Developments and Challenges of Civic Education
in Hong Kong SAR, China (1997-2017)

Eric King-man Chong

The Educational University of Hong Kong, China

Abstract

This paper reviews the developments and challenges of civic education in Hong Kong SAR, China, from 1997 to 2017. Civic education started to introduce rights and responsibilities in the mid-1980s, when the British colonial era entered a transition period. Just before the resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, nationalistic calls were made for civic education to prepare Hong Kong students to participate in national life after 1997 and to introduce them to rights awareness and democratic ideals to involve them in a democratic return to China. However, entering the 2000s, the need for a holistic educational reform surfaced with new imperatives, such as enhancing students' ability to use information technology and to read to learn, and moral and civic education was considered a key learning task. Civic education themes, such as national identity and global citizenship, emerged in this educational reform era in the early 2000s, against a background of a series of educational reforms covering school governance, educational management, curriculum and pedagogy. With increasing official pressure on nationalistic needs to enhance students' understanding of China, the Hong Kong SAR government started to arrange study tours to China for both senior and junior secondary school students, as well as for upper primary school students. School-based civic and moral education programmes on community exploration, Chinese national identity, moral and value education, environmental education also flourished in this period. Meanwhile, social discontent with the governance of the Hong Kong SAR increased, which had implications for Hong Kong people's identity and the endeavours towards political reform and democratic development. Civil society's anti-national education movement in 2012 and the Occupy and Umbrella Movement in 2014 further demonstrated a strong desire to protect local values, assert Hong Kong's identity and push for democratic development, which were at odds with embracing a Chinese national identity. This indicates the failure of the mandatory implementation of national education in 2012, which aimed primarily to develop Chinese national identity. The movement also led to a stalemate since 2014, as there was nowhere to go for civic education after the clash of Hong Kong society with both the Hong Kong SAR government and the Central People's Government in Beijing.

Keywords: civic education, national education, developments, Hong Kong SAR, China.

Introduction

This paper reviews the developments and challenges of civic education in Hong Kong SAR, China, from 1997 to 2017. Civic education started to introduce rights and responsibilities in Hong Kong's school

education in the mid-1980s, when the British colonial era entered a transition period of preparing the resumption of Chinese sovereignty. Just before the resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, nationalistic calls were made for civic education to prepare Hong Kong students to participate in national life after 1997 and to introduce them to rights awareness and democratic ideals to involve them in a democratic return to China. However, entering the 2000s, the need for a holistic educational reform surfaced with new imperatives, such as enhancing students' ability to use information technology and to read to learn, and moral and civic education was considered a key learning task. Civic education themes, such as national identity and global citizenship, emerged in this educational reform era in the early 2000s, against a background of a series of educational reforms covering school governance, educational management, curriculum and pedagogy. With increasing official pressure on nationalistic needs to enhance students' understanding of China, the Hong Kong SAR government started to arrange study tours to China for both senior and junior secondary school students, as well as for upper primary school students. School-based civic and moral education programmes on community exploration, Chinese national identity, moral and value education, environmental education also flourished in this period, and in particular teaching moral and value education is quite common since most schools have religious sponsoring background or they are run by charities or organizations that give emphasis on moral and value education on students. Values education allows one to internalise societal norms which help shape the behaviour of members of a given society (Marcus and Fisher, 1999). Meanwhile, social discontents with the governance of the Hong Kong SAR increased under materialistic values of wanting to have more say in the government (Inglehart, 1990), which had implications for Hong Kong people's identity and the endeavours towards political reform and democratic development. Civil society's anti-national education movement in 2012 and the Occupy and Umbrella Movement in 2014 further demonstrated a strong desire to protect local values, assert Hong Kong's identity and push for democratic development, which were at odds with embracing a Chinese national identity. This indicates the failure of the mandatory implementation of national education in 2012, which aimed primarily to develop Chinese national identity according to the official lines. The movement also led to a stalemate since 2014, as there was nowhere to go for civic education after the clash of Hong Kong society with both the Hong Kong SAR government and the Central People's Government in Beijing.

Civic education in British colonial Hong Kong before the handover of sovereignty (mid-1980s to 1997)

The British started colonial rule of this tiny southern point of China in 1842, after the first Opium War. With 100 years of urban and industrial development, the British transformed Hong Kong into a modern liberal society committed to *laissez-faire* economics, with the help of local Chinese entrepreneurs and elites and an abundant supply of cheap labour (i.e., refugees from adjacent Chinese provinces and from even farther away in Shanghai and Fukien). After its industrial boom in the 1960s, Hong Kong gained global attention for its 'Made in Hong Kong' products of textiles and garments, electronics, wigs, watches and plastic products, etc. It has been a major international financial centre since the 1980s. The future of colonial Hong Kong came into question in the late 1970s. Following a series of talks between China and the British, and that in1984 the British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe made it clear that the British government did not intend to extend its administration

beyond the end of the lease of Hong Kong in 1997, it was agreed in the Sino-British Joint Declaration that Hong Kong would return to China after 1997, with principles, such as 'One Country, Two Systems,' 'Hong Kong People Rule Hong Kong' and '50 Years Unchanged,' and a high degree of autonomy promised to Hong Kong by China. For school's education, the Basic Law Article 136 promises that Hong Kong can formulate its own policies on development and improvement of education (Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee, 2017).

In school's education, civic education is always an important component of the school curriculum in most countries. It could be offered in as a single subject, as cross curriculum theme or as extra curricula activities, and it could be either compulsory or optional and being offered at different learning stages. One of the important ingredients of civic education is citizenship. Ku and Pun (2004) argued that the formation of citizenship in Hong Kong embodied a distinctive colonial history of more than one hundred and fifty years under British rule. In the different stages of the colonial years, the formation of Hong Kong citizenship were marked by continual tensions and struggles between the state and civil society over the questions of rights, belonging, and participation (Ku & Pun, 2004). The British, nevertheless, had an official reluctance to embrace Hong Kong people with full citizenship (Ku & Pun, 2004). The 1960s and the 1970s saw the British colonial Hong Kong government 'nurturing a civic sense of Hong Kong identity, while continuing to delimit political development, by stressing law and order, local belonging, economic rationality, governing effectiveness and material welfare'(Kun & Pun, 2004, p. 4)

Colonial Hong Kong's transition period started in the mid-1980s when it was decided that there would be a resumption of sovereignty by China in 1997. The 1980s brought significant changes in citizenship development in several areas such as a localized sense of residence rights and belonging was inscribed in law of "Hong Kong permanent Resident" and that of emerging intense conflicts and competing discourses over democratic reform, civic liberties, and political identity about the handover issue (Lo, 2001). The British Hong Kong government also started to decolonise education in Hong Kong, with civic education in this transitional period focusing on teaching rights, duties and responsibilities, which were introduced to the school curriculum in the mandatory official civic education curriculum guideline (Hong Kong Education Department, 1985) for students from kindergarten to sixth form in secondary schools. A moralised version of the school curriculum was preferred, in which the morality of students was emphasised in teaching, and this period can be characterized with the development of personally responsible citizens (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004), in which a 'soft' model of citizenship of expecting people to obey laws and pay taxes. The 1985 civic education curriculum guidelines more explicitly discuss the role of the informal and hidden curricula, with specific chapters addressing this question. Furthermore, in its introduction, it also discusses the differences between 'political education' and 'political indoctrination' (Hong Kong Education Department, 1985, p. 7) to justify the need for civic education in schools. This politicisation of the school curriculum by introducing civic education reflected a need to prepare the Hong Kong people in terms of understanding their rights and responsibilities in this British colonial city, allowing them to become their own masters under the principles of 'One Country, Two Systems', in which 'One Country' refers to China and 'Two Systems' refers to socialism/communism in China and capitalism in Hong Kong after 1997. However, the June 4 student movement in China and the subsequent crackdown by the Chinese military made Hong Kong's people fearful of the Chinese Communist Party. The last governor, Chris Patten, introduced political reform in the composition of the Legislative Council, which triggered protest by China. A bill of human rights was also introduced in Hong Kong in this late transition period.

In education, a series of reform initiatives have been introduced under the ideologies of market efficiency and new managerialism since the late 1980s (Ku & Pun, 2004). Civic education in Hong Kong then started to focus on teaching students about human rights, freedom, the rule of law and democracy to familiarise them with such civic values.

When it came to the final stage of transition just before 1997, civic education in Hong Kong schools faced two major needs: to develop students' understanding of China and to equip students with more understanding about rights, responsibilities and democracy so that they could participate in future civic life. The promulgation of the 1996 *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools* (CDC, 1996) just before the resumption of Chinese sovereignty testified to the need for both the nationalistic and democratic development of Hong Kong's future generations. In the 1996 *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools* (CDC, 1996), the notion of 'civic values' (p. 12) is defined and a section in the appendixes is included in which the use of 'controversial issues' as teaching and learning strategies is discussed and recommended to teachers. It should also be noted that the focus of these guidelines is on both formal and informal curricula, and the discussion of informal and hidden curricula is less emphasised than that of the 1985 guidelines. In particular, students were often required to learn concepts and values related to family life.

Comparing the 1985 and 1996 civic education guidelines shows that they follow a similar structure, which includes the aims of the civic education curriculum, the content for each learning stage, the proposed methods and strategies for teaching, learning and assessment and implementation processes. The civic education guidelines were also written for teachers to clarify civic, political, social and educational concepts. Both guidelines before 1997 also encourage secondary school students (from 13 to 18 years old) to acquire an 'awareness of the need to develop good family relationship among members' and to learn to be ready to 'accept responsibility before entering into marriage' (CDC, 1985, p. 33). This family importance is often justified in view of Hong Kong or Chinese traditions and lifestyles. Hong Kong in the context of citizenship is emphasised in the 1985 guidelines, with no mention of China. In the 1996 guidelines, there is no clear emphasis on either, but there is coverage of individuals, the communities and the world. References to China and Hong Kong are similar in relevance in both the 1985 and 1996 civic education guidelines. As for the domains of civic education, both the 1985 and 1996 guidelines recommend the following:

In summary, the 1996 civic education guidelines, which were promulgated just before the Chinese resumption of Hong Kong's sovereignty in 1997, politicised civic education by expanding and including the understanding of politics and the government, the learning of democracy, national identity, human rights and rule of law and the promotion of global perspectives (Leung & Ng, 2004), with the latter a response to the coming era of globalisation.

	1985 *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools*	1996 *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools*
Domains of citizenship	Communities associated to citizenship including family, Hong Kong, China and the world, with more emphasis on Hong Kong	Family; Hong Kong; China, and the world, with relative same emphasis between them

Table 1. Domains of civic education in 1985 and 1996 guidelines

After the handover of sovereignty:
a need to Develop Nationalistic Education (1997 to 2008)

In Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) after the resumption of sovereignty by China, continual cross-border migration from the Mainland China just complicates the citizenship issue. Local Hong Kong residents are now entitled to a 'distinctive set of nominal and legal rights which is tantamount to a form of local or quasi-city state citizenship' (Ku & Pun, 2004, p. 7). The Basic Law, which is the mini-constitution for Hong Kong SAR came into effect on 1st July, 1997, guarantees the right of abode to all persons, among others, of Chinese nationality born to Hong Kong residents, regardless of their place of birth. According to Ghai (2001), this local status of permanent residence is "both more inclusive and more exclusive than citizenship, as it allows the accommodation of non-nationals at the same time as it excludes categories of nationals" (p. 144). Such legal status written in the Basic Law acknowledges the cosmopolitan nature of Hong Kong's society while marking Hong Kong from the Mainland, but on the one hand creating hierarchies among the residents, on the other (Ku & Pun, 2004).

In the educational reform that started in the early 2000s which was built on the ideologies of market efficiency and new managerialism, the Hong Kong SAR government's appeals to life-long learning, all-round education, and the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) which gives school more administrative and financial autonomy, as well as choice of curriculum, for those schools opting for this scheme other those traditional majority of government and aided schools. According to Kun & Pun (2004), this reflects a process of quasi-privatization of education that works more favorably for the elite schools and the wealthier class. The document *Learning to Learn: The Way Forward in Curriculum Development* (CDC, 2000) was produced that encourages Hong Kong schools to provide students with moral and civic education as one of the key learning tasks. This propelled schools to organise civic education activities. Entering the 2000s, the emergence of a competitive, knowledge-based economy arising from globalisation brought challenges (Leung, et al., 2016) and civic education was thought to be able to equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for the new era of globalisation. Indeed, the impact of globalisation made the discussion of global citizenship education significant (Davies & Pike, 2009) in education, with some scholars have made a distinction between 'soft' and 'critical' global citizenship education (Andreotti, 2006) in which the former is based on humanitarian normative principles of helping powerless others and framed around values of harmony and tolerance, while the latter is based on political normative principles of social justice and challenging injustice structures and power imbalances. But all these global citizenship discussions should be taken against a background of mainstream schools in Hong Kong which are, broadly speaking, adopting the 'traditional' approach focuses on the transmission of taken-for-granted dominant values, customs and traditions of a society by direct teaching (Solomon et al., 2001).

With China's resumption of sovereignty settling by the start of the 2000s, the need to enhance Hong Kong students' understanding of China arose. It came from the need to build up the Chinese national identity of the Hong Kong people, who had been separated from China for 155 years. Therefore, with the *Learning to Learn* (CDC, 2000) document, the Hong Kong SAR government injected a huge amount of public expenditure and learning resources to subsidise the costs of Hong Kong SAR students joining study tours to China, organise events (e.g., guest talks on different topics about China and training on how to raise the Chinese national flag)

and allow students to meet important Chines figures in politics, athletics and aerospace. There is indeed a priority attached by the Hong Kong SAR administration to promote National Education (Vickers, 2005). All of these endeavours aimed to again politicise civic education in terms of a Chinese nationalistic education and facilitate an official affirmation of national education for all Hong Kong students. However, schools in Hong Kong at that time focused more on moral education and which have been described as moralised and depoliticised (Morris & Morris, 1999).

After Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Hong Kong SAR on its 10th anniversary celebration in July 2007 and his call for providing national education for Hong Kong youths, the Education Bureau started to inject a huge amount of government budget for schools to join in study tours to China, which aims at enhancing students' Chinese national identification. The Education Bureau further advised the schools in renewing their school's civic education curriculum by publishing *The Revised Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework* (EDB, 2008). This recommends the schools to make use of life-event in order to enable students connect what they have experienced in their family, school, community and society life with moral and civics to be learnt. In particular, this framework has spent some coverage on how students can connect themselves with national life with examples. This has represented an official curriculum framework mandatory asking for Hong Kong schools to build up their students' connection with China in civic and moral education with examples such as personal life, study life and working life.

Liberal Studies in Developing political and social knowledge for civic education (2009)

Another watershed of civic education came when the Hong Kong SAR government introduced Liberal Studies in 2009 as the fourth compulsory subject, alongside Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics, for all secondary school students in Hong Kong. Due to its mandatory status, Liberal Studies was also made one of the compulsory subjects of university admission examinations. Dating back to the early 2000s, the education authority in Hong Kong SAR already sought to catch up Hong Kong's education with the globalisation era (CDC, 2000), aiming to shape future generations to be competitive in global competition (which fits with the liberal ideology) and have a holistic understanding about their lives. Therefore, the aims and objectives of the Liberal Studies curriculum were to widen students' perspectives and enhance their knowledge (CDC & HKEAA, 2007) on areas of study such as self and personal development, society and culture, science, technology and environment, with an independent enquiry study added on them. Some keywords in the teaching and learning of Liberal Studies include issue inquiry, multiple perspectives, critical thinking and informed judgement (CDC & HKEAA, 2007).

Students are expected to develop informed judgement and are required to apply their analytical power when studying different issues from multiple perspectives. The learning outcome is thus informed judgement based on the evidence and arguments that they identify while analysing issues. As an academic subject, Liberal Studies only intends to develop students' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, with no mention of motivating students to participate in society. At least, Hong Kong students have been better equipped with knowledge and concepts related to Hong Kong, China and the world, and these are important for teachers engaging them in civic education.

Controversy over the anti-national education campaign (2012)

National identity is promoted by the Hong Kong SAR government in the *Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 6)* (CDC, 2012) of 2012, which was preceded by a consultation document in 2011. Although the 2012 guide is considerably longer in content than the previous two civic education guidelines from 1985 and 1996, it only provides information for primary and secondary levels, but not for kindergarten. It also starts with individual levels, similar to the two previous civic education guidelines from 1985 and 1996. In the 2012 *Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 to Secondary 6)* (CDC, 2012), 'the individual' is identified as the domain of citizenship. The individual domain is defined in the 2012 guidelines as follows:

> The overall learning objective for this domain is to help students develop the personal qualities of autonomy, self-love, self-discipline, self-confidence, etc, as well as positive attitudes and a healthy lifestyle so that they are able to distinguish right from wrong, make reasonable judgements and put them into practice when facing adversities, doubts and challenges (CDC, 2012, PP. 18-19).

Yet, the national domain of this 2012 guide clearly indicates the official reunification needs of foster Hong Kong students' sense of Chinese national identity. In the 2012 guidelines, in contrast to the previous two civic education guidelines, the emphasis is more on China. There is a shift in focus from Hong Kong to China, particularly in terms of the aims of the citizenship education curriculum.

The Chinese government's sponsorship of national education teaching resources caused huge controversy. It also alerted the educational sector to possible problems with the 2012 guide. In early 2012, there was major concern regarding the possible indoctrination effect of national education on students, with only one-sided representations of China found in the government's sponsored teaching materials. Some students organised themselves into a pressure group called Scholarism and exerted significant pressure against such biased representations of China.

Wider civil society responded by organising protests throughout the summer of 2012. This represented a serious challenge to the government's authority and in particular demonstrated a strong social desire to reject Chinese national citizenship. The protests centred on the potentially biased national education curriculum being taught in schools. The school sector remained calm, maintaining professional neutrality and keeping politics away from students. The situation went as far as some protestors staging demonstrations outside of schools found to be offering national education, and Internet images being circulated in which parents were advised to be careful when choosing these schools for their children. This put some schools directly under political pressure. Ultimately, these civil society groups successfully made the government withdraw the mandatory implementation of moral and national education.

The anti-national education movement left the Beijing authorities disappointed by Hong Kong civil society's rejection of Chinese national identity. The Beijing authorities responded by saying that China had overall jurisdiction, which means complete governance in legal authority, on all matters of Hong Kong SAR since the 'high degree of autonomy' is originated from the Central People's Government. This in turn raised significant discontent in Hong Kong SAR society, given that the Hong Kong people were used to living under 'One Country, Two Systems,' 'Hong Kong people rule Hong Kong' and believed that the Hong Kong SAR should enjoy a 'high degree of autonomy' with only national defence and diplomacy rests with Beijing

authorities. This tends to suggest a narrowing of the political space guaranteed by 'One Country, Two Systems.' The patriotic and nationalistic ideologies of the People's Republic of China (PRC) were imposed on Hong Kong through public propaganda and patriotic education, which aimed to increase the integration of Hong Kong with the mainland and the influences of Chinese ideologies and lifestyles on Hong Kong civic values (such as freedom, rule of law, human rights, and aspirations for democracy) and liberal lifestyles. These trends also represented hurdles to the democratic return of Hong Kong under the PRC and may have intensified the fight for self-determination or even the independence of Hong Kong in the coming decades.

Emergence and aftermath of the 2014 Occupy and Umbrella Movement: maintain neutrality in civic education between nationalistic and localist debates

On 31 August 2014, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) ruled that the new Chief Executive would be chosen from a pre-selected pool of candidates by a 1,200-member Selection Committee, a mostly self-nominated body in which the pan-democratic camp would get approximately 300 seats. This angered many pro-democratic Hong Kong citizens. Before the NPC's ruling on the HKSAR Chief Executive's selection method, Hong Kong society was already calling for the use of a peaceful and large-scale occupation to demonstrate the desire for a truly democratic selection method and universal suffrage of the Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive election in 2017. In late September 2004, protestors staged a protest for truly universal suffrage in the 2017 election. People gathered around the government headquarters in Admiralty. On the afternoon of 28 September 2014, the Hong Kong SAR police fired tear gas bombs on the protestors to disperse them, but the young protestors did not retreat even though police continue fired many tear gas bombs on them. The co-founders of the Occupy Movement, Reverend Chu Yiu-ming, academic Chan Kin-man and Benny Tai, soon found themselves losing control of what had become a large-scale occupy and protest movement in which ordinary people and students took to the streets on their own, occupying major roads and streets at busy points of Admiralty, Wanchai, Causeway Bay and Mong Kok, and confronting and clashing with the police. Of course, on the other side, some pro-stability and pro-social order groups came out in criticizing such acts of occupy movements, and it was suspected that even triad societies took part in antagonizing and fighting the protestors during the occupy at Mong Kok. The pro-Beijing government political parties in the Legislature have also played an active role in mobilizing more voices in protesting against this Occupy campaign and its supporters (Kan, 2013).

Prominent figures of Scholarism and the Hong Kong Federation of Students participated in the mobilisation and campaign, and students and young people used umbrellas and facemasks to demonstrate resistance to a political unjust selection and nomination framework of Chief Executive of Hong Kong SAR. In the name of civil disobedience, the occupation later spread to other areas, leading to clashes with the police and unrest in both Admiralty and Mong Kok. The Occupy Movement spun out of the control of the co-founders and young activists. The movement eventually ended after 79 days without successfully pressuring the Hong Kong SAR government and central Beijing government into making any concessions on the proposed nomination and election methods of the Chief Executive in 2017. The student leaders of the Umbrella movement of 2014, who demanded that China uphold its promises for genuine democracy in the territory (Wong, 2017), retreated themselves and urged the protestors to leave. Civil society expressed deep sorrow for

failing to secure any of their demands from the Hong Kong SAR government, not to mention the Central People's Government.

In late 2014, Hong Kong's civil society continued to press for universal suffrage in the aftermath of the Occupy and Umbrella Movement. The pro-establishment camp dramatically withdrew from the Legislative Council's Chamber during the vote on the government's proposal for the Chief Executive's nomination and selection method, but failed to interrupt the vote. The pro-democratic camp in the legislature vetoed the results, thus ending the controversial chapter of the Occupy and Umbrella Movement and the government's introduction of universal suffrage. While the pro-democratic legislators still insisted for restarting the five step procedures to achieve political reform according to the Basic Law, Scholarism and the student leaders, however, insisted that for the democratic development of Hong Kong, the social movements should include referendum, shadow government and even self-determination, which are all very sensitive to Hong Kong SAR government and Central People's Government.

In education, schools responded by maintaining their professional neutrality. Hong Kong teachers continued to teach their subjects professionally, although some schools saw students strike in support of the Occupy Movement. An estimated 100 schools had students supporting the Occupy Movement (*Anonymous,* 2014). Overall, Hong Kong SAR schools proceeded with teaching as usual throughout all the turbulent times since the handover of sovereignty in 1997. There was a common consensus that Hong Kong teachers should adopt teaching issues based on balanced viewpoints and that teachers should maintain professional neutrality by not showing preference for either the pro-Occupy and Umbrella Movement or the pro-establishment side. Furthermore, Hong Kong teachers shoulder the ethical responsibility to teach from multiple perspectives and, in particular, to emphasise particular forms of reasoning within their disciplines and cite examples of how these forms of reasoning can be applied (Jones, 2004; Pithers & Soden, 2000). Yet, it must also be noted that the lack of space for civic education in school curriculum timetable, teachers' deficits in professional knowledge and the controversial and sensitive nature of the subject can make some schools and teachers hesitant to teach civic education (Leung & Ng, 2014), even though teaching controversial issues in an open classroom ethos contributes to civic learning (Hess, 2001). Stanley (2010) argues that one important tension in any social studies education is between engaging students in activities that "transmit" the social order (preparing students for the world as it is) and those that "transform" (preparing students for the society that ought to be). This tension is evident when teachers engage students in discussions about politics and controversial issues and this is also applicable in Hong Kong's civic education context.

There was more controversy over Liberal Studies after the Occupy and Umbrella Movement in 2014. Some critics argued that Liberal Studies unintentionally affected students by raising their civic awareness and thus contributed to their participation in protests and demonstrations without reasoning. These critics worried that such a development might negatively affect students' studies and development into responsible citizens of a territory governed by 'One Country, Two Systems'. In particular, some politicians accused Liberal Studies of affecting student behaviour. For example, Legislator Regina Ip Lau Suk-yee criticised Liberal Studies for mainly discussing topical events. She argued that Liberal Studies lacked theoretical support as the over-arching theme of the curriculum. Therefore, she called for a reversion of this mandatory subject back to an elective subject as in the previous Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination syllabus (Lp, 2014). Another legislator, Priscilla Leung Mei-fun, also criticised Liberal Studies for its emphasis on political events and for creating an

anti-Chinese mind-set among secondary school students. She called for the replacement of this subject with Chinese History (Yeung, 2014). These political figures come from the pro-establishment camp, which is pro-Hong Kong SAR government in policy setting and legislature voting decisions.

Although the effects of Liberal Studies on students' civic participation became a focus of debate in society, and in literature, a 'participatory citizen' is well accorded with Westheimer and Kahne (2004)'s model of 'participatory citizen' which encourages active citizenship, such as social participation and organising events to help others. To those progressives in any society, it could postulate that future citizens must actively construct the future and that the best way to do this is by active participation in the political and social life of society. In Hong Kong SAR's civil society, the core members of the youth group Scholarism stated that what they experienced in Liberal Studies about political knowledge could both enhance and impede political participation (Lee & Chiu, 2017). By learning the meanings of 'political participation' and discussing the rationales for specific protests, members of Scholarism started to understand the legitimacy of protest demands. This heightening of political knowledge led to personal empathy towards the protestors' grievances in general (Lee & Chiu, 2017). However, it failed to directly motivate them to participate in the protests. Instead, Liberal Studies learning made them more likely to be circumspect about taking part in overt political activities. Lee and Chiu (2017) found that some students perceived protest politics as 'useless' and were rather cynical about political participation. Of course, such political cynicism may work to both reduce and reinforce participatory political action depending on whether or not it is aligned with perceived unfairness (Klandermans et al., 2008). Lee and Chiu (2017) also found that some core Scholarism members acquired more political knowledge through Liberal Studies learning and mass media, and the Internet tended to increase their sense of political inefficacy and cynicism, making them 'hesitant to turn what they learned into political actions' (Lee & Chiu, 2017, p. 12).

Indeed, a much more balanced approach to perceive Liberal Studies would include examining the nature of social issues under spotlights and their social media coverage, with the latter of which would actually be much more powerful in mobilising students to take the initiative to join any social movement. This would in turn challenge civic educators in that they would be unable to predict when and what students would do. Yet, Liberal Studies as civic education serves to equip students with the analytical framework to analyse the social issues that they face. Then, by applying multiple perspectives in analysis, it can contribute to civic attributes, such as critical thinking and students' treasure of universal values. At least, whether students take part in social movements and in what form should depend on their own deliberation and moral judgement.

Localism and controversial demands since 2016:
what are the possible roles of civic education in discussing controversial issues?

Hong Kong society has witnessed an increase in localism in response to national identity. Hong Kong as a city-state theory has been put forward (Fong, 2017). This is an assertion of local identity by protecting local values and ways of life, which have been threatened by increasing influences from China. Some youth sectors in society in this localist movement have even openly called for referendum for self-determination and independence for Hong Kong. When taking such callings and the Occupy and Umbrella Movement together, they suggest a new generation of Hong Kong Chinese youth who may have quite different views about their

roles as citizens living under China. In particular, they dare to say no to the establishment, including the Hong Kong SAR government and the Central People's Government in Beijing.

In the political scene, the disqualification of several legislative councillors in 2017 has led Hong Kong people to start to feel that nothing much can be done to challenge Beijing's complete authority over Hong Kong. Chan Kin-man, both a university sociologist professor and one of the co-founders of the Love and Peace Occupy Movement in 2014 (Lam, 2017), argues that Hong Kong's youth have finally realised the difficulties of pushing a separatist agenda, although their feelings against mainland China have grown stronger amidst more instances of oppression. According to Chan, Hongkongers now see the limits of violent protest and pro-independence advocacy, a realisation that may provide room for dialogue in this once heavily divided city.

However, in the post-2014 Occupy and Umbrella Movement era, many secondary school students have retreated into their own digital lives and immersed themselves in social media. This has presented a challenge to civic education teachers. Teachers nowadays have found that students do not know much about society or have any interest in understanding social and civic issues. Teachers can hardly raise students' awareness, as they just have too little basic knowledge about society. What is more discouraging to civic education teachers in Hong Kong is that with the complexities and controversies of the disqualification of several elected legislative councillors, the jailing of three prominent student leaders and other activists involved in the Occupy and Umbrella Movement and the recent co-location arrangement of the newly built high-speed railway connecting Hong Kong and China, many Hong Kong school teachers now do not know what or how to teach their students. Thus, school teachers have no easily comprehensible topics to teach their students.

In civic education, Hong Kong school teachers must prepare students to face controversial issues. The call to teach controversial issues arises from an urgent need to prepare students to face the increasing number of controversial issues in society, such as the disqualification of several directly elected legislative councillors due to unacceptable and political oath taking messages in their swearing as Legislative Councillor of Hong Kong SAR to China and the arguments over the co-location arrangements of the high-speed railway connecting Hong Kong with China. Furthermore, civic education in this post-Occupy and Umbrella Movement era should enable students to think independently and to discern what to do after an informed judgement. The need to enable students to form their own informed and independent judgements has become more important, as Hong Kong has been split into establishment and opposition camps. People have been polarised. The opposition camp can be classified as a pro-democracy camp, within which can be found traditional liberal democrats, radicals and new youth groups calling for self-determination and independence. The pro-government establishment camp is conservative and supports the Hong Kong SAR government and even the communist domination of Hong Kong affairs. In recent years, towards the pro-democracy camp, the liberal democrats or radical democrats have been accused of colluding with foreign external forces over intervention in China's internal affairs. However, this opposition camp has consistently captured approximately 60% of the votes for directly elected seats. Therefore, against this kind of political background, there is a particular need for civic education in Hong Kong to create a platform and provide opportunities for students to listen to different views and make their analyses and evaluations of them.

Leung et al. (2016), meanwhile, argue that the core of civic education is political education and thus schools should allow students to take part in school affairs. Some examples include student participation in school governance and student union elections, though Leung et al. (2016) also found that Hong Kong schools

shared limited powers with their student councils and that student councils have power only in a school's operational matters. Student participation in governance and student union elections run counter away from civic education as de-politicisation and moralised orientation, and contribute to student positive participation in school affairs. These can also tackle the hesitation that schools and teachers usually have on teaching controversial and sensitive nature of civic education (Leung & Ng, 2014) because students shall learn how to modify their views in light of informed and rational decision making in school governance and elections, supported by hearing different perspectives and deliberating on collective standpoints.

Yuen and Chong (2017) argue that there are three main principles in engaging students to discuss controversial issues. First, teaching must be rational and balanced, and conducted in a team. Thus, teachers must teach issues based on facts and must not be biased by their own opinions. Teachers must maintain neutrality and analyse the facts and reasons from multiple perspectives to provide students with a holistic view. Team teaching can also minimise any chance of biased teaching. Second, learning methods, such as group discussions and avoidance of one-way indoctrination, can also create room for student thinking, analysis and decision making. The setting of questions should cater to students' ages, maturity and knowledge base. Teachers must also provide relevant concepts, knowledge and an all-round understanding using as many different sources as possible, and must include the processes of conceptual clarification and the mastery of major concepts (e.g., peace, caring, participation, equality and making changes) as starting points instead of presenting students with a complicated picture. Third, teachers must remain neutral and ensure healthy discussion, so that the different opinions of students can be represented. Teacher neutrality in the holding of classroom discussion is thus called for, where the core of the 'neutral chair' approach is that the teacher enhances procedural fairness and encourages students to express their own views and listen to those of others (Yuen & Leung, 2009). Teachers must also remind students to exercise modesty, open-mindedness and respect when listening to each other. Indeed, thinking and reasoning abilities are attained when these cognitive activities are taught not as subsequent add-ons to what is learned, but rather are explicitly developed in the process of acquiring the knowledge and skills considered to be the objectives of education and training (Glaser, 1984).

Regarding the controversy over the promotion of Chinese national identity in the school curriculum, Cheng and Yuen (2017) argue for broad-based rather than narrow-based national education. They argued that the conceptualisation of broad-based national education is premised on two fundamental principles. First, national education, which aims to develop, is a process by which humankind moves forward on multiple levels, including the personal, local, national and global levels. Second, national education nowadays must be understood within a globalised context, in which there are multiple, complex and dynamic developments at play, including the technological, economic, social, political, cultural and learning development of not only individuals and local communities within a nation, but also the global world beyond the nation. In short, Cheng and Yuen (2017) argue that broad-based education serves multiple functions at multiple levels.

Plausible suggestions

Educational implications: education for multiple citizenships and deliberative civic education

In the globalised era, multiple citizenship identities are a much better alternative than a single citizenship identity, whether it is a local identity or national identity. A single civic identity has only one loyalty, which

tends to be exclusive and suppressive of other identities, and may easily lead to populist politics (e.g., Donald Trump, the rise of the extreme right in both Western and Eastern Europe and populism in South America).

The implications for schools is first that they should provide education for multiple citizenship identities, which means an in-depth understanding of the inclusive and exclusive nature of identity politics, and a recognition of the equal existence of local identity, national identity (critical patriots) and global identity, which recognises human rights as global ethics and is the most inclusive one. Second, there must be education for tolerance in schools, which requires the recognition of diversity of viewpoints and attributes, the promotion of equality and a determination for peace. Third, there must be education for a willingness to compromise. This means nurturing the democratic personality with a willingness to compromise in terms of form and strategy without giving up core principles and values cherished by the society. Fourth, a culture of deliberative civic education should be developed based on different perspectives and values and the putting aside of those that are logically or factually wrong. A deliberative classroom is that teachers create a class culture that encourages students to share competing viewpoints and to disagree respectfully with their teachers and fellow students. This is commonly identified in the literature as an "open classroom climate" (McAvoy & Hess, 2013). This deliberative civic education also calls for comparison of the values of the remaining arguments by reference to universal values, such as international human rights, with particular attention to the tension between universality and particularity. Teachers must then put aside arguments that are clearly against universal values. With the remaining arguments that are all logically sound and are based on values compatible with human rights standards, teachers and students can deliberate together to generate an 'overlapping consensus', which could contribute to the common good of their communities and society. Together with all these new emphasis, they shall supplement the 'traditional' approach of value education which usually focuses on the transmission of taken-for-granted dominant values, customs and traditions of a society by direct teaching (Solomon, et al., 2001).

Indeed, the success of deliberative civic education depends very much on the attributes of tolerance and willingness to compromise. The implication for Hong Kong school teachers is that they should prepare to teach students how to deliberate from different views and to be able to find common ground for the long-term survival of their community and society. Schools should also create active and informed citizens who know, who think, who act, who reflect and who care. Civic qualities are needed to build up democratic systems and representative governments throughout the world (Kennedy, 2016). Finally, teachers and those holding powers should also recognize that youths usually feel that they should participate in the civic affairs that affect their lives (Haste & Hogan, 2006).

Conclusion

This paper outlines the developments and challenges of civic education in Hong Kong in the 20 years since the resumption of sovereignty by China. While there has been a constant need for personal development through education throughout all these years, and in Hong Kong SAR after 1997 this contributes to national goals, whether in terms of reproducing national identity or promoting economic growth for both Hong Kong SAR and China. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's civil society and local identity has faced nationalistic Chinese pressure and the expectation of society members becoming patriotic Chinese citizens, especially through the Hong Kong government's introduction of the moral and national education curriculum (CDC, 2012) in 2012,

which can be described as reflecting political tendencies, government interests, morality, religious beliefs, societal norms and ideologies of respective society (Cairns, et al., 2013). A strong protest against the potential indoctrinatory and nationalistic orientation of national education forced the government to shelve this curriculum. Next came the 2014 Occupy and Umbrella Movement, in which a strong desire for democratic nomination and universal suffrage led to societal rejection of the method for nominating the Chief Executive set by the Chinese NPC. Following Liberal Studies integration into civic education, it was unreasonably and unfortunately blamed as one of the main causes of the Occupy and Umbrella Movement. Localists demanded that Hong Kong people's interests be put first and asserted local Hong Kong identity. These localists created organised political groups and gained support from Hong Kong's younger generations during the District Board election in 2015 and the Legislative Council election in 2016. However, localist demands, such as self-determination and independence for Hong Kong's future, were met with severe repression from the Hong Kong SAR government in 2017. Elected Legislative Councillors were thrust into an oath-taking controversy and lost their seats, and three young student movement leaders and several young protestors were sent to prison for breaking the law. Faced with such complicated and highly controversial issues, many Hong Kong school teachers do not know what and how to teach their students, even though they have been pressured by the government to develop students' Chinese national identity and their understanding about Hong Kong SAR's constitution of Basic Law. The extent to which Chinese patriotic expectations of Hong Kong society will change in the light of such localist resistance is a major issue. Hong Kong's civic education should embrace its important role in dealing with the dual forces of patriotic and nationalistic education against a backdrop of strong local identity and localism. This is a major issue for the future of the Hong Kong SAR, and one that is confronting both young Hong Kong citizens and young citizens in the global community who face the challenges of multiple identities. The post-Occupy and Umbrella Movement era, the rise of autonomous thinking among youths and the oath-swearing controversy and the subsequent dismissal of legislative councillors by the NPC have all raised concerns about the bottom line of 'One Country, Two Systems.' What should the civic education sector do to prepare Hong Kong students for the future? Are the current civic education practices equipping them with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to be future citizens? These are perplexing but important questions to be explored and answered. Further research on this topic could use mixed methods to enable large groups of young Hong Kong citizens or civic education teachers to be surveyed in addition to smaller groups for follow-up interviews. This would provide some valuable insights into how young citizens develop their civic knowledge and attributes in an increasingly nationalistic Chinese social context. It would also allow for the influences of factors other than such the nationalistic Chinese context, such as localism and democratic ideals, to be assessed.

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