Research Note

Nation-Building and Curriculum Reform in Hong Kong and Taiwan

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Recent changes in the relationships of Hong Kong and Taiwan to mainland China have presented education policy-makers in both territories with problems of reforming school curricula in areas of teaching that are important for the formation of national identity. While both territories are subject to claims that they are part of China, both have also been separated from the Chinese mainland for long periods, and in recent years their relationships with it have been undergoing fundamental changes. Hong Kong's relationship with China has become closer due to economic integration with the hinterland and the 1997 transfer of sovereignty. Taiwan's identification as a part of China, on the other hand, has become increasingly uncertain as the process of liberalization and democratization that began in 1986[1] has allowed sovereignty to be practised by the residents of the island and a sense of "Taiwan consciousness" (*Taiwan yishi*) to develop.

As some of the changes made to curricula in Taiwan and Hong Kong in response to these developments only began to be implemented in the school year 1997–98, it is somewhat early to conduct the kind of comprehensive sociological survey that can assess how successfully they will achieve their intended results. It is timely, however, to undertake an analysis of the new curricula to see what they reveal about the ways in which educational authorities in the two territories hope to influence the identity of their future citizens.

One of the most interesting things to be shown by such an analysis is that the states in both Hong Kong and Taiwan want to sponsor the development of a multi-levelled conception of identity. This is based on the belief that individuals can determine their identities with reference to local, national and international communities, with there being no necessary conflict between these. Such a model, however, raises a number of problems because it is determined by what appear to be conflicting aims. On the one hand, the new curricula have been devised as part of state-sponsored nation-building projects; on the other, they are a response to broader demands for an education that is appropriate for creating future citizens able to participate in and support increasingly complex and democratic societies. As the curricula produced so far fail to resolve possible conflicts between these two objectives in a convincing way, the task seems to have been left in the hands of teachers who may be in a poor position to undertake it effectively.

1. Taking Taiwan's democratization as starting with the illegal but unopposed establishment of the Democratic Progressive Party on 28 September 1986.

Curriculum Reform in Hong Kong and Taiwan

Throughout most of the 20th century there has been a close relationship between education policy and nation-building in both Hong Kong and Taiwan. In Hong Kong under British rule, the education system was used in a negative way to neutralize the influence of ideas from across the border. A de-politicizing of the curriculum was achieved by presenting a conservative version of Chinese cultural tradition[2] and adopting an Anglocentric approach to subjects such as history, geography and literature.[3] In Taiwan under the Japanese occupation (1895–1945) education was used for a campaign of Niponization. Then, following the retreat of the Republic of China (ROC) to the island in 1949, policy was designed to mobilize the population behind the Kuomintang's (KMT) mission of national unification. In this process, minimal time was given to studying Taiwan itself, while courses focused on the cultivation of "Chinese" morality, culture, national consciousness and patriotism.[4]

Events since the early 1980s have forced these attitudes to change in both territories. For Hong Kong the trigger was the signing of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration and the approach of the 1997 transfer of sovereignty to the People's Republic of China (PRC). For Taiwan it was the democratization of the island that began with the establishment of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 1986, leading to the practice of sovereignty by the population of the island through electoral politics, a strengthening of "Taiwan consciousness" and a questioning of whether the island is a part of China at all.[5]

Responding to the challenges thrown up by these changes is the job of highly centralized bureaucracies. In Hong Kong, power over curriculum design resides with the Director of Education, who has the support of a range of bureaucratic bodies and consultative groups.[6] In Taiwan, these powers rest with the Ministry of Education, its curriculum committees, and the National Institute of Compilation and Translation (NICT, *Guoli bianyi guan*). The fact that both societies have introduced nine years of compulsory education gives these bureaucracies considerable power over

2. Bernard Hung-kay Luk, "Chinese culture in the Hong Kong curriculum: heritage and colonialism," *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 35, (November 1991), pp. 650–668.

3. Antony Sweeting. "Hong Kong education in historical processes," in Gerard A. Postiglione (ed.). *Education and Society in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), p. 43.

4. Jeffrey E. Meyer, "Teaching morality in Taiwan schools: the message of textbooks," *The China Quarterly*, No. 114 (June 1988), pp. 267–284. Richard W. Wilson, *The Political Socialization of Children in Taiwan* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970), and *The Moral State: A Study of the Political Socialisation of Chinese and American Children*. (New York & London: The Free Press, 1974).

5. On the relationship between democratization and national identity in Taiwan see Christopher Hughes. *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism: National Identity and Status in International Society* (New York & London: Routledge, 1997). Alan Wachman. *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

6. For a detailed account of this bureaucracy, see Paul Morris, "Preparing pupils as citizens of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong: an analysis of curriculum change and control during the transition period," in Postiglione, *Education and Society*, pp. 120–21.

influencing the formation of identity in young people.[7] Moreover, although Hong Kong allows independent publishers to provide textbooks, and Taiwan has been moving towards a similar system since 1989, control over the curriculum, allied with measures such as issuing lists of approved works, allows a great deal of central control to be exerted over the content of textbooks.

The curricula guidelines produced by the Hong Kong Education Department since the Sino-British Joint Declaration which most directly address the formation of national identity in the territory consist of two sets of guidelines on civic education. The first of these was issued in 1985 and drawn up by unidentified individuals of the Education Department's Curriculum Development Council.[8] The most recent was produced in 1996,[9] and was drafted up by an ad hoc working group composed of members drawn from the community outside the Education Department, who had a significant input into the drafting process.

Both these sets of guidelines reflect an attempt to develop a civic education that can meet the future demands of the "one country, two systems" formula for Hong Kong after 1997. Essentially, this involves trying to strike a balance between the inculcation of two identities in children, that of Hong Kong and that of China. The former is important to Hong Kong itself as a way of developing a sense of belonging and commitment to the territory with its transient community, nascent democracy, complex economy, global outlook and continued membership of international organizations.[10]

The 1997 transfer of sovereignty, though, has also meant that a Chinese identity has had to be imparted to children in Hong Kong. Mainland Chinese educationalists have thus urged the territory's government not to neglect the fact that the curriculum should be developed to encourage "love of the country and nation, as well as education in proper social behavior."[11] Before the transition, the Hong Kong Preparatory Committee made its views on the role of education known by urging publishers to remove "colonial references" and suggestions of "two

7. Taiwan introduced the compulsory nine-year system in 1968, consisting of six years of elementary school and three years of junior high, or "middle" school. Hong Kong introduced a nine-year system in 1978, consisting of six years of primary school followed by three years of junior secondary. In both societies there is a high continuation rate into senior high school/senior secondary school. This article focuses on the curricula for the compulsory period only.

8. Curriculum Development Council (CDC), *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools* (Hong Kong: Education Department, 1985).

9. CDC, *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools* (Hong Kong: Education Department, 1996).

10. The importance of maintaining Hong Kong's global outlook if the territory is to maintain its competitive edge is mentioned in some detail with relationship to English language teaching, in *Education Commission Report No. 6 (Main Report)*. (Hong Kong: Education Department, 1995), p. 1. On Hong Kong's transient society see Sweeting, "Hong Kong education within historical processes," pp. 65–69.

11. Li Yixian, "On the characteristics, strong points, and shortcomings of education in Hong Kong: a mainland educator's view of education in Hong Kong," in Postiglione, *Education and Society in Hong Kong*, p. 254.

Chinas" from textbooks.[12] Similarly, the PRC's Education Commission suggested that schools need not go on discussing events such as the Tiananmen massacre but ought to focus instead on strengthening nationalism and emphasizing the maintenance of sovereignty and national unification.[13] PRC Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen made his views clear when he told the National People's Congress on 13 March 1997 that the Preparatory Committee had decided "the contents of some textbooks currently used in Hong Kong do not accord with history or reality, contradict the spirit of 'one country, two systems' and the Basic Law, and must be revised."[14]

As in Hong Kong, the new curricula for Taiwan have also had to accommodate conflicting demands. These curricula include the elementary school curriculum of September 1993,[15] which was put into practice from the beginning of the school year 1996–97, and the middle school curriculum published in October 1994, which came into effect from the beginning of the school year 1997–98.[16]

Unlike Hong Kong, though, the new Taiwan curricula have had to reflect an increasingly tenuous relationship with mainland China. Since the 1970s the Chinese nationalism that the KMT used to use to legitimate its dictatorship following its 1949 retreat to the island has been eroded by diplomatic isolation and the rise of an increasingly urbanized and wealthy society.[17] Part of the process of democratization that has arisen from this crisis has been a movement for education reform. This took root in the early 1980s with a movement for campus democracy and school autonomy, quickly developed links with welfare and human rights organizations, and reached a peak in 1994 with a wave of protests involving some 210 pressure groups.[18]

As the reform movement spread, it began to address the issue of political indoctrination in the curriculum. Calls were made for more pluralism, more teaching about Taiwan itself, taking ideology out of education altogether, and even instilling a sense of Taiwan consciousness in the young.[19] Such demands received strong support inside parliament

12. The concept of "two Chinas" refers to the ROC and the PRC, and has become especially sensitive since the ROC on Taiwan changed its policy to advocating a policy of dual recognition in the UN in 1993.

13. *Ming bao*, 28 December 1996.

14. *South China Morning Post* (*SCMP*), 23 March 1997, p. A1.

15. Jiaoyu bu (Ministry of Education), *Guomin xiaoxue kecheng biaozhun* (*National Elementary School Curriculum*) (Taipei: Jiaoyu bu, 1993).

16. Ministry of Education, *Guomin zhongxue kecheng biaozhun* (*National Middle School Curriculum*) (Taipei: Jiaoyu bu, 1994).

17. Yun-han Chu and Tse-min Lin, "The process of democratic consolidation in Taiwan: social cleavage, electoral competition and the emerging party system," in Hung-mao Tien (ed.), *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 82.

18. For a history and analysis of the education reform movement see Pi Hsiao-hua (Bi Xiaohua), *Taiwan minjian jiaoyu gaige yundong: guojia yu shehui de fenxi* (*Taiwan's Civil Education Reform Movement: Analysis of State and Society*) (Taipei: Qianwei, 1996).

19. *Ibid.* pp. 268–69.

from the DPP and elements of an increasingly "nativized" KMT.[20] As the DPP began to win control of local governments it forced the issue of curriculum nativization through initiatives such as the introduction of mother-tongue education in counties like Ilan and Pingtung. The Ministry of Education began to respond to these pressures for change in 1989 when it held a national education conference, initiated a gradual liberalization of textbook production, and established committees to draw up the new elementary and junior high school curricula.

It is particularly interesting to note that in reacting to these very different situations, the educational bureaucracies in Hong Kong and Taiwan have arrived at remarkably similar solutions. Central to these is the idea that identity can be taught in terms of multiple layers. Hong Kong's 1996 guidelines on civic education, for example, maintain that identity should be developed in relationship to the "domestic context," the "regional community" (Hong Kong), the "national community" (China) and the "world community."[21] Values should be inculcated in learners that are "conducive to the development of a sense of belonging to Hong Kong and China so that they are ready to contribute to the betterment of the society (sic), the state and the world."[22] Taiwan's new elementary school curriculum talks in terms of children learning about the local community (Taiwan), the national community (*guojia*) of China, and the "pluralistic world village."[23]

The idea of multi-levelled identity has, of course, been common currency for psychologists at least since Freud, and was given an important place in social theory by Erikson.[24] Indeed, White and Li, in their exploration of regional, national and global identities in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Taiwan, even trace the idea as far back as Mencius and the idea that the individual can harmonize identifications with family, friends, ministers and sovereign.[25] What is interesting about the new curricula, though, is that this model of identity is actually being encouraged and articulated by the states in Hong Kong and Taiwan for the sake of solving their respective identity crises.

Having said this, however, although the multi-levelled vision of identity is remarkably similar in the two territories, closer examination shows that it has quite different implications when applied in each. This can be seen by looking in the first place at the varying interpretations and emphases that are placed on the levels of identity in the new curricula.

20. By the mid-1980s more than 70% of the KMT's members were "native" Taiwanese, as in being born in Taiwan before the armed forces of the ROC took the Japanese surrender in 1945 or being the descendants of such people. Lucian Pye, "Taiwan's political development and its implications for Beijing," *Asian Survey*, June 1986, pp. 618–19.

21. CDC, *Guidelines* (1996), pp. 22–23.

22. *Ibid.* p. 5.

23. Ministry of Education, *Guomin xiaoxue kecheng biaozhun*, p. 159.

24. For a concise survey of theories of identity as they relate to social formations see William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 25–53.

25. Lynn White and Li Cheng, "China coast identities: regional, national, and global," in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (eds.). *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 154.

In Hong Kong, the way in which the curriculum wants to teach children about the local and national communities of Hong Kong and the PRC has to be, first of all, in accordance with the "one country, two systems" formula. Right from kindergarten, children are expected to learn both "I am a member of Hong Kong society" and "I am a Chinese." When they get to junior secondary school they then learn about the political relationship between these two identities, looking at the institutional political arrangements of Hong Kong and the PRC, including the Basic Law, governmental structures and organizations, functions and roles, affiliations and groupings in society, law and order, and current social issues.[26] Within this schema, the "national community" of China clearly refers to the PRC. This is made clear by the way children are expected to develop an understanding of the "ideology(ies)" of socialism and communism, the economics of the planned economy and the socialist market economy, the political system of democratic centralism and the Party, and an awareness of the means and modes of participation, and the citizen's rights and responsibilities.[27]

In Taiwan, on the other hand, although children learn to identify with both Taiwan and China, the priorities attached to these two levels are quite different from those in Hong Kong. Learning about Taiwan starts in year two of elementary school, while studying China does not start until year five. This may seem reasonable, given the fact that the state children grow up in is the ROC on Taiwan. Yet it signals a radical change of priorities from the old curriculum. That mentioned Taiwan only at the very end of a grand narrative on the development of the Chinese nation from the stone age to the present.[28] Learning about the "bastion for national recovery" was expanded somewhat in the early 1980s, but remained confined to the development of the island after the government's retreat there.[29] When courses such as "society" did touch on Taiwan, they amounted to little more than learning about local laws and regulations,[30] the ROC Constitution and the condition of the local police station.[31]

Most indicative of the new importance attached to Taiwan in the new curriculum is the introduction of a course in the first year of junior high school called "Know Taiwan" (*Renshi Taiwan*), consisting of three sub-units on Taiwan's history, society and geography. At this level, learning about China has been relegated to year two, although it still revolves very much around the KMT narrative of the integration of China's nationalities, Sun Yat-sen and the establishment of the ROC, and the relationship between government and people before and after the

26. CDC, *Guidelines* (1996), pp. 35–37.
27. *Ibid.* p. 24.
28. *National Middle School Curriculum* (1972), pp. 100–102, (1983). p. 97.
29. *National Middle School Curriculum* (1983), p. 36.
30. *National Middle School Curriculum* (1972), p. 30.
31. *National Middle School Curriculum* (1983), p. 36

founding of the Republic.[32] Learning about the world is left to year three. The priority is clearly to learn about Taiwan first.

Curriculum Reform and Political Values in Hong Kong

What analysis of the new curricula shows, then, is that space has been created for children in Hong Kong to learn about their local community as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the PRC, and for children in Taiwan to learn more about the island's distinct identity. This order of priorities between the local and the national communities can be clarified further in the case of Hong Kong by the way in which the 1996 guidelines on civic education deal with and attach different priorities to the political concepts and values attached the local and national levels of identity.

To start with, the values and concepts attached to Hong Kong include participation and contribution to society, knowing and understanding the administrative systems of the SAR and the Basic Law, and developing an interest in and awareness of the current social and political issues in local society.[33] This requires understanding the meaning of sovereignty, the rights and responsibilities of Hong Kong people, representative government and election, communications between the government and the people, political authority and legitimacy, means and modes of participation, the role of public opinion, including demonstration, and the role of the press and the mass media. It also includes learning about human rights, democracy, rule of law, freedom, justice and equality.[34]

The concepts and values attached to the "national community" are quite different. These include "Chinese nationhood" and "political authority and legitimacy." More specifically, these headings refer to the study of "ideology," the political and economic systems of the PRC, the PRC Constitution, the government institutions of the bureaucracy and cadre systems, democratic centralism, the state and the Chinese Communist Party, and means and modes of participation. Under the rubric of "Chinese citizenship" children will learn "citizen identity; national pride, nationalism and patriotism; responsibilities and rights."[35]

It is clear that learning the first of these sets of concepts and values is oriented to an increasingly democratic Hong Kong while studying the latter is concerned more with the legitimacy of the CCP dictatorship in mainland China. It is something of a challenge, therefore, for the curriculum guidelines to make these compatible. They try to do this by arguing that although values can vary across societies, all societies do actually share certain universal or "core values." From an individual perspective, these include the sanctity of life, human dignity, honesty, courage, individuality, and a maturity in rationality, affectivity, aesthetics and creativity. From a social perspective, they include equality, freedom from

32. *National Elementary School Curriculum* (1993).
33. CDC, *Guidelines* (1996), pp. 22–23.
34. *Ibid.* p. 35.
35. *Ibid.* pp. 35–36.

intrusion, mutual belief in the building of a better society and bringing about the common good.[36]

If this premise is accepted, then when differences in values between societies do arise, these can be explained in terms of the fact that different emphases are placed on the principles of individualism and collectivism. Different values need not, therefore, be seen as mutually exclusive. This is because "in societies where individualism is more obviously valued, the significance of common interest, common will and common good is also valued. Likewise, in societies where collectivism seems to be dominant, there are various extents of respect for individuality, and self-realisation is seen as best achieved through collective realization."[37]

What this somewhat convoluted argument appears to hide, however, is that the guidelines do ultimately give priority to values attached to the national community. This begins to become clear when they go on to conclude that the aim of civic education is to reconcile core values with values that are held to be in accordance with an all-embracing "Chinese tradition." This is because in Chinese tradition, "... even though collectivism has been a dominant social value, self has been seen as the starting point of civic values, as exemplified in such sayings as '*tuiji jiren*' (put oneself in the place of another or treat other people as you would yourself) and '*xiushen, qijia, zhiguo, ping tianxia*' (from self cultivation, to family regulation, to country administration, and to global pacification). It is therefore important to see that individual and social core values, rather than being mutually exclusive, are to be seen as mutually supportive and inter-dependent. It is thereby important to see that self-realisation is best achieved in common good."[38]

In case the priority of this collectivist "Chinese tradition" is not clear enough in such wording, the fact that "national" values are to be given first place is further underlined when the guidelines explain that, "politically speaking, one's civic identity is defined by one's national identity. The national community therefore constitutes the ultimate domestic context for one's civic learning. Such national spirit as nationalism and patriotism is essential not only for one's national identity and sense of belonging but also for the cohesion and strength of one's own nation."[39] One of the specific purposes of learning about the "national community" is, accordingly, to get to know Chinese culture and Chinese history, "which is essential for developing national identity and patriotic spirit."[40]

The general priority of the new guidelines thus appears to be the inculcation of loyalty to China, which in this context clearly means the PRC. Such an interpretation is given further credence by statements concerning education made by government representatives. Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, for example, has voiced his concerns about con-

36. *Ibid.* pp. 12–15.
37. *Ibid.* p. 15.
38. *Ibid.* p. 15.
39. *Ibid.* p. 23.
40. *Ibid.* p. 24.

fusion in the minds of the young over how the identity of the individual relates to that of the regional and the national communities.[41] His solution is to use history to clarify the concepts of state and nation, with the Hong Kong government holding activities to promote knowledge of China and the concept "I am Chinese, my home is Hong Kong." Apart from the new civic education curriculum, activities announced for this initiative by the Education Department so far range from television programmes on the national and SAR flags, to using karaoke to teach the national anthem.[42]

The idea that such attitudes are reconcilable with the cultivation of democratic young citizens has already met with a degree of scepticism in the Hong Kong press. The similarity between Tung Chee-hwa's views and the kind of patriotic education campaign unleashed by Jiang Zemin in mainland China has not gone unnoticed. This is not to say there has been any widespread condemnation of the need to teach Chinese language, culture and history in schools, so long as this is not at the expense of other subjects.[43] It is merely that questions have been raised as to whether it is really a lack of knowledge about China that is at the root of the confusion over identity in the minds of the young. After all, if the identity crisis is related to such ignorance, then this is surely due more to the censorship and secrecy imposed in the mainland by the CCP than to the faults of the Hong Kong education system. Moreover, it has been pointed out, as successive waves of overseas Chinese have returned to the motherland since the 1950s only to have their enthusiasm dashed, it might actually be very healthy for the young to react with scepticism to the patriotic call.[44]

Curriculum Reform and Political Values in Taiwan

If the values contained in the Hong Kong reforms include a strong dose of PRC nationalism, those in Taiwan's new curriculum are quite different. This can be shown best by a close reading of the textbooks produced by the NICT for the "Know Taiwan" course.[45] A number of things about these books has been remarked on by critics in Taiwan, all of which add up to the general accusation that an attempt is being made to loosen the identification of Taiwan as a part of China.

41. See for example his speech on youth affairs of 20 December 1997, *Wenhui bao*, 21 December 1997, p. A12.

42. *SCMP*, 7 March 1998.

43. There is, for example, widespread resistance to the Education Department policy of promoting Chinese as the medium of general instruction at the expense of English. Parents and students reacted angrily to directives in September and December 1997 which decided that the majority of schools should work towards using Chinese as the medium of instruction. The outrage this provoked among parents worried about the detrimental effect this could have on career opportunities meant that by March 1998 the Education Department had significantly to loosen the criteria determining which schools would have to use Chinese.

44. *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, editorial, 24 December 1997.

45. In August 1997 the NICT produced three standard textbooks for "Know Taiwan": *Renshi Taiwan lishi pian* (*Know Taiwan History Volume*), *Renshi Taiwan shehui pian* (*Know Taiwan Society Volume*) and *Renshi Taiwan dili pian* (*Know Taiwan Geography Volume*).

There are many grounds for such views. For example, neither the *Society* volume nor the *History* volume refers to the people of Taiwan as "Chinese" in the political sense (*Zhongguoren*), or as the "Chinese nation" in the ethnic sense (*Zhonghua minzu*). Instead, the *Society* volume has a whole sub-chapter under the title "We are all Taiwanese" (*women dou shi Taiwanren*). It also departs from the established categorization of those who can trace their origins to Fujian or to Hakka ancestry as belonging to the Han ethnic group, by dividing the population into the four ethnic groups of Hokkien (*minnanren*), Hakka (*kejiaren*), "Mainlanders" (*waishengren*) and aboriginal peoples (*yuan zhu min*).[46]

Subtle but highly sensitive departures are made from the orthodox vocabulary of Chinese nationalism. For example, the Chinese national hero Zheng Chenggong, who expelled the Dutch in 1662, is called "Sir Zheng" (Zheng shi), rather than "Ming-Zheng." Whereas the latter title implies that Taiwan came under Ming dynasty rule with Zheng's occupation, the former merely implies that it was ruled by the Zheng family. Similarly, the period when Taiwan was part of the Qing empire is referred to as the period of "Qing rule" (*Qing ling*). Japan's surrender of Taiwan to ROC forces in 1945 is no longer called the "glorious retrocession" (*guangfu*), but merely "the end of the war." Taiwan is also openly referred to as the "ROC on Taiwan," something that critics claim is inconsistent with the official policy that the ROC is the sovereign government of the whole of China, which is only temporarily limited to Taiwan.[47]

The historical perspective and periodization adopted in the course also departs from the narrative of Chinese nationalism. The chronology is a mere 400 years, starting with the Portuguese naming the island "Formosa." The island is then presented as having gone through a "tragic history" (*bei qing de lishi*). Within this period the people of Taiwan have not been able to be "masters of their home" (*dangjia zuozhu*) until, that is, the coming of democratization, which culminates with the election of Lee Teng-hui as President in 1996.[48]

Within these 400 years, the brief period during which the Dutch and Spanish ruled in Taiwan is not called an "occupation," but merely an era of "international competition." The vocabulary used to describe the period of Japanese rule is particularly controversial, with the term *Riben tongzhi* (Japanese rule) used instead of the usual *Riju* (Japanese occupation), which critics claim reveals a scheme to make Japanese rule seem legal. Further evidence of this is claimed in the way that the *History* volume fails to mention that relationships between Taiwan and the

46. *Know Taiwan Society Volume*, pp. 11–14. The *Society* volume does refer to some of the residents of Taiwan as being *Zhonghua ren* which means "people of Chinese culture," and *huazu* which means "ethnic Chinese," as distinct from the more political *Zhongguoren* and *Zhonghua minzu* which are closer to meaning "people of the Chinese state" and "the Chinese nation" respectively.

47. Wang Hsiao-po *et al.*, " 'Renshi Taiwan' lishi pian xiuding" ("Corrections to the history volume of 'Know Taiwan', " in Taiwan shi yanjiuhui (ed.), *Renshi Taiwan jiaoke shu* (*The Know Taiwan Textbook*) (Taipei: Taiwan shi yanjiuhui, 1997), p. 53.

48. *Know Taiwan Society Volume*, p. 63.

Chinese mainland continued under the Japanese occupation, with Chinese revolutionary nationalists visiting the island and people leaving Taiwan to go to the mainland and resist the Japanese invasion. Moreover, the *History* volume is said to whitewash the Japanese period by not mentioning things such as the suffering of Taiwanese and sex slaves forced to serve the Japanese armed forces. Instead, it talks about how the Japanese enabled Taiwan to modernize its economic and social infrastructure, while playing down the harshness of colonial rule.[49]

Concerning Taiwan's future relations with China, neither the *History* nor the *Society* volume mentions the prospect of "peaceful unification." Instead, the former talks about developing Taiwan, especially in the last chapter. Here, when cross-Strait relations are mentioned, it is merely to talk about establishing a "double-win" situation for the 21st century through a process of transactions under the principles of "reason, equality and mutual benefit."

Such a view is certainly in accordance with "stage one" of the government's overall mainland strategy, as encapsulated in its *Guidelines for National Unification*,[50] which says that the present task is to build trust between Taiwan and mainland China. But it neglects to mention the second and third stages of that policy, which are supposed to involve direct contacts and ultimately unification between the two sides.[51] Instead of this, in the final chapter of the *Society* volume, under the title "Our blueprint" (*women de lantu*), is the proclamation that what is being undertaken is the task of "creating a 'new Taiwan'" (*yingzao "xin Taiwan"*).[52]

The new course has thus been condemned for promoting Taiwanese national identity, lacking academic rigour, adopting a Japanese perspective on history, revealing a "colonial mentality" on the part of the authors, eroding Taiwan's links with the Chinese mainland, developing a terminology to "de-sinicise" Taiwan and using education to separate the people of Taiwan from Chinese consciousness.[53] The closer critics look, the more they see the hand of the state, and the influence of Lee Teng-hui in particular. For example, one of the purposes of "Know Taiwan" is said to be consolidation and promotion of a Taiwan *Gemeinschaft* (*shengming gongtongti*),[54] a term that is central to Lee Teng-hui's thinking on the relationship between Taiwanese and Chinese identity. This has become

49. Chen Yingzhen (Chen Ying-chen), "Yi ge 'xin shi guan' de pozhan" ("The hole in a 'new view of history' "), in Taiwan shi yanjiuhui, *The Know Taiwan Textbook*, pp. 77–84. It may be of interest to point out here that because Taiwan was ceded by the Qing dynasty to Japan by the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), in terms of international law the Japanese occupation was legal. Of course, whether one accepts this, which neither the ROC nor the PRC government has done, depends on the status one gives to international law in the period of empire building.

50. Executive Yuan, *Guidelines for National Unification* (Taipei: Executive Yuan, 14 March 1991).

51. Wang Hsiao-po *et al.*, "Corrections to the history volume," p. 54.

52. *Know Taiwan Society Volume*, p. 90.

53. Wang Hsiao-po *et al.*, "Corrections to the history volume," p. 9.

54. *National Middle School Curriculum* (1994), pp. 854–55.

particularly sensitive in Taiwan's politics because it is widely held that the term is taken from DPP thinking and is a smoke-screen for building a Taiwanese national identity.[55] All of this adds fuel to the charge that "Know Taiwan" is more of a political manifesto than a course devised for true education.[56]

Education or Indoctrination?

If one accepts that schools are the right place to engage in nation-building, then attempts to revise the curriculum in Hong Kong and Taiwan could be seen as both reasonable and pragmatic responses to changing relationships between the two territories and mainland China. Yet concerns about the way in which this is taking place should alert us to the real danger that such initiatives could lead education back towards the kind of indoctrination that characterized KMT education policy under martial law and is still used by the CCP in mainland China.

Those responsible for reform in Hong Kong and Taiwan have attempted to rebut such accusations. The authors of Hong Kong's 1996 guidelines on civic education, for example, claim in their defence that "all societies use some form of indoctrination as a means of socialising youth, which involves the inculcation of a set of normative social, ethical and political standards that are believed to be the fundamental fabrics (sic) of a society." Such indoctrination, they argue, is acceptable so long as it does not involve "deliberately ignoring or falsifying evidence as well as presenting it in a biased way in order to achieve the desired end."[57]

That the new curriculum in Taiwan is aiming at a more balanced approach and not indoctrination has also been claimed by its authors. Professor Tu Cheng-sheng (Du Zhengsheng), who headed the committee that planned the new junior high history curriculum and was in charge of the NICT committee that compiled the *Society* textbook for the "Know Taiwan" course, has been most articulate. He insists that it is only right that Taiwan should be at the centre of learning since the "Chinese people in Taiwan" have acknowledged the existence of the mainland regime and are no longer concerned with politics based on Chinese nationalist claims to legitimacy. Yet he denies that this amounts to going to the other

55. In a speech on 8 August 1991. Lee Teng-hui credited this idea to the German concept of *Gemeinschaft* as found in Goethe and Kant ("From uncertainty to pragmatism – the shape of the age to come," speech to university professors. 8 August 1991, reprinted in Lee Teng-hui, *Creating the Future* (Taipei 1992), p. 117). Peng Ming-min, though, takes the credit himself (see Peng Ming-min Educational Foundation (ed.), *Peng Mingmin kan Taiwan* (*Peng Ming-min Views Taiwan*) (Taipei 1994). p. 29). Chinese nationalist stalwarts in Taiwan such as Hsu Li-nong (Xu Linong) of the "New Tong Meng Hui," also credit it to Peng Ming-min (see Hsu's comments in *Lianhe bao*, 20 June 1993). So do mainland-Chinese Taiwan watchers, such as He Biao in "Luntan Taiwan 'mingyun gongtongti' " ("Discussion of a Taiwan 'community of shared destiny' "), *Taisheng*, Beijing No. 107 (1993), pp. 6–7.

56. This point is made by Wang Chung-fu of the Department of History at National Taiwan Normal University, among others, in "Dui yu 'renshi Taiwan' jiaoke shu zhi ying you de renshi" ("Concerning what should be known about 'Know Taiwan' "). in Taiwan shi yanjiuhui (ed.), *The Know Taiwan Textbook*, pp. 6–7.

57. CDC, *Guidelines* (1996), p. 75.

extreme of following fashionable trends of developing a Taiwan consciousness. As Tu points out, China still has a special place in the new curriculum as the second circle of learning. This is crucial because China remains the key to understanding Taiwan's culture and history and also poses the biggest threat to Taiwan's security. Moreover, he argues, it would be a shame to waste the academic achievements in Chinese studies that Taiwan has built up over the decades.[58]

What Tu is advocating here, then, is allowing children to explore a more balanced view of the various levels of their identity for themselves. A similar point is made in Taiwan's junior high curriculum, which numbers the development of creativity, and the abilities to think logically and critically among its objectives.[59] Some of the authors of the "Know Taiwan" textbooks have also defended themselves in the press by claiming that the most controversial aspects of their work are not intended to be taken as factual knowledge but as the starting point for debate.[60]

In short, then, what the reformers of Taiwan's curriculum hope to achieve is something more than just a new kind of political indoctrination by presenting a balanced view of the various levels of identity and encouraging children to draw their own conclusions. Central to this task is not merely the inculcation of facts, but the development of critical skills, or what educationalists would call "political literacy."[61] The same solution is also sought in Hong Kong where the 1996 guidelines on civic education state that it is "critical thinking dispositions and problem-solving skills that would allow them [students] to analyse social and political issues and to arrive at a rational appraisal of these issues."[62] It is the development of such skills as being reflective, open minded, determined, self-controlled, tolerant of diverse views, democratic and putting a high value on freedom and liberty that allows "core values" to be sustained, explains the document.[63] When conflicts do occur between the values attached to different levels of identity, the teacher should not impose an answer but adopt an "affirmative neutral" teaching strategy.[64]

58. Tu Cheng-sheng "Bentu–Zhongguo–shijie" ("Native land–China–the world"), *Zhongguo shibao* (*China Times*), 25 May 1994, p. 11; "Lishi jiaoyu yao ruhe songbang" ("How should the fetters be released from history teaching") *Lianhe bao* (*United Daily News*), 23 January 1995, p. 11; "Yi ge xin shi guan de dansheng" ("The birth of a new view of history"), *Dangdai*, No. 120 (1 August 1997), pp. 20–30; "Cong 'renshi Taiwan' zuotan lishi jiaoyu" ("A seminar on historical education from 'Know Taiwan' "), *Dangdai*, No. 120, 1 August 1997, pp. 55–67.

59. *National Middle School Curriculum* (1994), p. 1.

60. This point is made by Lin Fu-shih of the Academia Sinica's institute of history and philology, who co-authored the draft of the *Society* volume, in defence of the use of the terminology "Taiwan's 400 years of Tragic History." *Know Taiwan Society Volume*, p. 66. See *Lianhe bao*, 7 June 1997, p. 11.

61. The concept of "political literacy" was argued for by Britain's Hansard Society in 1974 in the context of developing political education in Britain. See John Annette. "Citizenship and higher education: an historical overview," paper delivered at the Political Studies Annual Conference, Britain, 1997, p.5.

62 CDC. *Guidelines* (1996), p. 6.

63 *Ibid.* p. 14.

64. *Ibid.* p. 73.

Conclusion

The above analysis of the new curricula in Taiwan and Hong Kong has attempted to show how the educational bureaucracies in the two territories are responding to changing relationships with mainland China. In both territories a solution to an identity crisis has been sought by developing a multi-layered conception of identity, within which the local community of Taiwan or Hong Kong can still be presented as a part of the national community of China.

However, closer analysis shows that this conception of community is underwritten by agendas that reflect the very different political trajectories along which Hong Kong and Taiwan are moving. The tension between nation-building and democratization that is generated by these trajectories appears to give rise to a fundamental incompatibility of aims. On the one hand are the imperatives of Chinese nationalism; on the other is the need to cultivate the kind of political literacy that is essential for the working of complex, globalized and increasingly democratic societies.

In Hong Kong, it is not hard to see how the development of political literacy could lead children to question the nation-building project, especially if this seems incompatible with democratic values. Intelligent children may well wonder, for example, why Hong Kong but not the national community of China should have a democratic way of life. After all, as Julian Leung succinctly puts it, "how can one be patriotic if one's concern for the country's democratic development is considered a subversive activity?"[65]

In Taiwan, on the other hand, it may be hard to square the demands generated by democratization with those of Chinese nationalism. Reactions to the course "Know Taiwan" only go to underline the fact that despite the practice of electoral politics on the island, there remain many academics, parents, politicians and teachers who retain an attachment to Chinese nationalism and are unhappy with the idea of bringing up children with a strong "Taiwan consciousness." This is especially so if it means presenting children with a view of historical events that appears to be shaped more by political imperatives than by academic objectivity. In such a situation it is hard to see how a course like "Know Taiwan" can avoid leading to suspicion and cynicism, and even to street demonstrations at times.

To advocate that teachers should adopt an "affirmative neutral" teaching strategy to deal with such delicate situations is certainly refreshing following the "conservative moralist" methodology that has been adopted in both territories for most of the 20th century, which amounted to merely imposing values on children.[66] What the new curricula seem to be advocating instead appears to be very much in the enlightened tradition

65 Julian Y.M. Leung, "Education in Hong Kong and China: toward convergence?" in Postiglione, *Education and Society in Hong Kong*, p. 266.

66 On "conservative moralism" and other approaches to civic education see Jacques S. Benninga, "Moral and character education in the elementary school: an introduction," in

of John Dewey, who realized that while children had to identify with democratic values of their own accord this could not be achieved without firm guidance that would allow for the fact that "a democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, or conjoint communicated experience."[67]

However, striking the right balance between moral guidance, critical thinking and the formation of social identity is problematic. It can lead to controversy even in the best financed schools in the most open and democratic societies. In educational systems which are highly centralized, extremely competitive and almost totally exam-oriented, the success or failure of civic education may not come down to whether teachers are disciplined into teaching an official orthodoxy by school sanctions, but to whether they will have the time or motivation really to stimulate independent and critical thinking.

In such a context it is not surprising that an initial assessment of the implementation of Hong Kong's 1985 guidelines on civic education concluded that "the *Guidelines* were taken not so much as a guiding document but as a reference, and at worst it was neglected completely."[68] If a similar fate befalls the latest curricula in Hong Kong and Taiwan, then perhaps neither the nation-building requirements of the state nor the need to cultivate politically literate citizens for the future will be satisfied by the educational project. If, on the other hand, the new initiatives do succeed, then they might lead to the development of a multi-level conception of Chinese identity that would allow the future citizens of Hong Kong and Taiwan to make sense of their identities and relationships with China in exciting and creative new ways.

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footnote continued

Benninga (ed.), *Moral Character and Civic Education in the Elementary School* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991), pp. 3–20.

67 John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1963, originally 1916), p. 87.

68 Thomas Kwan-cho Tse, *The Poverty of Political Education in Hong Kong Secondary Schools* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese University, 1997), p. 17.