



**Comments on Hongbin Li,
“China’s Educational Inequality:
Evidence from College Entrance
Exams and Admissions”**

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China's remarkable growth
in the globalized world



Technological progress



Competent people
generated through
fair and tough competition
in a large population

What are the sources of possible biases?

- How are admissions determined?
 - Are admissions based on only CEE?
 - Are GPAs in high schools taken into account?
 - Are the subjects in CEE equally weighted in any college?
- Each college has a quota in each province set by the Ministry of Education.
 - Are colleges the source of the biases, or the MOE? (particularly in the case of urban-rural bias)
- Can these possible sources of inequality be examined?

What are incentives of the biases?

- Do colleges realize differences in the future progress (including future income and political power) between students depending on their type?
 - For example, the admission bias against women may reflect biases in future income and political power against women.
- Any incentive for the MOE?
- Can these possible incentives be examined?

Does equality based on CEE scores really mean educational equality?

- Questionable if GPAs and other factors are taken into account in admissions.
- US colleges see educational equality differently.

Prominent colleges in the US de-emphasized the SAT entrance exam in admissions.

- 4% Plan of the University of California:
Students at the top ranks of their high school classes are guaranteed admission regardless of SAT scores.
- Inequality if differences in ranks across high schools are taken into account, but...

Lessons from Japan?

- Only 43% of college students in Japan think that “efforts are rewarding in Japan” (Benesse, 2008)
- This may reflect educational inequality in Japan: Even if I study hard, I cannot get in a good school.
- Recently, admissions in many colleges including top private universities are often determined by GPAs, interviews, and essays.
- But, GPAs are not as important as in the US.
➔ What to do to get in good schools is unclear.
- “Educational equality” is important in the sense that rules are clearly known to everyone so that students think efforts are rewarding.