Politics, Participation & Power Relations

Transdisciplinary Approaches to Critical Citizenship in the Classroom and Community

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Until recently, youth have become the great absence regarding matters of citizenship, justice, and democracy. Rarely are young people taken up with the important discourses of freedom and citizenship, especially discourses that transcend national boundaries and academic disciplines.

Richard Mitchell and Shannon Moore have put together a brilliant book that not only fills this void, but makes one of the most powerful cases I have read for addressing young people in terms that not only allow them to talk back, be heard, but also to enjoy those rights and freedoms that give democracy a real claim on its ideals and promises. Every educator, parent, student, and all those young people now making their voices heard all over the world should read this book.

Henry A. Giroux

This diverse collection will appeal to students in senior undergraduate and graduate courses looking into the new cosmopolitanism in social policy, citizenship or cultural studies, in child and youth studies, and in post-colonial approaches to education, sociology, and political science.
Politics, Participation & Power Relations
This series represents a forum for important issues that do and will affect how learning and teaching are thought about and practised. All educational venues and situations are undergoing change because of information and communications technology, globalization and paradigmatic shifts in determining what knowledge is valued. Our scope includes matters in primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as community-based informal circumstances. Important and significant differences between information and knowledge represent a departure from traditional educational offerings heightening the need for further and deeper understanding of the implications such opportunities have for influencing what happens in schools, colleges and universities around the globe. An inclusive approach helps attend to important current and future issues related to learners, teachers and the variety of cultures and venues in which educational efforts occur. We invite forward-looking contributions that reflect an international comparative perspective illustrating similarities and differences in situations, problems, solutions and outcomes.

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POLITICS, PARTICIPATION & POWER RELATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Politics, Participation and Power Relations: Transdisciplinary Approaches to Critical Citizenship

The notion of what constitutes an effective cultural or political expression of democratic citizenship in this post-millennial, post-colonial, even post neo-liberal moment is increasingly fluid as we write this Introduction for our second edited text on these themes (see Moore & Mitchell, 2008). As Hyslop-Margison and Thayer (2009, p. xv) have noted “these are extremely tenuous times for modern democratic states and for democracy more generally” as world society drifts dangerously towards “neo-liberal capitalist collapse” without the emergence of any viable alternative paradigms. This is so much more the case since our project was conceived that we’re reminded of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman’s (2005) “afterthought” that we live now in a time of “liquid modernity … among a multitude of competing values, norms, and lifestyles without a firm and reliable guarantee of being in the right [that] is hazardous and commands a high psychological price” (p. 1095). We remain cautiously optimistic, in the sense that 20th century Brazilian educator Paulo Freire espoused, particularly as we observe the contemporaneous revolutions/revelations occurring in numerous Middle Eastern states- each one facilitated in their own geopolitical space through the phenomena of globalised social media. Recalling Freire’s contributions Henry A. Giroux (2010b) reflects on this approach to pedagogy:

What Freire made clear is that … education is a political and moral practice that provides the knowledge, skills and social relations that enable students to explore for themselves the possibilities of what it means to be engaged citizens, while expanding and deepening their participation in the promise of a substantive democracy (para. 5).

This “substantive” approach to participatory democracy could be argued to possess at least a few common baselines. Parenthetically even the most optimistic of critical educators could not have forecast the new boundaries being created by populist uprisings in Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and Libya in the final months of this project. Indeed, even a short year ago any critique that decades-old military dictatorships and their frequently oppressive oil-based oligarchies would or could be toppled in a few weeks through such means would have been received as preposterous. Yet here we stand.
Two other recent scholarly contributions from a burgeoning literature on similar themes are noteworthy here (Earls, 2011; Rhoads & Szelényi, 2011). Each for the most part avoids any broad attempt to redefine American-style capitalist approaches to democratic citizenship - perhaps in both cases innocently enough by virtue of a cultural myopia. Written from eminent US-based academic institutions, the first comes from a 2009 Harvard symposium on ‘child citizenship’ with special editor Felton Earls of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (2011), and recounts a broad range of mostly astute international presentations marking the 20th anniversary the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). In a critical reflection on the citizenship of Guantanamo prisoner and former Canadian child soldier Omar Khadr, one of us has previously argued that this treaty represents a “transdisciplinary … alternative model for citizenship education” (Mitchell, 2010, p. 38) by clearly marking out the new terrain children are travelling in this period from “rights to citizenship”, as Earls (2011, p. 6) also rightly declares. One of numerous highly regarded contributors in their collection is British-based international legal scholar Geraldine Van Bueren (2011, p. 30) who theorises a “multi-generational citizenship” recognising children as both national and international citizens - perhaps the closest to many of the theoretical and political themes running throughout our anthology.

The second selection from scholarly literature is by Rhoads and Szelényi (2011) who address the influence of “Euro-American authored ‘capitalocentrism’ ” (p. 4), but entirely omit the whole notion of children as active citizens or agents of change in this discourse and in the street. Drawing again upon a diverse group of international faculty and students from China’s Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in China, University of California, Los Angeles, the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina, and Hungary’s Central European University, these authors analyse “global citizenship” from the standpoint of the academy (Rhoads & Szelényi, 2011, p. 16). They view the role of the university in marking out this shifting terrain as a still dominant force for good, but start off with an observation that neoliberalism is “a confusing descriptor, since what we see today in terms of global economics is a near total victory of conservativism and the power of neoconservative geopolitical influence” (p. 13). This passage seems somewhat out of touch with their chapter from Argentina on that nation’s resistance to neoliberalism as well as the current pitched street battles say in the ancient cities of Greece, coincidentally one of the ancient birthplaces of democracy. While their Argentine analysis goes some way in responding to Hyslop-Margison and Thayer’s 2009 critique that too few alternative paradigms are being contemplated, in the end they make little of the sad overture being replayed in most of the international academy to accompany the bankrupt rearrangement of global capital’s deck chairs. This same odious overture is heard throughout the Hollywood documentary Inside Job directed by Charles H. Ferguson (2010).

As co-editors, we envisioned some of the process for creating any viable alternative paradigm may be undertaken within the transdisciplinary framework of active, participatory and inclusive expressions of child and youth citizenship presented here. Despite criticisms valid and otherwise, we are still keenly
interested in how to live and teach the participatory principles underlying democratic citizenship from the perspective of Freire. Thus, the volume began to take shape during our investigation of how 29-year-old Canadian activist Craig Kielburger - Nobel Prize nominee and 1995 co-founder of the international non-governmental organisation *Free the Children* at 13 years of age - defined and understood the concept in his work. With programs in 4,000 North American schools, the Kielburger brothers (older brother and Harvard-educated lawyer Marc is his co-founder/co-director) have built more than 500 schools in 16 countries, and employ more than 100 people in their Toronto-based charity (Kielburger & Kielburger, 2006). In 2009 they took in nearly $16 million in donations along with $8 million more in the US as part of what they identify as “the world’s largest network of children helping children through education”. Throughout their evolution and growth from an elementary school and home-based initiative, they have also quietly challenged the foundations of Canadian tax law related to charitable fundraising through their somewhat radical approach to social enterprise (Wingrove, 2010).

In line with some of the thinking espoused by democratic theorist Amartya Sen (see also Arvind, this volume), we present findings from an interview with Kielburger during that study along with selections from other mainly marginalised populations in Canada, England, India, Australia, the US and China while observing that the rise of democratic freedoms is certainly one of the principal developments of our time. We agree with Sen’s (1999) assertion that in the distant future when people look back at what happened in the 20th (and early 21st centuries), they will find it difficult not to accept the emergence of democratic freedoms as the most striking development of the period. Certainly the still emancipatory, liberatory march of women, children and other minorities from chattel to rights-bearers forms a large portion of these new chapters in the story of global citizenship. Nevertheless, in contrast to the often sanguine tone taken by Rhoads and Szelényi (2011), we are concerned with this evolution in the same way as Henry A. Giroux (2010a) observes below:

> Imposed amnesia is the modus operandi of the current moment. Not only is historical memory now sacrificed to the spectacles of consumerism, celebrity culture, hyped-up violence and a market-driven obsession with the self, but the very formative culture that makes compassion, justice and an engaged citizenship foundational to democracy has been erased from the language of mainstream politics and the diverse cultural apparatuses that support it. Unbridled individualism along with the gospel of profit and unchecked competition undermine both the importance of democratic public spheres and the necessity for a language that talks about shared responsibilities, the public good and the meaning of a just society. (para. 2)

As in our first iteration, we respond to this capitalist hollowing out of public spaces in many democratic spheres by turning again in this anthology to a transdisciplinary collection of critical pedagogues for contemporary expressions of global and local citizenship. In this, we have also taken inspiration from thinkers
such as Giroux, bell hooks, Ira Shor, Shirley Steinberg, Joe Kincheloe, Peter McLaren and others who declare mentor Paulo Freire as one of the most important educators of the 20th century. Paulo opened up new spaces allowing all of us to contribute to an “educational movement guided by both a passion and principle to help students develop a consciousness of freedom, recognise authoritarian tendencies, empower the imagination, connect knowledge and truth to power and learn to read both the word and the world as part of a broader struggle for agency, justice, and democracy” (Giroux, 2010b, para. 1). In thinking about this type of critical teaching for social change, Shor (1992) also cautioned that top-down “teacher-talk” alone along with attempts at “character education” cannot solve these problems since such traditional pedagogical approaches created these problems in the first place. “Teacher-talk” is a “frontal pedagogy … [that] contributes to depressing the achievement and aspirations of nonelite students. It will continue to do so”, he argues, “until teachers and students develop a type of mutual dialogue”, and while such “dialogic education cannot change inequality in society or guarantee success in the job market”, it can change student experiences by encouraging them “to develop the intellectual and affective powers to think about transforming society”. Shor suggests this type of “critical dialogue opposes all mechanisms for sustaining inequality” (pp. 110–111).

As critical educators grounded in at least two disciplinary traditions - one in sociology (Mitchell, 2005, 2007, 2010) and one in counselling psychology (Moore, 2006, 2008; Moore & Mitchell, 2008, 2009), we attempt daily to contribute to Freire’s mission (and Shor’s above) though at times we have paid not a small price for our optimism. While transdisciplinarity is still an emerging concept, we agree with Albrecht, Freeman and Higginbotham’s (1998) complex assessment that “politically, transdisciplinary thinking leads away from any form of authoritarianism, towards a politics of inclusion and an awareness that academics do not have a monopoly on wisdom. It is open a priori to all theories of knowledge, including those underlying indigenous beliefs….transdisciplinary thinking evolves reflexively as it assembles the meta-theory” (p. 58). As co-editors, we acknowledge and thank the contributors from six countries on four continents in total. The collection represents a robust expression of this overarching framework (see also Moore & Mitchell, 2008) while at the same time stands in solidarity with the reality of a struggle being fought by tens of thousands currently expressing a greater international thirst for a kind of globalised citizenship than ever previously known.

It is true that demonstrations and violent deaths have occurred daily for decades, and most likely over millennia, due to the lack of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, or rights to peaceful assembly, to organised labour, to education, healthcare, and to democratically elected political institutions. In light of these struggles we make our contribution respectfully and cautiously, in contrast to Kiwan’s rather forceful (2005, p. 37) argument that “human rights cannot logically be a theoretical underpinning for citizenship, regardless of how citizenship may be conceptualised”. Indeed, the civil, political and social rights
listed above are the simply entry points for the critical framework woven throughout this collection.

These contributions include: An innovative case study from mainland China by Wangbei Ye, a lecturer in the Department of Politics at the East China Normal University, with findings from her doctoral research that looked into the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) political control and involvement in citizenship education with data from the Special Economic Zone of Shenzhen City; a piece of narrative research from a Canadian Aboriginal setting by Sandra Wolf, an Ojibwe originally from North Dakota in Turtle Island and currently a northern Ontario-based teacher-educator who presents a chapter describing teams of pre-service teachers engaged in participatory social justice work; Emery Hyslop-Margison and Josephine L. Savarese, once again both Canadian-based teacher-educators from New Brunswick who present a theoretical analysis of post neo-liberalism in higher education and how current policies and trends undermine post-secondary education as a potential site of democratic learning; from Gaysu R. Arvind, an Indian teacher-educator from the University of Delhi, contributes a chapter drawing upon bottom-up case studies of school functioning while examining the education of marginalised children in the lowest strata of the traditionally unequal Indian society; from Australian educator Keith Heggart comes a chapter exploring the development of a model of human rights education in that nation that also addresses citizenship education.

From England, a troika of empirical studies are presented next: The first from teacher-educator Lee Jerome offers findings from a doctoral case study at London’s Metropolitan University where a ‘child rights respecting approach’ has been incorporated; the second chapter is another doctoral study from Sam Mejias and Hugh Starkey of the Institute of Education, University of London presenting findings from an exploration of the partnership between the international non-governmental organisation Amnesty International and an English secondary school; and the third offering is a critical analysis by Helen Trivers of Amnesty International (co-authored again by Starkey) that focuses on the Rights, Respect, Responsibility initiative in Hampshire, England and the UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Schools project (notably both of these projects draw heavily upon a made-in-Canada model).

A contribution from US-based Paul Thomas of Furman University in South Carolina presents his theoretical reflection from the standpoint of growing up and teaching in the rural south arguing for the need of critical literacy, specifically in the writing curriculum, to foster critical citizenship; returning again to Canada for the final two chapters, one from Brock University colleagues May Al-Fartousi and Dolana Mogadime in the Faculty of Education who, in response to a 2009 Muslim Canadian Congress call to government to prevent Muslim women from covering their faces in public, present a critical study of media representations of Muslim women wearing the burka; and lastly, our Moore and Mitchell case study of a youth rally hosted at our southern Ontario university by international child and youth activist Craig Kielburger (which includes a heuristic model for critically engaging young people’s citizenship) discussed above.
Also noted previously, we started and now end the project cautiously optimistic although with assumptions grounded in cultural and political perspectives (and upon many of our collaborators’ positions as well) that these freedoms are being taken for granted in many contexts, and are clearly being eroded in the so-called democracies wherein the majority of us work. Nevertheless, the fact that these freedoms exist anywhere at all is an important feature of ‘liquid modernity’ as Bauman observes it, while offering some measure of the firm and reliable guarantee he opines as missing even as blood is spilled in geographies where they are absent. We humbly contend that with this constellation of theoretical and empirical contributions, and the often marginalised populations making up their subjects, our goal of making a thoughtful, critical, transnational contribution to democratic citizenship education has been achieved. This goal began in our Canadian lecture halls and classrooms, and has implications well beyond not the least of which are occurring in the streets and plazas of urban settings far removed from our own fragile democratic mosaic.

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION


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SCHOOL POWER AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN CHINA

Experiences from Three Secondary Schools

ABSTRACT

Numerous critical studies on citizenship have demonstrated that schools and teachers make a significant contribution to democracy. However, due to the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) tight political control and the Chinese governments’ deep involvement in citizenship education, the ways in which Chinese schools and teachers affect democratic citizenship education are under-researched. With reference to school-based curriculum development (SBCD, initiated in 2001), this chapter investigates the impact of Chinese schools and teachers on citizenship education, with particular attention to their influence in the three stages of SBCD: goal setting, content and pedagogy selection, and implementation. Data were drawn from studies in three secondary schools (Grades 7–9), 90 questionnaires completed by teachers and 23 individual interviews with government administrators, university experts, school principals and teachers from February to December, 2008. The findings indicate that Chinese school practices are congruent with critical pedagogy studies underscoring the emancipatory potential of schools and teachers: Schools can advance democratic citizenship education by de-politicising CCP-dominated citizenship education, decentralising curriculum decisions in order to take power from governments, and democratising school culture to better meet the needs of Chinese civil society. These practices do not, however, eliminate the CCP’s and state’s politically-motivated values, centralised control and non-democratic education management style in general. Therefore, this study suggests school power in China can best be understood by viewing the concept of school power as a semi-emancipatory relationship.

INTRODUCTION

Citizenship education has been introduced in many countries in recent years (Davies & Issit, 2005; Johnson & Morris, 2010; Torney-Purta & Barber, 2004), with the expectation that it would help to ease the political indifference and apathy caused by post-modern challenges (Terren, 2002). Reinforcing civic participation and stimulating social integration, therefore, is a major feature of recent efforts at promoting citizenship education in different countries (Keddie, 2008; Leenders, Veugelers, & Kat, 2008; Mitchell, 2010).
Schools and teachers, as suggested by numerous critical pedagogy studies, can contribute to a more active citizenship and a higher quality of democracy by reconstructing education to include the diverse voices, views and experiences of various societal groups, even “against the grain” (Giroux, 2003) of the inequities and injustices of the social world. Having a transdisciplinary nature, critical pedagogy studies suggest that schools and teachers realise their emancipatory roles from these comprehensive perspectives: Questioning and analysing the politics that pervade education, school practices and policies (Nieto, 2000; Oakes, 1995); incorporating diverse contents and critical conversation and dialogue pedagogies (Shor & Freire, 1987), rather than being informed by dominant social forces in curriculum content and pedagogy selection (Slattery, Krasny, & O’Malley, 2007); transforming the traditional bureaucratic approach to educational decision-making in curriculum, school structures, organisation and management into a form of social empowerment and a search for deeper understanding that leads to justice, compassion, and ecological sustainability (See Kliebard, 1986; Osler & Starkey, 2010; Slattery, 2006).

However, despite widespread international interest in schools’ and teachers’ emancipatory role in reconstructing democratic citizenship education, most studies have focused on Latin America and Western countries, and the efforts of Chinese schools and teachers have been under-researched. This article addresses this gap and provides an explanation of Chinese schools’ and teachers’ roles in pursuit of democratic citizenship education.

Due to the country’s Confucian tradition, which stresses obedience and loyalty to the state (Sen, 1999), and its adoption of Marxist one-party governance (Held, 1992), citizenship education in China is characterised by strong political control (Hayhoe, 1993; Zhu & Liu, 2004). Since 1949, the ruling political party of the People’s Republic of China, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), has promoted citizenship education as a means to introduce communist ideologies based on Marxist philosophy (i.e., dialectical and historical materialism). Therefore, it has used the term citizenship education interchangeably with such terms as ideological education, political education, ideological-political education, ideological moral education, and moral-political education (Cheung, 1994).

Political control in Chinese citizenship education has been enhanced by centralised curriculum development, with the central government deeply involved in every aspect of education (Schneewind, 2006). Communist political knowledge is introduced at all levels of education in China: The Ministry of Education (MOE) follows CCP and state guidance in making education policies, the People’s Education Press (PEP) follows MOE policies in creating national curriculum standards and national textbooks, and local education bureaus guide schools to follow the national guidelines relevant to citizenship education.

In this context, Chinese schools’ and teachers’ influences in citizenship education were quite limited. China’s 1978 economic reform, however, witnessed the adoption of a market economic system, and an attendant emphasis on individual rights, interests and values, globalisation, mass media and the Internet, and the emergence of cultural diversity and pluralism in society (Li, Zhong, & Zhang, 2004), which have,
collectively, made it difficult for the CCP and the state to maintain a centralised and authoritarian indoctrinating form of citizenship education. The CCP acknowledges this, admitting to the existence of a “crisis of three faiths”—faith in the Communist Party, in socialism and in the country (Domes, 1990). The country’s youth are particularly cynical about Marxism-Leninism, urban intellectual enterprises care more about policies that materially benefit them than they do about ideology, and even CCP members are no longer motivated solely by Marxism-Leninism.

The CCP’s need to win back the hearts and minds of its citizens and to nurture support for communism in an increasingly complex society has led to the emergence of decentralising decision-making, with Chinese schools and teachers gradually gaining some decision-making power over citizenship education since 1986. Following the CCP the principle of “one curriculum standard but various versions of textbooks” (yì gàng duō běn) (Chinese Communist Party, 1985), schools adhere to a single national curriculum standard but gain the freedom to choose different textbooks, thus ending the PEP’s monopoly over textbook creation. Since 2001, the promotion of school-based curriculum development (SBCD) has, for the first time, allowed schools to officially exercise some control over curricula. The policy allows secondary schools and teachers autonomy over 16–20% of school curriculum time (Ministry of Education, 2001), allowing them to reconstruct school curricula (including citizenship education) to better meet the diverse needs of the school, students and local community.

Therefore, China provides an interesting case for examining the issues and tensions involved in schools’ and teachers’ contributions to more democratic citizenship education against the background of tight political control and deep state involvement.

The following section presents the theoretical framework of the study and discusses theories of power in society and in schooling processes. Next, an empirical study based on the analysis of data from my doctoral study “Power and School-based Curriculum Development in Moral Education in China” will be introduced, key findings of which suggest that Chinese practices are congruent with studies conducted by critical pedagogues. The paper concludes with a discussion of, and conclusions regarding, theoretical implications for understanding school power as a semi-emancipatory relationship in the Chinese context.

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section introduces the theoretical framework the study will use to explore the complexity of and power dynamics inherent in the reconstruction of citizenship education in Chinese school through SBCD. It begins with an overview of relevant studies on power and school curriculum, then constructs the theoretical framework for describing and analysing school power in citizenship education through SBCD in China.
According to Jary and Jary (1999, p. 513) power can be defined in four ways: first, as “the ‘transformational capacity’ possessed by human beings”; second, as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance”; third, as “the reproductive or the transformational capacity possessed by social structures, which may be seen as existing independently of the wills of individual actors”; and, fourth, as Foucault (1982, p. 222) contends, as an “agonism” relationship characterized by simultaneous reciprocal incitation and struggle. Each of these definitions suggests that power can be interpreted as a form of social relationship and that power relationships fall into two broad categories: hard and soft power relationships.

In hard power relationships, power is the ability of someone or some agents to get someone or some agents to do something that they otherwise would not do (Cartwright, 1965; Dahl, 1957). Emerson (1962) echoes this, defining power as the ability to overcome the resistance of others: the power of actor A over actor B is equal to the amount of resistance on the part of B that can be potentially overcome by A. Hard power is characterised by superior-subordinate relationships, what feminist scholars categorize as either “power over” or “power to” (Woehrle, 1992). The former is coercive power based on superior strength, often in the form of physical strength or superior arms; the latter form relies on a variety of exchange and reward possibilities (Dugan, 2003). According to French and Raven (1959), rewards, punishment, legitimate right, knowledge and expertise can all be considered sources of power.

Soft power, according to Nye (2004), refers to one’s ability to get what one wants through attraction, rather than coercion or payment. Unlike superior-subordinate power relationships, soft power emphasises collaborative endeavours (Woehrle, 1992), what feminist scholars call “power with” and others refer to as integrative or collaborative power. Dugan (2003) argues that power relationships should not be defined solely as one actor changing another; changes can be internal rather than external and a power relationship may consist of a combination of the two. Even in competitive power relationships, participants can be equal, with no party being either subordinate or superior; all players can be both influencer and influenced. Integrative power relationships are considered to be based on love, persuasion, integration, cooperation, communication or cooperation (Blades, 1998; Dugan, 2003); according to Foucault (as cited in Blades, 1998), power is derived from the complex network of relations between people and institutions.

Power and Curriculum

Power is a major concern in the field of curriculum, particularly when studying the curriculum decision-making process. Numerous scholars have noted and attempted to explain the diversities caused by power in curriculum decision-making (Deng & Luke, 2008). As Kliebard and Franklin (1983) conclude:
[The study of power and curriculum] is the scholarly attempt to chronicle, interpret, and ultimately understand the processes whereby social groups over time select, organize, and distribute knowledge and belief through educational institutions… with… its focus on the question of what gets taught in schools, as well as (or perhaps especially) the ways in which “a settled body” of knowledge, the curriculum, undergoes or fails to undergo change. (pp. 138–139)

The literature suggests that power constructs our understanding of an array of concepts and notions – including teaching and learning, teachers and students, and achievement and failure – that mediate classroom interaction (Popkewitz, 1997). According to studies on power and curriculum, curriculum is shaped by both society and the education system. How curriculum shapes and is shaped by the hierarchical stratification of individuals in society has been widely discussed (Apple, 1990; Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Curriculum is shaped by numerous forces – technological, political, economic, cultural and educational – and the question of “whose knowledge is of most worth” is a key power-related problem in curriculum development (Apple, 1990, p. vii) and defines the differences between the main approaches to curriculum – functionalism, conflict theory, Marxism and critical education theory.

From a functionalist perspective, education and curriculum are tools to be used to unite society. As such, functionalisists see that science and technology are important in determining curriculum (Karabel & Halsey, 1977); indeed, Spencer (1860) identifies them as the main determinants. Functionalism has, however, been criticised for exaggerating the role of technology and for underestimating the importance of conflict ideology (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), and is now widely in disrepute. According to Dahrendorf (1959), social reality is largely determined by conflict and flux, and not by the closed system envisioned by functionalism (p. 27).

Conflict theorists offer different perspectives on the relationship between power and curriculum at the macro level, identifying influential social groups (rather than technology) as main determinants. These powerful social groups, they maintain, use curriculum to socialise students and ensure that they will help to reproduce the existing social relations.

Economic force is central to Marxist traditions, which holds that all cultural and political institutions, relationships and activities, including education, reflect the economic relations of production. School knowledge and culture, therefore, serve the interests of privileged or (as Marx calls them) economically dominant groups (Hellrich, 1970). The question of power in schools is largely ignored beyond its role in reproducing “relations of domination and subordinancy through various school practices” (p. 150). More than a century after Marx, many scholars continue to see curriculum as a key social institution necessary for reproducing a society’s existing economic relations. Young (1971) adds political forces to the list of factors shaping curriculum, while Mason (2007) concludes that curriculum is the site of political struggle and social stratification and Apple (1996) notes the influence of culture on curriculum, in that powerful societal forces and culture are interwoven. In schools, curriculum is expected to confer cultural legitimacy on the knowledge
of specific groups, to “preserve and distribute what is perceived to be ‘legitimate knowledge’—the knowledge that ‘we all must have’” (Apple, 1996, pp. 61–62); in other words, school curriculum contributes to cultural reproduction.

Critical educational theory, however, questions the relationship between social power processes and educational processes (Masschelein, 2004), claiming that the relationship between curriculum and power is not so mechanical that only powerful societal groups determine school curriculum. Rather than interpreting curriculum as a kind of social control and trying to identify influential societal forces, some theorists employ Foucault’s (1979) power-knowledge nexus, which suggests “[abandoning] the belief that… the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge…; that power and knowledge directly imply one another” (p. 27) and claims that curriculum is not only a form of social control but also a form of emancipation. School itself plays an important emancipatory role affecting curriculum.

In the tradition of Dewey and Freire, critical pedagogy scholars advocate transformative practices directed at emancipation in schools and classrooms. Popkewitz (1997) proposes several strategies for empowering students and teachers to develop alternate pedagogical and curricular structures that offer students the opportunity to use lived experiences as a basis for acquiring language, literacy and critical thinking skills. Giroux (1983) argues that, for teachers, the relationship between authority and power is manifested not only in the legitimate exercise of control over students, but also in influencing the conditions under which they work. In this way, teachers can teach collectively, produce alternative curricula and engage in a form of emancipatory politics.

Connell (1993) goes further in describing the teacher’s role in this new power-curriculum relationship. In his book School and Social Justice, he argues that, to advance social justice, teachers must invert hegemony and organise “[educational] content and methods that [build] on the experience of the disadvantaged” (p. 38). He further points out that “producing [social justice], and then generalizing it, requires constructive intellectual work. And this is not easy for disadvantaged groups to do, precisely because of their disadvantage: most of the tools of intellectual work are in other people’s hands” (p. 41). Yoshiko (2006) suggests thatConnell is hinting that teachers could help to produce and organise the knowledge of the socially subordinate (p. 78).

To summarise, the literature on power and curriculum offers an analytical framework for power and curriculum. Power is conceived of as a social relationship and can be defined in terms of control (hard power) or in terms of reciprocal struggle (soft power). Traditional curriculum theories take a hard power position, arguing that curriculum is shaped by powerful societal groups (i.e., macro-level technological, economic, political and cultural forces). The soft power view is the province of numerous critical educators, who argue that the power-curriculum relationship is not as mechanical as hard power advocates suggest, and that curriculum can work as a means of social emancipation.
The Three-stage Analysis Framework

This study proposes a theoretical framework that provides an overview of Chinese school power in citizenship education in the form of SBCD and reveals how schools interact with external sources of macro-level social power in the process. This theoretical framework views power in school-based citizenship education reconstruction within a particular substantive area as a three-stage process. The first stage is a debate over curriculum goals and involves a wide range of actors – both influential social powers and curriculum makers and those with relatively little access to curriculum decision-making, such as academics, parents and the media – each of whom offers a different interpretation of what citizenship education should address, based on their particular values, views and interests.

Curriculum goal setting is mainly conducted by curriculum makers at the national, local and school levels, each of which negotiates (with varying degrees of success) for power and influence according to the resources they command, their inherent authority, their degree of participation and their overall role. Their actual agreed-upon goals (as opposed to their stated, published goals) influence and guide the next stage of the process. Some curriculum makers continue to exert influence over areas of school-based citizenship education reconstruction beyond the agreed-upon goals, in an attempt to realise what this study calls alternative goals; in changing situations, alternative goals may even replace agreed-upon goals.

The second stage is curriculum content and pedagogy selection. Contents and pedagogies are selected based on their perceived ability to effect the changes required; influential factors include the actors and forces involved in the first stage. While new materials, new organisation of contents, new presentations and new instruction methods are frequently adopted to address the agreed-upon goals, it should be noted that some old content and pedagogy may be retained for a variety of reasons. This study refers to this as “context”: why, how and whom to select. Even the same content and pedagogy may, given a different context, result in a largely different school-based citizenship education programme.

The third stage, implementation, consists of interactions among curriculum makers as they attempt to rise above the restrictions of the previous two stages and exercise more influence over others. In turn, this stage may impact the previous two stages by altering the relationships shaped therein. This study divides the results of the interactions into two categories – victory implementation and alternative implementation. The solution that wins more agreement is successfully implemented, while the other may remain on the list to be implemented at another time.

This proposed framework examines both macro- and micro-level influential factors to better analyse school power in citizenship education reconstruction in SBCD in China. On a macro level, it identifies possible forces and explains their purposes in and mechanisms for affecting school curriculum; from the micro level, it describes the relationships among curriculum actors and their curriculum power zones. This theoretical framework forms the basis for case studies conducted by this research and is a template for describing and analysing empirical results.
THE STUDY

This paper is partly drawn from the author’s PhD thesis “Power and School-based Curriculum Development in Moral Education in China”, which utilised a multiple case study method to examine school and teacher power in citizenship education curriculum reconstruction in three stages of SBCD: curriculum goal setting; content and pedagogy selection; and implementation.

Case studies give a vivid and full description of what happens and are well suited to revealing the complex process through which schools and teachers influence citizenship education reconstruction. As Chinese economic reform is relevant to school citizenship education reform, the three secondary schools selected, in addition to having well-developed school-based citizenship education curricula, were located in Shenzhen City, a city that provides a window on Chinese economic reform.

Although case study is not a sampling research method, the cases in this study (hereafter Schools A, B and C) each had different external/internal power relationships, so as to maximise the range and quality of information gathered about Chinese school and teacher power in citizenship education. School A was a public nine-year school (Grades 1–9) that was greatly influenced by external authorities and competitive relationships among school staff in school-based citizenship education reconstruction. School B was a public junior middle school (Grades 7–9) and featured close collaboration with external groups (e.g., local communities and organisations) and more democratic relationships among school staff in developing a school-based citizenship education curriculum. Finally, School C was a private, foreign-run boarding school with elementary, junior, middle and senior sections and a foreign university foundation programme. It distanced itself from external authorities but showed deep interest in meeting parent and student needs, and had more open relationships among school staff in their school citizenship education reconstruction. School C was included due to the distinction between public and private Chinese secondary schools, with the latter having more autonomy in curriculum development, teacher recruitment and training, and students from a different social class than the former (Cheng & Delany, 1999; Lin, 1999; Ross & Lin, 2006); as of 2008, about 10% of Chinese students were enrolled in private schools (Law & Pan, 2009). This study focused on the citizenship education programmes at the junior secondary sections (Grade 7–Grade 9) in each of the three schools.

For triangulation purposes, 23 individual interviews were conducted with government administrators, university experts, school principals and teachers, and 90 questionnaires were completed by teachers, between February and December, 2008. The questionnaire was a relatively less expensive way to explore the views of informants, while the interviews allowed the researcher to clarify and examine the views of key respondents in depth (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007); the interview schedule was constructed based on existing literature on the subject. To ensure validity, all interviewees were asked questions about policies, perceptions and practices relevant to the three stages of school-based citizenship education
curriculum reconstruction; at the same time, however, individual interview guides differed slightly to reflect the informants’ different positions. Taken together, these actors reflect the conflicts of interest inherent in power relationships in school-based citizenship education curriculum development, and their differing responses combine to form a more complete, balanced picture of school and teacher power. Table 1 below shows the interviewees in the case schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Interviewees</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University scholars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local education administrators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School principals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School middle leaders</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pilot interviews were conducted with two local education administrators and a university scholar to check for clarity, after which the wording of certain questions was changed slightly. The interviews, which were conducted in Chinese, were recorded, transcribed for closer examination and translated into English for this paper. Interviews with local education administrators lasted around 2 hours, compared to around 1 hour with other respondents; all were recorded on audiotape, with the permission of interviewees. Two teachers from School B preferred not to be recorded.

After the interviews, a questionnaire was administered to 90 teachers in the three schools to collect their opinions on school and teacher power in school-based citizenship education curriculum development; all 90 responses were effective. The questions covered: (a) their perceptions of the relationship between social context and citizenship education reconstruction; (b) the concepts, policies, procedures and mechanisms adopted by their school regarding school-based citizenship education curriculum development; (c) the design, implementation and evaluation stages of school-based citizenship education curriculum development; and (d) their reflections on the preceding. The response categories and corresponding codes are “strongly disagree” = 1, “disagree” = 2, “agree” = 3, “strongly agree” = 4, “no comment” = 5. The questionnaires administered in each case school differed slightly to suit the specific school context. A draft version of each respective questionnaire was sent to three teachers in School A, two teachers in School B, and one in School C for their comments on its relevance and wording. Based on this pilot test, the time required to complete the questionnaire was estimated at 40 to 50 minutes. To ensure reliability and to encourage greater honesty, the questionnaire was anonymous (Cohen et al., 2007). In addition, the internal consistency of the questionnaire was estimated using Cronbach’s alpha (α). All versions were found
to have high reliability, with Cronbach’s alpha \((\alpha) = .9779\) in School A, \((\alpha) = .9707\) in School B and \((\alpha) = .9768\) in School C’s questionnaire.

To maximise the quality and quantity of information received from respondents, the researcher asked the school heads to help select, as far as was possible, teachers with different gender, age and subject backgrounds. Although most respondents in School A were female \((73.3\%)\), informants from School B and School C were roughly gender balanced. Most of the teachers answering the questionnaire were between 30 and 49 years old \((80.0\%\) in School A, \(63.3\%\) in School B and \(70.0\%\) in School C), and most held a bachelor’s degree \((80.0\%\) in School A, \(93.3\%\) in School B and \(60.0\%\) in School C). Most of the informants from School A and School B had permanent teaching contracts \((80.0\%\) and \(73.3\%\) respectively), while most from School C held temporary contracts \((93.3\%)\). Finally, most respondents had more than 5 years teaching experience \((86.7\%\) in School A, \(76.7\%\) in School B and \(70.0\%\) in School C). Ethical procedures, such as obtaining consent and maintaining confidentiality, were strictly followed in accordance with established practice.

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

This section reports the empirical study’s major findings on school power, which reveal features that emerged during the three stages in the cases’ citizenship education programme development: schools deriving their goal setting power from centralised control in the goal setting stage; the growth of school power based on school resources and mechanisms in the content and pedagogy selection stage; and schools further enhancing their power by enlarging space, increasing commitment and including diverse voices in the implementation stage.

**School Power in Goal Setting Stage: Goal Selecting and Making**

*Power Grow from the Centralised Control*

The analyses of school power in the three cases during the goal setting stage examined the kinds of goals set, who was involved, how they interacted in goal setting, etc. The findings indicate that schools gained their goal selecting and making powers from centralised educational authorities.

Despite the fact that since 2001, Chinese secondary schools have been allowed autonomy to decide curricula for 16–20% of school curriculum time, the CCP and various levels of Chinese governments continue to exert great influence over school-based citizenship education goal setting by assigning different statuses to national, local, and school curricula, by making government-determined curricula compulsory and by insisting that school citizenship education curriculum goals focus on improving existing government curricula. Their attempt is obvious in its policy.

Schools should first accomplish national, local curricula, then they could allocate teaching time to school curricula, any levels of governments could supervise SBCD in schools directly (Ministry of Education, 2001).
School teachers in the survey acknowledge the lower status of school curricula as well (See Table 2).

Table 2. School teachers viewed school citizenship education as complementary curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Three Schools</th>
<th>Mean of Individual School</th>
<th>Difference in Means between Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-based citizenship education curriculum in my school is a complement to the official curricula.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the CCP and governments affect school-based citizenship education reconstruction by shifting funding and restrict goal innovation by defining the topics on which schools should focus. In School A, teachers attempted to improve official citizenship education by adding more aesthetic experiences; however, as its citizenship education programme was part of a nationally-funded project, macro-level bodies influenced goal selection. The university scholar leading School A’s school-based citizenship reconstruction project suggests that the school had more freedom in the beginning. The central government funded our project… Later, the state decided the specific topics and we could only bid for it… As a result, we began to focus more on the topic dictated by the state (Interview with the university scholar, in Beijing, 2008).

Finally, the CCP and governments affect school-based citizenship education reconstruction by their promotion, over a number of years, of various education themes in informal citizenship education. School B and School C, for example, were urged to include such externally-determined goals as environment education and traditional virtue in their school-based citizenship education reconstruction.

Despite the level of control exercised by the CCP and governments, schools are nonetheless the selectors and makers of their school citizenship education goals. They have the power to select from a range of government-defined goals, rather than be forced to implement a predetermined set of goals. School A, for example, actively participated in nationally-funded projects, while School B addressed the non-compulsory theme of environmental education and School C focused on traditional virtues education, which was not, at the time, well reflected in education bureaus’ policies.

Schools also have the power to reject goals suggested by the governments in favour of others that better reflect school needs. School A, while restricted to teaching the national and local citizenship education curricula, reorganised and improved these curricula to address school needs. School B’s goals were based on
national goals, but went beyond them to cultivate students’ critical thinking in environment education, which they believed had been neglected by the governments. School C criticised government-dominant citizenship education as unattractive to students, and initiated a series of innovative citizenship education goals, including introducing character education from abroad and using foreign teachers.

Schools’ individual interests guide their selection and creation of school-based citizenship education reconstruction goals, as can be seen in responses to the teacher questionnaire; most respondents agreed with the statement “To enhance school strength is one of the initiation reasons for our school-based citizenship education reconstruction” (83.3% agreed in School A, 96.7% in School B, 96.7% in School C). School A wanted, directly or indirectly, the resources, legitimacy, prestige and professional guidance government education authorities could offer; as such, its citizenship curriculum was designed as part of a nationally-funded project and accepted government-defined goals. School B, which wanted to enhance its ability to compete with other schools, focused on its strongest subject, environmental education. The private school, School C (which admits students based as much on the parents’ ability to pay fees 20 times those for public secondary schools as on the student’s academic performance) wanted to successfully compete with area public schools in a non-academic field, in order to enhance its reputation among those parents who wanted their children to have a fulfilling educational experience. As School C’s principal noted:

As an elite private school, we can afford good teachers and facilities but we do not have students as good as those in public schools. Therefore, there is no future for us in competing with public schools in student academic achievement (Interview with School C Principal for junior section, School C, 2008).

In short, in the first stage, schools have the power to challenge CCP- and state-suggested goals and select others instead.

School Power in Content & Pedagogy Selection Stage: 
Growth Based on Strength in Resources and Mechanisms

This section presents the changes that took place in the three case schools in the content and pedagogy selection stage of citizenship education reconstruction. By examining the curriculum makers who were responsible for these changes, and the context (e.g., influences from the first stage) in which they were made, it can be seen that school power in this stage grew based on the strength of the schools’ resources and systemic mechanisms.

First, external authorities exerted less influence over content and pedagogy selection stage than they had over goal setting. No direct CCP guidance was detected in this stage and, according to survey data, teachers in the three case schools showed less interest in political criteria.
Table 3. Political criteria and teachers’ content selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>S.A Mean</th>
<th>S.B Mean</th>
<th>S.C Mean</th>
<th>Difference in Means between Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S.A - S.B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thinking about choosing teaching materials for school citizenship education, I would consider whether it is politically correct.

The education bureaus, on the other hand, were seen as having a legitimate supervisory function to fulfill. However, they lacked the systemic mechanisms and resources necessary to exercise consistent guidance of content and pedagogy selection, with discrepancies existing between MOE departments and local education bureaus. For example, the National Office for Education Sciences Planning (NOESP) in MOE was responsible for overseeing the progress of the national project of which School A’s school-based citizenship education programme was a part, but lacked the authority to supervise school performance – that fell within the purview of a different MOE department. The reverse was also true – the education bureaus in neither Shenzhen City nor Shenzhen District felt able to supervise School A’s citizenship education programme, because it was part of a national-level project.

In addition, education bureaus in general lack the resources and experience necessary to supervise school-based citizenship education content and pedagogy selection. School A’s programmes were supervised by a university scholar on behalf of the MOE, as the local education bureau was not deemed competent to do so. The MOE did issue several policy statements relevant to programmes in School B, but these were abstract and had little effect. Moreover, the teaching materials the MOE provided were seen by teachers as out of date. In the case of School C, the local education bureau lacked the time, ability and inclination to guide private schools in any endeavour, let alone citizenship education reconstruction. School C’s district included 424 private schools and kindergartens in 2009, which served half of all registered students. When interviewed, the district’s education bureau officer indicated they were simply too busy to supervise private schools:

I have hundreds of public schools to oversee and visit in one school term… Sometimes I visit several public schools in one day to ensure I finish visiting all the public schools in my district. I really don’t have time for private schools though I know citizenship education in private schools is also very important, perhaps more important than in public ones (Interview with the education officer in charge of citizenship education, in Bao An Education
Unlike the external authorities, schools had the resources and flexible systemic mechanisms necessary to encourage teacher innovations, as well as the will to use them. Despite the differences in their programmes, each of the three schools pursued the same three main activities in content and pedagogy selection: adapting existing official citizenship education content; creating new content; and adopting innovative new pedagogies. Adapting content involved reallocating teachers and teaching time, creating new content required focusing on systematic curriculum content design, and pedagogical innovations required not only teacher innovation, but also financial support for teachers’ professional training and pedagogical experiments (smaller classes, heavier teacher workload, higher salaries, increased activity space, etc.).

In all three case schools, school citizenship education programmes were initiated by the top school leaders and therefore received school-wide resource supports. Schools could, for example, devote time used for state-mandated ideological or political extracurricular activities (e.g., flag-raising ceremonies and class meetings) to their school citizenship education. Schools could also create separate classes for school citizenship education programmes or integrate them into other subject teaching time or extracurricular time. This flexibility meant that school-based citizenship education involved not only teachers relevant to citizenship education but also many other staff in case schools. According to the teacher survey data, important school inputs such as these ensured the quality of their programmes.

<p>| Table 4. Teachers’ criticisms about education bureaus’ citizenship education curricula |
| All Three Schools | Mean of Individual School | Difference in Means between Schools |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>M_A</th>
<th>M_B</th>
<th>M_C</th>
<th>M_A - M_B</th>
<th>M_A - M_C</th>
<th>M_B - M_C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The extent of resource input our school made was a criterion to assess the quality of our citizenship education programme.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significantly, all schools created a leadership team for school-based citizenship education reconstruction, and used professionalism and innovative ability as appointment criteria for leaders of the content and pedagogy selection stage – respected and popularly selected colleagues, rather than the school hierarchy, made the key decisions in this stage of citizenship education reformation. In School A, two school vice-principals, both specialists in citizenship education, made general
School Power and Democratic Citizenship Education in China

recommendations to other teachers, while in School B, the Teaching and Research Office and the school-based citizenship education curriculum development team (which included experienced teachers) created the school textbooks, teacher handbooks and promoted basic principles. Schools encouraged teachers to innovate and provided mechanisms to absorb those innovations in a timely manner. Survey respondents from all three schools state that their school allowed them to communicate their ideas and opinions (mean = 3.12, standard deviation = .97). In School A, teachers’ best classrooms practices were recorded in a scholarly article published nationwide. School C even decorated its school garden to show their appreciation of teachers’ good ideas in school-based citizenship education.

Therefore, schools’ increased power in the second stage can be seen in their enhanced control of internal school resources and mechanisms, and in the related power struggles with external authorities over content and pedagogy selection.

School Power in Implementation Stage: Enlarging Space, Enhancing Commitment, and Including Diverse Voices

School power in the three case schools in the implementing stage is examined by comparing the kinds of interactions that emerged, the curriculum actors who were involved and the influence they had on school citizenship education programme implementation. The findings showed enhanced school power in three aspects.

First, schools enlarged their school citizenship education programme operating space by seeking external supports and restricting the influence of education bureaus. The district education bureau supported School A’s efforts to reconstruct citizenship education by reorganising teaching time and compulsory official citizenship education curricula contents, saying that “School A’s citizenship education programme highlighted extant problems in citizenship education throughout the district”. School B, with the permission of its local education bureaus, extended teaching time for school-based citizenship education, integrated the school programmes into all school activities and shared their experiences with other schools. In School C, parents, by virtue of the high tuition fees they paid, increased students’ access to quality citizenship education (smaller classes in citizenship education programmes) and allowed the school to make extensive innovations while maintaining the continuity and enhancing the sensitivity of those innovations; moreover, through their tendency to send their children abroad for higher education, parents made it possible for School C to focus on citizenship education rather than on preparations for national university entrance examinations.

Education bureaus’ influence over school-based citizenship education was restricted in two aspects: Their citizenship education curricula were criticised (See Table 5) and their supervision was regarded as poor. Schools felt that their school-based citizenship education programmes were an improvement over the education bureaus’ weaker curricula or addressed areas the education bureaus had ignored. The fact that the school-based citizenship education programmes in the three schools had different foci than the education bureaus’ citizenship education curricula made it difficult for the education bureaus to supervise them.
Table 5. Teachers’ criticisms about education bureaus’ citizenship education curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Three Schools</th>
<th>Mean of Individual School</th>
<th>Difference in Means between Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National citizenship education curriculum fully meets my students’ needs.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local citizenship education curriculum fully meets my students’ needs.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By dismissing the education bureaus’ supervision as inferior, schools were able to block attempts to make their school citizenship education programmes conform to local citizenship education curricula and ignore national education bureau policies. According to the survey data, most teachers from the three schools felt that education bureaus’ supervision restricted their school citizenship education programme (mean = 3.17, standard deviation = 1.27).

Second, school administrators interacted in two ways to ensure school teachers’ commitment to school-based citizenship education programme implementation. The first was to initiate internal interactions, such as competitions between middle-level leaders and those teachers participating in the school citizenship education programmes, thus encouraging the latter to display their knowledge of and commitment to the programmes. The second approach involved appointing school leaders and future teachers to ensure teacher commitment and continuity. As a private school, School C’s owners had the right to select a chief school board member to represent their values, and gave her the power to select school principals and teachers.

In the implementation stage, teachers had autonomy over content and pedagogy selection and were not forced to implement school-decided content or pedagogies as given; rather, they had the freedom to add, delete or change them based on their judgment or to accommodate grassroots interests. Based on questionnaire responses, teachers in all three schools felt that they were mainly in charge of content selection (see Table 6).
### Table 6. Comparison of school teachers’ autonomy in school-based citizenship education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>S.A</th>
<th>S.B</th>
<th>S.C</th>
<th>S.A -</th>
<th>S.B -</th>
<th>S.C -</th>
<th>S.A -</th>
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<td>M_A</td>
<td>M_B</td>
<td>M_C</td>
<td>M_A - M_B</td>
<td>M_A - M_C</td>
<td>M_B - M_C</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.37</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>S.C</td>
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Teachers not only follow the school committee, they also have revision power. When I have different opinions about the school decisions, I prefer to add some materials. Teachers mainly responsible for selecting teaching materials.

### Table 7. Teachers’ attitudes toward student, parent needs in citizenship education curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>S.A</th>
<th>S.B</th>
<th>S.C</th>
<th>S.A -</th>
<th>S.B -</th>
<th>S.C -</th>
<th>S.A -</th>
<th>S.B -</th>
<th>S.C -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M_A</td>
<td>M_B</td>
<td>M_C</td>
<td>M_A - M_B</td>
<td>M_A - M_C</td>
<td>M_B - M_C</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.17</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>S.A</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<td>S.B</td>
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When choosing materials for school citizenship education, I would consider whether it meet student needs. When choosing teaching materials for school citizenship education, I would consider whether parents support.

Third, this increased autonomy enabled teachers to allow student and parent voices to be heard in the implementation stage. Teachers from all three schools
showed similar attitudes towards addressing student needs in selecting materials and could make adjustments autonomously to address parental concerns. Although some teachers in School A characterised parents as non-cooperative, others generally saw parents’ understanding and support as important elements in programme implementation and evaluation (See Table 7).

The teachers made their own voices heard as well: School A’s teachers enjoyed a high degree of lateral autonomy in the implementation stage; in School B, teachers unionised to share governing power and enlarge their power zones; and, teachers in School C exerted deep and broad influences during the implementation stage. Increased autonomy meant teachers could select materials from multiple diverse sources such as the Internet, books, etc., with interviewed teachers from all three schools reporting having done so.

In the implementation stage, therefore, it can be seen that the redistribution of power enhanced school influence on, commitment to and sensitivity in school-based citizenship education reconstruction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: SCHOOL POWER AS A SEMI-EMANCIPATORY RELATIONSHIP

With reference to school-based curriculum development in citizenship education in three secondary schools in China, this study has examined the schools’ and teachers’ contributions to more democratic citizenship education in three stages: curriculum goal setting, content and pedagogy selection, and implementation. The study’s findings indicate that Chinese schools’ and teachers’ practices are congruent with critical pedagogy studies, which underscore the emancipatory potential of schools and teachers in employing more democratic processes in schools and classes (Apple & Benne, 1995), incorporating diverse social groups’ voices to improve existing education system inadequacies (Williams, 2009) and responding to the challenges brought by increased ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity in the society. At each stage of school citizenship education reconstruction, case schools in this study advance democratic citizenship education by depoliticising CCP-dominant citizenship education, decentralising curriculum decision-making power from governments, and democratising school culture to better meet the needs of Chinese civil society. Schools strategically select, develop, adapt or even ignore CCP and central government citizenship education based on their own perception of society’s needs. They sensitively identify and help to address grassroots needs that may not be adequately reflected in CCP- or government-defined citizenship education. Furthermore, schools enhance the quality of citizenship education by reorganising school culture and mobilising resources to address societal needs; this helps to explain the influence of Chinese schools in reconstructing citizenship education during China’s period of rapid social transition.

However, this does not mean the CCP’s and the state’s politically-motivated values, centralised control and non-democratic education management style has come to an end overall. The success of Chinese schools and teachers in attaining a
limited degree of power suggests that school power in China can best be understood by the concept of school power as a semi-emancipatory relationship. This view, as opposed to that shared by such progressive educators as Freire (2003), who sees schools as having the potential to work for radical democracy, addresses the tensions caused by state and political control over school citizenship education and depicts the schools’ efforts to gain more influence: schools are partially integrated with political forces, but retain sufficient independence to influence curriculum and interact with external forces. This study has shown that schools enhance their independence in citizenship education reconstruction through collaboration with university experts, community organisations, parents, foreign investors and local governments.

Figure 1. The Concept of School Power as a Semi-emancipatory Relationship in Different Stages of Chinese School-based Citizenship Education Curriculum Development.

Moreover, contrary to theories arguing that school power is radically emancipatory, the concept of school power as a semi-emancipatory relationship in the Chinese context holds that there are varied degrees of influence and independence at different stages of programme development. Schools’ influence over curriculum and their interactions with the community or external social forces least influential, but still palpable, at the goal setting stage. Schools increase their influence in the content and pedagogy selection stage and are able to decrease CCP are intertwined, and vary at different stages in the context of China. School power
is determined by the interactions among schools, the CCP, the state and other external social forces at different stages. Comparatively speaking, school power is and state control and support school decisions based on their control of local resources. School power extends even beyond curriculum development, by cooperating with external social forces, excluding CCP and state influences, and empowering school teachers (See Figure 1).

In addition, the concept of school power as a semi-emancipatory relationship has three implications for understanding the roots, mechanisms and sources of school power.

First, school power stems from the CCP’s and the state’s hard power. Although support for curriculum decentralisation is obvious in China’s promotion of SBCD, the CCP and state retain ultimate control in some areas. Schools, by obeying the CCP’s and the state’s ultimate authority (power over) in some areas, and by using the powers and responsibilities assigned to them (power to) in others, initiate their struggle for more influence in citizenship education. This characteristic has shaped school power, and differs from the understanding that school power is emancipatory.

In “power over” relations, power is based on superior strength (Dugan, 2003). This study has found that the CCP and state have ultimate power over two areas: determining the basic communist values to be included in citizenship education and determining the curriculum status of SBCD. In these two areas, all other forces must obey their decisions. Since the official promotion of SBCD in 2001, the CCP and state (through curriculum reform policies) have clearly indicated their intent to continue to transmit communist values and to give SBCD a lower status than that afforded official curricula. Despite regulating the three school-based citizenship education stages differently in different schools, their status as the unquestioned rulers of China impels schools to accept their decisions without resistance. In particular, the CCP and state expect schools to improve weaknesses in the state’s citizenship education curricula. Therefore, the CCP and state, by restating basic communist values and giving a lower status to SBCD, make schools serve their needs in citizenship education.

In “power to” relationships, power is based on a variety of exchanges, rewards, and punishments (French & Raven, 1959). This study found that the CCP and state, despite granting schools a measure of power, retained reward and punishment authority in three areas: making related policies; supervising schools’ practices; and deciding school personnel, resources and survival.

This article has shown that the CCP and state allow schools a degree of flexibility in school-based citizenship education programmes, including the freedom to exchange various contributions – such as professional knowledge, expertise and resources – to improve the effectiveness of official citizenship education. Schools can invite prestigious university scholars to supervise practices, cooperate with non-education government sectors on their school curricula, or make use of school strengths to introduce citizenship education that differs from official citizenship education.
However, there is much evidence to suggest that the CCP and state, through their reward and punishment regulations and mechanisms, are the actual leaders in these areas. Their influence is the power to start, change or end funding and to evaluate school performance; thus, they can contract or stipulate schools’ cooperation with non-education sectors.

Second, the concept of semi-emancipatory power implies that schools’ involvement in conflict and collaboration with diverse external forces enhances schools’ independent influence in citizenship education reconstruction. Schools initiate non-overt conflicts with the CCP and state over education regulations and lobby for greater freedom, a key feature of soft power relationships, according to Foucault (1982). One of the original CCP/state goals in promoting SBCD was to improve weaknesses in official citizenship education curricula to make them better fit the social transition period. The linkage among schools, citizenship education and changing social needs has influenced schools’ conflict with the CCP and state supervision of school citizenship education reconstruction.

Schools challenge CCP- and state-dominated citizenship education curricula for not meeting student needs, for not being systematically designed (and thus difficult to apply to school situations) and for using outdated teaching materials and pedagogies that bore students. Moreover, they criticise education bureaus for not being professional and knowledgeable, and may choose not to implement education bureau policies fully when these policies do not fit their situation.

Thus, without changing their core requirements, schools revise official citizenship education curricula to respond to the demands of students, parents and society – incorporating and rearranging official citizenship education curricula to suit student and school needs, replacing teaching materials provided by the official citizenship education curricula with updated materials reflecting local community needs, experimenting with new pedagogies not included in official citizenship education curricula, addressing student and parent needs and developing citizenship education themes attractive to community and parents but ignored or under-developed in official citizenship education curricula.

Schools began to collaborate with external forces to enhance their independence in citizenship education and emancipate themselves from the “pastoral power” of the CCP and state. Collaboration was believed to be a source of soft power (Blades, 1998), with which schools could challenge the state’s supreme power.

In the case of Chinese school-based citizenship education reconstruction, collaborations with external forces provide schools a greater range of resources and consultants, thus supplanting the CCP and the state as the sole resource providers and consultants and making schools more independent. As pointed out by Booher and Innes (2002), collaboration between interests groups of diverse backgrounds broadens the exchange and sharing of resources relevant to their tasks. Schools involve agents from education and non-education sectors (e.g., university scholars, district governments, district-level education bureaus, environment protection bureaus, and parents) in school citizenship education programmes, thus gaining professional insights, supports and resources from a variety of sectors rather than from the CCP and state alone. Collaboration with external forces helps schools to
succeed in school citizenship education reconstruction, bringing them recognition, rewards and fame, non-measurable gains that enhance their ability to resist CCP and state regulation.

Third, the concept of school power as a semi-emancipatory relationship shows that the sources of this power are complex but not chaotic networks. To ensure the success of school citizenship education reconstruction, schools redistribute internal power to engage more school staff and units, thus forming complex networks and changing traditional top-down school personnel relationships into multi-engaged relationships that continuously drive semi-emancipatory relationships in school citizenship education.

School subunits relevant to citizenship education (e.g., Moral Education Office, Teaching and Research Affairs Office, School Vice-principal Office, Student Affairs Office, Subject Team, Teachers’ Union) engage in school citizenship education reconstruction, decreasing CCP and state restrictions on school citizenship education programme implementation and facilitating schools’ independence by providing more teaching time, teachers and space, and by making better use of their unique advantages to increase success.

Teachers relevant to citizenship education (such as moral education teachers, class teachers, grade headteachers, and other subject teachers) combine to make school-wide decisions regarding school-based citizenship education programmes, create materials and pedagogies and to teach school citizenship education subjects and other subjects and activities.

By engaging various subunits and teachers, schools can create space for and generate additional resources to reconstruct citizenship education. Rather than implementing SBCD in the roughly 16–20% of curriculum time allocated by the CCP and state, schools in this study embed school citizenship education into other school subjects and extracurricular activities. School teachers bring professional knowledge, detailed information about student and parent needs and continuous sources of innovation to school citizenship education programmes, thus increasing opportunities for success.

This study has found that in-school networks, despite their complexity, are structured rather than chaotic, and that they further the commitment to school-based programmes. Two mechanisms are used to organise these complex networks: empowerment and changes in leadership styles.

Empowering individual teachers is a key feature of soft power (Connell, 1993; Popkewitz, 1997; Yoshiko, 2006) and is believed to be important to teacher commitment (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Gaziel, 2009; Wu & Short, 1996). In this study, teacher empowerment is a similar phenomenon across the case schools, with teachers enjoying a high degree of influence in school citizenship education programmes. Some participant teachers are empowered with school-wide curriculum decision-making powers and all enjoy a high degree of autonomy in implementing school-made policies, selecting content and pedagogies and influencing school-wide policies and practices. Empowerment helps teachers to shape their identification with and commitment to school citizenship education programmes.
Changes in school leadership styles are important for schools’ commitment to school-based citizenship education reconstruction. Managing the conflicting interests among diverse participants in decision-making is an important challenge. This study notes that conflicts of interest can exist between different school subunits, or between individuals, as they struggle to gain influence. Schools may make use of these conflicts to gradually shape common goals or to select leaders, teachers strongly committed to school-based citizenship education programmes.

To conclude, this study provides an account of school power in citizenship education reconstruction by examining the effect of school power in three stages of SBCD, advancing the concept of semi-emancipatory school power, and accounting for the roots, mechanisms and sources of this type of power in the Chinese context.

As a multiple case study, this empirical work has some limitations. The three case schools in the study were located in one open, economically developed city (Shenzhen) in mainland China. The choice of study site allowed this study to explore important relationships and issues associated with school power in citizenship education reconstruction and, in particular, to investigate various interactions among different forces in an urban and open region. However, China is a country that has experienced not only rapid economic growth, but also increased differences among regions – rural and urban, coastal and inland. Due to the case study site and the limited number of cases, the study results cannot be generalised to the wider context of China, particularly its less economically developed areas. Different regions of China have distinctive education traditions, reflecting their unique social, political and economic natures. For purpose of generalisation, a large-scale survey of comparable schools based on the insights from this study would be helpful.

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REFERENCES


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