

**Hong Kong 1997:
Changing Curriculum, Changing Values and Changing Politics**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the issue of curricular innovations in Hong Kong as 1997 begins to affect local socio-political and economic systems. The broad argument is that 1997 is a critical point in the history of Hong Kong for making curricular changes to prepare young people for the merger.

Chapter One introduces the problem: that the local educational system has responded slowly to the political reality of Hong Kong. The topic has emerged as a serious educational issue as educators seek a public consultation on the future objectives of Hong Kong education. The practical research question is how far are socio-political changes forcing people to re-examine their views of current educational provision?

Chapter Two draws on literature to provide an account of the current political and social, economic and cultural transformation in Hong Kong.

Chapter Three starts with exploring Hong Kong's educational context and its relationship with indigenous culture and the current socio-economic value system; and ends by reviewing the curriculum debate in Hong Kong which is beginning to stress moral and citizenship education.

Chapter Four takes up the theme of preparing young people for life and as citizens of

the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by raising the question of how values are acquired. The chapter concentrates the analysis on value acquisition especially in terms of the balance of social construction and intellectual development.

Chapter Five continues this discussion but focuses the analysis on the acquisition of economic values and concepts, and the socio-economic value system of young people.

Chapter Six describes the details of the interviewee-oriented research and fieldwork methods. Methods of data analysis are also introduced.

Chapter Seven analyses the data in three ways, using verbatim quotations; a coding frame; and the concept of indigenous Hong Kong culture.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis and suggests a general curriculum proposal for educating future "competent adults" in Hong Kong.

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*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come and
the years approach when you will say,
"I find no pleasure in them"*

(Ecclesiastes 12 : 14)

.....dedicated to Yahweh

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CHAPTER ONE

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH AND ITS CONTEXT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with 1997 and its implications for Hong Kong education in the 21st century. Hong Kong is joining the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1997. Its political, social and economic systems are in a process of transformation. Within this transitional period, Hong Kong society is expected to undergo radical changes.

As the political and socio-economic systems in Hong Kong are very different from those in the PRC, there is much speculation about the future stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. Some Hong Kong people have confidence in the PRC believing that Hong Kong's status quo will be kept under the policy of "One country, two systems". In contrast, many other Hong Kong people fear that the PRC will fail to carry out that policy and Hong Kong's style of capitalism will no longer be maintained under Chinese rule. As the 1997 issue is closely linked with the economic well-being of Hong Kong, local people as well as those who have business in Hong Kong share the feeling of uncertainty.

In response to these challenges, the educational system in Hong Kong is facing some problems such as lack of a consensus view on the future development of Hong Kong education. In such an uncertain socio-political situation, the direction of future Hong Kong educational development becomes one of the main concerns of educational policy makers: they are facing a dilemma about how to anticipate the problems posed by 1997 in the school curriculum.

Policy-makers share a feeling of obligation to educate youngsters to have an understanding of Hong Kong's political reality. Yet, in the absence of a clear view on the future Hong Kong political situation, it is difficult to generate concrete and relevant educational provision and curricular innovations. Although the educational system has to adapt to the new challenges, the ways in which education should take its shape and direction are not yet clear. In preparing young people for a new and uncertain society in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), local educators have not yet taken the decision about whether pupils should receive more independent and critical thinking skills training than fact learning and practical vocational skills.

In response to these new challenges in Hong Kong education, this thesis examines the socio-political and economic contexts of Hong Kong society, looks at education, and curriculum innovations, and ends by generating new ideas for curricular innovations for 21st century Hong Kong.

1.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The following section describes the particular ways in which Hong Kong society works and the lifestyle¹ of its people. Hong Kong is a unique society, with a fast pace of life driven by its competitive culture and further enhanced by its free market enterprise economy.

Hong Kong is remarkable for the following reasons. Firstly, Hong Kong is the first capitalist society to integrate into a socialist one. Secondly, Hong Kong is an apolitical place: politics are highly inhibited, and therefore, people lack a sense of political

awareness. Thirdly, Hong Kong's social ethos promotes an extremely pragmatic business-minded culture. Neither social nor political awareness are emphasised. Fourthly, local Hong Kong people share a unique pattern of thought based on the refugee status of so many immigrants which inclines them to strive very hard for better living standards for personal as well as family betterment. This pattern of thought is characterised by personal and family orientations rather than a sense of obligation to the state. Fifthly, the laissez-faire economy works.

In addition to these characteristics, the Hong Kong educational system is unique. Unlike other Asian countries such as Singapore and the Republic of China (ROC) where education acts as a tool to socialise pupils into national and/or political cultures, Hong Kong education is dominated by its core economic and industrialising values²---free competition.

The extent to which the 1997 issue has already brought changes to this society and, consequently, to its educational provision merits further attention, against the immediate crisis of the Joint Declaration signed by the Chinese and British governments in 1984.

1.3 HONG KONG IN TRANSITION

The origins of the Joint Declaration go back to 1842, when Hong Kong Island was ceded to the British Government because China had lost the Sino-British War, "the Opium War". The Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories was leased to the British Government for ninety-nine years in 1896. In 1979, both the Chinese Government and the British Government began to negotiate about the political future of Hong Kong after

1st July 1997. As soon as the two Governments started to table this issue, a series of disputes between the PRC and Britain was reported³. The Sino-British Agreement on Hong Kong's political future was not achieved until 19th December 1984 when the Joint Declaration was formally signed by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher and the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Zhao Ziyang on behalf of their governments, at a ceremony in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. To quote the first statement of the Joint Declaration:

1. The Government of the People's Republic of China declares that to recover the Hong Kong area (including Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, hereinafter referred to as Hong Kong) is the common aspiration of the entire Chinese people, and that it has decided to resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong with effect from 1 July 1997⁴.

Despite the assurance of the PRC's guarantee of prosperity and stability of Hong Kong after 1997, the immediate social response to the Joint Declaration was fear. This is because of the future subordinate relationship of Hong Kong to the PRC and the structural differences between the two societies. Also, this reflected people's negative attitudes towards the future of Hong Kong in general and political stability in particular. People have reservations about the new policy of "one country, two systems", one of the crucial policies in governing the future of Hong Kong. The details of the policy are discussed in the next section.

1.3.1 The Policy of One Country, Two Systems

During the Sino-British talks held between 1982-84, Hong Kong experienced a period of instability. The policy of "one country, two systems" was then proposed by the Beijing Government. Deng Xiao-ping emphasized that Hong Kong will enjoy a special

position under Chinese rule. R. Cottrell reported Deng's words (to the former Hong Kong Governor, MacLehose) over the future of Hong Kong:

A negotiated settlement of the Hong Kong question in the future should be based on the premise that the territory is part of China. However, we will treat Hong Kong as a special region. For a considerable length of time, Hong Kong may continue to practise its capitalist system while we practise our socialist system⁵.

In theory, this policy means that under Chinese rule Hong Kong will be allowed to have its own capitalist economic system. Deng replied to MacLehose's question about the relationship between Shenzhen and Hong Kong in the future by saying that, "we think we can build a great city"⁶. In other words, Shenzhen and Hong Kong will have greater socio-economic exchanges and interaction. Nevertheless, Deng stressed that "...there must be a frontier between Shenzhen and capitalism. But capitalism in Hong Kong and socialism in China can continue well into the next century"⁷.

Owing to the sensitivity of this issue and an uncertain future, the Hang Seng Index dropped dramatically before the official comments on the talks like "useful" and "constructive" were made public by the two Government representatives, Deng Xiaoping and Margaret Thatcher⁸. The announcement of the handover of Hong Kong from Britain to the PRC followed by the Sino-British Agreement helped remind businessmen that there were only fifteen years left before the lease on Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories expired⁹. Because of a lack of confidence in Chinese rule, emigration seemed to be the only way for the people of Hong Kong to obtain a sense of security.

People's perceptions of the sovereignty issue vary. Those who are optimistic believe that the promise, "one country, two systems", will be kept. They are convinced that, as

promised by the two Governments, Hong Kong's current capitalist economy and lifestyle will be maintained for another fifty years after the resumption of Chinese sovereignty in 1997. Sir David Wilson's speech to the Hong Kong Legislative Council on 11th October 1989, emphasised the essence of the policy, stating that, even after Hong Kong's return to the PRC, it would have its own laws and freedom, which **must** not be eroded¹⁰. Nevertheless, another completely different interpretation of "one country, two systems"¹¹ may prevail. As the PRC's economy is very different from that in Hong Kong, the PRC's ability to handle the Hong Kong economy is widely questioned¹².

The issue of Hong Kong 1997 and its future political situation has since become everybody's concern. One of the main sources of anxiety, among others, is the vision of Hong Kong outlined by the Basic Law.

1.3.2 The Drafting of the Basic Law

In June 1985, a Basic Law Drafting Committee was formed by the PRC. It consisted of fifty-nine mainland and twenty-three Hong Kong members who were charged with drawing up a constitutional document for Hong Kong on the basis of the principles and policies of the Joint Declaration. The importance of the Basic Law is that it was enacted as the Chinese Law which would govern Hong Kong from 1st July 1997. In order to make a smooth transfer and maintain people's confidence in the PRC, the head of the Chinese government's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, Mr. Ji Pengfei, asserted that the British Hong Kong Government should play its part in altering the Colony's political system to assist with a smooth transfer in 1997. From the 1980s onwards, the

PRC's interference in Hong Kong's political and socio-economic affairs increased rapidly. On the economic front, the effects of 1997 have already been seen.

Given the small scale and open nature of the Hong Kong economy, it is very sensitive and easily affected by external factors¹³. Among these uncontrollable factors, the "China factor"¹⁴ (involving the political situation and the attitudes of Chinese leaders towards Hong Kong's internal affairs) is regarded as most influential and deterministic. A heavy blow to the Hang Seng Index was given by Jardine Matheson and Company's move of the legal base of its headquarters to Bermuda in March 1984. Since Jardine was one of the well established traditional and colonial foreign enterprises, its move shook the faith of people in Hong Kong. In addition, after the Tiananmen Massacre on 4th June 1989, there was upheaval in Hong Kong. Recently, when the Chinese Government commented negatively on Governor Chris Patten's reform proposals in 1993, the Hong Kong stock market reacted violently¹⁵.

Hong Kong in this transitional period is facing many challenges and uncertainties. A serious educational question to be answered concerns the implications of these new challenges to Hong Kong educational provision. **"How adequate and relevant is current Hong Kong education in response to these new challenges?"** The following section discusses the current and changing patterns of Hong Kong education.

1.4 HONG KONG EDUCATION IN TRANSITION

Here, the argument is that new socio-political changes in Hong Kong challenge the current Hong Kong education system which is characterised by the transmission of facts

and rote learning¹⁶. There has been much criticism from both academic and industrial sectors. The relevance of the students' learning and knowledge has also been questioned by many commentators. This state of affairs may be partly caused by the fact that the government does not want students to be politically aware¹⁷. Nevertheless, the link between this colonial government's bureaucracy and the indigenous value systems is often emphasized.

Under the influence of the domination of values of free competition, the contemporary colonial education is interpreted as a means for better economic gains. For example, W. O. Lee comments that education is for earning rather than for learning¹⁸. In this credentialist society, the instrumental values of local education are perpetuating the competitive style of capitalism for modernisation and economic advancement.

Because of 1997, and because of its influences on the socio-political and economic systems, there is an identified need to change the school curriculum. This need is a direct result of the changing values and changing politics. In 1992, the Education Commission¹⁹ sought to create a widely-shared consensus on the aims of whole school education in Hong Kong. A consultative draft document was delivered to all schools and was also made available to the public.

The consultative draft indicates that the relationship between education and socio-political and economic values is always one of interdependence. The document attempts to develop a comprehensive and coherent set of aims for education indicating that local educators are concerned about the educational needs of Hong Kong's future economy

and society. Its objectives are to assist young Hong Kong people to develop an independent mind and an awareness of society, to equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes "which will enable them to lead a full life and play a positive role in the social and economic development of the community"²⁰. Without having an in-depth understanding of the social phenomena of Hong Kong society, it seems impossible to suggest a better way to take the current educational system forward. That question, how to take the educational system forward, is a major concern of this thesis, and the theme is pursued through one main argument, with several sub-arguments presented in the following sections.

1.5 THE ARGUMENT OF THE THESIS

The main argument of this thesis is that 1997 is a critical point in the history of Hong Kong for making curricular changes in order to prepare young people for life in the HKSAR. This thesis argues that in educating competent adults for a new society, moral reasoning and intellectual development are two crucial elements in the Hong Kong school curriculum. The educational objectives set out by the consultative draft document in 1992 suggest that if young Hong Kong people are to be able to take their places in a rapidly changing society and contribute to its development, then education has an important role to play. The main argument holds four sub-arguments which are presented in the thesis.

1.6 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARGUMENTS

The following section outlines the organization of the thesis and introduces each of the four sub-arguments in sequence. This thesis is organized as a combination of a literature analysis and of a fieldwork survey on Hong Kong 1997 and people's perceptions of the

future objectives of Hong Kong education. The development of the thesis is affected by the four sub-arguments.

The first theme of the thesis discusses the effects of the politics of Hong Kong 1997 on the local socio-political and economic systems. The first sub-argument has two parts, (a) that 1997 is a challenge to the existing Hong Kong value system; (b) that 1997 is an issue of confidence and opportunity. As people's confidence is rooted in the continuation of the current lifestyle and free and open social atmosphere, 1997 may mean a deadline for them to enjoy their existing freedom and lifestyle. Here, confidence means Hong Kong people's collective perceptions of the future of the HKSAR and their perceptions of the promise of the policy "one country, two systems". At the other extreme, 1997 is a matter of perceived opportunity: the people's perceptions of the economic future of the HKSAR. Even now when Hong Kong is returning to the PRC in less than three years' time, its economic well-being is still the main concern of its people. Therefore, the ability of the PRC to tolerate, permit, or encourage capitalism should make a difference to people's feelings of anxiety and uncertainty.

The second theme follows closely the first theme and links with the second sub-argument that the politics of Hong Kong 1997 have emerged as an educational issue and a generator of new curricular innovations in Hong Kong. Because of the challenge of 1997 to the local value systems and its close link with the current educational system, the merger will have substantial implications for the future development of Hong Kong education. Many local educators share a feeling of obligation to prepare young Hong Kong people for the merger. In the absence of a clear view on the political future of

Hong Kong, educators find difficulty in making relevant and adequate educational preparations for young people for life in a new society. As the society is already in a process of rapid transformation, people have to decide their position in the face of mixed and conflicting views on the new society; local educators strive for a reference point to change current educational provision.

The third theme takes up the theme of schooling and value acquisition in the areas of moral reasoning and citizenship education. The third sub-argument has three parts:

- That value acquisition is a combination of social construction and intellectual development.
- That Hong Kong schools have the social mission of preparing young people for life and as citizens of a representative government in the HKSAR.
- That in educating competent adults for this transitional society, moral discernment and civic mindedness become important curricular issues.

The fourth theme discusses young people's construction of the economic world, and examines young people's acquisition of economic values and concepts. The fourth sub-argument is that economic values and concepts are, like the acquisition of other social and moral values, a combination of social construction and intellectual growth. At various developmental stages, specific and sophisticated economic concepts are intellectually grasped and yet economic socialisation and maturation assist individuals in understanding economic life. Because Hong Kong has a *laissez faire* economy and promotes the style of capitalism, this socio-economic ethos has an influence on people's economic values. In this metropolitan city, the qualities of competent adults are usually measured by income and socio-economic status. Identification of young people's perceptions of socio-economic phenomena deepens our understanding of the economic

values of young Hong Kong people. In this changing society, the determination of the qualities of competent adults are guidelines for generating useful ideas for curricular innovations.

1.6.1 The Research Questions

Before reforming education, it is crucial to find out what people expect. The particular way Hong Kong people perceive and interpret the issue of Hong Kong 1997 provides some grounds for understanding reality and also the needs of society. In return, people's perceptions can be useful in assisting educational policy makers to form curriculum policy. Different routes into people's perceptions are provided by the following questions:

- (1) **To what extent are recent socio-political and economic changes forcing Hong Kong people to re-examine their views on current educational provision?**
- (2) **What do Hong Kong people think education should do in response to the socio-economic context of Hong Kong in 1997 and beyond?**
- (3) **What are Hong Kong people's perceptions of the purposes of education?**
- (4) **What are Hong Kong people's perceptions of competent adults in the Hong Kong of the future?**

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Within the organization of the thesis, Chapter Two extends the discussion of the Hong Kong context, indicating that people's reactions to the politics of 1997 are tightly linked with their value systems. The chapter draws on the literature to explore the challenges of 1997 to the socio-political and economic systems and indigenous culture of Hong Kong. Because the society is undergoing socio-political transformation, dilemmas and problems are inevitable. Secondly, the chapter describes how people's value systems

affect their perceptions of and feelings towards the sovereignty issue of Hong Kong after 1997. This collective feeling of uncertainty has become one of the main social issues and is well documented²¹. C. Emmons claims that this issue is "...a collective social definition of reality or public opinion about what will happen in a very uncertain future" and "...can become a self-fulfilling prophecy²²".

Chapter Three is a discussion of the current educational issues in Hong Kong. As this thesis aims at taking the educational system forward within the changing political and value contexts, the questions for education include: should it respond? If so, how should it respond? To date, the search for a way forward for educational provision for the future of this transforming society seems to be both essential and difficult. The chapter explores four aspects of the issue:

- the balance of the school curriculum;
- the challenges of the current educational provision;
- the response of the system to the challenges; and
- the future role of education in 21st century Hong Kong.

If education is to help young people prepare for autonomous and self-reliant decision making which will have an influence on the future, the current examination oriented educational system, so concerned with the transmission of facts, is inadequate. This implies a need for the reform of the school curriculum and especially curriculum content which is aimed at promoting civic mindedness and independent critical thinking. Chapters Two and Three discuss the close link between 1997 and the structural changes of Hong Kong. Because of the uniqueness of Hong Kong's current political reality which is new in its history, there is a gap between current educational provision and the needs of young people who will be citizens of the new society.

Chapter Four is a link chapter taking up the theme that how values are acquired throughout schooling and identifying the reasons for choosing moral discernment and civic mindedness as two crucial elements for values teaching for this uncertain and transforming Hong Kong society. The literature, on young people's acquisition of socio-moral values, shows how the process of socialisation, especially in school, inculcates values into young people.

Chapter Five continues this discussion but focuses on the way in which economic values and concepts are acquired. The chapter is broadly organized as a literature survey on the acquisition of economic concepts and values. Two categories of literature on value acquisition are discussed: the developmental and the socialisation perspectives. Because the chapter takes the view that the construction of economic concepts and values is not simply a developmental process, the chapter discusses the influence of both cultural norms and physical environment on the acquisition of economic values and concepts. It is also suggested that understanding economic knowledge and values is shaped by personal socio-economic experience and background.

Chapter Six links up the literature analysis of the following four chapters with a description of the empirical research. It is based on the thesis sub-arguments that 1997 is a challenge to the value system of Hong Kong people which stresses free competition, and that the politics of Hong Kong 1997 have emerged as an educational issue and a generator of new curricular innovations for Hong Kong. Twenty-seven interviewees were asked for their personal views about the future of Hong Kong and its educational

objectives. In addition, the interviewees' definitions of "adult economic life" in the HKSAR were collected.

Chapter Seven assesses the gap between the literature and the empirical work so as to offer a better understanding of social phenomena. The chapter analyses the data in three ways using: verbatim quotations, a coding frame and the concept of indigenous Hong Kong culture. Interviewees' perceptions of the current and changing situation in Hong Kong and the future objectives of education for producing the "competent adults" in the HKSAR are analyzed. In addition, the chapter suggests that changing politics and values of Hong Kong will bring changes to the people's perceptions of educating competent adults for a new society.

This thesis concludes in Chapter Eight with the main argument that moral and citizenship education is crucial for preparing young Hong Kong people for a new society. Interviewees' perceptions of the socio-political and economic future of Hong Kong and their definitions of the "competent adults" are summarised. Finally, the chapter attempts to draw insights for constructing a curriculum *proposal* for educating "competent adults" for the new Hong Kong society.

It is to the first of these sub-arguments that attention now turns.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

1. Reader's Digest, (1987), "Universal Dictionary", London: The Reader's Digest Association Limited, p.889. Life-style is an internally consistent way of living that reflects the attitudes and values of an individual or a culture.

Here, in the context of this chapter, lifestyle refers to the expressed and unexpressed values and meanings which manifest themselves in such things as the clothes we wear, the food we eat and the friends we associate with.

2. For details, see Luk, Bernard, Hung-Kei, (1992), "Hong Kong" in Wielemans, Willy, Chan, Pauline, Choi-ping, (eds.) Education and Culture in Industrializing Asia, Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp.111-146.

3. Cottrell, Robert, (1993), The End of Hong Kong: The Secret Diplomacy of Imperial Retreat, London: John Murray Ltd., pp.119-153.

4. Ibid., pp.205-206.

5. Ibid., pp.54-55.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p.55.

8. Gorman, Thomas. D., (1988), "Backdrop", in Members of AmCham, Doing Business in Today's Hong Kong, A review of what makes Hong Kong work, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Oxford University Press, p.8.

9. Hong Kong consists of three main parts, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories. Approximately, 90 per cent of the total Hong Kong land area is in the New Territories and is on lease till June 30, 1997.

10. Wilson, David, (1990), "A Vision of the Future", Annual Address by the Governor to the Legislative Council on 11, October, 1989, in Roberts, D., (ed.), Hong Kong 1990: A Review of 1989, Hong Kong: Government Information Services, p.5.

11. Cheung, Ng-sheung, (1984), 18th edition, The Words of A Mandarin Seller, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Economics Journal, pp.57-59, (Text in Chinese).

12. Harris, Peter, (1986), "Hong Kong Confronts 1997: An assessment of the Sino-British Agreement", Pacific Affairs, Vol. 59, pp.45-68.

13. Witt, Hugh, (1993), (ed.), Hong Kong 1993: A Review of 1992, Hong Kong: Government Information Services, pp.40-53.

14. Leung, Clarence, (March, 1992), "Another Face of the 'China Factor'", The Foundation, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Foundation Ltd., pp.4-5.

15. Financial Times, 26, May, 1993.

16. See for example, Lee, Wing-on, (1991), Social Change and Educational Problems in Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong, London: MacMillan Academic And Professional Ltd., Hong Kong, p.219.

Also see Yee, Albert, H., (1992), (2nd. edition), A People Misruled, Singapore: Heinemann Asia, a Division of Reed International (Singapore) Pte Ltd., p.316.

17. Yee, A.H., (1992), op. cit., p.288.

18. Lee, W.O., (1991), op. cit., p.127.

19. Hong Kong Education Commission, (October, 1992), "Foreword" in School Education in Hong Kong: A Statement of Aims (Draft For Public Consultation), Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer.

20. Ibid., p.9.

21. Harris, P., (1986), op. cit., pp.45-68.

22. Emmons, Charles F., (1991), Hong Kong Prepares For 1997, Politics and Emigration in 1987, Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, p.22.

At the other extreme, regarding this issue of crisis, he puts his emphasis on the role of the Hong Kong people in maintaining social stability and prosperity. Sharing this view, J. Friederichs takes a step further by arguing that the commitment of local Hong Kong business élites and educators is a foundation for localisation and self-determination in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 1997 and beyond.

For details, also see Friederichs, Jane, O., (1992), "Prospects for Educational Reform during Political Transformation in Hong Kong", Compare, Vol.22, No.2, p.166.

CHAPTER TWO WHAT IS CHANGING AND WHAT IS ITS SIGNIFICANCE?

2.1 PURPOSE AND ARGUMENT

This chapter extends the last chapter's discussion on the research context illustrating the 1997 challenges to the socio-political and economic systems of Hong Kong. The main argument of the chapter is that the 1997 issue is a challenge to the value systems of Hong Kong people. Feelings of uncertainty result from the differences between the socio-political and economic value systems of the PRC and Hong Kong. Although little political awareness is promoted by the colonial government and very few people participate in the local political system, people are content with the laissez-faire economic system.

2.1.1 Organization of the Chapter

The chapter locates the argument against three aspects of context: (1) the political system of Hong Kong, (2) analysis of the economic system---economic link between Hong Kong and southern China, (3) and the socio-cultural system of Hong Kong.

The chapter begins with an historical perspective on Hong Kong. The next section on the political system describes the non-interventionist nature of British rule. The section shows how the policy of "one country, two systems" has become a controversial and social issue. As Hong Kong's return to the PRC is a transfer of sovereignty from the British government to the PRC---in Friederichs' term, "decolonization without independence"¹---Hong Kong people have some reservations about the future of the merger: the immediate collective social response is emigration.

In the section on the economy, the nature of Hong Kong's laissez-faire economy and the contribution of the government's non-interventionist economic policy to social prosperity is discussed. The relationship between the style of free competition and opportunity for upward social mobility is indicated. Attention is then be drawn to the recent development of Hong Kong's economy, the PRC's open door economic policy and cross border economic activities.

The socio-cultural section discusses the characteristics of the social ethos and lifestyle of Hong Kong people. An attempt is made to describe the challenges of western cultures and the indigenous culture so as to deepen the understanding of Hong Kong's value systems. A discussion of the indigenous Hong Kong culture shows the differences between Hong Kong and the PRC.

Together the three themes shows the effects of 1997 on Hong Kong society. The differences between the PRC and Hong Kong in terms of socio-economic cultural norms are also regarded as barriers to a meaningful merger.

2.2 An HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON HONG KONG

The following section shows the development of Hong Kong society from an historical perspective. It describes how the society struggles for economic success and the role of local people's patterns of thought in that success. The relationship between the idea of free competition and social structure is outlined.

Despite the fact that Hong Kong imports half its food and over sixty per cent of its water together with other consumer goods, raw materials, capital goods and fuel from the PRC and elsewhere², this refugee habitat of some 1,067 square kilometres has developed into an international banking and financial centre. Under British rule³, Hong Kong has enjoyed a few decades of social, political and economic stability. David Wilson, the former Hong Kong Governor, comments that Hong Kong's economic success is due to its separation from China's complicated domestic politics⁴. At the other extreme, Hong Kong people are content with British rule. The stability of the internal political situation promotes economic development. S.K. Lau et. al.⁵ describe the features of this society as politically stable and economically prosperous and point out that people of Hong Kong have enjoyed a high degree of socio-cultural freedom together with economic activities.

In contrast, J.F. Tsai⁶ argues that the purpose of the colonial government is only to make economic gains. Under colonial rule, people are passive towards political matters whilst active towards economic matters. For these reasons Hong Kong's political situation is comparatively more stable than other Asian societies. Nevertheless, in Tsai's⁷ view, the colony did experience several occasions of social unrest in contrast to the standard comments on its political situation. Tsai offers the view that this society is characterized by a long history of social dissatisfaction with British rule. In his words, "the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized was full of ambiguities and paradoxes"⁸.

Regardless of these undercurrents, there are some important factors contributing to Hong Kong's economic development. Some people regard this success as due to the early settlers, namely refugees from Shanghai in the PRC. The early settlers brought talent and capital, which formed the base of Hong Kong's *entrepôt* economy and also contributed to its transformation into a light industrial economy. The changing economic conditions of Hong Kong in the early days paved the way for it to become one of the world's metropolitan cities⁹. B. Levin¹⁰ points out that Hong Kong's role as an *entrepôt* was ended by the PRC's participation in the Korean War, as the PRC was sanctioned by the United Nation's trade embargo. Since then Hong Kong has shifted to develop labour-intensive industries such as textiles and electronics. The influx of mainland Chinese caused by the Cultural Revolution provided a cheap labour market of skilled and semi-skilled workers for Hong Kong's early manufacturing industry. These industries have caused a marked difference in the standard of living between Hong Kong and the PRC. Hong Kong is regarded as a "paradise" by the mainland Chinese. Many fled to this "Land of Opportunity" at high cost and quite a lot of them even lost their lives fleeing to Hong Kong. Indeed, one of the main factors contributing to a non-stop influx of illegal immigrants from the PRC before the early 1980s was the economic activities of Hong Kong¹¹. It was only in the eighties, when the colonial government introduced its policy of immediate return of illegal refugees, that this flow stopped.

Owing to the fundamental differences between the political and economic systems of Hong Kong and the PRC, relations between the two societies were minimal. In the early days, restrictions existed at the border to prevent close interaction between the two

societies. The figures show that only a few hundred thousand people a year crossed the border in the sixties¹².

In the nineties, because of the politics of Hong Kong 1997, the relationship between the two societies became very close¹³. Here, the political reality is the resumption of the PRC's sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997 whereas the economic reality is the close ties of economic cooperation between Hong Kong and the PRC. Further, a non-stop train service between Hong Kong and Guangzhou has been introduced, which cuts a one-day journey to less than three hours. The improvement in transport not only allows more frequent cross border journeys but also encourages more economic transactions between the two sides of the Shenzhen River. When one-day business trips were allowed, frequent economic transactions and activities were encouraged.

Economic transactions across the border rapidly increased following Deng Xiao-ping's "open door" economic policy shortly after the death of Mao. This new policy attracted a lot of foreign investors¹⁴. Geographically, Hong Kong is, again, a gateway for PRC foreign trade. The development of special economic zones in southern China in the late eighties accelerated these economic exchanges and cooperation. In 1992, Hong Kong exported some twenty-six per cent of the overall domestic goods to the PRC which made it the second largest market for Hong Kong's re-exports. Conversely, the PRC re-exports about eighty-six per cent of its goods via Hong Kong¹⁵, linking these two economics closer than before.

Apart from its geographical advantages for economic exchanges with the PRC, Hong Kong is taking advantage of knowing the culture and speaking a language which assists foreigners in doing business with the PRC. Hong Kong thus enjoys a good opportunity for promoting mutual trade across the border and also assists foreign businesses in investing in southern China and in getting around the bureaucracy of this newly-open communist state and the problems of its language. Today, Hong Kong is the largest foreign investor in the PRC: it has provided some sixty per cent of direct foreign investment in the PRC¹⁶. David Wilson¹⁷ claims that as Hong Kong becomes more and more important in the world economy (Hong Kong was the eleventh largest trading economy in the world in 1990) it will be able to contribute significantly to the development of the Chinese economy. He suggests that:

we can strengthen the basis of our special future political status by the contribution that we make to the modernization of the Chinese economy and by the access to world markets, advanced technology and expertise that we can provide for China¹⁸.

In addition, T. Gorman¹⁹ suggests that at the managerial level, it provides expertise to Chinese investors as well as a sound trade staging point for foreign investors. Up to 1988, some seventy per cent of all foreign investment in the PRC was made by companies incorporated or registered in Hong Kong²⁰. Apart from this middle-person position, Hong Kong is a special channel for the PRC's import and export trade because of its excellent harbour facilities, Hong Kong is ranked as one of the three best natural harbours in the world and is at the crossroads of the west and east²¹. It also offers well-equipped port facilities which are efficiently and apolitically administrated.

In turn, the style of free market economy allows greater upward social mobility and opportunity is open to people with different talents²². S.K. Lau and H.C. Kuan²³ argue that this accounts for the success of many of the early industrialists and businessmen who came from humble origins. M.K. Chan and M.W. Kirt²⁴ assert that this is still one of the main elements for maintaining Hong Kong's social stability and economic prosperity: keeping opportunity open to all.

However, influenced by the style of free competition, credentialism becomes the educational culture of this colony. P. Morris notes that educational qualifications contribute largely to one's earning. For example, he²⁵ argues that graduates from the two oldest universities can usually expect well-paid and crucial positions in this society. Better education means better career prospects. For Hong Kong teachers, the salary difference between a qualified non-graduate teacher (points 17-26) and a non-qualified graduate teacher (points 20-26) is considerable according to the official Pay Scale. Education is perceived as the major channel for students, especially for those from humble origins, to break social class barriers and to achieve success. Consequently, credentialism dominates the society²⁶. This credential society is closely linked with the colonial political system and the next section illustrates this argument.

2.3 CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The negotiations between Britain and the PRC over Hong Kong's future after June 30th 1997 have been some of the main concerns of most people in Hong Kong. They are uncertain about whether Hong Kong's status quo including its style of capitalism and freedom will be maintained. Therefore, the initial reaction of the Hong Kong people to

the Joint Declaration was fear. P. Harris²⁷ attributes this fear to the testing of two rival economic ideologies (capitalism versus socialism) in the struggle to establish a set of values appropriate for the future of Hong Kong.

J. Cheng²⁸ argues that the key phrases such as "basically unchanged" and "local inhabitants" stated in the Joint Declaration made by the British and the PRC governments have not been clearly interpreted to Hong Kong. Harris²⁹ argues that, in future, the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the PRC will replace Hong Kong's existing laws which will be subject to amendments by the HKSAR legislature as circumstances change. In addition, he asserts that once the Constitution of the PRC is put in place in Hong Kong, it will greatly influence the HKSAR judiciary because the legislative systems in the two societies are different. In a socialist society, rights and freedoms are perceived in a fundamentally different way to western capitalist societies. Harris³⁰ therefore claims that Hong Kong will be a testing ground for two incompatible ideologies.

Moreover, Harris warns that freedom is likely to be reduced once the Chinese government takes over Hong Kong. At least in terms of external and foreign affairs, the HKSAR will have to follow the PRC. Harris comments that the future HKSAR legislature will not have its veto power when under the PRC's legislature. Despite slogans such as "Hong Kong people rule Hong Kong" and "One country, two systems" and also the promise that "Hong Kong's existing capitalist system and life-style shall remain unchanged for fifty years"³¹, many Hong Kong people do not seem to have confidence in the Chinese government.

Furthermore, Harris argues that the PRC will not allow Hong Kong to have too much "western-style democracy", otherwise, "...it will be perceived as drifting from that of China"³². He questions the likelihood of the future HKSAR deciding its own economic policies by quoting a senior official's words "...China wanted to hatch its own chicken, and did not want to receive a half-boiled egg in 1997"³³.

S.K. Lau and H.C. Kuan³⁴ take the view that the whole issue of the Sino-British Agreement is a new challenge to the current political value system promoted by the colonial government. So the issue cannot be easily interpreted because the transfer of Hong Kong to the PRC involves a different political ideology. Lau and Kuan argue for a rethink of the slogan "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong"³⁵.

Achievement of this policy necessitates a reform of the local political system. More importantly, any democratic political reforms will need the support of the Chinese government. The policy of preserving Hong Kong's existing capitalist economy for fifty years after 1997, means, in Lau and Kuan's view, accepting that Hong Kong can no longer be immune to political influence from the PRC. Even though the existing situation will be maintained for the following few decades, sooner or later after the return of Hong Kong to the PRC, it will have to change. In addition, they also identify some hidden resistances for democratic political movement within this transitional society. As the society consists of vested interest groups and any political reforms might threaten the existing free and competitive values, there are some doubts whether people would sacrifice their benefits in order to build a representative government. Moreover,

the dearth of indigenous trained and potential political leaders makes the transfer of authority to local people difficult.

In Segal's view³⁶, genuine convergence is dependent on the PRC's tolerance towards different roads to modernisation and the fate of its reforms. Indeed, Y. Hu³⁷ warns that the PRC's every move has a direct effect on Hong Kong and that China factor will become more and more significant to Hong Kong as time passes. Though no dramatic political disruption is expected in Hong Kong, Hu thinks that the existing Hong Kong political situation will be more shaky.

Before taking an optimistic view of the future of Hong Kong, Segal warns that the commitment of the PRC to reform up to and well beyond 1997 has to be determined. As 1997 is just a few years ahead, it is doubtful, even if the PRC does commit itself to reform, whether it will have had sufficient time to catch up with the pace of development in Hong Kong. Because of the differences between the two societies, it will be a rather long process for both sides to merge together. Noting that if the PRC returns to its closed and conservative path of reform as in the 60s, he is not convinced that the new rulers of the PRC will wish to integrate a troubled Hong Kong. He argues that, should there be a messy political succession in the PRC before 1997, Hong Kong will decline more quickly and the level of emigration will also be quickly intensified³⁸.

Segal suggests that Hong Kong people should promote a representative government encouraged by Governor Chris Patten's reform proposals³⁹. The proposal is an invaluable opportunity to promote political awareness of the problems of keeping

stability and prosperity, and it is also a test of the willingness of local Hong Kong people to abandon their pragmatism within this transitional period. Segal suggests that if people fail to make full use of this chance to claim their own rights and to establish a more autonomous society, Chinese rule will begin to grow in Hong Kong before 1997 and, in turn, the colonial government is likely to run down before 1997.

Arguing from another angle, J. Cheng⁴⁰ comments that a democracy has no definite link with a stable and prosperous society. Many Third World countries after the Second World War failed to develop democratic governments due to their inability to acknowledge the role of liberty and the rule of law. He therefore claims, today, it is valuable for Hong Kong to learn from the history of other societies and to avoid repeating the same mistakes. This claim may hold some truth as democracy has never been fully grounded in this British colony and its present prosperity and stability are the result of its free market economy ideology and practices.

Among the range of views about the post merger period, the feeling of uncertainty is consistently reported. As Lau⁴¹ puts it "...never before in the history of Hong Kong is the political scene so muddled that statements about its future can hardly be made with certitude".

The political reality of Hong Kong has significance for the current economic system. The next section explores the effects of 1997 on the economic system.

2.4 CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM

This section on the economic system tests the main argument by pointing out that 1997 is largely perceived as a challenge to the economic value system of the local people which stresses free competition. In other words, 1997 is an issue of opportunity. The following paragraphs start by describing the nature of this free market economy. Economic ties between southern China and Hong Kong promoted by the PRC's open door policy and local Hong Kong people's perceptions of the economic future of Hong Kong are then illustrated.

There is a consensus that Hong Kong's contemporary economic success is the result of the colonial government's non-interventionist economic policy. Segal⁴² states that "...Hong Kong prospers because its people operate in the international market economy without reference to frontiers or their government's policies". This view is further asserted by Lau and Kuan⁴³, "...in contradistinction to others, the role of the Hong Kong government in the economy has so far been minimal".

As the style of capitalism contributes greatly to the economic success of Hong Kong, the continuity of this style becomes a main concern of Hong Kong people after the merger. The economy of Hong Kong often overrides Hong Kong's political status⁴⁴. R. Cottrell⁴⁵ even argues that Hong Kong 1997 is simply regarded as an economic issue to the PRC. Hardly surprisingly, as Hong Kong society approaches 1997 attention is being given to the way in which the Hong Kong capitalist economy may merge with the Chinese socialist economy.

The following paragraph offers a brief review of the factors contributing to the economic success of Hong Kong. The three most favourable factors attracting foreign investment, according to the literature⁴⁶ are the free port, free foreign exchange and privatized entrepreneurship. According to a survey of factors affecting Hong Kong's investment, conducted by the Hong Kong Government Industrial Council, of 580 Hong Kong business companies, in 1989, the most important three elements, among twenty, are political stability, the political future, and financial and banking facilities. In addition, Hong Kong's economy benefits from its excellent location in the crossroads between East and West and a non-frozen harbour. The virtues of its people's endurance, hard work and talent play a crucial part too.

The preceding paragraph indicated that both internal and external factors are important for the economic success of Hong Kong. To date, when Hong Kong is joining the PRC in a few years' time, the economic future of Hong Kong is closely linked with its relationship with the PRC. C. Leung⁴⁷ comments that Hong Kong's success tomorrow has to be dependent on the PRC's attitudes towards its open-door policy and Hong Kong. This opinion is supported elsewhere⁴⁸. Nevertheless, even now the economic ties between the two fronts are very close.

In the late 1980s, half of the manufacturing industry in Guangdong province was owned by Hong Kong businesses⁴⁹. Since Hong Kong is the predominant investor in industrial processing and most of the industrial processing operations are located at the open sea coastal areas, bulk goods are normally shipped to Hong Kong⁵⁰. This, in turn, stimulates trade cooperation between these two economies. In fact, Segal⁵¹ refers to K. Davies and

points out that the re-export of domestic trade from Hong Kong has increased from 60.5 per cent in 1984 to 126.5 per cent in 1988.

According to the 1993-1994 Budget Speech by the Financial Secretary⁵², Hong Kong gains handsomely from investment in Guangdong and, in return, benefits the PRC by investing in manufacturing, communications and services. It is reported that Hong Kong manufacturers employ three million workers in Guangdong province, and among them, 650,000 are from Hong Kong⁵³. In addition, some twenty per cent of Hong Kong currency circulates in Guangdong. The contributions of Hong Kong to the economic development of the PRC are expected to expand in the near future and this is also seen as a good opportunity for the development of the Hong Kong economy.

The economic connection between Hong Kong and the PRC is closer than ever before.

P.S. Yuen⁵⁴ identifies three stages of economic cooperation between Hong Kong and the PRC:

- The first stage was between 1949 and 1978. In this initial stage, economic cooperation was taking place as a kind of interdependence across the border.
- The second stage, from 1979 to 1989, as the PRC's "open door" economic policy was implemented, was characterised by its exploratory, unplanned and short-term nature. All economic exchanges were operating on a regional complementary basis.
- The third stage is from the 1990s, and it is characterised by large-scale, planned and highly hierarchical economic cooperation.

Quite explicitly, these mutually beneficial economic exchanges have drawn the two economies together⁵⁵. Because of this economic reality, many people are convinced that Hong Kong's status quo will be maintained even under Chinese rule in July, 1997 and

beyond. Y.C. Jao⁵⁶ takes the view that, for the sake of the PRC's international image, Hong Kong's existing international status and economic prosperity will be kept by the PRC. In Jao's view, the PRC will allow Hong Kong to have greater freedom and autonomy in economic, social and cultural affairs and he supports Johnson's view that Hong Kong's free market economy will be preserved. In supporting Jao's argument, C. Leung⁵⁷ claims that the PRC has kept her open-door economic policy even during chaotic times such as after the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989. Moreover, Segal⁵⁸ emphasises the fact that the Hong Kong property market has never been seriously affected by this sovereignty issue. For example, rents for offices and shops nearly doubled between 1979 and 1987. Among other countries in 1987, Japan invested the highest amount, nearly HK\$ 5 billion in the property market and Australia was second to it⁵⁹.

It is predicted that Hong Kong will be the capital city of the Greater Hong Kong Economic Region which will include the newly developed special economic zones in southern China⁶⁰. In response to this claim, D. Akers-Jones comments that:

our problem...is likely to be not one of decline, but how to cope with the ever-increasing demands made on our economy and the supporting infrastructure and upon our workforce at all levels⁶¹.

And he presents the future of Hong Kong:

with our feet in Hong Kong, with our back against China, with our face towards the Asia-Pacific region, with our eyes open we scan the world⁶².

G. Johnson⁶³ argues that the PRC will treasure "the goose that lays (the) golden eggs". Segal⁶⁴ echoes Johnson's positive view by pointing out that Hong Kong can assist the PRC in dealing with international foreign trade as it has expertise in doing business with

other foreign countries. In addition, Y.W. Sung⁶⁵ suggests three roles for Hong Kong: acting as a financier, a middleman and a facilitator to the PRC and suggests that it will continue to be the PRC's link to the capitalist world, because he sees the geographical advantages of Hong Kong as crucial factor for its future economic development. Segal⁶⁶ emphasizes that the choice of Shenzhen as the first special economic zone is because of its geographical advantage, closeness to Hong Kong. The future economic relationship between the two areas is described by Dick Wilson:

the trend is for Hong Kong to become a design, administrative and marketing centre for a new industrial system in Guangdong and its neighbouring provinces. China will make the goods but Hong Kong will add value to them at the 'front end', by sourcing, marketing, design, quality management and product development, and also at the 'back end' through warehousing, final quality control, forwarding, shipping and trade finance. Hong Kong may provide technical services for China's heavy industries⁶⁷.

The analysis shows a mutually beneficial relationship between Hong Kong and the PRC. Hong Kong gains natural resources from the hinterland and also capital in real terms. In return, the PRC benefits from the technology and capital from Hong Kong to support her modernisation programme. Nevertheless, the economic activities across the border are restricted to economics. The newly developed special economic zones act as a controlled experiment for the PRC in dealing with its international economy while limiting the risks of "spiritual pollution" that seem to come with western business⁶⁸.

At the other extreme, different perceptions of the economic future of Hong Kong are also reported. The significance of Hong Kong---to assist the economic modernization of the PRC---should not be taken for granted. The managing director of the free trade zones warns that:

Guangzhou's free trade zone will apply international practices to develop into a highly open and internationalized trading zone similar to Hong Kong...What can be done in Hong Kong can be done even better in the free trade zone⁶⁹.

The extent to which the Chinese leadership has an understanding of Hong Kong's method of economic development and modernisation is little known. As Sung⁷⁰ notes: "Hong Kong is an efficient and flexible instrument for the promotion of trade and investment, but China has not yet mastered its use".

There are a few important points to be considered in the convergence of Hong Kong with the PRC. For example, Segal claims that convergence will mean a slowing down of the existing development of the Hong Kong economy. In turn, convergence will also mean a commitment of the Chinese government to speed up its modernisation accordingly⁷¹. To quote Segal's words:

the rulers of China seem to believe that they can have their sovereignty, and still retain a high degree of economic self-interest, while recognising that Hong Kong will not be quite as fat a golden goose as it once was⁷².

T.C. Hung⁷³ suggests that the wider the PRC opens its doors to foreign trade, the less important Hong Kong will be as a window to the PRC for foreign exchange and the international trading system. Hence, it is crucial for Hong Kong to offer a new paradigm to cater for the needs of the PRC. Otherwise, the role of Hong Kong will be easily replaced by the newly developed special economic zones.

The preceding analysis has demonstrated the close economic relationship between the PRC and Hong Kong. Despite the fact that Hong Kong has much to contribute to the PRC, especially in the areas of technology, managerial skills, advanced knowledge and

capital, there is a great deal speculation about the extent to which Hong Kong can be a model for the PRC. In spite of their interdependent economic condition, Hong Kong people are not convinced by the Joint Declaration that Hong Kong will continue to be prosperous after its return to the PRC. C.K. Law⁷⁴ takes a cautious view and comments that the PRC has to consider internal matters such as the legal system, capital flows, foreign debts and monetary policy before making use of Hong Kong's financial institutions.

Indeed, this economic system is very sensitive to the politics of Hong Kong 1997. Harris⁷⁵ sees people's feeling of anxiety as a direct result of the uncertainty about the balance of capitalism and socialism in the area.

This lack of confidence is also generated by doubts about the ability of the PRC, a socialist economy, to sustain free competition after 1997. Therefore, the PRC's ideas of developing a capitalist economy within its socialist economy are widely questioned by many people⁷⁶. They are afraid that the PRC will unintentionally damage Hong Kong's free-market economy because of lack of knowledge about the way it works⁷⁷. Both Hu⁷⁸ and Friederichs⁷⁹ take the cautious view that although the current Chinese leaders may have some understanding of Hong Kong's economy, it is not certain that future leaders will share their view and maintain their policy. The end of Deng's rule will have significant effects on Hong Kong's stability. Friederichs continues to claim that although Hong Kong people are proud of the PRC's open door economic policy, they have no desire to adopt the Chinese system⁸⁰. N.S. Cheung⁸¹ suggests that the economic future is beyond the control of Hong Kong people. In his words, the past



experience of Hong Kong people, suggests that the economic future is uncertain and, consequently, fear is unavoidable.

Because of the small scale open economy⁸² of Hong Kong, it is vulnerable to external factors⁸³. The "China factor" is always the most influential factor affecting the Hong Kong economy⁸⁴. This echoes the claim put forth earlier⁸⁵ that the PRC will determine Hong Kong's future. One of the Legislative Council members⁸⁶ feels that the Hong Kong stock market has been the thermometer of the relationships between Britain and the PRC. Indeed, due to the China factor, the Hong Kong stock market has received several dramatic blows especially within this transitional period. As noted by Hu⁸⁷ the stock market has collapsed twice, once during the process of negotiation of the Sino-British Agreement on the status of Hong Kong in 1984 and again in 1989 following the Tiananmen Massacre. Similarly, the continuous Sino-British dispute Governor Chris Patten's reform proposal has had another effect on the stock market. This happened on "Bloody Monday", 4, January, 1993, when the Hang Seng Index dropped to the lowest point ever⁸⁸.

Conversely, after the political storm had been weathered, the stock market once again showed satisfaction with the latest round of Sino-British talks and hopes of the Governor's reform proposal. The Hang Seng Index returned to its record-breaking ways, and rose 58.02 points⁸⁹. Later, after the meeting of the Sino-British Joint Commission, Hang Seng Index climbed 102.74 points⁹⁰. Lately, the news that the United States has recommended unconditional renewal of the PRC's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status cheered the stock market: the Hang Seng Index climbed another 91.79 points⁹¹. This

demonstrates the importance of the "China factor" on Hong Kong's future as a whole and its economic future in particular.

In enhancing Hong Kong's prosperity and stability, the British government plays an important part, too. The dramatic fluctuations of the Hong Kong stock market (regardless of ups or downs) do show that, to a large extent, the Hong Kong people have to rely on the conditions of the relationship between Britain and the PRC. Essentially, this unique society has no bargaining power to be independent.

An analysis of the literature on the changing economic situation in Hong Kong shows a mixture of positive and negative views about the open door economy policy. As P.C. Zhou⁹² claims, while political factors dominate the whole society, "social diversification, conflicts and re-organisation are unavoidable". In order to survive with all this hardship and achieve another new stage of economic development, Hong Kong people have to pay the cost and to work collaboratively for a better future. Realisation of the needs of providing a group of elites for localisation and working for this target necessitate a change of the current socio-cultural norms. Discussion of the 1997 challenge to local socio-cultural system will be presented in the following section.

2.5 CHANGES IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SYSTEM

The following section begins with a brief description of Hong Kong society and ends by illustrating the challenges of 1997. In illustrating the way in which the society is undergoing the transformation, local people's perceptions of 1997 and their struggles are also discussed.

Hong Kong society is small but competitive. As most people were refugees from political persecution during the Cultural Revolution, and from economic hardship and social unrest in the PRC, they settled in Hong Kong for a better future. In contrast to the standard view that the early inhabitants were experienced entrepreneurs, many people believe that most early inhabitants were without capital:

we had at least one and a half million refugees who had come here from China, most of them with virtually nothing---except their brains and their will to work⁹³.

Hong Kong has advanced through the efforts of thousands and thousands mainland refugees and their pattern of thought---endurance and the spirit of free competition. Yee⁹⁴ describes the Chinese mentality as to "make hay" when possible. For this reason, Hong Kong people are seen as pragmatic and business-minded. They make every effort to maintain a good relationship with westerners so as to keep their business growing. Tsai⁹⁵ argues that any patriotic strikes or riots are not supported by the business community.

Although Hong Kong may be the richest part of the PRC in future, it may not, however, develop at the same speed as now and as in other Asian countries. Segal⁹⁶ notes that since 1989, the colonial government has been paving the way for convergence with the PRC. Because of the politics of Hong Kong 1997 and because of their different speeds of modernisation, Hong Kong might have to delay its development so as to converge with the PRC. These uncertainties are strong enough to defeat the optimistic possibilities of the future of this society, as not all the people in Hong Kong will be able to emigrate. And Segal⁹⁷ thinks that this depends on the openness of the Chinese

leadership in accommodating Hong Kong's road to modernisation. All the precondition for confidence, appear to be under threat.

Within the last decade, a significant number of people have emigrated⁹⁸, and the actual number is higher than the initial estimation especially among professionals⁹⁹. In C. Emmons'¹⁰⁰ recent survey on Hong Kong's emigration problem, he reveals that emigration has affected both the private and public sectors. His findings further indicate that the fields of financial operation and computer business have experienced the greatest loss of manpower. This brain drain has happened in other sectors as well. For instance, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation lost over 40 of its 600 local officers in the first quarter of 1987; they mainly emigrated to Canada and Australia¹⁰¹. In the academic field, such as at the University of Hong Kong, about five per cent of the administration resign each year whilst five to six per cent of teaching staff resign at the Chinese University of Hong Kong each year¹⁰². The brain drain affects the following professionals: computer programmers and analysts, electrical and industrial engineers, economic analysts, social-science managers, medical and health administrators, financial and personnel managers and speech therapists.

Segal argues that the brain drain has slowed down the development of society in general and in economic terms in particular¹⁰³. As he puts it:

without the trained support staff, the success of Hong Kong as a business centre will fade...The international market economy may well take elsewhere that part of the business that is not directly related to the China trade¹⁰⁴.

Lau and Kuan and Yee¹⁰⁵ note that why the Hong Kong Chinese prefer British rule to Chinese rule is because of the impossibility for Hong Kong to be independent. In the absence of other alternatives to British rule, and in order to maintain social stability, the Hong Kong Chinese tended to prefer a colonial government. The actual fact is that most Hong Kong residents were either refugees from the PRC or were their immediate descendants, though many still have strong family ties with the mainland Chinese.

Nevertheless, at the personal level, they have difficulties in convincing themselves to put their faith in this socialist state in the idea that Hong Kong will remain as open as it is and that the PRC will allow the spirit of free competition to grow. Although Hong Kong people have strong family ties with the mainland Chinese they have a stronger desire to keep their current value systems and lifestyle as much as possible. Emigration indicates a gap between indigenous Hong Kong cultural norms and expectations for the future. Emigration supports the claim that 1997 has already begun to affect Hong Kong.

The characteristics of colonial rule, the self-selected character of the Chinese immigrants, the implementation of *laissez faire* as well as the unique work ethic have together created a distinctive ethos among the Hong Kong Chinese. This ethos, as Lau and Kuan have pointed out, "...represents a constellation of elements with disparate origins: Chinese tradition, Western modernizing influences and local developments"¹⁰⁶. More importantly, this social ethos not only widens the differences between these two societies but also, to some extent, prevents the people of Hong Kong from having the confidence to join their motherland.

After a century of British rule, people in Hong Kong are socialised into a laissez-faire economic culture---a spirit of free competition. The uniqueness of this spirit makes a big difference between British rule and Chinese rule. As time passes, the political and socio-economic systems of this Colony have been attracting a lot of its people to settle down and consequently, the sense of belonging increases. Moreover, this colonial government has successfully catered for the needs of the Chinese in Hong Kong in some aspects and has thus gained some degree of legitimacy¹⁰⁷.

At the very least, people have had the opportunity to upgrade their living standard and to advance their technology and knowledge. In contrast to mainland China where politics are always seen as an issue, Hong Kong seems to be a place restricted to business activities. In this open society, personal freedom and civil liberties are highly emphasized¹⁰⁸. Yee¹⁰⁹ asserts that, social stability and economic prosperity are the main factors favouring the British's role in Hong Kong. To the people of Hong Kong, stability and prosperity mean a higher standard of living and the freedom to keep private property. This echoes J. Cheng's earlier argument that liberty and rule of laws should in a higher priority than building a democracy¹¹⁰.

As indicated earlier, 1997 is an issue of opportunity: the resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong may mean an end to the existing free-market ethos. Opportunity will then be restricted to certain group of people. Yee refers to Milton Friedman¹¹¹, arguing that, "...for the coming years free markets make free men, rather than free men making free markets".

The prevailing socio-economic ethos suggests that a century of colonial rule has indeed formed a distinctive identity for the Hong Kong Chinese¹¹². In Lau and Kuan's¹¹³ findings, 59.5 per cent of respondents regarded themselves as "Hongkongese" when they were asked to choose between this and "Chinese". Since Hong Kong society is characterised by the light government control and freedom of speech and the press, 1997 has forced the Hong Kong Chinese to realise how tenuous their sense of freedom has been¹¹⁴.

However, he also realises that, in the process of achieving a greater sense of social awareness, tensions and anxiety resulted as emotional support is no longer available from family. Especially during this transitional period, stress has been created as people live with a continuing sense of uncertainty about the future. This tension is attributed by Friederichs¹¹⁵ to a new political alignment, a new structural context for the Hong Kong people.

In other words, the source of fear is a result of the challenge to the Hong Kong people including choice of behaviours and freedom of speech, and the perceived degree of freedom that the Chinese government will allow Hong Kong people. Despite the fact that the Colony is described as depoliticized, the essence of past British colonial rule is that it gave a certain degree of freedom of press and speech to the people. Segal states that:

the political system of the colony has never been democratic in the sense of its politics being decided by freely elected representatives. But Hong Kong's politics have benefited from a light touch of colonial rule, some representation at lower levels of politics and a free press and an independent judiciary. The specific mix of these features can be

described as the 'secret' to Hong Kong's success, but the confidence that in reality makes the system run is impossible to define¹¹⁶.

Consensus on the factors affecting Hong Kong's stability and prosperity is gradually emerging. Lau and Kuan, Yee and Harris as well as Dick Wilson share the same view that non-intervention is the key to Hong Kong's economic success. Further, this is also a major factor which makes this Colony a unique place for Chinese all over the world¹¹⁷. With a tradition of a lack of self government, and where authority is regarded as a "given" power¹¹⁸, the Chinese in Hong Kong do not encounter any particular difficulties under the banner of a British colony---a place of political inhibition.

B.H.K. Luk¹¹⁹ offers a deeper cultural analysis of the society and claims that this society is driven forward by this free social ethos of competition. Since the social ethos promotes free competition, people of humble origin enjoy opportunity to upgrade their social status. Coupled with the family-oriented tradition this social ethos allows the Chinese in Hong Kong to pursue greater family achievement in terms of preparing their next generation for a better life through working purposefully in society¹²⁰. The economic success of the Hong Kong Chinese, as Yee refers to Bonavia, are a result of "...their patience, perseverance and industry are deserving of all praise; no task is considered too trivial, no labour too arduous to engage in"¹²¹. Apart from the differences in the respective political, social and economic systems between in Hong Kong and the PRC, another significant difference is the Hong Kong Chinese mentality. The Hong Kong Chinese believe in the ethic of entrepreneurship, "the key to why the Chinese work hard"¹²². Hong Kong is regarded as a bicultural society by Wilson¹²³, a melting pot of East and West cultures. Lau and Kuan¹²⁴ claim that "Hong Kong Chinese are more

tolerant of social conflict...attachment to traditional ties is weaker" than in most other societies.

2.5.1 Hong Kong People's Patterns of Thought

Specifically, this section discusses indigenous culture in terms of patterns of thought. Writers on Hong Kong culture such as S.K. Lau, H.C. Kuan, A. Yee, J. Agassi and I.C. Jarvie as well as B.H.K. Luk¹²⁵ arrive at the conclusion that most Hong Kong Chinese people are utilitarians making use of the free market economy to advance personal and family economic status. The following paragraphs present different perspectives from these writers to deepen an understanding of the patterns of thought of Hong Kong people.

Utilitarian Familism

Lau and Kuan¹²⁶ note that Hong Kong people are different from their counterpart in the PRC in terms the socio-cultural values. As the origins and characters of Hong Kong Chinese are constantly flowing for seeking economic opportunities and escaping from political turmoil, they are well adapted to a changing social environment. In their words, Hong Kong Chinese "were more ready to uproot themselves from their Chinese soil"¹²⁷. Hong Kong people became less culture-bound, and have freed themselves from traditional Chinese cultural norms and moral values¹²⁸. Equipped with their self-selected character, Lau and Kuan describe that people are more self reliant, adventurous and individualistic than the mainland Chinese. These qualities permit and encourage the implementation of the western free market economy in Hong Kong society.

Exposed to a laissez-faire economy, Hong Kong people have more opportunities to be socialised into the western culture. In addition, because of the reliance on foreign market and western technology, there is a need for local people to find their own way to adjust to new socio-cultural values. In the process of adaptation, an indigenous Hong Kong culture is created. In order to maintain the balance between the Chinese and Western cultures, pragmatism and utilitarianism are combined in the colony.

At the other extreme, the teaching of Confucianism is still influencing Hong Kong Chinese in terms of the responsibility to advance and glorify one's family. Both pragmatism and utilitarianism have a strong bearing on personal and family betterment. In short, maximization of individuals' effort and opportunities in this free competition economy is driven by their utilitarian familism.

Stepping stone syndrome

Sharing Lau's utilitarian familism claim, Yee uses the phrase "stepping-stone syndrome" to describe "the single-minded work achievement attitudes of Chinese"¹²⁹. As noted by Yee, Chinese have strong commitment to the family and feel obliged to advance the family.

In Hong Kong society, Yee see people's behaviour as economic-driven and have a bearing on family and security of wealth. In addition, as the instrumental values of education are shared, Hong Kong people regard achievement of educational status as the primary step for economic success and the acquisition of a sense of security. Together, these attitudes underpin Hong Kong people's work-achievement ethic.

Face saving

J. Agassi and I. Jarvie¹³⁰ use the concept of "face saving" to interpret the pattern of thought of local Hong Kong people. They argue that face saving is a unique element of the local Hong Kong culture. In order to save the family's face, individuals make efforts to advance themselves and family. Moreover, in order to save "face" for other's, individuals dare not challenge authority. For example, students play a passive and obedient role in school so as not to challenge teachers' authority. This partly explains why loyalty and authority become dominant elements in Chinese society. Alternatively, regarding people's pragmatic attitudes towards education, Agassi and Jarvie note that this is Yat-sen Sun's Chinese philosophy, "we will take from you only what we need, we will not accept anything which goes against the basic precepts of Chinese civilization"¹³¹. They put forward the idea that Hong Kong Chinese are still proud of their ancient civilization and have a feeling of national pride. Relatively, they see western culture is superficial and shallow. Their mentality keeps them from being totally westernised. Nevertheless, it is not the British Government's practice to transmit its white culture to the non-white: local people are allowed to have considerable autonomy to keep their own patterns of thought.

Agassi and Jarvie note that Hong Kong people learn the western way of doing business with the intention of extracting its good to benefit their own economy. Despite the gap between western capitalist culture and Chinese authoritarian culture, Agassi and Jarvie argue that Hong Kong people make an effort to balance the two in order to maximize the best of them. In Agassi and Jarvie's view, this echoes Sun's utilitarian philosophy of making use of the western culture whilst maintaining Chinese culture. They then

conclude that Hong Kong has not been truly westernized over the past century. In addition, they argue that Hong Kong people have given up their face culture in order to conduct competitive business.

Free Competition

Luk offers a different perspective on Hong Kong culture stressing people's background. As the early Hong Kong inhabitants were a group of self-selected people fled from mainland, their refugee background encouraged them to choose a new lifestyle in a "new" society. So they were more ready to face uncertainties and put up with adverse living experiences. Owing to their background, they quickly joined in the competitive socio-economic ethos. These qualities have become crucial parts of their local culture and value systems.

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has shown how the effects of Hong Kong 1997 on the political, economic and socio-cultural systems. A wide range of adaptations across these systems was revealed. Adaptations bring a pool of mixed perceptions of the future of Hong Kong under Chinese rule. Local people's pessimistic responses to the political future of Hong Kong and optimistic perceptions of the economic future indicated their pattern of thought. The literature indicated that local people were much concerned with the well being of the current free market economic systems and channels of upward social mobility. Negative feelings towards the merger were understood as a result of different socio-economic value system held by the people from Hong Kong and the PRC. In view of the current Hong Kong lifestyle and value systems, integration would mean a

sacrifice for convergence. The changing political situation of local politicians and contradictory news reporting intensified the feeling of uncertainty within this transitional period.

As educational innovations and curricular development are tightly linked with the socio-political systems, the transformation of the Hong Kong political system and its political status will be a challenge to its current educational provision especially to its curricular issues. Yet what should be changed and in what way should it be changed are the main questions to be answered. The next chapter will present an overview of the Hong Kong educational system and examine the challenges to and responses of the local educational system.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

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2. Witt, Hugh, (1993), Hong Kong 1993: A Review of 1992, Hong Kong: Government Information Services, pp.40-53.
3. Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Nanking, signed in 1842 after China's loss of the Opium War of 1839. Kowloon Peninsula and Stonecutters Island were ceded in perpetuity by the Convention of Peking in 1860. In 1898, the Second Convention of Beijing gave Britain a ninety year lease on the New Territories. See Gorman, Thomas, D., (1988), "Backdrop", in Members of AmCham, Doing Business in Today's Hong Kong, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Oxford University Press, pp.1-12.
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5. Lau, Siu-kai, Kuan, Hsin-chi, Wan, Po-san, (1991), "Political Attitudes", in Lau, Siu-kai, Kuan, Hsin-chi, Wan, Po-san and Wong, Siu-lun, Indicators of Social Development, Hong Kong 1988, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, pp.173-205.
6. Tsai, Jung-fang, (1993), Hong Kong in Chinese History, New York: Columbia University Press, p.288.
7. Tsai, J.F., (1993), op. cit., pp.280-287.
8. Ibid., p.292.
9. Jao, Y.C., (1986), "Hong Kong's Future as a Free Market Economy", Issues and Studies, XXII, 5-8, pp.111-143.
10. Levin, Burton, (1993), "The Hong Kong-China Phenomenon", in Witt, Hugh, Hong Kong 1993: A Review of 1992, Hong Kong: Government Information Services, pp.5-10.
11. In the early days, many refugees in Hong Kong become the main family supporters of those supplying money and goods from Hong Kong to their mainland relatives. The Chinese mentality is discussed by Yee, A.H., (1992), second edition, A People Misruled, Singapore: Heinemann Asia, A Division of Reed International Pte Ltd., p.316 and Lau, Siu-Kai., Kuan, Hsin-chi, (1989), The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, pp.54-55.

For more details, see Jao, Y.C., (1986), "Hong Kong's Future as a Free Market Economy", Issues and Studies, XXII, 5-8, p.116.

12. Ibid.
13. Wilson, David, (1990), "A Vision of Future", in Roberts, David, Hong Kong 1990: A Review of 1989, Hong Kong: Government Information Services, pp.4-22.
14. Before the implementation of the "open-door" economic policy, the economic exchange between the two states were restricted to twice a year when the Canton Trade Fair took place. See Gorman, T.D., (1988), op.cit., p.6.
15. Witt, H., (1993), op. cit., p.44.
16. Leung, Clarence, (1992), "Another Face of the 'China Factor'", The Foundation, pp.4.
17. Wilson, David, (1990), op. cit., pp.4-5.
18. Ibid., p.5.
19. Gorman, T.D., (1988), op. cit., p.6.
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23. See Lau, Siu-kai, Kuan, Hsin-chi, (1989), second printing, The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, p.36.
24. Chan, Ming-kau, Kirst, Michael, W., (June, 1984), "The Political Economy of Education in Hong Kong: Reforms for Stability and Prosperity", The Chinese University Education Journal, Vol. 12, No. 1, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, pp.88-95.
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26. This is also being widely discussed by Lee, Wing-on, (1991), Social Change and Educational Problems in Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong, London: MacMillian Academic and Professional Ltd, pp.205-213. Education is supported by the government and nine-year free universal education has been in place since 1978. In the 1993-94 budget speech, the government proposed spending \$100 million on the Open Learning Institute and \$50 million on the New Technology Training Scheme for improving manpower skills training.
27. Harris, Peter, (1986), "Hong Kong Confronts 1997: An Assessment of the Sino-British Agreement", Pacific Affairs, Vol. 59, pp.45-68.

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29. Harris, P., (1986), op. cit., pp.54-55.

30. Ibid., p.56.

31. Ibid., pp.59-61.

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34. Lau, Siu-kai, Kuan, Hsin-chi, (1986), "Hong Kong After the Sino-British Agreement: The Limits to Change", Pacific Affairs, Vol. 59, pp.216-217.

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35. Lau, S.K., Kuan, H.C., (1986), op. cit., p.216.

36. Segal, Gerald, (1993), The Fate of Hong Kong, London: Simon and Schuster Ltd, pp.82-85.

37. Hu, Yebi, (1992), March, "The "China Factor" in HK's Politics", Hong Kong: The Foundation, pp.4-5.

38. Ibid., pp.4-5.

39. Governor Chris Patten's Reform Proposals are about increasing the direct election seats in the Hong Kong governing body, the Legislative Council, in 1995. This proposal was firstly introduced by the Governor in 1993 in order to pave the way for a representative government in the new society in Hong Kong.

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41. Lau, Siu-kai, (1985), "Political Reform And Political Development In Hong Kong: Dilemmas And Choices", in Jao, Y.C., Leung, Chi-keung, Peter, Wesley-smith, Wong, Siu-lun, (eds.), Hong Kong And 1997 Strategies for the Future, Centre of Asian Studies, Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, p.23.

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56. Jao, Y.C., (1986), "Hong Kong's Future as a Free Market Economy", Issues And Studies, XXII, 5-8, pp.111-143.

57. Leung, C., (1992), op. cit., pp.4-5.

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61. cf. Wilson, Dick, (1990), Hong Kong! Hong Kong!, London: Unwin Hyman, p.250.

62. Ibid.
63. Johnson, G.E., (1986), op. cit., p.248. Brackets added by the writer.
64. Segal, G., (1993), op. cit., p.33.
65. Sung, Y.W., (1991), op. cit., pp.16, 25 and 26.
66. Segal, G. (1993), op. cit., p.29.
67. Wilson, Dick, (1990), op. cit., p.250.
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69. Ming Pao Daily News, 11, December, 1992.
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71. Segal, G., (1993), op. cit., p.208.
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75. Harris, P., (1986), op. cit., p.56.
76. Hong Kong Economic Journal, 18, March, 1993.
77. Yee, A.H., (1992), op. cit., p.103, and Hu, Y., (1992), pp.3-4.
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79. Friederichs, Jane, (1988), op. cit., p.76.
80. Ibid., p.73.
81. Cheung, Ng-sheung., (1984), 18th edition, The Words of A Mandarin Seller, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Economic Journal, p.61, (Text in Chinese).
82. Witt, H., (1993), op. cit., p.49.
83. Leung, C., (1992), op. cit., pp.4-5.
84. Ming Pao Daily News, 12, December, 1992. This speech was given by the former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kwan-yew on the future of Hong Kong after 1997, on his last visit to Hong Kong at the University of Hong Kong. The meeting was chaired by the Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten. See, for example, Leung, C., (1992) op.cit., pp. 4-5, and also Hu, Y., (1992), op. cit., pp.3-4.

85. This claim seems to be self evident given its limitations such as lack of sufficient natural resources and military power. Compared with China, Hong Kong is just a province with its own economic and industrial commodities. Apart from that it has to rely on China's support in terms of raw materials, food and water---the most important basic needs for its people. Conversely, Hong Kong's contributions to China can be situational. It is not certain how China will weight the relationships between politics and economic as it does not seem to have a fixed rule for dealing with them. However, in recent China, although much attention has been put on developing economics and industry, in this socialist society, politics always comes first. This increases the Hong Kong people's anxiety and feelings of uncertainty. For Hong Kong's economic well-being and its strategic location bear no definite relationships with China' attitudes towards Hong Kong Special Administration Region, Hong Kong is essentially subject to China's "treatment".

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97. Segal, G., (1993), *op. cit.*, p.208.

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101. cf. *Ibid.*, p.57.

102. *Ibid.*, p.57.

103. Ibid., p.66.
104. Segal, G., (1993), op. cit., p.66.
105. Ibid., p.66.
106. Lau, S. K., and Kuan, H. C., (1989), op. cit., p.189.
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108. Lau, S.K., Kuan, H.C., (1989), op. cit., p.189.
109. Yee, A.H., (1992), op. cit., pp.250-251.
110. See Cheng, J.Y.S., (1986), op. cit., p.54.
111. Yee, A.H., (1992), op. cit., p.250.
112. Lau S.K., and Kuan, H.C., (1989), op. cit., p.189.
113. Ibid., p.2.
114. Yee, A. H., (1992), op. cit., p.251.
115. Friederichs, J. (1988), op. cit., p.75.
116. Segal, G., (1993), op. cit., p.192.
117. Wilson interpreted Hong Kong as a rare "free land" for the Chinese people.
- Wilson, Dick, (1990), op. cit., p.48.
118. See, for example, Yee, A.H., (1992) op. cit., p.250, as well as Cheng, J.Y.S., (1986), op. cit., pp.52-66.
119. Luk, Bernard, Hung-kay, (1992), "Hong Kong" in Wielemans, Willy, Chan, Pauline, Choi-ping, (eds.) Education and culture in industrializing Asia, Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp.111-146.
120. In Lau Siu-kai's term, "utilitarian familism", can be used to describe Hong Kong Chinese people's attitudes toward family, society and individual. The family used to be the dominant factor in driving individuals to work hard. The other two, society and individual needs, are relatively less important. However, as Lau has observed individualism is gradually overriding this family feeling. Maybe, it is due to the influence of Western culture after being under British rule for more than a hundred years. For details, see Lau, S.K., Kuan, H.C., (1989), op. cit. pp.54-55.

121. cf. Yee, A.H.,(1992), op. cit., p.192.
122. Ibid., p.194.
123. Wilson, Dick, (1990), op. cit., p.51.
124. Lau, S.K., Kuan, H.C., (1989), op. cit., p.189.
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CHAPTER THREE EDUCATION AND CHANGES IN HONG KONG

3.1 PURPOSE AND ARGUMENT

This chapter discusses the educational issues in Hong Kong, and Hong Kong people's perceptions of the future objectives of education as 1997 begins to affect the socio-political and economic systems. As this thesis explores changing Hong Kong curriculum within the changing political and values contexts, the questions for education include: should it respond? If so, how should it respond? Moreover, as 1997 is regarded as posing new challenges to the socio-economic system of Hong Kong, therefore more attention is needed for evaluating how far education has made adaptations to these changes.

The main argument of the chapter is that the politics of Hong Kong 1997 have become an educational issue and a generator of new curricular innovations in Hong Kong. Two sub-arguments are developed. The first is if education is to help young people prepare for autonomous and self-reliant decision making which will lead to an influence on the future, the current examination oriented educational system, so concerned with the transmission of facts, is inadequate. The second sub-argument is that the challenges to the value system of Hong Kong people imply a need for the reform of school curriculum and especially curriculum contents, aimed at promoting civic mindedness and independent critical thinking.

3.1.1 Organization of the Chapter

In order to test the main argument, this chapter surveys Hong Kong education. The following five themes are followed. The first theme is an overview of the current Hong Kong education system and includes: comments on its administrative structure, curriculum decision making mechanism, social values and education ethos, and the implications of pedagogic innovations. The second theme discusses the balance of the school curriculum. The third theme analyses the challenges of the current educational provision. The fourth theme which explores the response of the current educational system to the challenges, includes the expansion of higher education, the decentralisation of the educational system and changes of the educational policy. The fifth theme discusses the future role of education in 21st century Hong Kong.

As a direct result of the resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong, the relevance and adequacy of the school curriculum become a main social concern. Out of the dissatisfaction with existing educational provision, in 1993, the Education Department published a consultative draft to seek a public consensus on the future objectives of Hong Kong education. In the meantime, changes have been made in the school curricular contents---knowledge of recent Chinese history of the PRC and the structure of the PRC government are strengthened in the subjects of Chinese History and Social Studies. In order to prepare young people for a representative government in the post merger period, the teaching of democracy is also emphasized. To promote a democracy, Hong Kong society may find difficulty as it has no such tradition in its indigenous culture. So a serious educational question to be answered is what should education do in response to rapid changes?

The section on curricular innovations has indicated that civic mindedness and citizenship education are two preparatory curricular elements for preparing young Hong Kong people for life in the HKSAR. An awareness of the social and political affairs suggests a new direction for the development of the Hong Kong school curriculum.

3.2 EDUCATION WITHIN HONG KONG'S SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXTS

The standard views on Hong Kong education within this colonial, pragmatic and competitive society are that it is examination-oriented and non-critical¹. The instrumental nature of education is widely accepted as a primary path for career advancement. Consequently, the spirit of enquiry and learning is subordinated to credential earning². Because this meritocratic society promotes the spirit of free competition, these educational criticisms have not been taken seriously as long as it provides means for upward social mobility.

Because of Hong Kong's colonial status, the educational system allows little political and socio-cultural awareness. From the perspective of colonial culture, Luk³ argues that there is no other single main purpose for a colonial government in ruling its colony apart from making profit. At the other extreme, given that the peasant background of the last Hong Kong generation, they were hungry for opportunity for schooling and material rewards. The implementation of the laissez-faire economy is thus welcomed by both the ruling power and the ruled⁴. As a result, education policies are made to channel their attention and concentration on getting good marks in examinations⁵. Individual independent thinking skills and problem solving skills have not become the main concerns. In contrast, Hong Kong education is attempting one single task that

transmitting the spirit of free competition to young people. This celebrating hidden school agenda becomes one of the main social functions and keeps this free market economy running for decades in Hong Kong. Education for personal betterment and family betterment comprises the prevailing educational culture. However, this educational system receives new challenges as a direct result of the 1997 issue. In achieving today's economic success, the colonial government has tried its very best to maintain this free market economy. Therefore, this education remains very competitive.

Under this meritocratic system, educational qualifications and social status are closely linked. A. Yee describes the school ethos as characterised by the materialism and credentialism:

Somehow in Hong Kong, the move for equal educational opportunity, which is an indisputable value, became confused with quantitative assessment procedures. Qualities of mind and heart, being difficult to assess by the numbers, never got far; those willing to submit to rote conformities and spoon-feeding were to be rewarded⁶.

In Hong Kong, an appreciation of basic materials has not been the major tasks of students in examinations⁷. A visiting panel identified that among many problems of Hong Kong education, the crux of the matter is "bound up with social status and labour market appeal"⁸. Aspirations for upwardly mobility become the dominant driving force for learning. As English enjoys a better reputation in this commercial city, students prefer English to Cantonese. Because of this, although students learn more effectively in their mother tongue than English, this issue of effective learning and teaching has never been considered seriously.

J. Friederichs⁹ takes the view that the issue of language may suggest that schools have not been used as an agency for inculcating local Hong Kong culture into students. She argues that since language reflects the extent to which local culture has been transmitted in schools, the preference for English implies the dominance of western culture in schools. This prevents students from being aware of their own cultural identity as well as citizenship.

Yet, as a direct result of its credentialism, Hong Kong people invest heavily in education and make full use of every opportunity to get academic qualifications. However, education is not perceived as a way of acquiring skills. Rather, it is for equipping them with the basic entry qualification to attain better career prospects. To outline a general picture of Hong Kong education, the following paragraphs start with the policy making mechanism and moves to discuss the curricular issues.

3.2.1 An Overview of the Secondary Education System of Hong Kong

The introduction of the nine years of free and compulsory education by the Hong Kong government in 1979 provided universal education up to lower Secondary Three¹⁰. In primary five and six, students have to sit for the Secondary School Placement Assessment (SSPA). According to the students' assessment results together with their parental choice, students are allocated into different types and bandings of secondary schools. Hong Kong secondary schools are classified into three categories: the government, the aided and the private. But on the basis of the secondary school curriculum schools are classified as the grammar, the technical and the prevocational¹¹. All of them provide five year courses leading to the Hong Kong Certificate of Education

Examination. There are ninety-six per cent of the 12 to 14 years old children receiving full time education up to secondary three while there are only seventy-six per cent of 15 to 16 years old can enter the secondary four. Similar to the British education tradition, grammar schools in Hong Kong enjoy the most prestige as they are of more practical values for preparing students for better career prospects, and thus they hold most students (90 per cent in 1989)¹²; the other two kinds are less appealing to the parents.

3.2.2 Administrative Structure

To offer a better understanding of this colonial educational system, the following section discusses the process and the hierarchy of policy making in the Hong Kong educational system. Educational policy making is made by the Education Department, a highly centralised government department. The Director of the Department is the chief educational policy maker and makes the final judgement of most educational issues. T. Ha¹³ has argued that "...Hong Kong has one of the most rigid and inflexible systems of education in the world." Parents and other interest groups have little or no power in the process of educational policy making. Up to now, educational policies are formulated by the Executive Council (EXCO) consisting of the Governor, senior civil servants and other external senior invited guests; the policies are debated and refined by the Legislative Council (LEGO). Finally, the Director of Education Commission examines the policies before implementation in schools. This decision-making mechanism is restricted to the Governor himself and other senior government members. Representation of the public is essentially excluded¹⁴.

While British rule marries the traditional Chinese culture, the centralised political system reinforces the authoritarian aspect of Chinese tradition. Despite its rigid and centralised bureaucratic nature, the system has gained a certain degree of legitimacy. K. M. Cheng¹⁵ addressed the issue of legitimacy from Chinese culture and traditional practices of the Chinese Government. Most Chinese people are shaped by their traditional culture of which autonomy is virtually nonexistent. At the public level, Hong Kong people are quiet about both the formal and informal consultancies at various educational levels. Cheng added that Hong Kong people do not have great expectation on the colonial government for they do not have much knowledge of a representative government. This colonial government has successfully provided some channels for them to voice their views, and a certain degree of legitimacy is given to the government. Hong Kong people feel that they already have more autonomy in making personal choice than their ancestors in the PRC, they are content with the current system.

Because of the nature of the colonial political system, the local educational system is centralised. As an illustration of this centralised system, the next section discusses the curricular policy making process.

3.2.3 Curriculum Decision Making Mechanisms

Owing to the centralised educational structure, the Hong Kong government always conducts a close supervision on schools' syllabuses. All the major curricular decision-makings are made by the two government agencies: the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI)¹⁶. The CDC is an independent body appointed by the Governor for every curriculum decision making

matter whilst the Council holds seven coordinating committees together with seventy subject committees. Each subject committee is formed by teachers and other educational professionals to oversee and evaluate the development of a particular level's school syllabus. In addition, the CDC has a textbook committee that advises and makes suggestions to the CDC about the objectives and aims of school syllabuses and teaching methods up to secondary three. The textbook's sub-committee includes officials from the Advisory Inspectorate as well as subject specialists¹⁷.

At the other extreme, the CDI is a division of the Education Department responsible for improving the quality of school curriculum and also for issuing curriculum guidelines for schools. A total of hundred and thirty professional staff such as curriculum developers and researchers are working collaboratively at the CDI. It acts as a curriculum generator in Hong Kong¹⁸.

As a direct result of this pyramidal structural approach, classroom teaching is decided by the CDC and the HKEA^{19,20}. Not only does the CDC prepare detailed teaching syllabuses for secondary 1 to 3, but also teaching approaches and evaluation techniques are given. Regular subject inspections are carried out in school by subject inspectors from the CDC. In order to ensure that both the subject contents and teaching methods are within the guidelines of the CDC instructions, any teaching contents and approaches other than that will be challenged or rejected, and thus little teaching autonomy can be fostered. Examination syllabuses dominate the classroom teaching. Although the CDC does not design Secondary 4 and 5's public examination syllabuses, teachers have to follow the ones from the Hong Kong Examination Authority. Within the tight time

table, teachers can hardly have the opportunity to develop and manage their own classroom-based curriculum.

In contrast, H.W. Wong²¹ argued that in the seventies, the development of Hong Kong curriculum focused on quantity as it was influenced by the examinations, politics and textbooks. Entering the eighties, curriculum developers questioned the appropriateness and the direction of the curriculum. Tension is created between a common core curriculum model and an individualised approach to cater for the needs of individual students. For example, it is pointed out in the Education Commission Report 4²² that the common core curricular model fails to cater for the needs of the pupils at both extremes. A flexible approach to the school curriculum is therefore suggested.

Despite the fact that the School-based Curriculum Project Scheme was introduced in the 1988, because of the heavy examination pressure, little change was reported. As it is described in the Education Commission Report, most teachers are too engaged in developing the curricula to cater for the needs of students, "its impact on curriculum development has been marginal"²³.

Wong's reaction to the above quotation is, the Curriculum Development Council is not an independent advisory body, the extent to which the curriculum design and models of development can maintain autonomy are questionable. Wong continues to comment that genuine classroom innovation can hardly be developed within this highly centralised curriculum development mechanism. What is more important is that without changing

the examination system, genuine curriculum innovation can hardly be implemented in the classroom.

3.2.4 Social Values and Educational Ethos

This section on social values and education ethos analyses the relationship between the two to provide a link for the discussion on changes and challenges in local educational system. In Luk's²⁴ analysis of the traditional Chinese culture and its pragmatic value system, he argues that pragmatism actually encourages the development of a free market economy. Because of the non-interventionist economic policy, local people are encouraged to maximize their effort and make their own way to advance themselves economically and materially. This matches the historical background of early Hong Kong inhabitants, as most of them were peasants longing for economic advancement. This free market economy provides lots of opportunities for family and personal betterment.

Here, the instrumental values of education in Hong Kong has an important role to play in supporting this socio-cultural system. Luk claims that the competitive educational system of Hong Kong is a direct result of its free market economy. The expansion of education in Hong Kong in 1970s was a direct result of industrialisation. Education supports not only the demand of labour market but also the competitive social spirit. Consequently, young Hong Kong people are socialised into the social values of "survival of the fittest" throughout the process of schooling.

This free competition ethos manifests itself in its meritocratic élitist educational system. From the early schooling years, students are trained to compete with one another through regular internal and external academic assessments. G. Fu²⁵ notes that "as early as three, children start to learn competition for survival when they are sent to kindergarten". The best are usually highly rewarded whereas the lower achievers are discouraged. Lee comments that, as a direct result, a class of failure is created²⁶.

If language reflects the cultural identity of the society, this chapter argues that the local culture is not yet reckoned as superior to the western culture. Firstly, to maintain this international commercial and banking centre status, English is perceived to be as important as it is now. Secondly, the emphasis on strengthening students' command of English suggests people's pragmatic and utilitarian mentality. Thirdly, as different languages convey different cultural messages, people's preference of English suggests that Hong Kong people do not have a strong sense of Chinese identity.

Furthermore, Fu argues that in the children's first year of kindergarten schooling, they learn how to survive with English. He describes that "parents are quick to sense such employer expectations, and for this reason they press for English in the schools: their motives are utilitarian and vocational"²⁷. Under this competitive educational system every effort is driven by betterment. This competitive spirit, struggle for survival, continues to play a deterministic role in senior education level. It is a great economic advantage for career success and grows as students progress to upper levels.

Entering a new era of hi-technology and industrialisation, Luk²⁸ argues that Hong Kong education is supporting this movement. A competitive economy promotes a hardworking spirit that, in turn, encourages further economic growth. To date, as far as curricular issues are concerned, Hong Kong schools offer a range of free subject choices for students. Apart from the core subjects: English, Chinese Languages and Mathematics, both Arts or Science students can choose another three or four subjects and one or two from the rest. Moreover, Luk has pointed out that subjects are chosen by their personal career aspirations with their self-judgment on getting better results from the subjects. In this way, they are prepared to view their choices more practically. This suggests a notion of pragmatism.

However, the concept of pragmatism cannot be fully understood without making a note to its underlining philosophy of curriculum innovation. Lee²⁹ argues that industrialisation and modernisation have brought many challenges to education and mainly to the curricular contents and balance. As in the experiences of other South East Asian countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, the instrumental values of education overshadow the traditional cultural values. As far back as the early eighties, the age of science and technology has been greatly influencing the development of Hong Kong education. The emphasis of education is on assisting economic prosperity and industrial advancement. Practical subjects such as Mathematics, Integrated, Commerce, Computer Studies and technical studies---drawing, electricity and electronics---emerge in the school curriculum and are assessed in the Hong Kong Certificate Level of Examination. The shift of traditional academic oriented education to practical and commercial emphasis is understood as a result of the rise of "secular utilitarianism"³⁰.

Being a dynamic society and a meeting place of the east and the west cultures, Hong Kong is characterised by a vast interest group. Within the socialisation process of education, Luk³¹ observes that students are exposed to a diverse social expectation from various social organisations. For example, one of the early western cultural influence came from the religious organisations from Britain, the States and France and etc. As they are financing a number of schools in Hong Kong, they have a set of hidden educational objectives spreading the gospel through the informal school curriculum and extra activities. The teaching of ethics and social studies, for example, are means of spreading the Christian faith in society through students' later behaviours. Apart from incorporating of these hidden educational aims into the Hong Kong educational system, attention is also paid to the subjects which are of greater practical values such as English and Mathematics. Most of these organisation-funded schools enjoy a good reputation because of the outstanding performance of their students in public examination. These schools become very appealing to both christian or non-christian families and students in Hong Kong.

At the other extreme, Luk³² suggests that the traditional Chinese culture---Confucianism--has an important role to play in the current education system. During the educational process, students are socialised into a world of work ethics. The current curricula are transmitting students a selected set of traditional Chinese socio-economic values into youngsters which are socially desirable through the teaching of hard work and time valuation. These values are crucial elements in an industrialised society as they promote efficiency and high productivity. The spirit of free competition and survival for the fittest are reinforced by the school curriculum. People who are well-adaptive and

self-motivated fit well into this free competition society and make full use of every opportunity. Students are placed in a competitive education system. Under the influence of the teaching of Confucianism, authoritarianism becomes another distinctive cultural element in education. Authoritarianism, in return, assists the development of industry in the area of management.

3.2.5 The Implementation of Pedagogic Innovation

The above discussion showed that education is closely related to its socio-economic system. This section moves on to evaluate the way in which the socio-political system influences classroom pedagogic innovation. The Hong Kong educational system has never been a true British model. Morris³³ and many writers on Hong Kong education have criticised the education system as being rigid, and merely for fact transmission. Dialectic methods are seldom practised. Governed by the examination-orientated educational system and coupled with the socio-economic ethos, rote-learning dominates the school culture, curriculum innovations are being restricted³⁴. Firstly, since learning for examinations is the main purpose of education in this credential society, teachers are under pressure to prepare students for both internal and external examinations. Because of this that pedagogic innovation can hardly be carried out in classroom. Secondly, as classroom teaching is accountable to the school principal and usually assessed by students' performance in public examinations, teachers therefore do not have much autonomy to decide what and how to teach. Within these teaching and learning contexts, these are the perceived barriers for improving the curriculum innovation in Hong Kong.

Morris³⁵ analyses the crux of the problem from the aspects of teachers, students and principals. Classroom pedagogic innovation relies on the people who carry it out so teachers have a vital part to play. Both teachers' involvement and knowledge of the curricular innovations determine the outcomes of classroom learning. Morris illustrates the classroom situation by citing an example of teaching Economics. In reporting his survey on 45 Economics teachers' classroom practices he came to the conclusion that most teachers felt pressurised by the students' public examination results. Owing to time constraints, examination pressures and personal accountability, teachers seldom practice new pedagogic innovations within a thirty-five minutes of teaching session. Morris observed that most Economics teachers were too conscious of transmitting the information, covering the examination syllabuses while students were conditioned to record all the information and facts. Teacher-student intellectual exchanges are inhibited. His main findings indicate that most teachers perceived the barrier to carry out the new approach of teaching in classroom to be "the need to cover the syllabus within a specific period"³⁶. Another important factor affecting classroom teaching approaches is students' expectations. As students are very concerned about their examination results teachers have to cover all the examination syllabuses within a thirty-five-minute's lesson so as not to be complained about.

Nevertheless, in G. Chan's³⁷ study on students' preferred and actual learning approaches indicated a discrepancy between what might be desirable and what was happening in schools. Findings revealed that students preferred a more stimulating learning environment that is intellectually challenging with an emphasis on intellectual interaction with peers. The preferred learning strategy or approach was largely inhibited in the

actual learning environment. The study confirmed a rigid and mechanical learning ethos which prevented students from participating in a greater initiative and intellectually challenging learning strategy. In other words, students were not satisfied with the current educational system either. However, being placed in this credential and competitive educational system for years, findings also suggested that students have already internalised the spirit of competition and this assists them in coping with the stressful learning conditions.

There is a gap between school practice and students' perceived desirable learning conditions. The standard comments on students' pragmatism of education cannot fully explained reality. On the contrary, Chan's study suggested that students preferred learning environment is constrained by the practical assessment system. Here, this chapter argues that without changing the examination system, the rigid classroom environment is unlikely to be improved. The balance of the school curriculum is upset.

3.3 BALANCE OF THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

In this instrumental educational context, the current educational system satisfies neither industrial nor academic sectors. For example, in the field of business, B. Renwick challenges the practical use of the curriculum:

like many, I question the relevance of modern secondary and tertiary education to the lives students will eventually lead. Time spent acquiring knowledge to pass examinations would be better spent acquiring the skills and knowledge human beings need to function effectively in society. At present, students obtain far too little of the knowledge, and almost none of the skills, they will need to be successful when they leave full-time education³⁸.

In the academic field, analytical and critical thinking skills are not the priorities within this learning environment. Yee³⁹ refers to his personal lecturing experience arguing that most students are weak in report and essay writings as these skills are not emphasised in schools. He concludes that students' mentality is directed towards setting the qualification with the least effort.

This chapter argues that the school curriculum is dominated by Hong Kong's economic factors rather than by any other elements. The integration of various factors like traditional Chinese culture is selectively incorporated into the curriculum. In other words, the current school curriculum is a product of the traditional Chinese culture, industrialization values and education. Problems are created because much attention is paid to support the socio-economic systems and therefore the balance of the curriculum cannot be maintained.

Like the trend in many other countries, curricular decisions are dependent on the social value systems. R. Cowen⁴⁰ argues that, today, students are treated as "educands" being shaped to fit into different social roles. School reality indicates that students' needs are not usually catered.

In Hong Kong, changing curriculum results from changing political and values systems as the effects of Hong Kong 1997 have been seen. As the existing curriculum model and contents are tailored for the colonial political setting of Hong Kong it is therefore no longer fit well into the HKSAR. There is a perceived need to change curriculum for catering the needs of society and individual students in a new society. Yet, how far

education in Hong Kong has responded to its political and socio-economic changes will be the main concern. Answers for this educational question necessitate a detailed examination on the adjustments or adaptations of the school curriculum.

3.4 CHALLENGES OF THE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

The purposes of the following section are (1) to highlight the educational challenges and possible changes and (2) to set out the scene for further exploration of the educational adaptations to the aspects of educational policy making, curriculum innovations and contents of the school curriculum.

Entering the 21st century, apart from the pressures resulting from the world trend of industrialization this society is also pressurized by its internal political and socioeconomic transformations. Tensions have also extended into its educational provision and curricular issues. Speculation about the relationship between the political climate and educational reform and curricular innovations has been made. Writers⁴¹ on Hong Kong education are well aware of the educational implications of the notion of 1997 as indicate in the following paragraphs.

For example, P. Morris⁴² has identified the effects of 1997 on the school curriculum. The change of the ruling government means a change of its ruling strategies. Unlike the case in other countries where curriculum development and changes are attributed to the socio-historical factor, Hong Kong is a special case that its rapid political changes have enormous influences on its curriculum development. Morris points out that the more centralisation is the education system the more it is prone to be influenced by the

political factors. This highly centralised system imposes strict bureaucratic control on curriculum decision making by appointing a group of decision makers. In terms of curricular innovations and development, Morris asserts that substantial influences are expected. A bureaucratic government can restrict the range of curricular choices as well as contents and treatments.

G. Postiglione⁴³ echoes Morris' view that education becomes a key issue within this transitional period. He⁴⁴ also argues that the 1997 issue has the following effects on the local educational system. They are school culture or ethos, recruitment of government staff, contents of curriculum, students' attitudes towards the socio-political matters of Hong Kong, skilled labour training, education exchanges with other parts of the PRC.

Education is commonly used as a means for promoting patriotism in a transitional society. Hong Kong education will be assigned this mission too. As raised by Postiglione, a practical problem faces the educational policy makers is how should education should prepare the young people for their transitional society. This has a direct influence on school ethos and its socialising process. As he anticipates, the new mission of schools includes: assume new tasks such as patriotism and nationalism education. Given this hidden school agenda, students will be socialising into different socio-political values through the contents of school curriculum. In addition, the future educational assessment methods and government's recruitment of staff will be also affected by the changing curriculum. Postiglione shares Morris' view that this centralised educational system is prone to have more political effects and that more bureaucratic control can be expected under Chinese rule regardless of the statement set

out in the Basic Law. According to the Basic Law, the current education system in Hong Kong shall prevail:

On the basis of the previous educational system, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on the development and improvement of education, including policies regarding the educational system and its administration, the language of instruction, the allocation of funds, the examination system, the system of academic awards and the recognition of educational qualifications⁴⁵.

The crux of the problem is the extent to which this representative government can genuinely represent the Hong Kong people. Since this government will not be directly elected by the people but is subject to the Constitution of the PRC the autonomy of the government will be greatly affected.

At the other extreme, the changing political issue has a bearing on local education ethos too. The influx of socialist bourgeoisie in filling the gaps which are left by those who emigrated allows greater cultural penetration, and also presents a challenge to the existing education culture. Although the PRC does not propose a formal educational policy for the Hong Kong educational system, the integration of the educators from two different societies will create a very different school culture. Realisation of the implications of these changes, Morris concludes that there will have more educational changes on the curricular contents rather than the structure⁴⁶. For example, to prepare young Hong Kong people as citizens of the HKSAR, the contents of the school subjects such as Social Studies, History, and language will be strengthened with the knowledge of the PRC. The extent to which that there have more changes in the contents than the educational structure requires a detailed evaluation on both.

3.5 IS EDUCATION RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES, IF SO, HOW?

This section examines the responses of the Hong Kong educational system to the challenges from the managerial level, policy-making process and curricular innovations. In comparison with the pace of the socio-political system changes, the local educational system is responding slowly. J. Friederichs concludes that:

Each participant in education in Hong Kong---the business community, the Hong Kong Government, the Education Commission, educators, parents, and students---has particular needs and/or specific characteristics which make taking appropriate or effective and timely action unlikely⁴⁷.

Friederichs takes this problem as a matter of control. Democratization in Hong Kong means a threat to the businesses as they hold the key positions in the educational organisations. A representative participation of people from a range of social sectors will eliminate their power and control in society. Moreover, Friederichs comments that while overwhelming attention is given to serve the industrial needs and economy, the issue of Hong Kong 1997 has not been managed.

Despite these obstacles, some changes have been made in the educational system since the last decade. For example, decentralisation of the system has been made in order to prepare for 1997. The following section discusses the relevant educational provision.

3.5.1 Expansion of Higher Education

The purpose of this section is to identify what decisions have taken to make changes for the Hong Kong educational system in the last decade. One of main educational policy changes is the drastic expansion of higher education in Hong Kong. M. Bray⁴⁸ notes that owing to the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989 in Beijing, the government aims

to increase the first year undergraduate places from seven per cent in 1988 to eighteen per cent in 1995 in order to boost people's confidence in Hong Kong.

In analysing this policy, G. Postiglione⁴⁹ argues that this shows the departure of the government from its traditional educational policy. Expansion of higher education however implies a genuine resource problem for the qualifications of current lecturers who may not be able to meet the needs of expansion. Without solving this genuine problem, the quality of tertiary education can hardly be maintained. As this colonial government only has a few years remaining and its legitimacy in policy making is no longer a main concern of itself, the financial commitment of the government to expand high education becomes less pressurised.

3.5.2 Decentralisation of the Educational System: SMI and DSS

The Hong Kong government has tried to grant more independent decision making autonomy to schools for 1997. The following section presents the relaxation of government centralised policies. In 1991, the Education and Manpower Branch and the Education Department⁵⁰ (ED) reviewed the education system. The key problems are the ill defined management structure and strong bureaucratic control on schools. As a consequence of the review, the role of the Education Department changes from a central policy maker to an advisory and supportive team. Principals are given legitimacy in managing overall school administrative matters such as recruiting teaching staff and students. In addition, teaching professionals are also encouraged to participate in the school decision making process. However to maintain an effective policy making

process, schools are required to prepare a proposal with detailed school aims and objectives and procedures involved⁵¹.

The introduction of the School Management Initiative Scheme (SMI) in 1991 is a big move by the government to allow schools to have greater flexibility and self determination in the disbursement of funds. For many years, the pyramid bureaucracy has never been challenged. While Hong Kong is in its transition to return to the PRC, decentralisation of government control upon schools is seen as a breakthrough as well as a preparation for transition.

Similarly, for the purpose of preparing for 1997, the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) was introduced by the Education Commission in 1988, endorsed by the government in 1989 and effective from 1991. Among others, it is one of the most distinctive educational reforms encouraging more and more schools to receive government funding. The DSS not only promotes greater educational opportunities for students but also allows greater parental choices for school selection. Hong Kong Education Department asserts that the ideas of introducing this Scheme is to give "...greater freedom of choice for Hong Kong families in the type of schooling available for their children"⁵². The DSS has the purpose of attracting more private schools to receive government funds in improving their education quality. Private schools have autonomy in terms of charging school fees and recruiting students. DSS also supports the spirit of competition, granting schools to have greater autonomy in dealing with the administrative matters as well as quality control. What is more important, the DSS applies to all the leftist schools⁵³ which have been excluded from the central government education system for a long time. The DSS

is regarded as a sign to prevent the future centralisation of the educational system in 1997. Therefore, there are some political implications behind the DSS⁵⁴.

However, Morris argues this Scheme has only attracted some left-wing schools, five out of six, as they were excluded from the system for quite a long time for political reasons. He comments that facing an uncertain future of Hong Kong, organisations are unwilling to commit themselves to this attractive Scheme. Consequently, most private schools are not attracted by this scheme and prefer a "wait and see" attitude towards this social phenomenon. In comparison with the DSS, M.K. Tam⁵⁵ comments that SMI is less appealing to the aided sector than the DSS as aided schools have strong reservations about the effectiveness of the SMI.

Apart from the implementation of the DDS and the SMI policies as preparations for a meaningful merger, in the light of the curriculum development, schools are given greater autonomy to develop a school-based curriculum. The next section has the details of the scheme.

3.5.3 The Implementation of the School-Based Curriculum Development Scheme

In 1988 the Education Department introduced the School-based curriculum development scheme⁵⁶ in order to encourage greater school participation at the subordinate level. Morris⁵⁷ argues that this scheme is the government's response to public criticisms on the centralised curriculum policy making model. The school-based scheme is aimed to increase school's autonomy in developing the school curriculum for the individual needs of schools as to motivate more teaching staff to share the responsibility and to develop

the existing curriculum provision. According to the individual school situations, principals are allowed to modify the central guidelines to suit their needs. In carrying out this project, it is hoped that students' motivation will also be increased as they are provided more opportunities to participate and design their own classroom learning. In return, their individual learning needs are met. A flexible model benefits both the teachers and students.

Implementation of the school-based curriculum development scheme experiences several major difficulties. For example, Morris⁵⁸ notes that teachers have some reservations about developing a set of tailor-made classroom curricula within this examination-orientated educational system. There is a conflict between managing the examination syllabuses and, managing the new curriculum innovations at the same time. Moreover, most teachers do not have the skills to develop a school-based curriculum and the current resources for this project are far from enough.

3.5.4 Changes in the Educational Policy

The preceding section has indicated that an educational decision was taken to make changes for decentralisation. The succeeding section has the purpose of evaluating the educational documents to determine what policies and changes have been made in the school curriculum.

Lately, under the philosophy of education stated in the last chapter, School Aims: A consultative Draft⁵⁹ suggests that school should:

(1) ...help all its students, whatever their level of ability, and including those with special educational needs, to develop their potential as fully as possible in both academic and non-academic directions.(p.15),

(2) ...aim to meet the community's need for people who can contribute to Hong Kong's social and economic development. (p.16),

(3) ...help students to build a strong foundation of literacy and numeracy, (p.17),

(4) ...encourage and help students to think logically, independently and creatively; to make rational decisions; to solve problems; and to cope with stress and change, (p.18),

(5) ...help students to learn how to acquire knowledge through which they can better understand their world (including society and its history, the natural world, science and technology), and encourage in them a disposition to develop their understanding further after they leave school, (p.19),

(6) ...introduce their students to a range of practical and technical skills, and should help to develop abilities and attitudes which will be useful for further study and work, (p.20),

(7) ...help students to become aware of Hong Kong as a society; to develop a sense of civic duty, responsibility to the family and service to the community; and to exercise tolerance in interacting with others, (p.21),

(8) ...in partnership with parents and others, should contribute to the personal growth of their students, by helping them to develop a sense of morality and to prepare for the physical, emotional and mental transition to adulthood, (p.22),

(9) ...help their students to develop good physical coordination and a disposition to engage in physical activity, (p.23),

(10) ...help their students to develop their creativity and aesthetic sense, and should stimulate appreciation of the achievements of the local culture and other cultures (p.23).

Although these educational aims were prepared by the Education Commission, none of them are direct responds to this rapidly changing society. As these ten policy statements do not prepare specifically for this transforming society, attention turns to the examination of the curricular policy statements.

3.5.5 Changes in the School Curriculum Policy Statement

The following section discusses the latest development of the curricular policies in local educational system. Specifically, the analysis of the Guide to The Secondary 1 to 5 Curriculum⁶⁰ emphasizes the relationship between the politics of 1997 and the adaptations of school learning.

The Guide admits that (paragraph 2.4.3, page 6) after the announcement of the Joint Declaration in 1984, the uncertain future of Hong Kong encourages emigration, as a result, more well-trained people are needed to maintain the progress of this society. In addition, a representative government will be the main social concern. Thus, students are expected to have a greater sense of social responsibility and education should aim at improving their social and civic awareness and provide the power to analyse and think critically.

As the Guide points out, secondary education is seen, at the personal level, as an extension of primary education therefore it sets out to prepare students for adult life and further education. Achievement of the purpose of preparing young Hong Kong people for life in the 21st century and as citizens of the HKSAR necessitates to strengthen students' knowledge of the PRC, and an appreciation of the differences between the social, economic and political systems of the two societies. Moreover, the Guide stresses the importance of strengthening students' understanding of the structure of government and appreciation of the principles of lawmaking. In paragraph 3.2.7, it asserts that schools should increase students' socio-political awareness so that they can have more to contribute to society. Much curricular emphasis has been given on

students' civic mindedness to fulfil the social demands and to keep social stability. Curricular attention has also given to students' analytical and decision making skills.

On paragraph 3.2.4, the Guide puts great emphasis on the role of education in Hong Kong in contributing to the PRC's economy, and the way in which education should develop. The Guide highlights that both English and Chinese languages will continue to be important for the future development of Hong Kong. Education should aim at training students to have a good standard of personal and general education, in particular, a good command of both English and Chinese languages.

The Guide confirms that there is a strong link between education and economic development. Also education is connected with the needs of boosting industrialisation. This echoes Luk's earlier claim that managing the world trend of industrialisation is one of the main tasks that schools are engaging in. As far as of the medium of instruction is concerned, both English and Chinese languages are equally important.

The Guide attempts to identify the existing problems of local education and addresses the educational implications of the 1997 issue. Translation of the curricular policies into the school curriculum, a review of changes on individual subject contents is felt useful.

3.5.6 Changes in School Subjects

This section on changes of school subjects shows the effects of 1997 on the selected school subjects. This following paragraphs suggest that the present political climate

should permit a greater political awareness and national identity. New educational policies for socialising students into the Hong Kong's socio-political ethos are important.

The Basic Law spelt out that in order to maintain the well-being of Hong Kong, students should be equipped with a reasonable understanding of the Basic Law, as it is very important to their later lives in the HKSAR⁶¹. Therefore, there is an urge to integrate the Basic Law into the formal school curriculum and the political implications of the curriculum is obvious.

Morris⁶² points out several main changes in the government controlled secondary subjects such as social studies, Government and Public Affairs and Chinese history in order to increase young people's understanding of the Chinese culture and history. These changes are made for preparing a trouble free handover.

In addition, Morris is aware that there is a distinctive difference between the school curriculum in pre- and post-1982⁶³. This distinction is manifested by the signing of the Joint Declaration. Before the eighties, none of the school subjects were allowed to transmit any kind of political ideology. Owing to this school apoliticalisation, both Chinese Literature and Chinese Language were chosen from the classical texts. Chinese History was restricted to pre-1940.

A new Chinese History syllabus with a strong emphasis on the recent history of the PRC up to the end of the Cultural Revolution, 1976, will be introduced into the A-level course to increase students' sense of belonging to their society and motherland, the

PRC⁶⁴. Also to compensate for the omission of recent Chinese History in the colonial education system.

In Economic and Public Affairs (E.P.A.) Morris⁶⁵ points out several main changes in the government controlled secondary subjects such as social studies, Government and Public Affairs and Chinese history course, special attention has been paid to the connection between Hong Kong and the PRC. More recently, in the 1987 E.P.A. the syllabus makes a special reference to the Joint Declaration and Hong Kong's future. Further, Government and Public Affairs (G.P.A.) has been introduced. It was first examined as an "A" level subject in 1988 and as a Certificate level subject in 1989. These two subjects concentrate on the concepts of liberal western democracies (the role of Law, representation, consultation and elections). All these curriculum changes result by public demand for a democratic education. This claim is supported by the opinions that were submitted by the public in response to the Education Commission's school aims consultative draft⁶⁶. Morris⁶⁷ sees this as a kind of preparations for students to be citizens of the HKSAR.

Moreover, the Social Studies syllabus included the benefits of central planning, the structure of the Chinese Communist Party and the biographies of Mao Ze Dong and other key Chinese political figures. Alternatively, for the rest, emphases were given to the knowledge of understanding a representative democracy, freedom of speech and the emergence of statehood.

The above discussion confirmed the claim that the politics of 1997 has an effect on the curriculum. Morris⁶⁸ notes that before 1982, the only senior secondary subject concerning with Chinese matters such as culture, history, and political and economic aspects was E.P.A. Also its contents were largely revised in 1984 covering the structure of government, the principles of law-making.

Moreover, in other Chinese school subjects, curricular preparations for the transfer to Chinese sovereignty are also made. In comparison with the contents of Chinese History before and after 1988, he identified that topics regarding the recent Chinese History after the 1940s increased drastically, from twelve topics regarding the history of China in pre-1949 to fourteen topics in 1988 "with no discrimination between geographic sections or time periods" ^{69,70}. Also there is an extension of the study of Chinese History up to the seventies. So, students are provided more opportunity to explore the Chinese culture in history, in particular the recent mainland Chinese culture and history.

3.5.7 The Introduction of Civic Education

Implications of the 1997 issue for new curricular innovations are also reflected in the introduction of civic education. For it is regarded as the first step to promote political awareness in the schools. Historically, the government controls all the curriculum decisions and set up a censor system for the school curriculum so as to prevent schools from spreading communism and uprooting the colonial government⁷¹. The relaxation of power, as noted by Morris⁷² is a kind of preparatory work that the government does particularly for transforming the Hong Kong educational system for the future. More importantly, the remarkable differences between the period before and after the

publication of the Joint Declaration suggests a political effect, or the "1997 effect" on the educational system. For example, the government has amended its policies towards school political activities. The underlined sentences have been crossed out by Education Department:

If in the opinion of the Director the behaviour of any pupils is undesirable or improper or contrary to the good of the school or the other pupils, or if any pupil participates in processions, propaganda or political activities or in any dispute between an employer and his employees or in any disorderly assembly, he may, in his absolute directions, require the supervisor and principal to expel such pupils from the school or to suspend him for such time and under such conditions as the Director may specify.

No instruction, education, entertainment recreation or propaganda or activity of any kind which, in the opinion of the Director, is in any way of a political or partly political nature and prejudicial to the public interest or the welfare of the pupils or of education generally or contrary to the approved syllabus, shall be permitted upon any school premises or upon the occasion of any school activity⁷³.

The amendments are made specifically to establish the "Guidelines on civic education in schools" followed the publication of the White Paper on "The further development of Representative government in Hong Kong". As it is addressed in the forward that the purposes of issuing these guidelines are promoting greater socio-political awareness and preparing the public for an elected representative government, the Guidelines state that "...there is a special need at this particular time in Hong Kong's social and political development for schools to renew their commitment to the preservation of social order and the promotion of civic awareness and responsibility and these guidelines are designed to facilitate this renewal"⁷⁴.

Preparation of the Guidelines on civic education is the first step to break down the apolitical school learning and it is an attempt to raise students' socio-political awareness.

In the Guidelines on Civic Education in School, education is regarded as a socialisation process and that students are exposed to different kinds of selected social values. Apart from pointing the challenges of youngsters in today's Hong Kong, the document shows the government's recognition of the importance of preparing students for the citizens of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region⁷⁵.

Yet, Y. W. Leung⁷⁶ questions the extent to which the guideline can achieve the aim of promoting an open and participant society for local Hong Kong people. In his opinion, the emphases of civic education in Hong Kong that are set out in its curricular guidelines are rather different from other models of political education such as the one in Britain. The guidelines put the priority of social harmony and consensus view on top of greater personal critical thinking and independent thinking training. To cite an example, it is stated that:

In the light of Hong Kong's recent political development, evolution should be the watchword and the emphasis in this guide will be on civic education as a politically socializing force for promoting stability and responsibility⁷⁷.

Leung criticises that this model fails to serve the purpose of promoting a democratic and autonomous representative government in 21st century Hong Kong. Because the guidelines are characterised by knowledge-oriented, the actual political involvement and participation of students are minimal. In contrast, Leung sees it as a kind of social conformity education as they stress patriotism and nationalism. Morris and Leung comment that this is contrary to a genuine political education.

In addition, the guidelines are weak in educating young people with basic but important knowledge of participating in the political affairs. A review of the suggested framework

for junior and senior secondary classes deepens the understanding of the guidelines. The following framework has been set out: the individual; the individual and social groups; the individual and society (Hong Kong); the individual and the nation (the PRC); and the individual and the world⁷⁸. The guidelines begin with an understanding of individual's rights and responsibilities and move to the formation of positive attitudes and the refinement of personal and interpersonal skills.

3.5.7.1 Evaluation of the Implementation of Civic Education in School

This section identifies the difficulties in implementing civic education in schools. Leung has identified several genuine problems. Firstly, implementation of political education within an apolitical context within this latest stage of socio-political transition is a difficult task. Secondly, the extent to which the PRC shares the view of Hong Kong on political education is less certain. While the PRC advocates social conformity and patriotism this might not be appropriate for building an autonomous and democratic representative government in 21st century Hong Kong. For instance, patriotism does not necessarily mean to agree on every single governmental policy, for this denies people's critical thinking and rights for decision making. A genuine and open representative government should encourage people to make their views known and to participate into the political activities. These discrepancies on understanding democratic government and education for democracy will have extensive effects on Hong Kong political education. Thirdly, schools have to improve the resources and upgrade teachers' professional expertise. Leung notes that principals' attitudes towards political education within schools become the determinant indicator to assess the extent to which genuine school practices that can happen.

In addition, both Morris' and Lam's studies on the implementation of civic education in schools support Lau's claim that genuine school practices seldom happen. At this initial stage regardless of the role of civic education in preparing young people for an elected representative government, managing civic education has not become the school priority. Conversely, it is left to chance and dependent upon individual subject panel's personal view on its importance. The anticipated difficulties are teachers' professional expertise in managing the subject and the availability of resources. These two are regarded as the main factors affecting classroom implementation of civic education.

Although an attempt was made to indicate changing curriculum within the changing political and values contexts of Hong Kong, Postiglione takes the view that:

education in Hong Kong has not yet veered from its colonial setting. Except for minor revisions to the content of some textbooks, schooling continues to introduce children to a socio-political system that has remained almost unchanged for over 140 years⁷⁹.

An evaluation of the changes in individual subjects and the implementation of civic education conclude that local educational provision is striving for a direction of change. To take a step forward, it is important to identify the future role of education in the new society so that more concrete and relevant ideas can be generated.

3.6 THE FUTURE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN 21ST CENTURY HONG KONG

This section links the preceding discussion of the current educational provision with the future role of Hong Kong education in order to deepen the understanding of the challenges of 1997 to local education. K.M. Cheng⁸⁰ has pointed out that within this transitional period, the educators of Hong Kong felt uncertain about what should be on

the school agenda. The Joint Declaration has not given any pointers or hopes for this static and dissatisfied educational system and the future is beyond everybody's reach. Thus tension is created. Cheng is concerned with the legitimization of the members in the decision making mechanism. He questions that how far the future Hong Kong government will invite both experts and laymen from various sectors to participate in this decision making process. Furthermore, under what criteria will decisions be made about what is good for the community? In his view, the visibility of the decision making machinery becomes a crucial matter for effective and relevant educational policy making in 21st century Hong Kong.

To take a step further, Friederichs⁸¹ suggests three directions for future educational reform in Hong Kong: localization, sinocization and ad hoc decolonization. Localization means to equip a group of local leaders with skills and knowledge for self administrative Hong Kong. Sinocization refers to reforming the local education system to cater for the socio-political and economic needs of the PRC. Decolonization is to decolonize the local education but maintain the current capitalist and conservative ideologies in Hong Kong. Friederichs discusses the idea with reference to Cheng's view on the possibility of educating local experts in running the future educational system. Establishment of a representative government needs to have more locally well-trained leaders to keep the system enhances. With the leaders' advanced western knowledge and their social commitment they will maintain Hong Kong as a cultural centre, a meeting place of both western and eastern cultures. This seems to have particular socio-cultural values for updating the education of the PRC. In spite of these advantages, as she argues elsewhere⁸², the problem lacks a group of conscientious local people in Hong Kong in

taking the right position. Friederichs argues that when influential businesses are too engaged in their own commercial activities, they have little enthusiasm in committing themselves to run the political system.

In implementing of these three directions for educational development, the following difficulties must be tackled. As noted by Friederichs that the Hong Kong government as well as people who are participating in different educational sectors have been slow to respond.

With special reference to the policy of "one country, two systems", Julian Y.M. Leung⁸³ uses "three pairs of forces at work" to explore the future development of Hong Kong educational system. The three pairs of forces are: insulation and interdependence, decolonization and neo-colonialization, as well as internationalization and indigenization. The first pair, insulation and interdependence is concerned, Leung identifies a close relationship between the two societies in terms of educational and economic exchanges. For instance, a certain number of Hong Kong students study in the PRC and in turn, Hong Kong employs quite a large number of legal mainland professionals in different socio-industrial sectors. Bridges between the two societies are already built. He then concludes that insulation is unlikely because the two societies are interdependent on one another.

For the second pair, decolonization and neo-colonization, Leung echoes Morris' claim that the current education system is moving away from an apolitical colonial educational system to a political one. Cited with the example of the Education Commission Report

3, he thinks that people's suggestions for a 6+6+4 educational model to replace the current 6+5+2+3 educational system is one of the indicators. The suggested 6+6+4 educational model is the current practice of the PRC. In addition, as he notices, the supply of many mainland Putonghau teachers in schools to socialise students into Chinese culture is another obvious educational preparation promoted and encouraged by the British Government.

Finally, the third pair, international and indigenization, represents the future direction of the existing Hong Kong educational system. Historically, expatriate investments in the local education system produce some effects on the system. However, the continuation of this international approach to managing education and administering certain schools is highly subject to the permission of the PRC after the merger. As the policy of one country, two systems is not concretely defined and operationalised, therefore, Leung feels that the educational system in Hong Kong will remain uncertain.

In contrast, W.O. Lee suggests a positive view from two aspects: the PRC's policy of education for excellence and its modernization for economic, industry, science and technology and agriculture. Hong Kong enjoys a special position in the PRC in terms of assisting the realization of Deng Xiao-ping's claim that "the quantity and quality of our intellectuals have become increasingly important in determining whether our nation is strong and weak"⁸⁴. In short, Lee takes the view that the PRC will treasure and make use of Hong Kong economic and education systems to boost its own.

3.7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter indicated that over the last decade of socio-political and economic transformation of Hong Kong, the local educational system was responding slowly to the changes. Publication of the Guide to Secondary 1-5 Curriculum suggested that local curriculum developers were aware of the need for preparing young Hong Kong people for their adult lives in 21st century Hong Kong. The Guide also acknowledges the inadequacies of the current school curriculum, formal and informal, in anticipating the social and political training for students.

Cheng attributes the slow response of local educators to the fact that they were uncertain about the future and insufficient guidance and support. Bray⁸⁵ stresses that within this centralised system, the ceiling effect which is created by political changes can be easily identified in the educational system. The educational reality in Hong Kong invites speculation. Some Hong Kong educators have not yet prepared themselves for the 1997 challenges because of the uncertain future of Hong Kong.

In short, Hong Kong educators are facing serious educational problems such as what should education do in response to the changes? What are the educational implications of the socio-political reality of Hong Kong? In what ways can "a basically unchanged educational system" (stated in the Basic Law) cater for the needs of a rapidly changing society? To what extent might this examination-oriented educational system develop in this to be specially administered region? Although a few curricular changes have identified and discussed, an uncertain future of Hong Kong will mean a time of

confusion before any relevant and effective educational changes are made for the HKSAR.

3.8 REFLECTIONS ON CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN EDUCATION

This section suggests that there is an urgency for education in Hong Kong to clarify values teaching and to strengthen moral reasoning for preparing young people for life in the 21st century. Hong Kong education is facing the problem of inculcating a set of values, rules and principles to young people as they are exposing to many different or conflicting sets of values and principles. As many local and the PRC's politicians do not have a consistent view on the politics of Hong Kong 1997 in addition to the pre-merger political interferences from the PRC, a state of confusion and uncertainty resulted.

Value clarification and teaching are the primary curricular concerns of Hong Kong education. Introduction of civic mindedness and citizenship education are examples to illustrate how local education system responds to the challenges of 1997. Civic mindedness aims at preparing young people for greater socio-political participation in the HKSAR. Educational policy-makers and curriculum developers have identified that these issues become more important in 21st century Hong Kong. Both citizenship and moral education are two value laden curricular issues with special reference to the current Hong Kong socio-political situation. The succeeding chapter will offer a detailed analysis of the acquisition of values and what values are more important for Hong Kong as it is undergoing a process of socio-political transformation.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

1. Luk, Bernard, Hung-kay, (1992), "Hong Kong", in Wielemans, Willy, Chan, Pauline Choi-ping, (eds.), Education And Culture In Industrializing Asia, Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp.111-150.

2. Lee, Wing-on, (1991), Social Change and Educational Problems in Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong, London: Macmillan Academic and Professional Ltd., p.217.

3. Luk, B.H.K., (1992), op. cit., pp.111-150.

4. But the laissez faire economy does not contribute to modernize the socio-political structure of the colony. See Luk, Bernard Hung-Kay, (1992), op. cit., p.114.

5. "Purposely" means to direct Hong Kong people in an apolitical but socially desirable way. Here it is particularly referring to its free market economy.

6. Yee, Albert. H., (1992), second edition, A People Misruled, Singapore: Heinemann Asia, A Division of Reed International (Singapore) Pte Ltd., p.316.

7. Luk, B.H.K., (1992), op. cit., p.133.

8. Hong Kong Government Printer, (November, 1982), A Perspective on Education in Hong Kong, Reported by a Visiting Panel, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer, pp.27-28.

9. See, for example, Friederichs, Jane, (1992), "Prospect for Educational Reform during Political Transformation in Hong Kong", Compare, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp.165-182.

10. In Hong Kong, formal secondary education usually begins at the age of twelve. After they reach the junior secondary three, they have to sit for the Junior Secondary Education Assessment (JSEA) with effect from 1990, M.K. Tam claimed that there are eighty-five per cent of Secondary Three Students are provided with an assisted place in grammar, technical and prevocational schools.

For details, see Tam, Man-kwan, (1993), The Development and The Role of Private Secondary Schools in Hong Kong, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, London: University of London, p.159.

11. All the prevocational schools are fully subsidised by the Government and provide a wide range of technical and practical education for students.

12. Luk, B.H.K., (1992), op. cit., pp.111-146.

13. Ha, Timothy, Wing-ho, (1990), "Change in Direction" in Sweeting, Anthony (ed.), Differences And Identities: Educational Argument in Late Twentieth Century Hong Kong, Education Papers, Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, p.123.

14. McClelland, J.A.G., (1991), "Curriculum Development in Hong Kong", in Marsh, Colin, Morris, Paul, (eds.), Curriculum Development in East Asia, London: The Falmer Press, pp.106-128.

15. Cheng, Kai-ming, (1991), "Legitimacy in Education Policy Making", Studies in Educational Administration, Number 54, p.5.

16. Pang, K.C., (1994) "Improving the Curriculum", in Lam, C.C., Hon, H.S., Ho, M.K., Man, E.Y.F., Sze, P.M.M., (eds.), Proceedings of the Conference on Curriculum Changes in Hong Kong: The Needs of The New Era, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, pp.150-155.

17. Morris, Paul, (1992), (2nd ed.), Education Papers 7, Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, pp.6-9.

18. Pang, K.C., (1994), op. cit., p.150, points out the new Hong Kong curriculum innovations and research projects that are in progress. They are as follows:

- a. Promoting pleasurable and effective learning in the existing curriculum;
- b. Designing curricular support to teachers in school in tailoring advice and support curriculum to suit the needs, interests and abilities of the students;
- c. Trying to out the mastery learning strategy in the Hong Kong context;
- d. Developing special curricular programmes for the gifted and the less able;
- e. Exploring curriculum integration at the subject and whole curriculum levels;
- f. Studying the desirability and feasibility of modular curriculum;
- g. Promoting the adoption of the Activity Approach in primary schools;
- h. Encouraging teachers to participate in school-based curriculum development through a School-based Curriculum Development Project Scheme inviting teachers to develop an aspect or part of the curriculum of their own choice based on their interests and needs;
- i. Providing a comprehensive range of educational television programmes and developing new special programmes;
- j. Setting up a computer network system and a computerized resource centre;
- k. Developing, trying out and promoting the Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC).

19. Ibid., p.85.

20. The previous Curriculum Development Committee was replaced by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) in 1988. The newly organised CDC consists of six coordinating committee: the Special education, the Kindergarten, the Primary, the Secondary, the Sixth-form and the Textbook. See Lam, Chi-chung, (1991), The Implementation of Curriculum Change in Moral Education in Secondary Schools in Hong Kong, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, London: University of London, p.46.

21. Wong, Hin-wah, (June, 1991), "The curriculum design and models of development: conflicting values and choice", Educational Journal, Volume 19, No. 1, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, pp.103-109, (Text in Chinese).

22. Hong Kong Education Commission, (November 1990), Education Commission Report No. 4, para.2.3.(b), Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer, p.13.
23. Ibid., p.12.
24. Luk, B.H.K., (1992), op cit., pp.111-150.
25. Fu, Gail, B. S., (1975), A Hong Kong Perspective: English Language Learning And The Chinese Student, Michigan: The University of Michigan, p.92.
26. For more details, see Lee, W.O., (1991), op. cit., pp.224-227.
27. Fu, G.B.S., (1975), op. cit., p.93.
28. Luk, B.H.K., (1992), op. cit., pp.134-135.
29. Lee, W. O., (1991), op. cit., pp.116-125.
30. Secular utilitarianism is used by S. Wu (cited by Lee, Ibid., p.126) to describe the pragmatic value systems in Hong Kong. This phrase also indicates the change of Hong Kong education system from a traditional British academic oriented to a practical and commercial oriented curriculum. Utilitarianism---maximizing one's expertise to obtain the best economic returns---has been understood as part of indigenous Hong Kong education culture.
31. Ibid., pp.130-131.
32. Luk, B.H.K., (1992), op. cit., pp.122-125.
33. Morris, P., (1992), Education Paper 7, op. cit., pp.47-62.
34. Morris, Paul, (1985), "Teachers' Perceptions of The Barriers to The Implementation of A Pedagogic Innovation: A South East Asia Case Study", International Review of Education, XXXI, pp.3-18.
35. Morris, P., (1992), (2nd ed.), Education Papers 7, op. cit., pp. 47-62.
36. Ibid., p.50.
37. Chan, Grace, (1993), "Classroom environment and approaches to learning", in Biggs, J.B., Watkins, D.A., (eds.), Education Papers 17, Learning and Teaching in Hong Kong: What is and what might be, Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, pp.153-163.
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41. Here, the writers refer to Postiglione, Gerald, Friederichs, Jane and Morris, Paul as well as Bray, Mark. Their work will be further discussed.

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43. Postiglione, Gerard, (1991), "From Capitalism to Socialism? Hong Kong Education within a Transitional Society", Comparative Education Review, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp.627-649.

44. Postiglione, Gerard, (1991), "The Decolonization of Hong Kong Education", in Postiglione, Gerard, (ed.), Education and Society in Hong Kong: Toward One Country and Two Systems, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., pp.3-38.

45. Translated by the Secretariat of the Consultative Committee for the Basic Law, (February, 1989), Draft Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong: C & C Offset Printing Co., Ltd., Article 135, p.38.

46. Postiglione, G., (1991), "The Decolonization of Hong Kong Education", in Postiglione, G., (ed.), op. cit., p.630.

47. Friederichs, Jane, (1991), "Whose Responsibility? The Impact of Imminent Socio-Political Change on Hong Kong Education", International Review of Education, Vol. 37, p.195.

48. Bray, Mark, (1992), "Colonialism, Scale, and Politics: Divergence and Convergence of Educational Development in Hong Kong and Macau", Comparative Education Review, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp.322-342.

49. Postiglione, G., (1991), in Postiglione, G., op. cit., p.16.

50. Education and Manpower Branch and Education Department, (March, 1991), The School Management Initiative: Setting the framework for quality in Hong Kong schools, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer, p.33.

51. Ibid., p.35.

52. cf Ibid., p.156.

53. The leftist schools in Hong Kong are funded by the PRC and under its administrative. They have different school curriculum which is supervised by the two curriculum policy making agencies: the CDC and HKEA.

54. See for example, Bray, Mark, (1992), op. cit., pp.322-342.
55. Tam, M.K. (1993), op. cit., p.335.
56. For reference, see Education Commission (November 1990), Education Commission Report No 4, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer, p.12.
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61. Dai Kung Daily News, 10, April, 1992.
62. Morris, P., (1992), (2nd. ed.), Education Papers 7, op. cit., pp.158-159.
63. Morris, Paul, (1992), "Political Expectations and Educational Reform: the case of Hong Kong prior to its return to the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China in 1997", Compare, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp.153-164.
64. Sing Tao Yat Pao, 15, April, 1993.
65. Morris, P., (1992), (2nd ed.), Education Papers 7, op. cit., pp.158-159.
66. Sing Tao Yat Pao, 19, April, 1993.
67. Morris, Paul, (1990), "Preparing Pupils as Citizens of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong: An Analysis of Curriculum Change and Control during the Transitional Period", in Postiglione, Gerald., (ed.), Education and Society in Hong Kong, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., pp.117-145.
68. Morris, P., (1988), op. cit., pp.514-515.
69. Ibid., p.514.
70. 1949 is the year when the People's Republic and China was formally established.
71. However, in comparing Hong Kong's existing educational system and school decision making process with England and Wales, Cheng, Kai-ming (1985) argues that Hong Kong schools enjoy more autonomy than others. His standpoint is that in Hong Kong there was no compulsory subject for schools to teach, but in England and Wales, Religion Studies is a compulsory subject in the lower forms.

In Hong Kong, as Morris has clearly demonstrated (Morris in Postiglione, 1991:120-121) the mechanisms of curriculum control are strictly within the hands of two central organizations: the Curriculum Development Committees and the Hong Kong Examination Authority. Practically speaking, schools have to follow the official curriculum. Moreover, as the whole education system is examination-oriented, schooling is for examination preparation therefore, there is no possibility for schools not to toe the line.

72. Morris, P., (1992), "Political Expectations and Educational Reforms: the case of Hong Kong prior to its return to the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China in 1997", op. cit., pp.153-164.

73. cf Ibid., p.159.

74. Curriculum Development Committee, (August, 1985), Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer, p.1.

75. Paragraph 2.1, Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools (Ibid., p.10) states that: the specific role of the schools, as outlined here, will be to develop in young people the sort of knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for them to become rational, politically sensitive and responsible citizens who can contribute constructively to the process of political and social change.

76. Leung, Yan-wing, (1993), "Clarifications of the Terminologies: Civic Education, Political Education and Democratic Education", in Leung, Yan-Wing, Lau, Kit-Fai, (eds.) (1993), Political Education in a Hong Kong Setting: Theory and Practice, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Christian Institute, pp.2-3. (Text in Chinese).

77. Curriculum Development Committee, (1985), Guidelines on civic education in schools, op. cit., p.9.

78. Ibid., p.25.

79. Postiglione, G., (1991), "From Capitalism to Socialism? Hong Kong Education within a Transitional Society", in Postiglione, G., op. cit., p.630.

80. Cheng, Kai-ming, (1985), "Education: What is to be Planned?", in Jao, Y.C., Leung, C.K., Peter, W.S., Wong, S.L. (eds.), Hong Kong and 1997, Strategies for the Future, Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, pp.531-548.

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82. Friederichs, Jane, (1988), "The Current Hong Kong Educational Situation In Comparative Perspective", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, London: University of London, pp.306-310.

83. Leung, Julian, Yat-ming, (1991), "Education in Hong Kong and China: Toward Convergence?" in Postiglione, Gerald, (ed.), op. cit., p.265.

84. Lee, Wing-on, (1991), "Pressure for Educational Excellence", in Postiglione, G., (ed.), *Ibid.*, pp.235-252.

Later, Lee refers to Deng Xiao-ping's speech at the National Education Work Conference in 1985 in which Deng asserts that "the quantity and quality of our intellectuals have become increasingly important in determining whether our nation is strong or weak", p.237.

85. Bray, M., (1992), *op.cit.*, p.324.

CHAPTER FOUR SCHOOL AND VALUES ACQUISITION

4.1 PURPOSE AND ARGUMENT

Chapters One and Two concluded that as 1997 has begun to affect the political and economic systems of Hong Kong, the values systems of Hong Kong people were also challenged. The last chapter indicated that there is an identified need to change the school curriculum for preparing young people for life in the HKSAR.

This chapter is a link chapter. It takes up the theme that values are acquired throughout schooling and identifies the reasons for choosing moral reasoning and citizenship education as two crucial curricular elements for values teaching for this uncertain and transforming society. The literature, on young people's acquisition of socio-moral values, shows how the process of socialisation, especially in school, inoculates values into young people. Because this thesis has its focus on changing curriculum, changing values and changing politics of Hong Kong, the chapter discusses the relationship between schooling and value acquisition and two selected curricular elements: moral reasoning and citizenship.

The argument of the chapter has three parts. Firstly, the Chapter argues that values acquisition is a combination of socialisation and personal development. Environment gives opportunities for values acquisition and yet the pace of values internalisation is dependent on individual intellectual growth. Although values are consistently reinforced by the socialising agencies, the individual's capacity for moral judgment is a matter of intellectual growth.

Secondly, the chapter argues that Hong Kong schools have the social mission to prepare young people for life and as citizens of the HKSAR. Because the local people and politicians do not have a consistent view about the future of Hong Kong, young people find difficulty in differentiating facts from opinions. The acquisition of a consistent set of moral values and citizenship should be both invaluable to and urgent for young Hong Kong people. Society has an important role to play in terms of inculcating a selected set of values into youngsters through the process of socialisation. Thirdly, the chapter argues that in educating competent adults for this transitional society, moral discernment and civic mindedness become important curricular issues.

4.1.1 Organization of the Chapter

This chapter is organized as a survey of the literature on schooling and values acquisition around three themes. The first theme reviews the socialisation literature and discusses the process by which values are transmitted and acquired. The second theme focuses on the relationship between schooling and values inculcation. The third theme discusses the process of individual intellectual growth and the development of moral reasoning.

Two categories of literature are reviewed: the socialisation and the developmental literature. The socialisation literature emphasises the function of social interaction, exchange of ideas and communication of values while the developmental literature discusses the relationship between intellectual growth and the quality of moral reasoning.

In the first section, the concepts of values and culture are defined. The relationships between them are discussed. Then attention is given to the process of socialisation and values acquisition. Socialisation literature emphasises the function of social interaction, the exchange of ideas and the communication of values. As this educational research focuses on school as a socialising agency, attention is paid to the school curriculum and value acquisition. An analysis of the construction of the school curriculum with special reference to the social sciences deepens understanding of the process of schooling and values acquisition.

In the second section, as the socialisation literature fails to give a full explanation of the individual differences in values acquisition and moral reasoning, attention turns to the developmental literature. Jean Piaget's stage theory of moral development and Lawrence Kohlberg's stage of moral reasoning are both discussed.

In the concluding section, an attempt is made to outline which values become important for Hong Kong society and which curricular policies are relevant to the needs of the society in the post merger period.

4.2 THE CONCEPTS OF VALUES AND CULTURE

This thesis argues that values and behaviours are interrelated: as long as two persons interact and communicate, values are expressed. Values have a close link with culture because they are socially constructed. In other words, many values are codes of conduct in culture-specific contexts, regulating in-group members' behaviour in particular directions. The concept of value is directly linked with other people and is

usually reflected in individuals' behaviour and attitudes. Therefore, both the concepts of values and culture are defined within the context "society" as will be illustrated in the following.

L. Raths, M. Harmin, and S. Simon confine the concept of values to "individual beliefs, attitudes, activities, or feelings"¹. Raths. et. al. believe that values are connected with human capacity for intelligent and self-directed behaviours as values are reflected in people's acts.

This view is also shared and extended by H. Ganguli, G. Mehrotra and H. Mehlinger². They state: "We are what we value" and, more importantly, "we expect others to admire and respect us on the basis of our values"³. Values are built upon reciprocal respect and human rights. So Ganguli et. al. assert that values and human life are inseparable. "To be human is to possess values"⁴. The importance of values to human beings is highlighted by their definition of values:

a principle, a standard or a quality that is considered worthwhile or desirable. Values help us to decide whether certain objects are good or bad, right or wrong, desirable or worthless, important or insignificant. The objects can be ideas, decisions, persons, statements, actions and things⁵.

In addition, Ganguli et. al. claim that values can be classified into self-oriented and other-oriented. Self-oriented values are closely linked with personal success, comfort, privacy and independence. Other-oriented values are the particular principles and norms of a group, community or organisation, (for example, loyalty to family), and obedience to the rules and principles of a particular group. Other-oriented values may not be

compatible with the self-oriented values: to pursue a self-oriented value may create conflict with other values and other people.

Culture is similar to values in that it is a social construction and it is connected with a set of social norms, principles and rules. R. Williams⁶ stresses that culture has to be analyzed within a social context, either with particular traditions or societies. In Williams' opinion, culture is:

a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour⁷.

Williams points out that each culture has appropriate means for shaping a child into an adult. So the way in which a group of people behave and interact, implicitly and explicitly, indicates the local culture.

In addition, D. Lawton sees a strong relationship between patterns of human activities, thought and culture. He regards culture as:

everything that is created by human beings themselves: tools and technology, language and literature, music and art, science and mathematics, attitudes and values---in effect, the whole way of life of a society⁸.

As each society has its cultural norms and values, internalisation of social values is important for individuals to fulfil their social roles and for handling life more competently within a society. Because of this importance, each society has its own way of inculcating a selected set of values into young people.

4.3 THE SOCIALISATION PERSPECTIVE ON VALUES ACQUISITION

This paragraph highlights the connection between individuals and society in the process of values transmission and inculcation. To offer an in-depth analysis of socialisation and values acquisition, the word "social" is firstly defined. M. Mead offers a definition of social as follows:

the interrelation of individuals belonging to the same system in the sense that the behaviour and meaning of any member of the system involves other members of the system, so that any member of the system is a social individual⁹.

The quotation suggests a person-social environment interaction factor. When individuals are communicating with one another and exchanging ideas they form a set of patterns of thought and behaviour. Communication is a continuous process in which individuals acquire what is and is not desirable within a given society. As G. Mead points out society is "...a systematic order of individuals in which each has a more or less differentiated activity"¹⁰. Society socialises an individual into acquiring the shared cultural norms and patterns of thought.

B. Zevedei emphasises that society draws people together "by common needs and goals, by patterns of interaction and interrelationship necessary for the satisfaction of such needs and goals"¹¹. As indicated previously, values are not context free. Because of the uniqueness of each society, values vary. Values have instrumental purposes as tools for social stability and prosperity. Therefore, transmission of the selected values from generation to generation becomes one of the main tasks of a society. In most cases, policy makers choose the values which include the historical culture, socially defined

worthwhile knowledge and prosocial attitudes as well as behaviours that are crucial to society. All bear a social element.

4.3.1 Socialisation and the Acquisition of Values

This section starts by discussing the function of socialisation and then moves on to discuss the role of schools as a socialising agency¹² focusing on the process of school socialising and value transmission and acquisition.

Socialisation distinguishes human beings from non-human beings in terms of values, skills, attitudes and knowledge that an individual is expected to acquire. M. Mead suggests that socialisation is:

the process by which human children born potentially human become human, able to function within the societies in which they are born¹³.

Socialisation takes place in a variety of social settings, from two person interaction to group meetings, and varies from everyday conversations to formal talks. The purpose of socialisation is served as long as messages are exchanged, both verbally and non verbally. In human life, socialisation is a natural and life long process through which ideas are exchanged, knowledge is acquired and values are also acquired. In other words, socialisation is a crucial means for equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge for leading a competent life¹⁴.

As socialisation is an interaction process, both the role of the recipients and the transmitters are equally important. To understand the importance of the relationship between the recipients and the transmitter, attention should turn to the process of values

transmission, and to schools which play an important part in the whole process of value acquisition. As, in modern societies, the family¹⁵ cannot impart all the values needed by young people, schools have an important part to play in educating competent adults. Achievement of this purpose requires an examination of the related literature on school as a socialising agency in values acquisition.

4.4 SCHOOL AS A SOCIALISING AGENCY

This section on school as a socialising agency starts by discussing the nature and role of education, moves on to explore the social mission of school, and ends by examining the relationship between values and the school curriculum.

E. Durkheim notes the instrumental nature of education and argues that schooling is aiming "to adapt the child to the social milieu in which he is destined to live". Because of this, he asserts that "it is impossible that society should be uninterested in such a procedure"¹⁶.

Durkheim¹⁷ claims that education is a social construction which serves the purpose of maintaining the stability of society. In Durkheim's view, the hidden agenda of education is to hand down the worthwhile knowledge and culture from generation to generation.

Durkheim describes the social function of education as:

the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined¹⁸.

So he concludes that "education answers social necessities"¹⁹.

To E. Hopper²⁰, the social purpose of education is for regulating the total selection of labour force. Therefore, he argues that the whole education system is:

responsible, both normatively and actually, for the training, selection, allocation, and regulation of personnel with respect to their adult occupational roles and, hence, their economic and status positions²¹.

Whilst Durkheim emphasised social control and education, Hopper stresses education and the supply of a labour force.

In contrast, a different perspective on education is adopted by J. Bruner²². He makes a link between education and society from a cultural point of view. To him, education is dependent on culture as each culture has its own conception of the nature of a child and the essence of a good adult. The societal role of education is as a means for cultural transmission and as an arena for social stability. Hence, he argues that each culture has its appropriate means for shaping a child into an adult. Pedagogical theories are influenced by economic, political and social factors. For example, in industrial societies, education becomes the major social institution preparing young people for all trades and professions. Through formal school socialisation, socio-economic and political values are transmitted.

D. Heather takes a wider view that education has been assigned the role of shaping individuals into social beings in general:

The purpose of education is to render the individual sensitive to societies beyond his or her own country, including the global community²³.

R. Pring stresses that "...the educational activities promoted by any society are intimately connected with what society believes to be a valuable form of life"²⁴.

In short, several writers share the view that education is a means for passing selected values to young people. School has been assigned the mission of transmitting social values to youngsters. Social value systems and the structure of school knowledge are tightly linked. In order to offer a thorough understanding of the process of socialisation and value acquisition, attention turns to the formal education organisation: school.

4.4.1 A Formal Socialising Agency: School

G. Mead²⁵ points out that schools are social organisations with specific purposes of catering for the needs of society and individuals. Like other social organisations, schools have a set of organized attitudes and activities which socialise students in a particular way. When the children enter schools and are exposed to school teaching, they have an opportunity to communicate with peers. The formation of values is influenced by teachers and peers.

Nevertheless, the role of schools in transmitting values is better understood by investigating the school curriculum and the time table. Therefore, the next section moves on to explore the implications of school curriculum and value acquisition.

4.4.1.1 The School Curriculum and Value Acquisition

Educational knowledge, as discussed by B. Bernstein, is "a major regulator of the structure of experience"²⁶. Realization of formal educational knowledge necessitates three systems: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation, to validate knowledge of its transmission. There is a specific purpose of socialisation into school knowledge: to frame people into a specific type of experience so as to serve the diverse needs of society. Acquisition of formal structured knowledge, in return, permits young people

to have greater social mobility. Because of the importance of equipping young people with essential skills, attitudes, and knowledge for the benefit of society, young people's learning experience is neither value free nor culture free.

The relationship between social demand and the development of the school curriculum has been widely discussed, for example, in the work of D. Lawton, J. Cunningham, R. Dawson et. al. and Ganguli, et. al..

D. Lawton²⁷ argues that the priority of school learning and knowledge is connected with the perceived values of a group of policy makers. Value teaching is culture-specific because of the uniqueness of every society. Consequently, the emphases of the school curriculum vary. Nevertheless, within the diversity, a set of universal moral values is shared by different societies.

Similarly, J. Cunningham²⁸ notes that the formal curriculum is developed on the basis of a set of political and moral values of society. In terms of the informal school curriculum, the teaching of citizenship is always embedded. And as far as teaching human rights and responsibilities is concerned, the framework of moral education and citizenship is outlined and inculcated.

On the role of school in promoting citizenship, R. Dawson et. al.²⁹ argue that school has, among other social organisations, an influential power and a socially assigned role. They produce American evidence to illustrate the way in which American schools socialise students into their own cultural norms and strengthen students' nationalism.

Further, Ganguli et. al. point out two types of moral philosophies which underlie secondary education:

Students should be willing and able to reflect upon their own moral values and to decide in conflict situations which values should be awarded priority given the particular circumstances.

Students should be willing and able to empathise with the moral principles held by others³⁰.

The literature indicates that in schools, moral values are frequently taught in extra curricular activities or in the informal time table. Illustration of the way in which schooling inculcates a set of selected socio-moral values into young people is given by Lawton³¹. He points out that "the prefect system or the Cadet Corps" are examples of teaching social values through the hidden curriculum. In other words, the school curriculum reflects the particular kind of social values that society wants the young people to acquire. Desirable social values are, for example, the sensitivities, mental powers, basic skills and knowledge of cultural and societal values. Discussion of these values links with the succeeding section on teaching values.

4.4.1.2 Teaching of Citizenship and Morality

This section on teaching citizenship and morality has the purpose of discussing how values are transmitted across the school curriculum. As social sciences play an explicit role in transmitting values, detailed discussion is given to Geography and Social Studies.

Specialists make the general point about values teaching and Social Studies. For example, P. Rogers³² argues that most social sciences deal with rights and duties for citizenship. In addition, D. Dufty³³ draws attention to the written objectives of the

subject arguing that they are reflections of a mixture of community values that students should learn in order to cater for their adult social roles. Objectives like "respect for the law", "dedication to the democratic way of life" are examples of citizenship education in the school subject of social studies.

Similarly, S. Wronski argues that there are three purposes of teaching social studies at the secondary level:

- (1) social studies can help youth address their own individual needs;
- (2) students need to acquire academic, social scientific knowledge;
- (3) society requires adults who know their rights and responsibilities as citizens³⁴.

Thus, Social Studies are probably a sensitive and useful area to explore. As indicated, two subject areas will be used.

Example: Geography as a vehicle for value transmission

P. Wiegand³⁵ points out that the connection between school Geography and value transmission and the promotion of citizenship is through linking people with places. For example, the subject contents emphasise pro-social attitudes formation---students are taught to keep the environment clean and protect their neighbourhood. Wiegand argues that only by ascribing human values can the values of studying landscape be better understood. In the same way, the needs of environmental conservation or development also involve social values. A place is appreciated only when special social values are added.

D. Biddle³⁶ echoes Wiegand's view and asserts that Geography has the purpose of encouraging personal development. As a means for citizenship education, the subject has its purpose of introducing the division of labour and the diversification of occupations to students. Consequently, the objectives of the subject are directed towards the goals of building a better society. The urgency of a society to prepare individuals for future citizenship is also an example of value judgment, echoing the claim that social values are superior to individuals'.

Analysis of specific school subjects and their role as a vehicle in value transmission indicated that a particular set of social values are emphasised and reinforced by the social sciences. The selected set of values are tightly linked with citizenship. As indicated earlier, there is a strong link between the social value systems and the emphases of the school curriculum. The literature reviewed offers useful guidelines for understanding the Hong Kong school curriculum which will be the focus of the succeeding paragraphs.

4.4.2 The Case of the Hong Kong School Curriculum

This section on Hong Kong school curriculum locates the second part of the argument in this chapter that Hong Kong schools have to prepare young people for life and as citizens of the HKSAR. The analysis of recent Hong Kong school values teaching provides a better understanding of the 1997 effects on local education especially on the secondary school subject: Social Studies. The teaching objectives are stated to show the link between Hong Kong 1997 and curricular changes. In the proposed 1994 examination syllabuses, they spell out the following objectives:

- To impart knowledge and cultivate understanding of personal growth and contemporary society, and of the common problems related to personal development.
- To develop the practical and intellectual skills necessary for the study and intelligent discussion of contemporary issues.
- To encourage the formation of considered attitudes towards social and moral values, and inter-personal relationships³⁷.

At the junior secondary level, citizenship education is embedded in Economic and Public Affairs. As stated in the introductory paragraph of the syllabus:

Economic and Public Affairs as part of the common core curriculum for junior secondary schools plays a significant part in achieving the general aim of education in preparing pupils to be well-informed and socially concerned adults. It also has a specific role in helping to produce rational, sensitive and active citizens...it provides an education for citizenship, in addition to the basic knowledge of the socio-economic conditions in Hong Kong³⁸.

This thesis concludes that social sciences have a strong bearing on educating citizenship. The case of Hong Kong showed that much curricular emphasis was put on linking individuals with society and highlighted the pro-social values and behaviour. New educational and curricular implications can be drawn in the current and changing Hong Kong value context.

In the Guide To The Secondary 1 to 5 Curriculum, the school aims related to social and moral development are set out as follows:

- (v) To support students in identifying and cultivating personal ethical values and in applying these values to contemporary social issues.
- (vi) To train students in the habit of acquiring information and understanding about matters of concern for Hong Kong, China and the world and in making personal contributions towards the resolution of these places within the limitations of their circumstances.

- (vii) To make students aware of the noteworthy aspects of Chinese culture, to strengthen their esteem for it and to help them develop a positive attitude towards other peoples, cultures, values and ways of life.
- (viii) To help students appreciate the cultural richness of Hong Kong's international life and to help them acquire the habit of adapting it for their personal development³⁹.

Statements (v) and (viii) are specific school aims tailored for young Hong Kong people at the secondary level. The 1997 effects on the curriculum development in the recent history of Hong Kong have been spelt out by the Guide. It also has a special emphasis on the political reality of Hong Kong and the 1997 implications for drafting the aims of the secondary curriculum. Therefore, the social, economic and cultural political aspects of future Hong Kong society are special considerations for society in preparing adults for life in the 21st century.

In the social aspect, the Guide highlights that both formal and informal school curriculum should work towards the development of an all-rounded person and make use of leisure time.

On the economic front, the Guide stresses that:

Since China opened her door to foreign investors, Hong Kong has assumed an even greater importance as an international financial and export centre for China...To support these developments, education in Hong Kong is expected to produce adequate personnel with a good general education and a good command of both English and Chinese languages...Since many of the secondary school students will enter work on completion of Secondary 5, education in secondary schools is to equip them with good general knowledge, sound proficiency in both English and Chinese, and the ability to think logically and to make rational decisions, in order to become useful and responsible citizens of Hong Kong⁴⁰.

In the political aspect, much attention is paid to Hong Kong's return to the PRC:

As a result of the introduction of representative government, Hong Kong is becoming a much more open society than before. People enjoy greater freedom, more rights, and in return, they are expected to enable students to realize their future role in the community, education should help them to develop social and civic awareness, a sense of civic responsibility, and the power of analytical thinking and making rational judgement.

In the foreseeable future, the return of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in 1997 and the development of representative government will be the major issues of concern in this community. Students should be strengthened in their political and social awareness and acquire greater understanding of China through both the formal and informal curricula⁴¹.

Lastly, in the cultural aspect, the Guide points out that:

for historical and practical reasons, Hong Kong is very much influenced by Western culture; but, at the same time, it maintains a very strong Chinese culture because the large majority of its population is Chinese. Students should therefore be trained to be open-minded about different cultures. Education should help them to develop an appreciation of the Chinese culture, respect for all peoples and their different cultures, and acceptance of the differences in values and ways of life⁴².

The acquisition of values is important for socialising adolescents as citizens of society and yet values seem to be seldom transmitted on the basis of free choice. School has the mission of handing down "worthwhile" and "important" values to prepare young people for their adult lives. The case of Hong Kong illustrates how its political reality affects the direction of school curriculum development.

The notion of citizenship education has been highlighted in the social sciences in the Hong Kong school curriculum. Yet, in preparation for a representative government and educating competent adults or citizens for the HKSAR, a clarification of values teaching becomes an urgent task for the local curriculum developers. Definition of the needs of

the future Hong Kong society and the qualities of competent adults are useful for effective curricular innovations.

However, this chapter argues that to examine the way in which values are transmitted and acquired throughout the schooling, emphasis should not be narrowed only to the school curriculum. Rather, a broader view of the whole socialisation process---the people surrounding the school and peer culture influences---have also to be taken into consideration. For this purpose, the following section turns attention to peer influences and value acquisition.

4.4.3 School and peer culture in values inculcation

This section on school and peer culture discusses the influence of peer culture throughout the socialisation process. School is a meeting point for exchanging ideas, sharing values and making contacts. Adolescents and peer culture are always associated with one another as adolescents are exposed to a wider social environment. A. Giddens⁴³ defines the peer group as the friendship group of children of similar age. Children choose to socialise with friends of the same or similar age who share similar role responsibilities and experiences. Thus, they have more common ground and reference points to share. The differences between socialisation by family members and peers is equality. Peer groups serve the purpose of mutual support and sharing.

P. Musgrave⁴⁴ claims that peer group culture contributes greatly to one's adult life. In expounding his view, Musgrave argues that a healthy peer group life and other social group activities contribute greatly to the adolescent's social competence. In his view, social values and skills are acquired through sharing, discussion and negotiation with

others throughout the process of peer socialisation. This unique nature of socialisation gives a different social experience to young people which cannot be gained from the family. For example, they learn how to interact with the opposite sex, express themselves and respect others. Interpersonal relationships are crucial to assist young people in transferring from adolescence to adulthood and this is contingent on their peer group relationship and experience.

In K. Roe's⁴⁵ study on mass media and adolescent schooling, his findings indicated that peers have greater influence during the period of schooling and on current issues like fashion and media tastes. Peers generate values which may be similar to or contradict those of the wider society. There are some features of group values that are shared by the group members in terms of dress, language and choices of leisure and consumption. On the basis that peer group is the formation of a group of close friends, its influences may be seen as "benchmarks that tell us how we should react appropriately, and the correct or guide our attitudes and beliefs in both obvious and subtle ways"⁴⁶. Nevertheless, he points out that although peer groups play an important part in adolescent life, the family is still the most important place for the adolescents. They are inclined to consult their parents for more complicated and important problems. For the short term or on going choices adolescents attempt to seek peer advices. Roe concludes that peer influence increases with age and is different according to gender.

S. Duck⁴⁷ claims that peers are close friends who people anchor emotions, from whom they develop their attitudes towards the external world like the political, social and economic systems. An individual can hardly be immune to the influence of peer group

members. They offer a sense of belonging to the group, through speaking the language and a set of shared norms.

J. Coleman and L. Hendry⁴⁸ believe that youth culture is a source of external pressures on adolescents which oppose to the traditional lifestyle and values of the previous generation. K. Urberg⁴⁹ argues that peer group influence is mediated by conformity. His work on individual response to social pressures showed that adolescents' drinking behaviour was prone to be influenced by peers or best friends. Findings suggested that peer influence increased with the age of adolescents in particular with those who were high on conformity⁵⁰.

As conformity is closely connected with personality, J. Cohen⁵¹ reveals that personality does mediate peer influence. Furthermore, Cohen argues that how adolescents' social behaviour and values can be attributed to their peer group is subject to the nature of friendship. Selected intimate friendship is more likely to have greater peer group influence than the non-selected causal group. In the same manner, long-term friendship has more effects on peers' behaviour than the short-term.

4.4.3.1 Summary of Peer Culture and Values Acquisition

The cited literature confirmed the socialisation approach in the sense that social interaction and value acquisition are interrelated and peer culture plays an important part in schooling. Peers are more important to adolescents than to younger children. There is a close link between the activities that young people engage in and the nature of value transmission. Discussion of value acquisition indicated that certain values are important

for young people as guidance for them to fulfil their social responsibilities. Social values and skills are regarded as one of the practical competencies which enable an individual to play social roles such as a citizen, producer and consumer adequately.

4.4.3.2 Overall Discussion of the Socialisation Literature

In examining how values are acquired, the perspective of socialisation theory stresses the social learning process and role taking. Concepts of culture and conventions are formed in the person-social interaction process. This perspective notes different means to reinforce and to weaken a selected set of social values by the administration of reinforcement and punishment. At the heart of socialisation theory lies modelling and authority.

Values are important for the individuals to lead a competent life in any society and the school curriculum plays a supportive and reinforcing role in this process. Nevertheless, a deeper analysis of the literature suggested that values acquisition has a bearing on social conformity, yet the role of the recipient is important in determining what values to acquire and to what extent.

As this thesis suggests that the recipient is not simply copying a transmitter's values the active role of the individual in acquiring values should be given more attention. More importantly, if the acquisition of values assists individuals in making consistent decisions in different situations, there is a place for moral reasoning in making value judgments.

On the contrary, an individual's reasoning ability and moral judgment should also have effects on the internalisation of values. Despite the fact that research on socialisation provides evidence to indicate the relationship between socialisation and value acquisition, little is known about the process of values internalisation. The socialisation literature has not provided sufficient attention to the way in which an individual retains the values for future use and the differences between individuals' internalisation of values. In addition, it remains uncertain that whether values will be reshaped at a later stage.

4.5 A STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO THE ACQUISITION OF VALUES

This section on structural developmental approach has the purpose of understanding value acquisition in terms of intellectual growth and moral reasoning. This section argues that the gap between socialisation and individual developmental differences can be reconciled by the developmental literature. The following section introduces the mechanisms underlining an individual's internalization of values. The work of J. Piaget and L. Kohlberg on the development of morality is examined in order to provide a discussion and understanding of value acquisition and to generate insights for educational discussion.

To test the argument that values acquisition cannot be fully explained as social phenomena, the following paragraphs explore the emergence of morality from the perspective of developmental theories. This section focuses on the early to late adulthood stages of moral development. Particular attention is given to the internal structural changes of individual's cognition---what can be gained at what specific stages.

Piaget's assumptions of development of cognition are summarised as follows:

1. stages imply distinct or qualitative differences in children's modes of thinking or of solving the same problem at different ages.
2. these different modes of thought form an invariant sequence, order, or succession in individual development. While cultural factors may speed up, slow down or stop development, they do not change its sequence.
3. each of these different and sequential modes of thought forms a "structural whole". A given stage-response on a task does not just represent a specific response determined by knowledge of and familiarity with that task or tasks similar to it. Rather it represents an underlying thought-organisation.
4. cognitive stages are hierarchical integrations. Stages form an order of increasingly differentiated and integrated structures to fulfil a common function. The general adaptational functions of cognitive structures are always the same⁵².

Piaget's structural developmental approach is not purely an idea of biological maturation.

The basic transformation of cognitive structure is regarded as the result of processes of interaction between the structure of the organism and the structure of the environment.

Physical environment and biological maturity interact with one another and cultural norms are acquired in this continuous process.

Piaget⁵³ argues that moral development is a progressive developmental trend. He studied three age groups of children in learning the game rules of marbles, up to 4 or 5 years old, from 4-5 to 9-10 and 9-10. The rules of playing the marble game correspond to adult rules in society. Children before the age of 4 or 5 did not show any concept of rules whilst children between 4-5 and 9-10 years old followed the rules as a direct response to the authority. Those who were above 9 or 10 years old interpreted rules as a kind of mutual agreement among players. In an analysis of the verbal responses of children's interpretation of game rules, two stages of moral reasoning were found: coercion and autonomy. The child started to differentiate self from other, and

to give up self satisfaction to the imposed adult rules. A departure from egocentrism was identified and this stage was characterised by rule following.

In his studies, progression of moral judgment was found from a non-critical moral judgment stage to the next, rational rules, stage. The child tried to operate mental ability to elaborate and examine the adult rules. "Corporation" is the conception used by Piaget to describe the process that a child comes to verify adult rules and operate reciprocal control intellectually. An individual has to grasp the meaning of cooperation so as to make self judgment on moral acts and frees himself or herself from the imposed external rules.

Moreover, Piaget identifies three levels of the psychological nature of an individual's moral development. The first or fundamental level is characterised by rule following: obedience is good and disobedience is bad. At the second level, an awareness of self judgment is developed. Finally, the third stage is an objective conception of responsibility: personal conformity to the rules themselves after a self judgment process.

P. Smith and H. Cowie⁵⁴ summarise and illustrate Piaget's stage theory of moral reasoning in Table 1.

Table 1 : Summary of Piaget's stage theory of moral development

Up to 4 to 5 year	From 4-5 year to 9-10 year	After 9-10 year
Premoral judgment	Moral realism (Heteronomous morality of constraint)	Moral subjectivism (Autonomous morality of cooperation)
Rules not understood	Rules come from higher authority and cannot be changed	Rules are created by people and can be changed by mutual consent
	Evaluate actions by outcomes	Evaluate actions by intentions
	Punishment as inevitable retribution	Punishment as chosen to fit crime

The theory highlights that the necessities of the transformation of cognitive structures are basic conditions for maintaining an equilibrium in subject-object interaction. The transformation of cognitive structures represent "truth, logic, knowledge, adaptation in general forms"⁵⁵.

Piaget's stage theory of moral development is further studied by L. Kohlberg who adopts Piagetian tradition to study how individuals reason about dilemma situations in terms of stealing and lying. Kohlberg prepared a list of the questions for fifty American males between the years of 10 and 26. They were requested to offer justifications for such propositions such as "why shouldn't you steal from a store?" Kohlberg found that there were three levels of moral development: the preconventional, conventional and postconventional. At each level, there are two sub-divided stages of moral development. Similar to Piaget's stage-related theory of moral reasoning, Kohlberg suggested a typology. Moral development progresses with age at varying speeds. Yet, no rigid age

classifications were suggested. It is not the universal case that every individual achieves all these moral stages: some may stop at the conventional stage or below.

Advancement in moral reasoning is characterised by increasing differentiation and integration. The six stages of development are as follows:

1. obey rules to avoid punishment,
2. conform to obtain rewards, have favors returned, and so on,
3. conform to avoid disapproval and dislike by others,
4. conform to avoid censure by legitimate authorities and resultant guilt,
5. conform to maintain the respect of the impartial spectator judging in terms of community welfare, and
6. conform to avoid self-condemnation⁵⁶.

This classification reflects the proposition that younger children's reasoning about what is desirable and undesirable is based on the consequences of committing the acts. Parental responses are indicators for examining and reasoning about what consequences are likely to happen. Most basic moral values are acquired by observation and assessing, the consequences of committing different acts. At the conventional stage, right and wrong are submitted to authority principles and social rules. At the postconventional stage, an awareness of social norms and a compromise of personal values with them. Internalisation of moral values takes place as a result of the departure from the use of authority principles or social convention. At the postconventional stage, two levels are identified (1) the social control orientation and (2) the universal and ethical principle orientation. The social control orientation illustrates how individuals share and compromise with social rules and conventions whilst constructing their own standpoints. Therefore, a rational and logical mind is important for decision making. In addition, the judgment of right and wrong is a result of self conscientiousness, a universal and ethical principle orientation. In short, these ethical principles have their

foundation in the reciprocity and equity of human rights, justice and respecting for the dignity of human being as individuals⁵⁷.

4.6 DISCUSSION OF THE DEVELOPMENTALIST APPROACH TO MORAL DEVELOPMENT

The stage theory of moral development emphasises children's intellectual growth and moral reasoning rather than other socialising agencies. Developmentalists' views of the emergence of morality suggests an interaction effect between an individual and the physical environment. Internalisation of moral values and cultural norms depends on the readiness of the internal cognitive structure of an individual. Certain moral values can only be acquired if an individual has reached the specific moral reasoning stage. At the other extreme, the role of social environment in speeding up or slowing down the process of moral reasoning is also highlighted. The effectiveness of social reinforcement and punishment is mediated by personal intellectual thinking skills and conformity.

4.7 AN OVERALL SUMMARY

The following section has the purpose of combining the two categories of literature to offer an overview of the process of value acquisition. This chapter has shown that values acquisition is a life-long process and is a combination of socialisation and intellectual development. Socialisation allows cultural norms and adult principles to be acquired whilst intellectual growth permits various values dilemmas. Ganguli et. al. concluded that a moral human being is formed by a combination process:

One is a socialisation process in which an individual learns the particulars of his own culture; the second is developmental in which the individual's capacity for reasoning about moral questions grows apace with his intellectual growth⁵⁸.

Values are important to a society as well as individuals. At the social level, values regulate social functions and social systems. At the other extreme, values are equally important to redirect human beings in a particular way so as to gain personal competence.

In this chapter, the roles of society and individual in transmitting values are seen as an interactive process. Within this transmitter and receiver process, values are selectively transmitted by the transmitter and selectively acquired by the recipient. A direct link between the recipient's moral reasoning ability and the personal role of values in decision making is highlighted.

Part of an analysis aiming to develop insights for curricular innovations in Hong Kong especially for the next century, the relationship between moral reasoning and personal competence has been emphasised. A particular stress has been placed on values in terms of independent critical thinking and moral reasoning. Because of the social nature of schools, the selection of worthwhile knowledge, and the selection of skills for social betterment and harmonious social attitudes are major objectives for curriculum management and development. Different societies emphasize different cultural norms for producing future citizens, and managing socio-moral values across the school curriculum is always a social issue and always an important educational task.

In a changing society such as Hong Kong, inconsistent or conflicting societal values bring greater conflict and personal confusion. Therefore, clarification of values is an urgent task for the Hong Kong curriculum developers. Communication of public opinion

about the objectives of Hong Kong education in the future is important but little known. In a curriculum for the needs of Hong Kong society, educators would have to clarify the fundamental aims of education for the post-merger period. In particular, the educational implications of mixed views on the political future of Hong Kong and the prevailing of conflicting values would demand a rethinking of the objectives of local education.

4.8 CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLING AND VALUES ACQUISITION FOR THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG CURRICULAR INNOVATIONS

Because this chapter focuses on changing curriculum, changing values and changing politics of Hong Kong, the succeeding section draws special attention to moral and citizenship elements in the Hong Kong school curriculum. The preceding paragraph suggested that Hong Kong has reached a point in its history when it must redefine the objectives of education and clarify its values teaching in schools. Young Hong Kong people are in a stage of confusion as 1997 has begun to affect the local socio-political and economic systems. Most important of all, local educators are facing an educational problem of assisting young people in differentiating what is fact from opinion, among a sea of mixed reporting and contradictory views.

This chapter argues that to facilitate effective and relevant local Hong Kong curricular innovations, the dual socio-developmental approach discussed in the chapter provides useful ideas for values clarification and teaching. As Lawton⁵⁹ has commented, the socio-oriented approach to curriculum development fails to address the individual needs of children whilst the child-oriented approach oversimplifies the effects of the person-social interaction process. He therefore suggests a complementary approach to

managing the school curriculum, making use of social experience to cultivate individuals' intellectual growth.

Effective curricular innovation relies on an understanding of the socio-economic background and the intellectual development of individuals. For changing the Hong Kong curriculum, both the socio-economic ethos and young people's attitudes toward life and society have to be taken into consideration. To prepare young people as citizens of the HKSAR, educators should have an understanding of the expectations of the new society and of the young people so as to provide adequate educational provision.

Additionally, as young people's perceptions and understanding of society are restricted by their cognitive development and reasoning ability, attention should also be paid to individual differences in intellectual development. For meaningful educational provision and maximization of intellectual growth, the current Hong Kong educational system requires more attention to developing young people's reasoning ability.

To increase young people's socio-political awareness, citizenship education should have a higher priority in the school curriculum. This is especially crucial for paving the way for a genuine representative government in the 21st century. And Hong Kong education needs to provide a group of people who are both civic minded and aware, socio-politically.

For achievement of the above educational objectives, young people should have the ability to think critically, the ability to make independent decisions and to remain discerning amid conflicting values.

The interdependent relationship between individuals and society suggests that new educational innovation needs to maintain a balance between meeting the needs of individuals and society. Individuals need to stand firm but also be discerning. This is especially important to a democratic society where citizens are able to make rational decisions. These principles give guidelines for the future Hong Kong curriculum development. For example, as the social sciences have a strong bearing on values and citizenship education, there is room for further exploration into these subjects to identify relevant values teaching for 1997.

In addition, this thesis argues that although the economic system in southern China is in transition from a socialist to a capitalist system, young Hong Kong people still find difficulty in adjusting to the differences between the PRC's and Hong Kong's economic systems for 1997 and beyond. In preparing young people as citizens of the HKSAR, educational attention should also be given to understanding young people's construction of the economic world. This is will be discussed in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

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2. Ganguli, H.C., Mehrotra, G.P., Mehlinger, Howard, D., (1981), "Values, Moral Education And Social Studies", in Mehlinger, Howard, D., (ed.), UNESCO Handbook for the Teaching of Social Studies, Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, pp.192-224.
3. Ibid., p.192.
4. Ibid., p.192.
5. Ibid., p.193, emphasis in original.
6. Williams, Raymond, (1961), The Long Revolution, London: Penguin Books, p.57.
7. Ibid., p.57.
8. Lawton, Denis, (1989), Education, Culture and The National Curriculum, London: Hodder and Stoughton, p.17.
9. Mead, Margaret, (1983), "Foreword", in Williams, Thomas, Socialization, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., p.v.
10. Mead, George, cf. Miller, David, (1973), George Herbert Mead, Self, Language, and the World, London: University of Texas Press, p.190.
11. Zevedei, Barbu, (1971), Society, Culture and Personality, London: Blackwell, p.4.
12. Although this section has the purpose on discussing the role of schools in values inculcation, it does not exclude or overlook the similar role of other socialising agencies such as family and work. In contrast, an attempt will be made to indicate the role of family in socialising young people into a set of values later in this chapter.
13. Mead, M., (1983), op. cit., p.v.
14. Lindesmith, Alfred, Strauss, Anselm, (1969), Readings in Social Psychology, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, p.7.
15. The role of the family as a socialising agency in value inculcation is briefly described as follows.

Throughout the normal human life process, parents play an altruistic role in the rearing of their children. The family is widely regarded as an important place for young people to learn what is right and what is wrong. Research on parent-child interaction and social values transmission indicates that a parental socialisation effect exists. At different developmental stages, various socialising agencies are serving the purpose of transmitting

different values to the recipients. In a normal upbringing, the family provides most of the basic and natural training: language and social skills, the manner and values. Therefore, the literature on socialisation has assigned many responsibilities to parents in explaining the mechanism underlying youngsters acquisition of values, in particular moral values. So, the following paragraphs review the literature on parents and values transmission.

The role of parents in socialising into values is discussed by social learning theorists. M. Windmiller, among others, points out that parents are a crucial socialising agency and most primary values that children acquire are from parents. He notes that some parents have a sense of social obligation to direct or to "instill" the values which are thought to be useful for later social life.

See Windmiller, Myra, (1980), "Introduction", in Windmiller, Myra, Lambert, Nadine, Turiel, Elliot, (eds.), Moral Development and Socialization, Boston: Allyn And Bacon, Inc., pp. 1-29.

J. Aronfeed finds a close relationship between basic competent life skills and family socialisation. Parents are models for the young child and their responses indicate what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Most of the basic values are transmitted by parents at home and are reinforced by others such as teachers in school.

See Aronfeed, Justin, (1969), "The Concept of Internalization", in Goslin, David, (ed.), Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research, Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company, pp.263-323.

The role of parents in equipping the child for competence is further discussed by J. Whiting, I. Child and W. Lambert. In their view, throughout early childhood to adolescence, self-reliant skills and obedience are highly emphasised by parents in such activities as washing, cooking and problem solving. These values and skills are reinforced by parental rewards.

See Whiting, John, Child, Irvin, Lambert, William, (1966), Field Guide for a study of Socialization, New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., pp.43-76.

P. McPhail turns attention to family socialisation and individuals' acquisition of moral values. Children's fundamental moral education is received from parental reinforcement for being honest, moral and considerate whilst there is punishment for not being so. McPhail stresses that parents as teachers have to prioritise their "teaching objectives", making judgments on what values are more important for their children to acquire for leading a competent life in future.

See McPhail, Peter, (1982), Social and Moral Education, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, p.53.

Thus, the family has a primary role in preparing youngsters for better social adjustment and development through the transmission of values. The literature highlighted the proposition that values acquisition and social competence were tightly linked.

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17. Durkheim, E., (1956), op. cit., pp.67-70.
18. Ibid., p.71, emphasis in the original.
19. Ibid., p.74.
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21. Ibid., p.29.
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CHAPTER FIVE THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ECONOMIC WORLD

5.1 PURPOSE AND ARGUMENT

The last chapter indicated a close relationship between values internalisation and moral reasoning ability. This chapter has the purpose of extending the last chapter's discussion to review the literature on young peoples' acquisition of economic concepts and values. Young people brought up in Hong Kong might have great difficulty in adjusting to the PRC ways of thought and practice as the socio-political and economic systems of Hong Kong are very different from those of the PRC. In educating competent adults for Hong Kong in the next century, it is important to prepare young people for understanding the differences between capitalism and socialism.

A responsible citizen contributes to society in terms of making rational and logical economic decisions as a consumer and a producer. This requires an understanding of the economic system, an independent and critical mind. Citizenship education in the school curriculum highlights the element of economic awareness. Therefore, it is important to identify economic concepts and values in the school curriculum.

For instance, in England, a document produced by the National Curriculum Council indicates that citizenship education consists of the following components:

community---family and parenting; finance, including personal finance; the individual and society; local regional, national and international relationships including the European dimension; collective responsibility; rights and duties.

democracy in action---electoral procedures; constitutional background; local and national government; international law; human rights; planning

the conflicting demands and pressures, aesthetic, environmental, economic.

the citizen and the law--civil and criminal law; role of the police; working principles and everyday law; crime prevention.

work and employment---rights and duties; employment legislation; trades unions; economic factors affecting employment; wealth generation.

public services---local and national; the voluntary sector; how services are paid for---taxation nationally and locally; links between wealth generation/standard of living.

a plural society---the benefits and conflicts of living in a plural society.

leisure---the importance of leisure for the individual and the community; voluntary work; the environment; aesthetics in the community---architecture, the arts, libraries.

being a citizen---rights and privileges; duties; values and beliefs; importance of participating, how to be involved; sources of information; organisations to contact¹.

Most of the components demand an understanding of economics and thinking skills.

The fact that everyday activities such as shopping, choosing, throwing away and allocating time and resources involve an economic element. In other words, the economic facts of life are based on the interactive process between the choice behaviours of individuals, groups, communities, firms and countries and the whole economic system. In participating in these daily activities, individuals develop an intuitive feeling about the economic system². Economic awareness and citizenship are closely linked.

The main argument of this chapter is that economic values and concepts are, like the acquisition of other social and moral values, a combination of socialisation and intellectual growth. As Hong Kong has a laissez faire economy and promotes the spirit of competition, this socio-economic ethos should influence its people's economic values.

At the other hand, at various developmental stages, specific and sophisticated economic concepts are grasped. Economic socialisation and maturation assists incorporate individuals into economic life in a smoother manner.

Two sub-arguments are developed. Firstly, the construction of economic concepts and values is not simply a developmental process, neither can it be fully explained by the developmental literature. Secondly, the ways individuals construct their economic knowledge and values are shaped by their personal socio-economic experience and background. These two sub-arguments are developed and discussed on the basis of a detailed review of the related literature.

5.1.1 Organisation of the chapter

Achievement of the purpose of the chapter requires a survey of the literature on the acquisition of economic concepts and values. Because this chapter takes the view that the construction of economic concepts and values is not simply a developmental process, the chapter discusses the influence of cultural norms and physical environment on the acquisition of economic values and concepts. They are discussed in two main streams: the developmental and socialisation processes. For example, the work of A. Strauss³ on money, G. Jahoda⁴ on exchange transaction, V. Burris⁵ on money, transaction and work suggested that monetary understanding increased with age. In addition, the work of R. Sutton⁶ on children's understanding of money, Jahoda⁷ on profit and A. Furnham and P. Thomas⁸ on pocket money stressed social influences. A lot of everyday social experiences such as shopping with parents, buying with peers and learning from teachers, influence young people's consumer behaviour⁹. Yet, there is no certainty

about which economic concepts are best grasped at which age, and which social experience determine the extent and structure of economic beliefs. Both the developmental and socialisation literature will be reviewed and discussed to offer a thorough understanding of young peoples' grasp of economics.

This chapter employs a critical and systematic examination of the literature on the acquisition of economic concepts and values. Sutton's¹⁰ guidelines for understanding the mechanism underlying the process of the acquisition of economic concepts and values are used. For instance, the way children retain the useful information for isolating and learning a concept and how the retained information is transformed in the first place. And the characteristics of the growth of economic concepts and how far they are shaped by culture and environment.

The following sections discuss children's formation of various economic concepts and values. Developmental evidence on the differences between children at various developmental stages in understanding economic concepts or values will first be provided. As this chapter argues that some findings cannot be fully understood as developmental phenomena, the second part of the chapter provides socialisation evidence on the influence of cultural norms and physical environment on the acquisition of economic concepts or values. Particular attention is drawn to the intervention of social factors in the process of construction of the economic world.

5.2 THE DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO THE ACQUISITION OF ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

The succeeding section has the purpose of evaluating how the developmental literature presented children's formation of economic concepts: money, profit, shops and transaction. The argument of this section is that there is no coherent path in the developmental literature on understanding economic concepts and values. V. Burris'¹¹ investigation of the development of various economic concepts confirmed Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development. In his study, among the 96 children, the quality of their pattern of thinking progressed from simple to complex with age. The younger children's thinking is restricted by a physical set of objects whilst the older ones overcome this and show more awareness of social norms. The youngest group (four to five) comprehended a commodity from its physical features. A cow cannot be sold since it is too big to be transported by car. A baby cannot be sold as it is against the law (seven years old). In their view, all sorts of commodities can be sold and bought in society (ten to twelve years old).

In the same way, a contrast between the younger and the older age groups was found in understanding values of money. The younger children interpreted values in terms of the object's physical attributes. A diamond is smaller than a book, therefore, it is not as expensive as a book. The seven to eight years olds explained the value of goods in terms of their function or usage. A wristwatch is more costly than a book since it tells time but a book is just for reading. Also the subjects attributed the value of goods to their durability, for example, a pair of shoes could last for longer than a candy so it was dearer. In contrast, the oldest children explained the value of product from a human resources' point of view. A building requires a lot of human input so it is of higher

value. Because it takes longer to make a pair of shoes than a piece of candy, therefore, the former deserves to cost more than the latter. These types of answers are absent in the younger children.

As far as exchange is concerned, a progression from an ego-centric towards a wider social cognition is revealed in Burris' study. A conceptual confusion about the relationship between buyers and seller was found in the younger sample. In the absence of the knowledge of exchange transaction payment for goods they just regarded payment as a legal obligation---did not understand the reason for the buyer to pay the seller. Burris¹²believed this was due to children's intellectual egocentrism, seeing things from their own position, as termed by Piaget.

But more than seventy per cent of the seven to eight subjects overcame this egocentric thinking and understood the reciprocal relationship between the seller and the buyer. A full understanding of the transaction was achieved. And the ten to twelve years old children believed that payment was necessary for money circulation. They explained that the shopkeeper needed money for the shop expenses. Three main stages of grasping exchange transaction were found: egocentric-oriented, reciprocity-oriented and system-oriented. Burris claimed that these stages of understanding were similar to Piaget's framework of cognitive development.

The egoism of the younger children's thinking was also reflected in their understanding of property. Preoccupied by external moral justice (not explaining where this major external source came from), the children regarded stealing as simply a kind of

wrongdoing which would be punished. Subjects who were under twelve years old failed to see the relationship between property rights and the global economic system. However, there were quality differences in thinking at the age of eight as attention was paid to the underlying reasons for stealing behaviour. In contrast, the twelve-year-olds demonstrated a successful integration of several concepts: possession right, exchange process and equity. With other examples of economic reasoning such as work and income, similar findings resulted. From the responses given by different age groups in the sample, a consistent progression of understanding existed across a wide range of economic concepts.

In conclusion, the process of the acquisition of economic concepts is a matter of intellectual development. In other words, the social phenomena are firstly understood by their physical characteristics such as commodity, values and exchange. Then, secondly, children comprehended the meaning of social phenomenon and internalised as their own knowledge. Burris' work was supported by K. Fox's¹³ as she revealed that the development of children's reasoning about economic ideas was sequential and progressed with age. She argued that younger children's experiences were unprocessed so could not be regarded as true understanding. A thorough understanding of economics matter was reached only when the children mastered the economic knowledge to analyse and generalise data.

Fox's work has been further studied by M. Schug¹⁴. He reported that the development of children's economic reasoning progressed from unreflective responses, relying on physical cues, to reflective responses, fading of physical cues. More reflective economic

reasoning was found in grade nine than in grades one to four indicating an age effect. Five prerequisite concepts for understanding and using other economic concepts are: economic wants, limited income, opportunity cost, choice, and price mechanism. The last two economic concepts were found to be developing earlier than the others. Specific economic concepts, according to individual's experiences, however, do not necessarily follow the logic of this cognitive development process.

Moreover, in terms of understanding economic system, Jahoda identified a progression from a naive stage, no awareness of the meaning of transactions to view the economic system independently. Realisation of the connection between the transaction and economic systems was in the highest stage of cognitive development. One point that Jahoda stressed was that children did not rely solely on school learning. Rather, children make an effort to approach the problem from their own point of view and knowledge that acquired from the social environment. As he puts it:

the child attempting to understand his social environment is engaged upon an active process rather than mere passive absorption¹⁵.

Understanding money

The meaning of money was studied by Strauss. A group of sixty-six children, aged from four and a half to eleven and a half was chosen from families engaged in business in Indiana. The research findings confirmed a Piagetian framework of stage development. Nine stages of understanding of money were found and each successive stage was characterised by intellectual advancement. The stages are classified as follows:

- (1) associates money with buying but no understanding of the connection between the two concepts,
- (2) has no concept of the values of the coin represented (any coin can buy anything),
- (3) shows some confusion of the exact values that certain coins represented (for instance, not all the coins are the same, only certain coins give change);
- (4) understands the exact values of the coin,
- (5) recognises that selling is a job to support the shopkeeper's living, (the shopkeeper works hard in the shop so as to make a living);
- (6) shows an awareness of the relationship between customers and the shopkeeper, that is monetary (logical thinking emerges),
- (7) demonstrates an understanding of the concept of self payment (apart from paying the shopkeeper, the shopkeeper actually pays himself as well);
- (8) recognises that the shopkeeper sells for more money than he/she buys (a full understanding of shop profit and the basic principle which underlines exchange),
- (9) denies the possibility of the shopkeeper's short change so as to gain more from customers. (As it contradicts the child's moral justice, and the child thinks that customers will not call again).

Among these nine stages of development of economic concepts, in stage seven, Strauss noticed that the children's thinking process was actually interrupted by the development of moral justice. Because of the moral dilemma, the subjects denied the fact that the shopkeeper was actually selling dearer than he/she bought wholesale and consequently, no true understanding was yielded. Moreover, at this stage children confronted the problem of transition and failed to integrate their personal experiences with new knowledge. For instance, the child realised that his/her father paid less to the maker or the wholesaler but charged more to customers and regarded the acts as morally wrong. Another child interpreted the shopkeeper's acts as a way of earning and realised that

money could regenerate money. The studies showed that the subjects had not developed the concept of investment.

A decade later, Sutton's¹⁶ work on children's knowledge of the source and function of money and bank concluded that neither age nor socio-economic factors have a significant effect. Rather, the findings suggested that both personal experience and environment made a difference to the performance, especially on the questions "how do people get money, what is a bank and why do people save etc".

The concept of uses of money was also studied by K. Danziger¹⁷. In researching forty-one, five to eight year old Australians' conception of the meaning and uses of money, he summarised his findings reporting that children's development of economic concepts was in stages. Four stages were concluded by his work. The first initial pre-categorical stage showed no concept of economics and confusion in other social concepts. A boss at work was purely seen as a person helping workers at work without any economic function. Exchange of money was seen as a necessary custom in order not to be put in jail. The second categorical stage is characterized by isolated acts and governed by moral obligation. A boss was understood as a person who paid the workers, and money was therefore circulated into other commodities. They saw no relationship between the circulation of money and commodities. The third stage conceptualized relationships of the previous isolated acts but treated these relationships as isolated. A boss was the owner of the factory and has some economic function. The fourth stage integrated all these isolated relations as a whole and formed a system. At this stage, children realised that the boss actually earned a living by running the factory and the function of money

was helping the circulation of money as well as commodities. Danziger concluded that rational thinking and full understanding was achieved in the final stage¹⁸.

The concept of work

Research into understanding work suggests that children at different ages have different perceptions. These perceptions seem to be influenced by various sources across different age groups. For example, V. Burris¹⁹ studies of younger children, aged between four to twelve, revealed that the younger children, aged four to five, viewed work as what most people were engaged in. As the relation of work to subjective motivation had not yet understood, the subjects found difficulty in differentiating work from play. Children at the age of eight could differentiate work from play using the payment concept. In their view, work was coerced but play was self-directed and autonomous. Findings suggested that the school effect was insignificant for children's conception of work. Children were confused with the meanings of getting knowledge from school and getting paid from work.

Understanding of exchange and profits

H. Furth²⁰ carried out an extensive study in Britain looking at one hundred and ninety-five, five to eleven-year-olds' perceptions of money, shopping and the nature of work. She revealed that the younger children, five to six years old, tended to be more egocentric. Similar to Strauss' and Burris' work, Furth revealed that the younger sample judged on the physical characteristics of the social phenomena and saw social acts as rituals. These beliefs were less persistent in the older sample. Nevertheless, as no evidence was shown to confirm that the latest stage of development in economic

concepts was a result of previous learning, the differences in performance at various stages could only suggest different modes of formation of thought at a specific stage. Furth therefore argued that understanding economic phenomena could not fully be explained by the developmental literature.

In contrast, Furth revealed that understanding the concept of exchange was in stages. And from her findings, she classified four stages of learning exchange transaction activities such as buying and selling. They were namely: (1) no understanding, (2) understanding of payment of customers but not of the shopkeeper; (3) understanding and relating of both customer and shopkeeper payment, but not of profit; (4) understanding of all relationships between profit, pricing and sales etc.

Furth's earlier work on exchange was modified by Jahoda²¹. He applied Piagetian work to one hundred and twenty Glaswegian children between the age of six and twelve years old to examine their understanding of economic institutions: shops. Jahoda's findings suggested that most children under the age of eleven denied the connection between the selling and buying systems, especially for those who were aged less than ten. In contrast, a noticeable improvement was marked with the older children aged 10 or above. They showed greater awareness of the difference between buying prices and selling prices. At the age of eleven, most children demonstrated a true understanding of the two economic systems. Children correctly pointed out that a shopkeeper was actually earning a living by engaging in the buying and selling activities. The sample progressed from a "funny" stage showing no understanding of the meaning of transaction, to another stage which they could develop a notion of wage system (aged

ten), and then from not being able to see the relationships between two systems to a complete understanding.

In Jahoda's study on children's understanding of exchange, he revealed a gap between a full understanding of shop profit and bank profit. In the study, the 10-year-old children viewed a bank just as a place to store money and failed to identify the relationship with transactions. Not until the logic behind the whole transaction system was completely reasoned did they realise that the bank owner was making a profit from running the bank, like the shopkeeper.

In Jahoda's research, he identified a transitional problem. The subjects found it easier to understand profit when the selling prices were constantly higher than the buying prices. Conversely, they could hardly understand profit when the two prices constantly remained the same. A child's cognitive development advances after resolving these mental discrepancies. This cognitive progressive process appeared to Jahoda that before a child reached the formal operational stage (the formation of logical thinking), exposure to a social institution did not really help. Rather, a child at the concrete operational stage regarded exchanges activities as rituals. In summary, findings supported the claim that children's understanding of shop profit was dependent upon their intellectual growth.

However, when Jahoda²² conducted a similar study on one hundred and seven African children of nine to eleven years old, findings indicated that age only had a weak effect on their overall results in comparison with personal experience and social factors. Though most of the children's parents were engaged in either buying and selling or

growing and selling, the parental effect was not significant. In contrast, the peer group has been reported to have greater effect. Jahoda claimed that children gained a feeling for transactions simply from their daily lives. He believed that the social learning process played a crucial part in assisting the children in getting advancement in understanding shop profit than what was being achieved by the Scottish sample.

Jahoda's study demonstrated that if children were placed in a suitable social environment, they would have greater cognitive development at least in terms of understanding economic concepts. Jahoda assumed that the African subjects would perform less well in the standard Piagetian cognitive tasks if their superiority in understanding shop profit was a result of their cultural background because:

first, that knowledge of the social is different in kind from knowledge of the physical world; second, that the stages elaborated by Piaget with reference to understanding of physical phenomenon constitute the only valid yardstick for assessing cognitive development.

And he continues to argue that:

we must recognize...the fundamental similarity in which knowledge of any type is constructed. The child comes to know all aspects of the world through a similar process of constitution embedded within a specific matrix of social influence²³.

Acquisition of a full economic understanding, Jahoda asserted that, the child has to be able to dissociate himself/herself from the interpersonal relationship and the economic concepts. That was the way to overcome their subjectivity in analysing the social phenomena. In Jahoda's view, the reason that children found difficulty in understanding bank profit was because of the social function of a bank as an economic institution which offered social services to the public.

A hierarchy of conceptual organisation was identified by Jahoda. Monetary understanding was a fundamental concept for a child to develop further economic knowledge. Only when the child was able to see the function and values of money could he/she appreciate shop profit. This also has been discussed by Berti et al.²⁴. Different levels of economic understanding are closely related to its meaning to young children.

Berti et al.²⁵ studied the concept of profit with eighty-six Italian children at the average age of eight years focusing the relationships between various personal experience and the acquisition of the concept. The sample was divided into a control group without receiving any instructions and an experimental group instructed in their thinking approach. The experimental group achieved slightly better than the control group. Recent studies of Berti et al.,²⁶ and Berti²⁷ concluded that comparison task to increase children's awareness of the difference between selling prices and buying prices could help the acquisition of the conception of profit.

Furthermore, recent work on examining the effect of age, sex and class on children's acquisition of four exchange-related factors: prices, wages, investment and strikes, by Furnham²⁸ revealed significant age effects, but few sex and class effects. Despite the fact that age showed a constant main effect across various economic concepts, surprisingly, the oldest age group (between fifteen and sixteen) were more confused about the price setting of products than the other two younger age groups (eleven to twelve, thirteen-fourteen). Similarly, Berti et al.²⁹ reported their findings that even though their older sample (aged eleven to twelve) saw the reasons for the factory owner

running the factory, they failed to understand that of the shopkeeper. The lack of ability of generalization implied that this concept was understood in a context-related manner but had not yet been fully grasped.

In testing the knowledge of production and ownership of the four to thirteen years old Italians, Berti, Bombi and Lis³⁰ found the subjects' living environment made a big difference to their performance. The experiment was carried out in an industrial town which was surrounded by small farm houses. Most of the children's parents were either workers or housewives from the local industrial town. Children demonstrated a better understanding of factory ownership but failed to comprehend the role of farmers as owners of their farmlands.

Some implications can be drawn from the study. Firstly, it supports Jahoda's previous findings that no concept of transaction or profit is gained before the age of eight. Like the previous work, this study reiterates the significance of children's environment and parental role in shaping their economic concepts. The inconsistent findings are however not at all clear that how far the cognitive developmental approach offers a sufficient analogy to young people's construction of economic reality.

Children's understanding of the relationship between money and work was discussed by Furth³¹. In her in-depth study of one hundred and ninety-two British children, aged between five to eleven years, she found that the younger sample (aged five) related the source of money with work by their own perceptions or imaginations. For example, the

firemen paid for the fire-engine. Parents had a no payment job as they did it for fun. In their view, students were not paid because they gained knowledge from school.

However, the older children (aged ten years) perceived payment from the workers' performance because "they are doing a very good job"³². The subjects believed that adults get paid only for some particular jobs but not all. Moreover, children under six think teachers were not paid for teaching, but, they lived on their savings.

S. H. Ng³³ replicated and extended Jahoda's study on understanding bank and shop profits by researching ninety-six Hong Kong Chinese boys, six to thirteen-year-old, from the primary and secondary classes of a Hong Kong school. A significant performance lag was yielded when they compared the Hong Kong sample with Jahoda's Scottish sample. The concepts of shop profit and bank profit could be grasped by the Hong Kong sample two years earlier than the Scottish sample³⁴. On the whole, age has an effect on children's understanding of the two economic concepts. Remarkable progress was found between the eight to nine, the ten to eleven and the twelve to thirteen age groups. Each of them had progressed well beyond the immediately younger group. In short, the study confirmed Jahoda's earlier findings that the acquisition of economic concepts was according to children's stages of cognitive development.

However, the developmental stages of the Chinese children in understanding bank profit were different from Jahoda's model. Ng identified seven stages of children's understanding of the bank profit: the first stage was beyond the "funny" stage with no concept of interest, the second was interest on deposits only and the third was of interest

on loans only. When proceeded to the fourth which was of loan interest as less than deposit interest and the fifth was that loan interest equals to deposit interest. The sixth stage was that loan interest more than deposit interest but without a clear understanding of profit. The seventh stage was that loan interest was more than deposit interest and with a full understanding of profit.

Later, Ng³⁵ replicated the study in New Zealand to measure 140 seven to twelve years children's understanding of profit. Again, his findings supported the earlier results showing that the Hong Kong sample was two years ahead of the New Zealand sample. As for the understanding of shop and bank profits, Ng's³⁶ study suggested that the Hong Kong sample achieved the best performance when compared to the British sample, the Dutch sample and the Scottish sample. Thus, this phenomenon proved that the invariant stages of economic understanding could not be fully explained by the developmental approach.

Most important of all, Ng's findings indicated that the influence of social factors (and this has repeatedly been pointed out by researchers such as Jahoda). For instance, when the subjects were asked whether they had to repay more for borrowing from friends, quite a few children answered that sometimes this was required and this was absent in the western sample. Placed in such a highly commercial society, Ng believed that Hong Kong children could grasp this concept easily from their daily lives and socio-economic ethos. The operation of bank loan and the practice of private borrowing did not have much difference. Further, it was found that the Hong Kong sample achieved some

complicated economic concepts, such as bank loan rather than deposit interest, which were absent in Jahoda's Scottish sample.

Thus, this exceptional economic maturity of the Hong Kong sample was due to their high level of economic socialisation and consumer activity in addition to the business ethos of society at large. As Ng noticed, socially, life would be difficult for young Hong Kong people if they did not grasp socio-economic concepts at an early age. Their superiority of understanding, therefore, represented a case of socio-economic reality shaping socio-economic understanding. Although how far could children's economic awareness be attributed to the environmental factor is not certain, there is a relationship between socialisation and economic awareness.

This evidence supports the view that it would be possible to include economic values and concepts in the curriculum even at the early school years. Moreover, as this thesis is concerned with exploring and generating new curricular ideas for educating competent adults in future Hong Kong society, it is important to determine what curricular elements are especially relevant for this purpose. In order to provide a better understanding of young Hong Kong people's socio-economic values and socialisation, the following section turns attention to their economic profile of youth in Hong Kong.

5.3 YOUNG HONG KONG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE ECONOMIC WORLD

Young Hong Kong people have plenty of experience in using and earning money. The Ming Pao Daily News³⁷ reported that most Hong Kong secondary students have a part time job as private teachers of lower level students. The reasons for them working part

time vary from earning pocket money to support themselves. In order to fully utilize school resources, some students gave private tuitions at school. The Hong Kong Daily News³⁸ reported that the main reason for their part time employment was due to the culture of materialism. The source reported that there was a trend for Hong Kong students to engage in investment activities and small scale transactions.

The Ming Pao Daily News³⁹ reported in a recent survey of a hundred young Hong Kong people aged between fourteen to twenty years that only thirty-two per cent of them were satisfied with the amount of pocket money. Usually, the motivation to earn extra money was for purchasing designer name high fashion goods. On average, students receive five hundred Hong Kong dollars or above a month. Interestingly, the richer children tend to have more complaints about the shortage of pocket money than those who are poorer. In this survey, about twelve per cent thought that they should have part employment so as to make life better. However, only one per cent of them have part time working experiences during summer vacation and Christmas vacation. In other words, this study concludes that most of the sample does not have any working experiences while studying. In the same report, it is found that nine out of twenty teachers interviewed believe that part-time employment is acceptable provided it does not affect students' studies, especially during the summer vacation.

According to a recent study on Hong Kong students' economic values, over seventy per cent of undergraduates of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong work part time. Moreover, the Hong Kong Daily News⁴⁰ reported four main reasons for Hong Kong college students to earn extra money: personal enjoyment such

as dating; clothes; to become more marketable to the target company; gaining relevant work experiences; because it was of practical use and for self interest. The attitudes towards earning pocket money of young Hong Kong people represents the pragmatism of this society. Again, this social phenomenon could not be explained by the developmental literature.

Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department⁴¹ published the figures on expenditure of youth in Hong Kong indicating that expenditure of the household with head aged 15-24 were higher on clothes than the average household, and about the same on alcohol and tobacco while less on housing, food, fuel, transport and services. This is shown in the following table.

Table 2: Average bi-weekly expenditure, (dollars) by type of expenditure and age of household head---1989/90⁴²

	Age group		
	15-24	25-34	All ages
Commodity/service			
Food	1410	1644	1796
Housing	1013	1518	1343
Fuel	84	115	126
Alcohol	69	72	71
Clothing	540	426	395
Durable goods	189	257	201
Miscellaneous	289	360	352
Transport & Vehicles	300	593	399
Services	306	619	567
All sections	4400	5604	5250

Realisation of the social phenomena, the Hong Kong Daily News⁴³ described that a materialistic attitude was prevalent among the secondary students in Hong Kong.

In addition, the studies of K.Y. Leung and C.M. Chung⁴⁴ regarding Hong Kong secondary students' maturity in career choice revealed that the level of study, streams of study and sex had significant effects on students' career maturity. When compared with the level of study, age had less effect, which implied that the more education the students had received, the better would be their career choice competence. Female students showed greater competence in career choice and attitudes than males.

Young Hong Kong people's economic activities and attitudes suggested that the socio-economic value systems and economic awareness are tightly linked. The preceding discussion indicated that economic socialisation and understanding are not a developmental matter. Moreover, the studies carried out by Jahoda and Ng indicated that economic values acquisition and concepts are influenced by the cultural norms.

5.4 SOCIALISATION APPROACH TO THE ACQUISITION OF ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

The succeeding section turns attention to examine the relationship between cultural norms and young people's understanding of economic values and concepts. The argument of this section is that socialising agencies such as family and social organisations play an important part in transmitting the economic values and the acquisition of economic concepts. The studies reviewed in this section focus on the effects of early socialization from the economic perspective. Special attention is paid to the development of economic beliefs such as economic justice, inequality, social

differentiation and possession. Revelation of the way in which some economic concepts are acquired through the process of socialisation necessitates a detailed review of the socialisation literature.

The following paragraphs survey the literature on the role of family socialisation in transmitting economic values and concepts. Several studies on elementary school children's economic understanding revealed that parental effects and social effects were more significant than the age effects.

M. Kourilsky's⁴⁵ studies had highlighted the role of socialisation and the importance of mastering the language skills. Research results indicated that age had fewer effects on young children's acquisition of economic concepts than the parental and social effects. Researching into five-year to six-year-olds' knowledge of scarcity, opportunity cost, production, specialization, consumption, distribution and exchange, Kourilsky revealed that the children have developed some abstract thinking. She pointed out that economics is closely related to daily lives activities such as interaction and communication with parents. However, in some circumstances, findings indicated that some very young children have acquired more economic knowledge than their parents.

Significant parental effect on children's knowledge of money was revealed by H. Marshall and L. Magruder⁴⁶. They analysed their findings of a sample of five hundred and twelve rural children, aged seven to twelve years reporting that particular parental practice in using money influenced children's acquisition of specific knowledge in money. Marshall and Magruder have noticed children's knowledge in money was

increased with the following experiences: earning and spending, parents' attitude towards money. Family's socio-economic factor and parental effect would have more influence on the younger children than the older.

Social factors and young people's attitude towards school, work and employment was studied by A. Furnham and B. Gunter⁴⁷. They revealed that young people believed in effort and it was important for them for their career prospect. More importantly, the older the subjects, the more they were inclined to share adults' attitude towards work. For example, they acknowledged that academic achievement was closely linked with career prospect. The subjects felt that job satisfaction resulted from: job security (seventy-two per cent), satisfying work (sixty-two per cent), good working conditions (sixty-one per cent), pleasant work colleagues (fifty-six per cent), career development (fifty-three per cent), salary (thirty-nine per cent), responsibility (twenty-five per cent), and working hours (twenty-two per cent)⁴⁸. After a detailed review of the related literature and findings, A. Furnham and B. Stacey⁴⁹ drew the conclusion that young people's attitudes, and beliefs towards the world at work were multi-determined. Among other factors, the demographic, psychological and sociological factors had more effects on young people's perceptions and understanding of work than other age factors. However, sophisticated economic knowledge and economic awareness of the socio-economic structures were found among the older sample than the younger.

M. Siegal's⁵⁰ study of children's perceptions and evaluation of adult economic needs revealed that the older children, at the age of twelve to thirteen, gave more allowance to the ability and effort demanded by professions such as doctor. The ability to interpret

the family needs and occupation-related effort were better in the older children indicating that social norms seemed to have greater influence on the older sample. In a hypothetical situation, the sample was requested to allocate money according to their family needs to four different occupations: doctor, bus driver, shopkeeper and waiter. While most of the younger sample allocated money equally to all occupations on the basis of equality, half of the twelve to thirteen year old children rewarded the doctor the most. Recognition of the existence of inequality as a result of unequal distribution, the older sample accepted and regarded this social phenomenon as fair. The underlying assumption was a doctor required more effort than the rest. Consequently, disregarding the family needs of the other breadwinners, they thought the doctor deserved more payment. Conversely, the younger sample failed to see this unmet need.

M. Siegal and D. Shwalb⁵¹ extended the above study and examined the cultural effect on children's perceptions of economic justice. They concluded their results by stating that a significant cultural effect existed. A comparison between a Japanese sample and an Australian sample found that the Japanese subjects allocated significantly more to the workers with low ability but high effort, high family needs and productivity than the Australians. Siegal and Shwalb argued that this was owing to the cultural differences between the two societies. Because, they claimed that Japanese firms relied on a family-like working ethos, and Japanese children showed more concern with the family needs of workers. In contrast, there was a clear cut between company and private matters. The Australian children did not pay as much attention as the Japanese to catering for worker's family needs. However, both samples tended to reward more those who were

higher in effort, ability, family needs and productivity except from those showed low in effort.

A. Furnham⁵² claimed that various learning experiences were culturally determined. Two years later, he furthered Siegal and Shwalb's⁵³ work to determine whether there was any difference between African adolescents and the British adolescents on understanding economic justice. Furnham's study supported Siegal et. al.'s---the two samples allocated more money to workers with higher effort, ability, productivity and family needs than to those who were low in these aspects. Nevertheless, significant cultural differences were found. The African sample rewarded much more to the high in effort than the British counterpart. Among other factors, effort was mostly rewarded by the African sample and more money was given to the White rather than to the Black workers. Furnham argued that this act reflected how the Black sample perceived their socio-economic reality that the Whites received better pay than the Blacks. The research indicated that the African children believed in equity (greater pay should be given to those with higher effort) and the British sample believes in equality (equal pay for equal work).

Furnham attempted to tackle the earlier claim which was discussed by Siegal and Shwalb and determined whether, "equal pay for equal work" and "greater pay for greater need" was perceived by the children as a universal moral value. He concluded that there was no consistent answer. His study suggested that South African adolescents were more conservative in their socio-political attitudes and believed more strongly in world justice than the British sample. In addition, he argued that the African sample's

perceptions of economic justice were largely influenced by their own culture and socio-political attitude. These studies, consistently found that effort was seen as the most important element to be rewarded by young people across various countries. Despite this consensus, children from non-white societies seemed to value personal effort more than the whites and, similarly, were concerned more with the needs of family.

Furthermore, Furnham's⁵⁴ study on understanding young people's economic beliefs (those aged seventeen to eighteen years) revealed a culture difference. In a sample of eighty-six, (ninety-six per cent were between sixteen to seventeen and the rest were eighteen years old) most subjects were Christians and Conservative supporters, some eighty-one per cent had a saving account either in a bank or building society with the amount of saving from five to three thousand pounds. Many of them had experiences of borrowing money from and lending money to friends. The results gained from the study demonstrated that in comparison with the forty-four agree-disagree inventory, the British sample believed in the welfare state that the government held the responsibility to take care of them in case of difficulty. The British sample considered that if they were unemployed, it was the government which would be blamed rather than themselves.

Conversely, the American sample considered they hold the full responsibility for their own employment. They showed greater awareness of good working attitudes such as being hard working, free choice and competitiveness than the British. In Furnham's view, this attitudinal discrepancy resulted from the nature of society. Young people in America received less care or financial assistance from the government during

unemployment than the British. In contrast, the situation of unemployment in Britain was more salient than was the case in America as the British began their career earlier than the Americans. Contradictory results within the British sample were reported. For instance, they believed both in a welfare state (it was the responsibility of the government to take care of people who could not take care of themselves) and free enterprise (employers should have the right to hire non-union workers if they wanted to). Furnham viewed this as a result of socialisation into a mixed economy state like Britain where two different economic ideologies were allowed. Overall, the findings indicated that the British sample achieved better political than economic awareness. And their political beliefs of the subjects determined their economic beliefs. This difference suggests that economic values are formed in society.

B. Stacey⁵⁵ reviewed Coles' study on the eighty-five young and rich American children's construction of their economic world and concluded that socio-economic background had effects on children's economic understanding. As most of the subjects were exposed to abundant resources and a lot of property, they gained the concept of possession management while had no understanding of scarcity. In addition, they had developed a greater expectation of life. Their perceptions and understanding of socio-economic affairs were developed from their personal socio-economic experience and the family background. Stacey claimed that a change of such socio-economic conditions might cause a marked change in their socio-economic perceptions.

Furthermore, L. Furby⁵⁶ reported that personal efficacy and motivation were two dominant factors underlying the acquisition of possessive behaviours. In looking at a

sample of two hundred and seventy children from an individualistic state, America and a collective state, Kibbutz, Furby found that possessiveness developed in childhood. As early as they have the linguistics ability to express themselves, possessive concepts are developed. The study proved that, socialization played an important role in the development of possession. In communicating with siblings verbally, a child gained the concept of possessive objectives such as "it's mine" and "it's yours". The effect of socialization on possessive behaviour was found mediated by motivation rather than a set of particular experiences.

Berti et al.⁵⁷ argued that children's understanding of the concept, factory ownership, came directly from their personal experiences. For the subjects who were under the age of nine the process of getting pocket money was seen as the same ritual as parents' getting paid from work. Until they successfully integrated the relationship between getting pocket money and payment for work they started to appreciate the network of economic exchanges. Nevertheless, due to the physical limitation (an industrial town prevents them from keeping in touch with countryside), the subjects did not see the logic that farmers who sold what they grew in the market could also be the owners of their farmlands too.

Stacey⁵⁸ revealed the concept of social differentiation was noticed by ten years olds. They interpreted social class in terms of employment and possessions. The ability to differentiate social classes came as a natural matter to every child regardless of their own original social class. Stacey concluded that as young as ten, children could correctly identify the social class of people from pictures. In addition, it was found that

the older the children the more they shared the opinions of adults. He argued that socio-economic background has more effect on teenagers' acquisition of economic values. In his words "...in the second decade of life, social differences in the development appeared to be more pronounced"⁵⁹. But it was not clear to what extent this social phenomenon could account for the role of socialisation and young people's economic values.

Stacey revealed that among the three hundred and seventy-eight American subjects (eight to seventeen years old children from various social classes) the younger sample showed more sympathy for the poor and felt that the government should take more care of the poor. Conversely, the teenagers argued that the poor have responsibility to look after themselves because the government's intervention would invade their self interest. Stacey⁶⁰ concluded from the literature that the older sample usually adopted the following reasons to comprehend the existing huge difference between the extremely rich and poor are: (a) luck, chance, fortune; (b) ability, effort, talent, achievement; and (c) inherited life chances, i.e. opportunities made available or denied by class and race. These indicated that there was a relationship between age and internalisation of socio-economic values and attitudes.

In a quite consistent way, the older sample tended to have a more realistic view on various economic issues and concepts in comparison with the younger ones. Stacey found that formation of socio-economic attitudes was linked with individual's social exposure and significant others such as parents, teachers, relatives and peers.

In order to present a detailed and systematic examination of youngsters' acquisition of specific economic concepts, Thomas⁶¹ conducted an in-depth empirical study on twelve to sixteen year old British and Welsh students. The study focused on the psychological structure of a wide range of economic concepts such as money, wealth, cost, prices, standard of living etc. Findings suggested that economic concepts could not be grasped simply by studying the logic underlying them and the student's prerequisites alone. The process by which individual students understood a specific concept was unique. Thomas argued that a true understanding was yielded only when some special features and fundamental conditions for understanding the concepts were fulfilled. She revealed that students' knowledge of economics was largely influenced by their past experiences and their preconceptions⁶². Three ways of economic understanding were identified by the study. Firstly, the students adopted the economists' perspective to the concepts. Secondly, they comprehended the concept in relation to the situation, and thirdly, they freed themselves from the problem and analysed the concepts objectively. Nevertheless, one could argue that once a person tries to analyse a problem, objectivity is hard to achieve.

Thomas' work, among others', used the Piagetian tradition as a basis for investigating the underlying mechanism of gaining specific economic concepts. But her work was no longer concentrated on the responses elicited by the students. It was largely focused on analysing the qualities and observable features of students' economic understanding against specific conditions of learning. In so doing, she felt confident enough to reject Piaget's model. However, as she has noticed, the study made no distinctions as to which concept was best understood and whether any of the variables: age, sex, and

ability, there was a dominant factor effect. So this echoed the view⁶³ that there is no certainty about which economic concepts can be best grasped at which age, and what social experiences determine the extent and structure of economic beliefs.

In addition, Jahoda⁶⁴ offered an interactive approach to understanding the way that children's socio-economic thinking develops. Three economic concepts were studied: shops, the bank and profit. Jahoda argued that some points were more important than the others. As the child's understanding of the socio-economic phenomena was largely based on personal knowledge and perceptions, the place of personal experience was therefore important. Children gained the economic concepts through the socialization process and was influenced by parents and the media. Moreover, the process that shaped the children's economic mind was an interaction between personal thinking and the information given by social environment. The reason for Jahoda to reject Piagetian tradition was not because of its inadequacy in pointing out the significance of environmental influence, but because of his disagreement with its rigidity in claiming the child was passively interacting with the environment. In his view, the child is actually playing an active role in comprehending reality.

5.5 SUMMARY

The literature on understanding economics and values discussed very little on young people's understanding of the capitalist and socialist economic systems. However, the place of economic concepts and values teaching in the school curriculum was emphasized.

Among the variables, age, socio-economic status, culture, none have consistent effects on a range of economic concepts such as profit, money and possession. The developmental literature on the construction of economic concepts was not entirely coherent. No uniformity on the construction of economic concepts or knowledge had been identified.

Firstly, not all the related concepts develop in the same sequential manner, different concepts are acquired at different stages. Secondly, although the older children appeared to be more realistic and had more knowledge of the economic system, there were considerable cross-cultural differences in adolescents socio-economic beliefs, values and expectations. Therefore, the way in which that specific concepts will be acquired and retained for future use is less certain.

Various studies followed the Piagetian model and revealed different stages of economic conceptual development. Moreover, no consistent results were found when various economic concepts were examined in different societies. In short, some economic concepts for some groups could be grasped easier and earlier than the others, especially those which were related to children's personal experience.

At the other extreme, the literature on economic socialization in preadult years suggested that economic socialisation and acquisition of economic values were interrelated. Personal experiences were found closely related to the acquisition of related economic concepts. Nevertheless, socio-economic value systems had an effect on the process of understanding economics concepts, and the quality with which specific concepts were

grasped. For instance, in a society which promoted commercial activities, a related economic concept like profit was better understood.

5.6 OVERALL DISCUSSION OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL AND SOCIALISATION LITERATURE

Studies on economic concepts such as money and profits were better grasped by the elder sample and confirmed that young children's understanding of economic concepts was progressing in the passage of time. Understanding transaction and the use of money were related to the children's ability to deal with moral issues. For instance, both the concept of possession and the act of stealing involved an element of moral judgment. This showed that moral judgment on economic issues developed with age. Nevertheless, Strauss pointed out that not all the acquisition of economic concepts was an intellectual matter.

Although the literature indicated that the older the children, the better would be their understanding of the function and values of money, it failed to demonstrate in what way children retain and transform the useful concepts from personal encounters for future use. No consistent results could be concluded in terms of which factor is more dominant than the other, such as age and personal experiences. For instance, Sutton found that personal experience and external environment were more important than age and socio-economic concepts. Despite the fact that there were discrepancies among the wide range of studies, as Thomas has noticed in her related work, the results obtained indicate that the development of economic thinking, whether supporting Piaget's work or not, all highlighted the significance of experience and knowledge of the medium of instructions used.

These inconsistent empirical results indicated that children did not have a consistent way of learning economic concepts. Conversely, these concepts seem to be organised or stored in an isolated manner rather than a coherent one. A wide range of empirical studies showed that children had some difficulties in integrating various economic concepts in a systematic way. The developmental literature fails to address the question, under what conditions, intellectually and socially, do children have a comprehensive understanding of related economic concepts.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATING FUTURE COMPETENT ADULTS IN HONG KONG

As this thesis places its emphasis on educating competent adults for 21st century Hong Kong, clarifying young people's confusion in perceiving socio-economic phenomena is one of the educational preparations. In educating competent adults in Hong Kong today, the preceding discussion suggested a strong curricular notion for managing youngsters' socio-political and economic awareness across the school curriculum. Discussion on the acquisition of economic values provided useful guidelines for curricular innovations for 21st century Hong Kong. The components of being a competent adult gradually emerged in the discussion of Chapter Four and this chapter. Understanding young people's construction of the economic world is useful for promoting socio-economic awareness and citizenship education.

Within the context of this research and a conclusion of the last chapter and this chapter, a competent adult is the one who:

- (1) has a critical and independent mind
- (2) observes universal ethical principles, respects the dignity of mankind and human rights

- (3) is able to apply a value system in choice behaviour
- (4) has a sense of citizenship, is willing to serve society
- (5) is economically aware, knowing how to make a balance between constraints

These elements form the framework for educating future competent adults and have special meanings for Hong Kong curricular innovations for the 21st century. The issue of preparing young Hong Kong people for a representative government, in J. Friederichs⁶⁵ view, can be seen as one of the current educational objectives, educating a group of potential local elites to rule Hong Kong. Therefore, personal qualities such as independent and critical thinking skill training should be strengthened in schools as they are crucial for the future leadership of the representative government. In addition, placed in the new and transforming society, citizens of the HKSAR not only need to be responsible and active in the whole socio-political system but also should employ a critical mind.

In summary, this chapter has extended the exploration of the acquisition of socio-political, moral and economic values. Both personal intellectual growth and socio-economic experience and background are underlined by the literature cited above.

To date, the socio-political value systems of Hong Kong people have been challenged by 1997, therefore, educators should acknowledge the social needs and young people's needs in the post merger. Making references to the individual value systems should generate meaningful educational ideas for the policy makers in taking the school curriculum forward. Yet, how realistic it is to suggest that changes in the school

curriculum designed to produce "competent adults" could help Hong Kong in the period following 1997 remains unknown.

This sketch of understanding young people's acquisition of economic values and concepts provided a theoretical framework and background for the fieldwork. Analysis of value acquisition and the processes of socio-economic understanding bridges the gap between the reality of business, and economic institutions and educational policy making. As values are transmitted and selected by adults, such as educational policy makers, educators or parents, it is important that their views be known. This empirical educational research sets out to collect people's opinions to develop an interviewee-oriented approach to understanding social phenomena and educational reality. The next chapter will present the details of the methods used in the fieldwork.

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CHAPTER SIX METHODS

6.0 PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTER

The literature analysis of the first four chapters was tested by the fieldwork which was conducted in Hong Kong. The fieldwork examined Hong Kong people's perceptions of 1997, and the future objectives of Hong Kong education in terms of educating competent adults. This empirical research is based on the thesis sub-arguments that 1997 is a challenge to the value system of Hong Kong people which stresses free competition, and that the politics of Hong Kong 1997 have emerged as an educational issue and a generator of new curricular innovations for Hong Kong.

The background and purposes of the study are stated in the first section on "scope". Then the nature and characteristics of this fieldwork are discussed in the second section, and an attempt is made to link the research questions which are set out in Chapter One to the fieldwork design. The sensitive nature of this study and the ethical issues involved are discussed in the third section. Descriptions of the implementation of the methods of data collection are then provided in the fourth. The rationale for choosing the focused interviews as well as the process of conducting the twenty-seven in-depth interviews is explained. The procedure of selecting samples is described in the fifth section. Both the interview setting and atmosphere are illustrated, and the difficulties in conducting the interviews are also discussed in the sixth section which evaluates the merits and shortfalls of the fieldwork methods. Finally, the methods of data analysis are presented in the seventh section.

6.1 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In this section, the purposes of this fieldwork are clarified and the research questions are revisited. This is an interviewee-oriented empirical educational inquiry, qualitative in nature. The characteristics of the qualitative method, as suggested by R. Burgess¹, are that (1) the researcher works in a natural setting, (2) studies may be designed and redesigned, (3) the research is concerned with social processes and meanings, (4) data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously. One of the main objectives of the research is to explore Hong Kong people's perceptions of their society as it undergoes transformation. To what extent are recent socio-political and economic changes forcing the interviewees to re-examine their views on the current educational provision? What do the interviewees think education should do in response to the socio-economic context of Hong Kong in 1997 and beyond? What are Hong Kong people's perceptions of the purposes of education. And finally, what are Hong Kong people's perceptions of competent adults in the Hong Kong of the future?

More importantly, do the interviewees share a consensus view on the future objectives of education, if not, what makes the differences? A review of the related literature in previous chapters offered a background understanding to this research context. Yet, the question of how far the literature has explained reality is left to be answered and is the rationale for this fieldwork.

Approaches to understanding reality are dependent upon the nature of the research. There are several reasons for this research to emphasize the contributions of interviewees. Firstly, when educational research is for improving current educational

practices and provision, it is unwise for the researcher to ignore the views of that people already hold. If education is for preparing the young people for a self autonomous and competent and future social contribution, people from various educational sectors will have views that may assist the educational policy makers in taking a step forward.

Secondly, Hong Kong education is no longer perceived as only a matter for educational policy makers or educators. The Education Department is seeking public consensus on the future objectives of Hong Kong education. Increasingly, education is regarded as a main social concern for students, parents and teachers.

The publication of the Consultative Draft of School Aims in 1992 confirmed the need to consult public opinion. The Draft admits that to make a way forward, Hong Kong education authority should consult the opinions of people from other social sectors. Policy makers and educators believe that the collection of people's views on and opinions about Hong Kong education will be useful. Working from the ground up allows both greater participation as well as more comprehensive thinking about educational policy making.

This fieldwork shares the idea of asking a range of people to generate new ideas for educational improvement. Research attention is narrowed down to interviewees' perceptions of social phenomena and of Hong Kong educational reality. The connection between interviewees' perceptions of reality and the future objectives of Hong Kong education is also linked with the interviewees' perceptions of adult economic life. This three main areas are set out for research: the socio-political and economic contexts of

Hong Kong, interviewees' conceptualisation of adult economic life and finally, what Hong Kong education is now doing and should do in future. The details of the fieldwork are further elaborated in the succeeding section.

6.2 THE NATURE OF THIS FIELDWORK

Chapter Two indicated that the 1997 issue has created a lot of uncertainties for the Hong Kong people. The dominating feelings of uncertainty and anxiety are connected with people's lack of confidence in the Chinese government in maintaining the well-being of Hong Kong after 1997. The literature indicated that the 1997 issue means a challenge to the current free competition value system, and a sacrifice of the freedom of Hong Kong people. Greater social restrictions on public speech and public opinions about the government policies are perceived. Research in these socio-political challenges may provoke negative feeling in interviewees because this is a politically sensitive topic.

R. Lee² discusses the issue of researching sensitive areas, placing considerable emphasis on the relationship between the topic and the social context involved. The sensitivity of the research topic is affected by the particular group of informants and the meanings of the social phenomena that are assigned by the informants. The degree of perceived sensitivity varies from individual to individual. As far as this research is concerned, the politics of 1997 are potentially threatening for the interviewees. When the interviewees express their perceptions of or feelings about the future of Hong Kong, their confidence in the implementation of the policy "one country, two systems" is also revealed. Informants' responses embed some special socio-political meanings---their confidence in Chinese rule. J. Sieber and B. Stanley define a socially sensitive research as one:

in which there are potential consequences or implications, either directly for the participants in the research or for the class of individuals represented by the research³.

Lee⁴ also noticed that sensitive research "potentially poses a substantial threat to those who are or have been involved in it".

The sensitivity of this research area is imposed by the uncertain political future of Hong Kong and the pre-merger Chinese interference in Hong Kong society. Although Hong Kong is still a British colony, the political influences of the PRC in the political, economic and social systems of Hong Kong are regularly reported by the literature and the mass media. This pre-merger Chinese socio-political interference contradicts the Chinese promise of "Hong Kong will remain unchanged for fifty years". In reality, Hong Kong people have witnessed a period of rapid political and socio-economic changes shortly after the publication of the Joint Declaration in 1984. Hong Kong people find difficulty in trusting the Chinese policies in Hong Kong. These uncertainties may prevent the interviewees from airing their deeper feelings about Hong Kong joining the PRC.

Therefore, the researcher has to be sensitive to the difficulties of the respondents and understanding their resistances, feelings and rights. In other words, the ethical issues are involved in this sensitive research and will be discussed in the following section.

6.3 ETHICAL ISSUES

A researcher should be cautious about the protection of the rights of interviewees especially those who feel vulnerable. A list of ethical rules has been drafted to safeguard the rights of those who participate in the data collection or social research⁵.

The sensitive areas of the fieldwork are personal opinions about Chinese rule and the changing positions of some indigenous politicians towards the PRC. These two areas are avoided unless they were initiated by the interviewees. Also the personal details of interviewees are either kept confidential or changed so as to protect the informants' rights. However, there is a dilemma that too many changes will distort the information and as Lee⁶ has pointed out it has never been an easy task to draw a line between disguise and distortion. The treatment of this research is restricted to the reporting of the findings but no detailed descriptions of the interviewees is given.

The issue of professionalism is extraordinary important in terms of gaining trust and rapport from the interviewees. Most of senior educators demonstrated the highest degree of concern about the issue of confidentiality. Two of them refused to be taped during the interview. Another senior educator requested stopping the tape when he was expressing his feelings about personal preparation for 1997.

In addressing all these ethical issues, the researcher firstly gained the informants' consent to a tape-recorded interview. The twenty-seven transcriptions will **not** be bound within this thesis. (Though they are being made available to the supervisors and the examiners of the University of London). Moreover, the details of the individual

informants are also kept anonymous or the individuals are renamed for the sake of confidentiality. This is particularly crucial for the educational policy-makers as they are prone to be identified within such a small working context. In order to give detailed descriptions of the process of data collection, the succeeding section turns attention to the methods.

6.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

6.4.1 Instrumentation

This study was conducted by a Hong Kong research student of the Institute of Education, University of London, England. The pilot study was carried out in London but the fieldwork was done in Hong Kong by the researcher herself. All pilot interviews were undertaken on a friendly conversational basis, and they were transcribed and studied. Feedback from the pilot studies served as a base for the briefing paper for the fieldwork. The next section presents the rationale for choosing the technique of focused interviews and the outlines of the briefing paper.

6.4.2 The Focused Interview

The fieldwork studies the interviewees' perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997 and educational provision in Hong Kong. Among a wide range of qualitative methods interviewing was chosen as the interviewer could elicit the immediate responses of interviewee in the setting and clarify the questions where needed. L. Cohen and L. Manion⁷ claim that the interviewer's main task is to elicit the interviewee's specific, and research relevant, information. Throughout the face to face personal encounter, close interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee is permitted. Additionally,

interview allows direct and flexible conversational data collection which cannot be achieved by postal questionnaires.

C. Robson notes that the focused interview allows people's views and feelings to emerge whilst giving the interviewer some control which is especially suitable for investigating a particular situation, phenomenon or event⁸. In addition, L. Cohen and L. Manion⁹ describe the focused interview as a means for highlighting an interviewee's subjective responses to a particular situation. The specific response will be put into perspective and analysed by the interviewer. In addition, for sensitive research, F. Massarik¹⁰ warns that the interview can be regarded as a confrontation between the interviewer and interviewee. Therefore, to elicit informants' personal perceptions and feelings about such a sensitive area, the interview is most relevant.

This study focuses on the individual interviewees' perceptions of the areas of Hong Kong's socio-political situation and their conceptualisation of adult economic life and its relationship to the future objectives of Hong Kong education. All these three areas are familiar to interviewees and their personal perceptions are the main findings to be analysed. They know the latest news of the negotiations between the Chinese and British governments about Hong Kong's future as well as the local Hong Kong government. Consequently, from either first or second hand sources, the sample would have a feeling for the 1997 issue.

Because of the nature of this fieldwork, the relationship between the researcher and the respondents becomes very delicate. This is a joint exploratory process of the interviewer

and the interviewee to investigate the socio-political transformation of society and its implications for education. Throughout the exploratory session, the interviewees also come to have a deeper understanding of their perceptions of and feelings about education in Hong Kong within a political and socio-economic transitional period. Nevertheless, being flexible to the interview flow and sensitive to the interviewee's responses are the keys for the interviewer to handle the interview.

To study social phenomena within a known culture, a pre-structured qualitative design may ease the time schedule. One way of minimizing the time constraint is to translate research objectives into specific interviewing items. This is especially crucial in this interviewee-oriented qualitative research as a wide range of social phenomena could be covered. Therefore, the fieldwork was narrowed to a list of sub-items, drafted as a briefing paper, so as to direct the conversation in a purposive way. Another advantage of so doing was avoid putting time pressure on the interviewees. Simultaneously, the researcher is given better opportunity to probe and direct the respondents to the specific research areas.

6.4.3 The Briefing Paper

Robson¹¹ suggests that an interview guide will help organise the interview schedule. The guide should include the following: introductory comments, a list of topic headings and possibly key questions to ask under these headings, a set of associated prompts. The researcher should be flexible in eliciting the subjective experience of the interviewees.

Apart from giving an introduction about the fieldwork to the interviewees, there are two main reasons for drafting the briefing paper: to familiarise the interviewees with the interview contents and to give them better psychological preparation. The briefing paper was actually requested by the senior educators and economists before they promised to be interviewed. Many contacts advised that this was a sensitive topic, and thus without giving an outline and intended scope of study, it would be very difficult in getting potential subjects. This eases respondents' anxiety. In short, the function of the briefing paper is to assist the potential interviewees in understanding the purpose of the interview. In return a briefing paper helps to find the interviewees. All the questions listed in the briefing paper were piloted and revised before conducting in the fieldwork.

The briefing paper starts with two quotations about the changing socio-political phenomenon of Hong Kong. It was distributed to the interviewees through a mutual friend or by the researcher herself. For both parents and students, the purposes of the interview were explained in words by the mutual friend or the researcher herself. A few main areas of the research foci are covered in the paper. Firstly, it sought to introduce the research context to the interviewees. Secondly, it informed the interviewees of the scope of this study and explored their opinions on the relationship between this fast-changing society and adequate preparation for adult economic life. Thirdly, it was explained that the interview was about interviewees' perceptions of the extent to which Hong Kong students were aware of the issue of Hong Kong 1997 and their potential adult economic roles. Fourthly, the interviewees were requested to evaluate the role of Hong Kong education in preparing youngsters for competent adults in the next century.

Piloting is a crucial step to refine the questions and prepares the researcher for conducting the fieldwork.

6.4.4 The Pilot Study

J. Powney and M. Watts¹² note that piloting allows the researcher to clarify any ambiguities regarding the research questions. By piloting, the research objectives come more into focus. Thus, the researcher is able to draw attention to the relevant areas and collect useful information. Powney and Watts argue further that piloting should be as close to the real interviews as possible and serve the three main functions:

- (1) a check that the structure, or organisation, of the interview meets the requirements of the research project,
- (2) a practical test of the logistics of the interview,
- (3) an opportunity to practise the social interactive skills necessary for the kind of interview chosen¹³.

Eight one-hour taped pilot interviews were conducted at the Institute of Education, England, 1992. All the pilot interviewees were contacts of the researcher and were informed about the purposes of the piloting. Among them, there were three Economics educators from the Economic Awareness Teacher Training Team, Institute of Education, University of London. Although their expertise in promoting students' economic awareness was mostly developed in a western society, their opinions, perceptions and understanding of the phrase "adequate preparation for adult economic life" helped the researcher to reformulate the wording. As two out of the three British interviewees had direct experience in teaching Hong Kong students or student teachers in Hong Kong they had some knowledge of the research context. The other two pilot interviewees were Hong Kong graduates of the Institute of Education and School of Oriental and African

Studies, University of London. One taught Economics whilst the other taught Economics and Public Affairs (E.P.A.) in Hong Kong secondary schools. Both of them were freshly arrived from Hong Kong and so had the latest news of Hong Kong society while they were being interviewed. Their feedback on the pilot interviews assisted the researcher in modifying the fieldwork questions.

In addition, the researcher gained access to three policy makers from the Education Department of Hong Kong, during their short visits to the Institute of Education. Their personal views on and perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997, the conceptualisation of the phrase of "adequate preparation for adult economic life" and the objectives of Hong Kong education provided an useful indication for revising the briefing paper in terms of the wordings and conceptual sequence.

In conclusion, these eight pilot interviews were particularly crucial for the design of this exploratory study. In the pilot studies, the researcher learned what were the possible difficulties that might be encountered. This exploratory work focused on local Hong Kong people's perceptions of the politics of 1997, and the interviewees had some resistance to answering some of the questions. Moreover, because of the sensitivity of the issues, piloting provided a good opportunity to feel how interviewees would response to the interviewing questions. As far as the researcher was concerned, the pilot studies prepared her for the fieldwork psychologically and gave a feeling for the interviewees' possible responses to the research questions. From her experience, a lot of unexpected responses arose from the pilot studies. For instance, the phrase of "adequate preparation for adult economic life" was often questioned by the pilot interviewees except the three

from the Economic Awareness Teacher Training Team. An analysis of the pilot Hong Kong interviewees' feedback on this phrase allowed the researcher to investigate further other interviewees' conceptualisation of the phrase.

6.5 THE SAMPLING

There is a close link between method of sampling and the sensitivity of this fieldwork. R. Lee¹⁴ emphasises that the more sensitive the research, the more difficult will be its sampling. As a result, a sensitive topic stresses an in-depth study of a small number rather than a large number of interviewees. Individual interviewees were chosen on the basis of their knowledge of the research topic.

In doing research on sensitive topics, snowball sampling is a useful method of contacting potential subjects through the target population. Chain referral is a typical example. P. Biernacki and D. Waldorf¹⁵ point out that chain referral is a widely used sampling method to get access to groups of social deviants. The nature of this sampling starts from a random sample to approach other target samples through direct or indirect methods¹⁶. At the beginning, the researcher took a rather passive role, relying heavily on insider help to find informants. Although this is a sensitive topic, it is different from what sociologists called "deviant behaviours" or other socially sensitive behaviour such as homosexuality¹⁷. Here, the social visibility of the target group is as high as others. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, the exposure of respondents' opinions about politics, for example, could cause some threats to their social existence.

As Lee puts it, in such "network sampling, the researcher starts from an initial set of contacts and is then passed on by them to others, who in turn refer others and so on"¹⁸.

The sampling of educational policy makers at various levels is a typical example.

The researcher employed the network sampling method to gain access to the field. This network sampling is therefore especially important for getting interviewees from the various educational policy making levels.

This is a purposive sampling according to the researcher's judgment of the typicality of the subjects. In Robson's words, "a sample is built up which enables the researcher to satisfy her specific needs in a project"¹⁹. In narrowing down the scope of this study and making it more focused on its objectives, the choice of subjects was based on the principles suggested by Miles and Huberman²⁰ of taking a small chunk of a larger universe. In terms of the characteristics of a qualitative approach, they put much emphasis on studying a particular sample in a focused social setting. An in-depth study of the target group becomes the strength of a qualitative study. Similarly, this interviewee-oriented educational research places much attention on each individual interviewee's responses to the researched phenomena.

6.5.1 Descriptions of the Sample

This section moves to describe the details of the twenty-seven subjects. As this field study used a snowball sampling method, the main concern was to get interviewees who have knowledge of the educational system and economic systems of Hong Kong rather

than other details. In addition, gender was not a main concern of the selection of subjects²¹.

The main focus of this small scale non-random study was quality rather than quantity. Originally, the working plan for this snowball sampling was to get five subjects from each category. The sample of twenty-seven resulted from the availability of the respondents across different educational sectors within the given period of time.

Table 2 shows the actual sampling of the fieldwork. It also gives details of the background of the twenty seven people.

TABLE 3 : DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SUBJECTS

	School 1 Kowloon	School 2 Shatin	School 3 Yuen Long	School 4 Yuen Long	School 5 Lai King	Unclassified
Principals	1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	1(M)	1(F)	x
Economics Teachers	1(M), 1(F)	2(F)	1(M)	x	x	x
Parents	x	1(M), 1(F)	x	x	x	1(M), 2(F)
Students	2(M)	1(F)	x	x	x	2(M)
Policy Makers	x	x	x	x	x	3(M), 2(F)
Economists	x	x	x	x	x	2(M)

Overall, twenty-seven interviewees were chosen and interviewed. There were five secondary school principals, five economics teachers, five parents, five secondary students, five key Hong Kong policy makers from the educational sector, and two economists.

PRINCIPALS

One of the five principals was from a vocational secondary school and the others were from the comprehensive schools. The minimum length of holding the position was one year. Only one of the principals interviewed was female. The imbalance between sexes was owing to the restrictions of a snowball sampling method and the reduced control over the range of potential interviewees. In addition, although no statistical data are available, the majority of Hong Kong secondary schools principals are male. Nevertheless, the uneven distribution of two sexes may limit the degree of possible generalisation.

ECONOMICS TEACHERS

The teacher sample consisted of two males and three females. Four of them held a degree in Economics. Three of them taught secondary school Economics in upper forms either secondary four or five or both. The other two interviewees were Economics and Public Affairs teachers of junior secondary students in Hong Kong.

ECONOMISTS

The two economists were male. One was a district manager of a leading banks for a few years and has a daughter studying senior secondary economics. The other one was a financial consultant in one of the governmental departments.

PARENTS

Among the five parents, three were female and two were male. Four of them were from the working class. The other person was a primary school teacher with a daughter at

secondary four. Three parents had children in their final year of secondary education who were hoping to be accepted at the local university. There was no relationship between the parents interviewed and the student sample.

STUDENTS

A sample of five secondary students, four males and one female, was studied. All of them were in their final year of secondary education. They were therefore facing the question of whether to go into industry or to carry on Advanced Level studies in a few months time. They were between the ages of seventeen and nineteen.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY MAKERS

Additionally, another five senior educational policy makers were chosen. They were from different formal educational sectors. Two were from official curriculum development institutions: the Curriculum Development Institute and Hong Kong Examination Authority. The rest were from tertiary education organisation. They all were directly participating in different levels of secondary school curriculum development and planning or designing the examination syllabuses.

After this brief introduction of the sample, the following paragraphs present the details of the administration of the fieldwork.

6.6 THE SCHEDULE OF THE FIELDWORK

Every focused interview was run on a one hour basis unless mutually rearranged. The interviews ran punctually and finished on time except for all the sessions with the five principals which lasted for nearly two hours. Although some interviewees did show some concern about tape-recording, only one interview was recorded by hand.

M. Douglas²² claims that tape-recording is crucial for such in-depth qualitative research as it allows further analysis of the valuable items. For the sake of getting accurate data analysis, it is crucial for the researcher to relive the interviews by listening to the interviews again so that more accurate analysis could be made. In contrast, Galfo²³ argues that tape recording may invalidate responses. He suggests that the researcher should take field notes on the interviewee's non-verbal expressions. Again, it may be helpful if the reasons for employing tape-recording are expressed to the interviewee. Furthermore, he stressed that the researcher should handle the issue of confidentiality carefully. Analysis and publication of the field data may do harm to the interviewees as this would disclose their personal details. This underlines the role of a researcher's self censorship and professionalism in dealing the field data.

6.6.1 *The Interview Setting and Atmosphere*

The interviewing settings varied from school offices to family homes. The five interviewing sessions with the target principals took place in their offices. Their permission for using a tape recorder for fieldwork recording was gained first of all and only one of them refused. In order to allow the interview to flow freely, the interviewer opened the conversation by introducing the purposes of her research. The research questions were asked in a natural way and followed by the immediate verbal responses of the interviewees, and further questions; or moving into the next area of research

concerns. As the interviewee's experience and knowledge of reality was highly emphasised, he/she was allowed to have greater freedom of self expression in response to the interview questions. It was worth noting that, in comparison with other interviewees, the five target secondary school principals were more ready to take an active role in giving their own perceptions of the various researched areas than the rest. Their attention was directed by their administrative work such as the introduction of mother tongue as the medium of instruction, and the hot educational issue, "Task and Task-related Assessment"²⁴. Conversely, most principals expressed some difficulties in understanding the term "adequate preparation for adult economic life" and asked for the interviewer's own explanations. On the whole, the five interviewees were quite involved and, therefore, an extension of each interview was permitted from half an hour to another hour. A fairly relaxed atmosphere was also achieved in each interviewing session.

The other five interviews with school Economics teachers were also rather friendly. Four out of the five target teachers were prepared for the interviews as they were given the briefing paper a few days in advance. They expressed their concerns about the questions. The research phrase, "adequate preparation for adult economic life" seemed to be fairly straightforward. Their own perceptions of the phrase will be further discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The five interviewing sessions with the target teachers lasted for between forty minutes to an hour depended on their readiness in giving out their own perceptions and understanding of the questions as well as their working time table. One practical

problem was encountered. The interviews took place in a specially arranged room in their schools during their free moments: therefore the pressure of time was quite noticeable when compared with the five principals' sessions. Under such circumstances, a relaxed atmosphere was hard to create.

The five chosen parents were interviewed either in their children's school or their home. In a school setting, the subjects were not relaxed about answering the questions. In addition, four out of the five parents expressed a concern about their ability to answer the questions. In contrast to the sample of educators, it was hard to maintain a relaxed atmosphere for parents because the research questions were new to them and owing to their educational level the briefing paper was not given to them in advance. Aiming to remove any ambiguity around the questions and technical terms like "adequate preparation for adult economic life", further explanation or modified expression were made for them where necessary. It is worth noting that the sample found it hard to answer the questions. At the other extreme, the parent interviewed at his home did feel a bit more relaxed than the others. In addition, his educational level was the highest in the group. Therefore, the research area was not too difficult for him to respond to. The interviewing atmosphere was determined by both the nature of the setting and its degree of familiarity for the respondent and the nature of the research. At times when the respondents felt in control of the research topic, they had greater confidence in answering the questions. This fieldwork suggested that more attention should be drawn to the interviewing setting especially when the target parents were not comfortable with the research itself despite the fact that it focused on their children's education.

When the five target secondary students were interviewed in their schools or friend's apartment their responses to the interview varied. The two interviews which took place at a friend's home gave a relaxed and informal feelings to the interviewees. Conversely, a school setting had a formalising effect on the respondents and the interviewer felt that the interviewing atmosphere was relatively constrained. More importantly, because of the nature of the research topic, the sample found difficulties in understanding the topic. They were anxious about whether they could answer the research questions correctly. For this reason, some of the respondents complained about the difficulties of the research and were unable to relax. Another possible cause for anxiety for respondents when answering the interview questions could be the inadequate psychological preparation given to them in advance as no briefing paper was sent to them.

None of the policy makers were interviewed at home. They had the briefing paper in advance so a certain amount of preparatory work was done before the interview. Situated in a familiar setting together with a list of research questions, a more relaxed atmosphere was created. In some cases, personal but irrelevant issues were mentioned.

One of the economists was interviewed in an indoor recreation playground while the other was interviewed in his own office. The limitation of the physical setting was a serious problem of this fieldwork. In order to suit the convenience of the interviewer and interviewee, a less desirable setting was chosen inside an indoor recreation centre in the New Territories. However, recording was permitted and the setting was quiet. The respondent was one of the interviewer's acquaintances, so there was a preexisting rapport and external disturbance became less important. As a result, the whole session

flowed smoothly and freely. As the other target economist chose to be interviewed in his own office after office hours, he felt more ready to talk about his perceptions of the questions.

Finally, the interviewing setting did, to a large extent, influence the subjects' feelings about the interviews. In return, it affected the whole interviewing atmosphere as well. It was not clear, however, to what extent the sensitivity of the research topic created different degrees of tension in the respondents in answering the research questions. The worry was that their personal views on the research questions might become public and this was the biggest obstacle of maintaining a relaxing interviewing atmosphere. The overall evaluation of the fieldwork is given as follows.

On the whole, the merit of this method is within many political and technical restrictions, this empirical study still managed to (a) cover a wide age-range and (b) a wide variety of backgrounds but with economic and education specialities. This fieldwork gave the researcher a good opportunity to explore the reality and test responses against the literature even though this snowball survey would have restricted generalisation²⁵.

6.7 THE PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The succeeding paragraphs introduce the nature of the three-stage method for data analysis. As will be shown in the next chapter, findings are analysed in three main aspects: verbatim quotations from the interviewees, a coding frame and a sustaining concept---indigenous Hong Kong culture. In Part One, great attention is placed on

understanding the interviewees' individual responses to Hong Kong in transition and its educational future. The verbatim quotations present variations in interviewee's direct responses to a list of social phenomena. This part focuses on individual perspectives in perceiving the socio-political reality of Hong Kong. An immediate commentary is also provided after each section of the quotations.

Part Two summarises and categorises interviewees' responses by using a coding frame. In response to the main concerns of the conversations, six categorizations were developed: (1) perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997, (2) perceptions of Hong Kong's socio-economic future, (3) conceptualisation of adult economic life, (4) comments on the current Hong Kong educational system, (5) the objectives of the 21st century Hong Kong education, and finally, (6) educational preparations for producing competent adults in 21st century Hong Kong.

Part Three offers an overall interpretation of the findings using the concept, indigenous Hong Kong culture. Unlike the preceding sections where much attention was concentrated on the interviewees' own responses to a series of social phenomena, this section offers a deeper cultural analysis to understand the findings.

6.7.1 Description of the Coding Frame for Data Analysis

In response to the main concerns of the fieldwork, a coding frame was designed to categorise findings so as to fill the gap between the literature on Hong Kong education and Hong Kong reality. The coding frame administered to categorise interviewees' perceptions moves from the general to the specific.

The first category is perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997. It is one of the main research areas. Individuals' perceptions of the issue of Hong Kong 1997 help generate useful and insightful information for later analysis. This category offers a wide range of people's perceptions. Individuals' perceptions and understanding of reality show the way in which the issue of Hong Kong 1997 appears to them.

The second category is individuals' perceptions of the socio-economic future of Hong Kong. Chapter Two indicated that Hong Kong is an international financial and banking centre. Hong Kong's free market economy encourages the spirit of capitalism and the society has promoted many self-made businesses from humble origins. However, owing to Hong Kong's political reality, the extent to which Hong Kong people's perceptions of competent or successful adults will still apply in 21st century Hong Kong is not yet known. Hence, this category provides useful background information to understand individuals' perceptions of the objectives of Hong Kong education. In particular, individuals' perceptions connect closely with their suggestions for educational preparations for competent adults in 21st century Hong Kong.

The third category links closely with the second category examining individuals' conceptualisation of adult economic life. In so doing, individuals' definitions of competent adult will also be analysed. Hong Kong is known as a credentialist and materialistic society. Hong Kong people share pragmatic and free competition socio-economic values. Competent adults within the Hong Kong economy may be simply measured by their income index rather than their educational level. So, the socially-defined competent adults are successful businesses running cross-national firms.

However, how Hong Kong people come to define the qualities of competent adults within the 1997 context is not known. This category provides useful information for understanding interviewees' perceptions of the function of education within a transitional society.

The fourth category is individuals' comments on the current Hong Kong educational system. Chapter Three presented a list of criticisms on the current Hong Kong educational system. This category focuses on interviewees' perceptions of the current educational system as well as interviewees' suggestions for education in the 21st century.

The fifth category is interviewees' perceptions of the objectives of Hong Kong education in the 21st century with particular reference to the notion of Hong Kong 1997. This category helps to answer the educational question which was left unanswered in Chapter Three, i.e. how far the changing socio-political situation of Hong Kong has forced interviewees to re-examine the objectives of education in the 21st century.

The sixth category emphasises educational preparations for producing competent adults in 21st century Hong Kong. Hong Kong people's perceptions of competence within this free market economy have not been examined by the literature. In addition, as 1997 begins to affect Hong Kong society, people's perceptions of Hong Kong's future in general may change. Therefore, the fieldwork attempts to examine the educational implications of the current and changing socio-political situation. In other words, it tackles the way in which can "a basically unchanged educational system" (stated in the Basic Law) can cater for the needs of a rapidly changing society. Interviewees'

perceptions of making a living and pursuing personal betterment within the political framework, of "one country, two systems" are also discussed. All these educational issues become the main foci of this category.

6.8 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has described the nature of and procedure for conducting this fieldwork. The relationship between the political implications of this research and respondents' possible reactions to some parts of the research questions were illustrated. The rationale for choosing the focused interview and the procedure of data collection were explained. An attempt was made to report and discuss the difficulties regarding sampling and interviewing. Given the uniqueness of this fieldwork, particular reference was also given to data analysis.

Introduction of the conceptual structure of this fieldwork indicates how findings are to be processed and what implications will be drawn in the succeeding chapter. The link between the conceptual framework and fieldwork approach will also lead to a deeper level of analysis of the data. Achievement of a better understanding of the social phenomena and the objectives of education, the nature of indigenous culture, interviewees' pattern of thought will offer additional information to the current literature. This will be shown in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER SIX

1. Burgess, Robert, (1985), Strategies of Educational Research, London: The Falmer Press, p.7.
2. Lee, Raymond, (1993), Doing Research on Sensitive Topics, London: Sage, p.5.
3. Sieber, Joan, Stanley, Barbara, (1988), "Ethical and professional dimensions of socially sensitive research", American Psychologist, 43, pp.49-55.
4. Lee, R., (1993), op. cit., p.4.
5. Galliher, John, (1982), "The Protection of Human Subjects: a re-examination of the professional code of ethics", Bulmer, Martin, (ed.), Social Research Ethics: an examination of the merits of covert participant observation, London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., pp.152-165

Galliher points out three rules regarding the protection of vulnerable subjects in the whole data collection process. He argues with special reference to those who are prone to be harmed by the research, setting out a set of rules to assist both sides in protecting their rights.

The main purposes of drafting these rules are to protect those vulnerable persons who participate in any kind of social research activities. Three alternative rules to the Code of Ethics, Rules 3, 4 and 5 are suggested by Galliher, pp.162-163 as follows:

From: Every person is entitled to the right of privacy and dignity of treatment. The sociologist must respect these rights.

To : Every person is entitled to equal privacy and dignity of treatment as a private citizen. However, equal protection may require unequal treatment of different types of subjects. More elaborated warnings and explanations may be required in dealing with economic and racial minorities ignorant of the research process than with other citizens. The sociologist must make the judgment regarding the amount of explanation required for adequate subject protection. When actors become involved in government and business or other organisations where they are accountable to the public, no right of privacy applies to conduct in such roles.

From: All research should avoid causing personal harm to subjects used in research.

To : All research should avoid causing personal harm to subjects used in research unless it is evident that the gain by society and /or science is such that it offsets the probable magnitude of the individual discomfort. The revelation of wrongdoing in positions of public trust shall not be deemed to cause "personal harm" within the meaning of this rule.

From: Confidential information provided by a research subject must be treated as such by the sociologist.

To : Confidential information provided by a research subject must be treated as such by the sociologist unless it is evident that the gain by society and /or science is such that it offsets the probable magnitude of the individual discomfort. The revelation of wrongdoing in positions of public trust shall not be deemed to be "confidential information" within the meaning of this rule.

6. Lee, R., (1993), op. cit., p.187.

7. Cohen, L., Manion, L., (1989), (3rd edition), Research Methods in Education, London: Routledge, pp.307-308.

8. Robson, Colin, (1994), reprinted, Real World Research, Oxford: Blackwell, p.241.

9. Cohen, L., Manion, L., (1989), op. cit., pp.307-308.

10. Massarik, Fred, (1981), "The interviewing process re-examined", in Reason, Peter, Rowan, John, (eds.), Human Inquiry: A sourcebook of New Paradigm Research, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, pp.201-206.

11. Robson, C., (1994), op. cit., p.238.

12. Powney, Janet, Watts, Mike, (1987), Interviewing in Educational Research, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, see Chapter five.

13. Ibid., p.127.

14. Lee, R., (1993), op. cit., p.60.

15. Biernacki, P., Waldorf, D., (1981), "Snowball Sampling Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling", Sociological Methods and Research, Vol. 10, No. 2, November, pp.141-163.

16. Lee, Raymond, (1982), Interreligious Courtship And Marriage in Northern Ireland, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, p.151.

17. For details, see Lee, R., (1993), op. cit., pp.65-68.

18. Ibid., p.65.

19. Robson, C., (1994), op. cit., pp.141-142.

20. Miles, Matthew, Huberman, Michael, (1984), Qualitative Data Analysis - A sourcebook of New Methods, London: Sage, pp.36-37.

21. In this fieldwork, only one female principal was chosen and interviewed. This is partly because of the reality that male principals outnumbered the females means a

higher possibility of getting male subjects. Moreover, this is also because of the fact that gender is not the main concern of the fieldwork.

22. Douglas, Martin, (1993), A Phenomenographic Investigation Into Students' Economics Learning in a Mini Enterprise Context, Unpublished Master Dissertation, London: University of London, pp.55-56.

23. Galfo, Armand, (1983), Educational Research Design and Data Analysis: an integrated approach, Lanham: University Press of America Inc., p.94.

24. When the fieldwork was conducted in Hong Kong, the Task and Task-related Assessment initiative was one of the hot educational issues and was much debated. Because of lack of support of teachers and because of its controversial nature, it has never been implemented in schools.

25. Lee claims that bias is unavoidable in snowball sampling because the social relations which underpin the sampling procedure tend towards reciprocity and transitivity. In other words, this sampling method produces more homogenous attributes in the sample rather than different attributes. Lee, R., (1993), op. cit., p.67.

CHAPTER SEVEN ANALYSIS OF THE FIELD DATA

7.1 PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

This Chapter analyses the field data in terms of answering the research questions which were set out in Chapter Six using a three-stage method. As Hong Kong is in a process of transformation, rapid changes are occurring. Hong Kong people's perceptions of society are also changing. The implications of these new challenges for education development in general and curricular innovations in particular are the main foci of this research. To avoid a taken for granted or literature-oriented approach to understanding the political and educational realities of Hong Kong, this chapter starts with revealing interviewees' perspectives on understanding social phenomena and their position in relation to them. The analysis of interviewees' perceptions of the politics of 1997 fosters a better understanding of reality, and thus assists in generating effective educational policies for preparing young people for the 21st century.

As mentioned in Chapter Six and for the purpose of offering a comprehensive analysis of the data, a three-stage data analysis technique is employed. Data are analysed and presented on three main dimensions: individual interviewees' verbatim quotations, and the categorization of findings using both a coding frame and the concept of indigenous Hong Kong culture.

7.1.1 Organization of the chapter

This chapter consists of three main parts. Part One employs an interviewee-oriented approach: investigating interviewees' individual views on two particular topics: the

politics of Hong Kong 1997 and educational preparations for adult economic life. These two topics build bridges to the development of the thesis. The presentation of interviewees' direct responses to these two areas allows a direct understanding of the data in terms of getting the feelings of the individuals.

Given that the politics of 1997 and educational objectives are two main areas of this empirical study, the verbatim quotations illuminate the qualitative analysis. The use of quotations draws direct attention to the way in which interviewees describe their feelings about and their perceptions of particular social phenomena. Each category of individuals' views will be followed by commentaries so as to give an immediate interpretation of the quotations. In short, this section is a direct analysis of verbatim quotations.

Part Two summarises and categorises the main findings by using a coding frame. The coding frame follows from the research questions set out in Chapter One and identifies key findings that have not yet been tackled in the literature on Hong Kong education. Six major areas of interviewees' perceptions are therefore categorised in the coding frame, (1) perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997, (2) perceptions of the socio-economic future of Hong Kong, (3) conceptualisation of adult economic life, (4) comments on the current Hong Kong educational system, (5) the objectives of 21st century Hong Kong education, and (6) educational preparations for "competent adults" in 21st century Hong Kong.

Part Three consists of two sections, offering a deeper level of data analysis using a sustaining concept: indigenous culture. The first section aims at identifying interviewees' patterns of thought. An attempt is first made to list out the core values of Hong Kong. The second section interprets the findings by using the concept of indigenous Hong Kong culture. Chapter Two indicated that a set of indigenous Hong Kong values has been identified which is different from traditional Chinese culture. Throughout the chapter, the word "individuals" is used interchangeably with "interviewees".

Part One

7.2 AN INTERVIEWEE-ORIENTED APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents interviewees' verbatim quotations. Readers' attention is drawn to interviewees' direct responses to a selection of social phenomena. On the basis of the individual's points of view, several direct quotations are presented. Owing to individual differences in perceiving reality, a range of meanings of the same social phenomena is expected. Their responses reflect their centre of interest. A collection of their responses represents the way in which reality appears to them and, in turn, shows the differences among individual perceptions---giving a direct feeling of individual interviewees' perceptions and understandings of social phenomena. These responses also reflect the gap between the research findings and the literature reviewed in earlier chapters. Individual interviewees' perceptions provide a more concrete understanding of reality than the literature.

The following paragraphs present and then analyse interviewees' perspectives on the areas of (1) the politics of Hong Kong 1997 and (2) educational preparations for adult

economic life. Different perspectives are visible. For example, what makes the group of parents see things differently from the group of students, in the area of the politics of Hong Kong 1997? In what ways has the political transformation of Hong Kong forced individuals to rethink education for adult economic life? How different are individuals' views on the role of education in preparing young people for adult economic life?

7.2.1 The politics of Hong Kong 1997

It was suggested earlier that the political future of Hong Kong was understood as a collective feeling of social uncertainty. To make sense of the six groups of interviewees' perspectives an analysis of individuals' perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997 is offered.

Students

The responses of the group of five students were very different from the other five categories of interviewees. *Only* Student 1 regarded the PRC resumption of Hong Kong as a time for the Chinese to:

play a part on the world political stage. We are no longer humiliated by others. (Transcript 9:2)

The rest did not express any particular feelings about the issue.

Student 2 admitted that, because she was emigrating, her feelings about the socio-economic future were that "no noticeable changes would be made". Because:

people who I get along with have confidence in Hong Kong, so, I haven't thought about it seriously. (Transcript 10:1)

Student 3 regarded the politics of Hong Kong as a matter of job hunting, a test of job opportunity in a keenly competitive society:

it might be a lot easier to get a job or vice versa, I am not sure. So, that is my real question. (Transcript 14:5)

In contrast, the politics of 1997 were seen as a social issue for Student 4 and he believed that the current life-style would be kept by the PRC. In his words:

I don't think there is much difference. Because Hong Kong is forever Hong Kong. (Transcript 21:1)

In perceiving the future of Hong Kong, Student 5 held the view that:

none of us has any idea of the future. However, computing will be as useful as it is now. (Transcript 22:3)

In terms of students' perceptions of the socio-economic future of Hong Kong, students held self-oriented, individualistic attitudes toward reality. For example, Students 3, 4 and 5 anticipated greater job competition and associated educational competition. As indicated earlier, Student 3 was not certain about what sort of employment opportunity would result in the 21st century yet he believed the perceived social changes would have greater influence on himself. Students 4 and 5 both believed that the current competitive socio-economic ethos would continue in 21st century Hong Kong even under Chinese rule. Therefore, to them, credentialism would prevail and they thought that better employment opportunity would be given to those with better academic achievement. Yet, in Student 1's view "...in future, students will have many difficulties in adapting to society." (Transcript 9:1)

Commentary:

Among the group of five students, the political future of Hong Kong was perceived from a context-free perspective and experienced in a rather detached way. Yet, when they made an attempt to link the perceived socio-economic future of Hong Kong with their personal career prospects, they experienced a personal connection with the notion of Hong Kong 1997. They shared the feeling of uncertainty. For example, Student 2 initially responded to the socio-economic future of Hong Kong positively and stated that no particular changes would be made. However, when probed further, she answered that she would be exploited by others and have to sacrifice freedom of speech. Similarly, Student 1 regarded 1997 as having a historical significance to the PRC in the international political stage whilst concluding that what the socio-economic future of Hong Kong would be was "hard to say".

The five students were concerned more with their personal socio-economic future rather than Hong Kong society itself. This finding supported the view in the literature cited in Chapter Two, that socio-political awareness has not been the main concern of the students. Thus, the students' perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997 can be seen in terms of self orientation, with one exception who stressed "nationalism". Overall, their feeling of uncertainty towards Hong Kong in 1997 was a direct result of their perceptions of greater social competition from southern China rather than political implications.

A shared pattern of perceptions of the socio-economic future of Hong Kong among the students gradually appeared. The students' self-oriented and pragmatic attitudes

towards society show some of the characteristics of the local Hong Kong socio-economic value systems and youth sub-culture. This implies that young individuals in Hong Kong have been socialised into a practical and utilitarian socio-economic value system.

Parents

Speaking of the political future of Hong Kong, all the parents noted a certain degree of anxiety and uncertainty especially where the future of their children was concerned.

Parent 1 gave a direct response to her feelings about the politics of 1997: "...I don't have confidence in the Communist Party of China." (Transcript 2:2):

But we are very scared. China is very different from Hong Kong. I don't want my daughters to be educated in the PRC educational system. (Ibid., 2:1)

To Parent 2, Hong Kong 1997 would be a time of testing how the PRC socialist rule would work in Hong Kong. The political future of Hong Kong in 1997 meant that:

Hong Kong will then be ruled by China, and a communist China is no good to Hong Kong...Certainly, I wish Hong Kong would keep its status quo for fifty years after 1997. Anyway, she (my daughter) will be affected by these social changes...by a communist and non-democratic society. (Transcript 4:2)

Yet, he said, "I don't think there's any great social change in 1997." (Transcript 4:3)

However, he questioned if his daughter would be competent in managing her life in future:

In facing these changeable socio-political situations, she won't be able to tell what is fact and what is propaganda...What can we hope from an unreliable government? (Ibid., p.4)

Parent 3 described the politics of Hong Kong 1997 as "a Hong Kong people's problem."

(Transcript 6:3) She highlighted the differences between Hong Kong and the PRC:

In fact, they have totally different ruling policies...We were brought up here (Hong Kong), and we get used to the life style and policies...adjustment is a big problem. (Ibid., p.5)

The perceived difficulties in integrating the two different political systems were also identified by Parent 3:

After joining the PRC in 1997, the Chinese Government is not going to cater for our social needs. We have to follow its rules instead. (Ibid., p.6)

The politics of Hong Kong 1997 appeared to Parent 4 as offering "a different political atmosphere." (Transcript 16:4) But this would be a changing atmosphere. He saw a positive sign:

So, after 1997, there may be a very positive side of the PRC economic development if she keeps this lane (open-door policy). (Ibid., p.5)

Although Parent 4 offered a rather positive attitude towards the political future of Hong Kong, he had made an effort to convince his daughter to study abroad:

Probably, she doesn't want to go but the family does. Consequently, if we don't push her, she might as well stay in her home town. (Ibid., p.6)

Yet, Parent 5 aired her feeling of uncertainty which resulted from her perceptions of greater competition in Hong Kong:

I always warn my son that in future, under the policy of 'One country, two systems' certainly, many mainland Chinese children will be his competitors. Because, they will surely come and stay in Hong Kong. That's expected. (Transcript 23:2)

Moreover, new social challenges were observed:

Certainly, there will have a lot of mainland Chinese moving down to Hong Kong...But we have a very different life style. We speak different languages...Communication matters. (Ibid., p.5)

Alternatively, parents who were preparing to send their children abroad expressed a sense of relief. For instance, Parent 1 saw her perceptions of her daughters' future clearly:

Well, they will not be here (Hong Kong) by then. They will be studying further overseas and then might find a job there. So, only my husband and I will remain in Hong Kong. (Transcript 2:2)

Commentary:

The politics of Hong Kong 1997 appeared to the parents as a series of negative socio-political changes. These changes involved new challenges to the stability of Hong Kong's current socio-economic ethos, including freedom of speech. Expected new challenges would include: sacrifice of freedom of speech, change of educational ethos and keen social competition. When parents were questioned about their perspectives on Hong Kong in 1997, they made an immediate link with their children's future. Their negative feelings about their children's socio-economic future operated in parallel to their perceptions of the political future of Hong Kong under Chinese rule. Parents 1 and 2, as cited earlier, had clearly voiced their feelings about placing their children in a socialist society.

A stronger feeling of uncertainty, and negative attitudes towards the political future of Hong Kong in 1997 were identified among the five parents. As they had more social

experience and an understanding of the differences between a capitalist and socialist economy, they were able to make a comparison between them. In addition, owing to many unknown factors that they anticipated, they have more reservations about their children's social well-being.

Although the five parents have their own positions on the politics of Hong Kong in 1997, they shared one common point: the socio-economic future of Hong Kong will become more competitive. The extent to which parents' perceptions of greater social competition are forcing them to send their children to study abroad is not yet known. The urgency of the five parents for their children to leave Hong Kong, in turn, suggests that they have little confidence in the PRC. Overall, parents' feelings of fear and uncertainty are understood to be a result of personal knowledge of the PRC.

Economists

Economist 1 warned that "Hong Kong is nothing to China." (Transcript 8:2) He added that although the PRC was promoting a rather open political system and moving towards a greater democracy, it was interfering in Hong Kong political affairs. More importantly, he believed that the political future of Hong Kong would be controlled by the leaders of the PRC:

He (Deng Xiao-ping) won't allow democracy to be spread in China. Otherwise, democracy will become like a hole on the wall, or like a small outlet of a fountain. As the hole or the outlet becomes bigger, he (Deng) won't be able to stop it any more. (Transcript 8:1)

Therefore, he drew the following conclusions:

"Hong Kong people rule Hong Kong" is a completely new policy to us. We can't find any country which has such an idea before, you know? This idea needs to be fine tuned. (Transcript 8:7)

Therefore, he questioned whether the Hong Kong capitalist economy could really be maintained under socialist rule. He made a final remark that it would be advisable for people to gain security abroad.

The political future of Hong Kong to Economist 2, is uncertain "...we are still not sure about what's happening after 1997." (Transcript 20:1) His feeling of uncertainty was explained by his perceptions of the Fourteenth National People's Congress. He stated that Chinese politics was still being manipulated by a small group of leaders and he felt, "that might create some uncertainties for us." (Ibid., p.2) He came to the conclusion that "...our political scene is hard to predict." (Ibid., p.4) This concluding sentence echoed his earlier feeling that a positive view on the integration of the two societies was personal wishful thinking. (Ibid., p.1)

Commentary:

The group of economists understood the politics of Hong Kong 1997 as a negative sign for Hong Kong's future. Both economists thought that the political practices of the PRC revealed that the political system is still conservative. Economist 1 suggested that it would be more difficult for Hong Kong to build a democracy in the 21st century. For the sake of security, even only for psychological purposes, he advised that it would be better to obtain foreign citizenship. Similarly, Economist 2 showed a suspicious attitude towards the PRC politics by citing the example of the Fourteenth National People's

Congress suggesting that a few politicians manipulated the political decision-making. Such obstacles were difficulties for a constructive merger in 1997.

The responses of the two economists reflected their reservations about the future of Hong Kong in building an open or democratic political atmosphere. The two economists' lack of political confidence in the PRC was not unique; however, the way they comprehended Hong Kong political reality was different from that of the students.

Regardless of their negative feelings about the political future of Hong Kong, positive feelings towards the economic future of Hong Kong in the 21st century were reported by the two economists. Economist 1 shared Deng Xiao-ping's idea of a "Greater Hong Kong": the economic cooperation and integration of Hong Kong into Guangdong Province in the 21st century. Hong Kong's economic future is no longer perceived as independent of the PRC. Rather it is considered as a whole with the PRC and in particular with southern China. By the same token, Economist 2 gave some credit to the open door economic policy and suggested that the economic relationship between Hong Kong and the PRC would be very close. In their opinion, the economic future of Hong Kong is promising.

At the time when the confidence of the two economists is being restored by the PRC open door economic policy, the politics of Hong Kong 1997 invites them to rethink the political future of Hong Kong. In addition, the two economists share a consensus view that the economic well-being of Hong Kong is dependent upon the PRC leaders' perceptions of the role of Hong Kong in contributing to China's economic development.

The economists' resistance results from the inconsistent political policies of the PRC and its political interference in Hong Kong within this transitional period. In brief, both have doubts about the political future of Hong Kong.

Principals

The five principals interpreted the political future of Hong Kong as full of uncertainty. Principal 1 was concerned with the inconsistent political position of local Hong Kong politicians within this transitional period. An uncertain political future implies the need for training in logical thinking. As a secondary principal, he perceived that schools should do more to assist pupils in acquiring the skills of being discerning.

Linking the politics of Hong Kong 1997 with school reality, Principal 2 suggested that schools would be facing greater challenges. Firstly, Principal 2 perceived 1997 as an additional educational administrative pressure:

Today, we are told to manage our language teaching problem, tomorrow, we have to manage a new curriculum and the day after tomorrow, we have to manage another new curriculum...Consequently, as far as preparing youngsters for 1997 is concerned, we have nobody left for managing it. (Transcript 12:1)

Secondly, in terms of school ethos, Principal 2 anticipated that schools would become very centralised with new challenges:

I understand that there will be some changes...the government may require me to produce a report on my lessons...I won't question it, I mean I understand it is a kind of 'brain washing education'. (Transcript 12:9)

Sharing the feeling of uncertainty, Principal 3 described her personal feeling:

I have no idea. Because, having been ruled by Britain for such a long time, it is difficult to judge whether the youngsters love their motherland or not. (Transcript 15:5)

Principal 3's feeling of uncertainty about the political future of Hong Kong was marked by the anticipation of greater educational administrative pressure such as managing parental aspirations and the wide range of students' ability. Additionally, Principal 3 also felt that future Hong Kong education should focus on educating local Hong Kong elites for a democracy.

Taking a general perspective on understanding Hong Kong political reality, Principal 4 interpreted the resumption of PRC sovereignty over Hong Kong as meaning global social changes. Nevertheless, Principal 4 admitted that he was not certain of the politics of Hong Kong 1997. In his words, "...really I haven't got a clue what will be happening in relation to 1997." (Transcript 19:4)

In contrast, Principal 5 gave clear and specific explanations for his negative attitudes towards the British handover of Hong Kong to the PRC:

I don't know how promising the PRC open door economic policy is. Maybe, once Deng Xiao-ping passes away and there is the rise of the conservative members and there is a will return to the planned economy, then, that's it. (Transcript 27:6)

In addition, Principal 5 felt that Hong Kong would be continuing to play its supplementary role in assisting the PRC in developing its information system and technology. Principal 5 suggested that the relationship between Hong Kong and the PRC would be very close. In particular, he expected that Hong Kong and the Pearl

River Delta would both be supplementary to one another and would compete. (Transcript 27:1)

Commentary:

The politics of Hong Kong 1997 was understood as a time of educational challenge for the five principals interviewed, though there were variations among them. Following the five principals' personal knowledge and perceptions of the 1997 issue, 1997 is closely connected with the current political ethos of Hong Kong. For those principals who were concerned about the changing political ethos and its relationship with possible changes in school ethos, great attention was paid to coping with new administrative demands in education. Some principals were alarmed by the rapidly changing political ethos. Those principals who perceived the changing political ethos as causing school administrative problems expected to experience greater curriculum challenges. For example, Principal 1 felt that training in logical thinking would become a crucial educational preparation for a society with conflicting and contradicting views and news reports.

In terms of managing the 1997 issue across the school curriculum, none of the principals reported that schools had considered this as one of their main educational objectives. The reality is that the school time table has been filled up with other educational issues and new curricular innovations. The notion of Hong Kong 1997 is left to be managed.

The politics of Hong Kong 1997 is perceived as a source of extra administrative pressure which is, for the principals, less urgent than other school priorities. In

comparison with other educational issues, managing the issue of Hong Kong 1997 has not been widely recognised and addressed. Yet, unlike the suggestion of K.M. Cheng in Chapter Three, the responses of the five principals showed an awareness of the implications of 1997; but the extent to which principals are prepared for managing the issue of Hong Kong 1997 in the future is not yet known. Most important of all, deciding how a school should prioritise its needs is a serious educational task.

Economics teachers

The five economics teachers perceived the politics of Hong Kong 1997 as affecting educational objectives and posing challenges.

The perceptions of Teacher 1 of the politics of Hong Kong 1997 were subtle:

Maybe, to a certain extent, China's open door economic policy will mean some good signs for its politics. Mind you, it can be the other way round, too. A closed political system can slow down the pace of economic development. In fact, a lot of problems are created such as corruption by the lack of cooperation between the political and economic systems. (Transcript 13:4)

Teacher 2 responded to the resumption of the PRC sovereignty in Hong Kong with, "Just my personal wishful thinking, but there won't be any changes." (Transcript 18:4)

However, when questioned further about what sorts of difficulties students would encounter in 1997, Teacher 2 gave a very different answer:

They will have some difficulties, that's for sure...Largely because I feel very uncertain too. I am not in control. Everything has been determined, what I can do is to accept. (Ibid., p.5)

She then suggested that teachers should offer more opportunity to share personal experiences with students so as to assist them in facing a rapidly changing society.

Teacher 3 interpreted the politics of Hong Kong 1997 as a new teaching task for himself. "I strongly feel that I will have more to do." (Transcript 24:2) He regarded it as his own mission to promote pupils' socio-economic awareness because of the inadequacy of the current school curriculum, which:

... is not that relevant in terms of bridging the gap between now and 1997. (Ibid., p.2)

Teacher 4 said about the political future of Hong Kong:

Since we haven't got a clue what's happening in future, it worries me whether pupils can manage. (Transcript 25:1)

Teacher 4 asked "Will a critical mind make pupils' lives easier in an uncertain society? I doubt it." (Ibid., p.3) In anticipating a changing future, Teacher 4 acknowledged the importance of getting students "to have an understanding of the characteristics of Hong Kong and the PRC." (Ibid., p.4)

To Teacher 5, the 1997 issue is a "social, economic and political matter." (Transcript 26:4) In her personal view, education for critical thinking and standing firm for one's position should become the direction of educational development in future.

Commentary:

The five economics teachers interpreted the politics of Hong Kong 1997 as posing new challenges to society and consequently, new challenges to curriculum content. Hong

Kong 1997 has forced the five teachers to re-examine the objectives and adequacy of the current educational provision. They consider that in order to prepare young Hong Kong people for a new society, schools should strengthen the teaching of socio-economic awareness.

Policy Makers

A group of five policy makers understood the politics of Hong Kong 1997 differently. Some linked 1997 with the need for new educational policies whilst others thought that no special attention to education was needed.

To Policy Maker 1, the merger of Hong Kong and the PRC was an issue of relocating Hong Kong's economic role as a part of the PRC. In terms of education, he thought that as long as the current socio-economic ethos continued, there would be no major educational problems to be encountered in the Hong Kong society of the future.

In the same manner, Policy Maker 2 interpreted 1997 as "a point in our social development process". (Transcript 3:1) Consequently, in his opinion, "there won't be any changes in our educational objectives". (Ibid) However, when he was questioned as to how far pupils have an understanding of Hong Kong 1997, he replied as follows:

I think most of them do but I am not sure to what extent. Even myself, I am not sure how confident I am regarding Hong Kong in 1997. (Ibid., p.3)

As far as the politics of Hong Kong 1997 was concerned, Policy Maker 3 asked:

What worries us is, will the PRC political changes hold its economic policy back instead? (Transcript 5:6)

In addition, Policy Maker 3 expected some difficulties from the two different histories of the PRC and Hong Kong:

Given that the PRC had been isolated from the world for some time, it is difficult for mainland Chinese to share Hong Kong individuals' mentality in the short run. (Ibid., p.5)

Consequently, she felt that greater attention in educational policy-making should be paid to educating pupils to know the differences between the two societies as well as the social problems that southern China was encountering. For example, in her view, "difficulties like corruption" and "prostitution" are two major social challenges that confront the Hong Kong society of the future. (Ibid., p.5)

Policy Maker 4 was suspicious about 1997:

we just can't tell what's happening and what will be happening. A group of politicians are manipulating the politics. Who knows what sense the PRC and Britain are making [of it]? (Transcript 7:3)

From Policy Maker 4's personal understanding of political reality, she commented:

In search of certainty within a sea of uncertainties, a critical mind is the key. (Ibid., p.3)

Echoing Policy Maker 3's social concerns about southern China today, Policy Maker 4 stressed that "corruption exists widely in the PRC. It reflects an underlying crisis, a moral crisis". (Ibid., p.5)

In contrast, Policy Maker 5 connected the politics of Hong Kong 1997 with the economic success of Hong Kong:

Maybe it will be more or less the same as it is now. Because Hong Kong performs very well, economically, the PRC will want to keep Hong

Kong as it is in future. I don't think, therefore, there will be a great change. (Transcript 17:4)

Overall, he drew the following conclusion. "Maybe 1997 will make no difference to our secondary education." (Ibid., p.1)

Commentary

Although the five educational policy makers hold key positions in Hong Kong educational sectors, they do not share a consensus view of educational development. Policy Maker 1 is concerned with the future relationship between economic ethos and the role of education in 21st century Hong Kong. Policy Maker 2 declares that he is not confident about the political future of Hong Kong. Unlike the others, Policy Maker 3 suggests a problem of cultural difference between the two societies. A gap between Hong Kong people and mainland Chinese will be widened after the merger of the two societies in 1997. In contrast, Policy Maker 5 stresses that the PRC will treasure Hong Kong's economic contributions. The diversity of policy makers' views on the politics of 1997 may pose a challenge to the process of educational policy making. Conversely, in terms of social problems, there was some consensus that the threat of corruption and declining moral values have implications for Hong Kong education and curricular innovations. As these two aspects have not yet been addressed fully in the literature, educational policy makers should pay more attention to them.

7.2.2 Educational preparations for adult economic life

The twenty-seven individuals interviewed made many suggestions for preparing students for adult economic life. The individuals suggested, with variations, the following areas:

educational administration, curricular contents, school management initiatives and classroom ethos.

Students

The following quotations present the five students' individual perspectives on educational preparations for adult economic life.

In terms of preparing himself for playing economic roles adequately, Student 1 said:

I wish education could give me a new perspective for life and practical skills. (Transcript 9:3)

He continued:

What is more important is to give us a better psychological preparation so that we know what we are expected to manage...we can then participate in society more actively. (Ibid., p.3)

Student 2 made a different educational suggestion. "Give us more independent thinking skills training". (Transcript 10:4)

For Student 3, a successful adult in Hong Kong society should be "flexible, knowledgeable, experienced, well-presented and efficient". (Transcript 14:2) He therefore felt that it would be important to increase his self-confidence and awareness of political and economic matters. (Ibid., p.2)

Student 4 interpreted educational preparation for adult economic life as the need to equip students with academic qualifications. In Student 2's opinion, adult economic life refers to the ability of an individual to manage a family. (Transcript 21:3) However, with

special reference to Hong Kong 1997, Student 2 suggested that students should be equipped with independent thinking skills and an independent point of view. (Ibid., p.5)

In Student 5's view, educational preparation for adult economic life means the need to acquire "the knowledge which one really needs to get the job". (Transcript 22:5)

Commentary:

The quotations indicate two dominant directions. The five students share a similar pattern of thought: in order to prepare them for adult economic lives, the depth and breadth of the current school curriculum have to be revised. Among the various skills suggested, practical skills for work and critical thinking for life are highlighted. Yet, their perceptions are largely dictated by a pragmatic perspective.

Policy makers

Policy Maker 2 interpreted preparing students for their adult economic lives as "equipping them (students) with the ability to analyse, discuss and think independently". (Transcript 3:2)

In Policy Maker 3's opinion, preparation for adult economic life should be about citizenship awareness:

I personally feel that whether there is 1997 or not, youngsters should be prepared for citizenship...know their rights and responsibilities in society. (Transcript 5:1)

Additionally, she commented that it would be important to give students "a new perspective for life" (Ibid., p.3). In terms of curricular issues:

there are some things left out of the school curriculum like the political issue...such as getting them prepared to be a responsible citizen and knowing our election system as well as the idea of one person one vote (Ibid., p.4).

However, Policy Maker 4 interpreted educational preparation for adult economic life as the need to acquire "a critical mind". (Transcript 7:3) In her view "...if we get it, then I will say we are well-prepared". (Ibid.) Within the context of Hong Kong 1997, Policy Maker 4 suggested that:

A critical mind means a lot for an adult economic life. Because we have too many uncertainties. (Ibid.)

Commentary:

In contrast to current educational practices, the policy makers place much emphasis on critical thinking and citizenship awareness as preparing young people for their adult economic lives. They show an awareness of what should be done in the future in education in order to equip young people with the skills and knowledge to manage their adult lives. In other words, contrary to the comments on education in Hong Kong in Chapter Three (that local Hong Kong educators do not have a view on future Hong Kong educational provision), all of the five senior educational interviewees agree, at least, on the need for a critical thinking skills perspective in preparing young people for adult economic lives. Their view suggests a political effect. The political transformation of Hong Kong is forcing them to redefine the meaning of adult economic life and as a result, much attention has been paid to developing young people' thinking skills. Nevertheless, it remains uncertain exactly how far this critical thinking perspective reflects the policy makers' perceptions of the impact of Chinese rule. What is more

certain is that the policy makers do have different perceptions of the Hong Kong society of the future.

Parents

The responses of Parent 1 to adequate preparation for adult economic life were in terms of academic qualifications:

I will say that when one has finished his/her university education and is managing to earn a living independently, he or she is adequately prepared for his/her adult economic life. (Transcript 2:2)

When Parent 1 made special reference to the 1997 issue, she pointed out:

Let them (students) get in touch with our society...That will help them to prepare for their future. (Ibid., p.3)

In terms of the socio-economic development of Hong Kong, Parent 1 stressed the close relationship between Hong Kong and the outside world. To Parent 1, "to maintain the prosperity of Hong Kong after 1997, English teaching is crucial."

As far as future Hong Kong society is concerned, Parent 2 highlighted the socio-political education. His position is:

if Hong Kong has no democracy, a degree or certificate means nothing to her. What can we hope for from an unreliable government? (Transcript 4:4)

In general, Parent 3 believed that to prepare young people for their adult economic lives schools should pay more attention to develop students' potentialities, "because everybody would like to make his/her contribution to society." (Transcript 6:7) Yet, she did note that "how far can one adapt to the ruling power, the PRC, is a big question". (Ibid.)

The view of Parent 4 of preparation for adult economic life was as "to have skills for life." (Transcript 16:1) More specifically, Parent 5 said: "Maybe, it is better for him (her son) to acquire the skills which suit his interests." (Transcript 23:4)

Commentary:

"Adult economic life" was widely conceptualised as practical life management by the five parents. Individuals' conceptions reflected their pattern of perceptions within a free competition market economy. The five parents saw a close relationship between academic achievement and employment opportunity. For the sake of their children's career prospects or economic future, parents believed that it would be beneficial if their children were equipped with practical skills for work.

In the five parents' suggestions for preparing their children for future Hong Kong society, one feature is identifiable: parents make a particular point of the socio-economic ethos of Hong Kong under Chinese rule. In response to the perceived social challenges, special attention is given to strengthening pupils' socio-political awareness in school. The stress on pupils' socio-political awareness becomes particularly crucial within the Hong Kong context. Parents are making a step forward and departing from their pragmatic and economic-oriented perceptions of adult economic life.

Economists

In terms of educational preparations for young people's adult economic lives in 21st century Hong Kong, Economist 1 preferred English Language to Putonghua. In his view, "Hong Kong will still be a gateway to foreign trade, technology and information

advancement." (Transcript 8:4) The following explanations were given by Economist 1:

The point to make is...Hong Kong will still play the role of importing new technology, knowledge and western culture for the PRC and Hong Kong itself...In future, our Hong Kong youngsters will still be playing these roles to keep society going. (Ibid.)

In addition, "technology, computing and medical science are also crucial knowledge for young people to catch up with." Nevertheless, he rejected to particular educational preparation. "I don't think we need a special package to get them prepared, educationally." (Ibid.)

In contrast, in Economist 2's view:

Civic education is very important. Youngsters should have a sense of citizenship. (Transcript 20:5)

"In future, we might have a very different ruling policy." (Ibid.) Therefore, to Economist 2, educational preparation for adult economic life meant citizenship. He placed an emphasis on education for understanding one's citizenship and maximizing one's ability to contribute to society.

Commentary:

On the basis of Hong Kong economic development and from the position of Economist 1, educational preparations for adult economic life are interpreted as practical skills training. Economist 1 believed that Hong Kong young people's adult economic life would be built upon economic activities in Hong Kong today such as high technology.

The role of education, in Economist 1's opinion, is to continue to equip young people with the practical skills for life such as languages and advanced technology.

In contrast, Economist 2 drew attention to citizenship awareness and social awareness rather than practical skills training. His idea is that since Hong Kong and the PRC will be integrating as one country, education should aim at cultivating young people's civic mindedness and a democracy.

Economists 1 and 2 hold different views on preparing young people for their adult economic lives in the 21st century. If Economist 1's position is regarded as a career orientation, Economist 2's offered a social orientation.

Economics teachers

In preparing students for their adult economic lives Teacher 1 held the view:

that, on the one hand, we have to give out adequate knowledge of Hong Kong political and economical operations to students. On the other hand, we need a democratic education system to make sense of students' classroom learning. (Transcript 13:4)

Moreover, he stressed that schools should aim at increasing pupils' awareness of defending a capitalist economy and its relationship with today's Hong Kong economic success:

There is a general awareness of the advantages of a free market economy since the socialist or communist economies experience a lot of hardship. (Ibid.)

Teacher 2 acknowledged that young people's adult economic lives might need more independent and critical thinking skills and a personal perspective. Yet, she felt that

"school has done the job of providing adequate preparation for them." (Transcript 18:2)

So, the main educational preparation would therefore be social skills training.

Apart from independent thinking skill, interpersonal relationships play a part as well. (Ibid., p.3)

Nevertheless, she pointed out the dilemma of preparing young people for their future. Although she realised that to prepare young people for a changing society is important, she has no idea of "what sorts of adult lives they will have and what sorts of changes are likely to be made." (Ibid., p.4) In short, she was not certain of which direction education should follow. "Because we haven't got a clue what's happening in the future. Consequently, there is nothing we can do for it." (Ibid., p.7)

Economics Teacher 3 stressed that to prepare pupils for their adult economic lives meant to connect classroom learning with their daily lives (Transcript 24:3):

To get them to realise what sorts of potential problems our society will have and so to get them prepared. (Ibid., p.4)

The rationale behind his suggestion was:

Only by having a constant awareness of the whole development of society, shall we be able to judge what is right or wrong. (Ibid.)

Educational preparation for adult economic life to Economics Teacher 4 meant a "practical curriculum" allowing each subject such as "Geography, History etc. to incorporate more civic education elements." (Transcript 25:2) Then pupils will have more awareness of citizenship. Nevertheless, when she was making special reference to the political future of Hong Kong 1997, she asserted that:

pupils would manage better when if they have a greater understanding of the situation instead of having to manage it all of a sudden. (Ibid., p.4)

Teacher 5 interpreted adequate preparation for adult economic life as:

Having an awareness of and a clear understanding of what one is going to achieve and achieve it rationally. (Transcript 26:5)

Speaking of the right direction for educational development for Hong Kong 1997,

Teacher 5 made the following suggestions:

Firstly, it is about intellectual development. Then comes moral education. It is important to get pupils to develop a sense of social responsibility from their younger age. Apart from that, analytical thinking is another crucial element so that they could have their own standpoint. (Ibid. 26:4)

Commentary:

On the whole, the five economics teachers suggested that educational preparations for adult economic life will have many implications for curriculum innovations and contents as well as teaching method. The interviewees feel that both independent and critical thinking skills will become very important for helping students to handle their adult lives effectively. Besides, the teachers also highlighted that education should aim at developing pupils' independent points of view. In the opinion of the economics teachers, to be discerning and standing firm with one's own position are two crucial qualities for leading a competent adult economic life in future. They did not point out how could pupils become more discerning in knowing what is right and what is wrong. In other words, adult economic life within the context of 21st century Hong Kong is perceived and interpreted differently from the current pattern of lives. Accordingly, the teachers interviewed make special curricular suggestions for the educational system.

Principals

Principal 1 noted that little has been done especially for 1997, and he personally did not agree that 1997 should make a difference to the current objectives of education. He claimed that the objectives of education would remain as preparing youngsters for adult lives in general.(Transcript 11:4) However, he suggested that logical thinking skills might be one of the crucial educational areas that needed to be strengthened in school:

I think logical thinking is very useful especially in a fast changing society. I've had this idea for some time already. It's very useful because it ensures that you distinguish what is fallacy and what is truth.
(Transcript 11:5)

Principal 4 echoed Principal 1's claim that school has done little as far as preparing pupils for 1997 was concerned. In his view, preparation for adult economic life is "a very remote target." (Transcript 12:1) Yet, he thought their school in future should continue to play the role of "raising the standard of students' language and independent thinking skills. These two key targets of education should not be changed in any kind of situation." (Ibid., p.2)

In addition, Principal 4 felt that schools needed "to help students to learn how to get along with each other" and more importantly, "to give a perspective to youngsters for managing their own lives." (Transcript 12:3) These efforts would help pupils develop more pro-social behaviours as well as independent life skills.

Holding a practical and career-oriented perspective on educational preparation for adult economic life, Principle 3 suggested early official streaming:

I mean, children should be streamed into prevocational and grammar

schools in their early schooling. Once their academic performance is not to the level that is required, students should be placed in prevocational school. (Transcript 15:6)

In contrast, Principal 5 thought that "to prepare students for their adult lives is to teach them to have a simple life style." (Transcript 27:6)

Commentary:

Two different perspectives on perceptions of adult economic life, from purely intellectual development to practical skills-orientation, are identified. However, regardless of the practical or the intellectual perspective on preparing young people for adult economic lives, both suggestions are made on the basis of a changing and transforming society. In contrast to the standard educational suggestions in the literature, the five principal's perceptions of educational preparations for adult economic life are closely linked the notion of 1997.

Conclusions of Part One

Part One has placed its emphasis on each interviewee's personal perceptions and general understandings of the research areas: the politics of Hong Kong 1997 and educational preparations for adult economic life. Verbatim quotations indicated the uniqueness of interviewees' sense of changing realities. The commentaries summed up and analysed the responses against the selected social phenomena. The direct verbal responses of individuals enriched the general understanding of the socio-political reality of Hong Kong. Additionally, the interviewees' conceptualisations of "adult economic life" illuminated the indigenous Hong Kong socio-economic values systems.

As indicated in the introductory section, Part Two will use a coding frame to categorise and analyse the findings.

Part Two: Categorisation and presentation of the main findings of the fieldwork

7.3 INDIVIDUALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLITICS OF HONG KONG 1997

In contrast to the section using direct quotations from the interviewees, this part summarises findings into six major categorisations by using a coding frame. They are (1) perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997, (2) perceptions of the socio-economic future of Hong Kong, (3) conceptualisations of "adult economic life", (4) comments on the current Hong Kong educational system, (5) objectives of the 21st century Hong Kong education, and (6) educational preparations for producing competent adults in 21st century Hong Kong.

Sixteen of the twenty-seven individuals perceived negative changes coming from the politics of Hong Kong 1997 whilst the rest were either positive or neutral. Among the sixteen individuals, nine of them shared feelings of uncertainty. For example, a few individuals regarded the notion of 1997 as beyond their knowledge and understanding. Others had some reservations about the integration of the two rival economic systems (capitalist and socialist). The rest felt uncertain because of the inconsistency of the standpoints of the local politicians. One claimed that in reading the news and getting information will be a test of one's political discernment. In addition, some individuals were not certain if the political practices of the PRC will be manipulated by a few leaders. Because of the above speculations, some individuals doubt if the slogan, "Hong Kong remains unchanged for fifty years" would be put into practice. Apart from the

reasons mentioned above, a few individuals perceived new social challenges resulting from the competition of the PRC. There were two individuals who felt that Hong Kong 1997 means a period of losing freedom in Hong Kong.

Seven interviewees adopted a neutral or a "wait and see" attitude towards the politics of 1997. One economics teacher interpreted the politics of 1997 as a time of showing the differences between the political and economic systems of Hong Kong and the PRC. One principal perceived it as a time of spreading the PRC's socialism and patriotism in Hong Kong whilst another perceived it as a means of testing how much the Hong Kong people would share the feeling of nationalism about the PRC. Principal 3 comprehended the notion of Hong Kong 1997 as full of uncertainty. Alternatively, one policy maker claimed that the politics of 1997, to him, just meant that Hong Kong would be a part of the PRC. Although both Economist 1 and Policy Maker 5 thought that the economic well-being of Hong Kong would be sustained, they both anticipated that emigration would continue to increase. Conversely, two individuals interviewed perceived the politics of Hong Kong 1997 positively. Student 1 perceived 1997 as providing a great opportunity for the PRC to play a part in the world political stage. Student 5 regarded the issue of Hong Kong 1997 as beyond his knowledge whereas Student 2 admitted that she had little concern about 1997 as she was emigrating. To Student 4, Hong Kong's lifestyle would be kept by the PRC. Student 3 interpreted 1997 chiefly as a matter of employment opportunity.

7.3.1 Individuals' perceptions of Hong Kong 1997

Students

Across the six categories of interviewees, the group of five students gave more positive responses to the politics of 1997 than the rest. Two positive responses were collected and two students remained neutral. Only one student anticipated that Hong Kong after 1997 would have greater social competition. In contrast, all the parents interviewed shared a negative feeling about the future of Hong Kong's political reality. Their negatives responses stressed new social challenges such as greater social competition, sacrifice of freedom, a clash of the two different economic systems, and individual conflicting views and news reporting as well as massive emigration.

Economics Teachers

Similarly, the perceptions of the economics teachers were negative, except for one. Two teachers mentioned the feeling of uncertainty because of their small confidence in the political practices of the PRC. Teacher 4 pointed out that 1997 would be a time to observe the structural changes of Hong Kong political and economic systems. However, Teacher 5 suggested that Hong Kong in 1997 would be a sea of conflicting views. Finally, Teacher 2 thought that the politics of 1997 would be reflected in an emigration problem.

Educational policy makers

Three educational policy makers reaffirmed that the 1997 has created the feeling of uncertainty. Both Policy Makers 3 and 4 questioned whether the PRC would be able to keep its promise that "Hong Kong will remain unchanged for fifty years". Policy

Maker 3 warned that this might be an empty promise of the PRC leaders as she witnessed many socio-political changes were being made within the transitional period. Sharing this view, Policy Maker 4 took a step further to point out that Hong Kong would have a very different lifestyle after 1997.

Economists

Both Economists 1 and 2 were very concerned about the political practices of the PRC and its relationship with the politics of 1997. Judging from the PRC's previous authoritarian rule, Economist 2 had some reservations about the political future of Hong Kong. Similarly, after an analysis of Hong Kong's economic and political relationship with the PRC, Economist 1 concluded that it would be better to obtain citizenship abroad.

7.3.2 Summary of individuals' perceptions of the politics of 1997

Interviewees are negative rather than positive about Hong Kong under Chinese rule in 1997. Their reservations about the PRC's ability to maintain the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong are based on three major points. Firstly, the two political persecutions, Tiananmen massacre in 1989 and the Cultural Revolution in 1967, prevented Hong Kong people from having confidence in socialist Chinese rule. This suggests that there is a discrepancy between the Chinese leaders and local Hong Kong people in perceiving the future of the merger. Secondly, the pre-merger interferences of the PRC in Hong Kong's internal politics in this transitional period broke the PRC's promise that "Hong Kong will remain unchanged for fifty years" after 1997. Thirdly and lastly, the policy of putting two very different economic systems under the umbrella of the PRC socialist

political system is new to the Hong Kong people; interviewees have reservations about achieving a meaningful merger.

7.4 INDIVIDUALS' PERCEPTIONS OF HONG KONG SOCIO-ECONOMIC FUTURE

The future Hong Kong society is perceived by the individuals as many new social challenges. The main social changes were identified by the interviewees as: greater government control, sacrifice of freedom, contradictory and inconsistent sayings and points of view, the insertion of the PRC educational system into Hong Kong, greater social competition and the rise of socialism. Perceived internal social challenges are: rapid social changes and inconsistent individual viewpoints on the politics of 1997.

In contrast, individuals' perceptions of the economic future of Hong Kong are rather positive. Twelve out of the twenty-seven individuals expressed their view of the economic future of Hong Kong: the majority of those expressing a view (nine individuals) foresaw a positive and prosperous future. Nine individuals believed that Hong Kong would continue its current economic roles as a gateway to foreign trade and western advanced knowledge and technology. Because of the strategic geographical location of Hong Kong, many believed that the relationship between Hong Kong and the PRC would be productive. In particular, the two societies would have closer economic ties. In perceiving the future economic development of Hong Kong, individuals suggested that Hong Kong would be playing a supplementary role to the special economic zones along the south China coast.

7.4.1 Individuals' perceptions of Hong Kong's socio-economic future

Students

The fieldwork findings showed that the five students interviewed thought that the economic future of Hong Kong would be competitive. Some of them expected to have more difficulties in obtaining good jobs. However, one student perceived that credentialism would still be a dominant social value. One felt that Hong Kong people would have to sacrifice their freedom of speech. All in all, students shared a negative feeling towards the socio-economic future of Hong Kong.

Economists

The two economists stressed heavily the economic role of Hong Kong in the 21st century, especially when they looked at the future of Hong Kong as a whole. In Economist 1's view, Hong Kong is undergoing a process of economic transformation to be a "Greater Hong Kong" along with the PRC special economic zones. A "Greater Hong Kong" will become a strategic economic window for the PRC. Economist 2 expounded a view on the economic future of Hong Kong, highlighting the close relationship between the two societies. He echoed Economist 1's positive view of the development of the southern China economy. The two economists suggest that the well-being of Hong Kong's economy can no longer be treated independently.

Educational Policy Makers

Similarly, four of the five educational policy makers saw the economic future of Hong Kong as closely linked with the special economic zones in southern China. Policy Maker 5 believed that Hong Kong's economic prosperity will be sustained by the PRC

but Policy Maker 4 warned that Hong Kong businessmen's unlawful economic activities in southern China might have an adverse effect on the PRC's attitudes towards capitalism. In addition, Policy Maker 3 suggested that the growth of southern China's economy meant greater competition with Hong Kong's economic development. Holding a different view, Policy Maker 1 said it would be important for Hong Kong to identify clearly its role in assisting the special economic zones in developing their economy.

Parents

In the group of five parents, a wide range of responses was collected. Two of them perceived a positive future for the Hong Kong economy. Although Parent 4 had a positive attitude towards Hong Kong's hi-tech development and economic prosperity, he argued that Hong Kong's young people should participate in promoting business and commercial activities rather than political matters. The other three parents were concerned about the perceived social competition from southern China such as the influx of competitive skilled labour and managerial manpower. Parent 1 suggested that one of the social challenges would come the introduction of the PRC educational system in Hong Kong. Furthermore, Parent 5 was aware of the fact that Putonghua would become very important for social communication as 1997 approaches. The five parents perceived that credentials would continue to be important for social upward mobility. Overall, the parents expected greater social competition.

Principals

All five principals have noticed that the politics of Hong Kong 1977 have begun to affect society and present new social challenges. Principal 1 highlighted the inconsistent

views of the local politicians and the emergence of conflicting values. In Principal 2's opinion, the socio-economic ethos of Hong Kong will become more socialist: socialism and nationalism will override the current educational ethos. In contrast, Principal 3 thought that the politics of 1997 would pave the way for Hong Kong society to prepare for its localisation. So it is important for the society to educate a group of local elites for a representative government. Specifically, Principal 4 suggested that, in approaching 1997, Hong Kong society should focus on its science and technological advancement. This might also assist the development of the PRC. Nevertheless, Principal 5 emphasized that Hong Kong would have to face greater competition from southern China towards 1997 and afterwards.

Economics Teachers

The group of five economics teachers shared a consensus that Hong Kong society will face new challenges. Teacher 1 thought that under socialist rule, the Hong Kong capitalist economy will be challenged. However, three other teachers were concerned about mixed news reports and effects of individuals' inconsistent or conflicting views on society. The sacrifice of freedom of speech for Hong Kong after 1997 was stressed by Teacher 2.

7.4.2 A summary of individuals' perceptions of Hong Kong's socio-economic future

Nearly half of the interviewees believe the society will become less open, with restricted freedom of speech. Socialism is expected to spread whilst mixed and contradictory views and propaganda will be increased. Second to this dominating feeling, five individuals directly mentioned new social challenges in terms of greater social

competition. Nevertheless, nine out of the twenty-seven interviewees perceive a prosperous economic future for Hong Kong, with a closer commercial relationship with the PRC. The nine individuals feel that Hong Kong will play a supportive role to the special economic zones. Additionally, among the nine, the two economists share a positive view of the PRC's open-door economic policy. Again, individuals' perceptions are mixed, being positive about the economic future and negative about the social ethos.

7.5 INDIVIDUALS' CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF "ADULT ECONOMIC LIFE"

Among the twenty-seven interviewees, fourteen conceptualised "adult economic life" as non-materialistic, stressing independent critical thinking and the ability to manage one's life. Three individuals conceptualised it as performing one's economic roles as a citizen, a consumer and a producer. Some perceived that adult economic life means being a responsible citizen and accountable for one's words and acts. Nevertheless, five individuals understood that adult economic life has a direct relationship to one's career, and one even stressed that it meant earning money.

7.5.1 Individuals' conceptualisations of adult economic life

Policy Makers

Three policy makers conceptualised adult economic life as the ability to manage one's economic roles as a citizen, consumer and producer adequately. Particularly, Policy Maker 4 focused on the ability to manage one's daily life by acquiring knowledge of fair play, standing for equity and equal opportunity. Policy Maker 5 interpreted the conception as the ability to maximize one's potential to contribute to society.

Students

A different approach to understanding adult economic life is found in the group of five students. Student 1 conceptualised adult economic life as meaning a positive attitude towards work, but Student 2 said it simply meant money to him. Both Students 4 and 5 connected adult economic life with the ability to manage finance in marriage and prepare a better home for the next generation.

Parents

Among the five parents, three shared the perceptions of managing one's basic individual necessities and on that basis, to pursue one's life goal. Adult economic life, to Parent 1, however, is about one's academic qualification such as a degree. In addition, qualification is closely connected with adult economic life because it is important for leading an independent financial life. In the context of an uncertain society of the future, Parent 5 defined adult economic life as citizenship, the willingness of an ordinary citizen to serve society.

Economists

Two very different conceptualisations of adult economic life were offered by the economists interviewed. Economist 1 offered a more theoretical perspective, whilst Economist 2 used a pragmatic perspective to illustrate adult economic life. To Economists 1 adult economic life meant higher problem solving and thinking skills. In contrast, Economist 2 understood it as the ability to use one's qualification in maximising one's economic returns. He elaborated that it is about pursuing personal

satisfaction via economic activities because he thought that personal needs have higher priority than the spiritual ones.

Principals

In contrast to Economist 2's pragmatic approach to conceptualising adult economic life, Principals 1 and 5 put an emphasis on leading a simple life. In expounding his conception of adult economic life, Principal 1 said it involved a critical mind and an independent point of view whilst Principal 5 understood a simple life as a non-materialistic lifestyle. Yet, Principal 4 asserted that adult economic life involved active participation in productive activities as well as holding an independent point of view. Principal 2 perceived adult economic life as the ability to manage one's income and expenditure, and the relationship between effort and rewards. Yet, to Principal 3, it is about practical life skills such as language and critical thinking for social participation.

Economics Teachers

The five economics teachers conceptualised adult economic life differently. Teacher 1 perceived it as a mature, in-depth understanding of economic perspective, a balance between spiritual and materialistic life. However, Teacher 2 understood it in terms of personal discernment, having one's independent point of view. Echoing Teacher 3's conceptualisation of adult economic life, Teacher 5 said it was concerned with one's discernment in reading news reports.

7.5.2 A summary of individuals' conceptualisations of adult economic life

Adult economic life is expressed in various ways. A widely shared conceptualisation is to see it as based on thinking skills and personal life management. Two streams of interpretations of adult economic life resulted: personal discernment in distinguishing facts from propaganda, or the ability to satisfy basic economic needs as well as spiritual needs.

7.6 INDIVIDUALS' COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN HONG KONG

The findings indicated that none of the interviewees were satisfied with current educational practices in terms of preparing young people for the 21st century. Specific criticisms were made on the curricular contents and the whole assessment structure and methods. The majority of interviewees (seventeen) were dissatisfied with the breadth and depth of the school curriculum, especially in preparing students to have a critical mind. Half of the senior educational policy makers pointed out that the examination oriented system not only dictated the curricular contents but also the classroom teaching ethos.

7.6.1 Individuals' comments on Hong Kong educational system

Students

None of the five students were satisfied with the current educational system. They were disappointed by the system, as it failed to give opportunities for personal development. Student 1 made a special note that classroom teaching stressed too much the transmission of facts, which prevented intellectual exchanges. Student 5 criticised the school curriculum as too theoretical. Specifically, Student 4 pointed out that the crux

of the educational system was insufficient socio-political awareness training. And Student 2 added that the classroom instruction style needed further attention.

Parents

Comments on teaching content were also made by parents. Parent 3 directly criticized the fact that there was a big gap between the school curriculum and reality. Yet, Parent 3 added that a certain degree of social skills and technological knowledge was provided in the school curriculum. Parent 4 understood that the crux of the educational problem was that it ignored independent and logical thinking skills training. Parent 1 pointed out that current educational practice was dominated by rote-learning and keen competition. In addition to this, Parent 2 noticed that there was a lack of social and political education in the school curriculum. Nevertheless, the five parents pointed out that the function of education in society was to prepare students for career prospects. For example, Parent 5 noticed that education equipped pupils with basic numeracy and literacy skills so as to increase their competitive ability. This view was also echoed by Parent 3. Interestingly enough, both Parents 1 and 2 shared a consensual view that even if Hong Kong was not under the political threat of 1997, they believed there would still be a big problem in the current educational system.

Economics Teachers

From the five economics teachers' points of view, the Hong Kong educational system is simply centred on managing the examination syllabus. As voiced by the five parents, the curricular contents are narrowly designed for such a purpose. Consequently, there is a lack of political and social education, and citizenship awareness has not yet been

developed. Teacher 4 commented that the system was characterised by homework pressures and an impractical school curriculum. Similarly, Teacher 5 claimed that the system over-emphasized textbook knowledge but neglected sharing social experience. Teacher 1 attributed this to the colonial tradition in education, which allowed little thinking skills training but was geared to examination syllabuses.

Economists

In the same manner, Economist 1 made special comments on the lack of thinking skills and socio-political education. To Economist 2, Hong Kong secondary schooling is transmitting the knowledge needed for getting into higher education and for better economic returns. Yet, there is an educational trend to introduce more democratic thinking into the school curriculum.

Principals

At the policy-making level, the five secondary school principals also commented on the educational system and, in particular, on the school curriculum. Principals 4 and 5 argued that schools were preoccupied with managing examination syllabuses. Yet, principals were concerned more about the pyramidal and bureaucratic administration system. Principal 2 commented that owing to the centralised system schools were overloaded by new school innovations introduced by the Education Department. Extra administrative pressures were noted by Principal 4 who felt that schools were struggling with parental aspirations and pragmatic social values. In this context, the education system is now concentrating on career paths and practical skills for serving the economy. Overall, most principals mentioned the pressures imposed either by the Education

Department, or by society such as parental aspirations. At the same time, they shared parents' view that schools are under pressure to concentrate on students' examination results, as they are closely linked with career prospects or economic returns.

7.6.2 A summary of individuals' comments on Hong Kong's current educational system

A uniform comment on the educational system was identified---too examination-oriented but lacking skill training. Yet, various comments were offered according to individuals' attitudes towards the educational system. Parents and principals made most comments on the relationship between academic achievement and career prospects. Although parents were not satisfied with the narrow approach to school learning, two mentioned that apart from the challenge of 1997, they were satisfied with the system. In contrast, four principals criticised the huge examination pressures. Another five educational policy makers also attacked the examination-oriented system. In addition, the width and depth of the curriculum contents were widely criticized by students and economics teachers as well as the economists. Nevertheless, the newly introduced school curricula showed signs of a shift in attention toward developing independent thinking skills.

7.7(a) INDIVIDUALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE OBJECTIVES OF FUTURE HONG KONG EDUCATION WITH REFERENCE TO THE NOTION OF HONG KONG 1997

A wide range of educational objectives was suggested by the twenty-seven individuals. Among the suggestions, skills training, in particular, and education for independent thinking skill (thirteen interviewees) were given in the first priority as educational objectives. Second to these, attention was paid to the cultivation of civic mindedness and citizenship awareness (eight interviewees). Another two suggested objectives for

education were economic and political awareness, and perspectives on life in addition to practical skill training. These shared equal importance (six interviewees each). Other objectives included maintaining a good standard of English (four interviewees). Nearly seventy per cent of the interviewees suggested that these should be the first priority of the future education with reference to the approach of 1997. Eighty per cent of educational policy makers, and sixty per cent of students and principals suggested defining independent thinking skill as the most important educational objective in the 21st century Hong Kong education.

7.7.a.1 Individuals' perceptions of the objectives of future Hong Kong education with reference to the notion of 1997

Educational Policy Makers

As mentioned earlier, four out of five policy makers put a special stress on developing students' independent thinking skills. Apart from that, Policy Makers 3 and 4 shared the view that Hong Kong education should focus on cultivating pupils' civic mindedness and developing an understanding of citizenship. Policy Maker 3 added that civic education should be introduced in primary schools and be further strengthened in secondary schools. Specifically, Policy Maker 3 highlighted the importance of keeping young people' awareness of the nature of constraints. In Policy Maker 4's opinion, to develop and strengthen pupils' democratic thinking would be another crucial educational objective to be promoted in the school curriculum. Furthermore, Policy Maker 5 suggested a social-oriented school curriculum to develop critical and analytical thinking skills together with a perspective on life. In terms of school subjects, Policy Maker 2 stressed strengthening the teaching of school Economics and Public affairs and Government and Public Affairs. However, Policy Maker 1 felt that before suggesting

new school objectives, attention should be given to redefining the role of schools in 1997 and beyond.

Principals

In the same way, the majority of secondary school principals addressed the weaknesses of the current education system and urged strengthening critical thinking skills and discernment. Apart from these suggested common key objectives, different principals made special emphases on the following areas. As suggested by Principal 5, civics and moral education should be the two main educational objectives in the 21st century Hong Kong educational system. In contrast, Principal 1 argued that the school curriculum should place equal emphasis on the development of both spiritual and practical aspects of individual pupils. Principal 2 stressed transmitting discernment in handling contradictory and conflicting messages in the mass media via the formal and informal school curriculum. In addition, he also proposed that schools should provide better counselling services to students. This suggestion was supported by Principal 4. Holding a very different view, Principal 3 suggested establishing an early school streaming system so as to allocate pupils to different school types according to their ability and career aspirations. In order to improve teaching and learning, Principal 3 asserted that the policy of using mother-tongue instruction should be implemented in schools as compulsory.

Economists

Like many interviewees, Economist 2 suggested that future Hong Kong education should concentrate on cultivating and promoting civic-mindedness and citizenship awareness.

Economist 2 gave special attention to the practical side of school learning and knowledge for life skills. In contrast, Economist 1 put much educational emphasis on the improvement of: socio-political awareness, proficiency in English and knowledge of advanced technology.

Parents

While Parent 1 echoed Economist 1's educational suggestion for maintaining a good standard of English teaching, Parent 2 shared the view of Economist 1 and suggested a school curriculum for all trades and professions, especially for the transmission of advanced technology. Parent 3 emphasized on improving the quality of teacher-student interaction and genuine experience sharing. But Parent 4 placed priority on practical skills for life. Parent 5 asked for increasing pupils' political awareness.

Economics teachers

Sixty per cent of the economic teachers suggested that education should aim at developing and strengthening independent thinking skills and cultivating civic mindedness together with giving perspectives on life. Among them, Economics Teacher 2 asked for greater autonomy for curriculum management, and Economics Teacher 5 stressed developing pupils' own visions of Hong Kong's social future. This is to assist students in developing their own position in society. Economics Teacher 1 put the educational emphasis on strengthening pupils' knowledge of capitalism and the legal system so as to defend the current socio-economic system and for Hong Kong's benefit. In addition, he claimed that developing democratic thinking skills should become another crucial educational preparation.

Students

The five students focused on the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge for a better job. Considering practical skills, Student 5 referred to linguistics skills such as English and other technical skills for a career. In contrast, Students 2 and 4 demanded training for independent thinking skills. But, both Students 1 and 3 focused on attitude formation: on encouraging young people to have an independent perspective on life and developing good social attitudes and an awareness of socio-political systems.

7.7.a.2 A summary of individuals' perceptions of the objectives of future Hong Kong education with reference to the notion of 1997

Three main areas of educational objectives have been identified. They are acquisition of knowledge, skills and the formation of attitudes. In the areas of knowledge development, special attention has been paid to preparing young people for the acquisition of knowledge for obtaining a better job and assisting them in developing their own point of view about society. Equally important, much educational attention was also paid to making right choices within constraints. In the area of skills acquisition, interviewees highlighted educational training for independent thinking and logical thinking skills. More importantly, encouraging young individuals to be discerning and preparing them for managing a practical life were repeatedly emphasised by the twenty-seven interviewees. In the process of joining the PRC, education for discernment becomes the crucial scenario of Hong Kong education as suggested by the senior educators. Following this main educational objective, interviewees focused on the development of critical and independent thinking skills training. The fieldwork confirms that a gap exists between the current Hong Kong educational provisions and the existing

needs of young people and society as perceived by a representative selection of parents, students and educators.

7.7.b INDIVIDUALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PREPARATIONS FOR COMPETENT ADULTS WITHIN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF 21ST CENTURY HONG KONG

The concept of a competent adult is new to the literature on Hong Kong education reviewed in Chapter Three, but is a crucial concept to link up interviewees' perceptions of the objectives of education in the 21st century as revealed in this study. To take this concept a step further, the following section presents a wide range of individuals' views on the future objectives of Hong Kong education. Before presenting the suggested educational requirements for the competent adult, a summary of the individuals' definitions of "competent adult" is first presented. In individuals' views, a competent adult possesses adequate knowledge, skills and attitudes. Adequate knowledge means to be discerning on the basis of sound information which enables an adult to make independent decisions. In terms of attitude, a competent adult is flexible, adaptable and civic-minded. In the area of skill competence, a competent adult is equipped with independent and critical thinking skills coupled with practical skills for a career. The above conceptualisation of adult economic life includes both a pragmatic and a spiritual perspective as proposed by the individuals.

As far as education for adult life was concerned, the field data indicated that individuals' attention was paid to education for skills training. Under the banner of skills training, higher level and lower level skills training were identified. Higher level skills training refers to critical thinking skills for discernment and decision making whilst lower level

skills training refers to practical skills for careers. These two levels of skills trainings were consistently mentioned by every group of individuals. On the other hand, positive attitudes towards work and society were relatively less important to the individuals interviewed.

7.7.b.1 Individuals' perceptions of the educational preparations for "competent adults" within the socio-economic context of 21st century Hong Kong

Students

In the group of five students, three believed that knowledge of society and an understanding of social changes would be two crucial elements for being a competent adult. However, two of them mentioned that education should aim at strengthening students' practical skills for work, rather than textbook knowledge, in order to be a competent adult within the 21st century socio-economic context of Hong Kong. Moreover, the only emphasis that Student 2 made was on higher level of skill acquisition, and independent thinking skill.

Economics Teachers

Three of the five economics teachers perceived that to prepare young people for being competent adults within the socio-economic context of 21st century Hong Kong, significant educational targets are: higher level of skills training, positive and active social attitudes promotion. Therefore, both civic education and socio-political education would become important educational preparations for young people in 21st century Hong Kong. Only by improving achievement of these two main educational objectives pupils could develop their own perspective for life rather than passively follow the trend. Unlike the others, Economics Teacher 1 paid special attention to the need to educate

people to defend the current Hong Kong socio-economic ethos and capitalism. In sum, the five economics teachers placed much emphasis on education for understanding the fundamental differences between Hong Kong capitalism and the PRC socialist economy. Such educational preparation would ensure that pupils would have many opportunities to clarify their own positions in relation to the two economic systems in the future socio-economic context of Hong Kong.

Parents

To prepare young people for being competent in the 21st century Hong Kong socio-economic context, Parents 1, 3 and 5 said school training should focus on socio-political understanding. To them, school should prepare young people for being competent; school learning must therefore be practical. Parent 1 added that equipping young people with practical skills for careers, such as maintaining a good standard of English, would become one of the main educational objectives. Much of Parent 2's attention was paid to strengthen young people's critical and independent thinking skills. He regarded this as one of main qualities to equip young people to be competent adults with reference to the socio-economic context of Hong Kong in the 21st century. Interestingly, as a primary school teacher, Parent 4 perceived that the crucial educational preparation for being competent adults was to equip students with the skills to contribute to the economic advancement of the PRC in the 21st century.

Economists

Both Economists 1 and 2 suggested a practical skill acquisition for life approach to preparing young people for competent adults in the 21st century. Economist 1

underlined the role of English in contributing to commercial and technological advancement. Taking a personal perspective, Economist 2 emphasised education for maximizing one's knowledge for the sake of gaining the best economic returns. In so doing, the individual could not only satisfy family needs but also be able to pursue one's spiritual life.

Principals

To prepare young people to become competent adults in 21st century Hong Kong, four out of five principals judged that education should focus on the higher level of skills training. In contrast, one principal simply suggested that to be competent in the 21st century would mean to master a good standard of English. The other four principals shared a consensus educational view and recommended that education should aim at developing one's potential in handling and managing life adequately. Nevertheless, Principal 4 placed his emphasis on managing one's life competently within the socio-economic context of Hong Kong in the 21st century. For example, Principal 1 stressed education for a logical mind whilst Principal 2 emphasised flexible and adaptable attitudes towards new social challenges. Principal 4 took a middle range perspective with emphasis on advanced technical and independent thinking skill training.

Educational Policy Makers

Lastly, eighty per cent of the educational policy makers used a higher level of skill acquisition approach to preparing young people for being competent, with some variations. Policy Maker 2 stressed analytical and critical thinking skills, while Policy Maker 4 underlined pupils' knowledge of the notion of "the PRC socialist market

economy" in 21st century Hong Kong. Besides, she considered that a competent adult should be able to identify the importance of Hong Kong in the world. In contrast, Policy Maker 1 suggested that education should prepare young people for knowing the socio-economic value system since such knowledge would contribute to the economic well being of Hong Kong.

7.7.b.2 A summary of individuals' suggestions for educating "competent adults" in 21st century Hong Kong

With special reference to socio-economic changes in Hong Kong under Chinese rule, individuals interviewed underlined the significance of knowing the differences between Hong Kong's capitalist and the PRC socialist economic systems. The interviewees' model of an understanding competent adult within the Hong Kong context in the 21st century can be summarised as having an intellectual orientation. Moreover, many interviewees understood that educational preparations for being a competent adult means to prepare young people for leading a competent independent life. In the light of these educational suggestions, a few points would be worth discussing in detail: why should intellectual discernment become especially important after 1997 and why is an independent perspective for life is important in preparing a competent adult for 21st century Hong Kong?

Part Three

7.8 AN INDIGENOUS HONG KONG CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Parts One and Two offered individualistic views on particular social phenomena and an overview of findings. Part Three has the purpose of offering a better understanding of interviewees' perceptions by interpreting the data from an indigenous Hong Kong

cultural perspective. A special attempt is made to link interviewees' responses with the core values of Hong Kong culture by identifying their patterns of thought in response to the areas of the politics of Hong Kong 1997 and of future educational provision. The following paragraphs start by describing the make-up of the core values of indigenous Hong Kong culture, develop with interviewees' perceptions of reality and ends by linking culture and responses together.

The fieldwork indicated that the interviewees were making choices according to their own perceptions and expectations of the future of Hong Kong. Each interviewee has specific concerns about the politics Hong Kong 1997. Specific concerns are particularly related to economic and political considerations. They are derived from the work and social relations within the core values of local Hong Kong culture.

Although Hong Kong only has a century of history, it has developed a set of unique cultural norms which are reflected in its people's distinctive patterns of thought. They consist of both western and eastern values. The accommodation of a wide range of values shows the dynamics of indigenous culture and suggests that there is a mixture of values which might cause conflicts. Nevertheless, this accommodation indicates that people are very tolerant towards different values. The refugee background of the Hong Kong Chinese, and their entrepreneurial mentality, together with the colonial political culture, all help to contribute to this cultural make-up.

Most early inhabitants fled to Hong Kong for political stability and economic opportunity. They have a strong self determination in making their own ways for both

personal and family betterment. Hong Kong people believe in hard work and observe the opportunity to "make hay". Economic returns are the primary incentive for greater labour investment and personal commitment to work. Therefore, this economics-driven local culture emphasises individual competitiveness. The idea of survival of the fittest is widely shared by individuals and is one of the crucial core values.

People's industrious and persevering attitudes match the free competition market economy. These attitudes not only are rewarded by attractive economic gains but also, in return, encourage the government's non-interventionist economic policy. Both employers and employees believe in greater effort for greater economic rewards. As a result, any factors which might do harm to this relationship are regarded as inappropriate. Moreover, strengthened by both the tradition of Chinese authoritarian rule and the colonial centralised political policy, most workplaces are administered by a top-down hierarchical structure. As the local culture has a strong respect for authority, this hierarchical work value receives little resistance.

Hong Kong's political culture is characterised by authoritarianism. Because the colonial government has a strong central rule, political awareness is neither promoted in the educational system nor in the society as a whole. Possession of power is restricted to a small group of ruling elites who assume the responsibility for political affairs. Distanced from the political sphere, local people therefore channel their attention to economic activities.

Another distinctive pattern of thought which emerges from local Hong Kong culture is family loyalty. Although the second generation of Hong Kong people show a departure from the traditional Chinese culture and are influenced by western individualism, individuals still believe that they have a responsibility for family betterment. Parents feel that they have the obligations to provide every opportunity for their children and assist them in upward social mobility. Some even achieve this aim at the expense of personal enjoyment. In return, many young Hong Kong people are ready to compromise with parents for the sake of family loyalty.

An analysis of the fieldwork leads to a better understanding of the features of indigenous culture. The findings suggest that indigenous culture is characterised by being self-oriented, family-oriented as well as economic-oriented. The five students' detached feeling towards politics and their anxious feeling about their personal socio-economic status in future Hong Kong suggests a self-oriented orientation. Where parents are concerned, apart from sharing the feeling of uncertainty about politics after 1997, more importantly, they have a sense of urgency about preparing a good future for their young generation. This thesis argues that parents use a family urgency perspective to understand the notion of 1997. Further, the five economics teachers, and the principals as well as the policy makers perceive the politics of 1997 according to their roles in schools suggesting a task-oriented or self-oriented phenomena.

This thesis interprets parents' expectations of sending their children abroad as an act of traditional Chinese culture rather than purely a question of confidence. The five parents' feelings of anxiety and uncertainty associated with the politics of Hong Kong

1997 indicate that they share a similar pattern of thought. This pattern can be understood as family urgency. In other words, the feeling of family urgency drives parents to provide a better future for their next generation. At this point, parents' family urgency shares the essence of traditional Chinese Confucianism which strives for providing the best care for the family.

As far as individuals' perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997 were concerned, a pattern of perception, the feeling of uncertainty, emerged. Individuals' feeling of uncertainty is not simply defined as a kind of feeling of uncertainty about the future. Rather, the feeling is, closely linked with individuals' small confidence in Chinese rule. Findings indicated the fear that an era of Chinese rule in Hong Kong would mean a sacrifice of freedom for Hong Kong or a trial of the compatibility of Hong Kong capitalism and the Chinese socialist political system. The uncertain continuity of the Hong Kong free competition socio-economic ethos within Chinese socialist economy becomes the main source of feeling of uncertainty. In a different perspective, interviewees' anxiety resulted from the extent to which Hong Kong socio-economic ethos will be kept under the experimental policy, "one country, two systems" in 21st century Hong Kong. It is worth noting that none of the interviewees perceived the resumption of Chinese sovereignty of Hong Kong as a positive political future to Hong Kong. Interviewees' perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997 are, if not actively, passively negative.

This thesis interprets interviewees' collective responses to the transformation of Hong Kong politics as based on a set of shared values. Interviewees' patterns of thought

reflect their perceptions of social phenomena and, more importantly, a set of local cultural norms. Individuals perceived that the value systems in Hong Kong are different from those promoted by the PRC. The local Hong Kong social values system or culture distinguishes local Hong Kong people from the mainland Chinese. As indicated earlier, the fear of the sacrifice of free and open spirit of market economy prevented interviewees from taking a positive view. Indigenous culture cherishes its spirit of free competition and pragmatism. The spirit of free competition is not only widely shared by Hong Kong people but also an important cultural element that dominates people's patterns of thought.

In addition, this thesis also argues that individuals' responses to the socio-economic future of Hong Kong are a mixture of positive and negative feelings. Socially as well as politically, individuals perceive turbulent changes. Because the challenges are beyond their knowledge, together with the constant comments on local Government and the inconsistent Chinese government attitudes towards Hong Kong, a rather closed and restricted society is anticipated. For instance, individuals associate Chinese rule with the sacrifice of freedom for Hong Kong. Consequently, individuals' negative feelings towards the politics of 1997 are tightly connected with individuals' mixed messages and the impact of news reporting. As the Chinese leaders do not have a consistent position on the future of Hong Kong, it is hardly surprising that local Hong Kong people find difficulty in building their trust in the Chinese government. These new social phenomena weaken individuals' confidence in the PRC as well as in local Hong Kong politicians. None of the students or parents interviewed were concerned about the phenomena of conflicting messages and news reporting. In contrast, most senior

educational policy makers and principals highlight the inconsistency of individuals' views and their influence on the social culture---people's beliefs, attitudes towards each other and behaviours. The implications behind this contrast between pupils and senior educators are: pupils' perceptions of society are restricted by their socio-political knowledge and person-oriented attitude. Senior educators are inclined to pay more attention to external things which might have greater, if not fundamental, influence on social and school culture. As future educational provision and curriculum innovations are controlled by the senior educators, their understanding and perceptions of social changes become crucial in meeting the needs of the society and pupils.

In comparison with individuals' perceptions of the socio-political future of Hong Kong, economically, individuals are rather positive. Regardless of the interviewees' negative feelings towards Hong Kong's political ethos in 1997 and beyond, many of them expect a bright economic future. The feeling of economic co-prosperity between southern China and Hong Kong is widely shared by the two economists and some of the policy makers. Interestingly enough, the individuals perceive the socio-political and the economic future of Hong Kong independently. Put differently, interviewees are economically positive whilst politically negative. In contrast, parents and other economics teachers are expecting greater social competition. Regardless of their detached feeling towards the politics of 1997, students share a vivid feeling of uncertainty about their employment opportunity and academic achievement.

The previous two paragraphs indicated that conflicting values largely existed among the interviewees. Their conservative political attitude resulted from the limits of their

political participation as well as the inconsistent Chinese political practices even in recent Chinese history. However, with reference to their past experience of the developing Hong Kong economy, interviewees are confident that so long as the situation permits, Hong Kong will continue to be prosperous.

Although this thesis has argued earlier that the six categories of interviewees shared a general social values system, the spirit of capitalism, they were put it into different perspectives according to their own understanding. The group of students shared more similar feelings towards the politics of 1997 with the parents than with the rest. For example, 1997 was largely understood as promoting greater social competition and as a matter of job opportunity to students and parents. This reflects the main concern of students and parents when considering 1997. Alternatively, policy makers, and principals as well as economics teachers, interpreted 1997 as a test of personal discernment in receiving information and holding one's personal position. Two patterns of reasoning about the politics of 1997 are underlined. The patterns reveal not only the interviewees' socio-economic background but also their sub-culture. The diversity of people's perceptions and understandings of the politics of 1997 indicates interviewees' personal aspirations concerning education.

This thesis argues that the diversity and complexity of people's perceptions of the politics of 1997 and the objectives of education are useful indicators for understanding reality and the needs of society, but are neglected by the literature. Moreover, this thesis also argues that only by providing a comprehensive understanding of the needs

of society can a meaningful and genuine representative educational system can be achieved.

Owing to the two levels of perception of the politics of 1997 and consequently, there are two directions of educational concern regarding preparing young people for 21st century Hong Kong. This thesis has argued that students and parents use a pragmatic approach to understanding 1997, whilst educators use an educational-management approach to understanding the politics of 1997. As the superficial level is characterised by concern about practical skills for a career, the deeper level is characterised by the value of intellectual discernment for life in general. In other words, interviewees who employed an intellectual discernment perspective perceived that Hong Kong society would have greater intellectual challenges than before. Educators' perceptions linked with their understandings of the Chinese government and its inconsistent political practices. Individuals' conflicting messages confirm or reinforce educators' beliefs.

In comparison with parents and students, the sample of educators ,i.e. economics teachers, principals and policy makers, represent the gatekeepers of Hong Kong culture. To a greater extent they are more inclined to be socialised into a set of traditional Chinese high culture, i.e. anti-materialistic but spiritual-oriented perspective on life. In terms of educators' perceptions of the social ethos of future Hong Kong society, they place much attention on the phenomena of conflicting messages and news reporting. When Hong Kong people are put on trial to test their position in Hong Kong, intra-personal contradictory views reflect a negative feelings toward the future and a sense of uncertainty. Additionally, the educators' perceptions indicate their social sensitivity to

the issue of freedom to learn and freedom to teach. Anxiety about the extent to which 21st century Hong Kong will promote greater freedom to learn and to teach underlines educators' perceptions of the role of education as well as the objectives of education.

As the educators addressed the issue of social uncertainty, many of them suggested that developing moral discernment and critical thinking skills were major educational preparations for young people for adult economic lives. Here, the emphasis is on people's inconsistent standpoint in this rapidly changing society. Therefore, unlike giving any abstract and philosophical principles for education, educators' suggestions of educational preparations are context-specific. In another way, there are special meanings behind the claim that education is for discernment. Hong Kong young people are expected to have greater difficulty in handling their adult economic lives without being discerning within a society which is full of contradictory messages. Individual educators' perceptions of future Hong Kong education task are revealed. The findings have provided useful ideas for generating new educational provision for Hong Kong society.

As far as the two economists are concerned, educational preparations for adult economic life include practical work skill training and awareness of human rights. In contrast to the educators' view that future Hong Kong society needs a group of discerning young people, the two economists believe that to maintain the spirit of capitalism in Hong Kong society, young people should be equipped with practical skills for earning. In addition, economists emphasise that a free market economy relies heavily on a well-established legal system and the ability to stand firm on one's position in defending

capitalism. Relatively speaking, economists do share a pattern of thought, at least, in the areas of educational tasks. The two of them view education from its social function point of views meaning educating young people for the maximum value for society.

The difference between the educators' educational proposal for intellectual discernment and economists' practical and functional education lies at the heart of their points of departure. The educators believe that the main concern of education with reference to future Hong Kong society should be with intellectual discernment, a buffer between individual's independent position and contradictory messages and conflicting values. Alternatively, economists remain with their initial perceptions of the function of education, to advance industry and technology. The economists' view is a less socio-political responsive way to educational changes. In other words, the economists' educational suggestions are comparatively more skill based and technical and practical than the educationalists'. These practical educational suggestions echo the literature on indigenous Hong Kong pragmatic values.

7.9 CONCLUSIONS

The first part of this section looked for the similarities and differences between the six categories of interviewees so as to identify whether individuals shared patterns of thoughts. From the patterns identified, the deeper meanings of individuals' sayings were analysed. On the basis of the twenty-seven interviewees' responses, findings indicated a collective response of negative feeling towards the politics of 1997. Individuals' collective response suggested a pattern of thought and a set of shared socio-political

values. However, individual differences in interviewees' perceptions of the objectives of future Hong Kong education were found.

In the first section of Part Three, an individual difference was repeatedly identified. Particular attention was paid to the interpretation of the educational implications of the findings. This section was treated as a special one in terms of bridging the literature on Hong Kong and education with this empirical study. This section attempted to answer the extent to which recent socio-political and economic changes are forcing individuals to re-examine their views on current educational provision. An in-depth analysis of the individualistic views revealed a range of inter-individual perceptions and understanding of the politics of 1997 and the objectives of future Hong Kong education. The nature of interviewees' diversified responses in turn suggested that there is a socio-economic status factor in perceiving the role of 1997 and its implications for education.

In terms of individual differences of perceptions of the politics of 1997 and educational preparations for adult economic life, this study also attempted to identify the mechanism behind individuals' perceptions. The categories of students and parents represented typical examples of pragmatic perceptions of Hong Kong society, whilst educators were regarded as a group of socially conscientious people who defended the socio-culture awareness of young Hong Kong generations. Here, the whole thesis argues that half of the interviewees are adopting a pragmatic, self- and family-oriented point of view to perceive the politics of 1997 and educational provision for adult economic life. Adult economic life is therefore interpreted differently according to the range of perceptions.

A significant finding of this original work is the mixed feelings of individual interviewees. They were positive towards the economic future and negative towards the socio-political future. The finding offered an alternative explanation to interviewees' perceptions of the social phenomena, the inconsistent or contradictory messages. Although interviewees were aware of the inconsistency of local politicians' and key social leaders' political positions, interviewees were not aware of their own inconsistencies. In the light of this, personal contradictions become one of the common elements of indigenous culture.

Part Three filled the gap between the education literature and reality by suggesting an indigenous culture element. Inconsistent politicians views were widely reported. The society is full of conflicting values, contradictory messages---a state of value confusion. Interviewees' small confidence in the Chinese government is owing to these social phenomena. However, in such a confused and changing situation, Hong Kong people continue to be business-minded, with the hope that free market economy could be promoted in southern China.

This thesis argues that the uniqueness of Hong Kong society is manifested in its indigenous culture which promotes an urgency for self and family betterment while showing little urgency for society. Indigenous culture within this "melting-pot" is being continuously shaped by both traditional Chinese culture and western culture. The place of indigenous culture in Hong Kong education and the curricular issues has not been effectively discussed in the literature on Hong Kong education.

The three-stage method of data analysis unmask the values systems behind their perceptions of social phenomena. Some agreed that without the socio-political challenges of 1997, the current educational system need not to be changed. The fieldwork repeatedly confirms the pragmatism of local Hong Kong people. At a deeper level of analysis, the spirit of free competition has not been reduced by the politics of 1997. The socio-economic well-being of the future HKSAR will be highly dependent upon the ability of the Chinese Government to address the indigenous socio-economic values systems. At the other extreme, it also depends on how much the local community is willing to abandon this pragmatic and business-minded values systems. The role of education, as will be further discussed in next chapter is to redefine the needs of the HKSAR. If the future representative government builds a greater democratic rule, this pragmatic and business-oriented approach to life has to be modified. The concept of a competent adult in 21st century Hong Kong is explicated in the concluding chapter, and educational suggestions are also presented.

CHAPTER EIGHT CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

This chapter, which concludes the thesis and recommends a curriculum proposal for educating future competent adults in Hong Kong, is organized in three parts. Part one first presents an overview of the development of the thesis then summarises the fieldwork.

Part two links the literature analysis with the fieldwork by both revisiting the literature discussed in the preceding chapters and discussing the findings. This is to determine the extent to which the literature has explained Hong Kong society and education in transition.

Part three explores the implications of the thesis for generating new educational ideas for curricular innovations for 21st century Hong Kong, and a general curriculum proposal for educating future competent adults is suggested. Guidelines for managing and implementing the curriculum proposal are given.

Part one:

8.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

This thesis discussed making changes in the Hong Kong curriculum within the context of changing values and changing political control. The PRC will assume sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997. In the current transitional period, the politics of Hong Kong 1997 have begun to affect the local socio-political and economic systems. Because the

society is undergoing socio-political transformation, dilemmas and problems are manifested in conflicting and inconsistent views about the merger.

The thesis began with one main argument and was developed by four sub-arguments. The main argument of the thesis is that 1997 is a critical point in the history of Hong Kong for making curriculum changes for preparing young people for life in the next century. Local educators shared a feeling of obligation to prepare young Hong Kong people for the merger, yet without a consensus view on the political future of Hong Kong, relevant curricular innovations cannot be generated.

This thesis proposed the argument in Chapter Two that 1997 is a challenge to the existing Hong Kong value system, which stresses free competition. 1997 is an issue of confidence and opportunity: the uncertain ability of the PRC to maintain the style of capitalism in the HKSAR must be expected to make a difference to people's feelings of anxiety and uncertainty.

This thesis argued in Chapter Three that the politics of Hong Kong 1997 have emerged as an educational issue and a generator of new curricular innovations in Hong Kong. Because of the challenges of 1997 to the local value systems and their close link with the current educational system, the merger will have substantial implications for the future development of Hong Kong education.

In Chapter Four, the third sub-argument was presented. It consists of three parts: the first is that the acquisition of values results from a combination of social construction

and intellectual development; the second is that Hong Kong schools need to prepare young people for life and as citizens of the HKSAR; and the third is that in educating future "competent adults" for this transitional society, moral reasoning and civic mindedness become important curricular issues.

Chapter Five argued that young people's acquisition of economic values and concepts results from, like the acquisition of other social and moral values, a combination of social construction and intellectual growth. Hong Kong has a laissez faire economy and is capitalist, and this socio-economic ethos has an influence on people's economic values. In this changing society, determination of the qualities of competent adults provides guidelines for generating useful ideas for curricular innovations.

As this thesis was a combination of literature analysis and a fieldwork survey, the analysis of the preceding four sub-arguments was tested by the fieldwork conducted in Hong Kong. Chapter Six described the full details of the research methods. Six categories of data analysis were employed: perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997, perceptions of Hong Kong's social and economic future, conceptualisation of adult economic life, comments on the current Hong Kong educational system, the future objectives of education in 21st century Hong Kong, and education for producing competent adults in 21st century Hong Kong.

The fieldwork was analyzed in three stages, the verbatim quotations; a coding frame; and the concept of indigenous Hong Kong culture. Different routes to understanding the field data helped to reduce the subjectivity of the interpretation to a minimum whilst

encouraging a better understanding of the interviewees' perceptions of 1997 and its relationship with the objectives of education for the next century.

8.3 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE FIELDWORK

In this section, an attempt is made to summarise the main findings of the empirical work. The data are firstly summarised in six categories in Table 4 then are reinterpreted in a commentary.

TABLE 4: A SUMMARY OF THE FIELDWORK

SUMMARY OF THE FIELDWORK FINDINGS					
Question 1: Perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997					
Students (N=5)	Economics Teachers (N=5)	Parents (N=5)	Economists (N=2)	Educational Policy Makers (N=5)	
<p>S1:1997 is a great opportunity for the PRC to play a part on the world political stage</p> <p>S2:no particular feelings, I will emigrate</p> <p>S3:1997 is a real test of job opportunity as it means greater competition</p> <p>S4:Hong Kong is forever Hong Kong, life-style remains</p> <p>S5:they are beyond my knowledge</p>	<p>T1:full of uncertainty, the PRC has started to interfere Hong Kong's politics, it is uncertain if the PRC is able to separate its politics from economic policies when ruling Hong Kong</p> <p>T2:they are difficult to understand, but to students, it is just a matter of emigration</p> <p>T3:1997 will mean a time for the PRC to share Hong Kong's wealth</p> <p>T4:1997 is a time to see the political and economic structural differences between Hong Kong and the PRC</p> <p>T5:1997 is a test of young people's political discernment in reading mass media and information</p>	<p>P1:a time to obtain citizenship abroad</p> <p>P2:an uncertain future, a time to test how the PRC socialist rule works on Hong Kong and a test of people's discernment in reading mass media</p> <p>P3:a Hong Kong people's problem as it is full of uncertainty, it is a test of the differences between a capitalist and a socialist economies, also a time of sacrificing freedom for Hong Kong</p> <p>P4:a different political atmosphere, a matter of people's political awareness, Hong Kong young people can play an important part in assisting the PRC in developing its economics</p> <p>P5:a time of uncertainty and difficulty, Hong Kong will have greater competition and become socialist</p>	<p>E1:a time of uncertainty because the policy "one country, two systems" is an experimental policy in Hong Kong, it is better to obtain citizenship abroad</p> <p>E2:the society will be full of uncertainty as the PRC rule is still dictated by a small group of leaders</p>	<p>Pr.1:a time of uncertainty as many local politicians do not have a consistent point of view towards the PRC</p> <p>Pr.2:beyond one's knowledge, a time for introducing the PRC's socialism and patriotism into Hong Kong</p> <p>Pr.3:it is a time to test how much Hong Kong people share the feeling of nationalism with the PRC</p> <p>Pr.4:Hong Kong will be full of uncertainty</p> <p>Pr.5:full of uncertainty, not sure if PRC politics will return to their old conservative pattern dictated by a small group of leaders</p>	<p>PM1:Hong Kong will be a part of the PRC</p> <p>PM2:full of uncertainty, cannot put faith in the Communist Party of China</p> <p>PM3:a time of change, the slogan "Hong Kong will remain unchanged for fifty years" is just an empty promise</p> <p>PM4:full of uncertainty, the slogan "Hong Kong will remain unchanged for fifty years is just a slogan of the policy makers, 1997 is a time of sacrifice of current Hong Kong life style, from an apolitical society to a political</p> <p>PM5:Hong Kong's economic well-being will be kept, a time of emigration</p>

SUMMARY OF THE FIELDWORK FINDINGS

Question 2: Perceptions of Hong Kong's social and economic future					
Students (N=5)	Economics Teachers (N=5)	Parents (N=5)	Economists (N=2)	Principals (N=5)	Educational Policy Makers (N=5)
<p>S1:hard to predict</p> <p>S2:a restricted society, no freedom of speech</p> <p>S3:becomes a changing and competitive society</p> <p>S4:remains a credential and competitive society, the more qualifications one has the better will be one's opportunity to get a better job</p> <p>S5:not sure about what is happening in future, but credentialism prevails</p>	<p>T1:current Hong Kong capitalist economic system will be challenged</p> <p>T2:a society without freedom of speech and work etc.</p> <p>T3:a state of instability and full of false news reports</p> <p>T4:socially, a state of instability and full of false news reports</p> <p>T5:misleading media and news become dominant; demands a group of level-headed people to promote fair society and participate in local politics</p>	<p>P1:the PRC socialist life-style will be dominant, and keeps a close linked with the rest of the world; the educational system in Hong Kong will be replaced by the PRC's</p> <p>P2:remains economically prosperous</p> <p>P3:receives greater economic competition</p> <p>P4:Hong Kong will become a hi-tech society; however, it is better for the young people to participate in the economic sector rather than the political one</p> <p>P5:Pulonghua becomes a crucial medium of social communication</p>	<p>E1:Hong Kong becomes a commercial and banking centre of the PRC, and combines with the special economic zones as a "Greater Hong Kong", it remains as a gateway to foreign trade for the PRC, a special door to acquire advanced western knowledge to advance the technology of the PRC</p> <p>E2:Hong Kong remains as a gateway for the PRC and its relationship with the PRC becomes ever closer</p>	<p>Pr.1:a society of conflicting views</p> <p>Pr.2:a socialist society with a strong nationalist educational system</p> <p>Pr.3: Hong Kong, builds a localised government whilst remaining part of international society</p> <p>Pr.4:Hong Kong, as a supportive city to the PRC, provides advanced technology and knowledge and skills</p> <p>Pr.5:socially, as a research centre assists the development of the Pearl River Delta; economically, faces more competition from southern China</p>	<p>PM1:continues to be a commercial link to the PRC</p> <p>PM2:a society of uncertainty and changes</p> <p>PM3:it is uncertain if Hong Kong society can cope with the challenges associated with rapid social changes of the special economic zones; Hong Kong's current social ethos will face great challenges such as corruption</p> <p>PM4: the socio-economic ethos is challenged by southern China's businessmen's misbehaviour; corruption is one of the potential social problems, economically, greater competition comes from newly emerged neighbouring countries</p> <p>PM5:economically, continues to be prosperous</p>

SUMMARY OF THE FIELDWORK FINDINGS

Question 3: Conceptualisation of adult economic life					
Students (N=5)	Economics Teachers (N=5)	Parents (N=5)	Economists (N=2)	Principals (N=5)	Educational Policy Makers (N=5)
<p>S1: it is about pre-adult education and positive attitude towards work</p> <p>S2: money</p> <p>S3: about how to manage one's life: successful adults are flexible, knowledgeable, experienced, well-presented and efficient</p> <p>S4: earning a living for a competent family life that one enjoys</p> <p>S5: a better family life, having a reasonable job and providing a better life for the next generation</p>	<p>T1: a mature, in-depth understanding of an economic perspective: a balance between spiritual and materialistic life</p> <p>T2: adult life</p> <p>T3: being discerning and having one's own point of view</p> <p>T4: career life</p> <p>T5: the ability to analyse the mass media and information, knowing what is fact and what is propaganda</p>	<p>P1: having a university degree and being able to lead an independent financial life together with an all-round education</p> <p>P2: to make oneself useful in society</p> <p>P3: to manage one's daily life effectively, keep one's promises and be responsible</p> <p>P4: about one's basic necessities and life aspirations</p> <p>P5: hard to define in such an uncertain society: economic role means citizenship</p>	<p>E1: about higher problem solving and thinking skills</p> <p>E2: maximizing one's expertise to serve materialistic purposes</p>	<p>Pr.1: a simple independent life with a critical mind and a personal point of view</p> <p>Pr.2: about one's incomes and expenses, efforts and rewards</p> <p>Pr.3: having the language skills for career life and thinking skills for socio-political participation</p> <p>Pr.4: actively involved in economic production and handling personal problems as well as having an independent point of view</p> <p>Pr.5: means a simple non-materialistic life style</p>	<p>PM1: means to play the economic roles of citizen, employee and consumer adequately</p> <p>PM2: play economic roles as a citizen, a consumer and a producer adequately</p> <p>PM3: able to live with constraints and make a rational choice</p> <p>PM4: about the way one locates his/her social map, the way one manages daily life, and lives for equity, fair play and equal opportunity</p> <p>PM5: contributing to society by finding a job according to his/her ability</p>

SUMMARY OF THE FIELDWORK FINDINGS

Question 4: Comments on the current Hong Kong educational system					
Students (N=5)	Economics Teachers (N=5)	Parents (N=5)	Economists (N=2)	Principals (N=5)	Educational Policy Makers (N=5)
<p>S1:restricted teaching contents, impractical theoretical and rigid knowledge transmission</p> <p>S2:passive learning style</p> <p>S3:rigid, no room for individual development</p> <p>S4:restricted in political awareness, value judgment and thinking training</p> <p>S5:fact transmission and rote learning</p>	<p>T1 :typical colonial education, little thinking skills training</p> <p>T2:rote-learning and examination oriented; however, provides more thinking skill training than before</p> <p>T3:a pragmatic approach to learning, lacking in social and political education</p> <p>T4:is characterised by homework pressures and impractical school curriculum</p> <p>T5:overemphasise on textbook knowledge while ignoring social experience sharing</p>	<p>P1:dictated by rote-learning and competitive, closely connected with career prospects; without the issue of 1997, the system is fine</p> <p>P2:purely textbook-oriented, little social and political education, closely connected with career prospects; but without the issue of 1997, the system is fine</p> <p>P3:a big gap between the school curriculum and reality; however, social skills and technological knowledge are partially addressed</p> <p>P4:managing thinking skills and giving out adequate fundamental numeracy and literacy training but ignoring independent and logical thinking skills training</p> <p>P5:qualification objectives are emphasized together with basic numeracy and literacy skills</p>	<p>E1:textbook knowledge drilling, little thinking skills and socio-political education</p> <p>E2:transmitting knowledge for higher education opportunities and better economic returns</p>	<p>Pr.1:a narrow and unbalanced school curriculum</p> <p>Pr.2:struggling with the centralised system, managing new curriculum innovations from the Education Department, the formal school curriculum is managing languages and thinking skills</p> <p>Pr.3:education for career prospects, struggling between meeting the needs of parental aspirations and pragmatic socio-economic values</p> <p>Pr.4: teaching for examination and better economic returns</p> <p>Pr.5:dictated by its examination syllabuses, teaching methods are also dictated by the examination syllabuses, tightly linked with further education opportunities</p>	<p>PM1:supporting the free market competition value system and the structures of competitiveness of meritocracy</p> <p>PM2:fact transmission and memorization become two main tasks; recently critical thinking skill training</p> <p>PM3:classroom teaching is examination-oriented, but new syllabuses to promote civic mindedness have been implemented and the examination methods also focus more on problem solving skills</p> <p>PM4:managing or simply managing the school curriculum, little on civic education and independent critical thinking skill</p> <p>PM5:dictated by examination syllabuses; yet, different schools have different emphases on learning; some might have more on thinking skill training than others</p>

SUMMARY OF THE FIELDWORK FINDINGS

Question 5: The objectives of 21st century Hong Kong education					
Students (N=5)	Economics Teachers (N=5)	Parents (N=5)	Economists (N=2)	Principals (N=5)	Educational Policy Makers (N=5)
<p>S1: strengthening practical learning and giving a new perspective for life</p> <p>S2: increasing independent thinking skills training</p> <p>S3: reinforcing students' political and economic awareness, and pro-social attitudes training and socialisation skills</p> <p>S4: strengthening humanities teaching such as knowledge for personal and social development as well as independent thinking skill training, also preparing students for all trades and professions</p> <p>S5: maintaining a good standard of English teaching as it is useful for job hunting; establishing more technical institutes</p>	<p>T1: knowing the differences between the capitalist and the socialist economic systems; critical thinking training and civic education</p> <p>T2: strengthening students' independent critical thinking and building a personal standpoint</p> <p>T3: the school curriculum should be changed to increase students' awareness of the philosophy which underpins the Government policies and civic-mindedness cultivation; a more practical curriculum; give an independent perspective to students</p> <p>T4: promote civic-mindedness and citizenship awareness; strengthen the teaching of the differences between Hong Kong and the PRC; decentralisation of educational policy-making</p> <p>T5: to cultivate their civic-mindedness and have a vision of Hong Kong's social future</p>	<p>P1: keeping a good standard in English teaching</p> <p>P2: a school curriculum for all trades and professionals especially for advancing technology and information, and for promoting social awareness</p> <p>P3: strengthening students social awareness and increasing teacher-student interaction and genuine sharing</p> <p>P4: focusing on practical skills for life</p> <p>P5: increasing political awareness in the school curriculum</p>	<p>E1: promoting political literacy and social awareness whilst keeping up with a good standard of English teaching and advanced western knowledge and technology</p> <p>E2: cultivating and promoting civic-mindedness and citizenship awareness, strengthening textbook knowledge with practical social experiences</p>	<p>Pr. 1: a balanced and anti-materialistic school curriculum; education for discernment, enforcing students' logical skills</p> <p>Pr. 2: equipping students with analytical skill to handle explosive information and media; strengthening schools informal curricular, and counselling services</p> <p>Pr. 3: streamlining of students' studying domains according to their abilities; enforcing mother-tongue teaching; grammar school for outstanding students and pre-vocational schools for the less achieving</p> <p>Pr. 4: providing a school curriculum balanced between spiritual and materialistic aspects of life; thinking skill training, social awareness, and student counselling services</p> <p>Pr. 5: cultivating civic-mindedness and strengthening moral education</p>	<p>PM1: redefining the role of schools in 1997 and beyond</p> <p>PM2: strengthening students' ability to analyse, discuss and think whilst strengthening the teaching of Economics and Public Affairs and Government and Public Affairs</p> <p>PM3: keeping young people as discerning; training for independent thinking skills and cultivating civic mindedness from primary schools; knowing the nature and cost of constraints</p> <p>PM4: developing civic education, citizenship awareness, critical thinking, and democratic thinking skills</p> <p>PM5: developing a social-oriented school curriculum, promoting a critical mind in analyzing data, and an understanding of the world of work as well as a personal perspective for life</p>

SUMMARY OF THE FIELDWORK FINDINGS

Question 6: Education for producing competent adults in 21st century Hong Kong					
Students (N=5)	Economics Teachers (N=5)	Parents (N=5)	Economists (N=2)	Principals (N=5)	Educational Policy Makers (N=5)
<p>S1: an understanding of social changes and a positive attitude towards work</p> <p>S2: skill training for independent and critical thinking</p> <p>S3:knowledge for work and contemporary society, a flexible and adaptable attitude towards work</p> <p>S4: an understanding of Hong Kong society and the world</p> <p>S5:practical skill training for life and social skills for work rather than textbook knowledge</p>	<p>T1:knowledge of how to defend the current Hong Kong free competition capitalist economy and standing firm between a socialist and a capitalist economy; thinking skill training for democracy</p> <p>T2:training for independent thinking and standing up for one's rights</p> <p>T3:knowledge of discernment, an understanding of social and public affairs as well as the potential crisis; developing social and political awareness</p> <p>T4:strengthening civic education and citizenship awareness</p> <p>T5:being critical towards mass media; attitude promotion for socio-political awareness</p>	<p>P1:language skills training for English; practical knowledge of social and political affairs</p> <p>P2:education for discernment, knowing what is fact and what is propaganda</p> <p>P3:attitude training for socio-political awareness and integrating reality with classroom learning</p> <p>P4:skills training for participating and assisting the PRC in economic advancement</p> <p>P5:attitude training for socio-political awareness</p>	<p>E1: knowledge of advanced western technology; attitude formation for social orientation; fluency in English</p> <p>E2: practical knowledge of maximizing potentials and economic returns; a positive attitude towards life</p>	<p>Pr.1:skills training for discernment and logical thinking</p> <p>Pr.2:attitude formation, to be flexible, willing to accept new social challenges</p> <p>Pr.3:skills training for fluency in English</p> <p>Pr.4:two aspects:practical advanced technological skills training and independent thinking skill training</p> <p>Pr.5:practical skills for life management</p>	<p>PM1:values and skill acquisition that are conducive to the economic role of Hong Kong</p> <p>PM2:skills training for analytic, discussive and critical thinking</p> <p>PM3:attitude formation: a perspective for life</p> <p>PM4:knowledge of the meaning of "socialist market economy in Hong Kong" and its relationship with the rest of the world</p> <p>PM5:attitude formation: leading a happy life</p>

8.3.1 Patterns of thought

Table 4 showed interviewees' distinctive patterns of thought both as people from Hong Kong and as belonging to sub-groups. In the following paragraphs, interviewees' perceptions are summarised in four ways: perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997, attitudes towards the future of Hong Kong, conceptualisation of the phrase "adult economic life" and perceptions of the future objectives of education.

8.3.1.1 People's perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong 1997: collective feelings of social uncertainty

The fieldwork revealed a wide range of people's feelings about the political future of Hong Kong in relation to their own position. Similar responses to the political future of Hong Kong were identified and their responses indicated collective social uncertainty. These collective feelings of uncertainty are attributable to two factors: the uncertain political future of the transfer of Hong Kong from a British colony to an SAR of the PRC, and the challenges of a new socio-economic ethos under a different political reality. This thesis suggested that the feelings of uncertainty are a psychological resistance of Hong Kong people to the new socio-political challenges of the territory.

8.3.1.2 People's perceptions of Hong Kong's economic future: positive attitudes toward Hong Kong strategic economic position

This study concluded that interviewees were politically negative but economically positive towards the future of Hong Kong. Although most of the interviewees had some reservations about the political future of Hong Kong, they were proud of Hong Kong's economic success today. Many interviewees shared the view that Hong Kong could act as a technological and information centre, providing advanced skills and knowledge to assist the economic development of southern China. Interviewees believed that Hong

Kong should strengthen its role as a facilitator, a middleman and a financial centre¹. The two economists interviewed recognised the idea of "A Greater City" suggested by Deng Xiao-ping. Moreover, most interviewees were well aware of the economic relationship between Hong Kong and the cities along the Pearl River Delta. Interviewees' confidence in the economic future of Hong Kong was built upon the current and potential development of southern China's economy. In other words, interviewees' confidence in the economic future of the HKSAR is reinforced by the PRC's open door economic policy.

Findings also indicated that traditional Chinese culture is related to utilitarianism. This linked closely with interviewees' positive attitudes towards the economic future of Hong Kong. Many interviewees believed that Hong Kong would continue to be economically prosperous as it has an important role to play in assisting the PRC in developing its economy. Southern China's economic success today will be an important indicator of the economic development of Hong Kong tomorrow. In addition, most interviewees claimed that the relationship between the border cities and Hong Kong, as an SAR of the PRC, is one of interdependence.

8.3.1.3 People's conceptualisations of the phrase "adult economic life": financial independence

The phrase "adult economic life" was conceptualised by interviewees as an individual's economic status and independent life skills. Interviewees' interpretations of the phrase echoed the value systems of Hong Kong people who see individual competence in terms of income. This in turn supported the argument of Chapter Five that Hong Kong's socio-economic ethos has influence on its people's economic values.

According to the interviewees' conceptualisation of adult economic life in the socio-economic context of HKSAR, a "competent adult":

...is self-reliant

...is a rational decision-maker, knows the cost and constraints

...is a logical thinker

...is discerning

...is flexible and adaptable

...is politically, socially and economically aware

...has a reasonable understanding of political, social and economic affairs

...is willing to serve and to contribute to society

...has his or her own independent point of view

...leads a healthy life, striking a balance between a spiritual and a materialistic life.

This thesis concludes that people's perceptions of the qualities of competent adults have been affected by 1997. A discrepancy was identified between the core value system of the people interviewed and the core value system presented in the literature discussed in Chapter Two. Findings revealed the effects of Hong Kong 1997 on interviewees' perceptions of adult economic life. The interviewees realized the inadequacy of the materialistic socio-economic ethos in the transition to 1997 and the evidence showed that interviewees have begun to depart from their extreme utilitarianism. They noted that moral reasoning ability and civic mindedness will be important qualities of competent adults in 21st century Hong Kong.

Interviewees were concerned with the development of *the whole person* rather than the inculcation of materialism. Although the exact extent to which this concern resulted from the change of Hong Kong's political and socio-economic ethos within this transitional period was uncertain, it did give some insights for drafting the objectives of 21st century Hong Kong education.

8.3.1.4 People's perceptions of education: a civic minded and critical thinking approach

In answering research question 2, "what do Hong Kong people think education should do in response to the socio-economic context of Hong Kong in 1997 and beyond?" the research findings indicated two important points. Firstly, most interviewees made comments on the current examination-oriented educational system. Preparations for skills in examination fail to satisfy individuals' specific needs for a career and for adult living. Many of them believed that education should assume the responsibility of providing a wider scope for personal development, and a better balance between spiritual and practical orientations.

Secondly, given Hong Kong's political reality, the relevance and appropriateness of the current educational system were both questioned by the interviewees. Most interviewees suggested that critical and independent thinking skills should be strengthened for individuals to cope with their immediate and future environment. The teachers and parents stressed that, in order to prepare young people for moral reasoning, they need more training in independent thinking skills.

Given the structural differences between Hong Kong and the PRC, education for intellectual development should become one of the crucial educational tasks. Two interviewees were concerned with corruption, which might upset the Hong Kong style of capitalism in the approaching merger; this problem has to be addressed. Economic exchanges between the two societies promote greater cultural permeability and subsequently increase their social influence on each other. However, southern China, an economy in transition from socialism to capitalism, is regarded as a land of opportunity by many Hong Kong entrepreneurs. Owing to the difference in attitudes towards capitalism between one-party Chinese rule and British colonial rule, doing business in southern China is a real test of the ethical, cultural and political understanding of many Hong Kong business people.

In addition, in order to increase Hong Kong people's understanding of the differences between the two societies, the place of civic education within the whole school curriculum was said to be important. Interviewees thought that young people's socio-political understanding and participation are crucial for promoting a democracy.

Furthermore, practical skills for life in general and for work in particular were suggested by interviewees. In their view, education is dominated by the examination syllabuses, and both teachers and pupils are focused on fulfilling the examination requirements. Such an educational system is seen as resulting in a lack of balance in personal development. Therefore, they suggested that education should aim at providing more opportunities to promote students' socio-political and economic awareness.

Lastly, the fieldwork confirmed the proposition in the literature that there is a link between the existing examination-oriented and competitive school ethos, curriculum contents and teaching practices in classrooms.

Part Two:

8.4 HOW FAR HAS THE LITERATURE EXPLAINED REALITY?

This thesis argued from a literature analysis that Hong Kong people's spirit of competition, refugee mentality and attitudes to education are tightly linked. The politics of Hong Kong 1997 are creating both a crisis in confidence and an opportunity. Because of the refugee culture which contributes to an industrious work ethic and lifestyle, Hong Kong people are trained to tolerate uncertainty and make use of every opportunity to strive for personal betterment. Nevertheless, the political status of future Hong Kong society, as Harris notices, is a political experiment in the world², and thus negative feelings are unavoidable.

Analysis of the literature was useful for analysing and understanding the fieldwork data. An understanding of the transitional society and its cultural norms supported by the literature assists in a deeper analysis of the findings, and of education in Hong Kong.

Subsequently, the fieldwork provided additional information about local Hong Kong people's perceptions of social phenomena and the future objectives of Hong Kong. As indicated earlier, interviewees' patterns of thought enrich the understanding derived from the literature on Hong Kong culture.

8.4.1 The range of individuals' views and indigenous Hong Kong culture

The fieldwork data indicated that contradictions exist among interviewees. As Chapter Seven showed, many interviewees are negative towards the socio-political future of Hong Kong and positive towards the economic future of Hong Kong. This thesis suggests that interviewees' perceptions of reality are related to local Hong Kong utilitarian attitudes. The prevalent "industrious peasant" mentality of the last generation, traditional Chinese family loyalty and the spirit of social competition all help to make up the core values of indigenous Hong Kong culture.

In the past few decades, indigenous culture has been supporting this society and its economic advancement. In the colonial socio-political context, this indigenous culture is a unique social product and a generator of modernization and trade promotion. Nevertheless, as indigenous value systems are context specific as well as culture specific, the extent to which they are relevant to the future HKSAR is unknown.

This thesis suggests that the range of views among individuals about the socio-political and economic future of Hong Kong results from the challenges of the politics of Hong Kong 1997. The transfer of the ruling power to the local Hong Kong Chinese is being abandoned by the existing colonial government. The implications of Chinese socialist rule are understood as threatening the current lifestyle, and most important of all, as setting a deadline for enjoying the existing rewards of capitalism. The core values of Hong Kong society are now put on trial and local people tend to follow two paths: to "make hay"³ when possible and to find their security abroad when possible. These two directions are also identified in the fieldwork.

Interviewees' perceptions of the phenomena of transition to 1997 reflected a perceived need to change the current educational objectives, as interviewees realised that the political reality of Hong Kong will mean a serious educational problem. In contrast to the standard commentaries on Hong Kong people's pragmatic mentality, interviewees were concerned with an approach to preparing young Hong Kong adults for the HKSAR, an approach which calls for greater awareness and more critical thinking.

Further relevant educational suggestions were also made by the interviewees. They took the view that schools should strengthen young people's civic mindedness and citizenship education together with critical thinking training. The perceived need to change the current educational provision suggests that people are no longer remaining silent about education. More importantly, interviewees made an attempt to seek a balance between an examination-oriented model and an educational model based on the "whole person". Reform in education is difficult and urgent.

8.4.2 The broader implications of the thesis

Meaningful educational reform demands an understanding of the rationale behind the educational system. This thesis argued from the cultural perspective that the style of capitalism is tightly linked with the spirit of the competitive educational system, and this is detailed in the following paragraphs.

8.4.2.1 An economics-driven approach to understanding Hong Kong education

Because Hong Kong socialises its people into a laissez-faire economy and stresses individual competitiveness, the whole educational process is powerfully affected by the

spirit of economic competition. The educational system is led by a colonial government which has a non-interventionist economic policy. Personal effort to manage a tight time schedule and the regular competitive assessment process become determinant factors for one's future success and failure. The ideas of competition for survival and survival of the fittest are widely accepted by Hong Kong society. As noted by Luk, this society inculcates the socio-political value of "a commitment to hardwork for economic betterment"⁴ through the hidden curriculum.

In this educational context, pragmatism and utilitarian mentalities are generated and reinforced. Firstly, education is a stepping stone⁵ for career betterment which leads to family betterment (the promotion of family advantage through individual career betterment accords with the Chinese tradition of family loyalty). Because such instrumental values have been primary in education, the balance of the school curriculum needs more attention.

Secondly, education in this commercial society always meets the needs of employers, who have a higher priority than other interest groups. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, the refugee background of the early inhabitants who came to Hong Kong with a strong desire to advance their economic situation has reinforced the economic purpose of British rule. Therefore, Hong Kong people have a strong awareness of economic interest, and business-orientation has become a driving force in the development of the educational system.

Thirdly, there is a close link between the profit-based value system and the educational system. Because of the utilitarian aspect of Hong Kong Chinese culture and colonial rule, education promotes entrepreneurship. Traditional Chinese culture based on Confucianism contradicts⁶ the style of capitalism in Hong Kong. The anti-competition aspect of Confucianism is not emphasised, whereas the authoritarian aspect is strongly maintained in the school system.

Fourthly, if attention moves from the top-down educational structure and government centralisation to the objectives of education, school learning is dominated by pragmatic social values. Luk is aware that the qualification objectives of Hong Kong schooling have a bearing on industrialization⁷. As discussed in Chapter Three, educators are struggling with managing the needs of the economic system and of young people. The educational analysis in Chapter Three indicated that discovery methods and innovative classroom learning are inhibited. Indeed, current educational provision has not attempted to provide an adequate and relevant model for whole person development.

Furthermore, at the individual student level, Chapter Three indicated that students' choice of subjects is linked with the perceived instrumental values of the subjects and student career preferences. For example, English, Science and Commercial skills are of higher value to students as they are valuable in the workplace.

Part Three:**8.5 A CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATING FUTURE
"COMPETENT ADULTS" IN HONG KONG**

Although at the time when this thesis comes to its conclusion the future of Hong Kong is by no means clear, within this period of transformation the proposed curriculum model is able to give concrete directions and suggestions for taking current Hong Kong education system forward.

8.5.1 *The rationale*

This proposed curriculum model is based on the assumption that there is a close relationship among four distinctive dimensions of reality: the political status of Hong Kong, indigenous Hong Kong culture, profit-based values and the education system. This research suggests that in response to the challenges of 1997, Hong Kong curriculum developers need to prepare young people for understanding the personal relevance of learning for their future adult lives in 21st century Hong Kong. For example, they will need: practical knowledge required for leading daily lives competently; necessary skills for both the world of work in the new society and interpersonal relationships between people from Hong Kong and mainland China; appropriate attitudes towards uncertain socio-political matters; and lastly, moral values for making personal decisions and judgment when life gets tough and unexpected. Therefore, the three learning elements suggested: knowledge, skills, and attitudes are needed for special purposes for young Hong Kong people rather than merely constituting a summary of the fieldwork of this thesis. The curriculum model is concerned about promoting values which help maintain the balance between subjects, personal relevance and social utility⁸ in the context of the HKSAR. A useful and practical curriculum should place the personal experience and

meanings of students at its centre and which help young people prepare for autonomous and self-reliant decision making and having an influence on the future.

On the basis of interviewees' perceptions of the phrase "adult economic life", with special reference to the practical needs of this transforming society, the following strategic framing of a general curriculum proposal for educating future "competent adults" is suggested.

8.5.2 Proposed parameters for educating future competent adults in Hong Kong

(A) REFORM IN THE HONG KONG EDUCATION SYSTEM

Hong Kong society in the 21st century will remain unique. Its political status as the HKSAR of the PRC is a new alignment. Not only will this society enter a new era of development, but it will also strive to create a balance between the socio-economic systems of Hong Kong and the PRC. The consequences of a basically unchanged educational system in the HKSAR needs careful reinterpretation and an alternative should be proposed.

(B) HONG KONG EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "GREATER HONG KONG"

Hong Kong society will develop, together with southern China, towards a "Greater Hong Kong" which acts as a model for the special economic zones of the PRC. For the facilitation of this future socio-economic development, this thesis suggests that young Hong Kong people should be equipped with the skills, knowledge and attitudes which enable them to lead a competent life and to play a positive role in the new society.

(C) HONG KONG EDUCATORS SHOULD WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH PRC EDUCATORS

Facilitation of a mutually beneficial social convergence necessitates a coherent design of the educational system and curricular innovations to be reached by agreement between the HKSAR and the PRC. Identification of the differences between the two educational systems is desirable as Hong Kong and the PRC are not only different in their political socialisation but also different in their educational socialisation.

(D) HONG KONG EDUCATION SHOULD PROMOTE AND THEN HELP RETAIN A REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

In order to build a representative government system, education should aim to prepare young Hong Kong people for a democracy. Both political participation and the civic mindedness of young people are important curriculum issues. A supply of politically aware people paves the way for localization; Hong Kong people should be enabled to share in the governance of Hong Kong. In managing this change, education bears responsibilities for:

- (1) strengthening citizenship and civic education;
- (2) exploring the rights and responsibilities of being citizens of the HKSAR;
- (3) clarifying the expectations of the two societies towards each other; and
- (4) identifying the future social development of the two societies.

(E) HONG KONG EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MODERNIZATION

As the future Hong Kong society is seen as the economic and commercial centre of southern China, the needs of industrial and economic development in the two societies have special implications for Hong Kong educational provision; hence education in Hong Kong should remain instrumental. The current role of education as a means for upward

social mobility should continue. Moreover, there should have a close connection between education and a rapidly changing division of labour.

(F) HONG KONG EDUCATION AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Hong Kong educational system should aim at enhancing its role as a facilitator for social advancement, and thus the acquisition of science and technology becomes crucial to contemporary and future Hong Kong society. Furthermore, future Hong Kong education will be a base for research and development, and a link for the PRC to western science and technology.

(G) HONG KONG EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CORE VALUES

Educational socialization in 21st century Hong Kong will be political. As nationalism becomes a crucial element for integrating young people into a new society, an understanding of Chinese socialism becomes one part of the educational preparations. The core values of this society also link directly with industrialization and modernization, and education in the HKSAR and the PRC socialises people into pragmatic and utilitarian values. The current competitive educational selection system should continue to act as a supporter of this meritocratic society.

(H) HONG KONG EDUCATION SHOULD DEVELOP INDIVIDUAL POTENTIALITIES

This strategy should be embedded in and achieved by the other educational strategies proposed above. Within the process of socio-political transformation, education should strengthen young people's critical and independent thinking skills training. Here "critical thinking" refers to an awareness of the existence of alternative perspectives and an

acceptance of a diversity of personal viewpoints about political and socio-economic affairs. Moreover, students need to acquire an awareness of the diversity in fundamental assumptions and methods which gives rise to the various ideas such as those by which political and socio-economic events are interpreted. Hong Kong students should be trained to be rational and able to stand outside any particular set of views by acquiring the basis for understanding alternative views. Therefore, education should aim at preparing students for questioning the assumptions, values and methods which generate any set of ideas, and prepare them to reveal and evaluate their own views and decisions.

The Hong Kong educational system has special responsibility for equipping young people with moral discernment, critical thinking skills and individual perspectives for life to fulfil their roles as responsible citizens, effective producers and consumers in the HKSAR. Therefore, it is important for young people to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes as suggested in the general curriculum proposal in the next page, as these are conducive to the roles of individuals in society and the future of Hong Kong's role in the PRC.

In short, the crucial qualities of competent adults in 21st century Hong Kong are as follows: knowledge of socio-political and economic affairs in the two societies; flexible and adaptable attitudes toward the differences between the two societies, while having discernment in judging what is moral and social justice; together with the skills for striking a balance between a spiritual and a materialistic life.

8.5.3 A general curriculum proposal for educating future "competent adults" in Hong Kong

Knowledge

An understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses

An understanding of personal life goals

An understanding of key personal roles in new Hong Kong society

An understanding of society

An understanding of social culture

An understanding of work in 21st century Hong Kong

Skills

Intellectual: independent critical thinking, planning and organising

Practical: independent problem solving

Language: competent in both written and spoken English and Chinese (Putonghua)

Social: collaborating with others, being independent

Self management: allocation of resources such as finance and time

Communication and numeracy: reading, writing, calculating

Information and technology: competent in operating scientific machines such as computer, electrical appliances

Attitudes

Appreciating the differences between the two societies

Politically aware: knowing the governmental structure of the PRC and the HKSAR

Socially aware: willing to contribute oneself to build a representative government

Economically aware: able to have own position between a socialist and a capitalist economy

Flexible and adaptable to socio-political changes

Ready to accept new educational challenges

Morally aware: having a discernment in judging what is moral and socially justice

This general curriculum proposal spells out the practical knowledge, necessary skills and attitudes for individuals to handle daily lives competently in the new Hong Kong society. The proposal is related to what will be required to grow and to be effective as a competent adult in 21st century Hong Kong. This next section presents the details of managing and implementing this curriculum proposal for educating future competent adults in Hong Kong.

8.5.4 Implementation of the general curriculum proposal: educating future Hong Kong competent adults, a reference to personal and social education

The strategy of implementing the general curriculum proposal includes the following four areas⁹: (1) establish the climate, (2) raise awareness of need, (3) identify the principles and (4) consider the practical organisation.

Firstly, because this general curricular proposal: "educating future Hong Kong competent adults" focuses on personal and social development, and the three curricular dimensions can be achieved by the whole school timetable, this proposal already sets the scene for a whole school approach through making links across the school timetable. As achieving personal and social development is a process, Hong Kong schools should be allowed greater autonomy to develop their own style of curriculum management with a clear and explicit school policy to achieve their objectives. (This echoes the claim of School-based Curriculum Development in Hong Kong as mentioned in Chapter Three). A bottom-up approach to managing curriculum change should be enhanced in school, and active teacher participation is required and crucial. Departmental coordination becomes a determining factor for the effectiveness of curriculum management. In the

implementation of this proposed curriculum proposal, shared objectives must be made explicit to teachers, but they should be given autonomy to express their opinions in managing the proposal. Inter-departmental relationships are therefore important: a school should promote a friendly and easy cooperative ethos for professional development.

Secondly, an awareness of the needs which arise from pressures both outside and inside Hong Kong schools is important. As conflicts may occur over, result from, school internal aims and needs among the teaching staff, the school has to be sensitive to the dynamics of relationships and provide opportunities for teachers to discuss and negotiate possible ways of implementing the curriculum proposal. Interdepartmental cooperation stimulates constructive thinking and fosters open-ended investigations suitable for coursework. As Hong Kong society is undergoing rapid social and political changes both political and moral decisions are areas of controversy, teachers may find it difficult or even unwise to inculcate a particular set of values. And yet teachers realise that these personal and social qualities are important for educating young Hong Kong people to be responsible citizens and effective adults in leading their lives in the new society.

Also, it is important for Hong Kong teachers to be aware of the school's declared aims and policies especially on which values and attitudes a school wishes to espouse in this transforming society. Values that are held by teachers and values that the school aims to pursue may be a source of conflict for teaching and learning in 21st century Hong Kong. To avoid such conflicts teachers should be aware of the possible differences between their and the school's values on different matters. On the other hand, the school has to evaluate whether students' actual experience, style of learning and

relationships match the school aims. Regular evaluation of students' achievement and parents feedback can give useful guidelines for schools. Moreover, Hong Kong parents should have more channels to participate into the whole implementation and evaluation process in the new society.

Thirdly, establishing school policy statements makes it easier for Hong Kong schools to respond to the challenges of external social situations and resources. A developing school is one which constantly responds to external challenges and makes changes accordingly. Anticipated external challenges will be associated with the value systems of the PRC and socio-political cultural norms of Hong Kong. Some adaptation is necessary if the Hong Kong curriculum is to be effective in the 21st century. Both the managerial leaders and teaching staff need to identify the school principles and prioritize their management needs. In implementing this curriculum proposal, attention should be given to providing necessary in-service training for teachers and support materials.

Lastly, in order to prioritize the curriculum management needs, schools have to take practical organisation into consideration. This always relates to the capacity of the school to handle new curricular changes and innovation in terms of resources and managerial priorities and constrains. Analysis of the readiness of each school in terms of resource and staffing can make this curriculum proposal realistic.

8.5.5 Management of the general curriculum proposal for educating future Hong Kong competent adults: towards a whole school approach

This general curriculum proposal promotes values, skills, knowledge and attitudes across subjects and beyond the formal timetable to empower young Hong Kong people to

become competent and responsible adults in taking control of their adult lives in the new society. Emphasis is placed on equipping young Hong Kong people with the abilities to think, reason and generate personal insights from various subjects and to translate them into daily actions¹⁰. So to manage this general curriculum proposal effectively relies on a whole school approach.

In Hong Kong today, school learning can no longer be seen as a block of independent subjects. Students cannot develop personal competence simply by learning textbook knowledge, acquiring skills and attitudes through different subjects independently. Meaningful school learning especially in Hong Kong now must make educational connections across both formal and informal school timetables. Activities that the students engage in should have general educational purposes and be transferrable from one subject area to another. So Hong Kong must swift to a managerial strategy for educators and curriculum developers to plan the timetable as a whole, and to enhance the coherence and progression of the whole learning process and activities.

In the Hong Kong educational context, coherence assists students in making sense of their classroom learning across the timetable, and in seeing each individual subject as part of the whole school curriculum rather than as a haphazard and unrelated series of activities. Progression is based on students' existing knowledge, skills and attitudes which are being built up. A coherent whole school approach to managing the general curriculum proposal is dependent upon careful identification of the progression of the learning experience. Links within school learning become part of a coherent and progressive set of experiences that students can understand and reach.

The design of a coherent and progressive whole school approach should enhance and enrich students' experience within this curriculum proposal. And this proposal should strengthen and encourage the personal development of students who need to become competent adults in the new Hong Kong society. A general curriculum proposal---for educating future competent adults in Hong Kong---is pointing to greater personal and social development.

The implication of a whole school approach for managing this general curriculum proposal means a whole school process, in which all professional staff participate actively in negotiating and making decisions about implementing and evaluating the delivery of the proposal in their school. Drawing the schools' expertise together and defining both long-term and short-term goals are important. This avoids any overlapping of classroom learning whilst promotes greater learning coherence throughout the process which would improve the current Hong Kong schools practice. Teacher participation enables a better understanding of students' needs and therefore provides a good ground for setting objectives and classroom management. Resources can be fully utilized in inter-departmental cooperation practices. This is a good opportunity for Hong Kong teachers to learn and develop from one another through working collaboratively. And yet, in order to encourage Hong Kong teachers to participate in the whole school curriculum development process, sensitivity should be shown to their individual autonomy. Clear goal-setting and identifying responsibilities among teachers both maximize teachers' contribution and assist the implementation of the proposal in this socio-political transforming society.

To the above implies this general curriculum proposal that educating future Hong Kong competent adults would be suggested to be implemented and managed as a cross-curricular theme---personal and social education---across the whole school timetable. Getting Hong Kong teachers to recognise their responsibility for promoting the personal and social development of young Hong Kong people through managing this cross-curricular theme will also help them to manage the whole curriculum more effectively. Teacher education for managing this curriculum proposal will be very important. Particularly, schools should have a trained and supported coordinator who discusses with colleagues their scheme of work, gives assistance where needed, plans and reviews the lessons together as well as supports the involved staff¹¹.

According to this general curriculum proposal for educating future competent adults in Hong Kong, the three learning elements are: knowledge, skills and attitudes. In terms of dimensions, the proposal promotes personal and social development through the curriculum and through explicit coordination of different aspects to ensure that they permeate teaching and learning inside and outside the formal timetable.

The skills suggested in the proposed curriculum model include: communication and language, numeracy, problem solving, social and personal, and information and technology. The dimension of these skills can be considered and embedded within all subject areas as a cross curricular theme and knowledge components may occur within certain core and foundation subjects. These skills cannot be acquired completely through a single subject area. Similarly, in the aspect of attitudes: flexibility and adaptability, appreciation and an awareness of political, socio-economic and moral affairs are reliant

on the management of the whole school timetable, including both formal and informal learning activities. Lastly, in the aspect of knowledge suggested by this proposal for educating competent adults in Hong Kong: an understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses, social affairs and workplace issues is developed by the other two curricular dimensions, skills and attitudes. These three dimensions are interrelated and should be fully achieved by core and foundation subjects. Attention is paid to the attainment targets, building bridges for collaborative work between teaching expertise across school departments and each recognises the way the subjects can help one another.

This is a new approach to improving personal relevance and social utility of the current Hong Kong curriculum for young Hong Kong people through a cross-curriculum theme. Emphasis is placed on making a better sense of the school learning to young Hong Kong people within the whole school learning process in this socio-political transforming society.

FINAL COMMENTARY

This piece of intellectual work is the researcher's response to the current and emerging existential and historical situations of Hong Kong. The existential situation refers to the researcher's personal understanding and is concerned with the well-being of Hong Kong in 1997 and beyond. Throughout the period of study, there has been much speculation about the merger. At the time when the fieldwork was completed, new educational provision¹² was attempted and no immediate effects were found. The researcher is well aware of the conflicts between Hong Kong's political reality and academic analysis. At the end of this study, and because 1997 is only three years ahead, feelings of uncertainty

and anxiety among Hong Kong people persist. Since the recent history of Chinese rule brings unexpected events to its people, the indigenous curriculum developers have difficulties in preparing concrete educational provision for the future society. As both British rule and Chinese rule encourage a bureaucratic structure, Hong Kong educators will find difficulties in educating future competent adults for a representative government within Hong Kong's hierarchical political tradition. What is more, the final decisions about educational provision and curriculum innovation will be subject to the Chinese government's approval.

This is not to deny the significance and meanings of this research. On the contrary, the researcher has offered a systematic study of Hong Kong people's perceptions of the politics of Hong Kong in 1997 and their relationships with the objectives of education in the 21st century within this final period of socio-political transformation. However, because this is an ongoing process, the adaptation of the educational system and educational practice will not stop in July 1997.

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER EIGHT

1. This concept has been discussed by Sung, Yun-wing, (1991), The China-Hong Kong Connection, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.15-17.

2. See Harris, Peter, (1986), "Hong Kong Confronts 1997: An Assessment of the Sino-British Agreement", Pacific Affairs, Vol. 59, pp.45-68.

3. This term "make hay" is borrowed from Yee, Albert, (1992), (2nd ed.), A People Misruled, Singapore: Heinemann Asia, p.194. Yee uses this term to describe the general Chinese mentality without specifically referring to the Hong Kong Chinese. However in this chapter, the writer adopts this term and refers to the current mentality of Hong Kong people.

4. Luk describes the educational socialisation of Hong Kong as Social Darwinism.

Luk, Bernard, Hung-kay, (1992), "Hong Kong", in Willy, Wielemans, Chan, Pauline, Choi-ping, (eds.), Education And Culture In Industrializing Asia, Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp.131.

5. Yee, Albert H., (1992), op. cit., p.316.

6. Confucianism is regarded as the high Chinese culture which devalues materialism whilst emphasising spiritual fulfilment. So, genuine Confucian followers put very low value on business. They stress loyalty and patriotism. This thesis suggests that the intelligentsia in Hong Kong have a different value system from the mainland Chinese. Because they do not share the cultural burden of transmission Confucian teaching neither do they stress loyalty and patriotism as much as those in the PRC. Therefore, Hong Kong society does not have a strong background for producing patriotic extremists.

7. Luk, B. H. K., (1992), op. cit., p.132.

8. This view is taken from Richard Pring's comments on the British National Curriculum, and this thesis shares his view that the curriculum should serve the purpose of achieving an integration of school learning, personal relevance and social utility.

Pring, Richard, (1989), The New Curriculum, London: Cassell Educational Ltd., p100.

9. These four areas are suggested by T. Graham. For details see,

Tilley, Graham, (1991), Management of Cross-curricular Issues, Northampton: Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools, see Unit 1, pp.1-13.

10. Ibid., claims that education is concerned with helping people to think and to understand. It is about empowering them---giving them the mental tools to reflect, to reason, to argue and to solve problems (p.98).

11. The above suggestions for managing the curriculum model are drawn from British National Curriculum Council curriculum guidance. For further details see

National Curriculum Council, (1991), *Managing Economic and Industrial Understanding in Schools*

National Curriculum Council, (1989), *Circular Number 6: The National Curriculum and Whole Curriculum Planning Preliminary Guidance*

National Curriculum Council, (1990), *Curriculum Guidance Four: Education for Economic and Industrial Understanding*

12. In March, 1994, the Chinese University of Hong Kong organised a conference on curriculum changes in Hong Kong. Local and overseas participants shared the consensus view that the implications of 1997 for the future objectives of educational provision have to be addressed. The work of C.C. Lam and B.L.L. Lai, and H.K. Chow provided a suggested time table and new curricular contents for managing the politics of 1997 within the school curriculum. This is a break with the traditional apolitical colonial education as young people will be taught to know the political system of the PRC and its relationship with the future HKSAR.

For details, see Lam, C.C., Hon, H.S., Ho, M.K., Man, E.Y.K., Sze, P.M.M., (1994) (eds.), Proceedings of the conference on: Curriculum Changes in Hong Kong: The Needs of the New Era, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

With special reference to 1997, J. White ("Underlying Bases of A Compulsory Curriculum", in *ibid.*, pp.160-165) argues that education for democratic citizenship should be the first priority in order to assist young people to identify their own position among conflicting values. White asserts that critical thinking training is important.

APPENDIX A BRIEFING PAPER FOR INTERVIEW

Introduction

Hong Kong is joining China in 1997. The Mayor of Shenzhen points out that the future economic development of Hong Kong and Shenzhen will be very close. (Ming Pao Daily News, November, 20, 1992). In addition, China's "open-door" policy encourages a lot of foreign investors and Hong Kong may become more important to China as an international financial and export centre. Much foreign investment in China is routed through Hong Kong and the products of China are often exported through Hong Kong. So these are likely to be major social, economic and political changes in Hong Kong society.

And a Hong Kong economic teacher says: "economic changes, economic reformation and economic development, on the whole, can bring the Chinese government to face the change of politics. It's not restricted to Hong Kong, it's to all. I mean all parts of China. But Hong Kong plays a very important role because it is in the frontier line". To him, to prepare students for their adult economic lives is to train them to be critical.

Questions

- (1) Regarding preparing youngsters for their fast-changing society how important is it for them to be adequately prepared for adult economic life?
- (2) In relation to these changes, what are your own perceptions of the phrase, "adequate preparation for adult economic life"?
- (3) How far are students aware of the issue of Hong Kong 1997 and any changes in their adult economic roles?
- (4) So what sort of adult economic roles will the youngsters play in relation to the fast changing Hong Kong society?
 - a. What kinds of qualities should students possess?
 - b. What kind of economic demands will youngsters face?
- (5) In what ways can students be better prepared for adult economic life with particular reference to Hong Kong's joining China in 1997?
- (6) Being a policy maker/ principal/ an economist/ Economics/E.P.A teacher, how do you think you should prepare the students for their adult economic lives?
- (7) Again, how would you judge the appropriateness, relevance, adequacy and effectiveness of the current students' learning in preparing them for their future economic life in Hong Kong?

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