

CIVIL EDUCATION IN HONG KONG

National Identity of Hong Kong Chinese Students

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Hong Kong people have long been dubbed as apolitical, atomistic and materialistic (King 1977; Lau 1981). Those insisting on such rhetoric tend to attribute such characteristics to the depoliticised colonial education and its legacy. It seems plausible in the light of both Chinese and colonial governments' stances in forging Hong Kong people's identity before the 1980s. They were portrayed as 'subjects', 'compatriots' and 'residents' and their unique and capitalistic way of living was but expediently recognised (Morris et al. 2000).

Following the return of Hong Kong from Britain to the People's Republic of China (China or PRC) in 1997, education associated with national identity was no longer a taboo, at least in the Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government's tone when promoting their brand-new education policy emphasising national education. The 1999 Consultation Paper published by the Education Commission apparently dictates the central role of education is to promote 'a sense of national identity and in so doing it identifies the areas in which Hong Kong is viewed as "unique" (Morris et al. 2000: 258)'.

"National identity" discussed here refers to identification with the Chinese nation, which is directly linked to the state of the PRC (Ingold 1994); 'Chinese' here refers to anybody or anything in association with the 56 ethnic groups as classified by the PRC Government. The aim of this project is to correlate national identity and post-1997 education among Hong Kong's Chinese secondary school students. Such interplay will be contextualised with regards to other parameters, which may shape this dependent variable of national identity. There seem to be inadequate studies on the influence of post-1997 education on mainstream secondary students' national identity over the past twelve years. The three objectives of the project will thus be to fill this gap:

1. To chronologically analyse Hong Kong's civic education policies since 1985 from an anthropological perspective.
2. To conduct participant-observation and interviews with Hong Kong secondary school teachers. Such investigation would reveal how schools of various ideological backgrounds select, transmit and realise civic educational knowledge through school subjects and activities (Tsang 1998). Teachers' agency in civic education can also be contextualised with respect to the one they received in their schooling.
3. To conduct participant observation and interview with Chinese secondary students in Hong Kong, which can gauge the significance of the policies and education process over

students' national identity relative to other parameters, such as, peers, family and the media.

Methodology

Research methods of this project are formulated with an end of fulfilling the three research objectives. The first objective is to chronologically analyse Hong Kong's civic education policies since 1985 from an anthropological perspective. I will review past discussions on the government's civic education policies since 1985 while referring to first-hand policy papers. In the light of the policies, I will critically analyse the politics behind the scenes of civic education. The analysis will serve as a wider socio-political context for subsequent discussions regarding the other two objectives.

The second objective is to investigate how schools of various religious and political backgrounds in Hong Kong select, transmit, and realise civic educational knowledge through school subjects and activities. Teachers' agency in the education process is also the focus, which will be contextualised with respect to the civic education they received in their schooling. I will review literature on the ideological background of sampled schools. I will also conduct in-depth interview with teachers in charge of civic education. On the field, I will have participant observation in class, ceremonies and school activities concerning civic education.

The third objective is to conduct participant observation and interview with Chinese secondary students in Hong Kong, which can gauge the significance of the policies and education process over students' national identity today. Other parameters, such as peers, family and the media will be taken into account to see if and how much they contribute to shaping the students' national identity. In fulfilling this objective, I will first sample three co-ed secondary schools of a notable religious, political and charitable background respectively. I will then conduct individual and single focus-group interview with sampled students. I will also interview teachers in charge of civic education. As for participant observation, I will attend class, ceremonies and school activities in regard to civic and national education.

Background

Hong Kong people have distinguished themselves from the rest of Asians with an 'apolitical and materialistic' character, as portrayed by many academics. Such character is not quite intrinsically apolitical because it is a result of political manoeuvre by both the colonial and SAR's governments. Before the handover, the colonial government downplayed the politics-ridden elements when portraying Hong Kong people's identity with political motives. Turner (1995) argues that China did not allow any representation of Hong Kong identity that revealed a cohesive culture threatening the Mainland. Yet a nationalist Hong Kong culture was plausibly of their advantage. While nationalist and socialist sentiments provoked by China's communist regime in the 1960s were curtailed by the colonial government, the latter

emphasised the separateness of Hong Kong culture from the then sovereign state to rationalise denial of British citizenship to the colony's residents in full.

History curricula in schools could bluntly reveal how the colonial government attempted to nurture apolitical Hong Kong residents by avoiding 'politically-sensitive' content in contemporary Chinese history. Chinese History has existed as a school subject alongside World History (Morris et al. 2000). In the colonial days, the span of Chinese history included in the curricula was merely 'extended to 1911, 1945 and 1949 in the 1965, 1972 and 1979 Certificate of Education Examinations, respectively (Morris et al. 2000: 257)'.

The tide was not always on the colonial government's side, though. Their political agenda for apolitical people was occasionally in peril. The riots in the 1960s, a million people taking to the street against the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989, and post-Tiananmen fears prompting petition for British citizenship had more or less disproved the education policy and other vehicles serving the purpose of depoliticising the people until 1997. Civic education for apolitical people during the colonial days was intrinsically political and it did not prevent them from engaging in political events and controversies. With hindsight, the interplay between civic education policy and students' national identity should be studied within a holistic context of various cultural and institutional players involved in the interplay, which may be manifested in individual and social events.

Literature Review

Social Identity

From an anthropological point of view, identity distinguishes one from others by a dichotomy of 'self' and 'otherness'. Social identity is the way one makes sense of oneself from being a member of a particular group in society. This kind of identification leads to group behaviour among members by displaying particular attitudes and values (Tiedens & Fragale 2007). Group membership is forged by the individuals involved who 'define themselves and are defined by others as members of a group (Tajfel & Turner 2007: 362)'. A group can thus be conceptualised as a collection of individuals who consider themselves members of the same social category, share the same sentiments in this common definition of identity, and attain a certain level of social consensus regarding the evaluation of their group and their group membership (Tajfel & Turner 2007).

Social identity comprises those factors of a group member's self-image that come from the social groups to which he considers himself as belonging (Tajfel & Turner 2007). Tajfel and Turner (2007: 363)'s general assumptions are useful in discussing social identity within a limited concept of it:

1. Individuals strive to maintain or enhance their self-esteem: they strive for a positive self-concept.
2. Social groups or categories and the membership of them are associated with positive or negative value connotations. Hence, social identity may be positive or negative according to

the evaluations (which tend to be socially consensual, either within or across groups) of those groups that contribute to an individual's social identity.

3. The evaluation of one's own group is determined with reference to specific other groups through social comparisons in terms of value-laden attributes and characteristics. Positively discrepant comparisons between in-group and out-group produce high prestige; negatively discrepant comparisons between in-group and out-group result in low prestige.

Identity in Post-war Colonial Hong Kong

Identity politics in colonial Hong Kong after the Second World War can be discussed in two temporal parts: from 1945 to late 1960s and from late 1960s to 1997. Over the three decades after the Second World War, Hong Kong was a refugee society (Vickers & Kan 2005). The majority of the population were migrants from China who came to Hong Kong during the Chinese Civil War in the late 1940s or during the successive famines and political movements such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution (Vickers & Kan 2005). These migrants tended to be strongly attached to their native places and cultures in China and show relatively weak bonding to Hong Kong. In the realm of entertainment, for example, Mandarin-speaking films and Mandarin pop songs remained the mainstream until the late 1960s. During this period, most of the people regarded Hong Kong as a temporary refuge that they would leave and return 'home' to China whenever possible. Such mentality was reflected by the fact that many migrants from southern China established welfare associations according to their different provinces or counties of origin. They often named their associations *njiangxiangqinhui*, literally associations for those kinsmen travelling in Hong Kong. Speaking of any other identity apart from Chinese was not a question.

After the riots in 1966 and 1967, the colonial administration, local elites and the community began to establish a new social and political order. The baby-boom generation of locally raised Hong Kong people began to play an important role in accumulating wealth and raising standard of living in their 'home'. With China opening its door to economic reforms in the late 1970s, many of them who did business and travelled for the first time in China were appalled by what they found there. China 'turned out to be an ill-kempt, uncultured, scrounging delinquent – the sort of relative you would be tempted to lock away in the attic sooner than introduce to your friends (Vickers & Kan 2005: 174)'. The new generation called themselves Hongkongers, who were 'more sophisticated, more cosmopolitan and, above all, richer (Vickers & Kan 2005: 174)' than the Mainlanders across the border. Such pride on being Hongkongers had continued until 1997 when 56% of the surveyed residents of Hong Kong regarded themselves as Hongkongers, 29% Chinese and 15% both (Wong 1998: 10). A Hong Kong identity overwhelmingly dominated the scene of identity.

National Identity in Post-1997 Hong Kong

According to Wong's (1998: 10) survey on Hong Kong residents' self-identification in 1997,

56% of them considered themselves Hongkongers, 29% Chinese and 15% both. After the handover on 1 July 1997, those who opted primarily a Chinese identity are more likely to identify themselves as both Hongkongers and Chinese (Lau et al. 1996). Those who self-identified as primarily Hongkongers, however, tend to face mutual rejection between the two groups (Lau et al. 1996). In addition, in the face of a Hong Kong identity being defined by alienating itself from the Chinese one, respondents considering themselves Hongkongers reveal to be more willing to maintain the dissimilarity between Hong Kong and Mainland China after the handover (Hong & Chiu 1996; Lau et al. 1996).

As the economy has been thriving over the past decade on Mainland China, many 'arrogant' Hongkongers would otherwise like to see themselves Chinese for there seems no longer any pride of being a Hongkonger with the same 'assurance of economic superiority (Vickers & Kan 2005: 176)'. After the SARS epidemic in 2003, the Chinese government launched a new Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) between Hong Kong and the Mainland. This policy reinforced Hong Kong society's rhetoric on Hong Kong-Mainland relationships: it is Mainland China that is assisting Hong Kong. Under CEPA, Hong Kong's professionals such as accounts have explored the Mainland market and have benefited from the rising job opportunity. With a Hong Kong-in-decline of even greater integration into the Mainland, the fate of Hong Kong identity's distinctiveness seems as unpromising its economic prospects (Vickers & Kan 2005).

Civic Education in Colonial Hong Kong at the Policy Level

The purpose of civic education is to educate students to become good citizens. The root of 'good citizens' can be traced back to the occidental Classical times, which comprised two different interpretations. A good citizen in the eye of the Spartans was a warrior-citizen who was devoted to serving the Spartan state, while another Greek concept was rooted in individuals' obligation to actively participate in state affairs (Morris 1997). In the light of this dual concept of 'good citizens', civic education should stress obligations and duties, as well as active participation, of citizens in social and public affairs (Morris 1997).

The core of civic education lies in nurturing a proper understanding of 'the relationship between the individual and society' among students (Morris 1997: 108), which involves selection, transmission and realisation of civic educational knowledge (Tsang 1998). Such an education process is intrinsically political because the discourse regarding school knowledge is a result of political construction (Tsang 1998). The process can also reflect the patterns of political control within a given social setting. In this context, the British colonial government of Hong Kong first gave authority to the Director of Education in the late 1940s to control the education process (Morris & Sweeting 1991). The Director could censor all curricula, textbooks and other teaching materials and activities (Morris & Sweeting 1991). As a result, 'a highly centralised and bureaucratic system of control of the curriculum' emerged, which guaranteed that all the content of school education was depoliticised (Morris 1997:

110).

The colonial government unprecedentedly put considerable efforts to civic education in 1948 (Sweeting 1993). 'Civics' was introduced to the Hong Kong School Certificate examination as a new subject (Tsang 1998). The Civics syllabus emphasised that order is a prerequisite for a happy and prosperous community, and Hong Kong people should thus be thankful for the law and order under British rule (Tsang 1998). The notion of national loyalty was diverted to a cosmopolitan one, which was based on the ultimate loyalty to humanity (Tsang 1998). Such condition persisted between 1948 and the late 1950s.

Since the late 1950s, the Civics syllabus was substantially amended, which culminated in the 1964 replacement of the subject by Economics and Public Affairs (EPA) (Tsang 1998). Such change was marked by the increased coverage of economic affairs and usage of ostensibly depoliticised terms such as 'community' and 'role of youth' instead of 'colony' and 'citizenship' respectively (Tsang 1998).

As the Sino-British Joint Declaration signed in 1984 determined Hong Kong's unavoidable return to China in 1997, civic education was 'to prepare future citizens for self-government after 1997 as an SAR' (Tsang 1998:243). The Education Department published Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools in 1985 for a permeated and inter-disciplinary approach to civic education. In 1989, Government and Public Affairs was made a required subject for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (Tsang 1998). The next issue of the Guidelines was published in 1996.

Analytical Framework

Anthony Giddens's structuration theory (Cohen 1989) refers to production and reproduction of rules of conduct in society by social agents. 'Since rules are made manifest only when institutionalised practices are reproduced, they cannot be conceived exclusively in holistic terms... rules of conduct are trans-situational, in the sense that they are involved in forms of conduct that are (i) reproduced and recognised many times over during the routine activities undertaken by members of a collectivity, and (ii) reproduced and recognised for a considerable period in the history of the group (Cohen 1989: 43).' There is, however, not always reproduction of past rules of conduct; social agents can change them (Cohen 1989). Civic education as an interaction between students and teachers is therefore considered a structuration process in which civic education content such as national identity is produced, reproduced and contested. In order to better formulate and evaluate such a process, Spiro (1984)'s cultural frames are borrowed. Throughout the interaction within civic education, it is assumed that students are acculturated with national identity to various degrees of cognitive salience as the following (Spiro 1984). The first level refers to students knowing about the propositions of national identity (that is, preliminary acquaintance). The second refers to their understanding of the traditional meanings of these propositions, as interpreted by authoritative people or texts. The third refers to their internalisation of these propositions as their personal

beliefs. This, however, does not imply that such beliefs determine their conduct in daily lives. The fourth refers to these cultural propositions structuring their perceptual world and guiding their actions. Finally, these cultural propositions impose emotional and motivational salience over them.

With the structuration theory, the objective of marshalling the interactions among government policies, school ideology, teachers' agency and students' response can be fulfilled on one hand; on the other, the cultural frames can help evaluate the significance of the policies and education process on students' national identity.

Fieldwork Findings

YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College: Content and Changes in Civic Education

Civic education had been stipulated by the Civic and Moral Education Committee until three years ago, when the school organisation was reshuffled. A year later, the Pastoral and Student Affairs Committee took over the role of its predecessor. There have been annual national flag-raising and anthem-singing ceremonies held at school assemblies as part of civic education. The school has also encouraged students to join exchange programmes to Mainland China and has tried to raise students' awareness of China's issues, such as the Sichuan quakes in 2008.

The school year of 2009-2010 has witnessed a dramatic increase in the efforts putting in civic education because of suggestions in last year's School Annual Report. The Hong Kong government's civic education policy has aimed at fostering students' sense of patriotism and responsibility towards China. This school year's objective of civic education is to understand and develop a concern of China's affairs. The relevant activities include discussions about China's issues in class, a national flag-raising ceremony, sharing from student leaders, and a study trip to Guangzhou co-organised with Hong Kong's Education Bureau in which 31 third-form students study about urban planning and industry in Southern China.

School ideology of civic education

The sponsoring body of the school is the Young Woman Christian Association (YWCA) of Hong Kong, which explicitly describes its purpose on its website. The purpose of the Association is to promote young women's 'growth in Christian character and to cultivate Christian spirit' among them (YWCA 2010). At the school level, the constitution of the school lays down clearly that the school is to offer an education 'in a Christian context' (YWCA HTY College 2010).

Since the school is run by such a Christian organisation, it is reasonable that there is 'Religious Studies', de facto studies on Christianity, as a school subject. Therefore, the teacher in charge of civic education drafts relevant activities also in accordance with the Bible's teaching, namely being responsible for the betterment of one's country. As for those teachers who practise Christianity, 'most of whom can personally recognise the relations between Christianity and national identity, and may thus give civic education with reference

to their “inspirations” and due professionalism,’ explains Ms. Lee, the Religious Studies teacher in charge of national education.

Teachers’ Agency in Civic Education: A Case Study

This case study is based on two in-depth interviews with Ms. Lee, teacher in charge of civic education. The interviews can shed light on how the upbringing of a teacher in a particular socio-cultural context bears his or her agency in the post-1997 civic education in secondary schools. As for Ms. Lee’s case, the intricacy of her agency lies in a relationship between her political and religious beliefs and the government’s civic education policy, which is manifest in the way she stipulates the content of civic education and discusses China’s controversial issues with her students in class.

Ms. Lee is a 40-year-old married mother who was born in Hong Kong. She is a Chinese national and has not renewed her British National (Overseas) Passport since it expired several years ago. Her retired parents migrated to Hong Kong from Southern China in their teens. Her father and mother used to be a banking manager and domestic helper respectively. Her mother has been apathetic towards politics; her father hardly talks about it, and he trusts and supports the regime in China. Her family has neither made her politically sensitive nor has the family made her oppose to it, as Ms. Lee claimed.

Educated in the turn of the 1980s in Belilios Public School, a government-run secondary school, she learnt little about China at school. ‘We were still learning the ancient history of China in the third-form,’ she explains. In her university years, however, she was nurtured with a ‘perspective’ by her church and the university’s Christian group. Such perspective was about a Christian’s responsibilities as ‘a child of God’ who was also an active player in the secular society.

As the Sino-British Joint Declaration determining the future of Hong Kong was signed not long before her university years, an identity crisis and concern for China pervaded her social and religious life. The Chinese Christian Church Wanchai where she regularly visited, raised awareness of Chinese society in Sunday services and Sunday school from a Christian perspective; her university’s Christian fellowship was also aware of the social changes to Hong Kong Christians in the transition period before the handover. As a result, she began to contemplate on China and national identity.

Analysis: School Ideology and Teacher’s Agency in Civic Education

The interviews contributed to fulfilling the second objective of the project, that is, to understand how a school’s ideology may affect the selection, transmission and realisation of civic education knowledge with teachers’ agency being contextualised. The Christian background of the school may be the reason why civic education is particularly incorporated to the subject Religious Studies, though it is not necessary for teachers of this subject to talk about being a good citizen when teaching Christian allegories. It means that there are no

particular ideological guidelines for incorporation of civic elements into Religious Studies subject matter. From a theoretical point of view, the education process of civic educational knowledge is dominated by teachers' agency in the 'transmission' part in the light of the free hand given to teachers in the classroom. In addition, the relatively trivial significance of the subject Religious Studies with regard to students advancing through the exam-oriented schooling system makes the school administration unwilling to take the subject as serious as English and Mathematics, which is reflected in the way students are assessed. In this sense, as reiterated by Ms. Lee in an interview, the agency of teachers, which is subject to their past upbringing and education, is even more crucial to the civic education process.

The agency of the teacher informant, Ms. Lee, will be discussed against a backdrop of the wider socio-political context regarding the development of her civic awareness. Prior to her university years, she had been educated within an ostensibly depoliticised schooling system in which students were trained to solely serve the thriving local economy. In the early 1980s, she began to develop a Christianity-based concept of national identity, which has been manifested by her decade-long commitment to voluntary service in Mainland China. Such a conception of national identity entails compassion towards the people of China, whereas political advocacy in China is out of place for her. In the 1980s, she was also out of place amid waves of political controversy over Hong Kong and China because of her so-called 'political insensitivity'. This explains why she was reluctant to express her stance towards the legitimacy of the communist Chinese regime in the interview. She also evaded questions at the ideological level, such as how to solve a possible dilemma of being a Christian and a patriotic Chinese at the same time in the face of the religion-suppressing regime.

As a result of colonial civic education and devotion to Christianity, her 'politics-free' and 'good-Christian' concept of national identity bears a lot on her agency in civic education at school. In such a high affinity between the school ideology and the teacher's religious and political stance, students are likely to receive such civic educational knowledge as a mix of 'political insensitivity' and Christian compassion, which was echoed in the way she once held a class discussion on the 1989 Tiananmen Incident. She did not mention the political background and significance of the incident, but she merely affirmed the patriotism of the protesting students and asked her students what they would do for their country as Chinese youngsters.

Guangdong Study Trip Presentation Session: A Case Study

Observation was conducted at a presentation session hosted by Ms. Lee, teacher in charge of civic education and leader of the study trip. The two-day study trip was jointly organised by the school and Hong Kong's Education Bureau in late September. 31 third-form students visited the old city of Guangzhou, the Foshan Urban Planning Exhibition, and the Guangzhou Science Centre during the two days. After the trip, they worked on study projects in groups. During the observation, they were presenting their projects on various topics such as

Guangzhou's urban planning, Guangzhou's research and development efforts in manufacturing, and Guangzhou's economic activities.

Each of their presentations could be divided into three parts: study findings, reflections and teachers' comments. Their study findings were mainly descriptive and their sources of information were guides, exhibition panels and web pages of the institutions they visited. Four of the five groups worked on Guangzhou's economic activities. Their findings were about the rising standards of living due to economic development, while the remaining group worked on technological advances in Guangzhou's manufacturing industry. Their findings were about the implications of Guangzhou's success in technology on the country's development as a whole.

Their reflections were characterised by three patterns of comparison: comparison between China in the past and the present China; comparison between Hong Kong and Mainland China; and, comparison between China and the developed countries. They regarded the economic success of Guangzhou a testimony to China rising as a world economic power in contrary to its past poverty. With regard to Hong Kong, they commented that Guangzhou was even more advanced in technology than Hong Kong after visiting the Science Centre, and Hong Kong people should thus be humble. As foresight to China's future of catching up with the developed countries, all of the groups were positive about it without suggesting their reasons for optimism. Finally, teachers' comments were dominated by those of Ms. Lee despite the presence of two other teachers who had helped out with the study trip. Ms. Lee's comments were mainly positive and she was also affirmative of the hard work they had devoted to their projects.

Analysis: Study Trip as a Result of Policy and Education Process

The observation contributed to fulfilling the third objective of the project, namely, to gauge the significance of the government policy and civic education process over students' national identity. Such an observation, however, has not illuminated such significance in comparison with other parameters such as peers and the family. The significance of the trip lies in two aspects. On one hand, the trip can be understood as the outcome of the government's civic education policy for two reasons. First, the Curriculum Development Council of the Education Bureau renewed the Moral and Civic Education Framework in 2008, which emphasised national identity as one of the seven 'core values' to be nurtured among students (CDC 2008). Second, the study trip co-organised by the Education Bureau was an activity for enhancing students' identification with their state and nation (CDC 2008). On the other hand, the trip was definitely an illustration of the selection, transmission and realisation of the civic educational knowledge. 'Selection' and 'transmission' refer to a process in which teachers choose particular knowledge and teach students about it in particular ways, while 'realisation' means what the teachers expect the students to do with regard to the knowledge. The analysis will first discuss the second aspect of the significance.

With regard to the selection of civic knowledge, it seemed that the organising bodies of the trip showed a bias in favour of the plausibly positive aspects of the subject matter they chose for the students. For example, according to my observation, the students were studying the economic benefits brought by Guangzhou's urbanisation whereas they seemed to understand almost nothing about the undesired consequences. It would have been more reasonable if the study had been carried out regarding the plight of the displaced peasants, as well as the economic benefits.

Rhetoric was a manifestation of how transmission and realisation took place. The sources of information and the students' overwhelmingly descriptive approach to their projects reflected the rhetoric by the one who educated them in the transmission process. Some of them, for instance, quoted, 'a guide at the urban planning exhibition told us that Guangzhou's urbanisation would substantially raise the whole country's GDP because of the introduction of high value-adding industry'. The influence of such affirmative, albeit unreasonable, rhetoric was later crystallised in their reflections. Most of them concluded that 'Hong Kong should be humble' in the light of the advances of 'our motherland', while some dubbed China as 'an awakening dragon'.

As for the realisation of civic educational knowledge, namely what students should do as good citizens, Ms. Lee concluded, 'as a Hong Kong Chinese citizen, you should ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country. Hope this trip has brought you a clear understanding of what your responsibilities are for the betterment of Hong Kong and our country'. Ms. Lee remarks echoed her definition of a responsible Hong Kong Chinese that she had mentioned in interview.

The study trip exemplified a civic education process characterised by bias and rhetoric. The process served as an instrument for the government's current civic education policy through which the policy's aim of nurturing the 'core value' of national identity could be attained. The outcome of the process could be reflected by the fact that students understood more about China (though a biased understanding) and they displayed a strong sense of patriotism ('we must contribute to our motherland' and rhetoric as such) at the presentation session.

In conclusion, the civic education policy and the education process as a means were considerably successful in the case of the study trip. The success was manifested by students' recognition, if not internalisation, of the overemphasised patriotic core value as promoted by the civic education policies. The highly agreed school ideology and teacher's agency had also contributed to the success with their affirmative stance towards the Chinese government and, above all, a focus on economic issues, instead of political ones. In order to thoroughly fulfil the third objective of this project, however, several other parameters affecting students' national identity should be considered as well. Interview with the participating students of the trip is necessary.

Focus-group interview with students – introduction

A focus-group interview was conducted with two fifth-form female students aged 16 who are from the same class. They both were born in Hong Kong. The discrepancy of possession of social, cultural and economic capital between them was negligible because each of them has a working-class background and was educated in a ‘grass-root’ primary school in the vicinity of the public housing estates in Kowloon City. They have both studied at YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College since Secondary One. The objectives of the interview were to understand the informants’ negotiation of their identity, their conception of patriotism and to account for the weight of civic education in school in shaping such a civic conception in relation to that of family and peers. Attention was paid to rhetoric and discourse formulations, and contestations of ideas among the informants.

Chinese, Hongkonger or Hong Kong Chinese?

The informants’ negotiation of identity was revealed by the way they defined and categorised Chinese, Hongkonger and Hong Kong Chinese. Such discussion not only suggested their identity, but also what constitutes an identity in their mind. When they were asked what a Hongkonger was, they highlighted the locality of origin as an important component of identity. ‘A Hongkonger is one who was born in Hong Kong’, one of them concluded. The discussion continued from the point of departure of locality, which was followed by a more contested notion of whether a local-born White was a Hongkonger. The active informant commented, ‘even if there is a White who was born in Hong Kong, lives in the Hong Kong way and speaks Cantonese very well, I probably don’t consider him Hongkonger at the first sight. Yet, with more acquaintance, I will realise that he is indeed a Hongkonger. We need to take into account the appearance, lifestyle and mentality of a person to judge who he is.’ They both agreed on some of the requisites of being a Hongkonger: wearing casual jeans and T-shirt like everyone else in Mongkok, reading gossip magazines and making as much money as possible. They cited an example of distinguishing whether one was a Hongkonger from the criteria of locality, appearance, lifestyle and mentality as they had pointed at. ‘I have a classmate who migrated from Mainland China ten years ago. I don’t consider him Hongkonger or Hong Kong Chinese because he has a weird accent, mentality and way of dressing. We Hongkongers are more reserved and use fewer gestures when expressing opinions in class. My migrant classmate talks too much about his opinions to answer teachers’ questions. Besides, he takes his studies and grades too seriously to such an extent that we cannot imagine.’ The other explained why their classmate became out-of-place in the context of Hong Kong, ‘our migrant classmate is hard-working because he is poor and he thinks having good grades can help him improve his standard of living. We are not as hard-working as him because we are not that poor. Those Chinese migrants are either very well-off or very poor.’

Apart from the cultural level, identity on the levels of nationality and physical appearance was also prevalent in their discussion on whether they considered themselves

Chinese, Hongkongers or Hong Kong Chinese. When juxtaposing the Hong Kong-born White with their migrant classmate, the former was considered Hongkonger whereas the latter was not in a cultural sense. They both can be Chinese, Hongkongers or Hong Kong Chinese on the level of nationality so long as they hold the HKSAR passport. On the level of physical appearance, however, they were reluctant to agree on a White fitting into any of the categories even if he or she was Hong Kong-born, locally enculturated and holds a HKSAR passport. One of them explained, 'it is too strange to call a person who looks foreign "Hongkonger" or "Hong Kong Chinese".'

They finally considered themselves Hong Kong Chinese on the ground of their ancestral root in China and their birth, immersion and education in the 'unique' Hong Kong society. They adamantly alienated their identification from grounds of economic or cultural superiority, 'we consider ourselves Hong Kong Chinese just because we are very familiar and passionate about Hong Kong. We will still assert such an identity even if the rest of China have gained a higher status in the world or if they have become richer than us.'

On the Conception of Patriotism

Their conception of patriotism was crystallised by the analogy of their own school. One of them explained, 'it literally means having passion and a sense of belonging to one's country and the compatriots. It is the same as our passion and sense of belonging to our school.' She further exemplified patriotism, 'I am "patriotic" to my school and then I will study hard to continue my sixth form here after the Certificate Exam. I will also absolutely uphold the integrity and honour of the school by refuting unreasonable criticism against it.' The other put her illustration in the case of the state and government. 'We ought to contribute to our country and do everything in the best interest of it. It, however, does not entail blind support to whatever the state government does. Responsible citizens should both reasonably support and oppose the government's policies.'

After elaborating the nature and manifestations of patriotism, they discussed patriotism for themselves, being Hong Kong Chinese, on two levels of China and Hong Kong. They did not differentiate the two by mutual exclusion, but by varying degrees on the assumption that having more passion and sense of belonging to Hong Kong does not necessarily imply a lack of it to China as a whole. Such an assumption was based on the fact that Hong Kong is theoretically part of China. One of them summarised it in a sentence: Mainland Chinese should be more patriotic towards China; Hong Kong Chinese should love Hong Kong more instead. The other indignantly saw more tension between these two levels, 'Even the civil servants of Hong Kong should be more faithful to Hong Kong than to Mainland China. They should work for Hong Kong because Hong Kong has been downgraded as the Chinese central government's "rat" in the laboratory. The central government does not care much about us just because we used to be colonised by the British and we still differ a lot from the rest of China.'

Civic education and the family

The history of one of the informants' maternal family serves as context through which one can gauge the family's influence with respect to civic education in school. Her maternal grandmother's family used to run Chinese medicine business in Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province before the Communist Party took power in 1949. They were wealthy and owned lots of land because of their close affiliations with the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang). When the Nationalists fled to Taiwan in early 1949 due to the imminent Communist take-over, they took with them a considerable sum of money borrowed from her grandmother's family. As a result, the fortune and power of the family have declined. Over the 20 years after the Communist party took power, the family had been plagued with political persecution and deprivation of their ownership to land, due to accusation of being 'exploiting feudal landlord'. In the 1960s, her maternal grandmother migrated to Hong Kong together with one of her daughters, the informant's mother.

Her maternal grandmother often talks to her about her plight in post-1949 Mainland China. As a result, she has been predisposed with a negative image of Mainland China, which is manifest in the way she emphasised the 'unique and friendlier' Hong Kong society in which she was born and raised. She also intently distinguished herself from the rank of migrant Hongkongers and the rest of her relatives with whom she gets along well in a distinctive language environment with Cantonese, Shanghaiese and other regional dialects of eastern China. Her example also testifies to the minute influence of her school's civic education over her own understanding of identity and China. 'We had civic education lessons in our junior secondary years, but the teachers taught little about China. We were taught how to behave as a responsible and law-abiding citizen and so on. In addition, we first came across some strange terms such as "critical thinking" and "mutual respect" which had utterly nothing to do with the shaping of the sentiments you asked me about Hong Kong and China.

Analysis: Identity As a Result of School Education and the Family

The focus-group interview contributed to fulfilling the third objective of the project, namely, to gauge the significance of school civic education process over students' national identity with respect to the family's influence. The interviewed students' group identity is mainly a function of a basket of parameters, of descending importance, namely the locality of origin, appearance, lifestyle, mentality. Their understanding of group identity also explains why they insisted considering themselves Hong Kong Chinese instead of Chinese. Their understanding of their national identity, however, is more straight-forward in a sense that they can tell what their nationality are. They admitted to be Chinese on the grounds of their physical appearance and the HKSAR passport they hold. They are nominally Chinese in this sense. The discrepancy between their group identity and national identity can be attributed to the cultural difference between Hong Kong Chinese (the group they identify with) and Chinese (the nation they identify with). The two identities are not mutually exclusive; rather, the group identity is inclusive within the national one. Basing on the differentiating degrees to which

they identify with Hong Kong Chinese and Chinese, they have developed two levels of patriotism. If patriotism means a sense of belonging and responsibility towards a group, then on one level, they are more patriotic towards their group as Hong Kong Chinese (Hong Kong society) while displaying less passion and obligation towards their Chinese nation.

The interview findings regarding the school civic education they have received reveal a national identity that is invisible in the content and rhetoric of the education. They are taught how to be responsible and law-abiding citizens with a critical mind and respect for others. The nation or society to which those ‘good citizens’ ought to belong is unclear. Therefore, it is plausible that their conception of national identity is more shaped by their upbringing in the family. As in the case of one of the informants, she has been predisposed with a negative image of Mainland China by her maternal grandmother who suffered poverty and political persecution before migrating to Hong Kong. By comparing the bitter and miserable Mainland China portrayed by her grandmother and the friendly and comfortable Hong Kong, in which she was brought up, it is reasonable that she displays a more attachment to their group identity as Hong Kong Chinese. Meanwhile, it is far more difficult for her to identify with the Chinese nation because of cultural difference and the negative image that she associates with the plight her grandmother suffered in Mainland China. With a school civic education that rarely mentions national loyalty and identity, the influence from the family overshadows that of the school in shaping the students’ conception of national identity.

Fieldwork at Heung To Middle School: School Organisation and Content of Civic Education

The Student Development Committee coordinates civic education in school, within which there are separate divisions formulating and overseeing various civic education-related classes and activities. There is a flag-raising team, which officiates at the school’s national flag-raising ceremony on the first school day of each month. After the ceremony, a student will deliver a speech in front of the school regarding civic education. The speech is proposed and overseen by a group of teachers from the Committee. Apart from the two divisions holding the flag-raising ceremonies, there are also two campaigns promoting students’ civic awareness and understanding of social affairs, namely the Social Affairs Division and Liberal Studies in junior secondary classes. The informant, Mr. Hon, is in charge of the Social Affairs Division.

The Social Affairs Division carries out civic education in three areas. First, there is news report broadcast by the Campus Radio once every six teaching days, each of which is presented by two or three students. The report covers news of significance in Hong Kong, Mainland China and the rest of the world. Second, there are inter-disciplinary project competitions on social affairs in Hong Kong and Mainland China. For example, students may work on housing, urban planning and environmental protection, etc. Third, the Division cooperates with the school’s drama club to produce dramas regarding basic sociological knowledge, for instance, the reason why a family name is derived from the father’s.

Mr. Hon highlighted the strength of the school's civic education lies in the fact that it is conducted in parallel, but separately in the school organisation, with moral education. He believes that moral education is often irrelevant to civic education because one identifying himself with a nation or not, for example, has nothing to do with his morality. He deemed both moral and civic education intrinsically different; the school's emphasis on the latter is appropriate for its complicacy. He justified the complicacy by underlining two extreme examples within the 'spectrum of civic education', namely keeping the environment clean and sacrificing one's life for the nation.

School Ideology of Civic Education

As a secondary school with alleged affiliations with the PRC government, it was set up in 1946. The school has thus far been a cradle for 'pro-China' politicians and businessmen in Hong Kong. Other schools alike had assumed the educational role to nurture people within the self-sustaining 'pro-China' communities before the 1980s. According to Mr. Hon, most students of those schools finished their fifth form and refrained from taking the Certificate Exams. They either resorted to China-backed companies or, for the lucky ones, went to university in Mainland China. Most of them ended up working in companies with a Chinese background for the rest of their lives.

The school has a mission of 'cultivating patriotism and responsibility to the motherland (China)' (HTMS 2010), which can be resonated by the fact that the national flag of the PRC has been hoisted in school for over 50 years, according to the informant. The unspoken link between the school and China is highlighted by a high percentage of Mainland migrant students nowadays, as the school has been Mainland migrant-friendly in its curriculum and extra-curricular activities. For example, there are remedial English classes to help migrant students catch up with others in their English level. There are also community tours through which participating students can understand more about Hong Kong society. Some students explained that they had access to information about those 'pro-China' schools in Hong Kong from the Mainland authorities before their migration.

School Ideology in an Observation Session

There was observation of displayed educational materials in school premises and of the monthly flag-raising ceremony before conducting in-depth interview with the teacher informant. The observation commenced at eight in the morning on a school day. In the covered playground right bordering the school entrance, there were propagandist posters in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the PRC. One of those, for instance, portrays the 'success' of the PRC in promoting the country's technological advances with pictures of armour and the Shenzhou spacecraft. Others depict a 'harmonious' China with all 56 ethnic groups or are about the 'glorious legacy' of the Chinese culture. Apart from the propagandist posters, there were two news headlines of the day shown to the school on a

notice board. Those headlines were quoted from *Wen Wei Pao* and *Da Gong Pao*, two of the oldest pro-Communist China daily papers in Hong Kong. As generally understood in the media industry, the two papers have had great ideological compliance with the Chinese government in their news coverage.

The posters should be understood as ‘propagandist’ because they suggest only the positive aspects of the PRC’s achievements over the course of its history while ignoring the negative aspects such as the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen Incident in 1989. Such propaganda utterly falls short of civic education for a balanced and reflective understanding of one’s country. By virtue of such a biased ideology in civic education, it was no surprise that the censored speech delivered to the school after the flag-raising ceremony was ridden with propagandist rhetoric as well.

The fourth-form student addressing the school first provoked her fellow students by a question: Why did Disneyland appear only in the West? Are we Chinese less romantic than Westerners so that we rarely have our own fancy cartoon figures? Such questions presumed a Western superiority over Chinese because she put an equal sign between ‘Disneyland’, ‘romantic’ and ‘superior’. She then reassured the audience by juxtaposing some ancient Chinese fairy tales with their Western counterparts, reminding them of ‘the fact’ that Western supremacy has ‘merely’ existed for about two hundred years when considering the thousands of years of the ‘great Chinese civilisation’. She concluded by asserting the ‘harmonious interpersonal aspect’ of the Chinese culture that the Western one lacked, and by persuading her fellow students to ‘shoulder the yoke of revitalising the motherland’.

The ideology of the school is incarnated in speeches at the ceremonies because the topics of which are selected by the school and the content is censored by designated teachers from the Student Development Committee, according to the informant Mr. Hon.

Teacher’s Agency in Civic Education: A Case Study

The case study is based on an in-depth interview with Mr. Hon, the teacher in charge of the Social Affairs Division of the Student Development Committee. The interview can illuminate how his upbringing in a particular socio-cultural context affected his agency in the post-1997 civic education in a school in which he received his secondary education more than two decades ago. His agency in civic education is worthy of our study because of a high affinity between the school ideology and the one of his own: he was somehow an educational or ideological ‘product’ of the very same school. The questions about agency is: Is his agency like a rubber stamp of the ideological machine that many would compare to the Communist Party’s propaganda during the Cultural Revolution?

The informant, Mr. Hon, is an ethnic Chinese born in Hong Kong in the early 1960s. He received secondary education at Heung To Middle School. After finishing his sixth-form, he went to university in Mainland China to study sociology and subsequently returned to serve in his alma mater as history teacher in the mid-1980s. He has finished his master’s degree in

history at Hong Kong Baptist University and is doing research on China and globalisation for a doctoral degree at Renmin University in Beijing.

Before going to college in Mainland China, he identified himself as Chinese in ‘sentimental’ terms, but he lacked a thorough understanding of the social and political institutions. He immersed himself in Marxist sociology and China’s social and political life, and consequently, he discovered a prevalent misunderstanding of China among his fellow Hong Kong people. For example, many of them thought the Chinese Communist Party was nothing but disastrous, yet the fact was that the Party succeeded in underpinning China’s heavy industry within a decade after the dawn of economic reform.

With years of experience in Mainland China, he has developed a better understanding of China, as well as a pragmatic idea of educating a new generation of Chinese students for their better career prospects and daily lives in future China. In the interview, he classified his philosophy of civic education as realism. He explained, ‘civic education should neither be solely doctrinal nor sentimental. As a teacher, I should help them understand, for example, China’s socialism and Chinese society from a sociological point of view. Such education should, ultimately, lead to “natural” integration of our students into Mainland Chinese’. He depicted an ideal Hong Kong Chinese under appropriate civic education as one who has the competence and willingness to work and get along with the rest of his Chinese compatriots. He mentioned patriotic sentiments are conducive to this end because they can help narrow the ideological gap between Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese. The lack of such sentiments, as he insisted, is to be held responsible for distrust and even antagonism between Hong Kong people and the Chinese authorities, citing opposition to the Article 23 legislation and widespread agitations on the construction of a high-speed rail link between Hong Kong and Mainland China as examples.

Coherently from a realist point of view, he highlighted the inadequacies of government civic education policies, which lie in their irrelevance to Hong Kong’s schooling system. As part of the education process, evaluation helps realise and measure the realisation of education knowledge. The role of evaluation is particularly salient in Hong Kong due to its competitive eliminating schooling system leading to tertiary education. Such a system guarantees strict compliance with school syllabi and thus intense memorization of designated educational knowledge among most students who compete for university places. The other side of the coin, however, is that students and the school tend to pay much less attention to educational knowledge that is out of the exam-oriented schooling system. He considered it ‘lamentable’ that civic education is but in this rank of ‘useless’ knowledge. He put it soberly, ‘we need to take care of their public exam performance, and as a result, civic education is not quite on our priority list’.

Analysis: School Ideology and Teacher’s Agency in Civic Education

The interview contributed to fulfilling the second objective of the project, that is, to fathom

how a school's ideology may affect the selection, transmission and realisation of civic educational knowledge while contextualising teachers' agency. The school's ideology can be studied with significant relevance to the present Hong Kong society due to its 64-year-long orientation towards Communist China and the present-day Hong Kong being ruled by the PRC. Under such political circumstances, the 'pragmatic' approach to civic education by Mr. Hon, the informant who was educated in the very same school, may illuminate how ideology and agency interact. The school's ideology within the civic education process will be discussed for starters.

The selective aspect of the civic education process is exemplified by propagandist posters, daily news headlines displayed to the school, and censored rhetoric of the student leader addressing the school after the monthly flag-raising ceremonies. Regarding the realisation and assessment of civic knowledge among students, the inadequacies are rooted in the exam-oriented schooling system as quoted from Mr Hon's analysis in the previous section. The remaining aspect of transmission will be discussed together with the teacher's agency in the light of a high affinity between the school's ideology and that of Mr. Hon's.

Mr. Hon's agency plays a role in sustaining patriotic sentiments among students by teaching them about the 'pragmatism' of understanding China, namely, how we can elude misunderstandings about China pervading the Hong Kong society and how we can become competent and be willing to get along with the rest of our compatriots in Mainland China. Such kind of agency echoes the way he developed his attitude towards China: from a patriotic disposition in his teens to patriotism underpinned by relevant knowledge.

In the interview, for example, he quoted many misunderstandings such as 'the Chinese Communist Party is intrinsically authoritarian'. He refuted this misunderstanding by invoking statistics about the efforts of the Party in industrialising the country and eradicating illiteracy. His refutation was disappointingly irrelevant because authoritarianism is by definition about a regime's coercive means of control of power and its lack of legitimacy from a democratic point of view. Social achievements that he quoted do not necessarily make the Chinese government less authoritarian. As he has earned a master's degree in history and is doing his doctoral research on sociology, he is not supposed to have made such a grave logical mistake. Therefore, his remarks about authoritarianism and social achievements are more intended to deceive the researcher than a logical mistake. If such kind of interpretation of China's issues is what exactly he does in promoting civic awareness in History lessons, it is very likely that the 'pragmatism' he proclaimed is merely sugar-coated indoctrination serving the ideological purpose of the school.

The question at the beginning of the case study is: Is Mr. Hon's agency like a rubber stamp of the ideological machine of the school? According to the interview findings, the answer to this question is 'yes' because his agency, which advocates a 'pragmatic' approach to patriotism, is neither reflective nor reflection-provoking. As in the vivid machine-rubber stamp analogy, he indoctrinates his students in favour of the biased and unreflective rhetoric

of the school in civic education.

Analysis: Social Contexts in Favour of More Affirmative Response from Students

The following are the interview findings summarising Mr. Hon's interpretations of the relationship between post-handover social environment and civic education. After the handover, there has been intense social and economic integration between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Coupled with the fact that there are even more business and working opportunities north of Hong Kong's border, students have realised learning about guoqing (literally nation's situation) or Mainland China's affairs is more an economic imperative than dreary ideological tenets of the school.

Apart from the economic imperative that students are realistic enough to recognise, the post-handover political sentiments in society have favoured a more nationalistic civic education. In a wider social context, there have been even more Hong Kong people identifying themselves as Chinese and becoming more affirmative of the Chinese government. While harnessing such a wave of 'China Fever', the SAR government, together with many local social organisations, have extensively organised civic education activities. For instance, a multitude of so-called pro-Beijing charities, trade unions and other community-based organisations organising a 'Patriotic Parade' on every anniversary of the handover. The school 'encourages' students to take part in the parade to learn how to love their country. As for the SAR government, there was a temporary exhibition on the PRC's history in the turn of its 60th anniversary at the Hong Kong Museum of History.

Mr. Hon stressed that many of his students 'spontaneously' went to the movie in groups for the national blockbuster *Jianguodaye* (Triumph of the PRC) commemorating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the PRC. He pointed that such a phenomenon was no result of indoctrination, but a reflection of students' patriotic sentiments as a result of the patriotic social context and the advocating role of the school.

Po Leung Kuk No. 1 W. H. Cheung College: School Organisation and Content of Civic Education

According to the teacher informant, Mr. Leung who is also teacher-in-charge, and also of the Moral and Civic Education Division drafts and coordinates the school's civic education. The series of civic educational syllabi and activities are laid down in the year plan of the Division. As instructed in the year plan drafted by a panel of six teachers, on every Day One of the weekly cycle, there is either an assembly or a class teacher's period in which staff from the World Vision or the ICAC gives talks to students, for example. Civic education on Day One, however, does not apply to students from the fourth- to seventh- forms.

Apart from the above routine civic education sessions, there are relevant extra-curricular activities such as model law court hearings. When the school reopens every September, there is a national flag-raising ceremony. On the anniversary of the establishment of the PRC, there

are exhibition panels and quiz contests on knowledge about China.

Civic elements are also incorporated into Chinese History class discussions. For instance, students are encouraged to evaluate the achievements of particular historic figures such as Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong. As Chinese History is a compulsory subject for all first- to third-formers, all of them are expected to do an in-depth project on China's historic events that are relevant to today's China. For example, they may study Sun Yat-sen's republicanism and Communist China's political institution or Confucianism and political movements against it during the Cultural Revolution.

School Ideology of Civic Education

As the first secondary school set up in 1973 by Po Leung Kuk (a local charitable organisation), the school's mission must essentially not contradict that of the sponsoring charity (PLK College 2010). The mission of the school is to offer an all-round education that 'stresses both academic training and inculcation of moral virtues' (PLK College 2010), which explains why its sponsoring Po Leung Kuk has a clear orientation towards providing social services to the young (PLK 2010). The purported neutrality from a particular political or religious affiliation of the charity, as indicated in its mission, can be attributed to its origins dating back to more than 130 years ago.

In the late 19th century, Hong Kong was plagued with children- and women-kidnapping, a group of Chinese gentry therefore petitioned to the Governor to set up an organisation to rescue the kidnapped victims, hence the establishment of Po Leung Kuk. Over the past decades, the charity has diversified its services to health care and education. Its ostensible neutrality can also be accounted for by its main source of income, that is public donation. In this sense, despite a pro-Beijing majority in the composition of the Advisory and Directors' Boards (PLK 2010), the charity is plausibly free from political or religious affiliation in the light of its funding and normative roles to play in society.

Such a tendency seems consistent with what Mr. Leung portrayed about the school's policy of civic education incorporated into Chinese History lessons. As a Chinese History teacher, he insisted, 'there is no such thing as "political correctness"; we educate students about China and civic awareness from only a cultural perspective'. Regarding discussion on the Tiananmen Incident and politically sensitive issues as such in class, the school normatively has no particular stance or instructions and gives a free hand to teachers in the classroom. When he was asked about freedom in the classroom in relation to the school's 'bottom-line', if there was any, he took discussion on the Tiananmen Incident as an example. 'In a third-form Chinese History class about the Tiananmen Incident, I think the teacher can take his own stance during discussion. Yet he should not be too "radical". Even if he was, it would be no big problem because students can access information about the incident by themselves and formulate their own points of view'.

He later revealed the 'bottom-line' of the school in citing the Tiananmen Incident as

material for civic education. On the 20th anniversary of the incident, the Chinese History Society held a seminar on its origins and consequences. The Society had proposed to invite speakers from an organisation supporting students' movements in Mainland China. The principal had turned it down on grounds that the Society had not been able to invite speakers from a 'pro-Beijing' organisation as well. The principal, as Mr. Leung conjectured, tried to make the seminar a 'low-profile' one due to its politically sensitive nature.

Unlike the two other schools studied, there seems to be no particular political or religious orientation in Po Leung Kuk No. 1 W. H. Cheung College. The school appears to cautiously remain in a balanced position in dealing with political or controversial issues in civic education.

Social Contexts and New Challenges to Civic Education

After the handover, Mr. Leung thought there was a more favourable social environment for better civic education because of an increase in the number and types of civic activities out of school. There are several quiz contests and study project competitions on China's issues with prizes of considerable sums of dollars, which seem attractive to students. In addition, there are lots of leadership training summer programmes in Mainland China, which means that students have more opportunities to spend their summer holidays in a 'meaningful' way. He, however, observes that this generation of students would rather accept a 'global citizenship' instead of a self-evident patriotism. They sometimes raise questions such as 'Why did Hong Kong people donate so much money to Sichuan quake victims, but not as much to those in plight outside China?'

Discrimination against migrant students from Mainland China has also intensified among local students after the handover. As handover means more integration and mobility of people across the border, local students have realised 'a threat' posed by massive migration of students from Mainland China. The migrant students are hardworking and good at Chinese and Mathematics. The local ones are even losing their edge in their standard of English in terms of academic competition with their migrant fellows. Mr. Leung added, 'it is plausible that such fear among local students is channelled into a more intense discrimination, which on the other hand depends on how they have been predisposed with a reasonable or biased understanding of migrant students'. He has also perceived a polarisation of opinions about China among local students. Some have a more optimistic view towards Mainland China in terms of its wealth and social development; on the opposite side of the spectrum, some persistently dub it a 'poor and disgusting place'. He attributed such a polarisation to their reluctance to listen to the opposite points of view. For example, the optimists rarely read pro-democratic newspapers whereas those with opposite opinions are not likely to 'condescend' to join study tours to Mainland China. All in all, most of the students are reluctant to go to Mainland China to understand the society and livelihood within, and are less likely to identify themselves as Chinese. They hardly understand the facts of Mainland China;

in sentimental terms, they are apathetic towards patriotism that has been celebrated in the mass media and government rhetoric. But speaking of national identity, they do not deny the fact that they are holding the HKSAR passport and thus by definition Chinese citizens. The solution to such difficulty will start from a thorough and bias-free understanding of China, followed by reflection on their own relations with the country. Finally, it is up to them to choose what identity to have and whether to be 'patriotic' or not.

The new challenges to civic education in the post-handover Hong Kong lie in social and demographic change. As Hong Kong has become part of China, some local-born students are prone to identity disorientation while reconciling their Hong Kong-centred values and the plausibly 'superior' social setting in which they have been raised with those in Mainland China. Much effort in civic education is necessary to help them develop a more bias-free understanding of China and a self identity they feel comfortable with. As for the challenges from demographic change, they are rooted in an ever-increasing number of migrant students from Mainland China. Discrimination against migrant students among local ones seems to be based on the latter's predisposed bias against the former. Civic education should become a bridge linking both kinds of students, improving mutual understanding and thus enhancing mutual respect between them.

Teacher's Agency in Civic Education – A Case Study

The case study is based on an in-depth interview with Mr. Leung, a Chinese History teacher who has been teaching in the school for over 20 years. The interview shed light on how his interest in Chinese culture had interwoven with the significant nationalist movements so as to shape his agency in the post-1997 civic education in school. His agency is rooted in the reconciliation of cultural and political understanding of China and the manner in which he appropriates his past 'inspirations' about national identity during his upbringing to the ever-changing Hong Kong-Mainland relations after the handover.

Mr. Leung is a local-born ethnic Chinese whose parents were born in Mainland China and migrated to Hong Kong in their twenties. They hardly talk about China. He began to be concerned about China's affairs in his junior secondary years. It was the time when the diplomatic conflict between China and Japan over Diaoyutai Islands was provoking agitations and nationalist sentiments among Hong Kong people. He learnt about such an issue in the news through which he realised some people dared to sacrifice their own comfort and money for a lofty cause. From such sacrifice, he conceived of patriotism from a 'utilitarian' (as he claimed) point of view: their sacrifice is not merely for the good of the country, but for themselves as individuals as well. He concluded what he learnt from those nationalist campaigns, 'the survival and betterment of a country is crucial to that of individuals within that country. An individual's development cannot be alienated from that of his or her country'. Being a 'pragmatic patriot', the pre-handover political situation in Hong Kong bewildered his conception of patriotism which sublimed to a 'transcendental' humanist form. 'My utilitarian

understanding of patriotism and national identity was complicated by the ideological contestation of the 'dual China' manifested by celebrations of the PRC and Republic of China (ROC)'s establishment. It was at least 20 years ago when there were celebrations of the PRC's establishment on 1st October and those of the ROC's on 10th October. I was confused by the conflict between Communist and Nationalist Chinas, which was highly political at that time. In the end, I made myself clear that patriotism is nothing about utility or ideology, but about a transcendental Chinese culture shared by Chinese around the world'.

The adoption of patriotism in humanist form explained his sympathy and empathy towards the democratic movement in Beijing in 1989, as well as China's social issues in his university years. 'The Tiananmen Incident in 1989 was an event of impact for me because it was so dramatic and indignant for university students of that generation in Hong Kong like me. Like most of my fellows, I took to the street in Hong Kong in support of the protesting students in Beijing. Though the event ended up with a tragedy, I feel no regret for doing my very best at that moment of truth.' He did not join any advocacy campaign except the June Fourth protest; neither did most of his friends in university years. Apart from reading newspapers and referring to textbooks about contemporary China, he occasionally travelled in Mainland China in his university years. 'I was really appalled when I first went to Mainland China. Their culture and mentality were pretty different from what I had read on newspapers and books. Even the extent of their poverty was far worse than I had expected'.

His humanist approach to patriotism also pervades his Chinese History lessons. He explained, 'we can only teach students civic knowledge, but speaking of nurturing an appropriate civic attitude among them, we have to be their role-models'. An appropriate attitude means being responsible to the country and making necessary sacrifice of oneself for the good of the country. When Mr. Leung discusses the Tiananmen Incident with students in class, he first displays relevant footages and comments from CNN and CCTV so that students can have an 'all-round' access to primary and secondary materials of the incident. He then asks them to imagine what they would think and do if they were the protesting students. Students' response is generally apathetic because many of them seem to have no sentimental bonding to the protesting students, as well as the social discontent pervading Chinese communities more than 20 years ago.

Analysis: School Ideology and Teacher's Agency in Civic Education

The interview contributed to achieving the second objective of the project, that is, to understand how a school's ideology may affect the selection, transmission and realisation of civic education knowledge with teachers' agency being contextualised. There is no purported association between the school's civic education policy and the Beijing-affiliated directors in the Board of the school's sponsoring charity, but one cannot rule this out. In addition, it is the political awareness of the school principal that affects the civic education activities such as the 'low-profile' seminar on the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Incident. It is plausible

that the political ‘bottom line’ of civic education lies not in the ideology of the sponsoring charity, but in the administration of the school. Therefore, it is the agency of teachers that plays a greater role in determining the ideology of civic education – as long as they do not cross the ‘bottom line’ of the school’s administration.

The agency of the teacher informant, Mr. Leung, will be discussed against a background of the evolution of his understanding of patriotism and national identity during his upbringing. His early-predisposed interest in Chinese history was ferment for his pragmatic and humanist approaches to patriotism. Such purported depoliticised approaches are manifest in his classroom civic education. He focuses on sympathy and empathy among his students towards the protesting students in Beijing in 1989 instead of the more controversial political issues underlying the incident. He therefore hardly crosses the ‘bottom line’ of the school administration when addressing politically sensitive issue. His agency is rooted in his so-called ‘depoliticised’ and ‘within-the-line’ discussion, which is very likely to endorse and reinforce the school administration’s grip on freedom of discussing China’s politics in civic education lessons.

Focus-Group Interview – Introduction

A focus-group interview was conducted with six seventh-form students aged between 18 and 19, comprising two female and four male students from the same class. One of them was born in Guangdong whereas the rest were born in Hong Kong. Gender is presumably not a matter of concern for analysis; the effects brought by different places of birth can be neglected because the informant born in Guangdong migrated to Hong Kong when she was one year old and has henceforth resided in the city. The social, cultural and economic capital of them is assumed very similar, if not homogeneous, because each of them has a working-class background and was educated in a ‘grass-root’ primary school near Wong Tai Sin’s public housing estates. Above all, all of them have studied at Po Leung Kuk No. 1 W. H. Wong College since Secondary One.

The objectives of the interview were to understand their conception of China and national identity and to account for the weight of civic education in school in shaping such a conception in relation to that of family and peers. Attention was paid to rhetoric and discourse formulations, and contestations of ideas among the informants.

Conception of China and National Identity

Their conception of China and national identity was revealed by answering the question ‘Do you consider yourself Chinese or Hongkonger?’ Such a question was raised by the interviewer because of its contentious nature among teenagers who had been raised in the turn of the handover. This question would also reflect how they made sense of their group identity, how they negotiated their dual identity as ethnic Chinese living in Hong Kong and why.

All of the six informants considered themselves Hongkongers. They were bewildered by

the contested difference between Hongkongers, Chinese and Mainlanders as put forth by the interviewer. Some of them suggested that both Hongkongers and Mainlanders are ethnic Chinese, but they would rather be named Hongkongers instead of Hong Kong Chinese. Such identification was rooted in a perceived social and cultural superiority of Hongkongers over Chinese.

One of them bluntly explained her preference for 'Hongkonger', 'the term "Chinese" projects a rather negative image because it evokes "Mainlander", which is synonymous with "backwardness" and "being provincial".' The others mentioned Chinese people have a pretty bad image in the eyes of others around the world. Chinese tourists are generally considered as noisy and having a bad practice of squatting, smoking and spitting. One categorically hated China because of the prevalent industrial accidents and undesirable quality of products that are made in China. After discussing how problematic it is to be a Chinese, they in turn depicted a socially and culturally superior image of being a Hongkonger.

'We can more Westernised and civilised. For instance, we have a stronger sense of freedom and democracy than those Chinese'. One lamented, 'since the handover, Hong Kong has been getting more "Mainlandised" in terms of the vocabulary appears in the media and government documents. There has also been more pro-Beijing news coverage on China's affairs'. Others claimed they had witnessed a 'deterioration' of Hong Kong's culture and society since the handover. Such indignant rhetoric reflected an entrenched social and cultural hierarchy as the most outspoken informant said, 'there is a hierarchy for three types of Chinese: Hong Kong Chinese at the top, followed by Taiwanese Chinese and then Mainland Chinese. I thus identify myself as Hongkonger'

Such a sense of superiority being challenged by Mainland China's looming domination in Hong Kong's politics and economy seemed to be even more sentimental as some of the informants remarked. 'Hong Kong has lost its freedom since the handover. When I was in primary school, I did not like singing the national anthem and drawing the national flag. I would rather sing Hong Kong's regional anthem if there were one'. The outspoken one even dubbed those who are proud of being Chinese as 'China's slaves' and he described today's Hong Kong as 'being kidnapped by China'. It was difficult for him to accept the Chinese identity and ideology.

At the end of the interview, they were asked again if they would identify themselves as Hongkongers, Chinese or Hong Kong Chinese. They all unequivocally answered 'Hongkongers'. They admitted there is cultural commonality between Hong Kong Chinese and the rest of Chinese, but insisted in choosing 'Hongkongers'. To conclude, in the light of their predisposed pride on Hong Kong and antagonism towards Mainland China in social and cultural terms, it is plausible that they would not find 'Chinese' an appropriate choice of national identity.

Patriotism in Hong Kong

One of them suggested a thoughtful requisite for discussing patriotism in Hong Kong, that patriotism among Hong Kong people towards China is not commensurable with that among Mainland Chinese because of Hong Kong's colonial history and the great socio-cultural discrepancy between Hong Kong and Mainland China. By comparing patriotism towards the sovereign state before and after the handover, the other mentioned that Hong Kong people have become more patriotic after handover because they had understood even less about Britain and had far less passion for it in the colonial period. He exclaimed, 'How many Hong Kong people really understood Shakespeare and how many of them were really loyal to the Queen? They just cherished horse-racing as an entertaining British legacy and considered having English high tea at Mandarin Oriental a classy pastime.' They cited Hong Kong people's support for the Beijing Olympics 2008 and their zealous celebration of the 60th anniversary of the PRC's establishment as signs showing the more patriotic Hong Kong people. One of them anticipated that the more Hong Kong integrated into the Mainland, the more patriotic Hong Kong people would be. He concluded soberly, 'Hong Kong people will be as patriotic as Shanghai people when the former becomes no better than the latter.'

Civic Education in Hong Kong and Influence from Mainland China

All of them commented on the civic education in their school as futile. They did not think the civic sessions for the junior classes or civic activities organised by the school were of any use, which may be a result of their overwhelming presumption of the biased and indoctrinating civic education in both Hong Kong and Mainland China. They explained that there is a significant bias in civic education in Mainland China because they only educate students about the strengths and achievements of the country. Civic education in Mainland China tends to imbue students with 'unreasonable' patriotic sentiments so that they will support the Communist regime. This trend seems to have appeared in Hong Kong because the 'nothing but propagandist' video appears every evening before airing the main news on TV; the 'deceiving' rhetoric of 'harmony' and 'love the country and love Hong Kong' has also pervaded the society.

The most outspoken informant debunked the myth of civic education bringing more patriotic students, 'the situation in Hong Kong is quite different from that in Mainland China because we have far more sources of information about the truth in China, such as Apple Daily (a pro-democratic newspaper) and the free internet. The more we know about China, the less we are patriotic towards it.' Many of them used such terms as 'disgusting', 'inhumane' and 'evil' to describe the Chinese government. They all agreed that a reasonable civic education should educate students for a holistic understanding of the country. Mr. Leung supplemented about the phenomenon that in recent years there have been more and more local-born students of his having unfavourable bias against migrant students from Mainland China. He attributed it to the widespread news coverage on poisonous infant formula and

severe exploitation of farmers in Mainland China, which predisposes his students with a demonic and corrupt image of Mainland Chinese. Some of them even proclaim in class that they will never visit Mainland China. In order to undermine such a problematic bias, he said, 'I often tell them to reflect on problems with Mainland Chinese from a more reasonable point of view. Businessmen selling poisonous infant formula, for example, should be evaluated again and the students should rethink whether such a scandal originates in the "demonic nature" of Mainland Chinese or human nature. If it is out of human nature, then they should no longer adhere to the unfavourable bias against Mainland Chinese as a whole.'

Analysis: Civic Education in School Versus Influence from the Family and Media

Parents of four of the informants were born and brought up in Guangdong province. Their experience in Mainland China before migrating to Hong Kong was bitter and even traumatic as a result of poverty and political persecution in the 1960s and 1970s. Their bitter experience is manifested in their antagonistic comments against China in front of their children. Parents of the other two informants were born and raised in Hong Kong, two of whom (parents of the same informant) were educated in pro-Communist secondary schools. They, however, are not as affirmative of the Chinese government as the social imagination projects to us. The informant suggested that the mass media in Hong Kong may have nurtured a sceptical stance towards China's affairs among his parents. 'They know pretty much about China, but they just don't like it. They have a saying that everything in China is fake except the fake.' The influence of the mass media's biased coverage on the negative aspects of China's society has overwhelmed the students' own understanding of China as well, which is a result of the predisposed bias nurtured by most of their parents, looming 'encroachment' of Mainland students in their social life and marketing strategies of the media harnessing such Sino-sceptical sentiments.

Review on the Guidelines and Syllabus on School Civic Education after the Handover

The Syllabus of Civic Education was the first official document on school civic education after the handover. It was published in 1998 by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC), and was prepared 'in accordance with the concepts and curriculum framework proposed in the 1996 Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools (CDC 1998: 3)'. Civic Education is an elective in the group of Humanities subjects in Secondary One to Three. The Syllabus is thus an extension of the junior secondary area of the Guidelines that encompass various levels of civic education from kindergarten to senior secondary.

The following is the aims as laid down in the Syllabus (CDC 1998: 2).

1. To develop in students positive civic attitudes, values and a sense of belonging to the family, the community and the state so that they are ready to contribute to the betterment of the family, the community, the state and the world.
2. To help students understand the characteristics of Hong Kong society and the importance

of the rule of law, democracy, human rights and justice, and to employ these concepts in daily life.

3. To develop students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills that would allow them to analyse social and political issues objectively and to arrive at a rational appraisal of these issues.

There are three areas regarding the objectives, namely 'knowledge', 'skills' and 'attitudes' (CDC 1998: 2). As the focus of this project is on the relations between civic education and students' national identity, the relevant 'knowledge' and 'attitude' areas of the Syllabus' objectives are abstracted as the following (CDC 1998: 2).

Knowledge

To help students understand:

1. The local conditions of Hong Kong, the rights and duties of citizens, the functioning of the government and the communication between the government and the people;
2. The special features of Chinese culture and the structure of the Chinese government;
3. The matters of concern for Hong Kong, the state and the world;
4. The civic values, such as the rule of law, democracy, human rights and justice.

Attitudes

To help students cultivate the following attitudes:

1. Concern for the people, the community, the state and the world;
2. Courage to express opinions;
3. Enthusiasm to participate in public affairs and contribute to the community and the state;
4. Sense of identity and belonging to the community and the state.

Organisation and Content of School Civic Education

Civic learning is not only about acquiring knowledge about the nation and society, but also about how to live in one's own country and society (CDC 1996: 19). Therefore, the content of civic education as in the Syllabus is divided into six areas of locality context (CDC 1996: 19). The six areas include 'family', 'neighbouring community', 'regional community', 'national community', 'national community', 'international community' and 'citizenship and civil society'. In order to understand how the content may have any impact on students' national identity, one should delve into the national and citizenship areas of civic education.

As for the 'national community', students are to learn about the geography, citizens, current issues and development and organisation of the government of the People's Republic of China (CDC 1998: 6); while the 'citizenship and civil society' is highlighted by nurturing students' 'love and concern for the country and society (CDC 1998: 6)'.

Background of School Civic Education and National Identity

The first edition of the Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools was published in 1985 in order to introduce an interdisciplinary approach in implementing civic education (CDC 1996:

2). The Education and Manpower Branch's 1993 document 'School Education in Hong Kong: A Statement of Aims' mentions 'the need to develop social, political and civic awareness among young people (CDC 1996: 1)'. Consequently, the 1996 edition of the Guidelines reinforces such rhetoric by pleading to challenges arising from the pending return of sovereignty over Hong Kong to China (CDC 1996: 1). In the face of such challenges, the 'national community' area of the Guidelines essentialises that nationalism and patriotism are important 'not only for one's national identity and sense of belonging, but also for the cohesion and strength of one's own nation (China) (CDC 1996: 23)'.

Against such a background, the guiding questions in the Syllabus of Civic Education coherently realise the Guidelines in the 'national community' area. Those questions are about Hong Kong and Hong Kong people's contribution to China, how individuals in Hong Kong can strengthen their sense of belonging to China and how they can express their love and concern for China (CDC 1998: 16, 27, 32). The 'our-country' wording can be seen as an assumption and potential internalisation of every student being a Hong Kong Chinese citizen.

Changes to civic education in 2001 and 2008

The guidelines on moral and civic education published during the education reform in 2001 were the most comprehensive and up-to-date ones after the handover (CDC 2002). The publication emphasises five core values to be nurtured among students, namely, perseverance, respect to others, sense of responsibility, sense of commitment and national identity. It mentions the school 'should provide even more learning opportunities to nurture students' sense of belonging to their mother country' (CDC 2002: 3). Those opportunities include (1) community service in which both students and teachers can participate; (2) civic education lessons for junior secondary students; (3) civic elements infused into various school subjects; (4) school assemblies and form-teacher's periods; (5) visits to museums and Mainland China regarding *guoqing* (literally nation's affairs); and (6) daily lives among all members of the school (CDC 2002). The principles of assessment include all-round perspectives, continuity, reflexive, and, interactive approach among students, teachers and parents (CDC 2002). The indication of students' learning efforts includes comments on school reports and grades appearing in civic education folders (CDC 2002).

The Moral and Civic Education Framework 2008 (CDC 2008) further explains the manifestations of the core value 'national identity' as one of the objectives of moral and civic education. For example in secondary education, students are educated, (1) to think of how the student himself or herself can play an appropriate role in the development of the mother country; (2) to develop a sense of belonging to their mother country by joining study tours to Mainland China; and (3) to be committed to improving the mother country and the livelihood of fellow countrymen. The Framework also suggests some instances of learning opportunities that the school can provide, for example, national-flag-raising ceremonies, civic speeches delivered by student leaders and study tours to Mainland China regularly organised by the Education Bureau.

Education and Identity: Structuration Analysis

Interaction	Government policies	Reasons
<i>School ideology of YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College</i>	Government guidelines minimally observed; civic elements incorporated in Religious Studies	Vague nature of civic education; policy inadequacy; lack of exam-oriented motivation
<i>School ideology of Heung To Middle School</i>	Government education guidelines minimally observed; elaborate school organisation carrying out patriotic education in its own right	Pro-Beijing (so-called ‘patriotic’) tradition of the school for over 60 years
<i>School ideology of Po Leung Kuk No. 1 W. H. Cheung College</i>	Government guidelines minimally observed; school administration censoring politically sensitive civic content	Vague nature of civic education; policy inadequacy; lack of exam-oriented motivation; pro-Beijing sponsoring body

Table 1: Interaction between Government Policies and School Ideology

Interaction	Ideology of individual schools	Reasons
<i>Teachers’ agency at YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College</i>	A great coherence between Christian background of school and teachers’ stance when giving civic education	Civic elements mainly infused into Religious Studies lessons where all the teachers are Christians
<i>Teachers’ agency at Heung To Middle School</i>	Direct and magnified propagation of school ideology in lessons	Some of the teachers are past students and were predisposed with school ideology
<i>Teachers’ agency at Po Leung Kuk No. 1 W. H. Cheung College</i>	A free hand generally given to teachers, but school administration steps in for political reasons	Political awareness of school administration; pro-Beijing sponsoring body

Table 2: Interaction between School Ideology and Teachers’ Agency

Interaction and degree of acculturation across cultural frames	Teachers' agency at individual schools	Reasons
<i>Students' response at YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College</i>	An understanding of conventional meaning of national identity among students (on second level); reluctance to internalise it (towards third level)	Influence from family, peers and the mass media overshadowing and opposing that of school civic education
<i>Students' response at Heung To Middle School</i>	Entrenched national identity among most students, guiding their collective actions (on fourth level)	Previous upbringing in Mainland China; government's promotion of nationalism pervading society; together with 'patriotic' school ideology
<i>Students' response at Po Leung Kuk No. 1 W. H. Cheung College</i>	An understanding of conventional meaning of national identity among students (on second level); reluctance to internalise it (towards third level)	Influence from family, peers and the mass media overshadowing and opposing that of school civic education

Table 3: Student-Teacher Interaction and Degrees of Acculturation

Analysis: Interaction between Government Policies and School Ideology (Table 1)

The minimal compliance with the government guidelines among the schools is highlighted by the school assemblies, annual flag-raising ceremonies, and civic lessons for junior students and weekly form-teacher's periods. The possible reasons lie in the vague nature of civic education, enforcement inadequacy, and lack of exam-oriented motivation. The vague nature refers to the fact that the indication of civic education's content and grades of learning is not easily written on school reports and cannot be easily measured. As for the policy enforcement, its inadequacy can be attributed to the fact that there is no proper civic education curriculum that puts forth the policies and guidelines into practice at schools. In this sense, the schools 'may' easily follow the guidelines without a uniform and detailed curriculum that they 'must' follow as an official pedagogical document. On the side of the authorities, they have no official reference with which they can supervise the enforcement of policies at schools. As the subject is of vague nature and inadequate policy enforcement, it is by definition, and in fact, very difficult to motivate schools to devote as much teaching time and resources to the subject as to other subjects. The lack of exam-oriented motivation illustrates this point. If it is

assumed that all schools are motivated by students having good grades in public examinations, civic education will be a school subject that many schools would rather neglect because the efforts of teaching this subject cannot be reflected and measured in public examinations, nor can it help students attain their immediate academic goal: going to university. From the above interpretations, it is plausible that the highest ideology of the schools is exam-oriented pragmatism. Even the teacher informant from the 'most patriotic' school in the studies conceded that students' success in public examinations is the school's top priority. Underneath the overriding factor of examinations, the ideology of schools or their sponsoring organisations plays a considerable role in determining the schools' efforts and approach in civic education.

Analysis: Interaction between School Ideology and Teachers' Agency (Table 2)

The interactions between school ideology and teachers' agency to resist and modify it at YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College and Heung To Middle School are affirmative of giving civic education in strict accordance with the school ideology. It does not mean that the teachers are self-censored or reluctant to make use of their due freedom in teaching. Nor does it imply that the school administration intently and covertly control every action in a puppet show of civic education with its invisible hand. Instead, the reason may lie in the organisation and curriculum formation of each of the schools that place the right teacher in a right place teaching the right subject. For the Christian school, the infusion of civic elements into Religious Studies is a direct curricular arrangement that constrain the agency of the teachers to cross the boundary of Christian teachings in giving civic education. Like many other Christian schools, YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College has a preference for Christian candidates when recruiting members of staff, which means that the agency of many of the teachers to resist the school's ideology is subject to their religion that the school celebrates in the meantime. As for Heung To Middle School, the pro-Beijing (or so-called 'patriotic') education backgrounds of almost half of the total teaching staff not only explain why there is candid propagation of the school's ideology through civic education activities and lessons, but also make an affirmative condition in which students are nurtured with a designated national identity and patriotism. As for Po Leung Kuk No. 1 W. H. Cheung College, there seems to be little imposition of the school's ideology in civic education because of the former's relative political and religious neutrality. There is no intelligible organisational or curricular arrangement that is conducive to such imposition. The school's administrative structure, however, becomes a medium through which the head of school can interfere with civic education activities, such as the seminar commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Incident, with his administrative prerogative and 'political awareness'.

Analysis: Student-Teacher Interaction and Degrees of Acculturation (Table 3)

From the focus-group interview findings at YWCA Hioe Tjo Yoeng College (YWCA College) and Po Leung Kuk No. 1 W. H. Cheung College (Po Leung Kuk College), one can realise to what degree the students acquire and internalise the concepts of national identity from school civic education, in comparison with the ones they receive from the family and mass media. Such a discrepancy between the degrees to which they conceptualise national identity from each of the sources is highlighted by the tensions between propositions such as ‘be responsible to China’ and ‘we are Hongkongers not Chinese’. The politically correct teaching championed by school civic education is overwhelmingly overshadowed by the opposing concepts regarding national identity that most of the students recognise and internalise as personal beliefs. This phenomenon is illustrated by the fact that the interviewed students have merely an understanding of the conventional (politically correct) meaning of national identity, and they show no tendency of internalising such meaning (advancing to the third level of the cultural frames). By contrast, they have internalised a Hong Kong-centric mentality that at the same time stigmatises issues and people associated with China, or more accurately, Mainland China. It is probable that many of them who have internalised such a mentality under the influence of the family and mass media rarely understand its propositions and conventional meanings (as on the first and second levels). The phenomenon at Heung To Middle School seemingly displays a different story because of the explicit efforts of national identity acculturation among the students. Civic education in this setting can be interpreted as reaching the fourth level of the cultural frames at which civic education knowledge guides the collective actions (out of spontaneity) of the students. For example, they went to the Olympic events taking place in Hong Kong in 2008; they actively discuss China’s issues late after class; they went to the movie *Jianguodaye* (Triumph of the PRC) in groups to understand more about the country’s history. Such a phenomenon originates from their family’s influence, upbringing in Mainland China, and government’s promotion of nationalism pervading the society, together with the traditionally ‘patriotic’ ideology of the school.

Conclusion: Structuration Theory on Three Levels of Interplay Between Social Agents

The analytical framework discussing civic education and national identity among students is divided into three levels, each of which involves two kinds of social agents. Civic education is considered a process of production, reproduction and contestation of national identity across three levels according to the structuration theory. National identity is considered the rules of conduct, that is, the substance of the structuration process being relayed among social agents from the government (at the top) to students (at the bottom). The main objective of this project is to understand how the intended national identity is transmitted down through the three levels to students as a result of school civic education as an acculturation process.

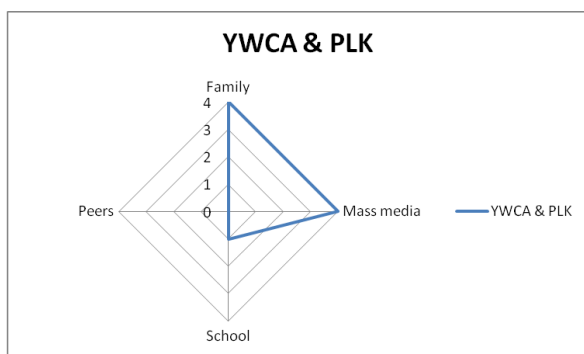


Diagram 1

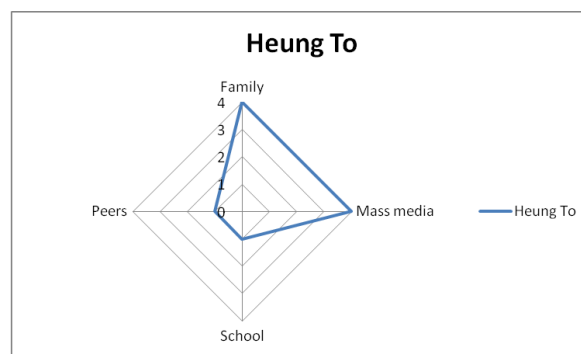


Diagram 2

The two diagrams (above) are impressionistic representations based on my fieldwork at three secondary schools, showing the relative influence of various factors over the interviewed students' national identity. As for all the three cases, the above diagrams show that school education has little influence over the conceptualisation of national identity among students in comparison with other parameters. The triviality of school civic education is proven in the cases (as in Diagram 1) of YWCA College and Po Leung Kuk College in the light of the ineffective, if not futile, transmission of the intended national identity through the government, school administrations and then teachers. Such ineffective school civic education is also echoed by the internalisation of Hong Kong-centrism and Sinophobia among students, which came from the mass media and their parents. Such views are contrary to and overshadow the national identity curriculum at school. Peer influence is insignificant in these cases because the students hardly talk about current affairs in Hong Kong and Mainland China, and let alone national identity. As a result, it contributes little to their conceptualisation of national identity apart from an intrinsic apathy towards this issue.

Diagram 1 shows the outcome of the structuration process through which national identity as substance of civic educational knowledge is produced, reproduced and contested along the three levels of social agents. On the bottom level of interaction between teachers and students (as in Table 3), the intended national identity is tremendously contested and modified by the students. The contestations and modifications are indicated by the mere understanding of the intended national identity among them (as on the second level of the cultural frames) whereas they display effective internalisation of an opposite understanding (Hong Kong-centrism) of the intended national identity due to the family and mass media. In this sense, the structuration process of civic education in these two cases does not encounter any significant contestation and modification because the intended substance of civic education on the first level is rarely contested and modified until it reaches the bottom level as the students' national identity.

The case of Heung To (as in Diagram 2) is different from the previous two. From the interview, I find that most of the Heung To students were born in and spent their childhood in Mainland China. Their concepts of national identity came from their family and mass media

just like their Hong Kong-born counterparts, but a closer look at the content will show that these consisted of an opposite ideology. For instance, parents of the Mainland-born students are all survivors of the political persecutions and other traumas in the Cultural Revolution. Although those miserable memories back then pervade many of their minds, the energetic and thriving China today may be a remedy to their bitter sufferings in the past. Students at Heung To explained there was a rather positive image of today's China among them because their parents had pinned much hope on today's 'advancing' China and their children's future. While their parents hardly talk about their youth and livelihood before the economic reform in the late 1970s, the students are not interested in the country's past. One of them cited a news article that he read years ago in Mainland China before migrating to Hong Kong: We ought to remember our socialist forefathers' blood and tears and devote ourselves to a new socialist China in the 21st century. Such an ideology championed by their families and the mass media in Mainland China is apparently opposite to the one their Hong Kong-born counterparts internalise as personal beliefs. Peer influence should be highlighted in this case because some of the interviewed students went to the theatre together to watch the national blockbuster commemorating the 60th anniversary of the PRC.

Diagram 2 shows the outcome of the structuration process as in the school civic education at Heung To. The intended national identity on the bottom level of interaction between teachers and students is, in this case, overshadowed by the kind of patriotism they have internalised as a result of their families, the mass media and their previous upbringing in Mainland China. The intended national identity propagated down to the bottom level is not antagonistic against the patriotism among them, but is overshadowed by the entrenched patriotism that contributes much to another kind of national identity instead of the intended one from the government's point of view.

Notes

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