

A Critical Reflection on Internationalization of Higher Education in Hong Kong: The Search for a Cosmopolitan Alternative

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Abstract

This paper aims to critically reflect on internationalization of higher education in Hong Kong in the light of Beck's thesis of cosmopolitization. While it argues that the existing internationalization process is largely founded on a national perspective, it proposes a cosmopolitan alternative for future development. Alternative here refers to a transnational perspective on global development of higher education. The paper begins with a literature review which exemplifies how cosmopolitanism can be used to examine and rectify the internationalization process in higher education. This is followed by a historical review of internationalization of higher education in Hong Kong. It then turns to examine the main policy initiatives related to internationalization and the corresponding tensions caused. The following section leads us to rethink the mission of internationalization. To conclude, the paper argues that cosmopolitan solution, by giving a cosmopolitan vision, is a way of bringing the educational perspective back to education.

Keywords: internationalization, cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitization, higher education, Hong Kong

1 Introduction

For the sake of talent competition, profit-making, national reputation and the like reasons, many societies have speeded up the process of internationalization of higher education. Hong Kong has joined the competition since colonial era and is keen to continue the policy after handover. In fact, we have witnessed that Hong Kong's higher education has undergone waves of massification and marketization. Meanwhile, the government has sought to develop the city into a regional education hub. These developments reflect that Hong Kong has followed the dual trends in higher education development (i.e., the pursuit of excellence with elitism and massification of higher education with egalitarianism) (Shin & Harman,

2009). As a consequence, while local universities are keen to internationalize themselves through recruiting more non-local students, instrumental approaches (e.g., talent competition and education as an industry) are widely adopted and the ideals of internationalization are rarely mentioned in designing and implementing their internationalization process (see Stier [2004, 2010] on instrumentalist and idealistic interpretations of internationalization of education).

This paper aims to critically reflect on the internationalization process in Hong Kong's higher education. On the basis of Beck's (2006, 2011) thesis of cosmopolitization, the paper primarily argues that the existing internationalization process is largely founded on national perspective, which is the main cause of the dilemma. It thus considers cosmopolitanism an alternative, which provides a "both/and" perspective on global development of higher education. The paper begins with a literature review illustrating how cosmopolitanism can be used to examine and rectify the internationalization process in higher education. This is followed by a historical review of internationalization of higher education in Hong Kong. The paper then turns to examine two main policy initiatives related to internationalization which triggers economic and political tensions. The following section leads us to rethink the mission of internationalization. Towards the end, the paper suggests that cosmopolitan solution, by bringing an awareness to global interconnectivity, is a way of bringing the educational perspective back to education.

2 A Cosmopolitan Vision for Internationalization of Higher Education

The main theoretical basis of this analysis builds on Beck's (2006, 2011) thesis of cosmopolitization. In accordance with this thesis of "new cosmopolitan vision for the social sciences," the mainstream social theory is greatly shaped by a western-centered hegemony. Such an approach formulates an "either/or" logic, which justifies universalism in the social sciences. That is to say, social scientists have

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long used their nation state as their unit of study and simply generalized their research findings to a global level. Nevertheless, this approach oversimplifies local, national, regional, ethnical, or religious cultures and traditions. Beck (2006, 2011) also suggested that globalization has given rise to risks which cannot be managed by adopting a national outlook irrespective of research design, institutional design or policy making. To handle the many risks in the global age, we should adopt a 'both/and' logic that involves a cosmopolitan empathy in the sense that we should view global risks as both an opportunity and a threat, recognize local/national differences, acknowledge the impossibility of living in a world without borders and insist on a *mélange* principle interpenetrating local, national, ethnic, religious and cosmopolitan cultures and traditions (Beck, 2006, p. 7). Under these principles, hence, there should be a fundamental transformation from a national outlook to a cosmopolitan vision, which emphasizes a global sense or a sense of borderlessness in analyzing and countering social problems (Beck, 2011, pp. 28-30). Although cosmopolitanism is revitalized in recent years, it has never come in handy in social sciences. This is because the concept is seen as a philosophical denial, which is more like "a task, a conscious and voluntary choice, clearly the affair of an elite, a top-down issue" (Beck, 2011, pp. 18-19). Nevertheless, Beck (2011) argued that the contemporary global interconnectivity uncovers "really existing cosmopolitization" (p. 18). He noted that as we are witnessing the disappearance of borders in different aspects of human life and activities that unfolds the reality of cosmopolitization, this new cosmopolitanism is not a utopian ideal but a reflexive practice to deal with global risks (pp. 19-25).

This thesis leads us to critically reflect on the current internationalization process in higher education, which can be seen as a response to the risks caused by globalization. Indeed, internationalization of higher education is aimed to cope with the globalized academic environment by altering higher education policies and adopting new practices in universities (Altbach & Knight, 2007). As a consequence, policy makers, university administrators, and academics have to place their focus of work on national, inter-/trans-national and global issues so as to prove their international standing and even to pursue a world leading position. For instance, internationalization of higher education is interpreted as a response to the rise of the knowledge economy in the global era. Therefore, we have witnessed that while the pursuit of excellence is frequently used as an agenda for internationalizing higher education, commodification and consumerism have simultaneously become the predominant discourse of internationalization of higher education in East Asia (Chan & Lo, 2008). However,

borrowing Beck's ideas of a cosmopolitan vision and his call for a cosmopolitan turn in social sciences, we argue that the internationalization process in Hong Kong's higher education is a task without a vision. The characteristics of the current process of internationalization show that it is somewhat an economic instrument for neoliberalization and a political instrument for mainland-Hong Kong integration rather than a practice for an cosmopolitan end highlighting the development of diversity consciousness, planetary citizenship and the enhancement of intercultural competence that enable both local and non-local students to engage with cultural diversity (Bucher, 2011; Haigh, 2008; Stier, 2006). This instrumentalist approach has sparked off some tensions between locals and non-locals. It is apparent that the global risks have not been properly managed by the internationalization initiatives, turning into threats as opposed to opportunities. In the following discussion, we will further use cosmopolitanism to help us reflect on the current mission of internationalization in Hong Kong's higher education. Meanwhile, cosmopolitanism also serves as a normative concept to rectify internationalization of higher education in the city-state. But, before that, let us sketch the historical background of internationalization of higher education in Hong Kong.

3 The Context for Internationalization of Higher Education in Hong Kong

Turning to the context of internationalization, we should not overleap the colonial influence on Hong Kong's education system on the ground that the development of higher education is greatly influenced by its colonial history. For instance, English is taken as the medium of instruction in universities. Meanwhile, the majority of faculty members earned their qualifications from English-speaking countries. These can be seen as the competitive edge of the higher education sector in Hong Kong when responding to the call for internationalization. In 1993, the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee (UPGC) (1993) published an interim report titled "Higher Education 1991-2001," in which the committee put emphasis on the investment in world-class higher education institutions (HEIs) and the recruitment of overseas students. Although the UPGC did not define the term "internationalization" in the document, this publication marked the beginning of internationalization in Hong Kong's higher education (Lee, 2010). Later, the UPGC was renamed to the University Grants Committee (UGC) and published another report "Higher Education in Hong Kong" in 1996. The report notes that universities should recruit more international academics, increase the ratio of non-local undergraduate and postgraduate students, and strengthen the cooperation

with other HEIs both in mainland China and foreign countries (University Grants Committee [UGC], 1996). All these can be seen as steps toward internationalization. At the meantime, Hong Kong higher education underwent a wave of expansion during the period of transition in the 1990s. Several postsecondary institutions were upgraded to universities.¹ In turn, eight HEIs have been funded by UGC and the participation rate for undergraduates aged between 17 and 20 hence surged from 2% in the 1970s to 18% in government-funded programs in the late 1990s (UGC, 1996).

As for the reforms in the post-1997 era, higher education, on the one hand, has been further expanded through marketization and privatization. Indeed, the former Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa (2000) set a target of increasing the participation rate of tertiary education to 60% by the 2010/2011 academic year. However, as this policy goal has been reached by market-led providers rather than UGC-funded ones, we have witnessed commodification of higher education in Hong Kong. We will elaborate on this point further below. On the other, the number of non-local students has been increasing after 1997. Tung (1997) in his maiden policy address kept pushing the internationalization process by reinforcing cross-cultural learning, doubling the proportion of non-local undergraduates to 4%, increasing the percentage of non-local research students from one-fifth to one-third and recruiting outstanding mainland Chinese students. Later in 2004, Tung has promulgated the notion of developing Hong Kong as a regional education hub. He explicitly pointed out that “apart from catering for local needs, they (Hong Kong’s education, medical and health care services, added by the authors) can be further developed into industries to serve people in the Mainland and elsewhere in Asia. We will study how our immigration and related policies may support such development” (Tung, 2004, para. 32). This policy goal was echoed by the UGC (2004) in the report “Hong Kong Higher Education: To Make a Difference, To Move with the Times” which indicated that the population of non-local students would continue to grow. Tung’s successor Tsang Yam-kuen (2009) continued the policy by taking educational services as one of the six pillar industries serving the goal of “enhancing Hong Kong’s status as a regional education hub, boosting Hong Kong’s competitiveness and complementing the

future development of the Mainland” (Tsang, 2009, para. 26). More importantly, he further noted that “the self-financing higher education sector has room for further expansion and is an important component of education services,” and “developing our education services will bolster the pluralistic, international and professional outlook of Hong Kong, and make the best use of social resources in the non-government sector to provide more opportunities for local students to pursue degree education” (Tsang, 2009, para. 28). The government believed that Hong Kong had a competitive advantage in higher education, which could attract students across the region, especially those from mainland China (Task Force on Economic Challenge [TFEC], 2009a, 2009b; Tsang, 2011). Again, the government’s goal was echoed by the UGC (2010) in its report “Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong,” in which the strategies for internationalization were discussed and emphasized. As for the recruitment of non-local students, it recommended that universities enroll 20% in undergraduate programs in its subsidized institutions. It also defined the education hub strategy as “a policy of investment in the competitive knowledge economy by providing educational services to a population that is non-local with a strong emphasis on inward pull” (UGC, 2010, p. 54). According to UGC’s (2010) interpretation of the education hub strategy, while the income generating potential of building an education hub was addressed, emphasis was put on promoting an integration of international students with local students at the campus level and maintenance of an international mix of the faculty in universities, thereby enhancing the international reputations and visibility of Hong Kong’s universities.

4 The Internationalization Initiatives

The above contextual section briefly illustrates how Hong Kong has experienced a transformation under the tide of internationalization of higher education. This transformation is highly associated with commodification and the notion of positioning Hong Kong as a regional education hub. These two reforms are considered the causes of tensions in the implementation process of internationalization. In this section, we turn to look at these two policy initiatives.

4.1 Commodification of Higher Education

As mentioned, the government intended to increase the participation rate of secondary school leavers in tertiary education to 60%. Since then, there was a dramatic increase in postsecondary enrollment rates. In the 2005/06 academic year, the figure doubled from merely 33% in 2000/01 to

¹ The Hong Kong Polytechnic, City Polytechnic of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Baptist College were turned into The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), City University of Hong Kong (CityU) and Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) respectively in 1994. Additionally, the government provided funding for two tertiary institutions. The former Lingnan College, re-named Lingnan University (LU) in 1999, came under the remit of UGC in 1991 and the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) was also granted by public funding in 1996.

66% (Education and Manpower Bureau [EMB], 2006). This means that the policy goal has been reached five years earlier than expected.

Nevertheless, this massification is not ascribed to increasing government-funded programs but to following the neoliberal trend by diversifying the provision through marketization. Indeed, the rapid expansion of self-funded professional higher diploma courses and associate degrees are the main cause for the massification of higher education. We hence have witnessed that a number of community colleges have been established to provide these programs over the past few years (Yung, 2002). Until now, 27 accredited institutions have offered self-financing post-secondary courses (Information Portal for Accredited Self-financing Post-secondary Programmes [iPASS], 2013a). It is noteworthy that all the UGC-funded institutions have joined this new market via establishing their community colleges or continuing education units.

Due to the expansion of the sub-degree sector, the supply of post-secondary programs has gone up considerably. In the 2001/02 academic year, there were 38 full-time accredited self-financing higher diploma and associate degree courses. In the following years, the figure

saw an eight-fold upward trend, reaching 315 programs in 2012/13 (iPASS, 2013b). Apart from the supply side, the government has simultaneously stimulated the demand of the programs by stressing the importance of higher education in knowledge-based economy and recognizing the qualification of self-financing post-secondary programs (iPASS, 2013c). It also provided a package of financial assistance schemes, including means-tested grants, non-means-tested/low interest loans and travel allowance (Student Financial Assistance Agency [SFAA], 2013). As a consequence, the number of associate degree students and higher diploma students has rocketed from 3,132 and 5,163 in 2001/02 to 27,822 and 23,974 in 2011/12 (see Figure 1).

On top of self-funded professional diploma courses and associate degrees, certain UGC-funded institutions have joined the market by offering degree programs on a self-financing basis. Most self-financing students in these institutions were graduated from community colleges because there have been scarce UGC-funded spaces for enrolling sub-degree or higher diploma graduates. This causes an articulation problem and these students could only study on a self-financing basis (Kemper, 2010). This means that they have to pay a higher tuition fee than those

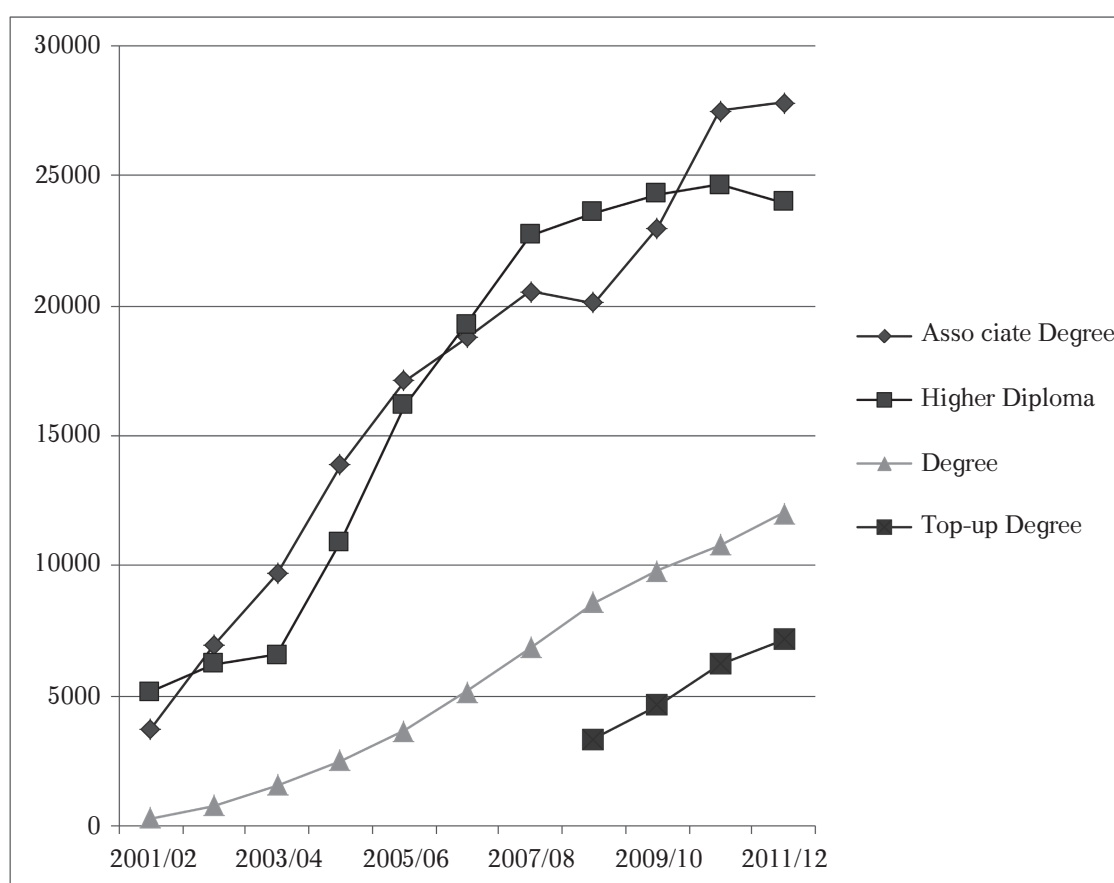


Figure 1 Number of Full-Time Accredited Self-Financing Post-Secondary Students

Source: iPASS (2013d).

Note: The number of Top-up Degree contains enrolment of degree programs with senior year intakes and is available since the year 2008/09.

in the public-funded programs. In other words, higher education as a commodity is more affordable for those who are wealthier, thus institutionalizing economic inequality and deepening the tensions between the rich and the poor.

Meanwhile, given that different universities have their own policies on deciding the tuition fee of self-financing students, UGC-funded institutions have also widened the tuition gap between local and non-local students in recent years. Though the government allowed increasing the enrollment rate of non-local students to 20%, non-local students have to pay a higher tuition fee. As depicted in Table 1, the level of tuition fee that non-local students pay varies from HK\$135,000 per academic year to HK\$100,000 annually, while there is a standardized tuition fee of HK\$42,100 for local students. Though higher education is internationalizing, a local boundary has seemingly been set up by tuition fee.²

4.2 Expanding the Population of Non-local Students

As said, the Hong Kong government announced the policy of developing the city into a regional education hub in 2004. Since then, there has been a significant upward trend in the number of non-local students in UGC-funded programs from 1,239 persons to 10,770 between 1996/97 and 2011/12 (see Figure 2). And, the ratio of non-local students also grew up from 1% to 14% during the period. Though there is no systemic census conducted by iPASS or Education Bureau, the Education Commission Working Group reported that the number of non-local students has reached to about 7,772 at 7% (see Table 2). It is also noteworthy that that nearly one-fifth of students in postgraduate courses are non-locals. These are the most

popular type of course in self-financed programs. Based on these figures, it seems that the government and universities are successful to attract more international students in Hong Kong.

However, the origin of non-local students has to be taken into consideration. As illustrated in Figure 2, most of the inbound students are mainland Chinese students. The number increased remarkably from barely 791 in 1996/97 to 8,936 in 2011/12. From 2000/01 onwards, the ratio of mainland Chinese students has accounted for over 80%. In fact, the UGC (2004) considered Hong Kong's strong links with mainland China the strong competitive edge of Hong Kong over its regional competitors, and tapping into the Chinese market is seen as a way of developing the city into an education hub (also see Lai & Maclean, 2011). As a result, mainland Chinese students have dominated the inflow of non-local students. Nevertheless, even though mainland Chinese students are seen as non-local students in Hong Kong, there are commentaries saying that expanding the recruitment of students from the mainland is a policy against the goal of internationalizing Hong Kong's higher education. In accordance with these commentaries, this strategy of education hub would only contribute to "mainlandization" of local universities (Lai & Maclean, 2011).

We argue that Hong Kong is facing a dilemma in the expansion of the admission of non-local students. On the one hand, mainland China is at the top of the major home countries international students. According to the latest statistics, there were 562,889 Chinese students studying abroad in 2010 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2012). It is anticipated

Table 1 Annual Tuition Fee for Local and Non-Local Students in UGC-Funded Programs

Name of UGC-funded institutions	Annual tuition Fee for non-local students (2012/13)	Annual tuition fee for local students (2012/13)
The University of Hong Kong	HK\$135,000	HK\$42,100
The Chinese University of Hong Kong	HK\$120,000	HK\$42,100
City University of Hong Kong	HK\$120,000	HK\$42,100
Hong Kong Baptist University	HK\$110,000	HK\$42,100
Lingnan University	HK\$110,000	HK\$42,100
The Hong Kong Institute of Education	HK\$100,000	HK\$42,100
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	HK\$100,000	HK\$42,100
The University of Science and Technology	HK\$100,000	HK\$42,100

Sources: City University of Hong Kong [CityU] (2013); Hong Kong Baptist University [HKBU] (2013); Lingnan University [LU] (2013); The Chinese University of Hong Kong [CUHK] (2013); The Hong Kong Institute of Education [HKIE] (2013); The Hong Kong Polytechnic University [PolyU] (2013); The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology [HKUST] (2013); The University of Hong Kong [HKU] (2013).

Note: Inapplicable to double degrees.

² Nonetheless, of many mainland Chinese students, most consider that financing cross-border was not a major concern (Bodycott & Lai, 2012).

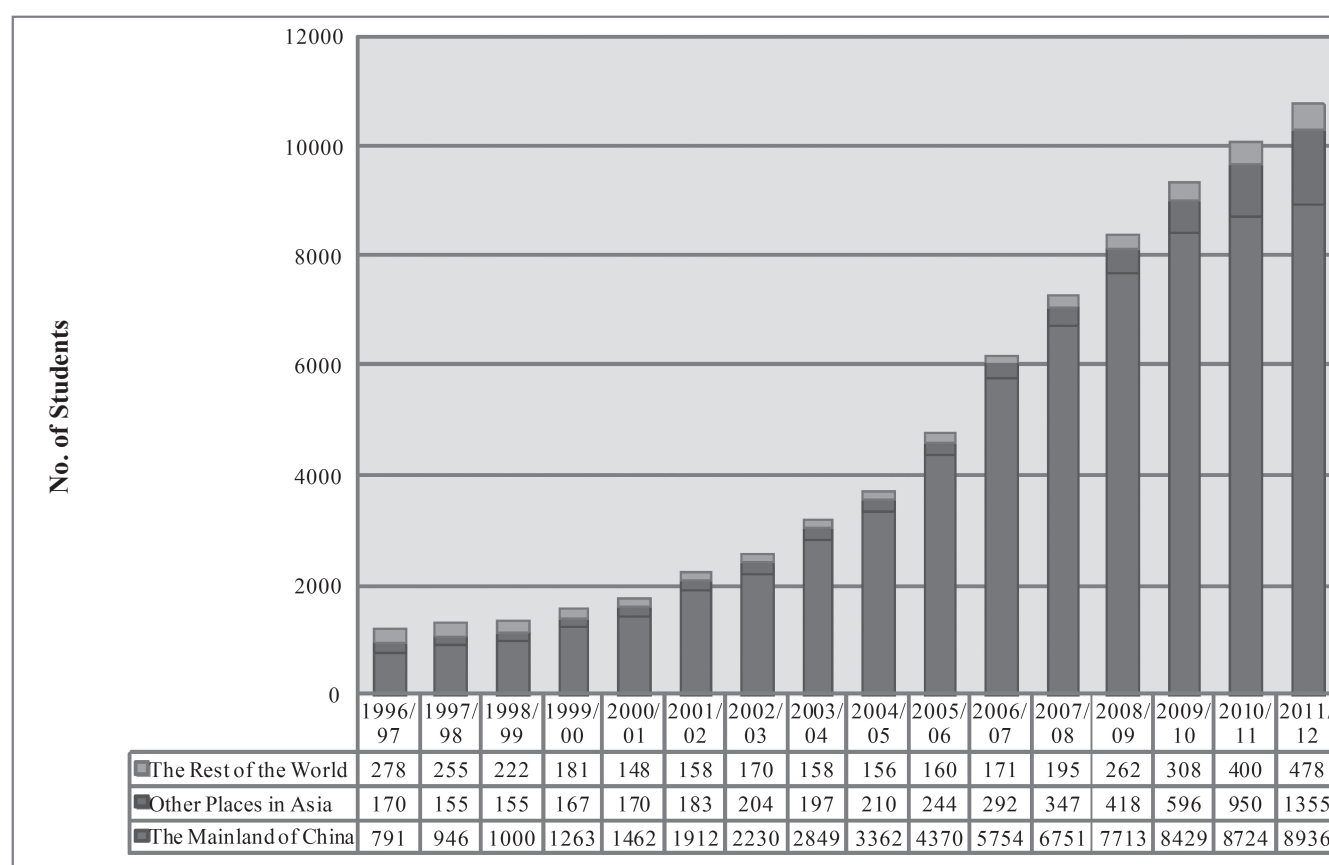


Figure 2 Number of Non-Local Enrolments in UGC-Funded Institutions by Source of Origin

Source: UGC (2013).

Note: Both full-time and part-time students studying undergraduate, postgraduate and sub-degree levels are included.

Table 2 The Number of Non-Local Student for Self-Financing Post-Secondary Program for the 2010/11 Academic Year

Level of study	No. of non-local students	Total student population	% of non-local students
Sub-degree (full-time)	510	52,154	1%
Undergraduate (full-time)	501	17,019	3%
Taught postgraduate (full-time and part-time)	6,761	35,351	19%
Total	7,772	104,524	7%

Source: Education Commission Working Group (2011).

that the country will remain the major source country for the next decade (Banks, Olsen, & Pearce, 2007). This implies that mainland China is a market that Hong Kong's higher education sector cannot afford to abandon. In fact, Hong Kong is an attractive option for mainland Chinese students on account of having a geographical proximity, permanent residents, high quality of competitively priced education and shared Confusion cultural heritage (Bodycott, 2009). We have thus witnessed that the higher education sectors in the two societies have developed a closer relationship in recent years. For instance, in 2004,

the Memorandum of Understanding between the Mainland and Hong Kong on Mutual Recognition of Academic Degrees in Higher Education was signed. This marks that the border between the higher education systems in the two societies has been blurred. In 2005, universities in Hong Kong began to enroll mainland Chinese students through the "national university and college admission system." All these developments possibly reflect a process of "market integration" (Li, 2011).

On the other hand, we recognize that there is a growing anti-mainland Chinese sentiment in Hong Kong

in recent years. Despite the fact that Hong Kong has been intensifying its connections and integration with the Chinese mainland after 1997, its anxiety over threats and competitions from mainland China gets deeper. This paradoxical situation can be explained by the historical and political context in which Hong Kong is culturally and politically distinct from the Chinese mainland. Also importantly, some people in Hong Kong believe that the increasing inflow of mainland Chinese visitors and immigrants would impose burden on social welfare system and unfair competition for goods and services.³ The recent shortages of hospital beds for local pregnant women and of formulae for local babies caused by mainlanders' demand somewhat exemplify and spread the anxiety. This perception of Hong Kong's continuous integration into the mainland explains the critics on mainlandization of Hong Kong's higher education. As a consequence, the internationalization policy is widely perceived as a factor undermining the opportunity for local students to study in universities, due to the substantial growth in the number of non-local students, especially those from the mainland China, under the policy. Particularly, this notion is strengthened by the recent statistics of research postgraduate in UGC-funded programs. That is, since the year 2007/08, mainland Chinese postgraduate students have outnumbered the local ones. In fact, in the year 2011/12, the proportion of these mainland Chinese students made up over 65%, compared to around 27% of local students (UGC, 2013). The large proportion of mainland Chinese students in turn deepen the tensions and conflict between Hong Kong and mainland China, as there is a perception among local students that non-local students are a drain on Hong Kong's education service.

5 Rethinking the Mission of Internationalization of Higher Education

The concept of internationalization has been widely discussed in higher education in recent years. According to Knight (2003), internationalization is "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 3). This broadly cited definition indicated that "cultural diversity" and "the sense of worldwide scope" should be adopted as the core ideas driving the internationalization process and practices at academic systems and institutions (Knight, 2003, 2004).

³ Under the implementation of Individual Visit Scheme since 2003, mainland travelers could visit Hong Kong on an individual base. This further facilitates mainland-Hong Kong integration and provides an opportunity for parallel goods traders to snap up daily necessities.

Haigh (2008) considered that the aim of internationalization of higher education should be to produce "citizens that feel at home," so it is imperative to promote "planetary citizenship." Ng (2011) further added that it represented a commitment to the development of an internationalized curriculum stressing the pursuit of global citizenship, human harmony and a climate of global peace. Coate and Rathnayake (2013) offered a philosophical approach based on care, responsibility and cosmopolitanism. These normative analyses are helpful in illustrating an idealist account of internationalization of higher education (Stier, 2004, 2010).

However, despite the awareness of these idealist goals of internationalization of higher education, we should admit that, higher education governance at both levels of national policy-making and institutional management is in reality inevitably affected or even determined by instrumentalist motivations, including political and economic ones. Hence, when we look at internationalization in Hong Kong's higher education, we should not overlook the importance of the two key factors, namely education as an industry and mainland-Hong Kong integration. The idea of education as an industry can be seen as a response to the global trend of neoliberalization and reflects that exporting education is taken as a way of increasing the income of governments and universities. Yet, following this instrumentalistic interpretation of internationalization, the idealistic process of internationalization "is impeded by management systems that take commerce as their model" and internationalization is adjusted to be merely "about income generation for cash-strapped higher education institutes" (Haigh, 2008, p. 427). Indeed, this form of internationalization blindly comes after the hegemonic definition associating with neoliberalism and global capitalism which is far from a practice for a cosmopolitan end. The notion of mainland-Hong Kong integration rationalizes the phenomenon of mainlandization by recognizing the rapid pace of integration between Hong Kong and mainland China after the handover. This however has led to query about how a homogenized, mainlandized Hong Kong's higher education sector can achieve "cultural diversity" and "the sense of worldwide scope." In the meantime, this form of internationalization deepens the tension between Hongkongers and mainland Chinese, which ends up walking into an opposite road to a cosmopolitan direction.

Nevertheless, Beck's (2011) thesis of cosmopolitization reminds us the importance of a cosmopolitan vision in achieving these idealist goals of internationalization of higher education. Obviously, the political and economic imperatives of internationalization illustrated are founded on a national outlook emphasizing an "either/or" logic. Thus, following this methodological nationalism

mechanically, we inevitably come to an analysis of the tension between “us” and “them.” However, Beck’s emphasis on a “both/and” logic, referring to a translocal/transnational perspective, and suggestion of methodological cosmopolitanism shed light on the possibilities of formulating a cosmopolitan agenda for internationalization of higher education. That is, an agenda recognizes national differences and acknowledges the impossibility of living in a global society without walls, but simultaneously develops a cosmopolitan vision which stresses sense of boundarylessness, engaging with cultural diversity and interconnectness of national societies in higher education sector.

Importantly, we recognize that Hong Kong, as a city-state but a special administrative region of China, provides a special example of imagining “national community” and of the implementation of cosmopolitization. On the one hand, Hong Kong’s territorial, social, cultural, and political borders exist and distinguish it as a city-state from the rest of China. This feature highlights the relevance of the concepts of “borders” and “national outlook” in examining the cross-border student flow and the policy of exporting higher education services in Hong Kong. On the other hand, Hong Kong is in fact part of China. This circumstance alters the cause of tension from “nationalism versus transnationalism” to “localism and nationalism.” Nevertheless, we believe that this special feature would not undermine the feasibility of cosmopolitization. The reasons are twofold. For one thing, Beck’s methodological cosmopolitanism indeed incorporates local, translocal, national, and transnational focuses. For another, nation-state is still a container model in the transition from national to transnational analyses. Admittedly, Hong Kong and mainland China share many common interests. So, this would not undermine the value of the process of cosmopolitization. By contrast, by pointing out the tensions and risks induced by the current internationalization process of higher education, it is believed that it would enhance the probability of this reflexive practice.

6 Conclusion

We began this study with a commitment to the transnational perspective on the development of higher education. In this regard, although we recognize that internationalization of higher education in Hong Kong involves many political and economic interests (including profit-making, talent competition as well as welfare competition), we do not consider cosmopolitan approach an ideal but an innovative alternative in analyzing and implementing internationalization. Indeed, the issues revealed in our analysis show the tensions between Hong

Kong and the Chinese mainland, which are sharpened and formed on the basis of the concepts of “border” and “national community.” However, it is obvious that it is impossible for us to abandon “national perspective” and “national sphere” in a short period of time. Yet, we feel obligated to investigate and promote this cosmopolitan vision for internationalization of higher education, because, cosmopolitization in our view is not a paradigm shift in research only, but also a multidimensional process which could be applied in the higher education sector. Beck put forward a cosmopolitan vision in doing research in social sciences, aiming at avoiding the overgeneralization of social theories simply constructed by some research findings from western societies and in turn enhancing the quality of social scientific research in this global age. Likewise, facing many global risks in the higher education sector, the internationalization reforms were primitively expected to manage these global risks. Adopting a national perspective is by no means a proper way to manage these risks, but right to the contrary turns them into some threats and tensions instead of opportunities for developing diversity consciousness, enhancing intercultural competence, recognizing planetary citizenship and formulating a cosmopolitan curriculum. We believe that through critically reflecting the internationalization of higher education, we could figure out the root of current threats and tensions, highlight the importance of a cosmopolitan vision, accelerate the process of cosmopolitization, actualize the reflexive practice and eventually bring the educational perspective back to education.

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