



From Aspirations to Success: The Community College graduates' experiences

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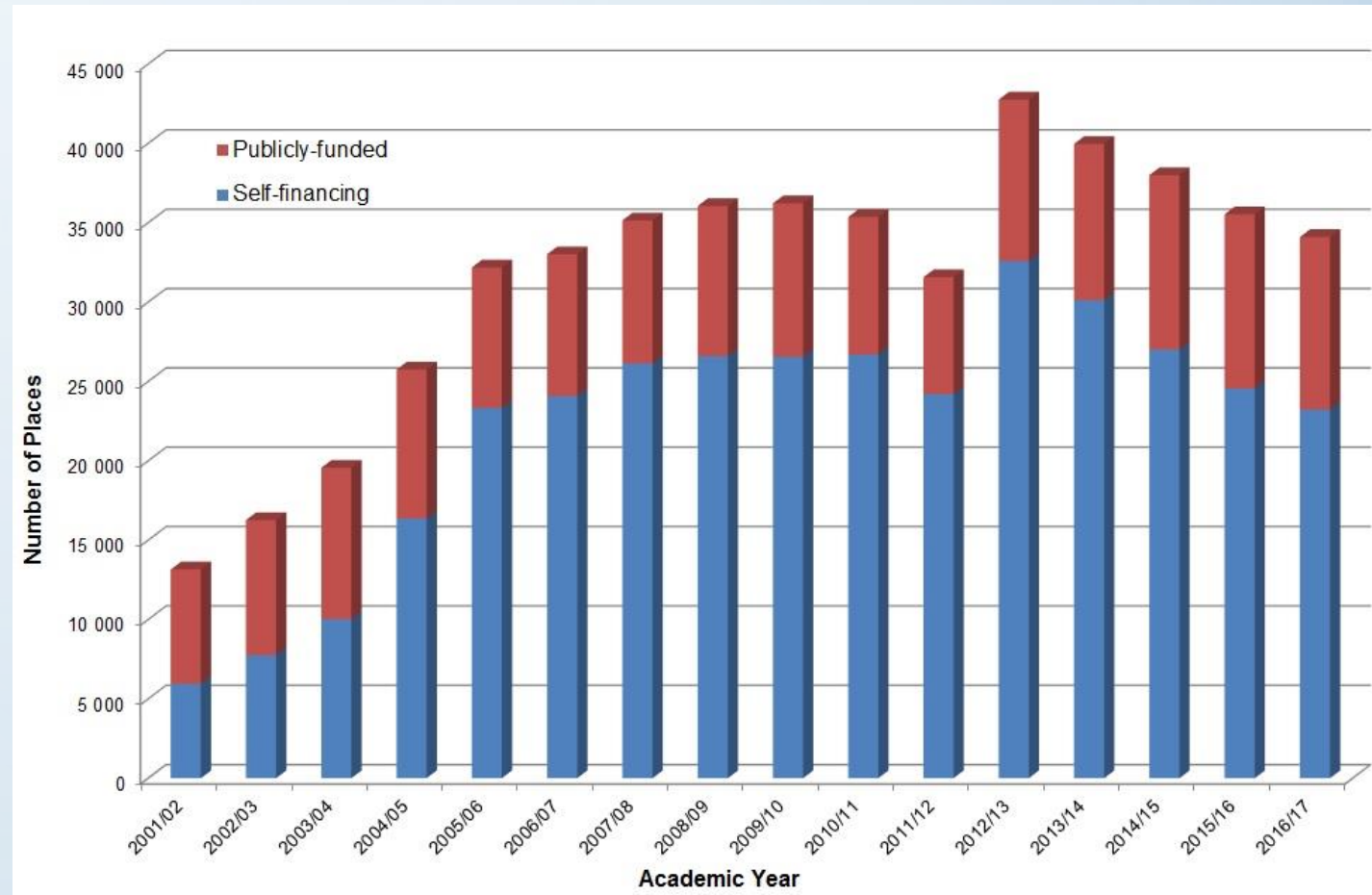
Community colleges in Hong Kong

- Massification of self-financing higher education (1997-2010s)
 - Target of allowing 60% of the senior secondary school leavers to receive post-secondary education by 2010
 - Community colleges were established in 2000 by the existing continuing education providers and other local charitable organizations

Community colleges in Hong Kong

Fig.1 Number of Sub-degree Intake Places

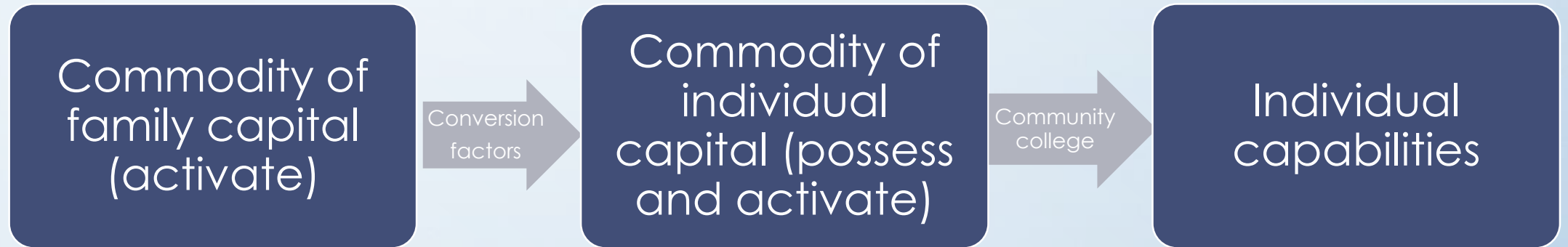
- Full-time self-financing sub-degree programme
- Majority are school leavers and local Chinese students
- Completion of HKDSE with Level 2 or above in 5 subjects



Significance of this study

- How the educational aspirations of community college students are formed and reshaped?
 - the educational aspiration prior to joining community college and the changes during the two-year college career.
- What makes a difference? Social class or Community colleges?
 - the influence of social class on educational aspirations

Conceptual Framework



Name	Job	Level of education attainment	Parent's educational background/occupation	Class origin
Nigel	Lecturer	Master degree	Father completed F.5; Warehouse worker Mother completed F.5; Clerk	Working-class
Simon	Executive officer	Master degree	Father completed F.3; Factory worker Mother completed F.3; Factory worker	Working-class
Austin	Student	Master degree	Father received Higher Diploma degree; Interior designer Mother received Bachelor degree; Housewife	Middle-class
Pamela	Executive Assistant	Master degree	Father completed F.7; Sales Mother completed F.7; Housewife	Working-class
Hailey	Student	Master degree	Father completed F.7; Banking officer Mother received Master degree: Accountant	Middle-class
Sabrina	Student	Associate degree	Father completed F.5; Driver Mother completed primary 6; Housewife	Working-class
Casey	Government clerk	Bachelor degree	Father attended Hong Kong Polytechnic: Operation officer Mother completed F.5; Nurse	Middle-class
Ada	Service Development Manager	Higher diploma	Mother received Higher Diploma degree; Self-employed	Middle-class

During the interviews, we have asked...



The role of the local community colleges in enhancing student success

- Hong Kong's community colleges can help students to **discover/activate** their capabilities and **warm up** their education desire by means of :
 1. **Formative assessment** conducive to a second chance for university admission
 2. **Self-discoveries** of academic capabilities and 'warming up' educational desire
 3. **Learner autonomy** and liberal teacher-student learning interactions
 4. **Effective career guidance** for strategic preparations for university admission

- “**The assessment are easier to control now**, like group presentation, I can prepare for them earlier. Another example is individual assignment, I can decide on what to write and it’s still okay, I am accountable for myself, **so it’s better than doing an examination.**” (Casey)

THEME ONE:

Formative assessment conducive to a second chance for university admission

- “After I entered the community college, I discovered that it suits students like me. I am the kind of students that during examination I cannot show my actual performance. But **I am fine with continuous assessment** by formative assignments and projects.” (Simon)

THEME TWO:

Self-discoveries of academic capabilities and 'warming up' educational desire

- “What impressed me is the course about contemporary world since 1945. Students needed to do **essay and group project** as assessment. The contents of the course were totally different from what I learned in high school. In high school history course, we learned what was before Second World War. But in the course contemporary world, we studied Cold War, Vietnam War etc. Because I never learned those historical events, **the course aroused my interest.**” (Simon)
- “...for my open examination, my results were only far below average. Many things made me realise I wasn't suited to study, but when I got to my Pre-associate degree, I got high grades even without studying very hard ... The reason is I **liked to attend classes by particular lecturers.** Even if you don't study, you still remember what they taught in class...” (Pamela)

THEME THREE:

Learner autonomy and liberal teacher-student learning interactions

- “There was a teacher who taught counselling and they taught very well, I really **enjoyed their classes**. Even after so many years, we will still meet up for dinner. I also kept all the lecture notes and didn’t throw away because at the time I really put a lot of effort in it. Most of the teachers in community college are **very attentive**, I actually learnt more from talking to them outside of classes.” (Ada)
- “I think the overall the whole learning experience was that they could really enlighten us. We could have very **good relationship with some lecturers**. They were just like friends – we could just consult them once we had any academic matters which we did not understand. They could also **provide lots of advice** regarding our further study plans. Even we did not decide to go for further studies, they **gave us support** for career development.” (Sabrina)

- “I often went to the counsellor in my first year because I got an Non-JUPAS interview offer. In my AD Year 1 and Year 2, I was offered interview with HKU, there was a written test for the interview and the **counsellor helped me brainstorm.**” (Casey)

THEME FOUR:

Effective career guidance for strategic preparations for university admission

- “...It was useful, because they had a **‘feedback system’**. For students who successfully entered a university, they are invited to enter into the system the data about their open exam results, details about admission interviews, and details of the offers. The information was put into a compiled volume (we called it as ‘the secret book to success’). It was **a very useful resource**, because I think majority of the successful graduates reported back.” (Austin)

Conclusion

- Community colleges give students a sense of opportunity (second chance)
- Social class does not determine their success in community colleges and access to higher education
- Community colleges can help students to discover/activate their capabilities and warm up their educational aspirations

Tang, H.H.H., & Dang, B.Y.Y. (under review) (2019). 'Warming-up' or 'Cooling-out' Functions in East Asian Higher Education? Assessing the Role of Community College in Elucidating Educational Disadvantages. *Policy Futures in Education*, xxx, xxx-xxx.