

# National identity and the music curriculum

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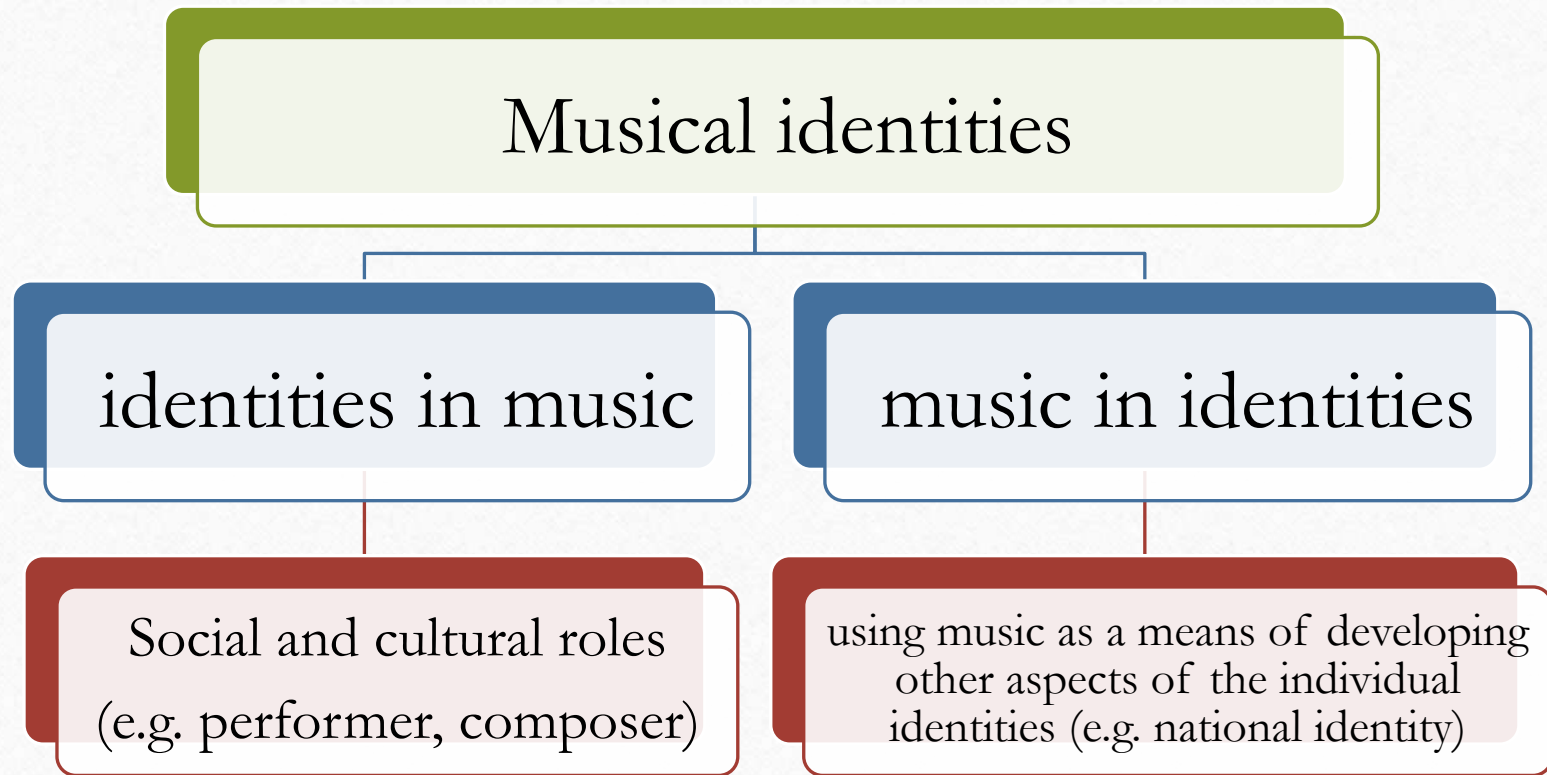
An exploratory case study of the construction of  
national identity in Hong Kong's primary schools

# Presentation Outline

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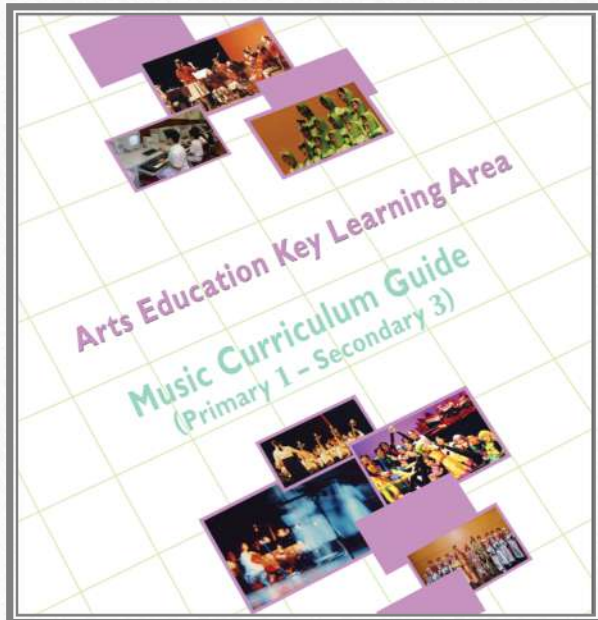
1. Background of the study
2. Research methods and methodology
3. Findings
4. Conclusion

# The formation of musical identity: Hargreaves et al. (2002)



# The Hong Kong school music curriculum

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- Published in 2003
- Around two 30-45 mins lessons per week
- Consists of Western, world music, traditional Chinese, local Hong Kong music
- “nurture... students’ creative mind, sense of national identity, flexibility and openness as well as respect for others” (CDC, 2003, p. 3)

# Research Questions



1) How do primary school music teachers describe their national identity?



2) How do teachers feel about the introduction of national identity in primary schools?



3) How do teachers feel about the introduction of national identity in school music curriculum through the inclusion of Chinese music?



4) How do music teachers feel that they can help students develop a sense of national identity at primary level?

# Research methods

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- Five lessons observations (April 2018)
- Six face to face semi-structured interviews (March-April 2018)

# Findings:

## Music teacher's definitions of national identity

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- The pride in the nation
  - ❖ The more pride there was within the nation, the stronger the national identity would be (Smith, 1991)
- Birthright of a person
  - ❖ *You are born with your national identity, it should be inborn and there should be no external factors affecting your national identity (Teacher B)*
- Labelling as Chinese or Hong Kong inhabitants

# Findings:

## Difficulties in developing the Chinese national identity in music lessons?

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- Most of the interviewees did not find it difficult
- *“Music serves as a supporting subject to the concept of national identity where it has already been introduced in other subjects.” (Teacher A)*



# Findings:

## Teaching and learning Chinese music in primary schools

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- “Values are the criteria for personal conduct and judgements while attitudes are the ways and orientation to behave and handle events. Both are interrelated. Through learning and teaching in music, teachers help students build proper values and attitudes, for instance: ... cultivating national identity through performing and appraising Chinese music; understanding and respecting local traditional culture through singing and appreciating Cantonese Opera...” (CDC, 2003, p.15).
  - Dependent on the textbook design
  - Teacher’s education
  - Student’s musical preference

# Implications

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- Teacher's education
- The idea of national identity in Hong Kong school music education
- Chinese music as world music?
- The music curriculum and school practice

# Limitations of the study

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- Sample size
- The definition of national identity
- Comparison between primary and secondary school teaching experiences

# Further research

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- Perception of national identity and music education of primary school students and their parents
- Disjunction between Hong Kong school music teacher's training and the curriculum
- Primary school music education