Access to Educational Opportunity: The Case of Kwun Tong

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by

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Access to Educational Opportunity:  
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Formal education has been expanding in Hong Kong, especially in the last decade or so, in terms of both the number of schools, primary and secondary, and the size of student enrolment. In 1961, for example, 84 per cent of the total population, aged 6 - 12, were attending school; in 1971, this rose to 95 per cent. The ratio of secondary school enrolment to the population in the 13 - 18 age group was 27 per cent in 1961 and 41 per cent in 1971. Considering just the economically active portion of the population, for most of whom the level of educational attainment may be considered "finalized," the proportion who have attained some secondary education or above increased from 27 per cent in 1961 to 33 per cent in 1971. As the effect of the current expansion takes shape some years later with the influx of the graduates (especially at the secondary level or above) into the working force, the proportion of more highly educated members would be even higher.

While the increase in school enrolment rates may be interpreted as a sign of increasing equality of educational and social opportunity,

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1 Calculated from Census figures of 1961 and 1971. Most of these are primary school pupils.


3 Taken from Census statistics of 1961 and 1971.
the question of to what extent attaining a certain level of education has or has not improved for people from various socioeconomic strata over a period of time still remains largely unanswered. What increase in enrolment rates shows is merely expansion on an aggregate level which must be distinguished from the distributional trend in education, i.e., how aggregate changes in school attainment are distributed among individuals from different social backgrounds. In a population with rising levels of school attainment, such as what Hong Kong is currently experiencing, it is possible that a youth can receive more schooling than his father without, however, necessarily advancing educationally compared with his peers. For children whose fathers have little primary or no schooling, upward educational mobility is achieved by merely graduation from primary school. For children of fathers with some secondary schooling or more, upward educational mobility means at least graduation from secondary school. It is therefore possible that upward educational mobility may operate independently of rates of access to given levels of educational attainment. As indicated by Census statistics the proportion of white-collar workers (administrative, executive and managerial workers) with a primary education or less has diminished from 60 per cent in 1966 to 46 per cent in 1971. Increasingly, secondary school completion is becoming a minimum qualification for entry into white-collar jobs. For children of poorly educated fathers, therefore, merely having more education than fathers is not a sufficient preparation for the job market if white-collar work is desired. It is thus relevant to ask if, for example, completion of primary school has improved for children with poorly educated fathers
as much as for the children of well educated fathers (e.g., secondary schooling or above). Furthermore, it is even more significant to ask whether, once having completed primary school, the chances of attending at least some secondary school have improved for children of varying social backgrounds.

The Data and Kwun Tong

The data used for the analyses reported in this paper were taken from data collected by the Life Quality Study, part of the Kwun Tong Industrial Community Research Programme undertaken by the Social Research Centre of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in the summer of 1971. Subjects included in the present analysis are male members of households listed in the Life Quality Study who were, at the time of collection of the data, living with their fathers and out of school (either employed or unemployed). In some cases, therefore, several members from the same household are included.

The dependent variable in this paper is the highest level of school education obtained by the subject. Two independent variables are included: the subject's age and father's educational background. Both the subject's education and father's education are classified under five categories (no education, some primary, primary graduate, some secondary and secondary graduate or more). Father's education is used as a rough indicator of family socio-economic status. Since most

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4 The study was supported by a grant from the Harvard-Yenching Institute. The sample taken was a stratified (according to housing types) random one, resulting in a total of 1,065 households.
of the subjects are quite young, their ages are categorized into three groups: 19 or younger, 20 - 24, and 25 or older.

Kwun Tong was an undeveloped area in the mid-fifties with a population of a few thousand in a sprinkling of villages. Today, after roughly twenty years, it has become a major industrial-residential "satellite town" of Hong Kong, boasting a population of half a million. Approximately 1,600 factories of all sorts in 1977 were employing 16 per cent of the total working force in Hong Kong's industries. In addition, many large public housing schemes, an important part of the new towns development efforts of the Hong Kong Government, have provided residences for over three-quarters of Kwun Tong's population. Kwun Tong is thus a new creation which plays a significant role in the social and economic development of Hong Kong as a whole. Kwun Tong being a planned community, knowledge of the educational attainment and hence potential contribution of its people to the quality of manpower should be an important ingredient in the planning process. Such knowledge should also stimulate thinking about the improvement of educational and other social services which are essential to the development of a community.

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5 Chan Ying-keung, The Rise and Growth of Kwun Tong: A Study of Planned Urban Development, research report of the Social Research Centre, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1975, p. 22.

6 Unpublished 1971 Census data, Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong.
FINDINGS

Overall pattern of educational mobility

The proportion of sons with more schooling than their fathers has remained roughly constant over time, being slightly over half of each of the three age cohorts (Table 1). The chances of becoming upwardly mobile educationally have not been improved. In fact, indications are that they may have dropped somewhat over the past decade or so when paternal levels of schooling do not seem to have improved. (The proportions of sons whose fathers have completed primary schooling or above are 33 per cent, 43 per cent, and 33 per cent, respectively, among the 25-or-older, 20-24, and 19-or-younger age groups.)

Since whether sons have more education than their fathers may be less important than how much education a son has actually received in terms of securing job opportunities and social mobility, we should consider not just aggregate rates of educational mobility but also the differences in rates of actual educational attainment.

Access to different levels of education

In Table 2, we are considering differential access to four levels of education: (a) some primary school, (b) primary school graduation, (d) some secondary school, and (d) secondary school graduation or more. Each cell within a given section (corresponding to a given level of education) of the table indicates the percentage of sons with a particular family background (represented by father's education) and age who had reached a specified level of education.
Table 1. Intergenerational Educational Mobility* by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Educational Mobility</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upward</td>
<td>Stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 or younger</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 or older</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Derived from comparing son's educational attainment with that of his father.

The first question that concerns us here is: has there been a steady increase over time in the completion of successively higher levels of education for sons from each social stratum? As the figures in Table 2 indicate, the answer appears to be in the negative. It is true, though, that more sons of fathers with no or some primary schooling have attained at least some primary schooling over time. Such attainment is approaching 100 per cent, which has been the case for sons of fathers who had completed primary school or above. For the attainment levels of "primary graduate" and "some secondary," by comparison, the percentage reaching the education level concerned shows some increase, in almost all social strata, from the 25-or-older age-group to the 20-24 age group, but decreases among the 19-or-younger age-group. In the case of graduating from secondary school or above, it is quite clear that very few of the 19-or-younger age group have been able to attain this level of education relative to the two older age-groups. Overall, then, there is not, with
Table 2 Percentage of sons obtaining a given level of education by father's education and age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Son's age</th>
<th>Father's education</th>
<th>Attainment gap (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No schooling (1)</td>
<td>Some primary (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 or younger</td>
<td>91.5(35)*</td>
<td>100 (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>84.8(33)</td>
<td>98.4(62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 or older</td>
<td>83.7(43)</td>
<td>90.2(41)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. Some primary

| 19 or younger| 57.1               | 53.7               | 96.7               | 73.3               | 90.5                           | +33.6             |
| 20 - 24      | 60.6               | 67.7               | 93.4               | 87.5               | 100                            | +39.4             |
| 25 or older  | 37.3               | 56.1               | 100                | 78.6               | 100                            | +62.7             |

B. Primary graduate

| 19 or younger| 11.4               | 22.5               | 30.0               | 33.3               | 72.7                           | +61.3             |
| 20 - 24      | 36.4               | 37.1               | 46.6               | 68.8               | 91.7                           | +55.3             |
| 25 or older  | 23.3               | 36.6               | 63.2               | 50.0               | 100                            | +76.7             |

C. Some secondary

| 19 or younger| 0                  | 2.5                | 10.0               | 0                  | 18.2                           | +18.2             |
| 20 - 24      | 12.1               | 9.7                | 28.9               | 18.5               | 66.7                           | +54.6             |
| 25 or older  | 9.3                | 14.6               | 31.6               | 7.1                | 66.7                           | +57.4             |

D. Secondary graduate or more

| Partial Gems: Son's ed. x father's ed./age:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 or younger</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>0.353</td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td>0.549</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 or older</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Base N for the percentage, the same for the given age-group from the given social background (father's education) at different levels of educational attainment.

# Son's ed. x father's ed./age: 19 or younger: .404; 20 - 24: .395; 25 or older: .501
few exceptions: a pattern of steady increase over time in the percentage of sons completing a given level of education. Indeed, indications are that fewer sons of the younger cohorts attained the same level of education as did those of the older cohort (the partial Gammes between son's education and age are all positive, especially for sons whose fathers had completed primary schooling or above), particularly in post-primary schooling.

Secondly, let us consider whether, for each age cohort, an association exists between the chances of attaining a given level of education and father's education. Take, for example, the 35 sons in the upper-left-hand cell of each section in Table 2 aged 19 or younger whose fathers received no schooling. We notice that 91 per cent of them had some primary schooling, 57 per cent graduated from primary school, 11 per cent had some secondary schooling, and nobody graduated from secondary school. By contrast, among sons of fathers who had graduated from secondary school or above, 100 per cent had some primary schooling, 91 per cent finished primary school, 73 per cent reached some secondary school, and 18 per cent graduated from secondary school or above.

Our findings in Table 2 indicate that, for each age cohort, the chances of reaching any given level of education tend to increase with father's education. The differential is not very large for reaching some primary school, probably because primary schooling is commonly accepted as "basic" and also because it has expanded very rapidly in the last decade or so. For graduation from primary school and above, the chances of attainment clearly improve with "better" social origin, although there are some irregularities when it comes to graduation from secondary school or above. The improvement is often quite substantial
(as much as 77 percentage points for reaching some secondary school among the sons in the 25-or-older age group from the two extreme social origin categories). The effect of father's education on son's education clearly exists at all levels of educational attainment. This is also indicated by the fairly high and positive partial Gammas between son's education and father's education controlling for son's age.

Since father's education does make a difference in the chances of reaching a given education level for each age cohort and since rates of completion fluctuate (except at the "some primary" level) fairly consistently across age cohorts, we should examine whether the educational "attainment gap" between children from the two extreme strata appears to have increased or decreased over time. For each age cohort, this gap is represented by the difference between the percentage of sons with uneducated fathers who reached a given level of education and those whose fathers had completed secondary school or above who also reached that level of education (see column 6 in Table 2).

In section A of Table 1, we can see that status differences in some primary school attendance diminish from 16 per cent for those in the 25-or-older age group to 8.5 per cent among those aged 19 or younger. The attainment gap for this level of education has thus decreased, reflecting the effect of expansion of primary schooling.

Differences in graduation from primary school are considerably larger, as compared with those in some primary school attendance. There is, however, noticeable decline in status disparities over time, from a difference of 63 per cent among those aged 25 or older to 34 per cent in the youngest group. Such disparities are likely to continue to diminish as the percentage of sons of better educated fathers who complete
primary school approaches 100 per cent and the effect of free primary schooling is allowed a longer time to crystallize. Nevertheless, it should be noted that over 40 per cent of the youngest men of fathers with some primary or no schooling do not have the chance of finishing primary school.

For secondary school attendance, the size of the attainment gap is even larger. Status differences in going to secondary school fluctuate over time, being as large as 77 per cent in the 25-or-older age group, decreasing to 55 per cent in the 20-24 age group, but increasing again to 61 per cent among the youngest group. Even if we use the sons of men who had at least some primary schooling as the "bottom" social category in calculating the attainment gap, the disparities due to social background in the chances of reaching some secondary school are still quite substantial, being at least 50 per cent. In either case, the opportunity gap among the two younger age cohorts is not as wide as that among those aged 25 or more.

The gap in graduation from secondary school also seems to have narrowed over time, from 57 per cent to 18 per cent. However, the situation here contains some irregularities. First, the rates of completing secondary school among the youngest cohort are considerably lower than in the other two age cohorts, which may be partly due to the fact that some members in the 19 or younger cohort are not old enough to have completed secondary school anyway. Second, the rates of attainment among sons of fathers who had some secondary schooling are even lower than for those whose fathers had only finished primary school. Our data are insufficient to suggest any clues as to why this is so. At any rate, the decrease in the attainment gap over time at the level
of secondary school graduation may be more apparent than real and would probably be much less of a decrease if all of the youngest cohort are old enough to have passed the average secondary school graduation age.

As already pointed out, the relative sizes of the attainment gaps at various levels of education are such that the status effects on attainment are much more pronounced at the primary school graduation level and above than at the same primary school attendance level. This reflects that having some primary education may be considered basic by all social categories alike. It is also related to the expansion of primary educationa and the provision of free school places at Government and Government-assisted schools in Hong Kong. At the higher levels of schooling, however, environmental influences, including those due to family background, may be more important in determining the chances of attainment. Indeed, besides and beyond father's education, such factors as motivation on the part of the son, his competitive ability, distractions affecting academic performance, and family's economic condition all may influence the likelihood with which the son will attain a given level of education. That such factors may be operative is suggested by the variability in rates of completion of secondary school or above in each age cohort.

Conditional Probabilities of Access

So far we have been considering gross rates of access to various levels of education in different social categories. Since the proportion of sons who attain a given level of education diminishes at successively higher levels, we can view the educational system as a selection process weeding out at various points individuals who lack the ability, motivation, and resources to proceed further. In addition to examining gross rates of access, therefore, we can also look at
conditional rates of access to see how likely sons from different social backgrounds may continue to "survive" the system after having crossed a previous hurdle in the selection process.

The data in Table 2 are reorganized and presented in Table 3, for which the interpretation of the figures has changed. Section A of Table 3 shows the percentage of sons in each age and status cohort who reached primary school that eventually graduated from primary school. Section B shows the percentage of primary school graduates who had some secondary schooling, and Section C indicates what percentage of these who had some secondary schooling eventually graduated. Among the youngest sons of some-primary-educated fathers, for example, 66 per cent (Section A) of those who entered primary school eventually graduated. Of these graduates, 34 per cent (Section B) went on to some secondary school, and 11 per cent (Section C) of those who so went eventually finished secondary school. By contrast, the conditional probabilities for sons of fathers who had completed secondary school or more are considerably higher at every stage of education: 91, 80, and 25 per cent respectively. Overall, we see that the influence of social background on conditional access to education is fairly consistent: with a few irregularities (particularly at the level of secondary school graduation), the conditional probabilities increase by at least 25 percentage points (attainment gap) as father's education improves.

Have the conditional probabilities of educational attainment improved over time? One would expect that, in a society where school enrolments are expanding, probabilities of educational attainment would improve over time. Contrary to expectation, however, conditional probabilities have on the whole declined at all three specified
Table 3 Conditional probabilities of sons obtaining a given level of education by father's education and age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Son's age</th>
<th>Father's education</th>
<th>Attainment gap (%)</th>
<th>PG1\textsuperscript{d}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No schooling (1)</td>
<td>Some primary (2)</td>
<td>Primary graduate (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 or younger</td>
<td>62.5\textsuperscript{a}(32)</td>
<td>66.3(80)</td>
<td>96.7(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>71.5(28)</td>
<td>68.8(61)</td>
<td>93.4(45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 or older</td>
<td>44.9(36)</td>
<td>62.2(37)</td>
<td>100 (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Proportion attaining at least some secondary school among those graduating from primary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Son's age</th>
<th>Father's education</th>
<th>Attainment gap (%)</th>
<th>PG2\textsuperscript{a}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 or younger</td>
<td>20.0\textsuperscript{b}(20)</td>
<td>34.0(53)</td>
<td>31.0(29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>60.0(20)</td>
<td>54.8(42)</td>
<td>50.0(42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 or older</td>
<td>62.5(16)</td>
<td>65.3(23)</td>
<td>63.2(19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Proportion graduating from secondary school or above among those reaching at least some secondary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Son's age</th>
<th>Father's education</th>
<th>Attainment gap (%)</th>
<th>PG2\textsuperscript{a}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 or younger</td>
<td>0 (4\textsuperscript{a})</td>
<td>11.1(18)</td>
<td>33.3 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 24</td>
<td>33.3(12)</td>
<td>26.1(23)</td>
<td>61.8(21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 or older</td>
<td>40.0(10)</td>
<td>40.0(15)</td>
<td>50.0(12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}Number of sons reaching some primary school, base N for the percentage in the cell concerned.

\textsuperscript{b}Number of sons graduating from primary school, base N for the percentage in the cell concerned.

\textsuperscript{c}Number of sons reaching some secondary school, base N for the percentage in the cell concerned.

\textsuperscript{d}PG1: Partial Gammas: son's ed. x father's ed./age.

\textsuperscript{e}PG2: Partial Gammas: son's ed. x age/father's ed.
educational levels, as indicated by the probability figures themselves as well as the magnitude and direction (positive) of the partial Gammas (Son's education X age/father's education, listed at the bottom of each section in Table 3). Only among the sons of fathers with primary or no schooling have the probabilities shown some relative improvement over time concerning graduation from primary school given some primary school attendance (partial Gammas of son's education X age are negative). Among high-status sons, such probabilities have slightly declined. The net result is that the primary school graduation attainment gap has quite clearly narrowed over time.

At the level of some secondary school attendance given primary school graduation, the conditional probabilities have declined for all social categories over time, more so for low-status groups (where fathers completed no more than primary school) than for high-status groups (whose fathers had some secondary schooling or more). The percentage of primary school graduates from the top stratum (whose fathers were at least secondary school graduates) who went on to some secondary school decreased from 100 per cent to 80 per cent, while that from the lowest stratum (whose fathers were uneducated) dropped from 63 per cent to 20 per cent. Despite the overall decline in attainment probabilities, therefore, the attainment gap between the top and bottom strata has in fact widened, from 37 per cent to 60 per cent. Even if we use the stratum with some primary-educated fathers as the bottom strata for comparison, the gap still has widened from 35 per cent to 46 per cent. This finding is significant in that it provides new and different information on the chances of reaching secondary school. When we were examining gross attainment rates earlier, we saw that the attainment
gap at this level of education seems to have diminished somewhat over time although there is some fluctuation. Given that the hurdle of primary school graduation is passed, however, it appears that being from a low social stratum is more handicapped than before (attainment gap widening) in reaching some secondary school. This is reflected in the relatively higher partial Gamma (son's education X father's education = .344) for the youngest age cohort than for the two older cohorts at this level of educational attainment.

Finally, as shown in section C of Table 3, it is clear that probabilities of graduating from secondary school given some secondary school attendance have generally decreased over time, although they have improved somewhat for the 20-24 cohort as compared with the oldest cohort whose fathers were primary school graduates or above. Over time, the attainment gap seems to have first widened (from 25 per cent to 39 per cent), and then retreated in the oldest cohort (27 per cent). But the trend is not entirely clear partly because, as indicated before when discussing gross attainment rates, some members in the youngest cohort are too young for secondary school graduation. Furthermore, the conditional attainment rates, like the gross rates, do not vary linearly with social background although the higher rates tend to be found in the high-status groups, which reflects the point made earlier that family background per se may have less systematic effect on higher levels of educational attainment. This may be particularly the case once the individual has already reached secondary school. That this may be so is also reflected in the higher partial Gammas in section A compared with those in sections B and C for each age cohort. We can infer that father's education probably affects the chances of graduation from
primary school (although this itself has weakened over time) more than the chances of attending secondary school once you finished primary school or of completing secondary school once you are there. Other environmental factors may well come into play in determining whether the individual will eventually complete secondary school. Our data are, however, insufficient for such an inquiry.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We have in this report provided some empirical data for examining the patterns of educational mobility and attainment among some residents of the industrial town of Kwun Tong in Hong Kong.

Given that school enrolment rates have been on the increase during this time, one would expect that more children of various social strata, especially those from the lower strata, would have attained a given level of education. Our data show that although practically all children of various social strata have had at least some primary education, the proportions completing primary school and reaching successively higher levels have generally declined over time for all strata.

The selection process of schooling starts early in the primary school years, much to the disadvantage of lower status sons, so that, for instance, as few as 45 per cent of those from the "bottom" stratum (fathers had no schooling) who entered primary school in the nineteen fifties or earlier (25-or-older age group) eventually graduated. It seems, however, that the expansion of primary schooling has improved the chances of primary school graduation for children of deprived families, for the attainment gap between sons of the top and bottom strata at this level of education has clearly dwindled over the years. This may also indicate that primary school graduation has increasingly become a norm.
of basic education that has spread to and accepted by the lower strata of
the society. This trend is significant in that father's education used to
have a considerable influence on the chances of graduation from primary
school, more so than on the chances of going from primary to secondary
school or graduation from secondary school once you are there, which
suggests that in those days (roughly fifteen years ago) completing primary
school was the more important and difficult hurdle to cross for lower
strata children. At present, this level of educational attainment is
without question the very minimum requirement for entry into the job market.

While the influence of father's education on the chances of
graduation from primary school has decreased (but still rather substantial),
we found that the relative chances of the sons of uneducated fathers
having graduated from primary school and reached some secondary school,
compared with the sons of better educated fathers, have diminished over
time. Furthermore, having poorly educated fathers has also been somewhat
a handicap in finishing secondary school once entering it, but here the
differential due to father's education is not monotonic. This suggests
that whether parents will send their children to secondary school when
they graduate from primary school is probably a bigger decision for parents
to make, largely depending on parents' own education and financial ability,
than the decision to carry their children through secondary school once
they are already in. With employment opportunities for child labor
(legal minimum employment age in Hong Kong is 14) easily available in
the industrial town of Kwan Tong, it is not unlikely that parents in
deprived families would rather send their children to work than to
school when they finish primary education.7

7 In the 1971 Census it was reported that an especially high rate of
employment (80 per cent) of out-of-school children aged 10 to 16 was
found in New Kowloon of which Kwan Tong is part.
Interpretation of the trend in differential educational attainment among the various social strata has to be limited since the age groups contained in our data spread over only a short time period. At the same time the pattern of decrease over time in the proportions of sons reaching a given level of education, as shown in the data described in this paper, may not adequately represent the overall educational situation in Hong Kong, but may be partly due to Kwun Tong's being an industrial town offering many job opportunities. It may be that most of the sons in our sample, hence those in Kwun Tong as a whole as well, belong to the lower socio-economic classes of Hong Kong society, in which case it is possible that older children are given a higher priority in receiving education. It may also be that some of the older subjects in our sample went to secondary school before their families moved into Kwun Tong which has relatively few secondary schools. Those children who began their schooling in Kwun Tong would thus be partly handicapped by the lack of secondary school places, and would have to seek such places in other parts of Hong Kong which would incur extra expenses and certain inconveniences to parents. Since our data do not provide controls for such factors as family income, son's birth order, family's length of residence in Kwun Tong, and location of schools attended, these interpretations are merely speculative and have yet to be tested.

Despite the absence of controls on other variables which are not possible in our data, our findings do point to the existence of discrepancies in educational opportunity among the various social strata. In most cases, sons of poorly educated fathers, as compared with those of better educated fathers, are at a disadvantage in reaching any given level of education and in proceeding further given that a particular level is

8 According to the list of community organizations in Kwun Tong compiled in March, 1972 by the Kwun Tong Community Centre of the Government's Social Welfare Department, there were at that time 77 primary and 15 secondary schools in Kwun Tong.
reached. What precisely accounts for the disadvantage is an important research problem which, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

Finally, our findings suggest that any claim of improvement in the educational system cannot be based only or even largely on increases in aggregate school enrolment figures. Even the finding that over half of our subjects in a given age group have had more schooling than their fathers does not really say much about any real improvement in educational attainment relative to peers. It is only when we examine attainment rates at given educational levels among different social groups that we begin to see variations in access to educational opportunities. Such variations would serve as a basis for evaluating the degree to which the goal of educational equality of opportunity is achieved.