in the USA**

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ABSTRACT

China's educated elite suddenly abandoned Confucian learning, the ancient civil service examinations, and finally in 1911 the imperial system. For Mao, the reference points became the CCP's rural Yan'an experience; the Russian revolution; and, specifically for education, the various components of the old reformers' critique of the established system. The extraordinary progresses of China's higher education (HE) were done after between 1990 and 2020 during the reforms and started under the presidency of Deng Xiaoping. Western countries, in particular the United States and UK are attracting Chinese HE students. In 1980-1990 when Chinese leaders were announcing the full range of reforms they were planning HE. The question then was whether American branches could be effectively grafted on a Soviet tree planted in a Chinese garden (Pepper, S. 1990). In 2023 it is sure that China succeeded in implanting Western HE successfully. During the 2020-21 school year, 317,299 Chinese nationals enrolled in US institutions, representing about a third of all international students studying in the USA. Other sources say less than three hundred thousands... These Chinese students- mostly in maths, computer science and engineering—most important reason is to get an “American degree” (SCMP 15.11.2022). An important question in 2021-22 is the degression in travels caused by the pandemic covid. The USA, Australia, and the UK are the most popular destinations, receiving 33 percent of international students. In the first six months of 2022, the US issued 31,055 F-1 visas to Chinese nationals, down from 64,261 for the same period in 2019, consequently the number of Chinese HE students going abroad is falling sharply. A main reason is China's economy which appears weaker in 2022. Finally, loss of confidence in President Xi Jinping's foreign policy judgment is palpable in supporting Putin even with care and this is not favorable for Chinese HE in America. Other foreign HE influencing China: The UK has been one of the three major social science powers after World War II along with the US and France (Archer, 1991). The UK produced around 10 percent citations and 15 percent of world's most highly cited papers with only 4.1 percent of the world's researchers in social sciences (Yu Kevin 2022).

Abbreviations: HE Higher Education, HKSAR Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, PRC People's Republic

Keywords: Challenges, HE Reforms, Mainland HE, Reform

Mainland China Reforms and Challenges in HE

What are the most prominent challenges facing higher education? There is a spectacular rise of higher education in all its contemporary forms in East Asia (Ka Ho Mok, 2016).

For Chinese researchers, international research collaborations appear to serve “two purposes, as a platform to introduce nationally active researchers into the global system, and as a space to integrate social realities and theoretical frameworks based in different contexts”. Additionally, the social relations in the China-UK collaboration in this study seem to be equal and respectful rather than dominant and dependent. Chinese researchers absorb much knowledge from the UK in theoretical analysis and publication advice but remain self-sustained and autonomous in other aspects of international collaboration activities (Yu Kevin, 2022).

The extraordinary progresses of China’s higher education (HE) were done after between 1990 and 2020 during the reforms and started under the presidency of Deng Xiaoping. Western countries, in particular the United States attract Chinese HE students.

There are challenges concerning China’s HE which exhibits a need for better regulation as well as more academic qualifications, teaching experience. Cheating is unfortunately relatively common.

Hong Kong Education Reform and in Particular HE Mainlandization

First Party control over HE in the literature concerning the relationship between education and politics in China is mentioned by few articles see Qinghua Wang (Wang, 2013).

What is the most prominent challenge facing the education in Hong Kong SAR? It is its mainlandization meaning in particular the education reform which started in June 2020. At present, in 2023 the mainlandization education reform in the HKSAR will continue during the period 2020-November 202, a transformation of the education system in Hong Kong which will politically re-educate in 2021-2047. Hong Kong affairs have firmly believed in the necessity of changing the education system of the HKSAR to an ideological direction (Lo, 2022, 1).

Migration of Students out of Hong Kong

A total of 89,200 citizens left HKSAR from mid-2020 to mid-2021. It was unclear how many students and teachers were among these roughly 90,000 immigrants (The Standard 12 August 2021). The student enrolment in day schools by level from 2002 to 2020 declined over time, especially after 2019. It must be noted that primary school students tended to increase in the period from 2005 to 2012, when the Donald Tsang administration was characterized by social stability and economic prosperity. Students enrolling in primary

schools dropped by 12,636 (1,707 at the secondary level). “The figures showed a significant decline in student population” (Lo, 2022, 165).

In 1996 97.9 per cent enrolling in HK universities were local and only 1.26 were from the mainland. In 2020, however 79.7 were local and 14.1 percent were from the mainland. However, HE students from Taiwan, the UK, Australia, Canada and the United States also come to the HKSAR’s universities. So, under these circumstances teachers and students are adapted to the new nationalistic contents of the education in Hong Kong. This increase of HE mainland students was confirmed by Sonny Lo and the author himself in December 2022, and showing a more ‘patriotic’ and nationalistic education ‘in the long run’ to transform Hong Kong’s education, factionalising it to be less pro-western or british to be in harmony with the mainland in ‘a more nationalistic way than before’ (ibid. 37,169, 173, 176). And also shifting ‘to a more hardline and politically conservative position’ (Lo, 2018, 392-415). “It remains to be seen whether the “political project of the PRC— in HK—will be successful in the long run” (ibid. 192).

China’s HE Students Abroad and particularly in the USA

The USA (with 976,853 Chinese international students). Australia with more than 141 thousand Chinese student enrolments in Australia in June 2022, with approximately 116.7 thousand enrolled in the higher education sector (Statista 3 January 2023).

In 2019, before the severe deterioration in China-Australia ties, international education contributed A\$40 billion (US\$29 billion) to Australian economy. But the number of Chinese students in Australia is declining. According to data provided by the Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment in Canberra, there were 166,319 Chinese students in Australia in January-September 2021, dropping nearly 13 percent year-on-year. Chinese students in Australia were 190,926 in 2020 and 211,965 in 2019. The UK is the most popular destination, receiving one third of international students (Global Times 21.6.2022).

Chinese students have consistently shown their interest in studying in the United Kingdom despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19, this trend will continue to grow as Britain has become the top study destination for Chinese students. At the end of 31 June 2020, 31,400 new students from China had submitted applications to enter HE in the UK this autumn, a surge of 29 percent. Nicolas Chu, founder of Sinorbis—a company that helps UK higher-learning institutions in China—said that by 2030 the increase will be 70 percent of undergraduate Chinese students. "It is in part due to the UK's increasing popularity as a study destination" (China Daily 19.9.2022).

The United States is the top destination for Chinese immigrants worldwide, accounting for about 28 percent of the 8.6 million Chinese living outside China, Hong Kong, or Macau, according to mid-2020 estimates by the United Nations Population Division. Compared to the foreign born overall,

Chinese immigrants are more likely to have arrived in the United States recently: 35 percent came in 2010 or later (MPI 2023). So, there are also many HE students in the USA. Number of international students studying in the United States in 2021/22 (Statista): 290,086. See photos of graduation of Chinese students in the USA below.

Epilogue

Since 2021 mainlandization means that decolonization and patriotic education is imposed in HKSAR. It influences secondary and higher education.

In mainland HE is remarkably successful and well organized. Exchange with many countries in particular the United States and UK is excellent in education.

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