

**Decolonization, Nationalism, and Local Identity: Rethinking
Cosmopolitanism in Educational Practice in Hong Kong**

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Cosmopolitanism and its application for education in western societies has been well examined. Yet cosmopolitanism in society and in education has not been systematically explored in many Asian societies. Facing a large number of people from diverse backgrounds, the society and its education system in Hong Kong are troubled by issues similar to those found in western postindustrial societies, related to cultural and national belonging and identity. Prejudice and racism toward ethnic minorities — particularly those from South Asia and Africa, is quite common. Additionally, animosity and hostility to mainland Chinese newcomers has increased and intensified in the context of Hong Kong’s “repoliticization” after its 1997 handover. This article aims to explore how cosmopolitanism is understood, valued, and approached in Hong Kong education. We start by exploring the role of decolonization and nationalization in political education in Hong Kong. We then discuss cosmopolitanism, and consider how it impacts particular social and educational issues in Hong Kong. We also provide an analysis of discourses on cosmopolitanism taken from Hong Kong *General Studies* and *History* textbooks, to identify challenges faced in facilitating cosmopolitan values, a balance of identities, and global citizenship in Hong Kong education.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism; Hong Kong; decolonization; nationalism; local identity

Introduction

With the world divided by continued political conflicts related to sectionalism, awareness has increased across societies regarding the need to actively bring people together to cooperate to solve problems that all are facing. For teachers and scholars who have dedicated their lives to fighting exclusion (e.g., attitudes of sectionalism and racism), teaching the values of social justice and human rights, the recent resurgence of racist and nationalistic identity politics is disorienting, confusing and heartrending. With changing population configurations specifically arising from global migration flows over the past decades, super-diversity is now a feature of many places and reflects the cosmopolitan

condition (Meissner & Vertovec, 2014; Vertovec, 2012, 2019). Teaching cosmopolitan values and practices is one strategy for helping develop attitudes of global and pluralistic understanding in this context, to enable people to look beyond national or regional borders in an open-minded and optimistic way.

Cosmopolitanism and its application for education in western societies has been well examined (Delanty, 2006; Gunesch, 2004; Hansen, 2008, 2009; Nussbaum, 1997; Osler & Starkey, 2003; Sobe, 2012; Tan, 2004; Waks, 2009). Yet the educational function, to shift from parallel cosmopolitan situations to interactive cosmopolitan dialogues, is less clear in other societies (Werbner, 2014). Hong Kong, as a diverse city where East meets West, has large populations from South Asia and other parts of the world, as students or economic migrants. Although 92% of the residents in Hong Kong are of Chinese ethnicity (including mainland Chinese), this number does not account for the many people who come from outside Hong Kong not counted as residents (Census and Statistics Department, 2016). Meanwhile, ethnically Chinese Hong Kong residents (from the mainland or Hong Kong) are also a diverse group, given the diversity of the mainland, as well as ties of many Hong Kong people to other countries around the world.

Facing a large number of people from diverse backgrounds, the society and its education system in Hong Kong are troubled by issues similar to those found in western postindustrial societies, related to cultural and national belonging and identity. Prejudice and racism toward ethnic minorities — particularly those from South Asia and Africa, is quite common (Klein, 1995; Lai, 2011; Vetter, 2018; Yan, 2016; Zheng & Leung, 2018). Additionally, the interplay of globalization, nationalization, and localization is key in the development of Hong Kong society, and its education provision (Bray & Lee, 1993, 2001; Grossman, Lee, & Kennedy, 2008). In this context, animosity and hostility to mainland

Chinese newcomers has also increased, and intensified in the context of Hong Kong's "repoliticization" after its 1997 handover (Lee, 2008).

How cosmopolitanism is understood, valued, and approached in Hong Kong education is worth exploring. This is the aim of this article. Here we start by exploring two important dimensions to understanding cosmopolitanism and political education in Hong Kong: decolonization and nationalization. We then discuss cosmopolitanism, and consider how it impacts the particular social and educational issues in Hong Kong. Although different normative forms of cosmopolitanism will be discussed, we do not aim to provide a comprehensive literature review. Rather, we intend to examine the challenges, complexities, and controversies related to cosmopolitanism in education in Hong Kong. How cosmopolitanism is perceived in Hong Kong is then examined, via an analysis of discourses on cosmopolitanism taken from Hong Kong textbooks.

Education in Decolonizing and Nationalizing Hong Kong

Hong Kong was a colony of Britain and now is a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China. After 1997, when Hong Kong was handed over to China, the decolonization of Hong Kong can be understood as incorporation into another state (Bertram, 1987). In this sense, decolonization and recolonization coexist in Hong Kong (Law, 1997; Lee, 2008). Decolonization here refers to "the elimination of mechanisms, practice or traditions established to consolidate the rule of the Hong Kong Colonial Government", while recolonization means "the institutionalisation of national sovereignty among the subject people" by the Chinese government (Law, 1997, p. 188).

Hong Kong's history leaves members of society with a problem: how to continue to decolonize Hong Kong. Different interpretations of the right direction of decolonization reflect divergent understandings of what is good for the future of Hong Kong. An approach reflected by the views of many Hong Kong people, especially the younger generation, is one

that links decolonization with globalization and internationalization. Many Hong Kong people see themselves as forerunners and defenders of cosmopolitan values, as illustrated by recent movements in Hong Kong, such as the anti-high-speed rail movement, the democracy wall movement at the University of Hong Kong, and the Umbrella Movement. Contemporary China, according to this view, is seen as having nothing new of value to offer to Hong Kong, in terms of technology, education, a political system, etc. A very small minority of local people even request that Hong Kong be recognized as an independent nation, rather than as part of the People's Republic of China.

In this approach, nationalism is not regarded as a solution for Hong Kong to decolonize, as being a HongKonger means connecting with broader, more universal values (e.g., critical thinking and cosmopolitan values), while being Chinese is associated with authoritarianism and brainwashing (Chan & Chan, 2014). In this way, local identity is equated with a kind of cosmopolitan identity, and both of them are commonly regarded as superior to national identity (Lee, 2008). This is also reflected in the local language hierarchy, as English and Cantonese are regarded as superior to Mandarin. Language proficiency has a strong positive correlation with educational and social opportunity and achievement in Hong Kong, with Hong Kong youth tending to view the language and social distance between themselves and native English speakers as closer than for counterparts from China (Postiglione & Lee, 1997). Additionally, there is a common stereotype that mainland Chinese people support national identity unconditionally and are hostile to cosmopolitan values. This stereotype can justify stigma and informal discrimination against mainland people.

Nationalization also provides a significant backdrop to discussing cosmopolitanism in Hong Kong. By assuming that “although its legal and political systems were heavily shaped by the British during their long period of rule, Hong Kong remains predominantly a

Chinese society where Chinese culture and values figure prominently” (Chan & Chan, 2014, p. 953), the Chinese government sees Hong Kong as part of China not only at a legal level, but also at cultural level. In this sense, the Chinese government assumes it is natural for Hong Kong people to develop a strong attachment to the mainland.

As surveys indicate, many Hong Kong people define themselves as different from mainland Chinese, or even as non-Chinese (Centre for Communication and Public Opinion, 2016). This poses a threat to Chinese governance in Hong Kong. The Chinese government credits the emergence of anti-mainland sentiments and related public movements (e.g., the Umbrella Movement), to a lack of understanding and appreciation for the mainland situation, and the contributions of mainland China to the development of Hong Kong. To reverse the situation, the attachment of Hong Kong to mainland China is being consolidated today, and national identity (meaning mainland Chinese identity) is being reinforced, with more emphasis on nationalism and patriotism in education (Chan & Chan, 2014; Lin & Jackson, 2019; Ministry of Education, 2016; Sing Tao Daily, 2017). This nationalizing tendency is reflected in curricula and textbooks, and could be perceived as a “delocalized nationalism” instead of localization, because of the tension between national and local identity in Hong Kong (Fairbrother & Kennedy, 2011; Lee, 2008).

Schools have generally become regarded in Hong Kong as places where social injustices and inequities are to be addressed, with an emphasis on respecting cosmopolitan values in education recommended by the Hong Kong government (Curriculum Development Council, 2009). It is assumed by policy makers that schools should not mirror or reinforce discrimination and prejudice in society. Instead, education, and educational resources, are to foster cosmopolitan values among students. However, the tripartite need, of valuing the local, the national, and the cosmopolitan, provides a challenge. These three identities coexist in Hong Kong as a social fact. However, if Hong Kong people are educated to believe that these

identities are mutually exclusive, it can create a tension, as Hong Kong youth may feel perplexed or guilty about their attachments. Given these social contexts of Hong Kong (of decolonization and nationalization), this paper focuses on whether and how educational resources in Hong Kong facilitate cosmopolitan values and balance cosmopolitan, national, and local identity claims among students.

Conceptualizing Cosmopolitanism in Hong Kong

The term *cosmopolitan* can be traced back to Ancient Greece, where it referred to the citizen of the world. In current discourse, cosmopolitanism is often categorized in more specific ways, such as economic (or neoliberal) cosmopolitanism, moral cosmopolitanism, ethical cosmopolitanism, political cosmopolitanism, cultural cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitan law, and critical cosmopolitanism (Delanty, 2006; Ingram, 2013; Miller, 2007; Peters, 2012). In all cases, cosmopolitanism is responsive to the limitations of nationalism and patriotism, and promotes values that aim to correct for parochial and narrow-minded attitudes and practices. Therefore, although there are many different views of cosmopolitanism, its core principle – broadly embracing all of humanity – distinguishes it from other views. There is in relation an emerging overlapping consensus regarding cosmopolitanism aims, in cultivating a particular kind of global citizen, with values including human rights and mutual respect (Appiah, 1997; Archibugi, 2008; Ingram, 2013; Osler & Starkey, 2003).

Interpretations and theories differ in relation to which particular characteristics global citizens should possess, and the more concrete, embodied content of cosmopolitan values. Although the understandings and interpretations coming from distinctive Asian perspectives remain nuanced, they are not necessarily in contrast with cosmopolitanism. Many traditions of Asia (e.g., Confucianism and Buddhism) also embrace cosmopolitan values, which may be labelled as “western” and “universal”, such as mercy, compassion, equality, tolerance, and mutual understanding, and see them as deserving of value and application by all (Bell, 2008;

Chan, 2014; Tu, 1992). In Asian environments influenced by Confucianism, the personal and social moral dimension of political relations is emphasized, such that these cosmopolitan values are interpreted from a moral perspective, similar to moral cosmopolitanism and ethical cosmopolitanism (Pohl, 2018).

Lee's (2008) concept of localized globalization refers to a local response to globalization that integrates global values and skills into the Hong Kong curriculum. In this context, we in parallel observe that Hong Kong may have a localized understanding of cosmopolitanism that intersects with Confucian and other local traditions. Many scholars have articulated a kind of Confucian cosmopolitanism (Gan, 2012; Han, Shim, & Park, 2016; Ivanhoe, 2014; Neville, 2012; Zhao, 2009). Confucian cosmopolitanism is similar to western conceptions in sharing the view that the universal inclusion of all should be accompanied by differentiation that takes particularities of specific situations into account (Tan, 2015).

To avoid cosmopolitanism being seen as abstract or as too idealistic, without relevance to society, many warn that educators should not teach students to become cosmopolitans who seem rootless and unembedded in social relations: people who admire abstraction and ideals, while possibly intolerant of others and the linkages that bring meaning to people's lives (Appiah, 1997, 2006; Erskine, 2008; McConnell, 1996; Nussbaum, 2008; Waldron, 2004). Thus, Confucian and western conceptions of cosmopolitanism share the view that mobile people (or global citizens) are not rootless (Appiah, 1997; Tan, 2015; Werbner, 2014). In addition, Confucian cosmopolitanism advocates caring for all, while observing that those most closely related to us have priority in our ethical consideration. In this sense, it echoes a rooted or locally oriented type cosmopolitanism which justifies giving priority to compatriots and/or others nearby (Appiah, 1997; Nussbaum, 2008).

However, Confucian cosmopolitanism diverges from western conceptions of cosmopolitanism in two ways. First, proponents of Confucian cosmopolitanism indicate that

the Confucian cosmopolitan “is not a citizen of nowhere but an interested guest or visitor of various cultures and ways of life who is comfortable around the world” (Ivanhoe, 2014, p. 34). They emphasize that harmony, a core theme of Confucianism, is crucial, if not the most important value here, alongside unity of nature and humanity (Pohl, 2018). Another divergence appears when it comes to the nature of social differentiation. Differentiation in most variants of Confucian cosmopolitanism is based on a sense of internal social hierarchy, while rooted and patriotic cosmopolitans think about differentiation in terms of feasibility to attain equity in practice.

Given these differences, the value of Confucian cosmopolitanism in relation to education for social equity and justice in Hong Kong may be limited. Confucian cosmopolitanism sees people in a diverse society from the perspective of harmony of guests or visitors with mainstream members of society, and this can limit its helpfulness for understanding the different interests of different groups in Hong Kong at a deep level. In addition, as Delanty indicates,

Although the origins of cosmopolitanism lie in an essentially moral view of the individual as having allegiances to the wider world, it was to acquire a political significance once it was linked to peoplehood (2006, p. 26).

Thinking at the political level rather than only at the moral level is important to comprehend cosmopolitanism in super-diverse contexts such as Hong Kong. Yet Confucian cosmopolitanism mainly emphasizes cosmopolitanism at the moral level.

However, our main aim here is not to advocate for or against a particular theory of cosmopolitanism. On the contrary, our primary aim is to understand how cosmopolitanism views can be seen to shape society via its representation and promotion in educational institutions in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong government advocates that schools take a

cosmopolitan stance, as one of the prescribed aims of education is to foster cosmopolitan values and cultivate global citizens, without specifying or defining which form(s) that such cosmopolitanism should take. Thus, cosmopolitanism is seen here as less like a normative theory, but more as a social practice and way to understand, explain, evaluate and transcend particular societal phenomenon in super-diverse cities (e.g. separation and integration, and social division) (Delanty, 2012; Sobe, 2012; Werbner, 2014). At the same time, some regard the normative basis of cosmopolitanism as found in complicity with western values related to the formation of European imperial powers, within a de-colonial cosmopolitanism, which emphasises the need to examine local traditions and understandings of cosmopolitanism (Mignolo, 2000, 2010). Thus, we take a critical de-colonial stance, shifting away from cosmopolitanism as a universal idea without an emphasis on practice. We aim here to uncover the transformative potential of cosmopolitanism to respond to social problems experienced in Hong Kong. Instead of relying upon a universal explanation of cosmopolitanism, we explore local understanding and implementation of cosmopolitanism.

Methods

“[W]ithout a learning process...it makes little sense in calling something cosmopolitan” (Delanty, 2006, p. 41). School is not just one of the central sites for the enunciation of cosmopolitan ideas; it also is a key place where cosmopolitan stances, dispositions, and habits can be learned and practiced (Sobe, 2012). In relation to schooling, textbooks are the leading source for Hong Kong students to learn about values and identities in society, as they are authorized by the Education Bureau and used by teachers as primary, preferred sources to teach students about the world. They are the most common used school resource reflecting social norms and values of Hong Kong, and shape teachers’ lesson plans and assessments (Apple, 2009; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2015; Kelly, 2009; McCarthy, 1993; Morris & Adamson, 2010).

In the next section, we examine textbooks for two required subjects of relevance here: primary *General Studies* and junior and senior *History*. Cultivating global citizens with cosmopolitan values and helping students construct their identities are included in the curriculum and guidelines of these subjects as crucial aims and themes (Curriculum Development Council, 2015). As different publishers provide slightly different versions of the texts, 127 *General Studies* textbooks with 7 different series were included in our analysis, which is 36% of the 354 existing textbooks from 1997-2017. In addition, 34 *History* textbooks including 11 series were analysed, which is about 47% of the 73 existing books from 1997-2017.

We use content analysis to categorize content relevant to cosmopolitan values, identity formation, and global citizenship, to understand how the textbooks teach about cosmopolitan values and identities. Data will be presented in the categories of cosmopolitan values, identity formation, and global citizenship. With the focus on “latent content” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2015), this paper analyses the depiction of subject(s) (i.e., HongKonger, mainland Chinese, and ethnic minorities), and the connotations and contexts of excerpts using summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) and systematic coding (Richards & Morse, 2007; Saldaña, 2013). Content in Chinese is translated into English here.

Findings

Our findings reflect that the role of *General Studies* and *History* textbooks in facilitating cosmopolitan values, balancing identities, and global citizenship is limited.

Cosmopolitan values

Generally, cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan values are described as good for Hong Kong people to embrace. For example:

People all over the world are living in a global village. In this global village, the exchange of goods, capital, information and personnel have become much more frequent.

The relationships between different countries and regions have been closer, and we are more similar than different. All important things happening in the global village are related to everyone” (New Asia Publishing House, 2017, p. 31).

Texts also remind students that people “come from different countries or from different regions of China”(Lee, 2004b, p. 42); “think differently” (Lee, 2004b, p. 31); have differences in terms of culture, appearance, language, dress, living habits, etc.; look different; and do different things (Cho, 2015b; Lee, 2004a, 2004b, 2004e; Pearson Hong Kong, 2015b). The texts recommend that students meet and engage with students from other places, as this “allows us to understand the different cultures and broaden our horizons” (Lee, 2004d, p. 58). As part of a society, students should “learn to respect one another” (Lee, 2004b, p. 42), “learn from different ethnic groups” (Lee, 2004c, p. 15), “accept people even though they are different from us” (Lee, 2004d, p. 58), “respect and value everyone’s life” (Lin & Yee, 2016, p. 27), and welcome everyone (Cho, 2015c; Pearson Hong Kong, 2015b).

However, these sentences are given in textbooks as slogans, without specifying further instruction or examples that could guide students regarding what aspects of diversity they should respect, and what they should do to show respect to others, and rectify exclusion or other discrimination in reality. For example, when a text encourages students to respect people’s “unique lifestyles” (Lee, 2004e, p. 25), it mentions festivals, food, and art forms, without touching on substantial diversity, of fundamental beliefs and values. Similarly, another text observes “differences in Chinese and Western cultures”, but only gives “diversity between Chinese and Western calligraphy in the uses of tools and writing methods” as an example (New Asia Publishing House, 2017, p. 9). The details of how to think about and treat others beyond abstract and idealistic slogans is never articulated.

Identity formation

Tensions between cosmopolitan, local, and national identity are reinforced and often exaggerated in textbooks. Regarding cosmopolitanism, Hong Kong is seen in textbooks as

- an international city with close links to the West (Cheng, Fung, Kan, Lau, & Tang, 2009, p. 105);
- a free and open society... [where]...people are tolerant of foreigners. Ethnic groups are able to keep their own cultures. For example, the Indian and Pakistani communities in Hong Kong practiced their own customs and traditions while integrating with local Chinese culture (Cheung et al., 2014, p. 95);
- one of the few modernized cities that can embrace different religions and cultures...[and] all cultures flourish and interact with one another (Cheung et al., 2014, p. 94);
- a city of many cultures (Pearson Hong Kong, 2015a, p. 31);
- a place where Chinese and foreign cultures mix together (Pearson Hong Kong, 2015c, p. 35);
- a cosmopolitan city (Pearson Hong Kong, 2015d, p. 25)
- a highly-developed city and a highly-westernized society (Cheng & Hui, 2016, p. 41);

In relation, textbooks emphasize that Hong Kong's government has worked to ensure different ethnic groups in Hong Kong can live in harmony:

[T]he Race Discrimination Ordinance came into effect on 10th July 2009. The ordinance protects people against discrimination, harassment and abuse because of their race...to help ethnic minorities integrate into societies, the Government and charity groups offer educational, employment and community assistance to them. These include providing materials and funds to help students learn Chinese, increasing job opportunities in different types of companies and providing translation services for some public services such as public hospitals and clinics. (Pearson Hong Kong, 2015e, pp. 34-36)

Local identity is thus to some extent described as cosmopolitan in Hong Kong. Hong Kong people also are depicted as holding cosmopolitan values, as a text describes:

as citizens of the world, we should also pay more attention to the problems of poverty around the world when we enjoy them, and help the poor to improve their lives according to our abilities. (Pearson Hong Kong, 2015f, p. 29)

However, more problematic features of Hong Kong (e.g., expected assimilation and prejudice) are concealed or beatified in textbooks. For example, a story of a Pakistani boy is used as an example in a textbook to illustrate how different ethnic groups in Hong Kong live in harmony:

When I first came to Hong Kong from Pakistan, I couldn't speak Chinese and I had no friends at school. Luckily my classmates were friendly. They invited me to join the football team. I also attend Chinese courses at a learning support centre run by the Government. Now I know as much Chinese as my classmates! (Pearson Hong Kong, 2015e, p. 34)

Although learning Cantonese is a way for minorities to be accepted and recognized in Hong Kong, it also represents expected assimilation. This excerpt does not explain the experiences of Pakistani youth, which might include more struggles, who cannot speak Cantonese.

Although textbooks do not link cosmopolitanism to Confucianism or other local traditions, they link Chinese culture to Confucianism, as the cradle and epitome of civilization in Chinese societies (Lee, 2008). Hong Kong is internally represented and prided in this case as based in Chinese culture (Confucianism), while being a defender of cosmopolitanism. According to this framework, non-Chinese ethnic minorities are framed as not sharing Confucianism and/or cosmopolitanism. At the same time, the texts reflect that ethnic minorities' apparent choices to not share Confucianism and/or cosmopolitanism leads to their marginal status. As Jackson notes, "ethnic minorities are perceived as uninterested in

local culture and learning Chinese language, and then framed as not part of society due to lack of engagement in debates” (2017, pp. 4-5).

By contrast, national identity is presented in these textbooks in a mainly negative way. Textbooks narrate mainland China as backward, lacking modernity, and needing help from Hong Kong. For instance, “we should care more about our country and act to help our compatriots in need in the mainland of China” (Cho, 2015a, p. 24). In comparison, what Hong Kong can learn from mainland China is only discussed in the texts in terms of historical Chinese traditions. Although a text narrates that “after years of development, China has now become a country of international standard” (Lin & Yee, 2013, p. 37), Chinese culture and foreign culture in textbooks are framed in terms of “tradition and modernity” (Cheung, Cheung, & Ho, 2014, p. 94). All good things mentioned in textbooks from mainland China are part of the cultural heritage from past generations, such as “Chinese tea; martial arts (Kun-fu); and Chinese medicine” (Lee, 2004f, p. 33), “worshipping ancestors and being filial to the elders” (Cheng et al., 2009, p. 105), dim sum (Cheung et al., 2014, p. 94), “Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism” (Cheung et al., 2014, p. 94), and “traditional moral beliefs” (New Asia Publishing House, 2017, p. 9). Additionally, the Chinese nationality of Hong Kong people is questioned in one text, which defines mainland Chinese people as “people who has a different nationality” than Hong Kong people (Cho, 2015a, p. 23).

In part such representations and sentiments towards national identity reflect a rising opposition to nationalizing forces from the Chinese government, and an aspiration to decolonize Hong Kong, by attaching its identity to broader, more universal values. The textbooks do not admit or openly explore factors associated in the society with Hong Kong people’s hostility toward mainland Chinese people, such as the milk powder incident, wherein mainland Chinese people’s purchasing of milk powder supplies led to a panic and lack of milk powder for babies in Hong Kong. Instead, animosity toward mainland China and

mainland people is not addressed, but latent in content which represents China as backward and poor. More generally, a picture of important aspects of Hong Kong and China relations is missing.

Global citizenship

Textbooks risk impeding cosmopolitan values and global citizenship among students, as they reinforce and reproduce prejudice, stereotypes, and misunderstanding of people, especially from the mainland and from other countries. In the theme *Poverty and Hunger*, textbooks reference “Chinese children”, “child labor from India”, “children of Albania”, and “schoolchildren in Nepal”, and say that “their life is so hard, we must cherish the living conditions we have now” (Lin & Yee, 2008, p. 9). Sometimes, people’s appearances are the focus of the discussion, such as in one text that asks, “here are the children of Africa, what are the differences between their body and appearance and ours?” (Lin & Yee, 2008, p. 10); the pictures are all negative, and not particularly representative of the children in the societies discussed, such as images of extremely skinny and dystrophic children, and children clearly suffering with illness.

Although these extracts present part of the living conditions of people in other countries, they overgeneralize reality in these countries. The texts thus risk reinforcing negative stereotypes of these countries, as backward, poor, and less educated, risking misrepresentation of Hong Kong people and students hailing from or associated with these countries, and reinforcing a sense of superiority among students whose families come from Hong Kong and other postindustrial societies. As the text discusses disadvantaged people from developing countries for the purpose of serving the interests of Hong Kong people (e.g., to cherish the living condition they have now), these texts may deliver a negative message to minority students, making them feel inferior to others, and used as a tool instead of being

respected and cared for. At the same time, these representations fail to note poverty within Hong Kong, and diverse living conditions found across societies around the world.

Overall, cosmopolitanism in textbooks mainly refers to “western based” (according to the texts) understandings of civilization and society, global values and global citizenship. The local in textbooks is synced to the global and the cosmopolitan, and thus distinguished from “less-developed” places (e.g., China), which are seen as in contrast with cosmopolitanism.

Conclusion

The role of textbooks in cultivating global citizens with cosmopolitan values is worth scrutinising in Hong Kong education. Cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan values are described as a good thing for Hong Kong to embrace, but in a simplistic way, without instruction or examples that could guide students regarding what aspects of diversity they should respect, and how they should show respect to others, and rectify exclusion or other discrimination in everyday life. In addition, local identity is described as a cosmopolitan in Hong Kong. Hong Kong people also are depicted as closely linked to cosmopolitan values.

Compared to this positive description of Hong Kong, national identity is presented in a mainly negative way: mainland China is narrated as backward, lacking modernity, and needing help from Hong Kong. All good things mentioned in textbooks regarding mainland China are the cultural heritage from past generations (such as Confucianism, which remains associated with Hong Kong culture today). Additionally, textbooks reinforce and reproduce prejudice, stereotypes, and misunderstandings of people portrayed as “outside” the Chinese local Hong Kong population, including mainland Chinese people (within and outside Hong Kong), and people from other Asian and African countries. Therefore, rather than teaching human rights values, tolerance, and open-mindedness, the textbooks to an extent reproduce and reinforce the everyday discrimination and stereotypes in Hong Kong, and exaggerate the

tension between cosmopolitan and local identity and national identity, contradicting the cosmopolitan stance that the Hong Kong Education Bureau aims to achieve.

The incomplete picture of cosmopolitan values and their significance, and of the diverse identities in Hong Kong and in other societies provided by these textbooks impede students in developing a comprehensive understanding of social reality and responding in an informed way to challenges faced in Hong Kong. These representations from texts also partly reflect the social reality in Hong Kong, wherein even as discrimination and prejudice occur every day, many local people remain unaware about it, continuing to see Hong Kong as a cosmopolitan and western city, which welcomes all, and to define themselves as forerunners and defenders of cosmopolitan values (Chan et al., 2015). In order to help students better understand their societies and work toward their enhancement for all their members (Appiah, 2006; Sen, 2006), the role and content of textbooks in elaborating and cultivating cosmopolitan values in the Hong Kong context should be critically rethought accordingly.

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