

THE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TAIWANESE
CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AFTER
WORLD WAR II

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Abstract

This article highlights the major transformation of citizenship education in Taiwan. The development of this school subject in Taiwan can be divided into three time periods- Authoritarian Period (1950-1970), Transformational Period (1970-1990) and Education Reform Period (1990-the present). The trajectory of the Taiwanese citizenship curriculum can be regarded as a historic process from authority to democracy based on the embedded ideologies. The intervention of politics in citizenship education diminishes after 1980s and this subject gradually proceeds to a more value-neutral subject.

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Introduction

Over five hundred years of recorded history, Taiwan was owned by a number of countries respectively in different periods of time. After WW II, this island's colonial status vanished with its return from Japan to China and, subsequently, due to the Chinese civil war, Taiwan entered another era under the rule of the KMT (Kuomintang of China) government as a bastion of retaking Mainland China. It is certain that political and social factors and education are highly interrelated. Apple (1992, p.4) illustrates that education and power are two inextricable terms, which intertwine to fulfil the national ruling legitimacy. As a consequence, the underlying objectives and ideology of education have changed in response to the external environment and, meanwhile, the KMT government has regarded education as a ruling means to mould 'ideal citizens' for the national interest.

Citizenship education in Taiwan - which is involved with political and social issues, national identity and patriotism - is like a prism reflecting the complexity of cross-strait relations (between China and Taiwan) and the changing national identity delivered in the citizenship education curriculum. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to outline and analyse the changing curriculum of citizenship education in modern Taiwan. The history of citizenship education can be divided into authoritarian (1950-1970), transitional (1970-1990) and education reform periods (1990- the present), according to distinct political atmospheres and the prescribed contents of textbooks.

Historical Background

The jurisdiction of Republic of China (R.O.C)¹ covers Taiwan and outlying islands in eastern Asia, approximately 120 kilometres off the coast of mainland China across the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan has 23 million people, of which 70% are Hoklo², 14% Hakka³, 14% Mainlanders⁴ and 2% aboriginal Taiwanese⁵ (Sue, 2006, p.355). Taiwan has been owned by Holland, Spain, China and Japan. In 1887, under the Qing Dynasty's rule, Taiwan's status was upgraded from an affiliation of Fujian province to a separate province.

However, eight years later, due to the defeat of Sino-Japanese War, the Qing Dynasty ceded Taiwan to Japan according to the treaty of Shimonoseki. It is shown that Taiwan has a long history of colonisation. Among those European and Asian forces, most of them regarded Taiwan as a business pivot of eastern Asia, except that Japan strived to Japanese Taiwan and intended to transform it as the southern expansion of Japan's territory. In consequence, education was taken as a means to teach the Taiwanese how to act as subjects of the Japanese emperor in order to establish Japanese national identity. The Japanese administration sought to weaken Taiwan's culture and promulgate Japanese culture. The Japanese language was the only acceptable language used in schools (Roy, 2003, p.42). Meanwhile, during this period, a revolution in Mainland China held by Sun Yet-sen in 1911 overcame the Qing Dynasty and established the Republic of China (ROC).

¹ The Republic of China (ROC) is the formal country name, commonly known as 'Taiwan'.

² Han Chinese who came from the southern part of Fujian province of mainland China in the 17th Century and speak the Min-nan language, and politically claim themselves 'Taiwanese' to distinguish themselves from Mainlanders.

³ A subgroup of the Han Chinese who live in the provinces of Guangdong, Jiangxi and Fujian in China

⁴ The Han Chinese who emigrated from Mainland China after the Chinese Civil War, and their descendants, are politically called 'wàishěng rén' to differentiate them from Hoklo.

⁵ They are the indigenous people of Taiwan and presently 13 tribes have been officially recognised by the Council of Indigenous Peoples of Executive Yuan.

Later on, the Japanese surrendered in WW II, and subsequently returned Taiwan to China⁶ after five decades' rule. Then, the KMT government was ruling Mainland China, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, and sent a group of administration officials to take over and govern the island. Instead of successfully integrating Taiwan into Chinese society, misunderstanding and tensions between the ruling Mainlanders and Taiwanese escalated because the natives thought the Taiwanese were being treated as colonial subjects, as they had been before. Therefore, intermittent disobedient incidents occurred and resulted in brutal violence on 28th February, 1947 (228 incident), followed by a series of local government crackdowns, called 'Taiwanese White Terror'⁷, and those can be perceived as the cause of long-lasting feuds between Mainlanders and the native Taiwanese (Li, 1999).

At the same time, in Mainland China, the trend of communism was broadly spreading and threatening the rule of the KMT government. Finally, after four years of full-scale Chinese Civil War, communists entirely controlled Mainland China and founded a new country, entitled 'People's Republic of China' (PRC). Defeated Kuomintang (KMT) fled to Taiwan and moved the ROC government from Nanjing to Taipei. Taiwan finally was no longer a province of China, becoming a retreating haven of Kuomintang, separated from the PRC by the Taiwan Strait and pinning its hopes on the island to recover Mainland China in the future. With a long-term standoff and unbalanced military forces, the desire to retake mainland China gradually weakened and the KMT converted its ruling attitude from a temporary bastion to a permanent residence of the ROC. Besides, with more and more international favour, the PRC replaced the ROC as one of the five

⁶ ROC (Kuomintang government) had not lost in Chinese Civil War and left Mainland China.

⁷ 140,000 people were imprisoned or executed for being perceived as the advocates and spies of Chinese communists.

permanent members of the Security Council in 1971, which meant the ROC was marginalised and subsequently renounced membership of the United Nations.

External unsolved disadvantages pressed the KMT to resort to success from the internal environment. In the initial years, economic aid from the USA and land reform programmes bolstered economic improvement. As for political liberty, the lifting of martial law⁸ in 1987 was symbolic of the elimination of the old socio-political order and the onset of social opening and democracy (Lui, 2004, p.99). The Taiwanese started to gain freedom of speech, association, the press and the right to hold assembly, which directly resulted in the foundation of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and a number of grass-rooted movements. As a result, from Chiang Kai-shek to his successor and son, Chiang Ching-kuo, who lifted the martial law, this period of time was regarded as paving the way from authoritarian to democratic society.

Lee Teng-hui, Chiang Ching-kuo's successor, started to work on constitutional amendment and in 1996 succeeded in Taiwan's first direct presidential election. Chen Shui-bian, representing the DPP, won the presidency in 2000, which signified a milestone of democratisation, due to the peaceful transfer of political power from the KMT to DPP. According to the DPP's Party Programme for Taiwanese Independence, Chen Shui-bian keenly promoted the Taiwanese Consciousness and Renaming Movement⁹, which caused the great tension and cessation of negotiation between ROC and PRC. In early 2008, the KMT presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou took office and actively attempted to re-establish a reciprocal relation with PRC. On account of

⁸ Martial law was imposed from 1949 to 1987 to maintain social order and prevent any possible turmoil, and it is the longest stretch of martial law in modern history.

⁹ Replace country name ROC with Taiwan.

democratisation and economic development, Taiwan has transformed into a liberal and prosperous country.

Over more than half a century, instability and underlying threats in cross-strait relations have immensely impacted on Taiwanese society at all levels and undoubtedly education is no exception.

It is contended that education and governing power are highly interrelated and that the relationship is strongly reinforced during times of upheaval (Apple, 1992, p.4). More precisely, the authorities intended to impose their ideology and policy upon the objective, content and process of schooling. It can be apparently observed in Taiwanese educational transition, and before the openness of the textbook market, that government-edited textbooks revealed several monopolised goals that the authorities instilled, especially for citizenship education, a relatively sensitive subject.

Overview of Transition of Citizenship Education in Taiwan

Under Japanese rule (1895-1945), the subject 'Disciplining the Person' was presumed as the earliest citizenship education in Taiwan. Before WWII, the KMT's ministry of education (TMOE) formulated a Curriculum Standard for Citizenship Education in 1916 and it was applied to Taiwan after the return to China (Wang, 2004). It can be argued that the Curriculum Standard was enforced in order to ensure the overall quality of schooling, but it could also be the binding regulation to implement the content that the authorities thought should be taught, which may be further regarded as a means to censor the schooling. Besides, the National Institute for Compilation and Translation (NICT) published textbooks and related materials according to the Curriculum Standard, and they were the only authorised textbooks allowed to be taught in schools. Later on, after education

reform, Curriculum Guidelines replaced the Curriculum Standard, and schools and teachers were given more freedom to create their own curriculum based on students' needs.

The following three periods of time explicate how the social and political issues affected the transformation of citizenship education. Taiwan's educational system is modelled on the US educational system. Citizenship education is both a compulsory subject in junior and senior high school, though the title of subjects is slightly changed with revisions. Citizenship education in senior high school used to be a collective subject, including Citizenship Education, Three Principles of the People¹⁰ and Modern Society, before they were integrated into a new subject, entitled 'Civics and Society' in 2006.

Authoritarian Period (1950-1970)

Although the Curriculum Standard was ratified in 1916, due to WW II and the Chinese Civil War it was not revised until 1952. TMOE held a Curriculum Standard Revision Committee and focused on Citizenship Education, Chinese, History and Geography. There were two major objectives for the revision: firstly, reduce the influence of Kominka¹¹. Secondly, to propagate Chinese nationalism. These objectives reflected the complexity of the political and social situation in Taiwan. On the one hand, the secession of 50 years has distanced Taiwanese and mainland China politically and emotionally, and the Japanese administration implemented 'assimilation policies', such as legalising Taiwanese-Japanese intermarriage, banning Chinese radio broadcasts and newspapers, and making changes in the education system to reduce the study of Chinese in favour of Japanese (Roy, 2003, p.41). The attachment toward Mainland China has receded with time. On

¹⁰ Sun Yet-sen's political philosophy, including nationalism, democracy and people's welfare. He is regarded as the founder of modern China.

¹¹ A policy aimed to turn Taiwanese into loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor.

the other hand, because of the previous '228 incident' and 'Taiwanese White Terror', the indigenous Taiwanese were hostile to the Mainland Chinese (KMT) administration. As a result, the KMT government attempted to legitimise their ruling power via the Curriculum Standard and capitalised on education to teach students loyalty and devotion to the ROC. Meanwhile, the government indoctrinated citizens in its orthodoxy of China and that the chance of retaking Mainland China was upcoming.

For contents, there were six units: (1) citizen and life (2) citizen and society (3) citizen and politics (4) citizen and laws (5) citizen and economics (6) citizen and culture. Among them, 'citizen and politics' accounted for a larger proportion. In order to consolidate the identity of the ROC and erase the influence of Japanisation, two sub-units, 'the understanding of nation and nationalism' and 'Constitution of Republic of China' were highlighted. Before withdrawing from the United Nations, the KMT authority still kept permanent membership of Security Council until 1971. This was a magnificent symbol of international status to justify the KMT's representation of the whole of China (mainland China and coastal islands; the PRC replaced the ROC's membership afterwards), though its jurisdiction was limited to Taiwan. As a result, 'United Nations' became an independent sub-unit in the curriculum and implied legitimacy over Taiwan and Mainland China.

In conclusion, there were three characteristics of citizenship education during this period of time: China-centred, patriotism and anti-communism. National identity could be cultivated through constant appreciation of Chinese culture and prominence of historic glory. References to 'our nation' in textbooks meant 'Mainland China and its coastal islands' and 'our history' meant 'five thousand years of the history of China'. Taiwan was merely described as a province of China. As for anti-communism, some propaganda-like sentences emerged in textbooks:

"Totalitarian authorities cannot tolerate any other political parties. Even though some political parties are legal and active, they are well-controlled and supervised by the communist party as a means to deceive citizens. Utilising each other is the way of communists and the Communist Party is the combination of craftiness, cruelty and brutality."

(Zhong-Hua textbook compilation committee, 1953, p. 165)

During this period of time, the KMT government strove for the legitimacy of its authority and promoted China's culture to establish consensual identity to the ROC. Meanwhile, the overstatement of communists' misconduct was transmitted in the textbooks (Sue, 2006). However, the forthcoming setbacks of diplomatic status led to the next stage of revision of the Citizenship Education Curriculum Standard.

Transformational Period (1970-1990)

In 1972, under international political pressure, the PRC was admitted to the United Nations, replacing the ROC's membership and permanent seat on the Security Council. At the same time, in the PRC, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was launched by Mao Ze-dong, the chairman of the Communist Party of China, aiming to abolish 'four olds' (old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas) and seeking to regain control of the party hit by the failure of economic policy¹². However, the revolution soon led to nationwide turmoil and one of the major effects on education was the destruction of Confucian culture. By contrast, the KMT government launched 'Chinese Culture Renaissance Movement' in order to emphasise the significance of ancient Chinese philosophy and accentuate the brutality and vulgarity of the communist party (Clark, 2008). Therefore, with the incorporation of traditional Confucian culture, Citizenship Education was

¹² Great Leap Forward: by the usage of labour mobilisation, the government intended to increase the production of steel but the low quality steel made living standards worse.

renamed 'Civics and Morality' in 1971, consisting of contents about code of conducts, moral consciousness, Youth Regulations¹³ and Cardinal virtues¹⁴ (Lee, 2004).

The second revision in this period brought citizenship education onto a new stage and constructed the fundamental framework for later development. The Department of Secondary Education of TMOE (1984, p.11) specified Senior High School Citizenship Education Objectives:

"The aim is to develop the youngsters physically and mentally. This subject is also designed as a preparatory introduction to future academic research and professional knowledge acquisition."

Eight major social science fields were encompassed and divided into four volumes (as shown in Appendix 3): (1) Psychology and Education (2) Morality and Culture (3) Laws and Politics (4) Economics and Society. Compared to the previous Curriculum Standard, the proportion of politics diminished and the UN introduction was subsumed under a new chapter called 'international politics'. In this chapter, besides the UN, contemporary regional organisations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, European Economic Community and Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, were articulated, and important global issues were presented and discussed.

Taiwan underwent a transitional process from an authoritarian to a democratic society, and this revolutionary and open atmosphere was also reflected in the content of citizenship education. Prior indoctrinating and uncritical content was gradually reduced, replaced by a variety of social science disciplines, and a new Curriculum Standard aimed to cultivate pupils' critical thinking and

¹³ Youth Regulations include 12 items, for example, Article 1: Loyalty and bravery are the bases of patriotism.

¹⁴ Cardinal virtues contain loyalty to nation, filial piety, benevolence, love, trustworthiness, justice, harmony and peace.

decision-making competence instead of merely patriotism and nationalism. Three Principles of the People became an optional course and the emphasis on anti-communist ideology lessened (Lui, 2004). Political propaganda - such as 'anti-communist', 'anti-Soviet' and 'retaking China' - was substituted by more objective and less demeaning descriptions.

After the lifting of martial law in 1987, political parties and social mobility mushroomed, and the first people's lawmaker by-election was held in the same year. In the third volume, 'Laws and Politics', pressure groups, political parties and elections were first introduced, because of liberalisation and democratisation. Although the multi-party system was adopted in the texts, the advantages of the dominant-party system were highly accentuated (Kuo, 2004). As for the most sensitive topic, the cross-strait relationship, one section, entitled 'Our Current Political Situation – an extraordinary period', explicated the split of the ROC and the PRC and, following the last period's ideology, the determination to recover Mainland China was recurrently mentioned. At the time, the opposition party – the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) - was promoting the concept of Taiwanese independence and gained the support from the Hoklo and the relatives of victims of '228 Incident' and 'Taiwanese White Terror'. However, meanwhile, the PRC continued its 'One China Policy' and was strongly opposed to the secession. Under these internal and external tensions, the KMT government carried on demonstrating the objection to independence in citizenship education textbooks (Kuo, 2004). As Apple (1996, p.22-23) mentions, a curriculum reflects tensions and contentions within society, and the formation of a curriculum is a process of compromise and negotiation, taking cultural, political and economic factors into account.

Education Reform Period (1990- the present)

Since 1988, the DPP has continued promulgating Taiwanese dialects, including Min-nan, Hakka and nine aboriginal languages, e.g. Pewian, Rukai, into the Curriculum Standard. For example, Hland county first embarked on dialect teaching in its primary and secondary schools (Law, 2002), and this corresponded with the expectation of preserving local culture and language. In the mid-1990s, grass-rooted educational movements requested TMOE to educate pupils in the identity of Taiwan rather than continue focusing on the Mainland China. Under persistent pressure from social groups and local government, the curriculum changed from China-centred to more Taiwan-centred. In citizenship education, the contents referring to China were reduced and two subsidiary new subjects, 'Understanding Taiwan' and 'Native Place Teaching Activities', were implemented. The former was for grade 7, concerned with festivals and customs, historical sites and cultural crafts, education, economics, politics, leisure, religions and social issues; the latter was for grades 3 to 6, aiming to teach pupils to know local history and involve themselves in local community affairs (Lui, 2004). After being implemented for four years since 1997, they were integrated into new Curriculum Guidelines for Citizenship Education after education reform, and these two subjects could be regarded as the onset of localisation in education.

Education reform was mainly led by a supra-ministerial reform agency called the Commission on Educational Reform (CER). The Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum Plan for elementary and junior high schools is one of the most tremendous changes to the Taiwanese educational environment, which displays the spirit of 'spiral curriculum' and 'integration of subjects'¹⁵ curricula'. Subjects in junior high school expand the identical contents in elementary school and are lifted to a more

¹⁵ The Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum Plan categorises traditional subjects into seven learning fields, including language (Chinese and English), health and physical education, social studies, art, natural science and technology, mathematics and comprehensive practice activity.

intensive and extensive level for students to revisit. Citizenship education, geography and history were incorporated into a new 'learning field', entitled 'social study', to fulfil the aim of integration and collectively transmit a more complete and interdisciplinary knowledge. TMOE also unveiled new Curriculum Guidelines for senior high school. Two optional subjects, 'Three Principles of the People' and 'Modern Society', are integrated into citizenship education, renamed 'Civics and Society' in 2006.

Due to the deregulation of the textbook market, NICT's government-edited textbook was discontinued and TMOE uses the system of NICT-approved (censored) textbooks, which means private publications are permitted on the market. As for contents, the Curriculum Guidelines have replaced Curriculum Standard, leaving more flexibility to schools, teachers and publishers. Curriculum Guidelines for Citizenship Education enumerate four major topics: (1) Psychology, Society and Culture (2) Education, Morality and Laws (3) Government and democratic politics (4) Economics and sustainable development. It can be observed that respectively the four volumes are the introductions to sociology, laws, political science and economics, which encompass more academic theories and knowledge than before.

For example - previously when mentioning the importance of laws - constitution, civil law, criminal law and the function of legal courts were four major aspects connecting legal knowledge with pupils' life experiences. The concepts were life-specialised and avoided technical terms. In the new Curriculum Guidelines, to completely demonstrate the theoretical framework of law, administrative law and administrative process law, which are obviously less relevant to pupils' life experience, are fully introduced in one chapter, and some legal terms, such as 'principles of statute supremacy' and 'principles of reservation by statute', are articulated in every publisher's version. Several professors questioned the propriety of material for teenagers and the qualification of present citizenship education teachers to deal with the more academic-oriented contents (Han,

2008). Obviously, it is also criticised that the contents are full of factual knowledge but lack in the cultivation of civic virtue and social participation.

Moreover, because of the public's growing call for neutrality and de-ideology, TMOE intended to deprive new Curriculum Guidelines of the intervention of politics (Lee, 2006, p.224). The concept of de-ideology causes the avoidance of sensitive issues, though the 'ROC - PRC relationship' has become an independent chapter in volume 3. Compared to the formation of Citizenship Education in other countries, 'patriotism and national identity' are two significant concepts to deliver and they can even be regarded as the main reasons why this subject exists. As a result, it could be argued that this subject has become a social science discipline without proper patriotic thoughts and national identity within it.

Conclusion

Drawing lessons from the past, it is clear that the curriculum programmes in Taiwan have been shaped by the political environments from which they have emerged. The development of Citizenship Education is also a historic process from authority to democracy. The intervention of politics in citizenship education diminishes and this subject gradually proceeds to a more value-neutral subject. Democratisation activates social mobility and freedom of expression ensures previously forbidden voices are heard. The DPP, as an opposition party representing the force of independence and pro-localisation, successfully balanced the KMT's China-centred policies. Since the 1990s, the growing intention of localisation and Taiwanisation can be found in citizenship education with the increasing momentum of Taiwanese identity. It can be observed that the intertwined China-Taiwan relationship will continue to influence the Taiwanese citizenship education in the future.

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