

## MASTER'S THESIS

### Individualization and school-to-work transition: a study of university graduates in Hong Kong

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**Individualization and School-to-work Transition: A Study of University  
Graduates in Hong Kong**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements**

**for the degree of**

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**Hong Kong Baptist University**

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## Abstract

This is a study on how university graduates in Hong Kong construct their school-to-work transition in response to the demands of an uncertain labor market. Based on the experiences of 17 young people who graduated in 2008, this study examines their coping strategies in their school-to-work transition. In light of the similarities between Hong Kong and European youth in dealing with uncertain employment prospects, this study seeks to examine the relevance of Ulrich Beck's individualization thesis to Hong Kong. It is found that young graduates are not only compelled to constantly seek new experiences and credentials to package themselves for job opportunities, but they also bear the risks of being penalized by employers in making inappropriate study and work decisions. In addition, this study also points out that family influence has not disappeared in the search for more satisfying employment. Young people from more economically secure families are still in a better position than their less well-off counterparts. However, it is noticed that the protection offered by the family of origin has decreased. Instead of structuring the life paths of individuals, the role of the family has become a means of risk absorption in cushioning them from setbacks in the labor market.

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