

1 **China’s Higher Education Reforms. Hong Kong SAR’s**
2 **Case. China’s HE Students Abroad, Particularly in the**
3 **USA**

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

1 *cited papers with only 4.1 percent of the world's researchers in social*
2 *sciences (Yu Kevin 2022).*

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

5 **Keywords:** *Challenges, HE Reforms, Mainland HE, Reform*
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8 **Mainland China Reforms and Challenges in HE**

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

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

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

26 There are challenges concerning China's HE which exhibits a need for
27 better regulation as well as more academic qualifications, teaching experience.
28 Cheating is unfortunately relatively common.
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31 **Hong Kong Education Reform and in Particular HE Mainlandization**

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

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

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10 *Migration of Students out of Hong Kong*

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12 A total of 89,200 citizens left HKSAR from mid-2020 to mid-2021. It was
13 unclear how many students and teachers were among these roughly 90,000
14 immigrants (The Standard 12 August 2021). The student enrolment in day
15 schools by level from 2002 to 2020 declined over time, especially after 2019. It
16 must be noted that primary school students tended to increase in the period
17 from 2005 to 2012, when the Donald Tsang administration was characterized
18 by social stability and economic prosperity. Students enrolling in primary
19 schools dropped by 12,636 (1,707 at the secondary level). “The figures showed
20 a significant decline in student population” (Lo, 2022, 165).

21 In 1996 97.9 per cent enrolling in HK universities were local and only
22 1.26 were from the mainland. In 2020, however 79.7 were local and 14.1
23 percent were from the mainland. However, HE students from Taiwan, the UK,
24 Australia, Canada and the United States also come to the HKSAR’s universities.
25 So, under these circumstances teachers and students are adapted to the new
26 nationalistic contents of the education in Hong Kong. This increase of HE
27 mainland students was confirmed by Sonny Lo and the author himself in
28 December 2022, and showing a more ‘patriotic’ and nationalistic education ‘in
29 the long run’ to transform Hong Kong’s education, factionalising it to be less
30 pro-western or british to be in harmony with the mainland in ‘a more
31 nationalistic way than before’ (ibid. 37,169, 173, 176). And also shifting ‘to a
32 more hardline and politically conservative position’ (Lo, 2018, 392-415).
33 “It remains to be seen whether the “political project of the PRC— in HK—will
34 be successful in the long run” (ibid. 192).

1 **China's HE Students Abroad and particularly in the USA**

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

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

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

25 The United States is the top destination for Chinese immigrants worldwide,
26 accounting for about 28 percent of the 8.6 million Chinese living outside China,
27 Hong Kong, or Macau, according to mid-2020 estimates by the United Nations
28 Population Division. Compared to the foreign born overall, Chinese
29 immigrants are more likely to have arrived in the United States recently: 35
30 percent came in 2010 or later (MPI 2023). So, there are also many HE students
31 in the USA. Number of international students studying in the United States in
32 2021/22 (Statista): 290,086. See photos of graduation of Chinese students in the
33 USA below.

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1 **Epilogue**

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

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

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28 Kang Yuyang and Jin Jiang identify the actors in research systems and underline the
29 importance of complementarities and mutually reinforcing innovation networks.

30 Liberal political theorists often assume that only in democracy should citizens be
31 prepared for their future responsibilities, yet citizenship education in China has
32 undergone a number of transformations as the political system has sought to
33 cope...

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