

## *Continuation of Crippled Citizenship: Civic Virtues Are for Social Responsibility or for Political Participation?*

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*Citizenship education becomes a sociological issue when it is a deliberate selection of knowledge by authority. This article analyses a series of junior secondary textbooks of Economic and Public Affairs in terms of the reflected civic virtues at the time of a decade after Hong Kong was returned to China. Selected textbooks have been investigated for the nature of the content: 45.32% for citizenship knowledge, 49.26% for economic development and other core factual knowledge while 5.42% for civic virtues. Textual and image analysis followed provides further evidence of its crippled form of citizenship for its neglect, inadequacy and prejudice of civic virtues since they are considered pivotal in the making of civic culture, political output and social responsibility. Overall, the findings of this textbook analysis further illustrate the prevalence of the incompetence, passivity, partiality and ambiguity of citizenship in Hong Kong.*

*Key words: civic virtues, citizenship, textbook*

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## **Introduction**

The education of young people to be good citizens “is a matter of some consequence” (Heater, 1990). The notion of good citizens is though reckoned as complex and complicated (Heater, p. 203; Oliver & Heater, 1994, p. 144), according to Oliver & Heater (1994, pp. 114–115), “A citizen, in the fullest sense, is someone who feels a moral commitment to the state and to perform the duties associated with the status.” Whether young people in Hong Kong are nurtured to be good citizens has been in doubt for the unique and peculiar history of this city that could have made the citizenship education exist in particular forms for certain political, social or other causes. Civic virtues are of particular interest since they reveal the underlying qualities, political considerations and even hidden interests of the authority. The portrayal of such “necessary” civic virtues that prevailed in textbooks would be an effective indicator showing what type of citizens our youth are learning to be, and in what ways.

Let us begin with the term “political” culture that refers to specific political orientations. They are the attitudes toward political system and its various parts, and attitudes towards the role of the self in the system (Almond & Verba, 1963, pp. 12–13). This is a vital tool to measure the degree of maturity of a society for its development of democracy as it indicates the form of the citizenship that reflected in the relationship between the government and people. Consequently, the citizenship attitudes and value involved with political culture could be referred as civic virtue—the trait and character displayed by the citizens for political means. Basically, there are different desirable civic virtues for different forms of polity. Republicanism, liberalism and communitarianism are the three most traditional schools of civic virtues that raise arguments and theoretical debates among their different interpretation and stands (see Chang & Li, 2004; Lin 2006a, 2006b). Civic virtues are pivotal in the analysis of political attitudes, activities and the political output, as well as senses of social responsibility that consequently produced.

*Borrowed Place Borrowed Time* (Hughes, 1968) has been a classic to describe Hong Kong, which depicts the instant history of this tiny city from opium to Suzie Wong, from the Banks to the shadow of Mao (Harrison, 1969, p. 381) It, alongside other classics, is loaded with the many facets of people's lives, with no exception of the ambiguous and changing national identity. Since Hong Kong was colonized by Britain, most people living here enjoyed almost no official nationality. Most of them were recognized as residents of Hong Kong without official British nationality. The end of the British rule marked the beginning of a new administration and signified another change of citizenship and national identity of the people. This article examines the values reflected in the chosen Economic and Public Affairs textbooks used by junior secondary classes. Moreover, the civic virtues, in line with the evolvement of civic culture, and the emergence of a civil society that are crucial to the fabrication of local citizenship under the new ruling authority would also be discussed.

## **Research Problem**

Textbook analysis has been chosen as Hong Kong education is essentially based on the teaching with textbooks. Textbooks editing basically follows the guidelines of syllabus in the curriculum that officially formulated and issued by the government, while teachers generally take the textbooks as the major medium for instruction, assessment tools and even preparation for public examinations. From the goals and objectives to products of education, education in Hong Kong is significantly led and influenced by the teaching of textbooks. In accordance to Bernstein (1971) and Tse (2000), the school curriculum is a result of deliberate selection and organization, the treatment of topics and contents in syllabuses and textbooks becomes a significant sociological and educational issue.

Besides, social subjects are different from other subjects for its sensitivity and changeability that the attitudes throughout the usage can be viewed as

reflection of the prevailing political ideologies and social values. Tse (2000) has summarized the points as follows:

The syllabuses and textbooks of social subjects not only provide political knowledge, but also define the normative expectations, appropriate attitudes, values and behaviour of an ideal citizen. Thus the curriculums and textbooks of social subjects are the central objects of controversies, and they are subject to an ideological critique. (pp. 93–94)

The textbooks of Economic and Public Affairs (EPA) are selected in this article as its aims stated in its syllabus serve social, economic, political and cultural considerations. This subject is also considered as civic education as it provides information which is political and citizenship education in nature.

The making of good citizens is a primal task for every government; appropriate “performance” of its citizens is crucial to a stable and thriving society. Political education is usually equipped with such aim, which is different from the teaching of politics since the former involves the instillation of political values, ways of interpretation of political motives and actions and the characters and judgment as a political participant. Schools have always purveyed values and no doubt always will. As Heater (1990) puts that:

Schools have taught their pupils to be good citizens in one of the three ways: one is by the often unconscious selection of material so that it conveys a biased message: nationalist history is an obvious example. Another is by the very deliberate identification of teaching objectives to ensure a particular moral outcome: traditional styles of religious education clearly fit this category; thirdly, there is a “hidden curriculum”—the daily almost subliminal messages which pupils absorb from the school assembly, the relationships with teachers, the organization of class teaching, extra-curricular activities. Much of the ethos of a school contains assumptions about the nature of the good citizen. (p. 204)

This article will examine the form of citizenship in Hong Kong that is reflected in textbooks, showing how comprehensive this form of citizenship

is. The purpose of this research is to locate the civic virtues that are instilled in the texts that can reflect the general attitudes, culture and political behaviour that are preferred or designed for our children, especially to see any change upon the advocacy of civic virtues in textbooks at the time of the tenth anniversary of return of Hong Kong to Mainland China.

## **Outline of the Official Syllabus**

Civics was the original name of the EPA and its syllabus which was firstly introduced in Hong Kong in the 1950s. The former EPA syllabus for junior secondary was implemented between 1987 and 1997 (Tse, 2000). Its role was to provide an education for citizenship in addition to the basic knowledge of the socio-economic conditions in Hong Kong. It was also considered as a bridging course to Economics for senior levels while the focus of EPA was the teaching of economics (Morris, 1988, 1992; Tse, 2000). The rationales for the aims of the EPA syllabus were about four considerations (Curriculum Development Council [CDC], 1997, p. 4):

1. Social consideration — provision of a positive attitude towards life and a sense of responsibility for one's role in the family and community;
2. Economic consideration — given Hong Kong has grown into an industrial, commercial and financial centre of the world, it is to equip students with good general knowledge and ability to think logically and to make rational decisions in order to become useful and responsible residents;
3. Political consideration — to help students to develop social and civic awareness, a sense of civic responsibility, and the power of analytical thinking and making rational judgment. Students should also be strengthened in their political and social awareness and acquire greater understanding of China through both the formal and informal curricula;
4. Cultural consideration — students should be helped to develop an appreciation of the Chinese culture, respect for all peoples and their different cultures and acceptance of the differences in values and ways of life.

There are three core topics introduced: 1. the people, 2. the government and 3. the economy, together with optional topics including food and energy supply, telecommunications, transportation, education, healthcare, housing and mass media, etc. The topic of how the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is governed and law and order is still included as a key topic as it did in pre-1997 edition, while the relationship between the China's People Government (CPG) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the HKSAR government has been newly added after the handover.

## Methodology

The aim of this article is to examine the civic virtues reflected in EPA textbooks. The textbooks *Hong Kong Our Home – A New Approach to Economic and Public Affairs* (Ng, Chung, & Mak, 2002) are selected. They are a series of six textbooks for Secondary 1, 2 and 3, comprising Volumes 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A and 3B. This series are chosen since the publisher is a popular one in Hong Kong and the textbooks have been widely used since the concerned curriculum was introduced.<sup>1</sup>

With reference to Tse (2000) and Chang & Li (2004), the three main categories for coding are 1. citizenship knowledge, 2. other core knowledge and 3. civic virtues. These three are chosen as a comparison to be drawn to indicate the volume of coverage and the representation of each respectively. The portrayal of civic virtues that being cultivated, the principal target of this project, could then be unfolded. There are sub-categories for each as they are shown in Table 1 and the Appendix. The unit of analysis was a sentence or a phrase that refers to a particular subject or concept. If there are two items referring to two different notions, for example, one refers to the citizenship identity while the second half of the sentence refers to how a student should behave in the aspect of civic virtues, they would be counted as two different units. For pictures and captions, the principles for analysis are the same.

The aim of content analysis is to show the distribution of coverage of

the general knowledge, citizenship values and attitudes. Then some relevant texts are highlighted for the textual analysis and illustrations, in which attitudes, values, ideas or even the set of ideologies that govern the textbooks are revealed and discussed. Image analysis then follows in order to reveal another type of representation of civic virtues. Two pictures are selected to study their implications and connotations that they might bring to students, which could be of symbolic meaning that affects the citizenship values of the readers. Criteria for the selection made for content analysis and image analysis are that connotations can be derived from the denotative signs placed in the sentences or images.

## Content Analysis

**Table 1 Summnerized Findings on the Distribution of Units of Knowledge**

Units of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
Citizenship knowledge		
Political knowledge	693	8.36%
Legal knowledge	418	5.04%
Economic knowledge	2159	26.05%
Social knowledge	451	5.44%
Cultural knowledge	24	0.29%
Moral knowledge	0	0%
Liberal knowledge	0	0%
Problem solving	11	0.13%
Sub-total	3756	45.32%
Other core knowledge		
	4082	49.26%
Civic virtues		
Respect for civil rights	31	0.37%
Citizenship obligations	35	0.42%
Political virtues	11	0.13%
Legal virtues	22	0.27%
Economic virtues	236	2.85%
Social virtues	82	0.99%
Cultural virtues	7	0.08%
Personal virtues	25	0.30%
Sub-total	449	5.42%
Total	8287	100%

see Appendix for detailed results

Table 1 shows that the core knowledge covers more than 49.26%, citizenship knowledge occupies more than 45.32% while civic virtues only

5.42%. Apparently, our textbooks are geared clearly with an aim to introduce students with abounding facts and knowledge in the scope of economic and public affairs, whilst discussion or introduction of civic virtues are kept to the minimal. This is not surprising as it is just parallel to the aims stressed in the syllabus of this subject — to equip students with good general knowledge.

Firstly, the overwhelming coverage of economics- and citizenship-related knowledge with minimal texts on civic virtues has shown the emphasis of making knowledge-based citizens. It remains true that fostering a sense of citizenship is not the primary task. Though being treated as minor, the subliminal values and political ideological implications will be carefully studied and analyzed in coming sections.

Next, the cultivation of civic virtues, an actively discussed issue over the last decades, is found insufficiently emphasized in the textbooks with coverage of only 5.42%. Among which are some more frequently promoted, they are the “Respect for civil rights”: expression of different opinion (press and publication)(23 times); “Citizen obligations”: to abide the law/to prevent crime and to maintain public order (17 times), election (to encourage voting) (15 times); “Economic virtues”: ecology/environment (to protect the environment and stop environmental pollution) (165 times), to prevent corruption (59 times); “Social virtues”: promotion of public service—to encourage volunteer work (16 times), significance of public interest (11 times) and the last one “Personal virtues”: to be critical and reflective (12 times).

Compared to the exceptionally scanty appearance of democracy-related virtues: “Human rights” (5 times); “Democratic disposition” (7 times); “Active participation in politics” (0 times) and “Concern for public affairs” (2 times), our young citizens are not very much encouraged to be politically active, let alone building a participatory political society. The most frequent virtue that is political in nature is to vote. Yet not much details about the definition, history and configuration of election and voting is given in the textbooks, not to say the nature of philosophical ideal and principles of election for the idea of democracy.

The textbooks for examination were published in 2002. In the post-1997 period, the coverage of features related to PRC be found in a number of chapters, compared to the almost absence of text regarding PRC in the pre-1997 colonial age. The appearance of text related to PRC, however, is not quite openly appealing to patriotic attitude or loyalty to the country, as expected to be similar to those published in the Mainland: citizenship knowledge — “Constitution of the PRC” (0 times) and “Communism/Socialism of China” (0 times), civic virtues — “be patriotic” (0 times). Rather, the “One Country Two Systems” rubric is highly stressed and the autonomy of Hong Kong is greatly emphasized (totally 117 times). During the transition period following 1997, it is not surprising with the increasing coverage of the new sovereignty. However, there is not any description of the Central People’s Government (CPG) in the chapters. Only a brief introduction of the themes of socialism and capitalism can be seen with purposes to enrich students’ understanding of “One Country Two Systems”. Readers would find it confusing and insufficient about the background of CPG, also the lacking details of relationship between HKSAR government and CPG. The inadequacy of such details could become a deprivation of significant parts on China’s politics that could have made a critical and fair judgment by students impossible.

Concerning citizenship knowledge that covers over 45% in the whole series of junior secondary EPA textbooks, there is enormous coverage of the development of Hong Kong society and government since colonized by the British. More efforts are also put into the description of Hong Kong’s governmental structure, operation, and her economic development.

In the subcategory of political knowledge, three items are particularly high in coverage: the political system of Hong Kong — “One Country Two Systems” and the emphasis of Hong Kong’s autonomy (117 times), structure of Hong Kong Government (93 times) and the topics over HKSAR Government and Hong Kong people (85 times). High coverage of Hong Kong government-related topics seems to underpin the consistency of “One Country Two Systems” policy, that Hong Kong people should learn well on

local affairs in the face of changing sovereignty, leaving matters linked to the PRC almost unmentioned. Students reading such textbooks are in a way denied to the access of factual and sometimes contradictory situations in China.

For the subcategory of legal knowledge, two items found taken up extraordinarily large portion of texts: important laws in daily life: the Basic Law, copyright ordinances, etc. (120 times), and also the structure and procedure of legislature and appeal (120 times). Clearly there is a frequent mention of the Basic Law, which is supposed to be the golden rules upon which China's authority over Hong Kong was based on. However, the lack of details of the justified Basic Law (Vol. 2A, p. 22) could also be interpreted as representation of absoluteness of the sovereign country.

For economic knowledge, 16.29% of the whole series of textbooks are about the Hong Kong economic conditions: entrepôt trades, industries, finance, productivity, transportation and telecommunication (1,350 times); while the knowledge of consumption, consumer protection (rights and duties of consumers count) only 458 times. The exceptionally plentiful volume of these hard-core information certainly reflects the prestigious economic status of Hong Kong and new generations are vital to fit her advancement. It also indicates the necessary knowledge to students as they are the consumers for life in this capitalist city.

The units of text over other subcategories like social, cultural, moral, liberal and problem solving are hardly covered. Even for social knowledge, the item Government and social services: non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (291 times) are mostly to promote the contribution of NGOs in terms of social services to the society. Social welfare is especially stressed in a way to encourage services provided by non-governmental agencies. It can be interpreted as a reflection of high-degree achievement of civil society. Yet it might also be seen as a de-emphasis of government responsibilities to shoulder the social welfare.

Passive citizenship appears to be the ideal mode for the government, or the subject politics throughout the edition of the texts in the selected textbooks

since the coverage of citizenship knowledge including political knowledge is immensely high (over 45%) with which students are provided with abundant facts about the operation and functions of the government and society, together with the intention to implicate the efforts of our government for the betterment of people's living: Hong Kong Government and Hong Kong people (85 times), Government's role in economic development (147 times) and Government and social services (291 times). However, we see not much about the encouragement and promotion of active, participative citizenship: sub-categories such as definition of democracy, concept of civil society, humanistic qualities, democratic disposition, autonomy as virtue and active participation in politics recorded nil. Portrayed in the selected textbooks, Hong Kong society still appears to be distant from the culture of participatory politics.

### **Textual Analysis: Portrait of a Good Citizen**

Textual analysis aims to analyze and interpret some texts in textbooks that tell in what ways a citizen is regarded as "good" and "desirable", and the kinds of civic virtues that are preferred by our authority and textbook writers. In brief, deformity, ambiguity, confusion, inadequacy and omission of citizenship are still found in our textbooks.

Good Use of Freedoms and Rights — to be a good citizen: What makes a good society? It is said that rights and freedoms are not enough, citizens should also: be cultivated...; be tolerant...; be helpful and generous...; be conscious of public and social affairs...; be considerate when using public facilities...; be friendly to our environment ... (Vol. 1A, pp. 106–109)

We enjoy many citizen rights and freedoms...we should learn how to make decision wisely. ...To make a sensible decision, we must be rational and objective. (Vol. 1A, pp. 109–110)

In post-1997 period, students are to be equipped with such qualities and thus become "good citizens" (emphasized as chapter title) that are desirable

to our country. Among them, “be conscious of public and social affairs” (Vol. 1A, pp. 106–109) is an exemplar showing that our society might be best described as a subject political society, which needs not active participatory political culture including eager concern for public matters, for apolitical subject citizens would be more desirable. It is also ambiguous to ask citizens to be rational and objective while appropriate rights and freedom in politics are not well established since rationality in politics and critical judgment may clash with deficient social and political systems. Nevertheless, how critical and rational should students act is not delineated in the textbooks all along, while it states clearly citizens should obey the laws and respect public interest. Hong Kong residents are still kept away from building a culture of participatory polity, continuing the colonial legacy of apolitical attitudes under a new sovereignty. *Ambiguity* is again found in the making of model citizen of Hong Kong.

Abiding the law is found as the most desirable civic virtue. The only one civic virtue that carries a sense of politics is to be conscious of public and social affairs, instead of being active and competent political participant. Learning of civic virtues also appears to be omissive, confusing, insincere and incompetent.

The importance of education to society: A well-educated population can raise the competitiveness of society and promote economic development... Education also helps people become virtuous... learn their social responsibilities... raising the education level of the people can bring peace and stability to a society. (Vol. 2B, p. 7)

Instead of facilitating human beings to be autonomous and nurturing the public, our textbooks are fully-loaded with pragmatic and functional ideas that inherited from the colonial legacy: to be apolitical citizens (Table 1 shows that 49.26% of the whole volume covers core knowledge, i.e., services and problems of the society while second largest coverage goes to economic knowledge at 26.05%). Hong Kong students are guided to increase the competitiveness for economic achievement, to be a “nice” (virtuous, not

in the civic sense) citizen and so help to keep the society peace and stable, which is rearing an apolitical, incapable and incompetent population.

The citizenship reflected in the textbooks is partial, ambiguous and passive. Notwithstanding there are traits of republicanism and communitarianism throughout the text: be loyal to the state and government (Vol. 2A, pp. 10, 26, 27), collective recognition enhanced by the same blood and same culture (Vol. 1A, pp. 69, 86, 88), increase of public spirit by the promotion of volunteer work (Vol. 2B, pp. 70, 71, 73) and praise of efforts by NGOs and government in welfare (Vol. 2B, pp. 68, 69). Ideals of liberalism are mentioned and held as well (Vol. 1A, p. 97; Vol. 3A, pp. 12–13).

Students are encouraged to be respectful to the others including other cultures and traditions (Vol. 1A, pp. 100, 103, 107). They are urged to be socially active to care and concern about others' interests (Vol. 2B, p. 70). However, the political inputs such as the rights of voting, the modes of election and political rights that are supposed to be the means of achieving public good in the view of the republicanism are obviously deprived, and played down.

Moreover, the almost absence of text describing the respect of political difference and the statement that claims clearly no law can contravene the Basic Law are problematic to democracy. Liberals would never appreciate such restriction since it is considered harmful to their freedom advocated by individualism. The political-related virtue in the textbooks that delineates how to be a good citizen is just to be conscious of public and social affairs. This contravenes the assertions of both republicanism and communitarianism as both advocate an active and enthusiastic participation in public affairs that is the only means to achieve their ultimate "public good".

From the above it is not difficult to see a hybrid of the three schools of citizenship and their civic virtues. In short, civic virtues that enhance the ruling of authority without much to improve on the political input have been reaffirmed: to abide by the laws, mutual respect and appreciation of government's efforts and greatness, and the consolidation of the rule of authority by affirming its unquestionable ideals and ideologies. The partiality,

inadequacy and disability in citizenship only prevent the people from becoming competent in politics and rational in decision-making concerning their genuine political rights and activities.

## Image Analysis

Appropriate use of pictures and images surely transmit appropriate knowledge, yet misuse or abuse of them may do the opposite. The below concerning the right to express public opinion is an example (Vol. 2A, p. 50).

**Figure 1 Image Analysis**



**Let's think!**

**Governed by a dictator**

With the help of the picture, answer the following questions.

The king declares that taxes will be doubled from next month. Those who fail to comply will be subject to the death penalty!



It's unreasonable! We've suffered from floods for three years. How can we afford such heavy taxes!

The king doesn't care about our condition. He forces us to rebel!

- 1 What will be the undesirable effect on social life and the regime if the government carries out harsh policies?
- 2 Through which channels, can the HKSAR government collect public opinions?

## Importance of communicating with the public

The major function of the government is to serve the community. Therefore the government should have close communication with the people in order to improve its policies.

Students may give free answers. Channels for collecting public opinions including mass media, consultation papers, the Internet homepage of the government (opinion/complaint) and councils.

A government should communicate with the public. Channels for the public to express opinions including mass media, councils, public processions.



The three schools of thought on citizenship: civic republicanism, liberalism and communitarianism all recognize the importance of public opinion. The upper picture in Figure 1 no doubt is portraying an official who was telling what the people should do and all the subjects are on their knees. They were deprived of the right to express their opinions, not to say objecting the orders from the dictator. The lower picture is supposed to establish equality between government and the people by symbolizing with a friendly gesture that it is ready to have a good communication with the public by staying at the same level with the public. It is surely far more improved than the one under dictatorship. Yet we do not know it is by mistake or intention, there is only one microphone found in the picture and it is the government who have the say while the others are listening, without signs of expressing their own views. Should the public have the say if it is supposed to be a two-way communication? Or our government is in fact an authority that pays not much attention to the public opinion. The worst is our students would be given an expression that it is righteous for a government to have the power to speak, thus the power over the people. In fact, governments are sometimes noted of not listening to, if not ignoring, the public opinion.

The right to express public views is vital if a public good is to be achieved as it belongs to the public and shared by the people for both civic republican and communitarian ends. For the liberals, the right to express is even more significant to attain their freedom and individual wants. If we are serious about the editing of our children's textbooks, the above critiques about the symbols and meanings brought by the images would not become insignificant.

### **Inconsistence Between Syllabus/Textbooks and Changing Political Culture**

The present curriculum document of EPA was issued in 1997, which can be viewed as an edition incorporated with the consideration of the changed sovereignty. It seems justifiable for abundant knowledge about Hong Kong's

economic development. Moreover, it is agreeable that students should be educated to respect law and order and understand the city's development since Hong Kong's success is dependent on their efforts and integrity. The textbooks examined entirely fulfill the rationales and specific aims listed in the syllabus (CDC, 1997) that are to help students understand the society and to encourage participation in appropriate activities for community improvement. Students are guided to appreciate the work of the government and its structure and operation, to respect law and order as well as the recognition of "One Country Two Systems". Disproportionately little discussion on topics including political and social aspects in critical perspectives makes the presentation of an active citizenship problematic.

It is not uncommon for an official curriculum to aim to equip students with the appreciation of the righteous rule of the authority, yet the syllabus seems to be designed to justify the legitimacy of Hong Kong's return to PRC (CDC, p. 16), to appreciate HKSAR's government's work and effort (p. 9). Objectives read from the syllabus also aim to have students develop a proper attitude towards citizenship and be willing to participate in activities for improvement of community life (p. 13) alongside other purposes. They aim to introduce and foster the "political legitimacy", to develop responsible and cooperative citizens as what Tse (2000) described. Other than democracy, there is very limited and superficial mention of other essential concepts like human rights, rule of law and freedom that are related to democratic orientation. Just as Tse noted, the syllabus is still more like a kind of personal and social education, rather than for participatory citizenship or political literacy; the conception of citizenship revealed was an incomplete and fragmentary one. The objectives were problematic in achieving citizenship education with regard to cultivating political literacy (Crick & Porter, 1978).

Concerning civic virtues, no clear guidance are seen in both textbooks and syllabus, other than to be conformable citizens with repeated stress of observation of laws, participation of volunteer work and the magnificent contribution of social services provided by the NGOs. There appears a deliberate choice of selected civic virtues to turn children to be conformable

and loyal subjects in agreement with the political and social conditions identified by the authority, best illustrated in “To be a Good Citizen” (Vol. 1A, pp. 106–112), instead of seriously learning about democracy, reality of social conflicts, “unforced” individual freedom and the pursuit of genuine public good.

Social issues are stated clearly in the syllabus optional. The texts describe the need to care for those in need and the benevolent work of the government and the NGOs while leaving poverty, inequality and complexity of social problems unmentioned. The reality of social conflicts between classes, values, cultures and stakeholders is unmentioned. They seem to oversimplify social problems, and an unrealistic picture is shown in which social problems were reduced to administrative and technical questions that are solvable (Tse, 2000). It will be difficult to expect students, deprived of appropriate and sufficient truth of the reality, to become truly rational decision-makers.

In history, people in Hong Kong are mostly descendants of refugees from China decades ago. They are, as described, pragmatic, practical and materials-oriented. People had not been active in political events and even showed signs of powerlessness (Ku, 2002). The apoliticalization and anationalization under the colonial rule in the 1960s and 1970s even conceived the birth of distinct local identity of Hong Kong people (Baker, 1983; Lau & Kuan, 1988; Ma, 2005; Wong, 1996). Civic morality among people might not be given high priority and the population in the city has been seen as indifferent, detached, utilitarian and apolitical as they care most for the individual and family interest. Lau (1981, 1982), in the 1980s, has used the term *utilitarianistic individualism* or *egoistic individualism* to describe the value-orientation of the Hong Kong people (Ku, 2002, p. 346). Lau & Kuan (1988, 1990) used the term *situational morality* to suggest that Hong Kong people weigh utilitarian considerations much heavier than those of morality.

Notwithstanding the pragmatism and materialism that cultivated throughout the decades, the clannish solidarity and communal relationships stressed in the traditions and deep-rooted culture of Chinese do help create

valuable social capital and building up a civil society that was discussed by Tse (2006). The rise of local political sense of awareness in Hong Kong since 1980s observed by DeGolyer and Scott (2003) led to drastic rise in political participation when they became available after the Sino-British Joint Declaration, as well as people were allowed greater self-government. Reported by DeGolyer and Scott (p. 383), the number of political parties formally established increased to ten from none and the number of voters increased from 34,000 to 3.7 millions. Growth and development of both local communities and political parties have been observed with effective communal bonding, increased mutual trust and understanding, and also the nourishment of social capital.

Civic virtues that established in a community can be enhanced by the existence of social capital—the relationship that benefit each other in return building up commonly-adopted values and understanding (Coleman, 1997). The accumulation of social capital is thus able to reinforce the values that are cultivated and appreciated by the communities in a civil society, to strengthen the communal bonds between citizens and even establish the communal sense of belongings among people in the polity. All these are beneficial to the education of civic virtues and the raise of political literacy among the people. Certainly the inter-enhancement of civic virtues and social capital ultimately facilitates the consolidation of a civil society.

In December 2006, the victory of democratic parties in the sub-sector election for the election of the Chief Executive of HKSAR (only about 800 voters) and the participation of the CE Election by a candidate of a opposing political party was another signal that strongly revealed the voice of Hong Kong people for greater political freedom and democratizing political system. However, what we found in the textbooks seems not responding to the voice for political reforms. The reflection of deformed, inadequate and incompetent citizenship, so as the development of incompetent and subject political culture and the deliberate choice of selected and “approved” civic virtues are still in dominance (see also Tse, 2000), ignoring the voice for real and active involvement for political progress and societal change.

## Conclusion

Hong Kong is described as a democratic city in the textbooks, yet there is not any definition of democracy. Elections are held with restricted qualifications. There is still a long way to the realization of universal suffrage in Hong Kong, let alone its achievement in the People's Republic of China. The election reality at present can be viewed as "votes without power" (Kwok et al., 1992), which is against the accumulating civic wisdom and democratic sentiment that cultivated in the population of Hong Kong since the 1980s. The reality of present citizenship education, as Tse (2004) observes that "the official civic education program serves more to breed students as patriotic subjects or nationals and competitive global people rather than competent citizenry." The difference found in the civics curriculum between the colonial age and the post-1997 period might only be the obvious nationalist sentiment.

Just as discussed, both the present syllabus and textbooks are lacking the reflection of societal truth and the will for political progress. The citizenship portrayed is found passive, partial and ambiguous, perhaps distorted. The choice of civic virtues for the children serves to satisfy the need of the authority to create conformable and loyal citizens without much rational reasoning and critical spirit, which are necessary for a participant political system. Not surprising, Hong Kong has been viewed as "on the verge of recolonization" (Chow, 1992; Scott, 1995; Tse, 2004). It continues the remaking of the British colonial legacy of producing passive and apolitical subjects that satisfy the subject politics.

Concerning the pursuit of ideal life in a community, Kymlicka has an identification of 'two preconditions' for leading a good life: "One is that we lead our life from the inside, in accordance with our beliefs about what gives value to life; the other is that we be *free* to question those beliefs, to examine them in the light of whatever information and examples and arguments our culture can provide" (Dagger, 1997, p. 196; Kymlicka, 1989, pp. 12–13). We greatly expect that our children can be given an opportunity

to become politically competent citizens and fully autonomous beings whom can be given “real freedom” to make decisions with rational minds. People living in this city are always in the hope of the realization of making Hong Kong “Our Place Our Time”.

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## Note

1. Sourced from an author of the textbooks.

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## Appendix

**Table A1 Numbers of Units for Citizenship Knowledge**

### 1. Political knowledge

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Citizenship identity	71	0.86%
2. Basic human rights	6	0.07%
3. Definition of democracy	0	0%
4. Basic political concepts	7	0.08%
5. Constitution of the People's Republic of China	0	0%
6. Communism/Socialism of China	0	0%
7. Appreciation of the difference between the public and non-public arena	0	0%
8. People's Republic of China & Hong Kong	3	0.04%
9. Political System of Hong Kong: one country, two systems; autonomy is emphasized	117	1.41%
10. Structure of Hong Kong Government	93	1.12%
11. History of Governance in Hong Kong	30	0.36%
12. Hong Kong History and Geography	41	0.49%
13. Hong Kong Foreign Policy	2	0.02%
14. Hong Kong Defense System	17	0.21%
15. HKSAR Government & Hong Kong people	85	1.03%
16. Hong Kong and Taiwan are part of China: both are emphasized as part of China	14	0.17%
17. Resumption of Exercise of Sovereignty	59	0.71%
18. Various races in the Republic of China	8	0.10%
19. Rights and freedom are granted	24	0.29%
20. Election	35	0.42%
21. District organizations: district councils	52	0.63%
22. Identity of self	29	0.35%
	<b>693</b>	<b>8.36%</b>

### 2. Legal knowledge

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Basic legal concepts: what is law? Importance of law	57	0.69%
2. Legal system in China	8	0.10%
3. Important laws in daily life: the Basic Law, copyright ordinance, etc.	120	1.45%
4. Legal duties and obligations	7	0.08%
5. Law enforcement bodies	97	1.17%
6. Civil law	3	0.04%
7. Criminal law	2	0.02%
8. Main legal issues	0	0%

9. Structure and procedure of legislature and appeal	120	1.45%
10. Legal aid	4	0.05%
	<b>418</b>	<b>5.04%</b>

### 3. Economic knowledge

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Hong Kong economic conditions, industries, finance, productivity, transportation & telecommunication, entrepôt trade	1350	16.29%
2. Trading between Hong Kong and China	116	1.4%
3. Trading between Hong Kong and the other countries	88	1.06%
4. Knowledge of consumption, consumer protection: rights & duties of consumers	458	5.53%
5. Basic economic concepts and principles	0	0%
6. Career life	0	0%
7. Major economic issues	0	0%
8. Government's role in economic development	147	1.77%
	<b>2159</b>	<b>26.05%</b>

### 4. Social knowledge

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Basic social concepts	0	0%
2. Introduction of social welfare	91	1.10%
3. Concepts of civil society	0	0%
4. Major social issues/problems: language discrepancies	64	0.77%
5. Government and social services: NGOs	291	3.51%
6. Social organizations	5	0.06%
7. Life knowledge: life skills, safety, leisure	0	0%
	<b>451</b>	<b>5.44%</b>

### 5. Cultural knowledge

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Culture of Hong Kong	1	0.01%
2. Basic concepts of culture	0	0%
3. Multi-culture: multi-culturalism	0	0%
4. Cultural exchange	0	0%
5. Difference races and religions in Hong Kong	18	0.22%
6. Channels to learn other culture	5	0.06%
	<b>24</b>	<b>0.29%</b>

### 6. Moral knowledge

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Critical moral judgment	0	0%
2. Working ethics & professional ethos	0	0%
3. Basic concepts of morality	0	0%
4. Moral issues	0	0%
	0	0%

**7. Liberal knowledge**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Respect for life	0	0%
2. Equality between two sexes and care	0	0%
3. Humanistic qualities	0	0%
4. Ecological awareness and protection/preservation	0	0%
5. Appreciation of the arts of humanities	0	0%
6. Balance of science and technological development	0	0%
7. Integration of disciplines	0	0%
8. Scientific spirits	0	0%
	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

**8. Problem solving**

Sub Categories	Times (frequency)	% in total Numbers
1. Critical thinking	11	0.13%
2. Value judgment	0	0%
3. Problem solving skills	0	0%
	<b>11</b>	<b>0.13%</b>

**Table A2 Number of Units for Other Core Knowledge**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Food supply	273	3.29%
2. Water supply	315	3.8%
3. Energy supply	318	3.84%
4. Education	488	5.89%
5. Health	453	5.47%
6. Drug abuse	381	4.60%
7. Juvenile delinquency	309	3.73%
8. Housing	417	5.03%
9. Mass media	358	4.32%
10. Population: What is census? Its significance	297	3.58%
11. Pollution	223	2.69%
12. Corruption	250	3.02%
	<b>4082</b>	<b>49.26%</b>

**Table A3 Numbers of Units for Civic Virtues****1. Respect for civil rights**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total Numbers
1. Rights	1	0.01%
2. Freedom	0	0%
3. Equality	0	0%
4. Human rights	5	0.06%
5. Expression of different opinions: press and publication	23	0.28%
6. Privacy	0	0%
7. Difference	0	0%
8. Property	0	0%
9. Free Education	0	0%
10. Welfare	0	0%
11. Not to abuse rights	2	0.02%
	<b>31</b>	<b>0.37%</b>

**2. Citizenship obligations**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. To abide the law/crime prevention/maintain public order	17	0.21%
2. Election: to encourage voting	15	0.18%
3. To participate in census	1	0.01%
4. To respect freedom of speech as a duty	1	0.01%
5. To pay tax	1	0.01%
6. To participate in public affairs	0	0%
7. Loyalty	0	0%
8. Be patriotic	0	0%
9. Free education	0	0%
	<b>35</b>	<b>0.42%</b>

**3. Political virtues**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Tolerance of difference	1	0.01%
2. Respect for the others	1	0.01%
3. Democratic disposition	0	0%
4. Maintenance of Justice	7	0.08%
5. Fairness	0	0%
6. Compromise	0	0%
7. Active participation in politics in community and at national level	0	0%
8. Concern for public affairs	2	0.02%
	<b>11</b>	<b>0.13%</b>

**4. Legal virtues**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. To abide by the laws	5	0.06%
2. Appropriate procedure	0	0%
3. Rule of law	8	0.10%
4. Fairness	6	0.07%
5. Justice	0	0%
6. Be critical	3	0.04%
	<b>22</b>	<b>0.27%</b>

**5. Economic virtues**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Working ethics	0	0%
2. Ecology/environment: pollution	165	1.99%
3. Appropriate consumption	1	0.01%
4. Views to wealth	10	0.12%
5. Diligence/hardworking	0	0%
6. Thrifty	0	0%
7. Saving	0	0%
8. Do not speculate	1	0.01%
9. Corruption	59	0.71%
	<b>236</b>	<b>2.85%</b>

**6. Social virtues**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Civic awareness	0	0%
2. Social justice	3	0.04%
3. Civism	1	0.01%
4. Care for the others	2	0.02%
5. Cooperativeness with the others	0	0%
6. Serving the others as a disposition	0	0%
7. Social obligation	1	0.01%
8. Public service: volunteer work	16	0.19%
9. To help the others	2	0.02%
10. Never abuse social welfare	1	0.01%
11. No discrimination against others in the society	11	0.13%
12. Public interest	11	0.13%
13. Concern for social affairs	1	0.01%
14. Building a caring society	1	0.01%
15. Be considerate when using public facilities	5	0.06%
16. Be critical to mass media	27	0.33%
	<b>82</b>	<b>0.99%</b>

**7. Cultural virtues**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Respect/Acceptance	6	0.07%
2. Tolerance	1	0.01%
3. Be critical and reflective	0	0%
4. Global perspective	0	0%
5. Local perspective	0	0%
6. Appreciation	0	0%
	<b>7</b>	<b>0.08%</b>

**8. Personal virtues**

Sub categories	Times (frequency)	% in total numbers
1. Honesty	1	0.01%
2. Be rational	10	0.12%
3. Be responsible	1	0.01%
4. Be critical/reflective:	12	0.14%
5. Autonomy	0	0%
6. Self-respect/self-confidence	0	0%
7. Self-recognition	0	0%
8. Self-control	0	0%
9. Courtesy / manners	1	0.01%
10. Modesty	0	0%
11. Courage	0	0%
	<b>25</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

Categories	Total frequency	
Core knowledge + Citizenship knowledge + Civic virtues (Table A2, A1, A3)	<b>8287</b>	<b>100%</b>