Chinese civic education being globalised

What changes have been made in civic education curriculum in China, Hong Kong and Macao

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to compare the curriculum developments of civic education in three emerging Chinese societies: China and two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao, which are increasingly under the impacts of globalisation in this information world.

Design/methodology/approach – The analytical method is used and the following are identified: active and global civic education-related learning units and key themes and main contents in official curriculum guidelines and updated textbooks related to civic education.

Findings – A major finding is that elements of both active and global citizenship, such as participation in the community and understanding about the world and thus forming multiple identities, can be found alongside their emphasis on enhancing national citizenship. Thus, ideas of global citizenship and multiple levels of citizenship from local, national to global start to develop in these three Chinese societies.

Social implications – The implications of such findings of both active and global citizenship, as well as multiple identities, found in these three Chinese societies could be huge for informing civic literature and sociological point of views, in particular, pointing to the next generations receiving a broadened and transcended notion of multiple levels of citizenship, apart from local and national citizenship.

Originality/value – The significance of this paper is that it argues that ideas of active citizenship in terms of community participation and global citizenship have been found in China, Hong Kong and Macao civic education curriculum and textbooks because of the expectations placed on students to compete in a globalized world, though national citizenship and patriotic concerns have been primary concerns. Globalisation makes the world society by impacting on these three Chinese societies for active and global citizenship, though they still retain their particular curricular focusses.

Keywords China, Hong Kong, Macao, Global citizenship, Civic education, Active citizenship

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

This paper compares the curriculum developments of civic education in three emerging Chinese societies: China and two Special Administrative Regions (SARs) of Hong Kong and Macao, which are increasingly under the impacts of globalisation in this information world.
The analytical method is used, and the following are identified: active and global civic education-related learning units and key themes and main contents in those official curriculum guidelines and updated officially approved textbooks related to civic education. Schools in these three Chinese societies are supposed to follow such official curriculum guidelines compulsorily and have adopted the officially approved publisher textbooks, though schools are usually given a certain amount of flexibility in Hong Kong and Macao. A major finding is that elements of both active and global citizenship, such as participation in the community and understanding about the world and thus forming multiple identities of local, national and global identity, can be found alongside their emphasis on enhancing national citizenship after their sovereignty resumption by China in the late 1990s. Thus, ideas of multiple levels of citizenship from local, national to global start to develop in education among these three Chinese societies. The implication of such active and global citizenship, as well as multiple identities, found in Chinese societies could be huge for informing civic education literature and pondering on their future social developments, which points to the next generations receiving a broadened and transcended notion of citizenship apart from local and national citizenship. This paper concludes by suggesting that there is an urgent need for improving teacher training of these three Chinese societies in civic education to equip teachers for active and global citizenship.

Hall (2018, p. 181) holds the view that globalisation “as a set of ancient processes, which only took on the more recent manifestations and became truly global in the last century or so”. Globalisation has also been widely viewed in terms of development of human civilisations can affect and challenge civic education (Davies and Pike, 2009). While changes in societal structures to meet globalisation are necessary, individual and collective learning must also play a fundamental role; thus, societies setting out to prepare students for globalisation (Giddens, 2002). Cosmopolitan dispositions have become more commonplace under the processes of globalisation (Kendall et al., 2009), and the higher education sector also saw widespread global citizenship (Friedman, 2018). There has been, indeed, a rise in worldwide concern for citizenship education in countries such as Japan, South Africa, the USA, the UK (McCowan, 2011), Ireland (Keating, 2009) and Australia (Tudball and Henderson, 2013). Diverse allegiance to one’s community, culture, nation and global context entails the idea of global citizen (Steiner, 1996; Clough and Holden, 1996; Dower and Williams, 2002; Heater, 2004), wherein a “global citizen” is a member of the wider community of all humanity, the world that is wider than that of a nation-state (Heater, 2004). Kennedy (2014) found that Chinese and Europeans share similar views on adequate preparation of citizens to serve the purposes of the nation-state. While the Asian focus is more on duty, obligations and civic virtues that contribute to the stability, in Europe, it is more on rights that can guarantee the equitable treatment of citizens, participation and engagement (Kennedy, 2014).

In particular, there has been a rise of interest in citizenship education in Mainland China (Fairbrother, 2003, 2008; Law, 2011; Kennedy et al., 2014, 2015; Zhao et al., 2014). However, Western models of citizenship education have not always been relevant (Lee, 2004, 2008; Lee and Fouts, 2005), whereas the impact of post-colonial globalisation and localisation has relevance (Grossman et al., 2008). Indeed, by conceiving globalisation in terms of not only interdependence and global institutions but also as inhabiting and reshaping the national, this opens up a vast agenda and analytical terrain for sociological research (Sassen, 2010), such as the linkages between global and using sociological concepts, methods and data when they are not designed to analyse the global (Sassen, 2010). A particular case is the recent Chinese curriculum named Morality and Rule of Law, which has been steadily advancing both active and law citizenship as examined in this study, in addition to the...
emphasis on ideological education since the establishment of People’s Republic of China (Zhao, 2013). Furthermore, recent developments of active and global citizenship in both Hong Kong and Macao SARs curriculum (in particular, through the various informal curriculum and immersion in different subjects of Hong Kong and Morality and Citizenship in Macao) merit as analytical focus too, in view of Cummings and Tang (2008), who carried out the “Hong Kong Global Citizenship Survey” and discussed that Hong Kong could assume “a globally responsible external agenda” to serve values such as social cohesion and collective self-esteem.

The significance of this paper is while the West got it wrong in their 1980s-1990s prediction of “economic reform will lead to political reform” and the “market economy will bring democracy, freedom, rights and the rule of law” to China (The Economist, 2018), this paper argues that ideas of active citizenship such as community and social participation and global citizenship have been found in China, Hong Kong and Macao civic education official curriculum guides and approved textbooks because of the expectations placed on students to compete in a globalised world, though national citizenship and patriotic concerns have been primary concerns. Indeed, many societies use teaching history or related subjects to shape a national identity and cultivate a sense of patriotic loyalty through a particular version of national history and national myth (Vickers, 2005). Second, this paper argues that in response to globalisation, these three Chinese societies have incorporated elements of global citizenship education into their respective civic education curriculum guidelines and textbooks, which aim at preparing their students for globalisation by exploring global issues such as international co-operation, world peace and cultural diversity and practicing skills such as co-operation and community participation. For the coming century, China’s rise obviously has implications for the global community, but it is related to domestic issues and concerns (Shirk, 2014) and thus deserves more research. This paper can also possibly fill up some gaps left over by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta et al., 2001) and the International Civics and Citizenship Education Study (Schulz et al., 2010), both of which covered many countries but not China. This study provides a timely contribution to the understanding about civic education in these three emerging Chinese societies. They, indeed, just like many other Asian countries, have prioritised educational reform insofar as it serves economic development (Mok et al., 2009). The conclusion of identifying both active and global citizenship elements in official curriculum guides and approved textbooks points to a professional need of equipping civic education teachers for both active and global citizenship in these three places, wherein teacher training is always one major area of education reform in the Asia-Pacific region (Mok et al., 2003). Perhaps, unlike many Western liberal democracies, Asian nation-states play major and decisive roles in intervening, regulating and planning the economy and public policies (Lim, 2016). Therefore, analysing how the curriculum guides and textbooks regulate both active and global citizenship education developments in these three Chinese societies can shed light on how they mitigate the interactions and tensions between national and global citizenship.

Transforming civic education in Chinese societies under globalisation

Globalisation can be regarded as an essential consequence of the rapidly changing processes in which prosperity in the past century has changed the historical context of traditional economic, political and cultural development patterns within nation-states (Shi and Guo, 2017). Co-operation and interaction among different countries have been increasingly strengthened. This kind of multidimensional global change, however, will inevitably challenge civic education (Rao and Chen, 2006). For example, the global mobility of human
beings has brought about a new transformation of identity and a sense of belonging. In answering the questions “who am I?” and “who are we?”, a new issue of individual self-recognition emerged. Historically, reflection on “who am I?” has had a philosophical foundation. Nowadays, it extends to include a sociological perspective, and in particular, interpersonal relations (Splitter, 2011). Individuals search for their own place within different social groups. With the establishment of supranational and international institutions, an extensive and profound range of transfers and the demise of national sovereignty have taken place, and the nation-state is no longer the sole source of legitimacy for participating in political activities and controlling the discourse on citizenship identity (Law, 2004). In sociological terms, we shall understand that local school and curricular arrangements depend on broader social institutions to supply their form and function (Meyer et al., 1992).

The changes brought about by globalisation have required civic education to develop citizens who are responsible and capable of making and influencing public decisions (Osler and Starkey, 2004). Also, Friedman (2018) found that a common rationale for embracing global citizenship is that students have a responsibility to effect change in the world. Jerome (2018) argues for reconsidering the relationship between the genuine educational aspects of citizenship education (where “powerful knowledge” opens up new and diverse understandings) from the normative aims, which are more akin to a form of socialisation (where “knowledge of the powerful” closes down certain possibilities). Civic education is thus bound to change the following: the first is its educational objectives. Because these three Chinese societies are undergoing a transition from passive to active citizenship (Janoski, 1998), the values embodied in civic education indicate that it is an “active practice” manifested by the way citizens participate in their political communities (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994). This necessitates the teaching of competencies such as “the values, skills, and attitudes that they need to take an active part in governing themselves” (Finkel, 2003, p. 137). The second is citizenship identity recognition. There is no longer a single line defining nation-states. Instead, they are distinguished by diverse ranges and levels, while the singular developmental model is becoming transformed into a simultaneous three-dimensional developmental model that includes local, national and international organisations (Heater, 1990, 2004). A nation-state is merely the starting point of a hierarchy defining a particular nationality and citizenship identity. Increasingly, in a world with both globalisation and migration surges, a nation-state identity can descend into a sub-national one or extend to a regional or even a global one (Guo, 2010). The connotation and constituent elements of citizenship identity, in fact, have expanded beyond Marshall’s (1950) assumption of a somewhat homogenous society composed of social class divisions into cultural, regional, environmental, multicultural, female citizenship and so on, thus expanding the concept of citizenship identity into multiple identities. Hence, both passive and active citizenship (Janoski, 1998) of individuals in a nation-state with certain universalistic rights and obligations at a specific level of equality, multiple citizenship (Heater, 1990, 2004) and institutional pluralism, multicultural citizenship (Kymlicka, 1996), democratic citizenship of both maximum and minimum interpretations of citizenship (McLaughlin, 1992; Lee and Sweeting, 2001), social justice-oriented citizen (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004), young people participation (Haste and Hogan, 2006), etc. are found in current literature (Table I).

In short, against a background of globalisation, this study found that there arises active citizenship in terms of encouraging participation levels and social concerns and broadened sense of citizenship education from local, national to global citizenship. China, Hong Kong and Macao societies, indeed, are increasingly opening up to the globalisation processes such as the explosion of information and new ideas, migration of people from diverse cultures and
environmental awareness. Schools then become an important venue for teaching civics, which comprises different domains of cultivating young citizens in terms of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and dispositions. The findings suggest that these three Chinese societies are helping students to be aware of their identity locally, nationally and globally, cultivating both national and global visions and their duties, and have a kind of cross-national, cross-cultural ability to communicate and engender the values needed to take part actively in a globalised world, thus favouring a sense of global citizen in the future.

Myers (2016) argues that citizenship education, as a field of study, has long been divided by a range of approaches organised around disciplinary perspectives, including civics teaching and learning, political socialisation (Niemi and Hepburn, 1995), youth activism and organizing (Bishop, 2015) and informal learning in politics (Pinnington and Schugurensky, 2009), while this paper focusses on analysing the curriculum guidelines and textbooks in China, Hong Kong and Macao as teachers’ curriculum is mostly textbook-based (Adamson and Morris, 2007). Yet, the limitation of the present study is that curriculum guidelines and textbook, certainly, need school and classroom implementation for any intended learning outcomes to take place.

**Curriculum development of civic education in China**

_Cultivating citizen morality and connecting with the world_

A goal of using education to impart political ideologies and loyalty to the Communist Party has been pervasive in communist China’s ideological education (Zhao, 2013). China also uses sports and physical education to remove national shame and support national renewal (Xu, 2008) and assists the struggle for national dignity.

China’s New Curriculum Reform of Basic Education was put forward in 1999 and implemented in the 2000s, which intended to transform Chinese education from being examination-oriented to focussing on quality (Guan and Meng, 2007; Zhong, 2006), especially the citizen’s morality. The reform emphasises the need to improve the competence of Chinese citizens to meet the demands of a globalised, knowledge-based economy. Yet, since the reform era of the late 1970s, civic education has been subsumed under the subject of moral education with nationalistic imperatives and patriotism. Student participation in

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Passive civic education</th>
<th>Active civic education</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rights and responsibility Mode</td>
<td>Concerned about rights</td>
<td>Equal importance between rights and obligation; addressing issues of fairness, equality and justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approaches</td>
<td>Emphasis on cognition, cultivation of specific positive emotions</td>
<td>Formal, informal, self-initiative cognitive, emotional and behavioural; knowledge, skills, values and attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching methods</td>
<td>Teacher-centred, non-interactive</td>
<td>Interactive, student-centred, active participation, issue-inquiry, built on real life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation levels and concerns</td>
<td>Mainly individual participation at the local level, civil, political and social rights</td>
<td>Local, national and global participation; individual or group participation; formal and informal participation; rights extended to gender, multicultural, ethnicities, ecological, etc., equality and justice concerns</td>
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Chinese society has usually been arranged by the schools. For example, young people have been encouraged to join organisations such as the “Communist Youth of China” and “The Young Pioneers of China” (Ngai et al., 2001). After reforming the public school curriculum, since 2005, China has mandated nine years of compulsory moral education, which is divided into three sections according to students’ cognitive development: Morality and Life has been taught in primary school Grades 1 and 2; from Grades 3 to 6, this changes to Morality and Society; and in middle school, it becomes Ideology and Morality. Adopting the textbook approval system, this round of curriculum reform was initially subjected to the Moral Education Standard (Experimental Draft) released in 2003. However, after revision, in 2011, the Compulsory Education Moral Education Curriculum Standard (2011 Edition) was released (hereinafter, Moral Education Curriculum Standard) and takes priority.

Spearheaded by the goals of another new curriculum reform, since 2011, the nine-year moral education curriculum in China has emphasised the comprehensiveness of the curriculum and focussed on the characteristics of children at different stages. For example, the Moral Education Curriculum Standard emphasises that in Morality and Life (Grades 1 and 2), the curriculum should be active and comprehensive in learning, highlighting life and action and attaching significance to life experience. In Morality and Society (Grades 3-6), importance is attached to practice and openness and finding problems and solutions in society. Concerned with ideology, humanity and practice, the Moral Education Curriculum Standard still emphasises students’ patriotic and collective values, real-life experience and life outlook, with the world being an important aim of Ideology and Morality. All these curriculum development could be related to a study on Chinese socialist youth’s explanations of social problems and individual civic responsibility, wherein they were adopting compliant, cynical or critical attitudes (Zhao et al., 2014).

The design of the nine-year moral education curriculum, since 2011, as a whole highlights curriculum reform and the coherence of the curriculum by corresponding with the students’ physical and mental characteristics at various stages. The Grades 1 and 2 curricula, for example, focuses on taking root in the life of children, leading students to love life, actively explore and to care for others, thus cultivating good student behaviour and habits. Starting from children and self, then society and the nature, the curriculum aims to develop the students to live healthily and safely, happily and actively, to be responsible, loving and creative. The concept underpinning the Grades 3-6 curricula is different. It not only pays attention to the students’ lives but also addresses their social needs. The Compulsory Education Moral Education Curriculum Standard (2011 Edition) suggests that helping students participate in society and learn to present themselves to others, which reflects the cultivation of good moral character during socialisation processes. The curriculum design focusses on the social life of children, from the individual, family, school and hometown, to the society, motherland and world. Overall, the primary school curriculum aims for children to “learn to live the ethical social life” (Lu, 2003) and yet, one can still find the relevance of “blood ties” in current Chinese society. Huang (2017, p. 238) referred to the “pattern of sequence difference” in Chinese social relationships that highlight “blood ties” rather than broader social connections. Zhang et al. (2013, p. 5) noted the same phenomenon when “community support and resources are related with ties of blood” so that family is at the centre before participating in other levels.

Insisting on the idea of focussing on living, moral education in middle school adheres to the basic principle of combining self-directed learning with valuable guidance in daily living by Chinese teachers (Chiu, 2015). This has clearly defined the moral curriculum as a comprehensive one that guides the development of values (Gao, 2012a, 2012b) among youngsters. The curriculum adheres to the unity of desirable values and the middle school...
students' independent thinking and positive practices, helping them live healthily and participate as responsible citizens. As the core curriculum, this actually supports the dual educational goals of creating “good people” and “good citizens” (Gao, 2012a, 2012b). Hence, the Chinese moral education curriculum has been divided into four parts (morality, mental health, law and national conditions) that correspond with the three major domains of self, others and collectives, society and the state, which are to meet the needs of individual growth and participation in social and national development, thus fostering active citizenship.

A reflection is that deeply rooted in this latest eighth round of moral education curriculum design is the concept of respecting and valuing life, which is different from the politicised tendency of ideological education before and reflects a focus on moral education (Gao, 2016, 2017). The majority of Chinese schools, actually, have been under strong ideological control, and Xu (2016) has provided important insights into the ideological structures of Chinese schools wherein politics, school leadership and patriotic education are coupled. Yet, from the perspective of global citizenship, the curriculum objectives and content have got some developments. “Our Common World”, part of the content of Morality and Society (Grades 3-6), explores international issues from the perspectives of geography, history, culture, environment and world peace. Besides, in middle school Ideology and Morality, the international topic can be found in the theme “knowing the national conditions and loving our motherland China”. That is to say, the curriculum design is mainly based on cultivating young citizens to know about and participate in one country, though attention has also been given to cultivating citizens suited to the development of international society and globalisation. The current new textbook of Morality and Rule of Law (Ministry of Education of People’s Republic of China, 2019) has also got a unit on Information Kaleidoscope, which includes world-related topic such as New World-Internet. However, it remains to be seen whether the internet censorship in China may mitigate any curriculum initiative to broaden students’ world understanding. Censorship limits the contact between Chinese citizens and rest of the world in the name of avoiding the possibility of promoting negative attitudes towards government and country (Lorentzen, 2014).

The reform of rule of law education under the national strategy
Reflecting the urgency of the Chinese national strategy to govern by rule of law so that citizens can participate in community and society in a lawful way, “rule of law education” was introduced through reforming the school curriculum and teaching materials for the Curriculum Standards for the Ideological and Moral Education of Compulsory Education (2011 Edition) (Ministry of Education of People’s Republic of China, 2012). Since the Communist Party of China’s (CPC) 18th National Congress in 2012, establishing high moral values and cultivating patriotic people had become the fundamental aims of Chinese education. Next, for the first time, in 2014, the fourth plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee took the statement “comprehensively implement the rule of law” as its theme and proposed that “law-related education should be incorporated into the national education system, starting from young people, set up the law-related course in elementary and secondary schools”. To implement this spirit, the Outline of Juvenile Rule of Law Education, jointly issued in 2016 by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice and the National Office of Popularisation of Law, demanded that law-related education be integrated with the moral education curriculum. By incorporating the requirements of the Outline of Juvenile Rule of Law Education, the moral education curriculum at the compulsory education stage was renamed Morality and Rule of Law. Its teaching content in the primary and middle schools includes a special volume on rule of law education in the first volume of Grade 6 and the second volume of Grade 8. In addition, according to the characteristics and levels of
children’s development, the content of rule of law education was systematically integrated into the curriculum.

With regard to the textbooks, in 2016, the Circular on Matters Related to Teaching Books for Elementary and Secondary Schools in 2016 issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education declared that the subjects Morality and Life and Ideology and Morality at the compulsory education stage and the beginning grades in elementary and secondary schools would be changed to Morality and Rule of Law. With new teaching resource development, the textbooks for previously in force Morality and Life, Morality and Society and Ideology and Morality in compulsory education were unified and renamed Morality and Rule of Law. Taking as examples the original textbook, “PEP Edition” (NICTR, 2010), published by the People’s Education Press in 2010, and the new textbook, “Ministry Edition”, published by the Ministry of Education (not published yet at the time of writing), in the first volume of Grade 4 (Table II), the revised teaching materials have not only increased the content on awareness of the class rules and family responsibilities but also have specially designed public domain topics, such as two units on “the information kaleidoscope” and “let the life be more green”, to enhance students’ social responsibility and abide by the public life rule (Lu, 2003).

The contents of rule of law education at the compulsory education stage focus on cultivating consciousness of rule of law, forming the habit of respecting the law and being

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<td>Unit 1 Growing up together with class</td>
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<td>1 Beautiful life</td>
<td>1 Our class is four years old</td>
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<td>2 Our lives</td>
<td>2 We set our class rules</td>
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<td>1 Are you safe today</td>
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<td>5 I will do these things</td>
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<td>3 When the danger occurs</td>
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<td>Unit 3 Spending money is a knowledge</td>
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<td>1 Family accounting book</td>
<td>7 Watching TV in healthy way</td>
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<td>Unit 4 Caring about your love for others</td>
<td>10 What we know about environmental pollution</td>
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<td>1 Let grandparents happy</td>
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<td>3 My neighborhood</td>
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<td>4 Helping and working together</td>
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| Keywords: Socialist moral youths, life, living,       | Keywords: citizen and society, morality, respect law,        |
| safety, caring and loving others                      | environment, responsibility, world                           |
| Highlights: Morality and Life (Grades 1 and 2):        | Highlights: Students are asked to establish rule             |
| the curriculum should be active and                   | awareness, understand the significance of rules and          |
| comprehensive in learning, highlighting life and      | regulations including fairness and fair competition in      |
| action and attaching significance to life experience  | the society. The contents also specially designed public    |
| in Morality and Society (Grades 3-6)                   | domain topics, such as on how to use information,            |
| importance is attached to practice and openness,      | make a green life and to enhance students’ social            |
| finding problems and solutions                         | responsibility                                               |

| Source: Ministry of Education of People’s Republic of China |
law-abiding. For example, the “teaching contents and requirements of school section” for the primary school junior grade (Grades 1 and 2) included in the Outline of Juvenile Rule of Law Education stipulates that primary school junior grade students are in the adaptive phase of a new school environment and a new identity. To acquire national understanding, juniors are required “to recognise the national symbols and marks” for establishing the concepts of state, nationality, citizenship and a legal understanding. Also, juniors are asked to establish rule awareness and understand the significance of rules and regulations including fairness and fair competition. The concept of equality under the law is initially established, together with fire safety, traffic rules and common public service calls for participation. Students are also encouraged to develop a preliminary understanding of nature, protect plants and do everything possible to save resources and the environment, thus practising active citizenship for the environment.

Yu (2017) argued that renewing teaching resources is extremely important to strengthen rule of law education in China. However, to Chinese teachers, it has actually meant new challenges, especially when teaching “rule of law” through education conveys global citizenship education (UNESCO, 2018), which entails teaching the concepts of equality and impartiality. For one thing, Chinese teachers’ understanding of the law has not been completely clear in a party-state education system, given that they have received little professional training in rule of law education before. Thus, teacher training in understanding and teaching “rule of law” education in China must be comprehensively improved and so as updating diversified teaching resources (Le, 2017).

Reforming Hong Kong’s civic education
Policy change from civic education to national education

Just before the resumption of Hong Kong’s sovereignty by China in 1997, the Guidelines on Civic Education 1996 (CDC, 1996) included understanding both politics and government, learning for democracy, national identity, human rights, rule of law and promoting global perspectives (Leung and Ng, 2004). This was unprecedented since the British colonial government because of counteracting threats to its legitimacy and to preserve the stability, controlled school subjects, textbooks, teaching materials and political activities in schools (Morris and Chan, 1997). Lee’s (1999, 2004) overviews of the civic education’s development and his analyses of the shift from 1985 to 1996 were broadly supportive of Leung and Ng’s (2004) position on that more is about moral education. Yet, civic education is seldom offered as an independent subject, and Fairbrother (2010) argues that to enhance the effectiveness of schools’ citizenship education in fostering national identity and active citizenship, the government should consider making it compulsory and as an independent subject.

The policy’s emphasis on Hong Kong’s civic education has paralleled reforms to the education system, curricular development and diploma examination from the early twenty-first century. The Basic Education Curriculum Guide – Building on Strengths (primary 1-secondary 3) 2002, which has been the guiding text of the new 10-year curriculum reform, has placed civic education as one of the Four Key Tasks (i.e. moral and civic education, reading to learn, project learning and information technology) and among five important learning experiences (moral and civic education, intellectual development, social services, physical and artistic development and work-related experience). Hence, most Hong Kong schools immerse civic education as part of other subjects or as an informal extra-curricular activity.

Attending a series of activities to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to China, in July 2007, Chinese President Hu Jintao placed great emphasis on the importance of developing national education for young people. Subsequently, in 2008, the Hong Kong
Education Bureau introduced *The Revised Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework (2008)* (EDB HKSAR, 2008), which added “care for others” and “integrity” as the primary values to nurture (others include “perseverance”, “respect for others”, “responsibility”, “national identity” and “commitment”), as well as funding for study tours to China. These were intended to strengthen the students’ national identity and improve students’ understanding of the country. It was also the first time Hong Kong mentioned “national education” in a policy paper. In a 2011 Policy Address, the government proposed that “moral education and national education” be independently implemented in elementary and secondary schools during the 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 school years, respectively. In 2012, promulgation of the *Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide (primary 1- secondary 3)* (CDC, 2012) immediately triggered a series of social protests opposing a mandatory curriculum on moral and national education on the grounds that the government-sponsored teaching materials were biased and had a narrow focus on national identity only. Suspect of indoctrination was also targeted in this 2012 anti-national education movement (Cheung, 2015). In September 2012, the controversial Chief Executive Leung Chun-Ying announced an indefinite suspension of moral and national education; however, the schools were allowed to offer school-based national education. Indeed, since the return of sovereignty to China, Lee (2008) indicates the tensions between nationalistic imperatives and global citizenship that can be originated before 1997. Global citizenship education has actually been adopted in Hong Kong primary school curriculum (author). As an alternative, Cheng and Yuen (2017) argued for a broad-based national education instead of a narrow-based one to suit this globalisation age.

Curriculum of moral and civic education
Civic education in Hong Kong school curriculum has combined various fields of both formal and informal learning (Table III) because it was not compulsory to set up independently. Through teaching in formal classroom learning, informal school culture and ethos, service learning and community projects, Hong Kong schools provide a comprehensive formal and informal civic and moral learning experience. The Education Bureau of Hong Kong SAR government issues civic education curriculum guidelines (CDC, 1996, 2012) and provides schools with self-examination tool (EDB HKSAR, 2008) to help them measure their objectives of school-based formal and informal moral and civic education. Yet, civic education is usually reactive in addressing short-term current civic issues, and there is much room for enhancing participation (Fairbrother and Kennedy, 2011; Leung and Yuen, 2012). Also, the post-1997 Hong Kong SAR Government emphasised moral training by involving the inculcation of traditional Chinese virtues (Leung and Ng, 2004). Meanwhile, the dual civic identities of national (Chinese) identity and local (Hong Kongers) identity have always been competing with each other, especially when the Chinese national identity is perceived as suppressing the local identity (Leung and Ngai, 2011). There has always been a contestation between globalisation, nationalisation and localisation:

> Amidst the tides of globalization, nationalization and localization it is no wonder that the plurality of citizenship discourses in flux are characterized by ambiguous, flexible, complex, uncertain, contradictory with eclectic manners with different elements overlapping and hybridizing. Hence on the one hand, there is an emphasis on “Chineseness”, Confucian tradition, paternalism and patriotism and on the other an emphasis on the local, humanism, anti-capitalism, democracy and Christianity (Tse, 2007, p. 174).

Moral and civic education is one of four key learning tasks in the updated *Basic Education Curriculum Guide (primary 1- primary 6)* (CDC, 2014) as an informal education. These have
seven primary values and attitudes, namely, “care for others”, “integrity”, “perseverance”, “respect for others”, “responsibility”, “national identity” and “commitment”. At the same time, the development of cognition, emotion and action is recommended for cultivating students’ whole-person development.

According to the Education Bureau, life events are the suggested teaching approach when teaching moral and civic education (EDB HKSAR, 2008) as an informal curriculum. In 2008, the Education Bureau issued a newly revised moral and civic education curriculum framework, in which “society and national life” was added as a life event, and asked the schools to strengthen national education (Table III).

“Life event” approach has informed the moral and civic learning in the core of the Basic Education Curriculum Guide (primary 1-secondary 3) (CDC, 2014), which aimed at carrying out the learning experience through “personal development and [a] healthy living domain”, “family domain”, “school domain” and “social life domain and community”. The Basic Education Curriculum Guide (primary 1-secondary 3) (CDC, 2014) suggested that for moral and civic learning in primary schools, individual schools could choose the appropriate life events and issues from five domains, namely, “personal development and healthy living domain”, “family domain”, “school domain”, “social life domain and community” and “national domain”. An overview of civic education implementation in Hong Kong schools can be seen in Table IV.

Overall, the design of civic education to be immersed in Hong Kong school curriculum as an informal one has been closely aligned with the official curriculum guides, while schools have flexibility in choosing and offering other informal moral and civic education programme and activities, which include local, national and global citizenship education.
The school sponsoring body’s mission, school history and culture also matter to their choices of moral and civic education. Out of about 360 government aided schools, a number of traditional patriotic Chinese schools have attached great importance to promote understanding and loving of China. Conversely, a significant percentage of religious-sponsored schools have a deep tradition of religious and moral teaching, which has been allowed because religions are generally positively perceived and religious organisations support charities. The rest of charity sponsoring schools have been more oriented towards cultivating their students to serve the society through commonly accepted social virtues. Finally, a few (about 30) government schools follow closely the official mandates on various aspects of education. With regard to civic education immersed in formal subjects, the interdisciplinary General Studies curriculum in primary school (about 6 to 11 years old) and Personal, Social and Humanities Education learning area in secondary school (about 12-17 years of age) (see explicit curriculum in Table IV) include Hong Kong society and culture, Chinese culture, Chinese history and Western history, environmental conservation and sustainability, international cooperation and world religion and cultures for civic learning and thus contribute to student participation in their neighbourhood, society, nation and the world (see learning scope in Table IV). The senior secondary school Liberal Studies and other personal, social and humanities education also have included issues for social inquiries.
related to civic education too. On informal curriculum, civic education has basically been organised around life events and discussion of social issues, which are catered to the students’ socio-economic backgrounds and abilities (Table III). Recently, the Basic Education Curriculum Guide (CDC, 2014) also emphasises the importance of integrating civic education learning with various interdisciplinary curricula to provide students with a comprehensive and balanced civic learning experience.

A civic education-related formal curriculum development is the introduction of Liberal Studies in 2009, and it has been included in the Hong Kong senior secondary schools’ diploma examination. Liberal Studies “aims to broaden students’ knowledge base and enhance their social awareness through the study of a wide range of issues” (CDC and HKEAA, 2007, p. 1); thus, multiple perspectives and independent thinking are encouraged, which can certainly be regarded as civics training for students (Leung and Yuen, 2012). Accordingly, examination-oriented inquiry teaching of civic education-related topics such as equal opportunities and social justice has been more obvious. However, a recent controversy erupted whether the Liberal Studies contributed an effect of mobilizing young people in the non-conventional form of participation (Lee and Chiu, 2017) such as illegal protests. Perhaps, moved by the moral claim or moral conviction on a political arena (Nussbaum, 1999; Skitka and Mullen, 2002), some young people might feel the moral passion of upset and even anger, which further motivated them to take political action and participate in protests. Lee and Chiu (2017) found that Liberal Studies just could either increase or impede a tendency towards political participation. Yet, entering into 2018, critics pop up that this civics-related Liberal Studies subject has too much emphasis on political events and thus creates an anti-Chinese Government mindset among secondary school students (Yeung, 2014).

Curriculum reform of Macao’s civic education

Moral and civic education as a formal curriculum

Since the opening of Macao’s port in the sixteenth century, it has been deeply influenced by the Portuguese policy of “only taking and not establishing”, and the majority of Chinese of Macao have multiple and complex origins from various nearby China provinces (Yee, 2002). Civic education was not consciously carried out, and it has long been laissez-faire (Shan, 2008) in different types of schools (government, Chinese patriotic, Portuguese, religious, labour unions, social charities, etc.). However, the adaptation to both Chinese and Portuguese cultures over 400 years has been part of the local identity, even though many locals cannot speak Portuguese (Berlie, 2012), but Cantonese and some other Chinese dialects. Arguably, this is why there have been distinctive Portuguese, Chinese, missionary and charity education.

In 1987, the People’s Republic of China and Portugal signed a joint declaration on the question of Macao; hence, Macao entered into a 12-year transition period for realizing Chinese citizenship. In particular, the Portuguese Government was urged to legalise the Chinese language and localise its law into Chinese and employ local civil servants. How to achieve a smooth transition and ensure the lasting stability of Macao was the most important task of the Portuguese Macao Government (Shan, 2008). To prepare for implementing “One Country, Two Systems” and “Macao people governing Macao” principles, the Portuguese Macao Government recognised that civic education was one of the main factors for social development, despite social organisations in Macao fulfilling the political and social functions of mobilisation and participation and the provision of many social services (Chou, 2015). The social ethos in Macao has been dominated by ideas of stability and collaboration with sayings of “Building a harmonious society” or maintaining social harmony in the Macao policy addresses (Wang, 2008). As a result, there was a strong
appeal for strengthening schools' civic education and raising civic awareness (Vong and Wong, 2010; Shan, 2008). Since then, Macao entered a period of civic education curriculum indigenisation (Vong et al., 2018), in which Macao started to develop its own curriculum without imitating that of Hong Kong.

After Macao’s return to the Chinese motherland in 1999, to further meet the needs to educate Macao citizens, in 2006, Article 4 of the “Fundamental Law of Non-tertiary Education System (Law No.9/2006)” (hereinafter, Fundamental Law) clearly stipulated the overall goals of civic education (Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, 2006, Article 4):

[... to cultivate their responsibility to the nation and Macao, to enable them to make adequate use of civil rights and to fulfill the civil obligations actively; to nurture their good values of morals and democratic accomplishments, so as to enable them to respect and to communicate with others frankly, to get along harmoniously with others and zealously care about social affairs.

To implement the Fundamental Law, guarantee a high and diversified quality of formal education in line with the requirements of education development, provide students with basic and comprehensive training and enhance personal quality, in 2015, the Curriculum Framework for Formal Education of Local Education System (CF) and the Requirements of Basic Academic Attainments (BAA) were introduced by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau as a supplemental administrative regulation to the Fundamental Law. According to these administrative regulations, Macao schools were to optimise their different curriculum structure, organise educational activities, systematically plan and implement changes to teach each learning area and subject. Both the CF and BAA became compulsory requirements in all public and private schools, ranging from preschool to senior high schools. Since 2016, the requirements for moral and civic education in various grades have also been successively introduced, which elaborate on the basic concepts, objectives and structure as the curriculum standard and framework for moral and civic education in Macao’s education system (Table V).

In recent years, Macao has established moral and civic education as a compulsory subject, which becomes part of the formal curriculum under the CF. The General Studies and Life in primary school and Social and Humanities Education in secondary school constitute the formal learning areas related to citizenship. The content is also based on the BAA, which aims to promote the six attainments, namely, knowledge, skills, abilities, emotions, attitudes and values, in addition to promoting whole-person development. The relationship between the BAA and civic and moral education and the respective learning goals are shown in Table V (Macao SAR Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, 2015).

The first set of officially recommended textbooks

Complying with the mandate for curriculum development, the Macao SAR Education and Youth Affairs Bureau cooperated with the People’s Education Press to compile the textbook Morality and Citizenship (trial version in 2010 with several editions), which applies to each grade. This has been the first set of textbooks on morality and citizenship published in Macao, which previously used textbooks from Hong Kong publishers. The Macao’s Morality and Citizenship (2010a, 2010b) textbooks take the local living environment as a starting point, and by understanding, experiencing, practicing and comprehending real lives and learning social culture, students are expected to build up an inclusive and multicultural vision about the community and the world (Vong et al., 2018) by equipping them with values such as service, participatory and inclusiveness. Apparently, the Macao SAR Government believes that equipping Macao’s students with a global vision as one of the learning goals will be important for Macao’s future economic development (which focusses on casinos, entertainment and
### Primary education (about 6-11 years old)

**Basic rationale**
1. The curriculum shall be based on students’ real life
2. Guiding students to participate in social activities, cultivating their moral character and civic awareness
3. Making good use of various educational resources and diverse forms of teaching and learning

**Curriculum goals**
1. Nurture students’ attitude of cherishing and loving life and develop good qualities as self-esteem, autonomy, self-discipline, diligence, honesty, sincerity, compliance with rules, love, sense of responsibility and aspiration for progress
2. Enable students to have a basic understanding of themselves, form the basic sense of right and wrong and the ability to control their emotions and behaviours, possess the basic abilities to adapt to the environment and resist negative temptations, and gradually form positive self-concept and the ideal of life
3. Cultivate students’ basic civic awareness and social ethics; help them to understand the fundamental rights and obligations of children and citizens; develop civic characters of cooperative, righteous, respectful, tolerant, polite and reliable; develop their awareness in respect to democracy, rule of law and social service
4. Nurture students’ patriotism and the sentiment of loving Macao, enable them to cherish and value the cultural traditions of the motherland and Macao; understand national identity, respect the cultural traditions and customs of different countries and international awareness
5. Foster students’ love for nature and awareness on environmental protection; enable them to acquire an understanding of the interdependence among people, the nature and environment; and develop the basic awareness on environmental protection in the world

**Learning scope**
About myself; B-My family and I; C-My school and I; D-My society and I; E-My country and I; F-The world and I; G-The environment and I

### Junior secondary education (about 12 to 14 years old)

**Basic rationale**
1. Taking the gradually expanding and enriching life experience as the base
2. Combining value orientation, students’ active exploration and autonomous practice
3. Attaching importance to the enhancement of students’ civic literacy and development of an international perspective

**Curriculum goals**
1. Cultivate students’ positive values and attitude, courage and ability to overcome difficulties and face setbacks, and develop such good qualities as self-esteem, autonomy, self-discipline, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, rationality, cooperation, caring and responsibility
2. Enhance students’ sense of belonging to the family and school, as well as their national and ethnic identity; foster their love for the country and Macao and nurture the habit of caring about Macao development
3. Cultivate students’ civic values in terms of democracy, rule of law, human rights and justice, their abilities of critical thinking and rational judgement and taking an active part in social life
4. Nurture students’ open and tolerant attitude to diverse cultures and lifestyles; broaden their international horizons and develop their awareness and sense of responsibility of “global citizens”

**Learning scope**

### Senior secondary education (about 15-17 years old)

**Basic rationale**
1. Cultivating students’ moral and civic literacy through life experience
2. Nurturing students’ civic participation abilities through social activities
3. Strengthening the cultivation of students’ ability of independent analysis and judgement, reflective ability and rational spirit
4. Broadening students’ international horizons, cultivating their global citizen’s awareness

(continued)
tourism industries about its world heritage) and to its connections with the Portuguese-speaking world. The *Morality and Citizenship* textbooks embody the learning requirements requested by the BAA, which highlight “Macao and the world” as one aspect of the junior-high-school content designed to cultivate students’ “international vision” (Table VI). The contents start with the local cultural characteristics and then expand from Macao to the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our country</td>
<td>1. China’s political system</td>
<td>How is China’s political system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. China’s reform and opening up</td>
<td>What are the effects of reform and opening up on China?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. China’s peaceful development</td>
<td>What are China’s international status and influence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macao and Mainland China</td>
<td>1. Interpretation of “One Country, Two Systems”</td>
<td>What is “One Country, Two Systems”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Create a better future</td>
<td>What is the significance of CEPA trading between China and Macao? How does an inclusive Chinese culture affect the world?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Promoting Chinese culture</td>
<td>How does Macao develop its position from “bridge” to “platform”? How does Macao seek development through “going out and getting closer”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macao and the World</td>
<td>1. Steady development of Macao</td>
<td>What are the performances of Macao’s prosperity and progress?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Broad and unique international connections</td>
<td>How does Macao develop its position from “bridge” to “platform”? How does Macao seek development through “going out and getting closer”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Shining in the world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Macao</td>
<td>1. Multi-ethnic symbiosis of Macao</td>
<td>What are the characteristics of Macao multi-ethnic cultures? How to maintain cultural diversity? How to balance urban development and heritage protection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Cultural blend and respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Chinese and Western cultural heritage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** People's Education Press, “Morality and Citizenship” in Macao Junior High School Textbook catalog page
In Macao, “global contact” is one of the five basic learning goals in high school. The textbook *Moral and Citizenship* (trial version) divides the learning content of “global contact” into six themes (Table VII), namely, “politics”, “culture”, “science and technology”, “environment”, “international exchanges” and “international affairs”. Within each theme, the “subject-situation” is the core element, and its subordinated learning contents correspond to the six major themes. These are designed and organised in layers to make learning the topic more specific and comprehensive, targeting the three-dimensional goals of cognition, emotions and actions. Understanding oneself as global citizens, being a responsible citizen on the internet and respecting cultural and ethnic difference are emphasised (Vong, et al., 2018). Meanwhile, as a society that was once governed by Portugal and has maintained Portuguese as one of its official languages, Macao’s pluralistic cultural environment has got implications for civic education’s curriculum design. Civics, thus, highlights cross-cultural interaction and is conducive to achieving the goals of cultivating students’ respect for multiculturalism and the ability to interact across cultures. Therefore, understanding the interrelatedness of humans and the global environment is promoted, as well as a sense of responsibility as “global citizen”.

**Discussion**

The authors analyse the commonalities and differences in the civic education curriculum in China, Hong Kong and Macao (SARs) (Table VIII), addressing curriculum organisation, orientation, objectives and content. In terms of commonalities, curriculum design in these three places was usually led by specific government policies or guidelines, whereas the idea of a civic education curriculum increasingly centred on children’s development and student participation and covering local, national and global domains of citizenship, thus contributing to build up multiple identities (Heater, 1990). This curriculum design is indicative of social developments found there, which reflects the cultivation of active participation and world awareness of students in this globalised world. Also, from a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wonderful world</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>The distinctive polities; the sovereign powers and responsibilities of the country; the role of international organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Complicated international realities</td>
<td>International affairs</td>
<td>Focus on international situation; perspective on international relations; examine global issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Science and technology for the benefits of human</td>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td>Feel the power of science and technology; walk into the world of biotechnology; keep life ethics; Promote the scientific spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Action for environmental protection</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Concern environmental issues; compliance with environmental ethics; pamper our homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Diverse cultures and culture prosperity</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Respect cultural diversity; examine universal values; promote cultural exchanges; build spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>International communication adherence to principles</td>
<td>International exchanges</td>
<td>Equality and consultation in solving problems; international cooperation in development; the principle of peaceful coexistence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** People’s Education Press, “Morality and Citizenship” (Trial Version) in Macao high school Textbook catalog page
### Table VIII
Comparison of civic education between Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum organisation</th>
<th>Mainland China</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Macao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum orientation</td>
<td>Independent curriculum</td>
<td>Immersion or informal curriculum, immersion approach, interdisciplinary learning</td>
<td>Independent curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum objectives</td>
<td>Study to live in an ethical life and become a socialist qualified citizen with ideals, morality, culture and discipline</td>
<td>Seven priority values and attitudes: “Perseverance”, “Respect for Others”, “Responsibility”, “National Identity”, “Commitment”, “Integrity” and “Care for Others”</td>
<td>Patriotic love for country and Macao, rights and obligations, moral quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum content</td>
<td>Based on children’s life</td>
<td>Selecting life events and school-based needs</td>
<td>Based on students’ real-life experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum implementation</td>
<td>Schooling a common national curriculum</td>
<td>Both formal curriculum and school-based informal curriculum</td>
<td>Regular curriculum combined with school-based curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum evaluation</td>
<td>Combining periodic and summative assessments (Procedural assessments in primary school; compulsory subjects evaluated in junior secondary schools; compulsory subjects for arts students evaluated in high school)</td>
<td>Formative assessments in main and summative assessments as a subsidiary (Periodic assessments in civic education-related subjects such as primary school general studies and junior secondary school life and society; senior secondary Liberal Studies is required for university entrance)</td>
<td>Formative assessments (Macao does not have a uniform examination of school graduates and all non-compulsory subjects are required to be assessed during the course of study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum teacher</td>
<td>Teacher of moral education</td>
<td>Cross-discipline teacher in main</td>
<td>Cross-discipline teacher in main</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sociological perspective, it is worth thinking of convergence in education in this part of Asia
world (Table VIII) in terms of global citizenship starts to take roots in the school curriculum,
not just in public discourses. However, one common objective in cross-place comparison
flares up: building students’ national identity remains important, especially in the
sovereignty-returned Hong Kong and Macao, to help implement the “One Country, Two
Systems” policy. Yet, this study has found that their civic education curriculum adopted an
outer learning scope of understanding and awareness of the world. This transcended and
multiple levels of citizenship shall have implications for projecting the future civic ideals and
development of youth in these three Chinese societies. From a sociological perspective, what
has been found here can be casted in neo-institutionalism (Meyer, 2010) and historical
institutionalism on globalisation, which help to make sense of the converging trend of
education in “world society”, on the one hand, and the path-dependence ensuing from
different historical conditions, on the other hand. There are common trends of increasingly
opening up to the outside world of education institutions in these three Chinese societies, but
they, perhaps just as many other world societies, still retain their own historical trajectories
in education. Therefore, institutions could be understood more broadly to refer to a “stable,
recurring pattern of behavior” (Goodin, 1996, p. 22). Furthermore, a sociological implication
can be generated from understanding how state institutions (i.e. civic education in three
Chinese societies) “house and enable particular global dynamics and conditions” (Sassen,
2010, p. 2).

With regard to their curricular differences, the organisation of the civic education
curriculum was either primarily formal (China and Macao) or informal curriculum plus
immersion in other formal subjects (Hong Kong) because of the respective curriculum
reforms. The curriculum objectives showed other distinctions on teaching both national and
global citizenship too, based on the respective unique political and social systems (e.g. China
emphasises more on socialist youths with ideals and morality, while Hong Kong is a
cosmopolitan city and so emphasises multiple perspectives), historical culture (e.g. Macao is
a multicultural Chinese and Portugal speaking society and has economic and cultural
connections with Portuguese-speaking countries), civic values (e.g. a cosmopolitan Hong
Kong society embraces Western core values and practices including freedom, human rights,
democracy, justice, rule of law, etc.), implementation method (e.g. both independent and civic
education curriculum in China and Macao but no independent and compulsory curriculum
in Hong Kong) and other contextual factors (e.g. both national and global citizenship are
particularly needed for both social and economic developments of Hong Kong and Macao)
that need to be adapted in their education systems. However, a common trend identified is
that these three Chinese societies increasingly emphasise more on active and global
citizenship education elements, although there are subtle differences in what is emphasised
under global citizenship as a concept, where China is more on knowledge dimension, while a
comprehensive understanding of global citizenship including knowledge, skills, values and
attitudes is endorsed by Hong Kong and Macao. Thus, a broadened and transcended notion
of citizenship from national to global is being established in China, Hong Kong and Macao,
which bring them more closer to the Western constructs of multi-dimensional citizenship
(Heater, 1990, 2004) and the idea of global citizen (Steiner, 1996; Clough and Holden, 1996;
Dower and Williams, 2002).

Certainly, there are still some other curricular issues to be explored. For instance, moral
education is also found as an important part of civic education in these three Chinese
societies, but moral education is by no means the equivalent of civic education. Civic
education can include gender and equality issues, political education, legal education,
democratic education, multi-cultural education, national education, global education,
sustainability education, etc. All these help students become both passive and active membership of individuals (Janoski, 1998) and a citizen who concerns about the challenges and possibilities in the world (Davies and Pike, 2009). Students should also be taught on how to contemplate and what to do when national interests may collide with responsibilities in global citizenship. Thus, it should be cautious the contents and concerns of civic education in three Chinese societies is more than just moral education but including the above dimensions.

On the choice of teaching contents, Hong Kong and Macao teachers tend to choose school-based issues or cases from the news media for civic education based upon the curriculum guidelines and approved textbooks mentioned in this study. The findings of increasing emphasis on active and global citizenship education in approved curricular guidelines are certainly posing another challenge for future curriculum planning and selection and usage of relevant teaching resources. However, it is sometimes hard to judge whether the value orientation of news media is in line with the aforementioned goals of providing active and global citizenship education for students. So, there could be a gap between the findings of this study as promoted by the curriculum guides and the news media in these three Chinese societies, which sometimes tends to be about local affairs. In a post-materialistic world, where openness and exposure to views and norms are becoming much more diversified and where the influence of social media on society and politics is difficult to deny in mobilizing people to participate in various movements, which created great pressures on governments (Tudoroiu, 2014), civic education teachers’ media literacy and their pedagogical competencies are important. Teachers should be equipped with relevant knowledge and competence in making moral decisions, including the relationship between morality and politics, approaches of making moral decisions, etc. (Chow, 2014; Sandel, 2009). Teachers should also, as the literature review found, emphasise more on the genuine educational aspects of citizenship education where teaching “powerful knowledge” opens up new and diverse understandings (Jerome, 2018).

Finally, teachers play a decisive role in school-based civic education, and that teachers’ attitudes affect their instructional decisions and willingness to adopt new teaching approaches (Day, 2008; Choi and Tang, 2009). The teacher should be treated as partners in curricular design rather than simply delivery technicians (MGIEP, 2017); this study found that active and global citizenship elements are incorporated in the respective official curriculum guides. However, one key point is that the civic education training of teachers remained a concern, with no systematic and regular training provided among teachers in these three Chinese societies. While in China, ideological and patriotic education has been given a stronghold since 1949 (Zhao, 2013), in Hong Kong and Macao, civic education has not been a priority for many decades, and so national citizenship and global citizenship after the 2000s face a need for well-trained teachers. Inadequately trained civic education teachers cannot guarantee the quality of education the students would receive in this fast-changing globalised world, no matter it is for teaching active membership in a nation-state or the participation and responsibilities of living as a global citizen.

Conclusion
With the expansion of globalisation, the goals, scope and contents of civic education will be definitely transformed. Although these three Chinese societies have experienced different historical developmental pathways for civic education, they share similar challenges on civic education in the recent globalised decades, and in particular, for national and global citizenship. Accordingly, this study found that they have similar developments such as active and global citizenship, although national identity and cultural belonging remain important. Against a background of globalisation, the
common direction among these three Chinese societies should be transforming civic education that cultivates “Chinese in the world”, which pushed civic qualities and issue concerns beyond the boundaries of their societies, thus embracing interactions and dialogues with other countries. This study also endorses a sociological notion that the nation-state as “container” is undermined by the multiple structuration of the global inside the national, which Sassen (2010) views as a process that denationalises what was historically constructed as national. Finally, global citizenship, as well as peace and sustainable development, is endorsed by UNESCO (MGIEP, 2017) for Asia in the twenty-first century. Finally, another full-fledged curriculum content analysis could be the next step towards a more systematic treatment of the subject matter.

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Further reading


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