Education, Politics and the State in Hong Kong

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Introduction

This chapter reviews the nature of the relationship between education and politics in Hong Kong (HK) since the end of the Second World War. This period covers the final years of its status as a British Colony and its subsequent emergence as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) from 1 July 1997. Inevitably the focus is on the role of the state and the extent to which, and purposes for which, it uses education as a political tool.

The central feature of the constitutional politics of HK reflects its status as a colony insofar as its populace have not been able to decide who governs them. This decision was the prerogative of the British government in colonial times and the decision was effectively transferred to the PRC in 1997. HK is therefore, in marked contrast to the subjects of the other chapters in this volume, not a self-governing nation state. A corollary of this situation is that one of the core political functions of schooling promoted by nation states (Green, 1990) – namely to foster a shared sense of national identity and patriotism – has not, until recently, been central to its role.

Notwithstanding its colonial status, HK developed and has maintained since its retrocession to the PRC many of the key elements of a relatively open, tolerant and liberal society – most notably a free press, the rule of law, freedom of expression, an independent judiciary and a

lively civil society. This juxtaposition of a lively and open civil society with a political context that, until a decade ago, was governed as a colony, and currently is governed as a satrapy of the PRC, has been the critical and ongoing feature that has shaped both the nexus between education and politics and the nature of the identity of its citizens.

Education and politics

If we view politics at its core as the exercise of power, then there is a necessary and unavoidable impact on education. And the connection is reciprocal, as education systems both have an impact on the political system and are themselves a product of a prevailing socio-political context. Thomas (1983) identifies three main areas of decision making that are directly affected by political considerations: the financial support for and access to education, the content and procedures of education, and the extramural roles of staff and students in political action. These functions are sufficiently broad to potentially ensure that all aspects of education are part of or influenced by the apparatus of the state and can be subject to political influence. The key issues therefore are not whether there is a connection between education and politics (for such is inevitable), but rather the degree, focus and purposes of that connection.

Iannacone (1983) argues that societies can be distinguished by reference to the degree of separation between the political and institutional structures of the state on the one hand and of education on the other. Where there is no separation between the two this is associated with political systems with low levels of legitimacy and the school system tends to be used as a tool for the state to directly promote its own priorities. Morris and Sweeting (1991) focus on the functional nature of this connection between education and politics by distinguishing between education being harnessed as a tool for: political indoctrination (directly transmitting the states' orthodoxy), political socialization (the encouragement of a predisposition towards a set of political values); and, political education (the encouragement of a critical awareness and openness towards a range of political phenomena).

As Dale (1989) argues the degree of control of governments is inevitably limited by practical and historical considerations that influence the bureaucracies and agencies that are tasked to implement policies. Thus, *inter alia,* inertia and passive resistance can reduce the direct impact of the state. In extreme cases, such as Cambodia under Pol Pot and in the PRC during the height of the Cultural Revolution, the state has closed down parts of the education system

because they were seen to be ineffective, or relatively inefficient, at undertaking the task of spreading the state's ideology.

Dale's portrayal is relevant to the situation in HK as its socio-political and institutional legacy has exerted a powerful influence. This is reflected insofar as "academic autonomy" is enshrined in the Basic law which is essentially Hong Kong's constitution. . A variety of longstanding agencies – broadly based on a post war British model –also operate in ways that serve to mediate between Hong Kong's general politics and what occurs in classrooms. These range from bodies that provide technical and professional expertise, such as the HK Examinations Authority, the Curriculum Development Institute and textbook publishers, to those with responsibility for operating schools, especially the various charities and missionaries/church organisations, which provide much of HK's schooling (as only about ten percent of schools are run by the government). The potential for mediation and for a degree of separation between the state and education therefore has been substantial.

The impact of politics on education in HK has inevitably been both affected and constrained by the broader politics of the colony and subsequently of the SAR. In turn HK's politics was largely determined by the broader political tensions of the region, but especially those that prevailed in mainland China. The most significant extraneous influences were the Chinese Civil War, the Korean War and the cold war more broadly, the Cultural Revolution, the suppression of the student movement in Tiananmen Square in 1989, and the rapid pace of China's modernization. Each of these events had a significant impact on HK's economy, its politics and in some cases on the education system.

In the post-war period, HK was one of the most successful economies in the world (Morris and Sweeting 1995). In late 1945, the economy began to recover from the Japanese occupation, which had resulted in a massive outflow of population and contraction of the *entrepôt* economy. HK then became a major manufacturer and exporter of goods in its own right. By 1959, as a result of the Korean War and China's increasing isolationism the entrepôt trade had declined. Only 30 percent of total exports were re-exports and 70 percent were goods manufactured in HK. This was the exact opposite of the situation in 1953. By the end of the 1950s, secondary manufacturing industries had become established and were growing fast. The first major industry was textiles but others soon developed. By 1970, over 30 percent of GDP and 47 percent of employment arose from the manufacturing sector. Since

1975, HK has retained an industrial sector, but has also developed into a major financial and commercial centre.

These changes to the economy were necessitated by major shifts in the political context in China and the region. For example, the Korean War made HK's entrepôt trade unviable and the growth of the service sector in the 70's was primarily the result of China's increased involvement in international trade after the end of the Cultural Revolution. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant market prices increased at an average annual rate of 8 percent from 1978 to 1989 and the average annual increase of real per capita income was 6 percent, the fourth highest in the world. In 1989, the per capita GDP at constant (1980) prices was US$43,757, the highest in Asia outside Japan. By the early 1990s its per capita GDP had surpassed that of Britain. The level of unemployment has remained very low. The success of the economy provided the colonial government with the main source of its legitimacy as it provided an environment in which its citizens could successfully make money and look after their families.

HK came of age politically in the period immediately after World War II as it assumed a *de facto* independence from its 'metropole', Britain, largely because its own economy outperformed that of the Metropole and because Britain proved to be singularly incapable of helping HK to deal with its 'problem of people' when help was most needed (Sweeting, 1991). The same period witnessed a gradual *de-Anglocentrification* of the curriculum, especially in such subject areas as history, geography, and economic and public affairs (Morris, 1988). More generally, the HK education system began to develop elements of autochthony in the period which followed World War II (Luk, 1991).

HK's survival as a colony long after the decolonization of most other European holdings and its survival were based on an essentially tenuous but symbiotic relationship between the government and the populace (Sweeting, 1990). The colonial government had no political legitimacy and was removed from the mass of the populace. However, it was tolerated by most of the local population for three main reasons: the alternative to the colonial government was not independence but control by the CCP; the growth of the economy allowed people to focus on the task of building their livelihood and provided the government with a strong degree of economic or performance legitimacy; and, generally, the government was relatively efficient and had little direct impact on the day-to-day activities of individuals and their

families.

These considerations were significant because a large proportion of HK's population came to its shores as refugees to escape the political and economic upheavals that affected the mainland and they were especially desirous of living in a stable political environment. Thus the 1961 census reported that more than 50 percent of the population were not HK born. Key events on the mainland that generated large influxes of refugees included: the victory of the CCP over the KMT in 1949 which resulted in, amongst others, a number of industrialists, especially from Shanghai, moving to HK; the Great Leap Forward in the 1950s and the harvest failures of the early 1960s; and the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976.

HK's sensitivity to events on the mainland and the tenuous position of the colonial government was most clearly demonstrated in the riots of 1966 and 1967. The former resulted from a domestic industrial dispute and the latter was more of a spill-over of the Cultural Revolution on the mainland into HK. The government was shaken by these events as they constituted a major crisis of legitimacy and served to highlight not only the need for stronger links with the local community but also the need to create a greater sense of belonging to HK**.** An active campaign to strengthen the administrations legitimacy and reduce the gulf between officials and the populace was embarked upon. The creation of District Offices, the revision of school curricula to encourage an appreciation of the government's role in providing public services, a purge on corruption and an expansion of public services (especially schooling and social welfare) all had their origins in this period.
HK was initially seen by many of those who came to its shores from the mainland as a temporary refuge, with which most had little affinity. However, by the 1971 census the majority of the population were born there and the prospects of older people returning to their homes on the mainland receded with both the passage of time and the closure of the border during the Cultural Revolution.

Following the Anglo British Joint Declaration in 1984, that HK would return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 the reaction was mixed. There was some trepidation, as the prospect of returning to the rule of China, when memories of the Cultural Revolution were fresh, was not seen as an acceptable alternative .In other sectors the departure of the colonial government was welcomed. This sentiment was reinforced by the rapid opening up of China's economy and the increasing liberalization of its political system. However, the events in Tiananmen

Square on June 4th 1989 had a powerful impact on the population in HK, who watched the events on television in horror. Subsequently over one million people staged a peaceful demonstration by marching through the streets. The earlier optimism of some for the future disappeared and was replaced by a climate of pessimism and fear. Many reacted by seeking overseas jobs and passports, and pressure for greater democracy in and autonomy for HK was markedly strengthened. This resulted in the appointment of a new Governor, Chris Patten, who put in place a system of governance which interpreted the Basic Law in ways which maximised the extent of Universal suffrage.

Thus whilst political turmoil in the PRC often spilt over the border and created major crises for the HK government, somewhat paradoxically, it also served to both reinforce the acceptance in HK of the colonial condition and helped to stimulate the development of a distinct sense of HK identity. That identity was characterized by an increasing tendency from the 1970s for people to view themselves as citizens of HK rather than visitors in transit. Various surveys (see Matthews et al, 2008) report the increasing proportion of people who described themselves as Hong Kongers or HK Chinese, rather than as Chinese from the 1970's to the late 1990s. The HK social psyche is also characterized by a strong pride in its Chinese cultural identity (as distinct from any affiliation to the PRC and its political leadership) and a very strong tendency to identify themselves in terms of their family and its interests. Thus Lau (1990) describes the prevailing attitude of Hong Kongers in the 1970s as one of 'utilitarian familism'. Prior to China's recent modernisation HK citizens perceived themselves to be the sophisticated and cosmopolitan urbanites, in contrast to their unsophisticated country bumpkin cousins on the mainland. Matthews et.al. (2008) argue that HK maybe the first society who's citizens have developed a sophisticated sense of identity which transcends the nation state or any specific ethnic or geographic boundaries. This identity is portrayed as global, market /consumer oriented and characterized by people choosing their nationality based on the maxim "what can the country do for me?"

Against this background of the key features of the socio political context of Hong Kong in the post war period three distinct phases are identified in the relationship between education and politics. These broadly reflect the changing priorities of the state and the subsequent nature of it's relationship with its citizens.

Firstly, the overriding concern of the colonial government, especially in the immediate post

war period from 1945 to about 1966, was to ensure its own survival rather than actively develop a citizenry with an allegiance to the 'nation' or state. The strategy was not to attempt to socialize Hong Kongers into an identity with Britain. To do so would have probably have fuelled anti colonial sentiments in HK and have risked annoying the mainland. In terms of education this resulted during the immediate post war period in its pursuing fairly heavy handed tactics to ensure schools did not foster any subversive and anti-colonial sentiments. That threat was ever-present, given the low level of political legitimacy of the colonial governance system, and at various times surfaced in what Scott (1989) has referred to as 'crises of legitimacy'. The task of minimising the potential for subversion was largely achieved by a combination of: pursuing direct action against "subversive" teachers and schools; through the depoliticization of the content of the school curriculum, subcontracting the provision of mass schooling to agencies (especially the missionary bodies) that were not hostile to the government, and through a range of bureaucratic controls over schools and teachers.

Secondly, the period after the riots of 1966 and 1967 up until 1997 saw a new political context slowly emerge as the Government was faced with a more affluent population with higher expectations, who were increasingly committed to HK and were not willing to be treated in the ways that had prevailed in the immediate post war period. The Precious Blood Golden Jubilee School Incident was representative of this changed context and contributed significantly to the process of change. The concern in this period focussed less on directly stemming Communist influences but rather on maintaining social harmony, not upsetting the mainland and avoiding conflict, especially over educational issues. Key tactics employed involved the co-option of dissenting voices, extensive use of advisory bodies and a reliance on the promotion of symbolic policies which relied on exhortation, were not mandatory and often not implemented. In this way conflict between the Government and key interest groups was minimised or avoided. During this period, following the signing of the Joint Declaration by Britain and China in 1984 confirming the return of sovereignty to China, there was a distinct shift that saw the government more actively promote the study of the culture and contemporary politics of HK, and to a lesser degree the PRC, through a variety of changes to the content of the curriculum (Morris & Morris 2002).

Thirdly, and in marked contrast, since 1997 a different political context emerged as the government of the SAR, armed with a belief in its own legitimacy, has sought to introduce

change and has promoted policies which it expects to be implemented. Co-option and the use of advisory boards has largely been abandoned, as the Government seems to increasingly operate on the maxim “if you are not for us you are against us”. The outcome is that the educational policy making system is a relatively closed system and interested parties react strongly to policy output as they have had no role in its formulation.

Three further features characterize the post-97 political context. The first is what Scott (2000) terms the disarticulation of the policy making system which essentially means that there is conflict and a lack of coherence in the different parts of the policy making system. Secondly, in an attempt to obtain public support for, and ensure the implementation of, its policies the government has engaged in heavy duty criticisms of schools and teachers (Morris and Scott 2003). Thirdly, political goals are sometimes not clearly enunciated or non existent but emerge from the policies promoted by individuals. In Lowi’s (1972) terms policies seem to be used to determine politics, not the other way round. These features, especially the disarticulation of policy and the tendency for policy to lead politics are best illustrated by the case of the HKIED which is examined below. The combination of these factors ensures that the implementation of policies has become a highly contested and politicized process.

The different approaches of the pre and post handover governments to the issue of what Medium of Instruction should be used in Secondary Schools is the best example of the contrast in the political contexts during those periods. This issue has provided policy makers with a perennial dilemma as pupils clearly learn best in their mother tongue (Cantonese for the majority) but English is the language which offers far greater opportunities in terms of access to Higher Education and employment. In economic terms the former has a high use value and a low exchange value and vice versa for English. The Colonial government grappled with this issue for decades by formulating policies which publicly promoted its support for the use of mother tongue instruction. However these policy actions were more symbolic than designed to change classroom practise as they were in the final analysis advisory and it was left to schools to decide. They relied on exhortation and the provision of extra resources to encourage change but few schools were willing to switch to CMI as parents wanted their children to study at schools which maximised their future prospects. This reliance on symbolic policies reflected the Governments own political dilemma; it did not have the legitimacy to engage in conflict with parents and the school sponsoring bodies which the implementation of policy would have necessitated, and to do so could have

threatened their own survival.

Other issues, such as the colonial Governments climb-down on its decision in the 1970s to include Chinese History in the new subject, Social Studies, (Morris et.al 1997, Vickers et al 2003) had illustrated the dangers of trying to implement policies which could be contrary to public sentiments. It was not until after the handover in 1997 that the Government put in place a policy on the MOI that was compulsory and implemented. This required all secondary schools, except 114, to use Chinese as the MOI. The post handover period has also seen the Government reduce the powers of the various bodies which sponsor schools. This has had a major affect on the major religions in HK, which are the largest sponsoring bodies.

The most notable goal of the post 1997 government has been its gradual harnessing of the school curriculum to promote a far stronger sense of patriotism and national identity. This initially has been pursued by a focus on fostering pride in a sense of a shared Chinese cultural and ethnic heritage. Attempts to promote a political identity with the nation state have been limited but are increasing .Attempts to develop an allegiance to the CCP and its leadership have been avoided. This and the gradual nature of this process of change, in itself reflects a recognition by the government of the sensitivity of many HK citizens to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).This pattern suggests a degree of convergence with what has happened on the mainland where the shared sense of identity is now promoted primarily through a cultural and nationalistic agenda rather than through Mao's interpretations of the tenets of Marxism /Leninism or of an allegiance to the CCP(see Vickers this volume).

The broad trends outlined above and the changing nature of the relationship between education and politics are best illustrated by examining a range of political crises that have required the government to actively and publicly manage issues affecting its relationship with the education system. The periods and incidents examined below serve to demonstrate both the broad but shifting trends described above and the means by which goals were achieved.

First to be examined is the period 1948 to 1952, which saw HK deal with the impact of the civil war in China and the victory of the CCP over the Kuomintang (KMT).This period saw the most coercive and direct intervention by the government in education and the mechanisms put in place have endured. Second is the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee incident, which involved direct political action by the pupils and teachers in a school. Third is

the response within the education system, specifically with regard to the content of the curriculum, both after the decision that HK would return to the sovereignty of the PRC and subsequent to its return in 1997. Fourth are two incidents – referred to as the Robert Chung and Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) affairs/incidents in 1999 and 2007 respectively – which involved allegations of government interference in academic autonomy.

(i) Politics in school, 1948-1952

Initial problems for the post-war colonial government stemmed from societal pressures (caused by the shortage of school places immediately after the end of the Japanese occupation) and from broader, 'world-system- level' strains (the Cold War and the effects of the Chinese Civil War). One of the results of the shortage of school places, which was exacerbated by the increasing influx of people from China, was the emergence of an alliance between left-wing trade unionists, seeking to establish schools for the children of workers, and Anglican clergymen, following the lead of their activist Bishop .A major outcome of this alliance was an effort to open up as many 'Workers' Children's Schools' as possible, in whatever premises could be obtained (often on rooftops). In the early post-war years, the government co-operated in this venture by providing small subsidies for such fledgling schools and by permitting the active involvement of some of its senior officials.

However, the success of the PLA in the civil war, and the subsequent persistence of the Communist-Nationalist face off across the Taiwan Strait in the context of the increasing intensity of the Cold War, quickly changed the attitudes of government officials. A sense of its own insecurity made the government especially sensitive to attempts to influence public opinion. Many of the Workers Schools were run by the local branches of the CCP or KMT who, whilst hostile to each other, shared an aversion to the Colonial Govt. Concern continued to be expressed periodically, especially about the activities of the new HK Teachers' Welfare Association (a trade union organization suspected of being a communist front) and about reports that students were crossing the border to join communist guerrillas in South China. In 1948, the new Governor, Sir Alexander Grantham, warned of the insidious dangers of politics in schools.

> "There are those, and to my mind they are the most evil, who wish to use schools as a means of propaganda and poison the minds of their young pupils with their particular political dogmas or creed of the most undesirable kind."(SCMP 16/12/48, cited in

Sweeting 1989).

More active government intervention in schools was to follow with the success of communism in China. This took the form of legislation and direct action, which effectively limited the *laissez faire* system that had previously allowed schools to adopt curricula, textbooks and examinations from jurisdictions outside HK. Overall these measures provided the government with the means to control the content of schooling through control of the curriculum and textbooks. In November 1948 the Director of Education requested that the 'Governor-in-Council' amend the Education Ordinance to provide him with the power to refuse or cancel the registration of any teacher. His reason was:

> "…the spread of communist influence in schools in Hong Kong and in particular the fact that these schools are known to be recruiting for armed communist organizations in South China. Under the present regulations the Director of Education has no power to curb the activities of extremist political parties in the colony's schools" (Minutes of the HK Executive Council 23/11/1948 ,cited in Sweeting 1989).

The proposal was accepted and the resulting legislation was quickly dispatched to the Colonial Office. This empowered the Director to refuse to register any school teacher, deregister a registered teacher, close any school, and control the curricula and textbooks of all schools. The most critical regulation (No. 98) was that which gave the director of Education the power "over school subjects, textbooks, and all other teaching material, and any activities (salute, songs, dances, slogans, uniforms, flags, documents, symbols etc.) which were political in nature." The communist victory in China in 1949 was followed locally by an intensive anti-British campaign. One response was a new Education Ordinance in 1952 which further strengthened and clarified the powers of the Director of Education in order 'to safeguard the interests of individual pupils and of the community as a whole against the use of schools for political indoctrination' (Sweeting, 1989).

These two legislative measures permitted the government to take direct action against schools. The first case involved the closure of the Tat Tak Institute, a large, popular, leftwing-inclined school in the New Territories (Lo 1987).Surviving archives indicate that suspicions of the Tat Tak Institute operating as a communist front were the immediate cause of the 1948 Education (Amendment) Ordinance and the prime cause of the haste with which it was introduced. The verdict against the Tat Tak Institute was anticipated even before the charges were formally made (Sweeting, 1989).

In 1949 direct action was also contemplated against the 'Workers' Children's schools'. Police considered these to be wholly penetrated by the communists with whom the Anglican bishop was thought to be collaborating. However public opinion and the media were against wholesale closures and instead were clamouring for greater provision of school places. Consequently the approach of the government in this instance was multifaceted and more subtle than its dealings with the Tat Tak Institute. It closed the Workers' schools, deregistered teachers, and used financial incentives in a quest to control the curriculum. When other schools were closed government schools were quickly constructed in the vicinity as substitutes. Missionary bodies, many of whom had come to HK to escape the civil war in China, were also encouraged to establish schools. Many of these obtained financial aid from the govt. and the basic contract between them was that the religious bodies were permitted to teach their beliefs/orthodoxy and run the schools as long as they did not engage in any activities which might be subversive of the colonial government. The growing concern of the Government was articulated by Governor Grantham in 1948 who described communist activities in schools as "deforming and twisting…..youthful minds".

In addition to the strengthening of existing machinery for supervision, in 1949 the HK government approved the establishment of a new section within the Education Department, known as the 'Special Bureau'. Its duties were (i) to study communist education and propaganda methods, (ii) to plan local education activities that would counter communist educational influences (specifically including the organization of civics courses, the training of teachers to give these courses, and the preparation of special materials for use in schools), and (iii) in cooperation with the Special (Political) Branch of the Police Force, to review all schools, teachers, and groups involved in non-formal education suspected of undesirable political activities, and initiate suitable action against them. The head of this Bureau clearly explained their role;

> "We are not concerned with legitimate political aspiration, but only with something which may threaten the education we believe in or be inimical to the interests of the Colony."(Cited in Sweeting 1989)

This body was the forerunner of the current Curriculum Development Institute which is responsible for curriculum policy matters. In 1952 a 'new approach' to the problems of textbooks and syllabuses brought together most of the existing functions of two separate

committees on textbooks and syllabuses, replacing them with a single Syllabuses and Textbooks Committee with 'wider and more positive functions' (Education Department, 1954).

The first strong move towards centralized curriculum control thus derived from a combination of influences. Some came from the common bureaucratic urge towards uniformity - though similar uniformity was not sought for the language of instruction or for the range of subjects studied. The major influence arose from the concern to remove inimical political influences from schools. The processes by which curriculum control was affected involved first the provision of 'model timetables' and then 'model syllabuses'. These stimulated the provision of 'model' textbooks. Specific curricula changes which were introduced in this period included the removal from 1958 (to 1972) of the study of Chinese History during the 1911 to 1949 period, the introduction of Civics as a compulsory subject and an extensive process for controlling the content of school textbooks.

All of this activity was the outcome of responses to what the government believed to be challenges by political influences in schools to its authority. By responding strongly the government effectively increased its powers and the scope of its intervention in the field of education. It thus provided the operational mechanisms that have allowed it to deal with subsequent political tensions and shifts.

Following this period, and up until 1984, the government did not need to use the powers it had given itself to control the content of schooling or teachers .It was able to take a minimalist role as schools busied themselves with the tasks of preparing pupils for public examination and competing to attract the academically most able pupils (Morris 1997).

(ii) The Precious Blood Golden Jubilee School dispute

In May 1978, young schoolgirls from a catholic convent-type school marched in the streets, demonstrated in a public park, and held all-night vigils outside the house of the Catholic Bishop. They were students of the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School, a well-known Chinese-medium girls' school. The immediate cause of their 'strike action' was the suspension of four students from classes. The background was the government's decision to press ahead rapidly with secondary school expansion at a time of trade recession, relying largely on sponsoring bodies (often religious organizations) for the additional school places.

In terms of quantity, quality, structure, and attitudes, administrative staff in the government's Education Department (ED) and in the sponsoring bodies were not well-suited to the challenges of the change from an elitist to a mass system of education. New teachers, often enlivened by their own experiences as members of the students' movement, raised problems for the system, especially when they felt it appropriate to confide in their students. Problems were exacerbated in an atmosphere made tense by knowledge of the Red Guards' role in China's Cultural Revolution, memories of student participation in the 1967 disturbances in HK, a proliferation and emboldening of educational pressure groups, the recent establishment and crusading nature of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), and a very lively local press that devoted great deal of column inches to covering educational issues.

In February 1977, three young teachers reported irregularities in the school's accounts (use of funds raised from pupils for charitable activities of the Precious Blood Congregation) to the Professional Teachers' Union (PTU) and thence to the ICAC. The teachers pressed the school management committee (SMC – consisting of the principal and two other sisters of the Precious Blood Order) about their findings but were not satisfied with their guarded responses. The ICAC discovered no clear evidence of corruption but possible grounds for investigation by the ED of financial mismanagement. The ED investigation began in mid-April and an ED official was appointed to the SMC, but did not visit the school for several weeks. The principal resigned in mid-April.

The 1977-78 school-year saw polarization and escalation, with the new management and the ED on one side, teachers involved in the financial disclosures and many students on the other. Typical issues included the practice of isolating new students from seniors, the use of group pressure by students not only *vis-&vis* the authorities but also against the less active nature of their own numbers, and accusations by both sides of physical intimidation. The suspension of four students led to strike action, the petitioning of the Legislative Council, Bishop, and Governor in early May, and a 'sleep-in' outside the Bishop's house for four days and three nights.

On the whole, the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee School affair demonstrated how, in the absence of moderating influences, relatively minor disputes could escalate into alarming confrontations. It offered proof of the ability of organized pressure groups to mobilize public opinion and, like an earlier issue in 1974 (the struggle of Certificated Masters' for pay and

status recognition), it showed that the ED was not well organized to respond to grievances and that its predispositions were towards support for management and the *status quo* but against all persons and groups who might be identified a radical. The whole affair also reflected the government's reluctance to respond to criticism until matters reached crisis proportions and then to respond in a heavy-handed way. It subsequently appeared that one of the immediate results of the affair was the appointment by government of a 'Special Committee on Pressure Groups' to monitor activities critical of official policy (Davis with Roberts, 1990). More positive outcomes were the increasing awareness shown in public statements of the need for participatory school governance, for an infrastructure that was more sensitive to grass-roots feelings, and for the separation(eventually through the decoupling of the administrative and Policy branches) of day-to-day administration of schools from the consideration of policy priorities.

The escalation and mishandling by the government of the conflicts arising from the micropolitics of a single school had wide-reaching ramifications for Hong Kong's politics more generally. Effectively it was the micro-politics of schooling which had major reverberations on the broader politics of HK. Thus, the announcement in October 1978 of the intention to arrange an overall review of education policy, and at least some of the rhetoric and recommendations of the subsequent Report of the Overseas Panel (Visiting Panel, 1982); the restructuring of the administration of schools into regional areas (from 198l); the establishment of the policy reviewing post of Secretary for Education (in 1981; renamed Secretary for Education and Manpower in 1983, and reverted back to Secretary for Education in 2007); and the establishment of the Education Commission in 1984, can all be linked with the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School crisis and its resolution.

(iii) The 1997 factor

In 1984, after two years of negotiations, the British and Chinese governments agreed that from 1 July 1997 HK would cease to be a British colony and would become a Special Administrative Region (SAR) under the sovereignty of China (Sino-British Joint Declaration, 1984). Unlike most other exercises in decolonization, the reversion of HK's sovereignty to the PRC was not viewed by most of the populace as a process that would result in liberation and increased self-determination.

As noted earlier, these concerns relating to the Chinese Governments role in Hong Kong were

exacerbated by the fact that a large proportion of the population were first or second generation migrants many of whom came to HK as refugees and illegal immigrants from China.

Although everyone knew that Britain's 99 year lease on Hong Kong's New Territories expired in 1997, there was little anticipation of the results of the Sino-British negotiations. Instead, the widespread belief during the late 1970s and early 1980s was that the PRC would allow HK to remain as it was - to do otherwise would, it was believed, be economic folly. The effects of the Joint Declaration on education in the later 1980s were, therefore, almost entirely unplanned. Two areas of educational affected by the transition, namely the curriculum of secondary schools and the provision of tertiary education are examined here.

Prior to the mid-1980s the government had effectively pursued a policy of depoliticizing and desensitizing the content of schooling. The best way to avoid pupils asking questions as to the nature of the colonial governance and their own identity was to provide curriculum content that avoided focusing on modern HK, Chinese history, geography and politics. This was achieved by concentrating on the study of far away times, places and people (Morris, 1988). Consequently 'generations of students grew up learning from the Chinese culture subjects to identify themselves as Chinese but relating that Chineseness to neither contemporary China nor the local Hong Kong landscape. it was a Chinese identity in the abstract, a patriotism of the émigré, probably held all the more absolute because it was not connected to any tangible reality' (Luk1991)

The realization that Hong Kong would return to Chinese sovereignty changed this and affected the curriculum in two main ways (Morris, 1988). First, it created pressure to prepare pupils for their future as citizens of the PRC and to continue to ensure that key aspects of China's political orthodoxy were respected. The motive force came largely from the HK government itself, whose primary goal was to ensure minimal disruption prior to 1997 and a trouble-free handover on 1st July of that year. This task was pursued by revising the content of school curricula to encourage pupils to understand and appreciate their Chinese cultural heritage and the workings of the political and economic system in the PRC. The subjects most directly affected were History (see Vickers 2005), Chinese History (see Kan 2007),Civics Education, Education and Public Affairs and Social Studies .

The second influence, which arose mainly in response to pressure from within the local community, entailed an attempt to use the curriculum to increase the political awareness and involvement of the populace. Here the motive was to ensure that HK had a politically literate and active population which would enable it to function as a relatively autonomous political and economic entity after 1997. Specifically, the curriculum has been used to promote a more representative system of government in HK. This task, which had been largely ignored since the failure of attempts at constitutional reform in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Tsang, 1988), became a matter for concern when the political future of HK was made clear in 1984. It became a particularly urgent issue following the suppression of the pro-democracy movement in China in 1989. This was best illustrated by the creation of a new school subject, Government and Public Affairs, which promoted a view of a model citizen as an active and critical member of the community committed to improving all aspects of society. In reality the impact of this subject was minimal as its adoption was, like the Cross curriculum Guides for Moral, Civic and Sex education, optional. Only a handful of schools decided to adopt the subject and of those that did there was a tendency to avoid those modules which addressed controversial issues.

With regard to the official control of school textbooks, which are approved for use in schools, a similar pattern is evident. The common theme was the attempt to modify textbooks to ensure that China was portrayed in a favourable light. This became most apparent when pressure arose to include reference to the massacre in Tiananmen Square. The response of the senior government official in charge of education was that textbooks could not include any events in the history or economics and public affairs curricula until after a period at least 20 years had elapsed (see Vickers 2005 p.173).Other examples which relate more to reflecting the political orthodoxy of the Mainland include asking for texts: to not refer to HK as a colony; to avoid referring to North Korea invading South Korea; and, to not show Mongolia and Tibet as separate countries prior to 1949.

The main means by which textbooks were controlled was not to directly ban those that included offending material, nor to directly involve the government in publishing books. A far more subtle and complex system was created and continues to operate. Schools were/are required to use textbooks that are on the government's approved list of books produced by commercial publishers. If schools plan not to do so they must submit an explanation and seek permission from the Government. Schools prefer to choose books from the 'approved' list as

these are seen to best prepare pupils for the ever important public examinations (the results in which determine the status and success of individual schools) and require no additional bureaucratic activity or scrutiny. In parallel, commercial publishers comply with every piece of 'advice' given by the government during the process in which draft manuscripts are reviewed so as to ensure their texts are included on the approved list. To fail to achieve this would be, and has been commercial suicide.

In October 1989 the Governor announced the rapid expansion of tertiary education so that 18 percent of the relevant age group would be enrolled on first degree courses by 1995. In 1988 the target for 1995 had been set at 13 percent, which was in itself an ambitious goal given that in 1989 the proportion was just seven percent. These expansion plans were publicly justified by reference to social demand, but this explanation is in itself unconvincing given that the government had consistently maintained a low level of tertiary provision despite a high level of demand. The 1988 expansion was designed to improve local opportunities and to reduce the high level of migration. The 1989 policy was announced in the aftermath of the suppression of the student movement which culminated in the Tiananmen Square incident in June. This had, as noted earlier, a very marked effect on public confidence in HK and the policies identified in the Governor's speech of 1989 were interpreted as an attempt to boost confidence (Morris and McClelland 1994).

Since 1997 the new political context has continued to impact on the content of the school curriculum. There has not been a massive and immediate change to textbooks, syllabuses and other concrete manifestations of the curriculum experienced by pupils, as has been the case elsewhere during periods of decolonization. There has, however, been a gradual and constant process of change designed to influence the identity of HK citizens towards greater patriotism and loyalty to the Chinese motherland. The first Chief Executive was explicit about his intentions, as he explained:

> "We must step up civic education so that our youngsters will have a better understanding of China, the Chinese culture and History, the concept of one country two systems and the basic law. Through better understanding we hope to inculcate in them the passion, and the concern for China, the pride of being Chinese, and a constant readiness to contribute towards the well being of not just Hong Kong but the entire country…"(Tung Chee Hwa 1998)

This goal was incorporated in the basic education Curriculum Guide published in 2002, which identified National Identity as one of the key themes and explained:

> "The return of HK to China since 1997 calls for a deeper understanding of the history and culture of our motherland" (CDC 2002)

The major manifestation of this shift in schools thus involves an admixture to the curriculum with the infusion of content that focuses on the PRC and displays the country in a positive light. For example, pupils are exhorted to 'love the mountains and rivers of China' and are provided with a description of the political system in the PRC. Generally, the revisions to the curriculum provide pupils with a soft portrayal of Chineseness that promotes a sentimental affinity for a common cultural and ethnic heritage. Relative to the curriculum materials used in the mainland, the approach is more subtle, less directly politicized and the explicit promotion of the benefits of rule by the CCP is avoided. This is reflected in the display at HK's Museum of History compared to those in Museums on the mainland (see Vickers 2005 pp68-75).The former tends to avoid reference to the colonial period whilst the latter portrays Hong Kongers as having been oppressed by the evil colonial regime and ecstatically welcoming the return of sovereignty as an exercise in liberation by the PRC.

Other initiatives and activities that have affected schools include the provision by the government of flag poles and flags with encouragement to hold flag-raising ceremonies at the beginning of the school day. Principals, teachers and pupils are also being encouraged and funded to undertake study visits and summer camps to learn from their counterparts in the mainland. One off events, most notably the visit to HK by Chinas first astronauts (as their first public engagement after their space mission) was powerfully used to promote a sense of national pride. National education is being actively promoted, although there is a lively debate as to whether the goal is to merely promote patriotism or to develop active and critical citizens.

One of the largest initiatives and more politically explicit ones is that involving the kindergarten sector, which is not publicly funded. Kindergartens have been provided with a comprehensive curriculum package including songs and activities titled 'We Love China' The focus on this sector suggests a recognition by the government that the creation of a patriotic citizenry in HK, which sees the state as representing their interests, is going to involve a

gradual and long term process of change which focuses on the youngest members of society.

A similar shift is also evident in the mass media. Up until the mid-1990s mainlanders were portrayed in HK's soap operas as unsophisticated and mendacious country bumpkins who spoke Cantonese with a heavy accent. This was contrasted with sophisticated and cosmopolitan Hong Kongers. Nowadays mainlanders (many of whom are very affluent) are more commonly portrayed as at least as sophisticated as Hong Kongers who are often portrayed as speaking Putonghua (Mandarin) with a heavy accent. This has gone hand in hand with a significant increase in the proportion of people who can speak Putonghua and of the availability and popularity of Putonghua films. Putonghua was introduced as a school subject and whilst not compulsory is growing rapidly in popularity.

These changes may be having a slight but perceptible impact on people's sense of identity. Mathews et al (2008) argue that the trend of people identifying themselves as Hong Kongers from the 1970s has been reversed and that increasingly young people are identifying themselves firstly as Chinese and secondly as Hong Kongers.

In parallel, various mainland dignitaries have encouraged a greater focus on patriotism and national education . The Vice Minister of Education of the PRC expressed it thus on a recent visit to HK:

> "Young people are the future of society. I believe the various sectors in HK will continue to render their strong support towards the work of national education and strive for better results."(www.news.gov.hk 16/1/08)

Paradoxically, on key 'patriotic' issues that involve disputes with Japan, especially the sovereignty of the Daoyutai Islands and the anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre, many HK citizens have been at least and often more vociferous than those on the mainland. This reflects the continued capacity for freedom of expression in HK and the willingness of Hong Kongers to distinguish between their loyalty/pride in their Chinese identity, which does not extend to an allegiance to the party and its leadership.

(iv) Academic Autonomy and the State

In 2000 Robert Chung, an academic at the University of Hong Kong (HKU), claimed that he

had been encouraged to cease, or at least modify, the regular opinion polls that he conducted in the University's Social Science Research Centre on the popularity of the government generally and the Chief Executive (CE), Tung Chee Hwa, specifically. This pressure, he asserted, had come from senior academics who were themselves responding to pressure from the highest levels of the government. At the time the government was facing a major threat to its legitimacy following a series of crises in the period following the handover. The Asian economic crisis had seriously damaged the economy, the opening of the new airport had been a fiasco, and the CE was widely viewed as indecisive. Robert Chung's regular surveys of public opinion served to provide the objective evidence that the government was losing the confidence of the people. Following massive media coverage and protests by students and staff, HKU's governing Council established, albeit reluctantly, an inquiry headed by a retired, expatriate High Court Judge. This was an open inquiry that focussed on the possibility of interference into academic autonomy which is protected in HK under the Basic law (HK's constitution). The whole process was televised.

The outcome was that the inquiry found that an aide to the CE had spoken to the Vice Chancellor (VC) of HKU about Chung's activities. In turn the VC had requested a pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) to speak directly to Chung. The VC and the PVC resigned their posts and the credibility of the CE's aide as a witness was questioned by the judge. Subsequently, the university council, when it received the report decided not to 'accept' it, but rather to merely 'note' the report they had commissioned. This has been interpreted (Currie et al, 2006) as a reflection of the very close links between the government and Council members, and the active lobbying of the latter by the former.

In 2007 another incident blew up involving the question of interference in academic freedom at the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), which trains most of HK's teachers, especially at the primary and kindergarten levels. Following the media reports of a Press Conference held by external members of the HKIED's governing Council to attempt to justify their non reappointment of the present author as its President, the Vice President, Professor Bernard Luk Hung-kay, posted an Intranet letter to staff and students in which he stated that the real reason Professor Morris was not reappointed was because he was unwilling to bow to pressure to merge the HKIEd with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and that during his tenure he had been under pressure to sack staff who were critical of government policies.

The allegations caused a great deal of media interest and coincided with the 'election' process for the CE. The incumbent claimed that the whole incident was merely a political conspiracy engineered by his opponents to embarrass him. This caused massive media interest and the Legislative Council began to consider conducting its own investigation. The CE quickly stepped in and established a Commission of Inquiry in February (prior to his 'election' in March).The first judge appointed to Chair the Inquiry was asked, and agreed, to recuse himself as he had a close working relationship with one of the key officials.

After calling over 40 witnesses and 39 days of sitting the Inquiry published its report in June (Yeung and Park 2007). It concluded her actions constituted an improper interference in academic freedom.

It also found that two other allegations, which were not part of the terms of reference but arose during the course of the Inquiry and were denied by the senior government officials involved, did in fact occur. Firstly, Arthur Li had threatened to 'rape' the HKIEd if it failed to merge with CUHK; and secondly, Fanny Law had requested a professor at HKIEd to sack a staff member who was publicly critical of the Government's reform agenda. The credibility of Arthur Li [Para 8.77] and Fanny Law [para 8.84] as witnesses was also questioned by the Commission. In terms of the nature of policy making processes the report stressed the need for the Government to follow due process;

> "Allegations of improper interference could be avoided and improper interference will not arise if the government or it's officials make use of proper channels to secure the institutions acceptance to follow the government policy"(para. 15.25).

On the day the report was published Fanny Law resigned from her post as Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Arthur Li was not reappointed to the new Government that came into office on 1 July 2007. Subsequently, in a move which parallels the decision of the HKU Council not to accept the report it commissioned, the Govt.

sought a judicial review of the findings of the Commission of Inquiry which it claimed were incorrect .That request was granted and the review is pending.

What these two incidents suggest is that in HK, as elsewhere, individual government officials have attempted to directly influence the work of academics which they view as critical of their policies and this has taken the form of trying to get their seniors to take action. Probably in other jurisdictions the response to critical academics might involve a more direct influence on funding decisions. However, probably uniquely in Asia, this has in HK been viewed as unacceptable and action has been taken, albeit reluctantly, to investigate the matter and to censure those involved. This outcome was in both cases necessitated by a combination of the actions of individuals, the active role of the media, and in the HKU case, by student and staff actions as well. In neither case was the defence of academic freedom a result of a robust system of governance which served to separate the government and the higher Education sector. The university governing bodies in both cases were perceived to be compliant, too close to government and having conflicted loyalties. This was hardly surprising in the HKIEd case as all external members of its council are directly appointed by the government and some work for organisations which directly compete with the HKIEd.

Conclusion

What emerges overall from this analysis is that there has been a strong connection between politics and education in HK and this relationship has at times been reciprocal. Three distinct periods were identified in the relationship between the Government and the education sector which reflected the changing nature of the political context in HK and specifically it's changing relationship with the PRC. The pattern is one that has involved a shift from the heavy handed role of the colonial government in the immediate post war period to a fairly benign process of political socialization in the second and third periods. Whilst the various Governments have attempted to use education to directly promote their own political agendas the nature of that connection has involved a clear separation between the society's general politics and the politics of the educational sector. This separation has been maintained by the various agencies and aspects of civil society, especially the mass media and the legal system, which have often served to mediate the direct influence of the Government on Education. However there are signs of a gradual shift towards a strengthening of the use of schooling as a vehicle for promoting national identity/patriotism as HK converges towards using schools to promote a form of the cultural nationalism now prevalent in the post Communist era of the

PRC.

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