

# Re-Shaping Education for Citizenship



Re-Shaping Education for Citizenship:  
Democratic National Citizenship in Hong Kong

By

Pak-sang Lai and Michael Byram

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P U B L I S H I N G

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# CONTENTS

Chapter One.....	1
Introduction	
Chapter Two .....	11
The Context for the Study of Hong Kong Citizenship Education	
Chapter Three .....	27
Citizenship Education in Post-Colonial Times	
Chapter Four .....	59
A Hong Kong School: Citizenship Education in a Liberal Context	
Chapter Five .....	83
The School's Citizenship Education and the Study of Nationalism	
Chapter Six .....	113
Students' Views	
Chapter Seven.....	123
School and Theories of Nation Building	
Chapter Eight.....	177
Citizenship Education and Governance: A Comparison of Hong Kong and Singapore	
Chapter Nine.....	209
Conclusion	
Appendix .....	219
References .....	225
Author Index.....	247
Subject Index .....	251



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong experienced a change of sovereignty and began re-integration with China as a special administrative region (SAR) in 1997. Citizenship education in Hong Kong is designed to help in the development of local citizenship for democratic self-governance and also to help in China's nation building process by fostering in the young people of Hong Kong a national identity which might resemble a pan-Chinese identity (He and Guo 2000). However, the effect may be to crowd out other variants of national identity including the view of Hong Kong people on nationhood. The "one country two systems" notion of citizenship is an indication of China experimenting with a new kind of citizenship development different from the socialist collectivist citizenship of the Mainland. Hong Kong citizenship education is also an indication of the possible liberal character in future Chinese citizenship building since it embraces both integrative and fissiparous effects in citizenship development at the local level.

Against this background, the purpose of this book is to give an ethnographic account of citizenship education as it is happening in Hong Kong and to study the development of citizenship among young people in the context of a Hong Kong, which is now post-colonial and post-industrial, undergoing changes which are intended to be those of democratisation, re-nationalisation, and globalisation (EC 2000). This will be done first by studying a Hong Kong secondary school's citizenship education curriculum and its implementation, and second, by comparing the discourse of citizenship education with that of China and Singapore. This will reveal tendencies in practices on citizenship expansion in nation-states with centralised governance and their attempts to establish cohesion, stability and development in the flux of global change and the Information Communication Technologies revolution where the world system has increasingly been "penetrated by a variety of transnational

forces” Falk (1994: 131) which may strain the state’s authority and make it feel it is becoming “less and less autonomous”.

We shall show how Hong Kong citizenship education teaches a territorialised citizenship where local citizenship and national citizenship are structured by different political and social beliefs and values. These two components of citizenship are different but do not separate from each other in the nation formation process and Hong Kong citizenship education will be shown to be closely related to political and national development and modernisation in China. Citizenship education in Hong Kong attempts to pursue a dual purpose: developing a democratic citizenship and the national identity locally, and secondly showcasing this experimental territorial democratic self-governing region as a model for the re-unification of China and Taiwan.

### **Citizenship education, citizenship development and nation formation**

The study of citizenship education and citizenship development is significant and challenging in today’s world where a nation-state is understood more as an abstract political community (Anderson 1991; James 1996) and nation formation is conceived as an integrative kind of “social formation” that frames “the practices and subjectivities of contemporary social life from the individual’s sense of identity to the ‘collective’ activity of fighting wars” (James 1996: xv). It is also important where the fissiparous effects of increasing globalisation and heterogeneity in the composition of a nation-state become apparent. For many analysts state school education, and citizenship education specifically, is crucial to citizenship building or nation formation. For others, the effects may be of both kinds and depend on particularities of context, culture, policy, institutions and incidents, etc (Turner 1993; Green 1997; Kennedy 1997; Morris 1997; Kennedy 2004). For example, for Wielemans and Chan (1994), citizenship education is both “part and parcel” of nation- and state-building in many countries known as developmental states where government plays the lead role. In contrast, Green (1997: 10) finds citizenship education more a “vehicle” and “product” of the process of government pursuing specific economic development and he looks for “broader aspects of state-formation which concern the cultivation of social cohesion and national identity”.

Like many countries in the process of political development and transformation, Hong Kong citizenship education changes as a result of



reform and itself provokes changes for reform in citizenship development and nation formation but unlike other countries, Hong Kong citizenship education is not national or nationalised but territorial and territorialised. First, Hong Kong is not a nation-state. It is re-integrating with sovereign China, following the political handover, as the SAR of People's Republic of China (PRC) under the "one country two systems" arrangements, the critical measures of which are mutual non-intervention and reinforcement of commonalities. Second, the citizenship curriculum is based on the Hong Kong context and it does not cover other territories across the Louhu bridge into Shenzhen and China. Third, there has been a citizenship education in place in the Mainland since the establishment of the PRC in 1949. As a consequence the territorialised national identity of Hong Kong is in many ways dissimilar to the national identity advocated in the Mainland and convergence of the two national citizenships seems unlikely, at least in the near future. Instead, citizenship education in Hong Kong pursues the establishment of both the commonalities and differences with Mainland citizenship. The commonalities include for example the ethnic culture and modern achievements at the national level and the differences include Western liberal democracy, individualism, and human rights and freedoms at the local level. However, China's national position and viewpoint sometimes prevails in citizenship formation in Hong Kong insofar as China constitutionally represents Hong Kong on national defence and foreign affairs. China's view on nationality is another example. According to He and Guo's (2000) analysis China practises a pan-Chinese nationalism policy which in a sense is a state-nationalism. It "centers on the Party-state and encourages the development of loyalty to the state through the idea of a 'pan-Chinese' identity" where "a national identity is compatible with all ethnic identities, not only Han, but also non-Han as well" (ibid: 99). In application, it contains two elements, namely "ethnocentric" and "modern". The "ethnocentric" component embraces "all peoples living in the current territories of the PRC" (ibid: 115-116) when it was set up in 1949 and "refuses to accept anyone not born into the community" (ibid: 98). The "modern" component extends membership to "all persons holding the nationality of the People's Republic of China regardless of ethnic, racial, religious, cultural or class differences" (ibid: 36-37). In the case of Hong Kong, the Han Chinese Hong Kong people can obtain both permanent resident status of HKSAR and Chinese citizen status simply because of their Han ethnicity, and China prevents the non-Han non-Chinese people of Hong Kong from obtaining Chinese nationality until and unless naturalisation is approved

(OCTSERI 1992:14—Basic Law, Article 24). There is here a differential treatment between past and present which reveals a complex relationship between citizenship, nationality and ethnicity which the people of Hong Kong know little about, hardly understand and in which they have little say.

In this book, we shall also identify another critical feature of “one country two systems” citizenship which can be described with a multi-layered or multi-leveled notion (Hughes and Stone 1999; Wang 1996) since in addition to the central and local strata in citizenship development, we also find the civic education curriculum draws on the Confucian moral order of self realisation from individual, progressively higher up to the collectivity of family, country and world at large to underpin citizen growth as responsible and participative citizens (CDC 1996: 15). The social web constituted with these two strands has a clear sense of hierarchy, authority and discipline in citizenship building with which as Hughes and Stone (1999) suggest “individuals can determine their identities with reference to local, national and international communities, with there being no necessary conflicts between these” (ibid: 977). Kennedy (2004) supports this Asian kind of multi-leveled or layered alternative view of citizenship by elaborating on Yamazaki (1996) and Fukuyama (1995). He argues that a society or social order of different separate levels built around a deeply engrained moral code can allow more fluidity than Western institutional arrangements like a parliament to mediate local and external values. We shall look at “one country two systems” citizenship as a composite rather than an analytic notion, more a cultural than an institutional construct such that something socially or institutionally incompatible can be negotiated or lived with for the common (national) good by individual citizens through the learning of moral and social self-cultivation.

## **Citizenship education in school**

A study of these constructs of citizenship formation as discussed above in a school context can give us a better understanding of how citizenship locally is shaped and of how and in which sense citizenship development and nation formation are related.

Our study is of a secondary school, and its cultural setting, which is characteristically liberal, democracy-oriented and strong in religious and English education traditions. It is school-based management driven and

this reflects the free and varied characters of individual schools territory-wide on the one hand and on the other hand the *laissez-faire* policy of educational governance and liberalising school reform within the formal centralised educational system. There is plenty of freedom for schools to have individual interpretations of the centralised guidelines of “one country two systems” citizenship and the result is not just different emphasis but conflicting narrations of local citizenship on many dimensions. In this sense, we argue that school education in Hong Kong provides a liberal atmosphere for learning a liberal citizenship or the citizenship of heterogeneity which is more individualist-oriented, democracy-laden and based on the Hong Kong system, rather than a variant of centralised citizenship or citizenship of homogeneity which is more collectivist-oriented, socialism-laden and China-based. Many schools like the school we study teach a liberal democratic national identity which is in many ways different from China’s national identity.

We seek to gain more insights into whether a liberal/ heterogeneous citizenship or central/ homogeneous citizenship is the deliberate aim or is simply a result of the school process related to the degree or form of de-centralisation and liberalisation of centralised educational governance a school undergoes. In order to do so, we compare the Hong Kong school situation with Singapore which also has a highly centralised structure and has some liberalising change initiatives which are being undertaken to reform the centralised education governance. The system and the policy impact on the citizenship development of students, and on the discourse of the citizenship curriculum, is the focus.

Second, we try to study the school intensively to reveal as many as possible of the liberal and democratic features of the school in teaching “one country two systems” citizenship, bearing in mind that the centralised and bureaucratic governance of the Hong Kong school system remains the major government policy and everyday routine practice, although de-centralisation and liberalisation via school-based management reform is under way. We argue that with an English education tradition, a Western democratic and liberal learning culture and atmosphere, and with a Catholic ethics and moral background, students can more easily access the liberal and democratic citizenship of Western individualism. Students can be more exposed to different approaches to learning a modern Western citizenship and a national identity with which they are helped to exercise their independent judgment in participating actively in society and developing their sense of commitment towards Hong Kong and China.

School will be seen participating in both the role of socialising agent

transmitting the government's position on citizenship –the responsible and participative local citizen and the patriotic Chinese national citizen– and also the role of socialising agency, as a public local site where different groups of people, specifically school stakeholders of school organisers, teachers, parents, students, alumni and government can participate freely and equally in the discourse of citizenship. From the study, there emerges a pattern of interactive and consensus negotiated practices for a public (national) culture (Smith 1995) of a “one country two systems” citizenship in citizenship building and nation formation. It is indeed a political and democratic learning process which shows that a rational and critical discourse is and should be used to develop a citizenship that can be accepted by all the different groups of people in the community. Hong Kong people should learn to reinforce commonly shared views while learning at the same time to tolerate or even embrace the difference of views and position of other people especially on democracy and patriotic national identity.

“One country two systems” citizenship will be an empty construct if it cannot be contextualised and adapted to people with an agreed set of commonly shared values and beliefs in Hong Kong society especially on democracy and national identity. Citizenship education through school is one important location where negotiated consensus on agreeing to agree and to disagree on citizenship development can be reached through rational and critical discourse as advocated in the citizenship curriculum.

## **Structure of the book**

After stating the purpose of the book in this first chapter, Chapter Two briefly sets the scene for our school case-study by first giving a backdrop of school civic education in relation to the citizenship development of Hong Kong before and after 1997. Notably, the issues of democracy and national identity in citizenship education are the focus. The two issues are controversial in local citizenship education. At issue is that China is basically a socialist collectivist authoritarian state which is nonetheless modernising to keep up with the modern Western world while Hong Kong is to extend and develop its citizenship through transforming the present capitalist social system and way of life and embracing an identity with the sovereign China. There are both integrative and fissiparous effects in citizenship education in the liberal and plural Hong Kong society as revealed for example by the polarisation of extreme views on democracy

and patriotism. To enable the dynamism of the “one country two systems” citizenship to be more communicative and accommodating requires a new mindset and wisdom. While the “one country two systems” citizenship as citizenship innovation is territorially confined, we shall in the course of later chapters try to explain how local civic education is not only a citizenship project for people of Hong Kong pursuing democracy and national identity but can also be perceived as part of China’s modernising programme for political development and for national re-integration and re-unification.

Before analysing citizenship education in the case-study school, in Chapter Three, we examine various conceptions and theories about citizenship in the context of experience of citizenship development in other cities and countries like Australia, the U.S.A., Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and this offers insight in apprehending the Hong Kong situation. First, various notions of citizenship and approaches to citizenship study are applied to analyse the problematic of Hong Kong citizenship education in relation to political changes. For example, we find the concept of a developmental state is helpful to characterise Hong Kong’s political landscape and its citizenship education. We come to a view that the role of school in political socialisation can be that of both socialising agent and agency, the latter referring to school as a local site where different views on citizenship compete for primacy. The discourse on the role of school in citizenship development allows us to understand how citizenship education in its democratic form of delivery helps shape the “one country two systems” citizenship in students. This comparative approach also highlights the contextual and cultural sources of local citizenship growth in students, for example, whether there is a liberal learning milieu for liberal citizenship learning and if so what the effects are. Finally, after studying various citizenship models we propose a concept of multi-leveled or multi-layered citizenship as a means of examining the “one country two systems” citizenship where uniformity or heterogeneity of values occurs at different levels. Models of citizenship of homogeneity like in China or the citizenship of multiculturalism in the U.S.A. for example may not show accurately enough the unique citizenship characteristics of Hong Kong as the SAR of China.

After this examination of discourse on Hong Kong’s citizenship development and citizenship education, we begin from Chapter Four to Chapter Six to focus on the school case-study as an instance of citizenship development in Hong Kong. In Chapter Four, we first look at the school and learning context where the centralised civic education guidelines of

HKSAR are put into practice by teachers who are involved in developing the school-based curriculum. The school's citizenship learning is then seen more as a process of re-construction of citizenship guidelines with the school's own characteristics. The institutional, traditional and cultural sources of school influences on citizenship learning are identified and the impacts on student learning of democratic and national citizenship are studied. In order to compare and contrast the educational practice of citizenship learning in China, we use a detailed comparison of schools' responsibilities in the two territories. The field investigation has shown that the long-established school tradition and practices, current school vision and culture and organised learning of various participant groups in school, all contribute to shaping a specific form of citizenship for students to learn. In our case-study school, this means liberal citizenship learning in a liberal and democratic school context. Other individual schools may have different characters and contexts, for we can imagine that the learning process for students in different schools will have much in common but also many differences. Citizenship education is likely to be diverse because of the ways in which the organisation of school curricula is in practice liberal, heterogeneous and varied.

Chapters Five and Six continue the case-study by shifting the focus to the curriculum itself. Through documentary research, school visits, class observations and interviews with students, we explore and explain how students learn from their own viewpoints the different facets and levels of a "one country two systems" approach being developed in their school. Chapter Five shows us that the national identity students have learnt is territorialised in the sense that it is a composite identity of nationalism and democracy, with a two-tier loyalty towards Hong Kong and China, a democratic Hong Kong and de-politicised ethno-China. The emphasis of Chapter Six is on reporting the discussion of students on how well they know, understand and feel about school's citizenship education after they have had the learning experience. It touches for example on how and how well school addresses inherent difficulties of the "one country two systems" citizenship notion like democratic individualism versus collectivist tradition of harmony; local democratic identity versus national patriotic identity; and pan-Chinese nationalism versus the separatism of various sorts in national unification and re-unification of China, for example the emergence of a de-sinicising consciousness in Taiwan. It also reveals some inhibiting and facilitating factors of the school citizenship programme for student learning, for example the balanced approach of teaching opposite views and the sensitive political neutrality role of

teachers. Different from what is the case in Mainland China, students hint that the school's national programme turns out to be citizenship education for divergence rather than for convergence as initially planned.

Having studied the school's learning context and delivery of the curriculum, in Chapter Seven, we interpret the findings on nation formation and citizenship development in the school with the aid of theories of nationalism, specifically Anderson's theory of imagined community, with modifications, and Smith's plural model of public (national) culture. First, we see that the making of national identity in school is more an interactive process of consensus and of cultural decision among various participants like government, school organisers, teachers, parents, students and past students, media and outside bodies rather than a national imprinting. Second, while the school enlarges the commonality of the ethno-cultural base for national identification, it at the same time widens the political differences between Hong Kong and China through its deliberate neglect and avoidance of teaching Mainland politics and its focus on local politics. Third, the locally created national citizenship has embraced characteristics of an indigenous, liberal, democratic, rational and critical kind.

An understanding of the school's citizenship education will not be complete without an evaluation of the influence of government on the school's delivery and shaping of citizenship given the fact that the HKSAR government is an executive-led government and the governance is constitutionally centralised. In Chapter Eight the centralised governance role of Hong Kong government over citizenship development and school civic education is dealt with by examining the developmental state thesis where government as dominant player commits heavily to re-making an active and participatory citizenship as well as a patriotic national identity for national developmental goals through public education and schools. To give a contrast, we examine the impact of centralised governance in comparison with Singapore which, like Hong Kong, is reforming by liberalising its school-based citizenship education in order to secure a responsible and participative citizenry with a patriotic national identity. When de-centralisation of central authorities and the enrichment of teacher professionalism and autonomy are in vogue, Hong Kong tends to take a more a liberalised and democratic approach whereas Singapore keeps a tight grip on its centralised state management over many aspects and levels of citizenship learning, for example in policy, curriculum guides, subject studies, teaching hours, teaching strategies and learning experience, textbooks, timetable and assessment. We shall see that the Hong Kong

model is more contributive to the building of an active citizenship of Western individualism while neither of the two liberalising models is effective in building patriotic national identity.

Chapter Nine is the concluding chapter which identifies several emergent trends of citizenship development and citizenship learning from studying the case school's civic education. It is clear that "one country two systems" citizenship is a citizenship of democracy and its national identity is more a constructivist process of negotiated consensus and cultural decisions being institutionalized primarily through school education. It is more a multi-leveled citizenship than the overarching pan-Chinese national citizenship of China. Active citizenship development in HKSAR as revealed in this book has developed a liberal variant of national citizenship of Western democratic individualism intertwined with de-contextualised ethno-cultural Chinese nationalism.



## CHAPTER TWO

# THE CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY OF HONG KONG CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

### **Setting the scene: the context and the issues**

Politically, re-unification with China and democratisation have changed the ways Hong Kong people think and live.

(EC 2000:3)

In 1997, Hong Kong came to an end as a British colony and re-integrated with China as a special administrative region (SAR). System change reforms soon took place in the society. For example, in education, a new Education Blueprint (EC 2000) was drawn up in 2000 after two and half years of territory-wide public deliberation. It aims not just at re-orientation of the education system (Bray 2000) but at developing a new education system and new citizenship which would be pluralistic, democratic, civilised, tolerant, dynamic, and with an international outlook (EC 2000). This new citizenship education is also a national education:

Our relationship with the Mainland is closer than ever before. We should therefore enhance our understanding of our country, our culture, and strengthen our sense of belonging and commitment to our country (EC 2000: 28)

The local national education so constructed is however different from that in the Mainland which is basically patriotic, and the purpose of this book is to analyse the processes which are taking place in Hong Kong by considering in detail a case study and its relationship with the context as a whole. Local citizenship education in Hong Kong needs to be studied in itself and as part of the China's national modernisation programme. This is important in itself since China and with it Hong Kong is already an

important factor in an internationalised world of instant communications and changing identities, and will clearly continue to be so. It is also important as part of our understanding of the nature of modern citizenship and of states which, despite frequent suggestions from historians and others about the end of the nation-state, nonetheless seem to follow the pattern established in the nineteenth century.

The changes in China and Hong Kong are thus part of a wider process but Hong Kong also has its uniqueness. First, unlike many ex-colonies in Asia, it did not become an independent state but re-integrated with sovereign China, and nonetheless, decolonisation processes are evident in the transition from colonialism and beyond (Bray 2000). The ethnic group of Han Chinese which constitutes the largest group in China as a whole also forms the absolute majority of the population of Hong Kong, and soon after 1997, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government added a national component to the Hong Kong school curriculum for the first time in its 150 years. "National Identity and Chinese Culture" is an obligatory theme throughout the whole 12 year basic education curriculum (CDC 2001). In this sense, citizenship education in Hong Kong is a part of education for national re-integration and functions as part vehicle of nation-building, ethnically and culturally. It puts great emphasis on Han Chinese culture and history whilst simultaneously teaching western democratic political ideas.

This is the second important characteristic of the situation. For, politically, China is one of a handful of communist countries in Asia and yet is modernising itself intensively and extensively by learning from the Western democratic world. Hong Kong being the most internationalised and freest society in China is then the most appropriate place to serve as the practice ground for trying out Western contemporary political democratic ideas. With the promulgation of the Basic Law, rudimentary in its outlook though it is, Hong Kong became the first city in China where a capitalist, democratic political system, modeled basically on British colonial representative government, is practised under a communist government which is said to be anti-capitalist and authoritarian by nature.

In education, the official education system reform documents published in 1996, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 reiterated the declaration that national education and democratic education would form an integral part of the new citizenship education in HKSAR. The message is explicit enough that the Chinese central government may have already changed its long established opposition to Western liberal democracy. In deed if not in word, Hong Kong is the experimental ground for Western liberal

democracy in Communist China. Macao followed suit later, after the Portuguese withdrew in 1999, and became the second special administrative region of China which also incorporates democratic self-government and builds its local education system under another Basic Law. The change is drastic and dramatic. It is symbolic yet practical and pragmatic, too. For example, it surprises many people that China allows Hong Kong people to keep their capitalist system and way of life for 50 years (OCTSERI 1992:6—Basic Law: Article 5) and that this includes, among other things, letting the Catholic Church associations continue to provide educational services, and run schools locally (OCTSERI 1992:47 and 48—Basic Law: Article 137 and 141). It means that local Catholic schools which constitute some 19% of the total secondary schools in Hong Kong (CHSCO 2009) can help teach the new democratic and national education for Communist China even though China and the Vatican have not yet established a formal and official relationship, the Vatican declining to relinquish its diplomatic tie with Taiwan.

Looking back at the antecedents of these events, the first important system change in China was the economic reform which occurred in 1979, immediately after the return of Deng to power and China began to open up to the Western liberal world and thereafter to experiment with market capitalism in its economy. The “one country two systems” self-government policy for HKSAR can be viewed as an important continuation of the system change of China turning to the Western liberal world after decades of lopsidedly leaning to the former Soviet Union after the Communists took power in 1949. This time, it is politics—and political administration—not economics: the modernising experiment is territorially delimited and Hong Kong and Macao were expediently picked as newly created special administrative regions.

In this new situation, the HKSAR government seems to be setting out to cultivate a new nationhood in its people that can be compared and contrasted with the processes in other Asian countries with past experiences of de-colonisation, and present experiences of globalisation. The wish is clearly reflected in HKSAR aims of education for 21<sup>st</sup> century: future citizens of HKSAR will be “willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of their society and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large” (EC 2000:4).

This has several implications. A liberalised nationhood constructed through HKSAR citizenship education may help bring more closely together the people of the Western world and Communist China. Li, a

mainland Chinese educator and expert in Hong Kong colonial education takes the view that Hong Kong after re-integration should help reform Chinese education by depicting the pros and cons of education in China and the Western world (Li 1992: 256). Communist ideological difference is no longer an impasse and the people of HKSAR can opt to learn and study Western democratic ideas and theories, as Western experts have long studied communist ideology. The kind of citizens of Communist China advocated in HKSAR will be more open to new political thoughts and beliefs alongside existing ones. In the local school curriculum (e.g. Secondary Curriculum Guidelines—Civic Education, F.1 - F.3 (CDC 1998)) it is foreseen that Chinese state government shall be taught alongside democracy. It refers briefly to the Chinese Communist Party and communism but not to teaching the exportation of communist revolution and communism to other countries; it begins instead to import many Western liberal ideas, cultures, institutions and languages.

Furthermore, a future Chinese citizen as conceived in HKSAR will be shaped as a Chinese patriot with an international perspective. In the Education Blueprint for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (EC: 2000), it is made clear that “Hong Kong’s long term objective is not only to become one of the outstanding cities in China but also a democratic and civilised international city embracing the cultural essence of the East and the West” (ibid: 28). Whilst learning the core facts of Chinese history, culture and geography (CDC 2001:23-24 and 46), HKSAR students will also be taught universal values like plurality, democracy, freedom and liberty, due process of law, rationality, equal opportunity, human rights (CDC 1996:14-15). Equally significantly, they should be bilingual Hong Kong citizens (i.e. proficient in both Chinese and English), and Chinese and English are two of four core subjects (the other two core subjects being Mathematics and Liberal Studies) in the new school curriculum and are prerequisites for entry into local universities.

On the other hand, HKSAR can hardly look to the Mainland or other Asian countries for models of democracy, since China is an authoritarian socialist state and democratic centralism will not be an option in the foreseeable future. Many of its Asian neighbours like Thailand and the Philippines have only unstable democracy where political problems are often resolved by mass movements of People Power and moral force which in turn cause major hazards to the society and economy. Through democratic education in its national citizenship education HKSAR has to find its own way to develop a healthy democracy that emphasises rational and critical discourse and open, fair, just and clean elections.

This new Hong Kong nationhood is however not taught; it is learned and constructed in school. It is not taught in class as an independent subject. Instead, students learn it through participating in everyday school life. This means that a study of the changes as they are implemented rather than the analysis of plans for change in citizenship education is the best way to know exactly what is happening. Furthermore, a comparative study can help tease out significant factors in a school which as a research site is complex, interactive, dynamic, developmental, and constructive. For example, in many Asian countries, the main theme of citizenship education is to take liberal democracy and its institutions more as “one set of options”, but less as “a universalizing set of conditions” (Kennedy and Fairbrother 2004: 294). HKSAR has similar practice and characteristics. Lee (2004a) analysing the Western concept in an Asian context, comments that it is a natural development to see the post-97 Hong Kong citizenship education curriculum changing to emphasise morality rather than politics or civics. The new Curriculum Development Reform Guidelines (CDC 2001) and new Basic Education Curriculum Guide (CDC 2002) put more emphasis on individual morality and national identity than political literacy, the latter of which occupied the largest part of the content in the Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools in 1985. On another point, Lee (2004 b) argues that national citizenship education in Asia is more a process of the “indigenisation of foreign ideas” (ibid: 278) which is to integrate Western liberal political concepts and institutions into specific Asian values and contexts. Kennedy and Fairbrother (2004) seem to agree with Lee by commenting that indigenous factors play a vital role and that most modernising national education reforms in Asian countries reflect deep cultural roots, local values, national identity, and social context that could not be eliminated by colonialism and globalisation. HKSAR faces a similar situation but it remains to be seen whether it will follow the same steps as its Asian neighbours.

In sum, the case of Hong Kong should not only be studied in itself but should also be seen as part of China’s national modernisation programme which first focused on economic system change and is now broadening to embrace political system change, though this is confined mainly to Hong Kong (and subsequently Macao) society, education and people. China’s liberalised economic reform was first trialed in several small, economically un-important southern coastal cities like Shenzhen and Zhuhai. Now, it is evident that the lessons of the market economy experience in these economic special zones have changed the whole economic landscape of China in ways without parallel. The same might happen with education

and citizenship education in particular. It is after all national policy, as the Communist Chinese government often repeats, that HKSAR's "one country two systems" model could also apply to re-unify with Taiwan, which recently has transformed to a two-party political democracy from an authoritarian constitutionalism. It seems that Western concepts with Chinese characteristics, as construed in Deng's reform, reflect China's pragmatism and flexibility towards change in its national modernisation programmes (Lee 1992). Should we here make a bold guess that China itself will eventually change to adopt the capitalist democratic political system once success is proven in Hong Kong and Macao or in Taiwan after re-unification?

### **Citizenship education in implementation**

At the policy level, from the time when the Joint Declaration on the question of Hong Kong was signed between the Chinese and British governments in 1984 to the handover in 1997 and through to the present, HKSAR has implemented several curriculum reforms in citizenship education as revealed by the three official guidelines on "civic education" in 1985 and 1996 (CDC 1985 and 1996), and the Curriculum Development Reform Guidelines in 2001 (CDC 2001).

The first school civic education guidelines in 1985, which advocated political democracy and active participation (CDC 1985) for Hong Kong people, failed to adequately anticipate post-handover changes because they did not deal satisfactorily with issues of Chinese national identity (Lee and Sweeting 2001). Responding to political changes closer to the handover, a new set of Civic Education Guidelines for Schools was issued in late 1996 which had a richer conception of citizenship constituted within a total framework embracing the individual, the communal, the national and the international (CDC 1996). It suggested a rationalistic nationalism where to be a modern citizen in a global world, one should be politically active and participative and show commitment to both one's national and the international community and engage in reasoning and critical thinking on public affairs (CDC 1996; Leung and Print 1998). This subsequently attracted much attention from school teachers, especially civic education teachers (Leung and Print 2002).

The year 2000 saw the grand education reform in the HKSAR. Two papers, one on policy, the 2000 Education Blueprint (EC 2000) and another on implementation, the 2001 Curriculum Development Reform

Guidelines (CDC 2001) were drawn up and the new civic education can be seen to be building a new concept of citizenship where the emphasis was on the learning of national identity, and civic duties and commitments towards the country. This moderate and subtle change of emphasis on individual morality and communal obligations and services attracted little open and public disagreement when the Guidelines were issued, and Lee (2004a) explains this phenomenon by reference to a Confucian principle of self cultivation where political learning is the development of individuality rather than civic activism. Arcodia (2000) too finds that Asian countries tend to introduce Confucian principles into citizenship formation and that they often put a moral code first in both personal and organisational dealings. Accordingly, “the citizenship education agenda can be rather politicised in terms of serving the state (as expressed in patriotism)”, but “the focus often reverts to the quality of self, which is sometimes expressed in terms of moral quality” (Lee 2004b: 287).

As far as implementation was concerned, the HKSAR government wanted schools to initiate their own patriotic programmes based on the government’s nationalistic inspirations despite the fact that no new civic education guidelines were issued to dovetail the nationalistic aims into curriculum actions. The former colonial government in contrast, had detailed the action needed for a political democracy in schools in the 1985 Civic Education Guidelines (CDC 1985). In a post-handover study, civic educators were found to consent to the addition of nationalistic components to the existing civic education but were inclined towards an eclectic approach for nationalistic education (Leung and Print 2002). They wanted to have a “liberal, open, rational, and inclusive nationalistic education”, which would be compatible with “education for democracy, human rights education and global education” (Leung and Print 2002: 207). Though C H Tung, the first Chief Executive of the HKSAR, echoed the scholars and educators’ re-definition of the Hong Kong citizen, the emphasis was nonetheless different. The China component was given special attention and the patriotic subjective elements were all said to be important. Representing the official view on the aims of civic education, Tung wished to see in youngsters:

- a sense of responsibility towards the family, the community, *the country* and the world;
- a *passion for China* and Hong Kong, and a global outlook (ibid 1997: 3 - emphasis added)

Tung and his top leadership had these convictions clearly, explicitly and repeatedly spelt out on various formal and official occasions in the early years of the change of sovereignty.

In short, there was no doubt that nationalistic and patriotic education would be the main focus of future civic education in schools in Hong Kong after 1997, but democracy, which was the main topic in the 1985's Guidelines, was now of secondary importance in the new discourse of civic education for nationalistic, patriotic learning. Democracy was eliminated from the arena of nationalistic and patriotic education and the word "democracy" did not even appear in the subsequent Curriculum Development Reform Guidelines which instead put heavy emphasis on educating students for national and civic duties and responsibilities (CDC 2001).

### **Challenges to schools**

This will be the new challenge for schools: to take up education for the "new" citizenship to which the HKSAR has added the new national dimension but given little specific detail on how the aims can be realised at school level. The new concept will remain wishful thinking if consensus cannot be reached at the level of implementation because schools may get lost with things of which they have little previous experience. Instead of further clarifying the action to be taken, the government is giving a free hand for schools to do anything they like as long as they are not doing things anti-governmental, un-patriotic or anti-nationalistic. The government merely wishes schools to prioritise patriotic programmes over other civic education activities and projects, and to submit their plans of action. Yet the political contexts of the new HKSAR under the "one country two systems" arrangements are too dynamic, complex, and conflicting for schools to grasp them properly and appropriately without appropriate central guidance. For politics presents many pitfalls for schools doing civic education about China from their own perspective. In the transitional years prior to the 1997 handover, for instance, the Chinese government promised democracy for the people of Hong Kong in the Basic Law and people who promoted democracy locally were acceptable and legal but people who advocated democracy movements across the border on the Mainland were regarded as involved in a subversive act by the Beijing central government (Leung 1992). Schools were found trying to avoid politically sensitive issues like democracy and national identity in their



teaching curriculum and textbooks (Lee 1999a) and were hesitant to take initiatives to launch innovative civic education programme for students. This situation continued to prevail in the early post-handover years.

Having said this does not mean schools did not have their views on political education. On the contrary, there was a “rich diversity” of views specifically on democracy and national identity and the views were “not only diverse but in many cases polarised” (Lee 1999a: 339). Basically, school and education sectors agreed in principle with the HKSAR government’s one China doctrine and political goals for national unity and re-unification achieved through democracy and self-administration, which are stipulated in the Basic Law (OCTSERI 1992), rather than the dictatorship of the Chinese Communist Party on the Mainland. They understood that citizenship has multiple facets, which correspond to the notion of multi-dimensional citizenship (Cogan and Derricott 1998; Lee, W.O. 2001) which permeated into the 1996 Guidelines (CDC 1996). Despite such shared broad political and nationalistic principles, the government and schools were not all agreed on one value framework, emphasis and approach, policy and strategy, or programme of action and development in the school civic curriculum. In reality, there were views more divided than unified on the nature and status of civic education programmes, and on the curriculum contents, teaching strategies and programme evaluations (Lee 1999a; Lee and Sweeting 2001; Tse 1999). The centralised patriotic programme of civic education practised on the Mainland would not be imitated and the HKSAR government followed closely the previous practice of *laissez faire* in implementing civic education. This meant that, despite views different from those of the government, schools were required to initiate their own programmes to fit to their school specific situations on the one hand and on the other hand to take into account the latest political developments of local community and China at large. At the very least, schools were asked to re-examine the existing civic education programmes inherited from British colonialism, which restrains both ethno-cultural and national identification and political democracy (Morris and Morris 2001; Bray, 2000; Lee 1999a; Tse 1999).

### **The way forward**

Today, the HKSAR has existed for more than ten years and whether or not the “Hong Kong experiment” of “one country two systems” proves to be a smooth and successful one, the teaching of civic education has a very

important role to play in political socialisation where students are taught a set of political values in schools identical with those being endorsed within the community and the nation at large. The HKSAR government tries not to dictate any civic education action to schools but instead expects schools to work together following the official line. In a pluralist society, there need not be a prescribed set of monolithic values but interactive sets of values of divergence and heterogeneity. There need not be a set of *a priori* universalised values but rather negotiated values of shared consensus. Nationalism and democracy will be a product of negotiation and interaction, taking all stakeholders into account.

### **The purpose of the study**

It is against this background that post-handover civic education in a Hong Kong school will be examined in this book whose purpose is to investigate what really happens in practice when civic education is pursued in circumstances of fluidity and flexibility within a nonetheless clearly defined framework of intentions.

Our first observation is however that, basically, the teaching mode of civic education in schools does not differ much from the past. The conventional practice that civic education is conducted through the whole school approach, permeating into every possible learning activity with a loosely structured curriculum is inherited, and differs from other learning of independent subjects with a specified syllabus produced by the curriculum authorities. Furthermore, as in the past, each school prepares its own civic education programme. A second look reveals differences nonetheless. Since the civic education guidelines of 1985 aimed genuinely at a democratically representative government without making big changes to the existing value system of the society, schools knew clearly what and how to integrate the democratic elements into the schools' long-established curriculum structure and schedule. Essentially, they added it on top of the existing civic programme or spared a few class time slots to accommodate it. But the 1996 guidelines were the new formula of education for citizenship, which contains the broad, loose framework but does not provide details for implementation. This concept of citizenship with a nationalistic platform affects much of the existing fundamental social values deeply embedded in past colonialism, which means a total change or re-drafting of the existing social curriculum. A new nationalistic dimension is mentioned but what, where and how to integrate it with the

current school curriculum without conflict is not made clear. This flaw is repeated in Tung's statements and other official reports pertinent to civic education, which remind schools about building a national identity among students but equally lack implementation details. The situation becomes more difficult and complex for schools than in the past because the parties involved in the civic education experience a clash in their positions, interests and viewpoints. Whether or not schools share the same China perspective with each other or with the government matters less than whether every school has its own education for citizenship with a China perspective ready for implementation.

In this book therefore, our intention is to examine what new national citizenship students learn in such a loosely defined, vibrant and divergent context, and how they learn. We shall examine how the context is formed and presented to students from which they nurture a socially constituted national citizenship. Will the citizenship so constructed in school be like the one suggested by the government in various educational papers? Which role do students have to play in constituting an identity with local, national and global dimensions, particularly at a time when Hong Kong is undergoing fundamental and total values transformation where increasing uncertainty, indecisiveness, heterogeneity, diversity and dividedness is the norm?

We shall also study the effectiveness of the school's civic education programme from the students' point of view, examining the supportive or inhibitive factors of schooling in implementing the civic education programme. In what ways does the school manage the balance of divergent forces in the making of citizenship of different scopes and levels? For example, how far is the discourse on democracy an integrative or disintegrative factor in the unification of China?

This is then in essence a case study examining how civic education is conducted in a specific school. Methodologically, it is a single-case investigating natural settings through the eyes of the researcher (Donmoyer 2000; Stake 2000; Hammersley and Gomm 2000; Hitchcock and Hughes 1995).

Specifically, the following questions will be addressed:

- What do students learn about Hong Kong citizenship?
- How many dimensions of the notion of citizenship are taught?
- What do students learn about a national identification with China?
- In which ways is the notion of China explained to students?

- In which ways and to what extent does the civic education programme affect students' learning of citizenship (e.g. printed materials; teaching methods of teachers; school ethos)?
- What exactly is the school's civic education programme with particular reference to teaching of national identity and democracy (e.g. formal curriculum plan and action)?
- How is the civic education programme implemented in school (e.g. formal and informal curriculum activities)?
- Is the citizenship taught in the school's civic education programme comparable to the one the government wishes to constitute (e.g. raising national flag and singing national anthem; direct election to chief executive and legislature)?
- Are nationalistic education and democracy education taught together or separately?

The research will focus primarily on three aspects of education for citizenship in Hong Kong. First, what was exactly the school's civic education programme in the early post-1997 years? Did it adequately build in a local identity with a national as well as global dimension? Second, what do the students learn in a school civic education programme, which now comprises new national components? Third, in what way does the theory of nationalism explain the students' learning of citizenship in the school context? How does it address the tension of democracy with national unification in the "one country two systems" context of HKSAR?

Despite its uniqueness and specificity, the school under study does have many things in common with other local schools in organising its civic education programme in the shared "one country two systems" context. It will be argued in later chapters that the results of our analysis of how and how well students learn a national and democratic citizenship could provide insights for other schools into how to devise and run similar programmes. The inspiration drawn from the school's civic ideas and approaches that are different from those suggested by the education authorities is particularly useful. Furthermore, the case-study will, it is hoped, add new knowledge and perspectives on school civic education since previous research studies were largely focused on large-scale quantitative surveys lacking contextual details on how exactly students learn in a civic education programme (e.g. Morris and Cogan 2001). School research of this kind on the one hand can fill this knowledge gap and on the other hand is more appropriate and timely in the milieu where Hong Kong is experimenting with "one country two systems", full of

complexities, uncertainties and contradictions. The significance of the study thus not only lies in the pattern of behaviours of the individual school but also how it serves as a representative of other schools in similar situations and bearing similar characteristics. More important, it demonstrates how a school civic education programme helps students of different social backgrounds and cultures integrate peacefully within a boldly imagined and constructed national community.

In many studies of nationalism, a macro approach is often adopted with a nation-state as the unit of study and education and school are seen as part of the state system. In this study, the school is the focus of study of how the making of an imagined national community (Anderson 1991) evolves through a civic education programme. It is hoped that such a study will help to give another dimension to current scholarly works. In other terms, a case study using qualitative data will focus on policy at its implementation level. Change or refinements of macro or national policy will be tailored for local needs and situations. Furthermore, contextual study of the local will provide a concrete and material base for further policy formulation.

Since the study is the study of a real case and the choice of the case school was a matter of convenience and opportunity, there are some inherent constraints that deserve attention. The school is a dioceses school and is directly supervised by the local Catholic Church. This status and its relationship with the Church have made civic education at the school subtle and sensitive. First of all, at the macro level, the political relationship between China and the Vatican is tense and sensitive. As mentioned earlier, the two states have not yet established any formal and official diplomatic relationship because the latter recognises Taiwan instead of China and does not agree with the one China doctrine in dealing with China. However, the Church influence inherited from British colonialism is strong in Hong Kong schools. According to the Basic Law and the “one country two systems” policy, these Church affiliated schools will continue to operate intact with their initial visions and missions for 50 years from 1997 onwards.

Secondly, the tension between the HKSAR government and the local Church became more intense after the people’s rally on First of July 2003 and the open critique of the outspoken Hong Kong Bishop against the HKSAR government with respect to the hasty legislation of the local national security act. The Bishop wished a democracy be locally secured first before enacting the legislation, which, to many people of Hong Kong, limits individual freedoms on the one hand and on the other hand extends

government powers without sufficient corresponding power check.

With these subtleties, complexities and uncertainties, schools under the directorship of the Catholic Church in Hong Kong may feel embarrassed about implementing civic education for the HKSAR government and some schools might become more cautious and prudent towards outsiders inquiring about political education of any sort. This institutional constraint is also felt in the case-study school, but, since the task of selecting the case is the development of theory rather than testing assumptions about common features and differences between specific schools, the focus in the study as pointed out by Flick (2002) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) is on the concrete content and relevance of the case instead of its representativeness. Real and rich findings from the case with respect to students' learning of citizenship, which help produce the maximal "variational range of possible comparison" (Flick 2002: 63), are of more importance. As the field researcher is himself Catholic, he has a dual role through which he was able to secure trust from the school but this demanded high proficiency in interpersonal skills, shifting between the status of outsider and insider in building and maintaining good rapport with the school authority and informants. He would always be fully aware of his behaviour, frequently entering and exiting the role as a researcher and as member of the Catholic community in the fieldwork.

As may happen during fieldwork, an unforeseen event of significance for the study took place. As already alluded to, half a million middle class people took to the street to protest against Tung's leadership and his administration on First of July 2003. Many demanded direct election to the local leadership as soon as possible. The mass rally is said to have changed the political landscape of Hong Kong from a governance of strong leadership to a more responsive government. This dramatic political event inevitably engendered profound effects on young students. In his study of the politics of Hong Kong students, Leung S. W. (1997) found that great political events will have an immense impact on students' political learning in school and this happened here too. For instance, immediately after the people's rally, a political group of the Secondary School Students Union was set up to organise a youth force to take part in Hong Kong politics (The Hong Kong Economic Times, 22.08.2003, p.A35). The First of July event still has repercussions. Overreaction of student informants over political developments may have biased response to interview questions about political citizenship, as is understandable.

Besides these institutional forces for change, there are other limitations with respect to student informants. The study is focused mainly on senior