

**The Education of Ideal Citizens:  
An Ethnographic Study of Two Schools in Hong Kong**

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## **Declaration**

I hereby certify that this thesis is of my own composition, and is the record of research executed solely by myself. Where other sources are quoted or paraphrased full references are duly given. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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## Abstract

Soon after the political handover in 1997, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government had introduced a series of education and curriculum reforms. Such reforms is said to be proceeded in response to teenagers' lack of national identification towards their motherland China, and also to the public discourse addressing the economic challenges and competition in the universal trend of globalization. Although a few studies had unveiled the underlying values of Confucianism, neo-liberalism and market ideology under these objectives, how the new definitions of "ideal citizens" is understood and promoted in the actual school settings, and how those values influence the process of students' identity construction and their vision on their life trajectories, remains unknown.

Drawing on the data from an ethnographic research conducted in 2010, this thesis illustrates how the qualities of an "ideal citizen" propagated in the education and curriculum reform would be understood and transformed in two very different schools in Hong Kong. One is a long-established girls' school located in a middle-class district, which has a reputation of providing "all-rounded" education and nurturing future woman-leaders; the other one is being considered as a "academically-low band" school located in remote area, which struggled to survive and started to admit "Non-Chinese speaking" (NCS) students from Pakistan, Nepal and Philippines three years ago in order to solve the problem of insufficient intake of local students. Apart from the half-year participant-observation in the two campuses, in-depth interviews of the 2 school principals, 13 teachers, 19 students and 2 alumni of the two schools have also been conducted. Other school documents including official school magazines, school reports as well as students' publications have also been collected as supporting information.

Due to the different historical background, the school management strategy and most of all, the composition of students from very different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, the two schools had developed very different ideas and definition of an "ideal citizen", and thus led to different directions of school policies and expectations on students. Through the examples of the provision of the "Other learning

Experience” (OLE) and students’ participation patterns in Chapter Five, the different language policies and students’ ability in languages in Chapter Six, and the process of the construction of femininities of young girls in Chapter Seven, this study shows how the problematic of class, gender and ethnics domination still exist under the new context of education reform. This study also reveals that while Hong Kong policy-maker claimed that the education reform ‘bears upon the equity and balance of our society’, the socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity and gender which traditionally being viewed as factors that differentiate education outcomes in sociological studies are completely ignored in the reform.

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## List of Abbreviations

CMI	Chinese as the medium of instruction
CSD	Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong
CSSA	Comprehensive Social Security Assistance
DSS	Direct Subsidy Scheme
EC	Education Commission
EMI	English as the medium of instruction
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
ESF	English Schools Foundation
GYLC	Global Young Leaders Conference
HKAL	Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination
HKCEE	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations
HKCSS	Hong Kong Council of Social Service
HKDSE	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
JUPAS	Joint University Programmes Admissions System
LS	Liberal Studies
MOI	Medium of Instruction
NCS	Non-Chinese Speaking students
NET	Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OLE	Other Learning Experiences
SSPA	Secondary School Places Allocation System

# Chapter One Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Education always has as its mission the cultural and ideological transmission desired and defined by states. That is, the ideal characteristics, attitudes, values and behaviours of an ideal citizen are embedded in the curriculum and policy of education. However, the image and the criteria of the 'ideal citizens' often changes over time and space, according to the specific social political situation of a place in a particular period of time (Tsang, 1995). Therefore, a change of educational policy or the introduction of curriculum somehow may reflect a new agenda of 'state citizenship', which is responding to the whole social, economic and historical context. School, as a site to institutionalize and promote this 'state citizenship', also becomes a site of conflict over the meaning of citizenship.

In recent years, Hong Kong has undergone dramatic changes, both politically and economically. The return of sovereignty to its motherland China has turned Hong Kong into a Special Administrative Region (SAR) after a hundred years of colonial rule by Britain. At the same time, it is also facing economic challenges in the universal trend of globalization. As one of the most economically prosperous cities in Asia, Hong Kong has always been trying to keep pace with global trends. Not long after the transition of political sovereignty in 1997, the Hong Kong government quickly addressed the high priority of carrying out fundamental reforms in education, following and borrowing reform practices from other places to shape local education. Although the educational reform was triggered by the colonial government, many scholars showed that it was only after the political handover that reform gathered speed, and that the range and depth of the reform both go beyond the predecessor (Choi, 2005; Morris et al., 2000; Yuen, 2008).

Given such a distinctive context, the implications of educational reform have brought much attention. The reform of the educational system is not only characterized by the incorporation of new managerialism and marketization (Choi, 2005; Morris and Scott, 2003), but also the projects of "decolonialization" or "re-nationalization" (Ku and Pu, 2006:5-6). Tse (2006b) has pointed out that, after the handover, the rhetoric

of Hong Kong as a global city, together with an emphasis on patriotic education, were uneasily merged in civic education.

The simultaneous promotion of global citizens and national identities may have created conflicting values in the reform curriculum. Yet, these multiple but contradictory cultural and moral values of neo-liberalism, market ideology and Chinese tradition in Hong Kong, and how these values influence the complex and struggling process of identity formation, is discussed in only very few studies (Chan, 2006). Indeed, although there is much discussion about the conceptions of citizenship in post-colonial Hong Kong, most of the studies are limited to the political dimension of citizenship. On account of the specific political background of Hong Kong, it is understandable that the focus of research is put on the political attitudes or the political identities of Hong Kong people. For instance, the studies on citizenship education in Hong Kong are often concentrated on the extent to which it is possible to discuss political issues (e.g. nationalism or patriotism) or controversial issues (e.g. universal suffrage and the **Tiananmen** Massacre) in the curriculum, the proportion of “apolitical” and “political” content in the teaching materials or teaching guidelines, or the politically apathetic attitudes of students (Bray and Lee, 1993; Fok, 1997; Tsang, 2006; Tse, 2000; Tse, 2006a).

Apart from the emphasis on the political aspects in studies of citizenship or citizenship education, most of the educational studies about the educational reform remained at the institutional level, by exploring the policies and curriculum of the reform. As citizenship education (Moral and Civic Education Guidelines) is implemented as a whole-school approach in Hong Kong, simply analysing policies and curriculum guidelines may seem to be remaining on a superficial level of investigation. Viewing “policy as discourse” (Ball, 2006) is that, once policy enters schools, it becomes an ongoing, interactive process to create new meanings. Not only should the implementation process be considered, how different stakeholders (principals, teachers, students) in the school settings understand, interpret and value the goals of the whole citizenship agenda should also be understood. As Tse (2003) stated, there is a need to explore the dynamics of the teaching and students’ learning of civics.

Despite the ideological conflicts and social changes that directly influence the educational reform and the teaching, learning and conceptualizing of citizenship in schools, students' social characteristics, including their social class, ethnicity, gender and disability etc. is also significantly affecting their experiences as citizens and their conceptualization of citizenship. As highlighted by Arnot (2009),

*“.....definitions of citizenship have been shaped by, for example, civic republican, liberal, social democratic, neo-liberal or nationalistic, post-communist, communitarian or cosmopolitan ideals. These political ideals have different consequences for a range of social groups such as working classes and professional middle classes, the low paid and the unemployed, religious and minority ethnic communities, children, the aged and the disabled. Such ideals whilst often appearing to be gender neutral, also construct male and female citizens in particularly ways within and across such groups.” (Arnot, 2009: 6).*

While the listed political ideals has illustrated the different positions they take in evaluating and defining the relationship between individuals and the nation-state; Arnot also draws our attention to how different social groups construct their citizen identities differently. It is particularly significant to research on the live experiences of different social groups in the school settings because schooling, under the political stream of liberalism dominant in the post-war period, was supposed to function as an institution balancing the citizens of different social groups, and to give chance to individuals to utilize their talents. However, many sociological studies have shown that social differentiation and inequalities have been sustained especially when the educational reforms across the globe are mostly economically driven and the (neo-)liberal discourses of promoting concepts such as “individualism”, “self-investment” and “responsibilization” is masking the polarisation of the wealthy and the poor, the privileged and the marginalized. Nevertheless, apart from the uncovering of the gender assumptions of the pseudo-neutral liberal democratic notions of citizenship and class/ethnic stratifications of the school institutions, other feminists or post-structuralists/modernists also explore students' construction of multiple identities through the positioning in different discourses and meanings in this new era (Gordon, 1998, Gordon, 2006; Preece, 2002; Skeggs, 1997). For example, Harris (2006) has suggested that the era of post-modernity, neo-liberalism, de-industrialisation and the

rise of new information technologies has led to the reconstitution of girlhood and the reworking of femininity so that the “can do” girls could be more compatible with modern life.

Following the frame of sociologists of education and feminists, this research aims to contribute to the sociological discussion of citizenship identities focusing on the inter-relations of social class, ethnicity and gender in the context of Hong Kong society where contradictory discourses of citizenship coexists and neo-liberal ideology prevails.

## **1.2 The Research Questions and the Research Sites**

It is based on the above social and political background that I develop my interest in the exploration of the social and cultural meanings of citizenship in the school settings under the influence of the neoliberal education reform. After the theoretical and empirical considerations based on the Literature Review and the findings of the pilot study, two major research questions have been developed:

- (1) What notions of cultural and social citizenship are promoted and presented in the schooling process under the educational reform in Hong Kong?**
- (2) What are teachers’ and students’ experiences and interpretations of “citizenship”?**

Based on the above research questions, this research examined the interactive meaning-making process of the idea about citizenship, especially how students interpret the meaning of “ideal citizen” set out by the reform, the school authorities and teachers, while at the same time reacting to their circumstances to construct their citizen identities.

Drawing on the arguments of critical and feminist theorists, the research was designed to conduct an ethnographic research study in two distinctly different secondary schools in Hong Kong to address the significance of social class, ethnicity and gender in the construction of citizen identities, and to explore the impact of school tradition and school ethos on the interpretation of citizenship by teachers and



students. The two schools in this research: St. Caroline's College (St. Caroline's) and Peterson Secondary School (Peterson's School)<sup>1</sup> could be seen as the representatives of the types of schools in the hierarchical educational system in Hong Kong. St. Caroline's is one of the most popular traditional elite girls' schools, situated in a middle-class residential area on Hong Kong Island. Similarly to other traditional elite schools, St. Caroline's has always been popular among students and parents in Hong Kong. Not only because it is regarded as a "Band 1" school and had a number of famous alumni, but it is also among the 114 secondary schools that are allowed to use "English as the medium of instruction" (EMI). It is found that most of students are of middle or upper middle-class backgrounds. On the contrary, Peterson's School is located in a satellite town in the New Territories and surrounded with public housing estates. Teachers reported that over 80% of the students are from working-class families or families receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA). The school has been regarded as "Band 3" (and "Band 5" school in the previous "5 bands" system) and is using Chinese as the medium of instruction. With its previous reputation, the school is not very popular among students and parents, and even faced the challenge of closing down because of the decreasing number in the student intakes in recent years. With the change of policy in admitting "Non-Chinese Speaking" (NCS) students in the past few years, the school is able to survive in the increasingly competitive education market.

### **1.3 Key Findings**

This research has provided empirical support of the neoliberal influence of the education reform in Hong Kong (Choi, 2005), and proved the impact of the overarching determinants of social class and ethnicity to students' lived experience of being citizens, their construction of citizen identities and aspirations for future lives in Hong Kong.

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<sup>1</sup> To ensure confidentiality of research participants, both school names and the names of participants are pseudonyms.



The research first explored the school principals' expectations of the characteristics of the "ideal students" and "ideal citizens" image, which largely influenced the implementation of curriculum and policies in schools. The School Principal of St. Caroline's College expected students to become "global citizens" and "leaders of the society". Thus, she stressed the importance of "all-rounded" development of students, which expected students to perform well in all aspects including academic achievement, extra-curricular activities and "being girls". On the other hand, the School Principal of Peterson's School expected his students to be "good citizens" who were moral and law-abiding in the current competitive, complicated world. He emphasized the development of the "whole-person", which evolved from the Confucius tradition, emphasizing the cultivation of personal conduct, ethics and virtues.

The findings also showed that the interpretations of citizenship by teachers and students also differed in the two schools. Due to the dominance of the middle-class ideology embedded in the school tradition and school ethos, teachers' and students' of St. Caroline's understanding of citizenship were generally coherent with the "ideal citizen" promoted by the school authority and the education reform, so that many students had developed the "habitus" and cultivated the necessary "cultural capital" to be competitive in the era of globalization. Yet, there were teachers and students who realized or challenged the working of class in the process of the cultivation of cultural capital due to their personal experiences as the marginalized groups or teaching experiences in other schools.

For teachers of Peterson's School, many of them recognized that the lack of cultural, linguistic and economic capital of their students would affect their future citizen status. However, they were also influenced by the notion of "individualisation", which blamed students for not taking their responsibility to self-actualize, ignoring the effect of class and ethnicity which disadvantaged students in the schooling process. Yet, I argue that Peterson's students were social actors who could subjectively define their self-worth and identities not simply based on the "institutionalized evaluative system" set out in the current education system. As is shown in the analytical chapter, Peterson's students were in fact making choices and

acting based on the “evaluation system” developed among themselves or based on their understandings about, or personal experiences of, the world.

## 1.4 Organization of the Chapters

**Chapter Two** is the context of the research which foregrounded the whole study. It first demonstrates the social, historical and political background of the development of citizenship (civic) education and citizen identities in Hong Kong since the 1950s until the post-1997 period when Hong Kong reached the historical turning point of the transfer of sovereignty. Then, a summary of the major education reform documents is presented and the language ecology of Hong Kong is discussed, so as to illustrate the major policies and concepts that are closely examined and analysed in the two school settings.

**Chapter Three** reviews the literature concerning the theories of citizenship and citizen identities. Through a critical discussion of different theories I developed the theoretical framework constituted on critical and post-structuralist perspectives, on which I based an exploration and analysis of the myriad meanings of citizenship to teachers and students in this research.

**Chapter Four** is a description of my methodological approach and research design of the research. Based on the elucidation of my epistemology, ethical concerns and reflective account of the processes of the research, this chapter provides the ontological, epistemological and personal backgrounds of the researcher, which allows readers to understand the positioning, power dynamics, negotiation and struggles in the research process. Additionally, this chapter also offers a glimpse of the culture of the current marketized educational system and the school ethos of the research sites of the two schools to facilitate an understanding of the subsequent analytical chapters.

**Chapter Five to Seven** are the analytical chapters, which explore the understandings about citizenship by school principals, teachers and students, and students’ experiences of the construction of citizen identities and cultivation of cultural capital, in three dimensions. **Chapter Five** explores the newly-established “Other Learning

Experiences” programmes, which explicitly reveal the different definitions of “ideal citizens” in the education reform and in the two schools. **Chapter Six** concentrates on the language policies and use of languages in the two schools, which illustrates the close connection between languages with students’ construction of citizen identities and their citizen status in relation to acquisition of languages. **Chapter Seven** discusses the less obvious gender dimension of citizenship which, once again, shows the interconnected influences of gender, class and ethnicity on students’ understandings of being citizens and of their future “mother/carer roles” in their own families and in the wider (global) society.

Finally in **Chapter Eight**, I summarize the findings of the analytical chapters and answer the research questions. Further discussion focusing on the relationship of citizenship with late modernity, globalisation and gender is developed based on these findings. Lastly, some implications and limitations of this study will be outlined.

## **Chapter Two**

# **Context of the Research: Citizenship, Identities, and Education Reform in Hong Kong**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The major aim of this chapter is to situate this research in its historical, political, social and institutional context in Hong Kong. In so doing, it will help us understand the cultural and social meaning of citizenship in Hong Kong society, and its influence on the construction of “Hong-konger” or other dimensions of identities in the schooling process.

The first section, on Citizenship Education, provides a general background about the evolution of citizenship education in Hong Kong as well as the social milieu and political atmosphere in Hong Kong in different periods of time.

The second section is a summary of a preliminary document analysis of some of the educational reform documents. Through this analysis, I will highlight the major objectives and the anticipated citizens’ image of the government, and delineate some of the concepts suggested in the documents that would serve as “sensitizing concepts” for the analysis of the research.

The last section concentrates on the language ecology of Hong Kong, to set the scene for understanding the working of the symbolic power of different languages due to the historical, political, institutional and social factors in Hong Kong. This section will outline the current status of the major languages (English, Putonghua and Cantonese) in Hong Kong, and will illustrate the related language policies of the “Medium of Instruction” implemented during the reform period. This background will help us to understand how the different symbolic power of languages is working in schools, and how it has a high impact on students’ understanding of self-position and aspirations for their own future.

### **2.2 Citizenship Education and Citizen Identities in Hong Kong**

Citizenship Education often carries its mission of cultural transmission and acquisition with regard to the notions of citizen and citizenship of the nation-state or

government (Tse, 2003). That is, the curriculum and policy of citizenship education often bear the ideal characteristics, attitudes, values and behaviours of citizens desired and defined by the government. Meanwhile, the implementation or change of curriculum and policy of citizenship education somehow reflects the specific social and political situation of certain places in certain times.

This section tries to illustrate the major transformation of citizenship education that took place in Hong Kong at different periods of time based on three significant political issues, specifically, the colonial period before the issue of 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration; the transactional period of “decolonization” and democratisation from 1984 to 1997; and, the post-colonial age after 1997 when China resumed its sovereignty over Hong Kong with the establishment of the new Special Administrative Region (SAR) government.

#### **Depoliticized civic education in the colonial years (1950s to 1984)**

This section covers the colonial years from the 1950s to the year 1984, before the confirmation of Hong Kong’s future destiny by the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration. The characteristics and the role of civic education in Hong Kong can be divided into two distinct periods. The first period is from 1945 to 1965, when the content of civic education was mainly determined by the colonial government and was primarily designed to counter any direct threats to its legitimacy and rule. In the second period, from about 1965 to 1984, because of the rapid economic growth after the Second World War, and under government policy based on free market ideology, the nature of knowledge of civic education was primarily defined by the market. However, within these 40 years, citizenship education in Hong Kong can be generally characterised as alienated and depoliticized. (Bray and Lee, 1993; Morris, 1997; Morris, 2000; Tse, 2003; Tse, 2006b)

There are various notable political and social phenomena that may explain the depoliticized nature of civic education from year 1945 to year 1984. First of all, the tenuous authority and legitimacy of the colonial government had led to its cautious attitude towards controversial political issues and was reflected in its education policy and civic education curriculum. Second, the traumatic experiences and social

background of Chinese refugees who had migrated to Hong Kong since the 1950s, which constituted a major percentage of Hong Kong's population, meant that they generally held a sceptical attitude towards political issues, and were described as political-quietists or suffering from "politico phobia". Third, the rapid economic growth of Hong Kong under the positive non-interventionist policy has made Hong Kong the role model of laissez-faire capitalism in the world. Due to these various factors, Hong Kong had developed into a depoliticised territory with very low levels of political participation while, at the same time, giving high priority to economic development. In the context of such non-participant polity, the civic education curriculum emphasised the passive, obedient, law-abiding and compliant role of citizens (Bray and Lee, 1993). This special political and social atmosphere may well serve to explain the depoliticized nature of civic education in this period.

### **Uncertain positions during the transition period (1984 to 1997)**

Citizenship education has raised much public concern in Hong Kong since the mid-1980s after the signing of the Joint Declaration in 1984 which detailed Hong Kong's status as a relatively autonomous Special Administrative Region (SAR) starting from 1997. An awareness of the need to develop both a sense of national identity and a capacity for political participation developed from the impending political transition led to a variety of curriculum reforms designed to provide a more contextualized and politicized approach to civic education (Morris, 1997; Morris and Morris, 2000; Tse, 2003; Tse 2006b). In this stage of the transitional period, two Civic Education Guidelines were issued.

### **The Civic Education Guidelines (1985)**

The first Civic Education Guidelines were introduced in the year 1985, a year after the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. Though many previously sensitive issues for China which were directly related to the promotion of pupils' cultural and national identity were covered in these guidelines, they failed to respond to the issue of political apathy among Hong Kong people and students which would not be conducive to the progress of democratization of the future SAR government. Substantial emphasis was on an analysis of governmental institutions and on the



rights and responsibilities of a good citizen. In the section on suggested teaching methods in the Guidelines, they even stated that activities that might encourage active political involvement should be avoided. So it is quite obvious that the guidelines reflected the government's intentions to maintain the status quo and avoid any radical change (Morris and Sweeting, 1991). As a result, the guidelines were perceived as fragmented, abstract, conservative and apolitical.

In addition, the Guidelines also avoid the discussion of political concepts and processes related to democracy. (Morris, 1997; Morris and Sweeting, 1991). Such guidelines somehow satisfied people who viewed the major purpose of Civic Education as national identity building. However, they failed to respond to the other public requirement to cultivate political knowledge and active participation in political issues which were essential to the development of Hong Kong's democracy, and essential to prepare students to take part and contribute to the relatively autonomous rule of future SAR governments and politics. The Guidelines were just encouraging pupils to conform to the prevailing social system and political arrangements.

### **Second phase of the transitional period**

In fact, the requirement to make use of the curriculum to increase political awareness and political participation/involvement came from the local community after the future transition of sovereignty in 1997 was confirmed. The aim was to ensure that Hong Kong had a politically literate and active population which would allow it to function as a relatively autonomous political and economic entity after 1997. The 1985 Civic Education Guidelines failed to respond to this request. However, the suppression of the pro-democracy moment by the Chinese Communist government in spring 1989 incited a new phase of political awareness in seeking further democratic reform in the political system.

The 1989 Tiananmen incident influenced Hong Kong people in several aspects. First of all, the 4<sup>th</sup> June event, together with the other political upheavals in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, whetted Hong Kong people's appetite for democracy (Fok, 1997, pp.88). The majority of Hong Kong people agreed and

supported the pro-democracy movement first launched by university students in Beijing. It was recorded that about a million people had joined in demonstrating in support of the Beijing students. Later, when the last Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, introduced his political reform proposal to bring greater democracy, the opinion polls showed that it gained support from the majority of the society

Second, it triggered fear towards the Chinese Communist Government and anxiety about Hong Kong's status after the transition of sovereignty in 1997. Although the Basic Law of Hong Kong promised to keep Hong Kong's own distinctive political system and policies under the "one country, two systems" notion, many Hong Kong citizens were afraid that after China resumed its sovereignty over Hong Kong, the various citizens' freedoms, human rights, the justice of the legal system and the uncorrupted public and private sectors would be dismissed, and Hong Kong would turn into a territory in which all kinds of behaviours and speech would be under the surveillance and strict control of the Chinese Communist Government. Some even reminded themselves of their ascendants' traumatic experiences during the Cultural Revolution. Under this pessimistic attitude towards Hong Kong's future, some people started to migrate to other countries. At the same time, some others, especially the well-educated elites, started to strive for a more universal and democratic political system, so that they could ensure that those representatives who were not conforming to the Chinese Communist Government could be elected into the Legislative Council.

Third, the 1989 Tiananmen incident also triggered complicated emotions among the Hong Kong community, as well as discussion inside schools. It was the very first time that large-scale voluntary political citizenship education took place in the school settings. However, unsurprisingly, as time goes by, the 1989 Tiananmen incident receded into history, and the enthusiasm for this political education in schools subsided.

In 1992, the last Hong Kong Governor, Chris Patten, introduced a series of political Reform Proposals after the 1989 Democratic Movement attempted to promote a more democratic political system and a greater degree of citizen participation. At that



time, an opinion poll (Public Opinion Programme, The University of Hong Kong, 1996) revealed that the proposals had gained support from the majority of the society. However, the enthusiasm towards democracy soon died away when the Chinese government opposed Patten's proposals. When a group of Legislative Council members from the Democratic Party were elected in 1995, the Chinese government affirmed that the term of the Legislative Council would be ended before 1997, in spite of the normal practice of a 4-year term in office. The dismissal of the Legislative Council disappointed many Hong Kong people for whom this was their first time to actively participate in voting in the elections. A feeling of pessimism and powerlessness about the future development of greater democracy developed. Many people expressed their willingness to give up democracy for stability and prosperity (Bray and Lee, 1993). Some people simply gave up their desire for democracy in order to appease China. The 1995 post-election studies by Tse (2006a) showed that Hong Kong citizens generally had a strong faith in democracy; but simultaneously they held a strong sense of political scepticism, strong feelings of political helplessness and a strong sense of distrust in the Hong Kong Government in the same questionnaire.

### **The Second Civic Education Guidelines in 1996**

The change of public political mentality due to the pro-democracy movement and the 1989 Tiananmen incident, and the dispute over Chris Patten's political reform, aroused a concern for the need to develop social, political and civic awareness among young people. A second version of the Civic Education Guidelines was issued in 1996. At the same time, the imminent approaching sovereignty hand-over in 1997 also reminded the society of the need to cultivate the national and cultural identities of students through civic education.

Therefore, the Guidelines tried to respond to the pluralistic sets of expectations of civic education. They reconciled the promotion of nationalism, patriotism and Chinese cultural values with the promotion of active, critical and rational citizenship (Morris and Morris, 2000, pp.51). The 1996 Guidelines were recognized as taking a more constructive and progressive approach in the history of civic education, especially compared to the 1985 version, in the content and the roles of civic

education. For example, according to Leung and Ng (2004:49), the six foci on politics which included ‘the education for democracy, education for rule of law, human rights education, nationalistic education, global education and education for critical thinking’, could well prepare students to take up their roles as citizens in the future of Hong Kong. Yet there were also criticisms about the embedded conceptual conflicts such as whether it would be compatible to teach the concepts of democracy and human rights and national identity at the same time. Strong dissent of scholars and other commentators also reflected their anxiety about the building of national identity and sense of belonging which emphasized that emotional and irrational “feelings” would become political indoctrination to identify with the nation state (Choi, 1995, quoted in Lee and Sweeting, 2001); Man (1996) also expressed strong anxiety that issues about democracy and human rights would be downplayed if patriotic education were over-emphasized (quoted by Leung and Ng, 2004). It should be noted that Man’s insightful prediction was later proved to be right. As we will see in the following section, the overwhelming emphasis on nationalistic education had developed so strongly that after the political transfer, civic education seemed to be once again “depoliticized” and further “moralized” (Leung and Ng, 2004; Leung and Yuen, 2011).

### **Post-1997 Education Reform**

After the political transition in 1997, the SAR government tried to establish its legitimacy and maintain a high degree of stability following the transfer of sovereignty. The political system in Hong Kong has remained as a form of “bureaucratic hegemony” and executive led government. The Chief Executive, Mr. Chee-wa Tung, was elected by the Election Committee consisting of 800 members, many of whom were described as having close links with the Chinese government. The members of the executive board were selected by the Chief Executive himself. These members included elites drawn from the ranks of the civil service and the business community. The prevailing ideology has been predominantly conservative and elitist.

Despite the pro-China background of the administrative group, the SAR government has been strongly influenced by the policy agenda of the colonial government,

including the educational policy agenda. During the long period of preparation for the political transition, the colonial government had introduced a range of reforms prior to its departure (Morris et al., 2000; Bray and Lee, 1993). However, it was only after the transition of sovereignty that the education reforms gathered speed. The appointment of Antony Kam-chung Leung as the new leader of the high-level Education Commission broke out criticism and scepticism (Hong Kong Standard, 1999). Aside from a lack of knowledge and experience of academia for such a highly specialized position, the controversy over Leung's appointment mainly due to his background from the banking and financial sector, provoked anxiety about the introduction of neo-liberal ideology into the educational sector through the educational reform. His close relationship with the Chinese government also raised concern among the public.

After Leung chaired the Education Commission, he soon started to create a dominant discourse for reforms. This discourse consisted mainly of the condemnation of existing education structures and practices, so as to create a consensus that drastic change should be made in order to survive in an era of intense global competition. Another discourse also included empty, high-sounding slogans in support of new measures in education which dovetailed with the needs of the financial sector under economic globalisation (Choi, 2005, pp. 240).

An understanding of the propaganda exercises of the educational reform should be situated in the social context of that time. The first issue of significant relevance is that the financial crisis of 1997 emerged right after the political transition. During that period, Hong Kong confronted a difficult time of economic recession for the first time, after having experienced long-term economic success since the 1970s. People in Hong Kong came across a time of low morale and developed a sense of scepticism towards the politics of the SAR government, especially the ability of the Chief Executive, Chee-Wa Tung, who was really green in administrative experience. The capability of the SAR government to tackle the economic downturn was also called into question. Thus, the introduction of educational reforms may have served the purpose of distracting public attention towards other policy-making and re-establishing public trust for the new administration.

Another context is the political situation. Bray and Lee (1993) have stated that the colonial government had a special concern to sustain economic growth in Hong Kong in order to siphon off the discontent of the Hong Kong people, which may have threatened its rule. Such a special interest in economic growth provided a convenient context for justifying the government's attempt to maintain depoliticization. Ironically, the ideology of "economic growth comes first, all other things go next" was also applied during the transitional period and even until recent years by the post-colonial government. The slogan of "maintaining the prosperity and stability" of Hong Kong was consistently mentioned in the discussion of the democratisation of Hong Kong politics by introducing universal suffrage (E.g. Song, 2014; Lin, 2015). It is amply supported in Beatty's book, which pointed out that the dispute among political elites from different political parties often became a debate over the pace rather than the suitability of democracy in Hong Kong. The major concern was whether the advent of democratization would impede economic development in the SAR. On this point, the local conservative elites revealed their nebulous fears of "instability" (Beatty, 2003).

As the content of the Education Reforms has direct impact on the policies and practices of the schools in my research, a preliminary analysis of the major reform documents will be given in a later part of this chapter

### **Post-1997 Moral and Civic Education**

It is part of the tendency to avoid controversy and maintain the stability and harmony of society that the government decided to replace the former Civic Education with Moral and Civic Education, as stated in the major curriculum document *Learning to Learn: Life Long Learning and Whole-person Development* (Curriculum Development Council, 2001) in the Education Reform. The change of title amply indicated a down-playing of the political aspect (Leung and Ng, 2004:53). Moral and Civic Education has been positioned as one of the "Four Key Tasks", in which the five predominant values and attitudes to be promoted are: 'national identity, a positive spirit, perseverance, respect for others and commitment to society and nation.' (Curriculum Development Council, 2001:84). It is also one of the "Five Essential Learning Experiences" with the aim of 'developing personal character and

interpersonal skills, respect for others, perseverance and national identity' (Ibid: 20). It can be shown that the content of Moral and Civic Education mainly inclined towards the personal and interpersonal dimensions of character development, as well as an emphasis on responsibility and a sense of belonging towards the society and nation. The re-depoliticized and moralized nature is explicitly identified (Leung and Yuen, 2011). Yet despite the criticism of re-depoliticized, moralized and patriotically-inclined tendency of the reform documents, *The Revised Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework* (Education Bureau, 2008) still enhanced the proportion of "national education" in the framework. It has been said to be a response by the HKSAR government to a comment about, "Attention should be paid to teenagers' national education" by Hu Jintao, the president of The People's Republic of China during his visit to Hong Kong on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2007 for the celebration activities of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hong Kong's political return. (Leung and Yuen, 2011; Chik, 2012).<sup>2</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The above section on the development of citizenship education and the evolution of citizens' identities in Hong Kong is only a simplified review to contextualize this study. During my research fieldwork, conducted in year 2010 (From February to August), Moral and Civic Education remained a key task or essential experience in the Education Reform and was implemented as a school-based approach which allowed schools to develop their own curriculum to teach based on their own agenda. Thus, the research mainly focused on a whole-school approach in the education of social and cultural notions of "citizenship" in the two schools. Due to the vast volume of literature on the discussion of political notions of citizenship and the "depoliticized" civic education guidelines/framework, instead of focusing on the

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<sup>2</sup> I would also like to say that after this research fieldwork had been conducted, a new subject of "Moral and National education" was suggested in the 2010/2011 policy address to replace the former "Civic" or "Moral and Civic" education. Yet the government finally announced its decision to shelve the curriculum due to fierce opposition of students and parents. (Also see Ch. 3, Section 3.6 Defining 'Ideal citizens' in contemporary Hong Kong)



down-playing of political education and controversial issues, this study took an alternative perspective to uncover what is, in fact, an emphasis on the educating of students into “future citizens”, which I define as the socially and culturally valued citizenship.

### **2.3 Contemporary Social Class and Ethnic Composition in relation to the Schooling System in Hong Kong**

#### **Contemporary classifications and understanding of social class in Hong Kong**

To discuss the influence of the neo-liberal reforms to different social groups, especially to students with different socio-economic background, inevitably the definitions and classifications of social class in Hong Kong have to be considered.

Yet, it is in fact a challenge to illustrate the social class structure in Hong Kong as there is no authoritative definition of social classes (e.g. Tsang, 1992; Wong and Lui, 1992; Yu and Bain, 1985, as suggested by Lai, 2010), or being seen as irrelevant in understanding the social structure of Hong Kong society based on the ‘culturalistic and undifferentiated approach’ (Wong and Lui, 1992). For example, according to Wong and Lui (1992), the previous study by Lau (1982) suggested that Hong Kong society is structurally a familial resources network and upheld a “utilitarian-familism” cultural ethos, which was based on the assumption that the Chinese community is homogeneous and social class have not had profound significance (Lau, 1982, suggested by Wong and Lui, 1992:18-19). However, most of the social scientific writing and discussion in Hong Kong usually followed the social class framework established by Wong and Lui (1992) which is the most well-known and benchmark social empirical study conducted in Hong Kong over the years concentrating on the issue of social class and social mobility in Hong Kong.

Wong and Lui’s study (1992) surveyed Hong Kong people’s class concept and explored how their thinking and behaviour were conditioned by their class position. Generally, sociological research usually define social class by the employment relations, including occupational groups and roles, such as the widely accepted Goldthorpe (1987) model which was developed for the 1971 Nuffield Study and the

later Comparative Analysis of Social Mobility in Industrial Nations (CASMIN) study. Wong and Lui's study also adapted Goldthorpe's class schema of social mobility study dovetailed with the Hong Kong context, which they probed for detailed occupational information beyond merely the occupational title, which included the respondent's employment status and managerial/supervisory duties. Based on the different occupational positions, they derived a sevenfold class structure for Hong Kong which could be occasionally viewed into a three-folded model.

Seven-folded Class	Brief Description	Three-folded Class
Class 1	Upper service Class: Higher-grade professionals, administrators and officials, managers in large establishments, larger proprietors	Service Class
Class 2	Lower Service Class: lower-grade professionals, administrators, higher-grade technicians, managers in small business and industrial establishments, supervisors of non-manual employees	
Class 3	Routine non-manual employees in commerce and administration, personal service workers and shop sales personnel	Inter-mediate Class
Class 4	Petty Bourgeoisie: small proprietors, artisans, contractors, with or without employees	
Class 5	Lower-grade technicians, supervisors of manual workers	
Class 6	Skilled Manual workers	Working Class
Class 7	Semi-skilled and unskilled workers, agricultural workers	

**Table 1 - The Seven-folded class structure of Hong Kong by Wong and Lui (1992)**

As shown in the above model, Wong and Lui (1992) was trying to indicate one's class position through their occupational position. Simultaneously, they also asked

the respondents to assign the class they belong to, which reflected that to a large extent the respondents' subjective class positioning matched their objective class positions under Wong and Lui's model which categorized them according to their occupational position. Wong and Lui's research further demonstrated that people of different classes do think and behave differently by asking situational questions to see their different ways of coping with problems they face, through different types of resources.

Another part of Wong and Lui's studies is to examine whether class position or class background would affect people's opportunities to achieve success. In other words, the intergenerational and intra-generational mobility is under examined. In their studies, they found that respondents with higher class backgrounds had a much better chance to succeed compared with those with lower class backgrounds. Yet due to the economic boosts since mid-1970s until early 1990s which created ample opportunities in the financial, managerial and professional sectors in Hong Kong, both the middle-class and working-class were benefited economically and socially, and thus, social inequalities and mobility opportunities seemed not to differ very much among different classes by the time. (Lui, 2005; Lui and Wong, 2003).

Apart from the measuring of intergenerational or intra-generational mobility, social mobility is most often quantitatively measured in terms of changes in earnings, educations and occupation. According to the research brief by the Research Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat (2015), the recent statistics revealed that there's limited opportunities for upward earnings, educational and occupational mobility, and a statistically significant correlation between the socio-economic status of the parents and their children in 2008 suggested that low inter-generational mobility. For example, a study shows that 62.9% of workers experienced no earnings mobility over the five year period of 2003-2008 and 47.2% over the 10-year period of 1998-2008. Worse still, 54.1% of the workers in the lowest income quintile had no earnings mobility after 10 years of work and were "being trapped at the bottom" (Vere, 2010, quoted in Legislative Council Secretariat, 2015). Another study compared the university enrolment rates of youths aged 19-20 from the wealthiest 10% of families with those household incomes less than half the median



level. It was found that in 2011, the university enrolment rate of youths from rich families was 3.7 times that of those living in poverty. (Chou, 2013, quoted in Legislative Council Secretariat, 2015).

Hong Kong's high Gini coefficient, a measure of income disparity based on original household income, is comparable to some developing countries in Africa and South America. The latest census data from Census and Statistics Department shows that the city's Gini coefficient reached 0.537 in 2011, up 25% from 0.43 in 1971 (Chen, 2014). All of these figures suggested that while Hong Kong's economic growth sustained, the huge wealth disparity between different social class and the limited social mobility reflected the much more difficult lives of the disadvantaged classes.

### **The relationship of social class to different types of schools in Hong Kong**

Aside from the academic banding, the social class and the medium of instruction that classified different types of schools, nowadays the financial sources and the format of operation of the schools have become another significant variable that affects students'/parents' choice of school, which also significantly showed the inter-relation between different social classes and different types of schools in Hong Kong. In other words, the division of social class is intensified between different types of school under the current school systems.

Previously, schools in Hong Kong were either "Subsidized Schools" or "Private Schools". Subsidized schools means schools that were financially dependent on a government subsidy, including government schools and all other aided schools which were founded by missionaries, other religious groups or charitable organizations. "Private Schools" referred to schools that were financially independent from the government, including international schools and schools of the English Schools Foundation (ESF). However, as the government tried to extend the private sector of education, a Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) was introduced, by which schools are given a government subsidy on a per capita basis, but they are allowed to charge school fees, design their own curriculum and draw up admission criteria that are consistent with the basic educational standards. The Direct Subsidy Scheme was first proposed in 1988 and introduced in 1991, but as Choi (2005) stated, it was not until

2000 when the education reforms were launched in full that more schools started to join the scheme. This scheme not only attracted private schools that were charging low tuition fees, and who admitted local students with lower academic achievements (not international schools that attracted students from white/middle-class families which charged high fees), the scheme also attracted some of the aided schools to join in, which, mostly, are the most popular traditional elite schools.

It has come to everyone's notice that there is an increasing trend of traditional elite schools joining the DSS, despite the fact that DSS schools only receive the government's subvention if they admit enough students, which means that the financial situation is not as stable as in the traditional aided scheme. However, as illustrated above, because of their tradition, their past history of students getting good academic results, and the guarantee of studying in English, these elite schools are very popular among students and parents. Thus, there are always many more students applying to enter the schools than the available school places.

At the same time, these schools also benefit from the freedom to select their students, because they can decide whether or not to join the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System, and draw up their own sets of admission criteria. In a newspaper report which announced another elite school discussing and planning to join the Direct Subsidy Scheme, one of the reasons suggested by the school management committee is that they witnessed a declining quality in the student intake in recent years. This quality downturn might be affected by the change of "banding" systems after the educational reform. Previously, the "banding" system consisted of 5 bandings, which classified students' learning abilities based on their academic results in school in the last one and a half years of their primary school year. However, the system later changed into 3 bandings, which means some of the band 2 students are also being classified as band 1 students. For traditional elite schools, which always admit band 1 students, the academic abilities of band 1 students varied very much under this change, and this decline in students' quality may affect the "brand-name" of the school. Therefore, if the school has the freedom to select their own students, the school management committees think that would guarantee that the school has taken in the best students and maintained the standard

of the school. However, there is also concern about the social selection of students whose families are from lower socio-economic classes, as the school may think that parents from such backgrounds may not be so involved in their children's education, and invest less on their education in terms of time, economic resources and cultural resources.

Another problem is that many traditional elite schools charge much higher tuition fees after joining the DS scheme. Compared to some of the DSS schools which are newly established or transferred from the private school sector, elite DSS schools obviously charge much higher fees. The reason is that, because of the freedom in management and curriculum development, schools often need money for further development, including building more and better facilities (e.g. swimming pool, sports ground, laboratory, library), hiring teachers from other foreign countries or training teachers to obtain special qualifications to develop new curricula such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB) aside from the curriculum for local public examination.

Obviously, middle class parents are willing and able to pay for their children to enter these schools. In fact, the introduction of these international curricula in these elite schools is an attempt to attract students from the middle/upper class. Although the tuition fees of elite DSS schools are much higher than general aided schools and other DSS schools, they are still cheaper than international schools, which mainly admit non-Chinese speaking students (white middle class). Therefore, it is quite obvious that these elite DSS schools are targeting a group of middle class parents in the education market. Although there is a regulation that DSS schools should provide a certain amount of money to set up educational grants for students who cannot afford the tuition fees, it is still a big burden for parents from lower income backgrounds to pay the balance. When the new curriculum emphasizes so much about "other learning experiences", the extra expenses for students in these elite DSS schools would be a financial and psychological burden for students and their families (South China Morning Post Editorial, 2014; Yau, 2015).

Various new measures with regard to assessment, student allocation structure and curriculum have been introduced in the educational reforms driven by neo-liberal ideology since the consultation documents before the actual reform proposal (Education Commission, 2000) was published in September, 2000 (Choi, 2005:240). Apart from the aforementioned reduction of state commitment to education by encouraging the privatization of schools, the school system has become a battlefield to compete under the introduction of accountable assessment. These include the external and internal quality assurance exercises, such as the external school review (ESR) execute by the Quality Assurance Inspectorate (QAI) (Education & Manpower Bureau, 2004, p. 2), and the school self-evaluation (SSE) and evidence-based school self-assessment (SSA) which also prepared for the inspection of the external school review. A School performance index is also introduced and announced by the Education Bureau to allow parents and students (consumers) to compare and surveillance the performance of the schools (Choi, 2005; Tse, 2002).

Managerialism, performativity and accountability (Ball, 1990) intensified under the education reform when the government forced all schools to practise School-Based Management (SBM). Schools were required to lay out development plans and written annual reports for public access through the internet, whereas the procedure for staff appraisals and staff development schemes are required to be developed following the new detailed guide of Teacher Performance Management (Education & Manpower Bureau, 2003). Teachers are under thorough scrutiny and pressure to meet the wide-ranging assessment indicators, while at the same time overloaded by the excessive workload imposed on them for meeting the requirement for the preparation for the external school reviews.

Besides, the neo-liberal reforms also exacerbated the social class inequalities by transferring the government expenses on education to the parents. As illustrated in the next section about “Society-wide mobilisation”, it emphasized the important role of parents to “rendering support to education” (EC, 2000:48), which parents’ roles as the manpower and financial support for the students’ education has also been repeatedly addressed in different major documents. The minimized responsibility of government and the masking of social class inequalities through the concept of

“individualisation” and “responsibilization” under the influence of neo-liberal ideology will be further discussed in the following section 2.4.

### **Contemporary ethnic composition of Hong Kong**

Hong Kong has been described as having a homogenous demographic structure with about 94% of its population being Chinese (Census and Statistics Department, 2011), but ethnic minorities had existed as early as the beginning of the British colonial period (Bhowmik and Kennedy). However, it was not until 2001 that ethnic minorities was officially mentioned as a subgroup of Hong Kong’s population in the census report by the Census and Statistics Department of the government (Bhowmik and Kennedy, 2012).

The number of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong has increased significantly by 31.2% over the past 10 years, from 343 950 in 2001 to 451 183 in 2011(Census and Statistics Department, 2002, 2012c), constituting 6.4% of the whole population in Hong Kong. While many of the ethnic minorities were not permanently settled in Hong Kong, including large groups of Filipino and Indonesian who were working as domestic helpers, a total of 42.4% of ethnic minorities had resided in Hong Kong for 7 years or more. The majority of ethnic minorities were ‘Usual Residents’ (98.7%) while only 1.3% were ‘Mobile Residents’ in 2011 (Census and Statistics Department, 2012c).

Among the 451 183 ethnic minorities, Non-Chinese Asians were the largest group (81.0%), and the rest included 12.2% Whites, .4% Mixed and 0.3% others. Indonesians (29.6%) and Filipinos (29.5%) were the two majority groups among the Non-Chinese Asians. The remaining included Indians (6.3%), Pakistanis (4.0%), Nepalese (3.7%), Japanese (2.8%), Thais (2.5%), Koreans (1.2%) and Other Asians (1.6%). Among the population of these ethnic minorities, a great majority of them were born outside Hong Kong (86.7%) and only 13.3% of them were born in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2012c).

The increasing numbers of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, and the discussion and enactment of the *Race Discrimination Ordinance* passed in 2008 (enacted in 2009),



has made the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong more visible in the public, and has raised awareness about their daily lives in Hong Kong, especially their educational experience (Bhowmik and Kennedy, 2012; Hong Kong Unison, 2009, 2010, 2011; Kapai (2011); Kennedy and Hue, 2011, Ku et al., 2005; Loper, 2004). Despite having equal right to education, the school attendance rate was relatively less common in pre-primary, senior secondary and post-secondary level among ethnic minorities compared with the local Chinese. For age groups 3-5, 17-18 and 19-24, the school attendance rates of ethnic minorities were 86.9%, 75.7% and 13.8% respectively, while those for the whole population were 91.3%, 86.0% and 43.8%. Even after excluding foreign domestic helpers in the aged 19-24 group, there were still 12.0% gap in the school attendance rates between ethnic minorities and the whole population on the post-secondary school level (Census and Statistics Department, 2012c). These figures not only reflected that a higher dropping out rate of ethnic minorities children and teenagers (Bhowmik and Kennedy, 2012), they also drew attention to the lower number of ethnic minority children going to kindergarten, which may undermine 'their adaptation to school life in terms of self-care and social skills, as well as language and academic development.' (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2011:4)

Besides, literatures also revealed that ethnic minority students were having limited choice on primary and secondary schools. (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2011; Ku, Chan and Sandhu, 2005; Loper, 2004). In 2011, a total of 32400 ethnic minorities aged under 15 and 9579 aged 15 and over were studying full-time courses in the educational institutions in Hong Kong, constituting 4.9% and 1.9% respectively of the relevant figure of the whole population. However, according to the report of South China Morning post, only 15000 of these ethnic minority students were studying in Hong Kong's public schools (government or aided schools) (Ngo, 2013).

The problem about limited school choice is also closely related to the absence of adequate and effective language support, the alternative Chinese as a second language, curriculum, and a moderated Chinese language assessment system for ethnic minority students in the mainstream schools. Some ethnic minority students

whose families could afford to support their education would choose to enter some of the private schools (e.g. international schools or schools of English School Foundations (ESF) or designated schools using English as the medium of instruction (EMI) which are considered not conducive to integration and effective learning of Chinese, but could offer other international programmes (e.g. British system and the International Certificate of Secondary Education and the UK's A-level exams; American curriculum; International Baccalaureate programme and IB diploma etc. ) (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2005; Kennedy, et. al, 2011; Ku et al., 2005)

However, for the 15000 ethnic minority students in the public school system, their choices of schools are much more limited in Hong Kong. Because the current Secondary School Places Allocation System (SSPA) could not guarantee that students who completed their primary education in EMI designated schools could be offered places in EMI secondary schools, these ethnic minorities students may end up studying in schools where Chinese is the medium of instruction (CMI), and encounter additional difficulties in both their academic studies and school lives (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2011).

Apart from the major difficulties of the limited choice in education and the inadequate support and policy of the learning of Chinese, the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong also faced other circumstances concerning education including difficulty in adaptation, difficulty in obtaining information about school placement, and lack of interaction with Chinese students etc. (Kennedy et al., 2011:9; Ku et al., 2005; Loper, 2004).

## **2.4 Summary of Major Education Reform Documents**

This section summarizes the basic analysis of the major Education Reform documents I conducted before my entry to the research field. As shown in my review of the Hong Kong Citizenship Education context and the section on “Post-1997 Education Reform”, the first education reform document issued in September 2000, which unfolds a series of education reforms, should be understood in the historical context of Hong Kong's post-colonial rule, which at the same time was confronted by the global economic recession. In the process of reading these documents, I also



bore in mind the existing dominant ideology of high priority over economic growth and the tendency for political scepticism in Hong Kong society. In this section, I will mainly focus on the text of the first research proposal document, which set the tone of the whole reform, while also referencing 5 other documents (See Appendix A). I will summarize some of the major changes in the education system after the issue of these documents, demonstrate the characteristics of the reform proposal, and lastly, discuss some of the implications and special terminologies or concepts introduced in the reforms which are related to my research.

### **Major changes introduced in the reform**

There are mainly three changes introduced in the reform: a structural change of the whole educational system; a change of curriculum content, which is interlinked with a change in methods of assessment; and a change in pedagogy which alters the methods of curriculum implementation.

Firstly, the reform documents have suggested a structural change of the educational system. While the compulsory primary education of six years remains the same, a new academic system of senior secondary and higher education changes from the existing “British” system to the new “China/U.S./Australia” system. The previous system consisted of three years compulsory secondary education (F.1-3), two years senior secondary education (F.4-5) which led to the Hong Kong Certificate of Examination (HKCEE), and then another two years of matriculation courses (F.6-7) which led to another public examination – the Hong Kong A-level Examination (HKAL) – to compete for the limited places in tertiary education. Based on the reform guidelines (document 4, May 2005, Education and Manpower Bureau), the new scheme started from students entering Secondary 1 (S.1)<sup>3</sup> in 2006, who would start to study under the New Senior Secondary Curriculum (Document 5, Curriculum

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<sup>3</sup> From year 2009 to 2012, there were two groups of students studying under two different senior secondary curriculums and for two sets of exams (HKAL or HKDSE) in the same school. To distinguish students of the old academic system and the new one, most of the Hong Kong schools would name the classes differently. For students of the old system, the usual practice is to say students are of “Form 1” or “Form 6” (F.1 or F.6); for students under the new system, they are called “Secondary 1” or “Secondary 4” students (S.1 or S.4).

Development Council, 2009) in the year 2009, and participate in the first newly-established public exam for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) in 2012 which replaced the former two examinations (HKCEE and HKAL) before students entered tertiary education. At the same time, the normative study period of 3 years for university bachelor degrees would be extended to 4 years (except specific subjects such as Medicine, Pharmacy, and Teacher Education, which already had a longer studying period under the old system).

Secondly, the drastic change in the educational system also means a change of curriculum content and of methods of assessment. One of the significant changes is to include the Liberal Studies (LS) subject as one of the core compulsory subjects which, together with the traditional core subjects of Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics, serve as the basic requirement for entry to Hong Kong university degrees. Another major change is the institutionalization of the former extra-curricular activities, which are now named as the “Other Learning Experiences” component, which the reform documents suggested should be one of the three components (the other two components are “4 core subjects” and “the 2/3 elective subjects”) that the universities should consider when they admit students out of the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS). Simultaneously, the method of assessment also changed. While under the previous curriculum, only some of the subjects would include School-based Assessment (SBA), such practices have become an important part in the new curriculum under the rationale that they could ease students’ pressure in evaluating their performance not solely by their examinations but also by their in-school performances. Moreover, the institutionalization of extra-curricular activities not only regulated the time spent and the different aspects of activities that students should “experience” during their secondary school years, a new credential system called the “Student Learning Profile” was also introduced because of the change of focus of assessment to ‘Students’ **attitudes** and **abilities**, rather than the knowledge they memorize, should be emphasized.’ (EC, 2000:63; originally highlighted). Although this learning profile is said to be just “a reference” for the universities and future employers, from the detailed suggestions of the format and content of the “Student Learning Profile” as outlined in the documents (especially document 6, Curriculum Development

Council, 2009), the “Other Learning Experiences” seems to be more than just the expansion of former extra-curricular activities.

Lastly, the pedagogical change is obviously linked with the above changes of curriculum content and assessment method. Because of the reform’s emphasis on student-oriented and students’ learning experiences, a more interactive way of teaching and the use of multi-media and information technology to aid students’ learning are suggested in the reform. At the same time, students are also required to acquire the nine generic skills, including information technology skills, collaboration skills and communication skills, in order to actively engage in interactive learning.

### **Ideologies and terminologies of the reform and implications for the research**

As the most significant education reform documents, the Reform Proposal (Education Commission, 2000) not only outlines the whole framework for the series of structural and curriculum reform in the following 10 years, but also sets the tone for the whole reform by rationalizing the intention and objectives of the extensive change of the whole educational system.

#### **The Discourse of Change**

Firstly, the reform proposal has illustrated a “risk society” (Beck, 1992) which suggests the need for people to “change” in order to cope with the “changes” of economy, technology, society and culture. The eye-catching title of the chapter on “Background of the Education Reform” states ‘The World has Changed, So must the Education System!’ (p.27, Document 1), suggesting that “change” of the education system is unavoidable because the world has changed. This theme of “change” is a repetition of the dominant discourse created by the Chair of EC, Antony Leung, as described in the “Post-1997 Education Reform” section, which depicts a new age which is in need of people changing in order to cope with the changes of economy, technology, society and culture. I found that this discourse of “change” had a profound and enduring impact on school principals and teachers and even students I have encountered in my fieldwork, and I suspect that those ideologies would also influence many Hong Kong citizens who have been engaged in the reform to different degrees. The frequent use of terminologies in the proposal such as

“Knowledge-based economy”, “globalized economy”, “new job requirements” and “life-long learning” when they illustrate their opinions or worries about students’ futures also reveals the dominance of the discourse. (See Appendix B)

### **The moralized and national Identities building agenda in the reform**

*On the other hand, with the rapid development of information technology, the spiritual aspect of our life is being suppressed by **materialistic influences**. It is the society’s expectation that education should enrich our **moral, emotional, spiritual and cultural life** so that we can **rise above the material world** and lead a healthy life. (2000:38; bold are my emphasis)*

As we can see from the examples given, the “moral, emotional, spiritual and cultural life” has become part of the major concern of the reform documents. This is also evident especially in the section on the new assessment system which claims that the focus of assessment is ‘Students’ **attitudes** and **abilities**, rather than the knowledge they memorize, should be emphasized.’, and ‘more attention should be paid to their performance and the problems they encounter in the **learning process**, as these will serve as reference for adjustments in teaching methods’ (originally highlighted) (EC, 2000:63)

Although Moral and Civic Education is portrayed as a range of values education, including Environmental Education, Sex Education, Health Education etc., most of the content in the guideline is about examples of “life events” to teach students about positive values and ethics, or activities and information on National and Patriotic Education.

On the other hand, there were actually five priority values and attitudes introduced on which the schools should place emphasis during the first phase of the curriculum reform (2001-2002 to 2005-2006), which included, ‘Perseverance’, ‘Respect for Others’, ‘Responsibility’, National Identity’ and ‘Commitment’. Obviously, “Responsibility” and “Commitment” are emphasizing the role of citizens to be responsible and contribute to the society; “Respect for others” emphasizes the need to “appreciate and tolerate views and beliefs different from their own”, and might be responding to the dispute on universal suffrage in Hong Kong among society,

because in the illustration of this value, the diversity it describes only refers to “adults and peers in the school and in their neighbourhood”. So such “diversity” may only refer to the different standpoints of “insiders” or (citizens) members of the society, instead of suggesting respect to the basic human rights and lives of other minority groups.

### “All-round Development” or “Whole-person Development”

“Life-long learning” and “All-round development” are the major aims of the education reform, which has told us much about the anticipated quality and image of Hong Kong citizens. However, the exact definition of “all-round” is never clearly defined in the documents, and it seems to me that the meaning of “all-round” is so broad that it includes almost all aspects of the person’s well-being in different levels. We can see how the documents illustrate the exact qualities/image of the ideal students in the “Aims” or “Objectives” sections of the documents.

*“To enable every person to attain **all-round development** in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes so that he/she is capable of life-long learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change; filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, process, freedom and democracy of their society, and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large.”(EC, 2000:30)*

So, we can see that although the term “all-round development” has no rigid definition, based on the above description and aims, we can see that the meaning of “all-round” would include their skills, knowledge and abilities as well as young people’s characters, their moral values and ethics standards, their emotional qualities and perspectives to form the major dimensions of being “all-round” students.

Interestingly, another similar term – “whole-person development” – has also been used in the reform, although with much less frequency compared to the term “all-round development”. Taking the example of the reform proposal (EC, 2000), the term “all-round” appeared 43 times, while the term “whole-person” appeared only 7 times. Besides, while “all-round” seems to include all dimensions of the development



of students in the context of the proposal document, the term “whole-person development” was often used in order to juxtapose with the negatively-described old academic system, including the “Academic Aptitude Test” (p.72), “the public assessment for Secondary School Place Allocation (SSPA)” (p. 82) or “shifting from over-emphasizing academic studies to focusing on whole-person development” (p.60). The term “whole-person” seems to carry more of the dimension of morality and ethics of individuals in traditional Confucianism ideology. The slightly different connotations of these terms will be further discussed in Ch.5 about the schools principals’ expectations of students’ future.

### **“Society-wide mobilisation”: the social equity issues**

It should be noted that while the reform proposal did mention the ‘**Urgent need to alleviate the disparity of wealth**’ (Education Commission, 2000:28), not much has been talked about on this issue.

The only section that seems to be responding to this “urgent need” is the section about the “New Role and Functions of Education” (ibid: 29-30), which claims that ‘the development of education **bears upon the equity and balance of our society**. Hence an important mission of education is to enhance the knowledge, ability, quality, cultivation and international outlook of the people of Hong Kong.’ It is interesting that when I look at the Chinese version, it further elaborates this point by saying that ‘by enhancing the knowledge, ability, quality, cultivation and international vision of individuals, everyone would be able to take hold of their own lives, and have the opportunity and ability to create their own future’ (my translation). So it seems that the underlying assumptions of the education reform are: (1) the provision of education itself is enabling social equality in society; (2) everyone entering the educational settings are at equal starting points; (3) it depends mostly on the persons/students themselves to make changes to their lives, especially to their economic status. Under these assumptions, the socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity and gender which are traditionally viewed as factors that differentiate educational outcomes in sociological studies does not exist. As shown in the analysis of this study, not only were these factors which affect social inequalities being

ignored in the reform, they were, in fact, further increasing the stratification or “disparity” between students of different social class and ethnic groups.

My major concern is that, while the government suggested including extra-curricular activities as part of the formal curriculum, it simply ignored some of the educators’ concerns about whether this would impose extra financial burden on students from less privileged families. Instead, the reform proposal document simply suggested that the schools ensured students’ participation in different learning activities (EC, 2000:118), and assumed that parents and the society (social sectors/ community organizations) would share the role of providing these life-wide learning experiences to young people (EC, 2000:151).

Furthermore, through the introduction of the concept of “Society-wide mobilisation”, the reform proposal established the idea that the extra learning activities should be the responsibility of students themselves and should make use of the existing resources in society. For example, the illustration of “Society-wide mobilisation” in the proposal is that ‘Life-long education is the important foundation on which we, and Hong Kong **as a whole**, can build success. The Government, the education sector, various sectors of society as well as learners themselves are **all obliged to make contributions**’ (EC; 2000: 37, bold are my emphasis). Although in this definition, the claim of “society-wide” included everyone in society, among the documents I read, the emphasis has always been put on the role of the school management team, the teachers, the parents and the students themselves. The role of the government seems to be minimized.

Another significant aspect of the so-called society-wide mobilisation is that the documents often emphasized the important role of parents to ‘...co-operate with schools in providing diversified learning experiences for students. Parents can also play an important part in rendering support to education.’ (EC, 2000:48). In all of the documents, not only is the great impact on students’ learning attitudes and effectiveness from parents’ guidance and viewpoints emphasised, the parents’ role as the manpower and financial support for the students’ education has also been repeatedly addressed. For example, it is suggested that parents work in school



libraries or volunteer in school activities to help the school in providing learning experiences to students. Therefore, the cooperation of parents with the school is not only to understand students' lives in school through communication, but parents should also 'reduce teachers' workload and help schools develop an environment conducive to all-round education.' (Ibid: 151)

This suggestion of requiring parents to spend more time in students' school lives actually neglected the fact that most of the parents in Hong Kong both have to work in order to support the family. Not only are there generally long working hours in Hong Kong, many parents in lower income family also take up more than one job because of the low salary pay. So, it is quite unrealistic to expect parents to afford the time to volunteer and participate in school activities after work. I suggest that only the parents from middle-class family, where the mothers would not need to work, could afford the time and energy to be the "extra human resources" of the school.

*"Parents play a very important role in supporting education. There should be a partnership between schools and parents, as the latter can provide support in the form of **human and financial resources**, to enable students to have all-round and **diverse learning experiences**, as well as appropriate guidance and assistance. In fact, many parents nowadays are **spending a lot of money on their children, paying for extra activities, like private tuition, dance and music classes, and for examination exercise books** etc. If some of these resources could be channelled to the school system, it would greatly benefit the **all-round development** of their own children." (Ibid: 145)*

From the above quotation, the proposal suggested that parents should provide support in the form of human and financial resources, and said that many parents are spending lots of money on their children's education. We can see that, although the whole proposal and also other documents in the reform tried to portray a "neutral" student image, there is an underlying middle-class student image behind the scenes. This resource strategy actually ignores the situation of students from non-middle-class families, whose parents may not be able to support the extra expenses to enable their children to participate in those "all-round" and "diverse learning experiences".

## **2.5 Language Ecology in Hong Kong**

### **Introduction**

The concept of “language ecology”, as discussed by Gu (2011), is about ‘the study of interactions between any given language and its environment.’ (Haugen, 1972:35, quoted by Gu, 2011, 18). That is, through an ecological approach, researchers could try to understand languages within social, economic and political settings, which affect the positioning of languages within the society as well as among different groups of people.

As Law (2004) illustrated, in response to the trend of globalization, the education reforms both in Hong Kong have emphasized generic and transnational skills, including English proficiency and information technology. Together with the decolonization agenda of the SAR government, the institutionalization of language and the language policies within the education reform in Hong Kong provide ample insights into the construction of citizens’ identities. Thus, apart from the contextualization of this research within the historical development of citizenship education and the conception of citizenship in Hong Kong, this section will provide background information to understand the language ecology in Hong Kong.

### **English as the power language in the symbolic market**

It is quite easy to relate the superior status of English to the colonial history of Hong Kong. Before 1974, English was the only official language before Chinese (Cantonese for the spoken form, traditional Chinese characters for the written form) was recognized. However, English retained its primary official status until shortly before the transfer of sovereignty (Tsui, 2004). While English native speakers only made up about 1.3% of the whole population in Hong Kong (Tsui, 2004:97), they remained the dominant class throughout the colonial years, until the handover of sovereignty in 1997 (Lin, 1996). Law (2009) has illustrated the complex relationship between the English Language and colonialism in Hong Kong. He states that, although the development of privileged English-language education arose from ‘irregular changes in policy and societal orientations’ (Law, 2009:32), one of the apparent uses of English was to sustain the social and racial segregation between the

colonizers and the colonized. And for the Chinese elite, who were the few that could acquire knowledge of the English language in the early nineteenth century, English was the signifier to maintain their superiority among the Chinese community, especially distinguishing themselves from the “mainland Chinese”.

While Law’s theory is based on a historical perspective which explains the privileged status of English in Hong Kong, and concludes that it was as a result of the collaboration between the colonial power of the HK government and the Chinese elites, Lin’s (1996) discussion of the domination of English covers both the historical and socioeconomic aspects, and provides us with a broader and deeper understanding of the direct influences of such dominance on people in Hong Kong. According to Lin, there are three major factors that have contributed to the process of unifying and legitimizing the domination of English in the symbolic market in Hong Kong. Firstly, several colonial government policies have formulated the social selection mechanism: the English-medium higher-education policy; the British-based accreditation system of professional qualifications including accountancy, medicine and engineering; English as the major official, legal and government language; and the imposition of an English-language requirement on individuals aspiring to join the civil service. In addition, Lin states that there was a bifurcation in both the symbolic market and the education sector in primary and secondary level (Ibid: 55-56). Morrison and Lui (2000) share a similar opinion, that before 1949, the demand for bilinguals who could act as interpreters and facilitators of trade between the Chinese and English speaking communities was limited because of the small size and scale of the English-managed corporations in the private sector and the less ambitious colonial government. Yet, drastic changes occurred after the establishment of The People’s Republic of China in 1949, when China was embargoed by the United States in the 1950s for its involvement in the Korean War, and was further isolated by the western powers and also the Soviet Union in the 1960s. Because of the cultural and economic separation from China, the alternative symbolic market based on the Chinese cultural and economic influence no longer existed to compete with the English-dominated symbolic market in the colony (Lin, 1996:56).

A significant gap in Lin's argument is that the most remarkable change in the relationship between Hong Kong and China – the transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong in 1997 from Britain to China – once again gave rise to another change: the symbolic market of Putonghua in Hong Kong. This will be discussed in the following section.

Last but not least, Lin emphasized that the generation of mutually legitimizing and perpetuating economic and educational myths and facts should be recognized to understand the symbolic value of English in Hong Kong. The significance of English is often emphasized in the story of economic myths in Hong Kong. Lin showed that the recurrent public discourse highlighting the importance of English as a language of international trade and commerce, and the mastery of English as the cornerstone of Hong Kong's economic success, neglects the fact that the economic miracle achieved by Hong Kong since the late 1960s had little to do with the English language or the English conversant elite. In fact, based on her exposition of preceding historical analysis, English has only been one among many other more important facts, including: the continued development of China's economy, and especially the "open door" economic policy at the beginning of the 1980s; the work ethic of the people; the opening of China's huge consumer market; and a mastery of the Chinese language. Undeniably, many white-collar jobs in the colony did require a competence in English, especially those in the government and foreign companies. However, what Lin demonstrated here is that a mutually legitimizing and perpetuating relationship exists: (1) the job market's (especially the government's and foreign companies') demand for English; (2) the government's English-dominated policies as shown above; (3) the public discourses generating the taken-for-granted notion that Hong Kong's economy hinges on English. This mutually legitimizing relationship has reinforced the public discourse about the essence of the mastery of English both for Hong Kong's economy and for individuals' career development, which could also be reflected in the public debate about the medium of instruction (MOI) policies. (See later section). It seems that the business sector's demands for a ready-made workforce fluent in English have been used to legitimize the current Hong Kong practices of subordinating all other educational goals to the dominant goal of mastering English (Lin, 1996:56-58).

It is under these conditions that there is still a widespread belief that to attain a good mastery of the English language is the pathway to success; and the ability to acquire the English language is still considered as the essential and indispensable way of keeping Hong Kong's international cosmopolitan status. English is, therefore, 'not seen as a coloniser language so much as a language for international commerce.' (Zhang, B., 2010: 243). Under the current rhetoric about globalization, global competition and the "ever-changing world", as described in the document analysis in the previous section, the supremacy of the English language could be expected to increase with the rise in popularity of the internet, international trade and tourism (Chan, 2002).

Besides, English was not only the prominent linguistic capital in Hong Kong, but it also constituted an important part of the Hong Kong identity. As illustrated by Bolton, as early as in the late 1960s to the 1990s, the recognition of a distinctive "Hong Kong identity" could be found, and was vividly defined by Baker as the personified and gendered "Hong Kong man", who is 'go-getting and highly competitive, tough for survival, quick-thinking and flexible', and 'speaks English or expects his children to' (Baker, 1983: 478, quoted by Bolton, 2000:280). Coincidentally, Qi Zhang also echoed this by remarking that the characteristics or images of people of Hong Kong are 'well educated, quick-witted, smart, pragmatic, cosmopolitan and bilingual in Chinese and English' (Zhang, Qi, 2010:23), but added a class dimension, claiming that this construction of distinct local identity is actually based on the image of the middle-class which recently emerged in the past 30-40 years as a results of socio-economic success in Hong Kong.

From a linguistic perspective, Qi Zhang stated that, due to the significant linguistic power of English, one important aspect of the definition of the Hong Kong identity lies in the value attached to the learning and using of English (Zhang, Q., 2010:23). By referring to different examples across the globe, Zhang illustrated that a particular group in a society which acquires linguistic capital would usually become the model for other people in the society to imitate, thus the usage of language by this particular group would be likely to spread. While the Hong Kong middle-class seems to dominate Hong Kong society, especially given their large numbers in the



professional and government sectors, and constitutes the main representative of the Hong Kong identity, the variety of English they speak would be assumed to serve as a linguistic target or a model for upward mobility in Hong Kong (Zhang, Qi, 2010:23-24). Zhang's argument clearly illustrates the link between the use of English (or in particular, the English spoken by the middle-class) with Hong Kong identity.

Undeniably, as the *lingua franca*, English is not only the linguistic capital but a sign of cosmopolitanism, which serves as an important part of Hong Kong people's collective identity, especially for distinguishing themselves from mainland China (Chan, 2002: 273). Being hailed as one of the important international financial centres as "Ny.Lon.Kong" (i.e. New York, London and Hong Kong) by Time Magazine (Elliott, 2008), people in Hong Kong are aware of their distinctive privilege in English among other Chinese from mainland China, and even position "English" as a "barrier" to distinguish themselves from "mainlanders": '.....not only is Putonghua not spoken among Hongkongers: many simply do not understand it. To have to communicate in a third language, such as English, creates an important barrier between Hongkongers and Mainlanders.' (Chan, 2000:506).

### **The rise of Putonghua**

Despite the fact that Hong Kong people often use English proficiency level to distinguish themselves from competitors from China, a significant trend started since the 1990s is that Putonghua – the official spoken language in China – has become an increasingly significant language in Hong Kong. For example, the proportion of the population who can speak Putonghua has increased significantly from 34% in 2001 to 48% in 2011 while, at the same time, the proportion of the population who can speak English either as their everyday language or as another/second language only increased from 43% in 2001 to 46% in 2011 (HKCSD, 2012a).

Putonghua is the direct transliteration of Mandarin commonly used in China, and it is the official name of Mandarin in Hong Kong. While the term Mandarin is traditionally and politically neutral, and is often used by Taiwanese, Singaporean or Malaysian Chinese who speak the same language, as well as foreigners who do not know the language at all, Putonghua can be understood as a term particularly

referring to the official language of China, thus suggesting a tendency toward Beijing. In Hong Kong, although Putonghua is not a dialect intelligible to the general public of Hong Kong, after 1997 it became one of the official languages and is often used on official occasions alongside English, especially when mainland Chinese officials are in attendance (Pierson, 1992:186).

Nowadays, more and more people, especially people among the business sectors, have started to speak and learn Putonghua. Of course, the hand-over back to China may be one of the reasons that people started to value Putonghua. Yet, a more possible and materialistic reason might be the fact that China has become one of the strong growing economic entities and has a rising international influence both economically and politically. In addition, Hong Kong's economy is becoming more dependent on China, especially in tertiary industries like tourism.

However, Putonghua did not become part of the formal curriculum until the pre-political transfer period. It is only since 1990 that the Curriculum Development Council produced two curriculum guides for Putonghua for Primary 4 to 6 and Secondary 1 to 3 respectively. As the demand for Putonghua accelerated because of the increased commercial and social exchanges between Hong Kong and China, after the political transfer in 1998, Putonghua was first approved for inclusion in the core curriculum, meaning that all local schools could offer Putonghua in the first compulsory nine years of education. (Primary 1 to Secondary 3) (Davison and Lai, 2007).

In recent years, the learning of Putonghua has become one of the compulsory subjects in many schools after the return of sovereignty. In some of the schools like the elite school St. Caroline's, they even started to teach the Chinese Language subject in Putonghua instead of Cantonese. Schools would usually explain this policy by two reasons. Firstly, many teachers may find Cantonese to be a barrier for students to learn proper written Chinese. Some argued that the written form of Chinese is, in many ways, quite different from the speaking language of Cantonese, but rather, has more similarity with Putonghua. Cantonese as a dialect has many vocabularies that cannot be written down, therefore, sometimes teachers would think



that Cantonese is just too vulgarized and would influence students' ability to write properly. So some schools may think that teaching the Chinese subject (more refer to the written form) through Putonghua may be a good way to improve students' Chinese standard. On the other hand, as the Chinese subject is one of the core subjects in the formal curriculum, taking this opportunity to use Putonghua may be a better way for students to get used to the language instead of just learning it as a third language for just an hour in each academic cycle.

### **“Jung-man”: Chinese, Cantonese and Putonghua**

In the context of Hong Kong, Hong Kong people traditionally and culturally regard “Chinese” or “*Jung-man*”, which literally means “The Chinese language” as their native language, and they simply say that they are speaking “Chinese” instead of specifying that it's in fact “Cantonese”, which is the dialect mainly spoken only by the people of the Guangdong Province in China, the prosperous Canton delta, or people of Hong Kong and Macau. It can be proved by the name of the subject in the education system as “Chinese language” (primary and secondary level) / “Chinese language and culture” (AS level) or “*Jung-man-Fall*”, which has always been used while, in fact, these subjects were usually taught in Cantonese in most of the schools, at least before the political handover in 1997. Ironically, “Putonghua” as the national language is only called “Putonghua” when it is taught as a complementary subject in the curriculum instead of naming it “Chinese”.

The reason for this is that “Jung-man” (Chinese) can be understood in many ways. When “Chinese” was accorded the status of an official language in the Official Languages Ordinance of 1974 after a language campaign, the ordinance did not specify any particular variety of Chinese. It is quite complicated and ambiguous because “Jung-man” (Chinese) can refer to Cantonese (the dialect), Putonghua, the national language of China, but it can also refer to the written language of Chinese. Such ambiguity and imprecision in fact provides room for Hong Kong schools to teach the Chinese subject either in Cantonese or Putonghua without violating the ordinance. On top of the differences in spoken Chinese between Cantonese and Putonghua, the written form of Chinese could also be divided into the “traditional Chinese characters”, which is taught and used in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and

some of the Chinese in the Southern Asia region; and the “simplified Chinese characters”, which is the simplification of the traditional form, is strongly promoted after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China by the Communist Party in 1950s and 1960s to improve literacy.

When the status of Putonghua has arisen in recent years, there has been a call from the local community to preserve and support the use of Cantonese, despite the fact that Cantonese has gained its official status under the “bi-literate and tri-lingual policy” (written Chinese and English; and spoken Cantonese, English and Putonghua) in 1997 after the political handover. Some have referred to the necessary linguistic evidence to support the notion that Cantonese is one of the contemporary Chinese dialects most closely resembling ancient Chinese in both pronunciation and structure; others have emphasized the fact that Cantonese, being the major part of Hong Kong’s identity, should not be overlooked (Cheng and Tang, 2014; Groves, 2007). In recent years, people in Hong Kong have been developing a more distinctive Hong Kong identity, especially in their recognition and increasing pride at their daily use of the “mother tongue” and Cantonese heritage, and their way of writing Chinese in its traditional form. For instance, last summer, before the 16<sup>th</sup> Asian Games were held in Guangzhou in 2010, there was a series of protests in Guangzhou objecting to the idea of compulsorily broadcasting in Putonghua instead of Cantonese for the Asian Games, as suggested by one of the government officials. The events were supported by many Hong Kong people (especially through internet and Facebook groups). A similar “Protecting Cantonese Campaign” was launched in Hong Kong too, as a support to the demonstration in Guangzhou on 1<sup>st</sup> August (Spegele, 2010).

At the same time, an increasing aversion to simplified Chinese writing has been developed in recent years in Hong Kong, especially among the internet users and younger generations. The aversion towards simplified Chinese may be due to several reasons. Cultural critic Chin Wan commented that Hongkongers hated simplified Chinese because it was developed by the Communist Party and did not reflect the historical characters used for many generations, and that the use of simplified Chinese seems to be catering just for the increasing number of tourists from mainland China (Cheung and Wong, 2012). It should be noted that Wan is the

founder scholar of the “Hong Kong Autonomy Movement”, advocating the self-rule of Hong Kong people (Cheung and Wong, 2012). The group is viewed as discriminating and stigmatizing all new immigrants from mainland China. Nevertheless some of their claims still echo the growing discontent of many Hong Kong residents, especially when the large number of tourists from mainland China, or the large number of mainlanders giving birth to their children in Hong Kong, are increasingly affecting the normal lives of Hong Kong people.

Both the issue of “Putonghua versus Cantonese”, and the “traditional Chinese characters versus simplified Chinese characters”, have shown that many of the Hong Kong people are hoping to establish their Hong Kong identity, or even diminish their Chinese identity, by juxtaposing their use of spoken and written language with that of mainland China. Lee and Leung (2012) have summarized the significant social implication of Cantonese: ‘Cantonese develops according to the particular needs of the people of Hong Kong, who share a way of life and culture, and it is clear that Cantonese is strongly intertwined with Hong Kong’s sociocultural characteristics and identity.’ (Lee and Leung, 2012:2). The acquisition of Cantonese and traditional written Chinese serves as an important part of the Hong Kong identity, and is particularly essential to distinguish themselves from the mainlander “others”, in a time when the tensions between the Communist Chinese government and Hong Kong is escalating.

Nevertheless, contradictory to the increasing attention paid to Cantonese among the general public, or its official language status shared with Putonghua and English, Cantonese’s symbolic value in the symbolic market could not be guaranteed. As shown in Lee and Leung’s study, despite the superficially equal status of the three languages, neither significant promotion nor funding approaches for Cantonese could be found in the language policy at the levels of government, education or curriculum (Lee and Leung, 2012).

## **The Medium of Instruction (MOI) Issue in Hong Kong**

This definition of the historically and politically influenced linguistic background of Hong Kong, helps us understand the language policies in the Hong Kong education system in context.

Since 1997, the promotion of the “bi-literacy and tri-lingualism” policy has been officially announced by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government, and has been continuously emphasized by the Chief Executive in its annual addresses or other official occasions (Lee and Leung, 2012: 4). Nevertheless, from Lee and Leung’s illustration of quotes from official statements and the figures about government funding to the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCLAR), it seems that all the attention and resources were located on the teaching of English and Putonghua while Cantonese was almost absent from the SCLAR’s language development programmes (Lee and Leung, 2012:5-8).

However, only two months after the political handover, the government put forward the guidelines on the medium of instruction in secondary schools (HKSAR Government, 1997) which officially announced the commencement of the new medium of instruction guidelines in secondary schools in the next academic year in September 1998. The guidelines stated that all public secondary schools, whether they were fully funded (government schools) or partly aided (the aided schools), were to adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction (MOI) in Form 1 to Form 3. Distinct from the *laissez-faire* policy of the language policy in the past, a punitive measure of a maximum fine of \$25, 000 and two years in jail are said to be used against the school principals who did not follow the instructions of the guidelines.

Such strong enforcement of the policy quickly evoked fierce debate in the society. Many parents objected to the idea, worrying that it would deprive their children of the chance of learning English and greatly jeopardize their children’s future. There was a common belief among parents that entering the EMI schools would secure their children’s future, as a good pass in English is essential for university entrance, and getting into university means the path of accessing prestigious jobs in managerial, administrative, financial or professional domains including medicine and

law. As Lai and Bryan (2003) stated, it was the high symbolic value of English that was attached to English-medium schools that parents and schools were concerned with (Lai and Bryan, 2003: 323).

Although the government cited a number of pedagogical advantages to support its decision on the mother-tongue teaching policy, and some teachers and principals advocated the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction because mother-tongue education has been proven (e.g. UNESCO, 1953) to be pedagogically beneficial to students learning over teaching and learning in a second language, most of the parents and students were not convinced. Contradictorily, despite the fact that Chinese had become the medium of instruction, and Cantonese as the spoken form had been acknowledged as the “mother-tongue” in the MOI Guidelines, Cantonese is not considered as the teaching and learning objective (Education Department, 1997; quoted in Lee and Leung, 2012). Cantonese teaching had long been neglected in the local education sector, and it is only applicable in the listening and speaking aspects in the curriculum of the senior secondary Chinese subject. Due to the fact that Cantonese words, in fact, do not have a written form and, in many cases, Cantonese words could be made up along the way or from different origins (e.g. English words which are homophonous with Cantonese word), written Cantonese can be considered a low form (Lee and Leung, 2012:8).

Soon, the controversy surrounding this language policy was further intensified because of the exemption that was granted from this mother-tongue policy. Three months after the announcement of the policy, the Education Department confirmed that 100 secondary schools, about 20% of the total number of 460 schools in Hong Kong, were granted an exemption from the policy and could use English as the medium of instruction. While exemption was granted through an assessment of the students’ capability in learning in English in the previous three years, as well as the teachers’ abilities in English, and the schools’ supporting strategies and programmes, some of the schools which failed to obtain the exemption complained that the time of assessment was too short and the criteria of assessment was unclear and unfair. For schools which were forced to change their medium of instruction into Cantonese, they argued that the Education Department stratified and legitimized schools into the



superior EMI schools and the second-graded CMI schools, which may affect the intake of students because parents and students would prefer to enter EMI schools, and thus EMI schools would have the benefit of having high-calibre students. As the MOI Guidelines is forcibly implemented to all aided and government schools in Hong Kong, while schools in the private sector, including those under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), which could still enjoy the flexibility of deciding their own Medium of Instruction (Education Bureau, 2009a:8), are also later being regarded as having the “privilege” under the enforcement of the Guidelines. I would like to argue that English is not only a linguistic capital but is also a form of symbolic capital as displayed in the dispute about the labelling effect of the mandatory mother-tongue policy. It was not just a matter of the language to learn by students, but had ‘become a matter of honour or dishonour, of pride or shame’ because the exemption of some of the elite schools had secured their prestigious status, and the degradation of some of the schools which failed to obtain the exemption for teaching in English, had denied some other students the opportunity to accumulate this symbolic capital. (Chan, 2002)

The strong bias against Chinese-medium education may also be caused by the general perception that the imposition of this mother-tongue policy was by political means rather than pedagogical reasons, as stated by the government (Wen, 1999, cited in Morrison and Lui, 2000). Although the policy was, in fact, initiated by the colonial government before the change of sovereignty, there has been a subsequent perception that the decision was made by the first Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, who had a strong pro-China background and was appointed to the position by Beijing. This perception may be caused by the pro-China image of Tung and the HKSAR government led by him, but also by his emphasis on the justifiability of learning in the mother-tongue because of Hong Kong’s return to China, as a gesture of solidarity (Lai, 1999:192). On the contrary, during the colonial period, the emphasis was more about minimizing the use of mixed-code of English and Cantonese in class, which was a very common practice in most of the secondary schools in Hong Kong except for the most elite schools which solely taught in English, or the lowest schools which solely used Cantonese.



Thus, despite the fact that the SAR government also emphasized the importance of learning and enhancing students' English proficiency, the impression that the HKSAR government was trying to overturn the linguistic imperialism from English to Chinese was quite strong over the years, and the policy was widely perceived as being primarily driven by political motives (Lai and Byram, 2003, p. 315; see also Lai, 1999; Poon, 1999; 2004). Yet, what was more challenging for the new government was that, while it tried to play down the significance of English as the gesture of decolonization (Lai, 1999:192), it seemed to face difficulties in balancing the need to strengthen the national identity of Hong Kong people with the need to maintain the international outlook and economic development of the city. The greatest criticism of the enforcement of the Chinese MOI policy is that it is leading to declining English standards and to students' lack of motivation to learn English (Poon, 2013; Poon, Lau and Chu, 2013; Yip, Coyle and Tsang, 2007). As Stone's (1994) study reported, 'the results of this study are consistent with general anecdotal and research evidence suggesting that the English proficiency of Hong Kong undergraduates is low' (Stone, 1994, p. 97 quoted by Poon, 2013: 43).

Parents were also unconvinced that English proficiency could be assured if English was taught as a "foreign language" in school instead of being the medium of instruction which, they thought, would enable more exposure to the language within an "English environment". The truth is that most of the Hong Kong Chinese children are living in a Cantonese-speaking environment and Cantonese local culture that, if not by intention, means that they rarely speak English at home or read English books or watch English television programmes. As Morrison concluded, "English is confined to work, and children's exposure to English is largely confined to school." (Morrison and Lui, 2000:476).

In response to the controversy and criticisms, including the problems of language-bifurcation, the labelling effect between CMI and EMI schools, as well as the threat of the decline of the English proficiency level of the workforce under the challenges in the globalization era (Poon, 2013; Fung and Ma, 2012), in September 2010, the government introduced a "fine-tuning" of the Medium of Instruction arrangement for secondary schools starting from the 2010/2011 school year at Secondary 1 level and

progressing each year to a higher form at junior secondary levels. Under the new MOI policy, secondary schools are permitted to offer EMI classes, partial-English-medium classes (i.e. one to two subjects taught in English), and/or CMI classes. (Poon, Lau and Chu, 2013: 946). Thus, instead of admitting the failure of the mother-tongue policy, through such “fine-tuning”, the government agreed to give greater autonomy to schools over choosing their Medium of Instruction according to the criteria specified by the Education Bureau, including the requirement of the students’ language proficiency and the teachers’ qualifications. Although the revision of the policy would be beneficial to some of the higher ranking CMI schools, and allow competent students in CMI schools to have more chance of exposure to an English learning environment, the labelling effect which further stratified students, even within CMI schools, seems to be unresolved (Fung and Ma, 2012). It could be said that such a policy change is, once again, reaffirming the dominance and linguistic power of English in the Hong Kong context. As demonstrated in the Legislative paper submitted to the Education Panel by the Education Bureau (2009a) and the later document (2009b), the major objectives of such “fine-tuning” are to ‘provide our students with more opportunities to be exposed to, and use, English at junior secondary levels under the policy goal of upholding mother-tongue teaching while enhancing students’ proficiency in both Chinese and English, so as to enhance their ability to learn in English and to better prepare them for further studies and work in future’ (Education Bureau, 2009b:2) while emphasizing Hong Kong’s challenges of ‘entering a new era as globalization has taken hold, and our younger generation will meet unprecedented challenges of the ever-changing environment.’; ‘Hong Kong needs to enhance its position as a modern international city and a global financial centre for sustained economic growth’ (Education Bureau, 2009a:1-2).

The government was also under pressure from the business community to maintain or improve the “standard” of English of students due to the recurrent discourse about the worry of a “declining English standard” of Hong Kong students, especially repeated from the business sectors, stating that the decline of the English proficiency level of fresh graduates would further erode Hong Kong’s status as an international business centre and mean that it would be overtaken by its major competitors, Singapore and Shanghai (Poon, 2013). In response to this, the government thus

introduced the “Workplace English Campaign”, and also sponsored university students to participate in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) before they graduate, to ensure their “English standard” would meet the needs of economic globalized market.

## **Conclusion**

The above section has tried to demonstrate the current status and usage of different languages in Hong Kong, and also focus on the relationship between these languages and the construction of Hong Kong identities.

It is found that the superior status of English is still sustained, especially when English is viewed as an essential asset to secure Hong Kong’s status as an international financial centre, or the “Asia world city” positioned by the government itself, under global competition in the era of globalization. The linguistic power of English maintained by the educational system and the job market (particularly the finance and commerce sectors) also affirms the essentiality of the acquisition of English, at least in the minds of people in Hong Kong.

Besides, it has emerged that the acquisition of English and Cantonese both contribute to a distinct Hong Kong identity or “Hong-kongers” identity. It is particularly conspicuous when the status and use of Putonghua has increased in society due to the large number of mainland tourists visiting Hong Kong in recent years and the persistent bias towards immigrants from mainland China.

From the discussion about the Medium of Instruction policy in Hong Kong, it is shown that the introduction of the “bi-literacy and tri-lingualism” policy has revealed the government’s complicated wishes. On the one hand, through the enforcement of Chinese as the Medium of instruction in most of the schools, the government tries to support a local Hong Kong identity while fostering the national and integration with China at the same time with the promotion of Putonghua in the curriculum (Lai and Byram, 2003); on the other hand, under the threat of the decline of Hong Kong “economic competitiveness” and international status in the era of globalization, the government is eager to “maintain a good standard of English” and states that

'Learning of the English language in schools is therefore a Government priority.'  
(Education Department, 1997).

## **Chapter Three      Conceptualizing Citizenship**

In this chapter, I will refer to some of the important discussions about the concept of citizenship and try to build up a theoretical framework for this research. Considering the conception of citizenship from Marshall's three rights model, Feminist theories to the social, cultural aspects in relation to identities, I suggest focusing on the theoretical concepts of cultural capital and cultural citizenship which inform the multiple cultural identities at work in contemporary Hong Kong. By exploring the meanings of "ideal citizens" and the accumulation of cultural capitals in the schooling process, this theoretical framework would delineate the influence of the social categories of social class, gender and ethnicity in the living experiences of students, and contribute to the discussion of multiple identities in relation to the meanings of citizenship in Hong Kong.

### **3.1      Marshall's Conception of Citizenship**

Citizenship is not a fixed but a contested concept, which has undergone much discussion. In political and legal theory, citizenship is generally defined as a 'status' and a set of rights and obligations arising from this status. No matter how elusive the concept of citizenship is, it is undeniable that it carries connotations about the relationship between the individuals and the society in which they live. As Ghai (2001) described, 'Citizenship has a specific, legal meaning concerning the relationship of an individual and the state.....It also has a broader meaning which concerns the political and moral status of individuals and their connections both to the state and society.' (Ghai, 2001:143)

Another mainstream definition of citizenship is the theoretical formulation of citizenship as three types of rights, namely the political, civil and social rights identified by T.H. Marshall. Marshall's analysis of citizenship (Marshall, 1950) has inspired many recent scholars in the discipline of sociology, and is often the starting point for discussion on the notions of citizenship.

Fairbrother (2005) has analysed the status of citizenship in Hong Kong based on Marshall's 'three categories of rights' model. He suggested that, since the colonial



years, the Hong Kong government has strategically prevented the enhancement of political rights, so as to preserve Hong Kong's political and social stability and economic prosperity. At the same time, in response to the social disturbances of the 1960s, the government started to expand the social welfare system, and this policy orientation is still sustained in post-1997 HKSAR government. He concluded that Hong Kong has relatively strong civil and social rights but weak political rights.

However, at the same time, Ku and Pun (2006) argued that not only political rights, but also social rights have remained relatively under-developed in Hong Kong. They argued that the development of Hong Kong 'has shown a great deal of continuity between the civic, urban, economic, and self-reliant subject under colonial citizenship and the enterprising individual under the recent ideology of neo-liberalism.' (2006:7). They argued that neo-liberalism is now reforming social divisions in new ways, including education and social welfare. For instance, in the domain of social welfare, there is a guiding motto of "self-reliance" upheld in the society. Hong Kong people generally hold a negative attitude towards people relying on the welfare system. The recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) have been constituted as welfare recipients rather than enjoying their social rights, regardless of their status or condition. In such a case, the provision of social citizenship is not in terms of "rights", but a very basic safety net for the "economically inactive" people (the unemployed, the disabled or the elderly). In 1998, the Social Welfare Department proposed a "Support for Self-Reliance" scheme, so that the security system can "give its recipients the opportunities to become self-reliant". Such a scheme, as pointed out by Leung (2006), is actually 'depriving the citizenship rights of such people as single parents, women, the underclass, new migrants, and ethnic minority groups, by emphasizing the obligations and individual responsibilities of benefit claimants' (Leung, 2006:184).

We can see that the development of citizenship, especially the aspects of 'rights' proposed by Marshall, may not be able to explain the situation in Hong Kong. There have also been many criticisms of Marshall's analysis, including an argument about the universality of Marshall's theory of citizenship rights, or its "anglophile" or "anglocentric" perspectives that tended to generalise the development of citizenship



in England to all capitalist countries. Besides, Giddens (1996) also criticised Marshall's "one-way phenomenon" on the development of civil to political to social rights, that is, the progression of citizenship rights is "an irreversible trend of development". However, Giddens pointed out that citizenship rights were defended and obtained through constant struggles and a citizenship movement, instead of being a natural development from one to another.

### **3.2 Feminist Conception of Citizenship**

Another major criticism is Marshall's single focus on social class, and ignorance of women and ethnic minorities. It is argued that Marshall's citizenship was constructed in a way applicable only to men. Women and other groups did not appear in the picture, because he simply confined them to the private sphere and excluded them from the public domain of citizenship. Although Marshall's theories of citizenship claimed that civil rights ensured individuals' rights to justice and liberty, most women did not enjoy these rights until their political citizenship had been secured (Leung, 2006). Besides, women are often viewed as dependent on their husband, i.e. a dependent member in the family unit. Their access to political rights as well as social rights is limited because these rights are often subject to the breadwinners of the family, who are usually male.

It has been a long history for women to strive for their citizenship rights and citizenship status in society. So far, there have been some significant theoretical discussions and challenges posed by feminist scholars about the conceptions of citizenship. Preece (2002) suggests that the major discussion concerning the relationship between women and citizenship can be categorized as four major strands: liberal, radical, socialist and post-modern/poststructuralist. First, the liberal model emphasizes the equal rights and equal status of women and men. This emphasis on sameness between women and men can be signified by the women's movements on the struggle for universal suffrage and women's inclusion into politics. These feminists believe that the political rights women gained were essential for them to move forward in making demands for more civil and social rights. However, this liberal model, which emphasizes the sameness between men and

women, has failed to challenge male domination over women. The second is the radical model, which defends female ways of being, and values women's difference because of their own identities. However, it is said that the radical model does not challenge the categories of gender power differentials. The third is the approach from socialism. The socialist model is aware of the difference between women, but primarily explores the ways gender is socially (not biologically) constructed. Although the socialist model addresses the differences between women, it does not help us to understand how patriarchal dominance exists in the first place. Last, but not least, is the post-modern/ poststructuralist model. This model shifts its focus from the differences between men and women onto relationships between language and power. It explores how women and other social groups are positioned in different discourses and meanings which construct their multiple identities. It is able to identify the various social positions and situations of different groups, as well as the different forms of embedded oppression. (Arnot, 2003; Gordon, 1998, Gordon, 2006; Preece, 2002)

Indeed, many feminist scholars have illustrated the rational, autonomous male images which define citizenship in modern liberal democratic nations (Arnot and Dillabough, 2000; Choi and Ho, 2005). Under such notions of citizenship, women and many subordinated groups (including migrant women/workers and (sexual and social minority groups) are excluded from these abstract concepts of citizenship. As Arnot and Dillabough mentioned, 'the challenge was to expose not only the discriminatory assumptions which lay behind such abstractions, but the ways in which the construction of "other" acted as the mechanism for social exclusion and marginalization.' (Arnot and Dillabough, 2000:4).

Chan has highlighted the gendered teachers' identity construction in the early years of educational reform in her doctoral thesis. By teasing out that these gendered assumptions are embedded in management strategies, she showed how these masculinized cultures of an entrepreneurial school exploited young women, discriminated against motherhood and forged competition among women of different educational qualifications (Chan, 2004). Choi and Ho (2006) have also suggested that there has been an erosion of teachers' characters on the "feminine" aspects of

care and concern under an increased workload, and an escalation of stress, which led to teachers' psychological struggles, burnout or even withdrawal from their teaching careers. Both studies have addressed the impact of economic globalization on the construction of gender identities and professional identities. They also exposed the problem of female citizenship by displaying the separation of public/private domains in women's lives. When women actively participated in the public sphere (or in public institutions, such as schools in these cases), they were expected to act rationally and autonomously, to conform to the traditional, liberal views on citizenship ---- the version of masculinity which has a liberal democratic origin.

From the above studies, we can see that feminist studies are not only concerned with how to strive for women's citizenship rights and citizenship status in society. The substance of a feminist critique of citizenship, therefore, is that women are not only outside the realm of citizenship, but also that the notion of including women within the problematic conception of citizenship is dilemmatic. The significance of feminist perspectives on citizenship is that it challenges the fundamental notion of citizenship. Feminist approaches not only reflect that citizenship is not gender-neutral, they also illustrate the contested nature of citizenship , and bring about the need to integrate a broader understanding of differences, such as class, ethnicity, disability and sexuality.

### **3.3 Educating Citizenship: the Cultural and Social Aspects and the Intersection with Identities.**

As we can see from the discussion of the concept of citizenship by feminist research, the nature of citizenship should be understood beyond the political, legal definition of citizens' status and Marshall's model of the three kinds of rights, but should also consider the other cultural and social meanings of citizenship, and its relationship with the construction of identities. For feminists, (as shown in the work in Mac an Ghaill, 1994, Lister, 1997, Skeggs, 1992, Walkerdine et. al, 2001) citizenship as identity is more than just the sense of belonging of the individuals to the state, because the context where the individuals are situated, and their different social and personal backgrounds, would lead to different state-citizen relationships, as well as

multiple layers of citizen identities. In educational research, although the official views of citizen identity propagated by the state are well-researched, the integration, intersection or conflicts between the official view of citizenship, the general views held by the public, and the actual views held by individuals are usually overlooked and have much less discussion.

Kiwan's (2008) research about the conceptions of citizenship by key players in the formation of the Crick Report, which led to the citizenship curriculum in England, is a good example. Besides outlining the major official views of citizenship identity in the moral, legal and participatory aspects, she found that other multiple identities, especially race, religious and ethnic identities, were found to be downplayed and marginalized by the key players. The Crick Report, which took a civic republican approach, separated ethnic and religious identity from citizenship, and relegated these forms of identity to the personal (private) sphere. To be particular, civic identity was framed only in the legal status of individuals related to the state, and ignored the social or cultural dimension which is closely related to individuals.

Undeniably, critical theories and feminist studies have filled the knowledge gap by revealing the construction of citizen identities in educational settings. Critical theories have unveiled how marketized educational reforms have profound impacts on the understanding of citizenship, especially on how the new definitions of ideal citizen-subjects may have different influences on students in different social positions, especially in different social classes (Bernsterin, 1997; Choi, 2005; Lam, 2005; Plummer, 2002; Whitty, 2002) On the one hand, students-as citizens-to-be are regarded as human resources/human capital, who are expected to acquire necessary skills and dispositions, to be "value-added", to help their country to compete in the increasingly competitive global economy. On the other hand, they are expected to perform as rational autonomous individuals and consumers, who are always on the lookout for resources and new opportunities to enhance their income, power, life chances, and quality of life (Ku and Pun, 2006:1); and who know how to maximize their own benefits by making rational choices (Chan, 2006:75).

For feminist research, the emphasis has been put on the intersection of citizenship with class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality in constructing multiple citizen identities. Mac an Ghaill (1994) has stated that, while the educational reform in the United Kingdom aimed to (re)establish “Englishness”, most girls felt alienated and marginalized by the (re)masculinized curriculum. Only the heterosexual, middle-class boys benefited from the reform, and had their status and power in school enhanced. On the other hand, Walkerdine et al. (2001) have also done research which showed that working-class girls felt alienated from achieving, and compromised into the middle-class neo-liberal subjectivities. Middle-class girls also struggled between the constructions of their female identities and students’ identities to achieve the new citizenry. While middle-class girls were taught by their family (mother) to perform “rationally” to fit into the middle-class culture and neo-liberal students’ attributes, their emotional expressions were also regulated and restricted by these rules of rationality. At the same time, as girls’ female identities are very much constructed by their relationships with others and emotional expression, these middle-class girls thus faced conflicts between being a girl and being a good student.

### **3.4 Cultural Capital and “Institutionalized evaluative standard”**

The preceding section has address how critical theories and feminist studies discuss the identities politics in relation to citizenship and the intersection of citizenship with class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality in constructing multiple citizen identities. It is shown that the concept of “citizenship” is embedded in the lived experiences of individuals, yet constrained by the dominant conception of citizenship in relation to political, legal and national terms, issues of citizens identities and the effect of gender, class and ethnicity to the citizenship construction process is difficult to encapsulate. Drawing on Moi (1991)’s suggestion of cultural capital as ‘micro-theory of social power’ (1991:1019), and Lareau and Weininger (2003)’s reconceptualization of cultural capital as ‘institutionalized evaluative standard’, this study make use of the concept of “cultural capital” to elucidate the ‘everyday negotiations of the mundane’ (Skeggs, 1997:167) or ‘micro-interactional processes’ (Lareau and Weininger, 2003: 568) of the construction of citizenship in the school settings.



According to Bourdieu, the society could be understood based on the stratification of the social space due to individuals' accumulation or loss of "capital". The most explicit example would be economic capitals, which are reified as economic resources such as money, financial assets or the institutionalized form of property rights. Social capitals are made up of social obligations, "connections" or social networks, or institutionalized into "title of nobility" (Bourdieu, 1986, reprinted in Lauder et.al, 2006:106). Bourdieu delineated cultural capital in three forms. The embodied state which pertains the form of "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body"; the objectified state which exists as cultural goods including pictures, books, instruments or machines; and the institutionalized state such as the educational qualifications, which suggests the embodied cultural capital, such as individuals' competencies, skills or disposition are certified and takes on an objective value (Bourdieu, 1986, reprinted in Lauder et.al, 2006:106).

It is not surprised that Bourdieu's conception of cultural capital has been prominently applied in educational research. However, Bennett et. al (2009) argues that 'increasing evidence of the pluralisation, diversification and fragmentation of cultural taste make it unclear how traditional notions of 'high culture' are still relevant' (2009:23). Kingston (2001) also criticizes that when cultural capital is defined in terms of exclusionary class-related practices and dispositions, which does not substantially account for the relationship between social privilege and academic success, nor does it applicable to the American context where researchers could show the distinct, exclusionary cultural practices of any broad social class (if there's any) (Kingston, 2001: 97). As critically evaluated by Lareau and Weininger (2003), the dominant interpretations of the concept of cultural capital, which developed mainly as the "highbrow" or "lowbrow" taste or the distinct form of "skill" or "ability" among studies of the status attainment tradition, limit the scope of cultural capital originally suggested by Bourdieu.

By going back to Bourdieu's work on education and schooling, Lareau and Weininger suggest redeeming Bourdieu's original intention of viewing cultural capital in concrete context. In the social field of formal schooling, Bourdieu emphasized the "exclusive advantages" as the institutionalization of 'criteria of



evaluation which are the most favourable to their children' imposed by the capable social classes. (Bourdieu, 1979: 86). Thus, Lareau and Weininger address the need to identify the particular (formal and informal) expectations which the school personnel appraise students; and the variations among students (and parents) in their ability to meet the standards held by educators. (Lareau and Weininger, 2003: 588).

On the other hand, while the relative neglect of gender or women in Bourdieu's theory (despite his discussion on masculine domination, 2006) is recognized, many feminists scholars have critically extended his theory and developed theoretical resources or analytical tools to discuss other socio-cultural issues (See Adkins and Skeggs, 2004). Moi states that Bourdieu's approach enables the reconceptualization of gender as a social category in a way which undercuts the traditional essentialist/non-essentialist divide (Moi, 1991:1019), or may also have positive implications for moderating Butler's understanding of gender as performance which recognizes the possibilities of women's resistance or submission to gender domination (Lovell, 2000).

Skeggs's research on women's construction of classed femininities is a good example to illustrate the use of the concept of cultural capital to generate the idea of "respectability" from women's lived experience. The definition of cultural capital, on the one hand, did not simply frame the lived experience of women but 'shifts power and agency back into the hands of those who have restricted access to it'; on the other hand, it could still explain the power of class and gender in formulating the standard of the evaluative standard (Skeggs, 1997:166).

'The intellectual and educational fields, like any other such, have their own specific mechanisms of selection and consecration.' (Moi, 1991:1021). Hence, this research follows the approach taken up by these feminist scholars in a critical use of Bourdieu's theory to ground and understand the specificities of experience of teachers and students about citizenship, and to illustrate the selection mechanisms or the "laws of the game" (Bourdieu, 1984:110, quoted by Moi, 1991:1021) in the social field.

### 3.5 Individualization and Responsibilization in Liquid Modernity

The previous sections have examined the concept of cultural capital and how the cultivation of cultural capital is related to the construction of citizen identities. While the “exclusive advantages” (Bourdieu, 1979) and “institutionalized evaluative standard” (Lareau and Weininger, 2003) is suggested to be imposed by the capable social classes. As illustrated in the analytical chapters, school principals and most of the teachers believed that the decision about the acquisition or cultivation of cultural capital mainly depends on students’ personal choice (E.g. on the participation levels of the OLE programme). I would like to argue that such discourse of “choice” and being “self-responsible” is particularly dominant in the neo-liberal era, that the risk and challenges were emphasized in the “Liquid modernity” and individuals could only rely on themselves to survive because of the withdrawal of state’s responsibilities (Choi, 2005).

“Liquid modernity”, described by Bauman (2000), is characterized by “the state of ambient insecurity, anxiety and vulnerability”. The circumstances and characteristics of late modernity is also elucidated by Harris (2004:3) as ‘complex, global capitalist economies and a shift from state support and welfare to the private provision of services’, which ‘forced a fundamental reassessment of the material with which young people are able to craft their identities and forge their livelihoods.’ In another article, Bauman stated that “insecurity” has been used as a basis for power in democratic societies, because it ‘links into the liberal idea of autonomy, which underpins our form of democracy....’ (Bauman and Haugaard, 2008:118). This is especially remarkable in Hong Kong where the government has always claimed to adhere to the philosophy of “laissez faire” on policies, and the rhetoric of “self-reliance and perseverance” represented in the “Lion Rock spirit”<sup>4</sup> as described by the

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<sup>4</sup> The “Lion Rock myth” or “Lion Rock spirit” was raised by former Financial Secretary Antony Leung Kam-chung (Also the chairperson of Education Commission who initiated the education reform and produced the education reform proposal) in the budget speech in 2002. Lion Rock is a geographical landmark of Hong Kong, but the “Lion Rock spirit” is often referring to the traditional values such as hard work, self-reliance, community cohesion to go through difficult times, which is the major theme of a television drama series entitled “Below the Lion Rock” in the 1970s on stories about working class Hong Kong people which fulfil their (economic) dream and formulated the “Hong Kong economic myth” at the time. (Lam, 2005; Lee, 2005)

former Financial Secretary, Antony Leung, to encourage people to face the new economic challenges with the same old “Hong Kong Spirit”. The rhetoric of “crisis creates opportunities” was repeated to encourage Hong Kong people to “equip” themselves to meet the ever-changing world and global challenges, and again, repeated in the education reform as illustrated in this thesis.

‘Under conditions of modernity, the future is continually drawn into the present by means of the reflexive organization of knowledge environments.’ (Giddens, 1991:3). The “present” and the “future” are closely linked because continuous reflection on the current situation should be made so that individuals can make considerable adjustments and plan for their prospective citizen roles. This continuous reflection and evaluation of the “self” and life plan is due to the uncertainty and unstable nature of “liquid modernity”. In this process of “continuously revised biographical narratives” (Ibid: 5), individuals have to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of “the project of self” so that they could continuously improve to meet the changing requirement of the society from time to time.

In addition, the notions of individualism could not be isolated from “responsibilization” in the increasingly uncertain settings (Kelly, 2001, 23). Because the different life trajectories are framed as individual choices, it is also individuals’ responsibility to scrutinize the options available, and make the “right” choice. As stated by Giddens, ‘The self is seen as a reflexive project, for which the individual is responsible. (.....) what the individual becomes is dependent on the reconstructive endeavours in which she or he engages. The self forms a trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future.’(Giddens, 1991:75) As vividly shown in the findings, school principals and teachers of both schools had been stating the students’ responsibility, either in the planning of the kind of OLE activities in which to participate, the university subject choice (St. Caroline’s) or simply to behave or not to behave (Peterson’s). The constant reminder from their teachers of their “responsibility to choose and to plan” has saliently reflected the continuous “project of the self” (Beck, 1992; Kelly, 2001; 2006) or “reflexive project of self” (Giddens, 1991).

Although the late modern age seems to be offering a diversity of choices, at the same time some of the choices are only accessible to a small group of people who can display certain personalities or personal qualities, or have “prepared”, “equipped” or “invested” in themselves to reach the requirements. Simultaneously, there are other choices that are more “risky”, when the selection of choices may lead to consequences where the individuals are requested to bear their own costs. In this process, help is not available to everyone. The young people who are being criticized as “irresponsible” or making the “wrong choice” would be labelled as the “at risks” (Harris, 2004; Kelly, 2001, 2005). The purposes of the opposition of the “can-do” and “at-risk” by Harris (2004) is well elaborated by Rose, ‘The identification of risk factors and populations at-risk will be understood as techniques mobilised in diverse attempts to “make up” rational, choice making, autonomous, responsible citizens within (neo)liberal projects of government.’ (Rose, 1996, quoted by Kelly, 2001:23). This process of labelling would simply ignore the form of social and cultural capitals mediated by Peterson’s students based on their interpretations of the evaluative standard in their social field, and only recognize a single form of “success” or “ideal citizens” image favoured by the government or the economic-oriented Hong Kong society.

This reflects how individualism and responsibilitization have obscured the working of class in the process of stratification and forming of hierarchies, which require all individuals to achieve the ultimate standard which is based on middle-class ideology. The previously patent class struggle has been replaced by individual downfall.

To summarize, I would like to draw on Weiner’s illustration of inequality that could be applied to gender, class and ethnicity under the influence of individualism.

*Inequality is seen to be the consequence of differences in individual ability and aspiration rather than structural disadvantage, and because girls are achieving better results than boys in some examinations, sex equality in education is deemed to have been achieved. Such notions, however, mask both the strengthening grip that the British middle-classes have on educational advantage and privilege; and the continued exclusion of women from areas of education and employment, and, in particular, at the most senior levels of politics, industry and commerce. (Weiner, 1997)*

### **3.6 Defining “Ideal Citizens” in Contemporary Hong Kong**

In this section, I explore the definition and description of the attributes of an “Ideal Citizen” in the context of Hong Kong in order to set as a background to understand students’ conception of citizenship, and the possible rationale of the school policies and practices based on teachers’ expectations towards students.

As suggested in the preliminary analysis of the reform documents in Ch. 2 (Section 2.3), there were five priority values and attitudes had been emphasized including “Perseverance”, “Respect for Others”, “Responsibility”, “National Identity” and “Commitment”. Each of these values and attitudes illustrated the attributes of an ideal citizen envisioned by the government, for instances, “Responsibility” and “Commitment” not only emphasized students’ responsibility and commitment to the society, but may also be understood as the responsibility and commitment towards their own studies and their lives; while “national identity” illustrates the post-colonial government’s intention to reinforce students’ sense of belonging towards China, which is obviously a political mission needed to be accomplished after the political handover of Hong Kong, and is further emphasized in recent years due to the political confrontation of many Hong-kongers towards the Beijing governance on issues such as the struggle for universal suffrage and the top-down implementation of the Moral and National Education.

On top of these values and attitudes suggested in the Moral and Civic education curriculum (2008), the education reform has also suggested the attribute of ideal citizens not only on the moral aspects, but also the abilities that everyone should acquire. These qualities were listed in the vision of the reform (Education Commission, 2000), including the building of a lifelong learning society, so that everyone ‘has the attitude and ability for lifelong learning’; the construct of a diverse school system ‘so that learners have more choices and multi-faceted talents will be nurtured’; the creation of an inspiring learning environment ‘that is inspiring and conducive to the creative and exploratory spirit’, the acknowledgement of the importance of moral education ‘to provide students with structured learning experiences in the areas of moral, emotional and spiritual education’ and the



development of an education system 'that is rich in tradition but cosmopolitan and culturally diverse' in order 'to help students develop an international outlook so that they can learn, work and live in different cultural environments.' (Education Commission, 2000:5).

These visions indeed highlighted the essential qualities and attributes of the ideal citizens in responding to the world of changes in the era of late modernity, especially on the expectations of students' willingness and ability for lifelong learning, having multi-faceted talents, creativity and exploratory spirit, acquiring the quality of being cosmopolitan but still "rich in tradition" and be morally righteous.

These anticipated attributes of ideal citizens are not only ideas on papers, but have shown to be promoted in the school settings in Hong Kong elite schools.

Chan (2006) has discussed about the production of new elites/citizens who are competitive and autonomous individuals under the reformed educational system through the experiences of five girls studied in elite mission girls' schools. From the interviews, she found that in order to become the new elites or "ideal citizens" in Hong Kong, the "cultural (and middle-class) accomplishments" and the "Masculine and competitive ethos" should be acquired.

For example, the girls in the elite missionary schools were pressurized to compete not only academically, but also culturally. As illustrated by Chan, 'Yet academic excellence alone is not enough to become a woman elite member in these schools, accomplishment in extra-curricular, social and cultural activities is equally essential.' (Chan, 2006: 73). One of the students, Mandy, who was from less affluent family backgrounds, revealed that the requirement of being "all-round" was biased to her sister and students of her background because that had become an important aspect to evaluate students' abilities. Mandy's story is in fact the real live example echoing the notions of "all-round development" as suggested in the reform documents. Another student, Rebecca, also described the masculine and competitive ethos in her school, which 'the strongest emphasis on examinations, competition and stratification. Every element in the school, including knowledge, classes and the worth of students, was



clearly ranked and carried different utilitarian values.’ (Chan, 2006:74). Such competitiveness was also responding to the discourse of changes and global competition repeatedly stated in the reform documents and constantly reminded by the government. Yet, Chan (2006) writing further questioned the desirability of the notion of ideal citizen/student and its unequal accessibility by students of different social positions, especially of lower social class backgrounds or schools with lower academic banding.

For the discussion about the definition of “ideal citizen” in Hong Kong, another aspect that could not be overlooked is the dispute between “global vs national” identities of Hong Kong citizens developed from the controversial implementation of the new “Moral and National Education” subject in the year 2012. (The Standard Young post, 2012; Lam, 2012)

As illustrated in Ch. 2, the reform documents have repeatedly emphasized on the competitiveness of students in the ever-changing globalized market. It is not surprising that the interpretations of global citizenship were often immediately related to the “entrepreneurial individuals” or competitive globalized subjects within the dominant economic framework in Hong Kong. Although the Moral and Civic Guidelines of 2008 had suggested developing students’ concerns on global issues, focusing on environmental education such as global warming and social issues of poverty and the fair trade movement, cunningly, controversial issues, especially about politics, liberal and democratic development and human rights issues, were downplayed or simply erased from the agenda.

The concept of global citizenship was further marginalized in the later proposal of the formulation of a new subject of “Moral and National Education”, after this research fieldwork had been conducted. This new subject was suggested in the 2010/2011 policy address to replace the former “Civic” or “Moral and Civic” education. Despite the extensive criticisms about such top-down, large-scale subject changes, especially on the emotional and patriotic “indoctrination” towards the “nation”, and the ignorance of important universal values including democracy, human rights, social justice and rule of law in the content, the government still

accepted the “Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide” in April, 2012 and enforced the introduction of the compulsory subject in the primary schools starting from September, 2012 and secondary schools in the 2013/2014 academic year. While the government persisted firmly to deflect the criticism, and ignored the strong opposition and growing request to withdraw this imminent introduction of the compulsory subject, a new student activist group, “Scholarism”, founded by a group of secondary school students in May, 2011 (with no political affiliations), the “National Education Parents Concern Group” which is also newly established in 2012, together with 15 other local organizations formed the "Civil Alliance Against the National Education". Interestingly, one of the counter arguments proposed by the alliance was that it is more important for students to recognize their global citizen identity and responsibility, and to develop a more inclusive notion of citizenship education in which social belongings are bounded with common values of human rights, social justice and democracy etc. The use of the concept of global citizenship to counter national citizenship in Hong Kong somehow coincided with the challenge of promoting an overarching and unified national identity in many multicultural societies (e.g. the U.S. and Australia) and in countries that are encountering an increasing number of newcomers under the trend of worldwide immigration as illustrated by Banks (2008).

Although the above examples illustrated that the definition of “Ideal citizens” would not be able to have a unified definition, it also reveals that all of the emphasized or anticipated attributes of ideal citizens, either in the education reform proposal (Education Commission, 2000), the Moral and Civic Education Guidelines (2008) or the teachers’ expectations described by the girls interviewed in Chan (2006)’s study, are abstract qualities including values, attitudes and personalities, which somehow could be viewed as Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital at the embodied state which refers to the form of ‘long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body’ (Bourdieu, 1986, reprinted in Lauder et.al , 2006:106).

I suggest that in order to search for the concept of the model and formation of the “ideal citizen” in the school settings, the focus should be placed on the general school ethos and atmosphere or activities that could more easily display students’

behaviours and attitudes. In this research, the first area that I came up with is the new compulsory “Other Learning Experience” programme which I thought would be one of the most evident aspect to discover the school’s anticipated ideal citizen’s qualities and students’ reaction to that. Although the newly introduced Liberal Studies subject into the senior secondary school curriculum could also be viewed as another evident example revealing the government’s anticipation of the model of ideal citizen, it is not included in this research due to two major reasons. Firstly, the exploration of the Liberal studies subject may shift the focus of the meanings searching about ideal citizens from the teachers and students’ perspectives. Although the six modules (Personal Development and Interpersonal Relationships, Hong Kong Today, Modern China Module, Globalization, Public Health and Energy Technology and the Environment) in the new senior secondary syllabus seems closely related to the anticipated knowledge of ideal citizen, the syllabus could only reveal the official models of ideal citizens promoted by the government but fails to illustrate the reaction and understanding of students of different social groups to such official notions of citizenship. Furthermore, as will be explained in the Methodology chapter, there were severe constraints in entering of classroom in both schools because of different reasons, and the discrepancy in the experience and development of the organization and content of the Liberal studies subject between the two schools would foresee the imbalance of data, which is later proven in the comparison of other data. Nevertheless, the curriculum of Liberal Studies in relation to the construction of ideal citizen or meaning of citizenship in the education reform is a research area worth to be studied.

### **3.7 Theoretical Framework**

Based on the above literature review, I suggest to develop a theoretical framework around the key theoretical concepts of cultural capital and cultural citizenship, which not only place the emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of citizenship, but also informs the multiple identities at work in the conceptualization of citizenship and construction of citizen identities of students in this research. I believe that the concept of cultural capital and cultural citizenship could respond to my major interest in understanding how the schooling process develops students into “ideal citizens”

(or “citizens-in-waiting”), and figure out the state’s version of social and cultural notions of citizenship which students would encounter.

Particularly, the concept of cultural capital is significant in explaining and illustrating the meaning of citizenship and the process of fulfilling the requirement of ideal citizens. As Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital was based on the discussion about French middle-class habitus and the definition of cultural capital in its embodied, objectified and institutionalized forms (Bourdieu, 1979), the primeval connection between the concept of cultural capital and social class is strong. This enables the discussion on the social class impact in the schooling experience of students under the neoliberal education reform in Hong Kong, and could even display more specifically the phenomenon of “institutionalization” and the working of students’ self-reflexive projects as illustrated in the literature on Liquid Modernity.

Yet, instead of adapting the deterministic perspective of class “disadvantages” which simply understand the class processes as the “lack” of capital of the working class, I advocate the approach taken by Lareau and Weininger(2003) which define the cultural capital as the “institutionalized evaluative standards” in specific settings, and conceptualize the concept of cultural capital in its’ broadest sense.

Thus, notwithstanding its original connection with social class, the extended concept of cultural capital as “institutionalized evaluative standards” could also help to illustrate the specific consequences of gender and ethnicity based on the feminist account of Bourdieu’s theories, especially in the empirical situation of ethnographic research (Moi, 1991:1019). For example, Skeggs (1997) study has made use of the cultural capital concept to examine the construction of classed femininities and the meaning of “respectability”. Hence, the working of the multiple identities related to social class, ethnicity and gender, which are particularly significant as shown in this research, could be delineated with the help of the concept.

The application of Bourdieu’s concepts of “cultural” and “social capital”, “habitus” and “symbolic power” would also be used as the ‘micro-theory’ of power (Moi, 1991:1019) to reveal the micro-politics of class, gender and ethnicity within the

school settings. That is, it could reveal the ideal notions of citizenship promoted and anticipated by the state, or defined by those having the power within the social groups among the classes, genders or ethnic groups.

On the other hand, the concept of cultural capital could also illustrate how individuals understand or interpret the meaning of (cultural) citizenship, how to they act upon or resist against the institutionalized evaluative standard, and how that is related to their current citizen identities, experiences, aspiration of their future and future citizen roles. The exploration of students' conceptualization of the multiple citizen identities according to their own subjectivity, backgrounds or other multiple identities would be another focus. For instance, the new immigrant student Piano's choice making process in the learning of Cantonese and English and unlearning of Putunghua in the special language context of Hong Kong could illustrate her interpretation of the linguistic capitals attached to each language, and how these languages are related to her multiple (citizen) identities: ranging from the national Chinese identity or regional, local Hong Kong identity to the cultural identities of China connecting to Putonghua or the cultural identities as Hong Kong student in the struggle of learning English and Cantonese dialects. Scott (1992) believed that, from these individual interpretations, people could develop their own sense of agency or independent action. One of the aims of this research is to record the individual experience of "living" citizenship and, through this process, not only allow them to reflect on their own lives, but also suggest other different ways to act as members of the community.

Thus, the concept of cultural capital is a key concept for this research to illustrate the various interpretation of ideal citizens by the school, the teachers and students in the school settings. It is also useful to delineate the cultural and social meanings of citizenship.

According to the preceding sections on the conceptualization of citizenship from various theoretical streams, we can see that notions of citizenship could be understood beyond the legal and political level, and also in its cultural term. By cultural citizenship, what I emphasized here is not only about the cultural or ethnic



diversities or politics, but about the cultural attributes, cultural resources, identities and dispositions attached to that.

Individuals as citizens are living in the community and the society, which suggests a relationship between self and others. These daily interactions are a process of encountering different social and cultural values, norms, moral values or living ethics, social expectations and also the rules and regulations of proper behaviour. Individuals have to learn, perform and reproduce these values and behaviours in order to be recognized as members of the society. This is especially the case for those who are originally counted as the “others”, because they are expected to prove that they are eligible to be in the community. In the case of the state and its citizens, new immigrants and ethnic minorities are often expected to acquire these social and cultural values or traits, which I call the cultural and social citizenship. Simultaneously, these social and cultural meanings of citizenship also influence how individuals identify themselves in the society and community. Delanty (2002) has delineated clearly the inter-relationships between the self, the others and the society in the context of citizenship:

*“Citizenship is not entirely about rights....it concerns the learning of a capacity for action and for responsibility but, essentially, it is about the learning of the self and of the relationship of self and other. It is a learning process in that it is articulated in perceptions of the self as an active agency and a social actor shaped by relations with others. In this view, citizenship concerns identity and action; it entails both personal and cognitive dimension that extend beyond the personal to the wider cultural level of society.”*  
(Delanty, 2002, pp.64).

Hence, this research also intended to contribute to the field by broadening the concept of citizenship, emphasizing the cultural citizenship and living citizenship to be placed at the centre of the discussion. Albeit the term seems to be alien to teachers and students, as shown in my pilot research, I suggest that being or becoming a citizen is actually part of individuals’ lives. To be recognized as a citizen or, in particular, a “proper” citizen of a state, is not the moment when you obtain the national identity card, but is when the other members of the society recognize you as one of them. This may require an ongoing, or even life-long learning, exercise, or



struggle between self and the relationship with others. In some cases, this process of struggle may never end because, not only do the standards regarding a proper citizen change over time, the personal social backgrounds, and the other dimensions of one's identity, also exercise with, and struggle against, the social and cultural notions of citizenship. It is this complex but lived and grounded notions of citizenship that I would like to explore and contribute to the academic field of citizenship.

Therefore, to integrate the multiple meanings of citizenship from different levels of the schooling process, and to understand the dynamics or conflicts in acquiring the qualities of ideal citizens, albeit differently defined by different students, the data collection and data analysis is primarily based on the two concepts of cultural capital and cultural citizenship.

The emphasis of cultural conception of citizenship which I have delineated as the cultural attributes, dispositions, resources and identities, I assume that the notions of ideal citizens should be explored in the school settings by conducting an ethnographic study. Not only because of my assumption that the school culture and school ethos would have influence on the cultivation of cultural capital and the conceptualization of citizenship of students, I also found that my definition of cultural citizenship is surprisingly similar to the description of the "whole-person" or "all-round" development of students, which is the major aims of the reform (EC, 2000) as explained in Ch.2. Ethnographic research would allow the researcher to immerse into the school culture through participant observation, and the conducting of in-depth interviews could also explore the teachers and students' insider account about the "institutionalized evaluative standard" in schools, and their personal opinions and reactions to that. Besides, because of my understanding about the influence of social categories to the conceptualizing of citizenship and attitudes towards different cultural capitals, the research is designed to compare two different schools located in Hong Kong with contrasting social class background and academic achievement levels (banding) to understand how these differences would affect the meanings of ideal citizens in the two schools and how that would interact with students' multiple identities.

The concept of cultural capital is also useful to organize and analyse the data collected in the research. It is not only applied to illustrate the unbalance in social, economic and cultural capital resources existed in the two schools based on the traditional definition of the term, the concept could also apply to understand the cultural and linguistic capital of different languages not only in its economic terms, but the influence and attached values to the construction of students citizen and group identities. For example, English is shown to be more than the powerful language with the most linguistic capital, it also contributes to the sense of belonging as Hong-konger in its cultural sense. The concept of embodied cultural capital also help us to analyse the meanings of the construction of classed and ethnic femininities as shown in the analytical chapter seven.

### **3.7 Pilot Study**

Based on my research objectives and the literature review, I have conducted a pilot study in Hong Kong during April 2009, to test the validity of the research topics of the social and cultural notions of citizenship. This section will be a brief summary of the purposes and findings of the pilot study. For the detailed report, please refer to Appendix C.

The major purpose in this pilot research was to examine how exactly the education of citizenship was working out in schools, and what was being regarded as important factors in “being good” according to teachers and students. Before entering the research field, I decided to have a preliminary understanding of how teachers and students conceptualized “citizenship” and how citizenship was taught and learned in schools. Given these purposes, I designed my interview questions with teachers to be not limited to their own perceptions or interpretations of “citizenship”, but also to include the aspects of how it works within the school context. In this pilot study, three teachers were interviewed, two male and one female, who were from different schools with different lengths of teaching experience.

In order to explore students’ experiences and interpretations of citizenship, I also organized group discussions with two groups of students. Based on my theoretical

framework, I assumed that students are subjective agents who enter the school with different social backgrounds, and would interact and respond to the meanings of citizenship based on their personal experiences and knowledge. Therefore, the pilot research included students from different kinds of ethnic, socio-economic status, religion and academic background. One group of students were five Form 6 students who are now studying Liberal Studies (AS level) in the current curriculum. They were all from middle-class families, and the school they were in was one of the academically high-band girls' schools where almost 100% of its graduates entered university. Another group of students were from different schools, but with similar ethnic backgrounds ---both girls were from Pakistan and were Muslims. Also, the socio-economic status and the influence of Islamic values of Mona and Eva's families were very different. I also conducted a short, half-hour interview with an elder Pakistani girl, Tara, individually. I found that, while students were expected to learn and grow up according to the state-designed image of ideal citizens which is promoted in school, these girls from non-Chinese family backgrounds were influenced less by the school and emphasized and valued more how their family, parents and religion had influenced them. On the other hand, the Liberal Studies students in the academically high-band school also claimed that the mass media and their peers might have influenced their values more than their teachers did.

## **Findings**

In the interviews, I found that the concepts of "identity", "school ethos" and "globalization" emerged throughout the text and answered the first question about what influenced the teachers' and students' conceptualizations of "citizenship". While for the second question, the interviews have shown that the so-called "enhance critical and independent thinking" or "encourage rational and objective analysis" curriculum, was not that liberal, and could somehow reflect a hidden agenda about the kind of values which are preferred by the government.

From the teachers' interviews, teachers not only illustrated what they considered to be the characteristics their students should possess as "citizens in waiting" or "citizens", but also that how teachers think about themselves as teachers, their role or

the type of teacher they want to be, was actually in relation to the way they want to influence students. That is, that in being a role model to the students, their own identities was actually how they conceptualized the concept of citizenship.

On the other hand, students' own conceptions of their identities were less idealistic, but more related to their own lives which they were living. For example, for the Pakistani girls, their identities were more about their religion, their own culture and their connections with their family. Except for Tara, who expressed her sense of identification with Hong Kong, I found it difficult to draw ideas from the interview with Eva and Mona.

The theme of globalization is quite apparent in the text too. Both teachers and students realized the competition of the "real world", and the role of English as an essential tool for Hong Kong students to catch up with the globalization trend was very apparent. Learning or mastering of English, the power language, has become one of the indexes to identify whether that student has the ability to enter the competition.

### **Conclusion and Implication**

The findings of the pilot study have helped me to develop my major research questions and the research framework of my later fieldwork. Firstly, the interviews with the two groups of students of completely different backgrounds have proved that the social class, ethnicity and gender of the students have substantial influence on their understanding of their positions in society, both in current times and in their aspired futures; simultaneously, their schooling experiences also have significant impact on their interpretation of self, society and the ways of being "citizens" in the wider society. The teachers' interviews also confirmed the influence of class, ethnicity and gender on the interpretation of citizenship, particularly from how teachers evaluated their students' social positions and futures in society and in the era of globalization in relation to these backgrounds. Thus, how teachers evaluate and expect students' future citizen role, as well as students' own evaluation of their social positions and future citizen status, would be one of the aspects to be explored in this research.

In addition, the findings also revealed that, in spite of the noticeable impact of the mass media and new media such as the internet, the school settings and the schooling process remain important sites for students to learn and understand the meaning of citizenship, to develop their own interpretation, and to explore their own ways of living as (Hong Kong) citizens and constructing their citizen identities. Students' and teachers' meaning-making processes of citizenship would be influenced by the school tradition, school ethos and culture of the schools as shown in the findings. It was especially patent in the interviews with the Pakistani girls, because of their limited opportunities to interact with other (local) people in the community due to their cultural and religious practices, the schools have become the sole space and time where they could mobilize freely, and where the ideologies embedded in schools have become another important source of influence aside from their families.

Moreover, the repeated theme of "globalization" by all teachers and students in the pilot study seemed to confirm my assumptions about the propagated rhetoric of "global competition" and "changes" in the education reform. Yet, the three teachers who were teaching in different schools seemed to interpret differently the impact of "globalization" on their students, which may be due to the different banding of the schools, and the different academic achievement level and socio-economic backgrounds of the majority of students in their schools. This further reinforced my belief in exploring the conception of citizenship in the schooling process within the school settings under the influence of the reform.

### **3.8 Research Questions**

Based on my research objectives illustrated in the introduction and the theoretical framework, as well as the findings from my pilot study, I have come up with the following research questions:

- 1. What notions of cultural and social citizenship are promoted and presented in the schooling process under the educational reform in Hong Kong?**
- 2. What are teachers' and students' experiences and interpretations of "citizenship"?**



For the first research question, I would like to discover the embedded concepts of cultural and social citizenship which are promoted in the schooling process. In particular, how cultural and social citizenship is conceptualized, presented, transformed, interpreted or reinterpreted in school. This will be explored at two levels: the policy and curriculum level and the school level.

In this research, I suggest that the educational reform and the new curriculum embedded the official views of the kind of disposition, behaviour traits or “qualities” that the government aspired students to achieve. The major policy reports and curriculum guidelines will be those implemented in school. Therefore, in order to understand the background of the school policies and the current curriculum in school, a basic analysis at the curriculum level is needed.

While citizenship education in Hong Kong is implemented in an interdisciplinary, “whole-school” approach, the ethos of schools, the teaching and learning both within and outside the classroom, would have great impact on how the students understand and learn the embedded preferred images of citizens in the curriculum. In such a case, the interpretation of the school, the head teacher, and the teachers on the new curriculum should also be explored. At this school level of investigation, besides looking at the school structure or policies, the focus is also about the culture, the traditions and the ethos of the schools. For instance, what aspects are emphasized or marginalized, or simply left out completely in the curriculum and the whole schooling process? What are the characteristics of an “ideal citizen”, or “ideal students” praised by the school authorities and teachers, and among students?

For the second research question, I would like to explore teachers’ and students’ experiences and interpretations of citizenship.

The research aims to address teachers’ own interpretations of the concept of “cultural and social citizenship” in order to understand how these conceptions of citizenship influence the educating of citizenship. I believe that teachers’ understandings about how to become “good” citizens would also influence their expectations of their



students' future roles as citizens, and the process of evaluating and educating their students to fulfil those expectations.

Students, being the targeted group of the whole citizenship education curriculum, are expected to learn and grow up according to the state-designed image of ideal citizens which is promoted by the reform. However, students are not passive individuals who adopt what they are taught and told. They are subjective agents who enter the school with different social backgrounds, and interact and respond to the meanings of citizenship based on their personal experiences and knowledge. Therefore, this study aims to understand what kinds of experiences or how different kinds of social background (ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status) would influence students' interpretations of citizenship in their schooling process, and the influence of their daily lives. How do they themselves interpret being a citizen or becoming a citizen? How do they adopt/ react to/ react against the forms of citizenship promoted by the curriculum or the school?

## **Chapter Four      Methodology and Research Design**

Research methods, research objectives, theoretical frameworks and research questions are inter-related. The use of research methods not only responds to the research questions, but also reflects the researcher's beliefs. In this section, I will discuss my research design in four sections. Firstly, I will outline my research epistemology and methodology, which directly influence my choice of research methods and also lead to my concern of research ethics and the related research approach and strategy (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser, 2004: 5). Secondly, I explain the choice of research field sites in addressing the significant social variables that would affect the meanings of "ideal citizens" and students' experience and interpretation of citizenship, and also reflect on my sampling choice of such contradictory school sites and the sampling of research participants. Following that will be a reflexive account of my research process, illustrating the application of different research methods for the collection of data in the field. This section not only demonstrate my consideration of my researcher's identities, "conceptual baggage" and positions, it also readdress my beliefs of the appropriate way to produce knowledge (epistemology) and to proceed and conduct the research (methodology). The section also illustrates the power dynamics and power relationships of different individuals in the field, which largely influenced the research process, the construction of research data and my later interpretation and analysis of the data. It also allows readers to understand the research culture in educational settings in Hong Kong, and the school ethos and cultures of the two schools. Lastly, the transcription, data analysis and translation methods will be discussed to inform issues of conducting, analysing and writing research in different languages and culture.

### **4.1      Epistemology, Research Methodology and Research Ethics**

An ethnographic approach which encompasses both the strength of feminist and critical ethnography is applied as the research design of this study.

The application of ethnographic method as my research methodology corresponds to my research objectives and research question, especially in the school settings. My

aim is looking into the schooling process to understand the social interaction between teachers and students and among students, and the multiple meanings of social and cultural citizenship produced and reproduced in the process. Also, one of the major aims was to investigate how the general aura of the schools would affect students' conceptualization of citizenship and development of their cultural identity and cultural capital. As previously suggested, the concept of individualism and responsabilization were developed in the current era of "Liquid Modernity", in which individuals have to make their own choice for their life and career, and be responsible to either success or failure of these choices in an unstable, unpredictable and competitive world and job market. Through the implementation of the new "Other Learning Experience" (OLE) curriculum under the current educational reform in Hong Kong, the government's intention to force students to develop other soft skills, non-academic knowledge, experiences or personal characters (leadership, independence, critical thinking etc.) and to institutionalize new set of cultural capital is obvious. Yet, how these concepts of individualism and responsabilization were introduced into the schools, how different schools interpret and respond to these concepts and the related policy changes, would definitely affect the schooling experiences of students who are the future citizens and potential candidates of the job market. At the same time, students of different socio-economic backgrounds, ethnics or gender or religion, may also react in various ways depending on their own cultural identities and their understanding about the characteristics of being an ideal citizen in Hong Kong.

Thus, in order to explore the school policies, usual teaching practices and the overall school ethos of the school on reinforcing the idea of "individual choice and responsibility"; how different schools implement the OLE curriculum and how students ardently or stubbornly participate in it and cultivate the cultural capital; and teachers' and students' opinions, feelings and sharing of experiences about the schooling process under these changes and new concepts, an ethnographic research is most suitable.

*Ethnography's concern with everyday events and its emphasis on meaning and action that the accounts that it yields are usually*

*insiders' accounts. (... ..)Our intention is to place ethnography within a theoretical tradition which laces a primacy on the importance of situated meaning and contextualized experience as the basis for explaining and understanding social behaviour. (Pole and Morrison, 2003:5).*

Ethnography is therefore, justified to apply in this research to understand the “insider accounts” of teachers and students on the meanings about citizenship, and to investigate their actions and responses in the context of schools under the neoliberal educational reforms.

Nevertheless, I believe that by recording the narration of students from different social backgrounds, we can discover the diversity of meanings of citizenship due to the different social positions of students in the society. The process of ethnographic research could also become an emancipatory power for students to show how alienating the “state citizenship” is to their lives, and what “citizenship” really means to them.

*Ethnographic studies of schooling have the potential to reveal the meaning of schooling as experienced by groups whose viewpoints have been ignored, denigrated or marginalized. In other words, if the education policy process is to be properly informed then it needs to access the perspectives of those most affected by schooling, and the only feasible and realistic way of doing that is through ethnographic means.” (Smyth, 2006:33).*

Since ethnography views knowledge as contextual and interpersonal, and can realize the different aspects of everyday life and the agency of individuals (Stacey, 1988) my rationale to adopt an ethnographic approach is understandable and appropriate to the specified research aims.

### **Research Methodology and Epistemology**

Research Methodology is a set of practical theories built up based on the content of epistemology and ontology. According to Skeggs (2001), due to the emphasis on “experience and the words, voice and lives of the participants” which enables a “view from below”, ethnography provided an excellent methodology for feminists

(Ibid: 430) and could have a direct political impact under the influence of post-feminist theorist (Ibid:429).

Critical ethnography which rooted in the sociology of Bourdieu (e.g.1977, 1979), the sociolinguistics of Bernstein (e.g. 1971, 1973, 1996) and the cultural studies of Birmingham School illuminates ‘the exercise of power in culturally specific yet socially reproductive processes.’ (Lather, 2001:479). Critical ethnography also challenges the objectivism, empiricism and subjectivism in conventional ethnographic practices of detachment and suggests an ‘activist collaboration with oppressed groups’ (Lather, 2001:479), which I found coherent with my epistemological concern.

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge which encompasses a set of questions and issues about knowledge, including ‘what it is, how we get it, how we recognize it, how it relates to truth, how it is entangled with power’ (Griffiths, 1998:35). Researchers’ understanding about how knowledge is constructed (epistemology questions), and their understanding towards the nature of society and human beings (ontology questions), would both influence researchers’ methodology (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002).

The epistemological stand which informed this research could not be separated from my previous experience of studying of Sociology and Gender Studies, which exposed me to the world of feminist literatures and feminist politics and developed my concerns and interest about social inequality and injustice in relation to gender, sexuality, class and ethnicity. My research methodology is largely based on feminist epistemologies and influenced by critical theories. Griffiths (1995) has suggested that feminist epistemologies challenge the “traditional conceptions of epistemology” which, despite the many different feminist epistemological stands, shared two common threads. First is the essential moral/political stance against the devaluation and disempowerment of women which other epistemologies underpin; second is the importance of “self or subjectivity” which acknowledges ‘the subjective consciousness of an individual’ (Griffiths, 1995; 223). Stacey also summarizes the commonalities of feminist epistemologies as ‘widespread disenchantment with the



dualisms, abstractions, and detachment of positivism, rejecting the separation between subject and object, thought and feeling, knower and known, and political and personal as well as their reflections in the arbitrary boundaries of traditional academic disciplines.’ (Stacey, 1988, 21-22)

For critical theory, it is usually referred to the theoretical tradition deriving from the Frankfurt school. Similar to feminist epistemologies, critical theory also take a political stance of uncovering the effect of social political structures or “hegemony” and the associated power relations from a Marxist tradition. The works of Bourdieu (1979) and Freire (1970) are significant examples in the education field.

Informed by the above theories, I formulated a framework of my epistemological position to develop my ethnographic research, which I summarize as follows:

1. Experience: Valuing individuals’ experience, especially the experience of minorities (women, ethnic groups, disabled, migrants etc.) because that can reveal their different situation in society which is often ignored by the mainstream society; that means, attention paid to individuals’ experience can also help us to discover dimensions and issues being ignored in society (Hesse-Biber and Yaiser, 2004; DeVault, 1996; Harding, 1987; Smith, 1987), especially the working of power. Following the poststructuralist viewpoint, experiences could not be understood without the discursive analysis of the production of power and knowledge in Foucault’s term (Skeggs, 2001; 431).
2. Constitutive Knowledge: Feminist researchers and critical ethnographers realize the power relations and problems of ethics between researchers and research participants throughout the research process. Instead of taking a ‘god’s eye view’ (Greene, 1994:426; Griffiths, 1998:46) which suggests the production of ‘objective’ knowledge independence from the observers, researchers should recognize the ‘perspective’ or ‘value system’ of oneself or the participants who shared their own interpretation of the world and knowledge based on their own value system. Thus all knowledge is subjective and should be situated in time and place. Knowledge is also produced through discourses and language, which suggest the multiple and constitutive nature of it (Preece, 2002). The implication

to research methodology is that, while normal research viewed research participants as the “object” of research, in critical ethnography and feminist studies, researchers would regard them as “subjects” or “participants” who simultaneously participate in the construction of knowledge (DeVault, 1996; Harding, 1987; Smith, 1986).

3. Diversity: Emphasizing the importance of realising human diversity, including social and economic class, race, nationality, ethnicity, culture and religion etc.; poststructuralist feminists even extended this definition of diversity into the differences of each individual (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992).

### **Research Ethics and Research Strategy**

The above research methodology also reflects my concern about the possible research ethics that may exist in my research, which influence some of my research strategy that I applied in my research. Based on my concern about the working of power and issues of social justice in relation to the understanding of citizenship and students’ positioning as citizens, I am particularly aware of my ‘situationality and authorial power’ through reflexive practices (Tsolidis, 2008:271). The basic ethics and research strategies are illustrated with brief examples and will be further elaborated in the later sections of “Entering the field” and “Data Collection: a reflexive account”. These later sections will demonstrate that an awareness and sensitivity to research ethics, reflexivity and sensitivity to power relations, should be embodied and internalized by the researcher throughout the research process.

- Informing all participating students and teachers about the purpose of my research and interviews, providing whatever information they needed about the research, and also ensuring that they were participating voluntarily and comfortably. This strategy is especially important in doing research with students and children. During my fieldwork, I have explicitly reminded teachers and students of my position as researcher, as well as my other identities as “substitute teacher/volunteer helper” (Peterson’s school), “alumni of the sisterhood school” (St. Caroline’s) and “Ph.D student” (both schools). I also respected research participants to choose their form of participating in the

interviews. For example, teachers and students could choose the place where they felt comfortable to have the interviews, so that they could feel safe and natural in their familiar environment.

- Use of multiple or creative methods to understand the lives of different research participants, especially students. Sometimes, it may be difficult for students to articulate their emotions or experiences in a face-to-face interview context. The use of other methods, such as group games and photo-taking sessions may allow students to tell a story and share emotions in their own way. Although I found that the use of classroom games and a disposable camera as new research methods seemed to fail due to the passive response of students in Peterson's school, my effort paid off by seeming to help us to build up a more trustful and equal relationship, which encouraged more personal communication in the process of research fieldwork and the participation in interviews especially for Southern Asian students.
- Realise my influence throughout the research process, and record the interactions and social relationships between me and the research participants. Dorothy Smith (1986) has pointed out that in doing social research, besides emphasizing the experiences of research participants, it is very important to be concerned about the subjectivity and the role of the researcher, because when entering the research field, the researcher and the research participants will always be interacting. The researchers' identification of being reflexive throughout the research process and the demonstration of their own position and thinking in the research writing and analysis are essential. Through the researchers' reflexive expression of self in the research, the reader can understand the research process and the result in the full context (Harding, 1983 : Reinharz and Davidman,1992: Smith,1986)

## **4.2 Sampling: Choice of Schools and Research Participants**

### **Choice of schools**

The choice of school is an important part of the methodological section of a piece of educational research. In research based on grounded theory, the choice of schools

may lead to the collection of different data, which may result in a different theorization. In research that is based on certain theoretical hypotheses, the choice of school responds to these hypotheses, in order to collect data which confirm or refute these hypotheses. Therefore, the selection of schools as targets for research is somehow connecting the theoretical and the practical, between theory and data.

Despite the fact that every school has its unique history and ethos, and every student has her/his distinctive stories and perceptions, there are still some significant variables that impact on the conception of citizenship in the school settings. One of the significant variables that may influence the learning and teaching of citizenship process and students' perception is the academic "banding" of the school, which is determined by the academic achievement levels of students the school take in each year.<sup>5</sup> Chan (2006) argued that the competition of academic performance in the academically "high-banding" schools would create a competitive "masculine" ethos in schools that would influence the construction of citizen identities of students. However, Chan (2006) also added that the academic "banding" of schools would not tell the whole picture. Her research has illustrated that the school ethos is also very much dependent on the socio-economic status (SES) of the students. As shown in some studies, students from different social classes experienced different criteria for becoming citizens (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Ball and Reay, 1998; Ball, Davies, David and Reay, 2002); also, students from different social classes would have different understandings of the meaning of citizenship and act in different ways (Walkerdine et al., 2001).

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<sup>5</sup> There is, in fact, no official "banding system" of the schools in Hong Kong. However, primary school students were being categorized into different bandings according to their academic achievement levels in schools. Thus, under the current "3 bands" categories, band 1 students are those with the highest academic achievement level; while band 3 students are those with low academic achievement. The general public normally would consider the percentage of Secondary 1 students' intake of the schools to define the "banding" of schools. Schools that admit mostly "Band 1" students would be considered "Band 1 schools", and vice versa.

In this research, I planned to study two contrasting school cases. The reason for such contradictory case studies is based on the assumption that the neo-liberal education reform would have different effects on the meanings of citizenship in schools with different social class and academic banding background. As mentioned in the previous chapter, many studies have illustrated how different social class practices would influence the school ethos as well as students' understanding of citizenship in the school settings. Together with the specific school cultures developed according to different academic "bandings" in the field in Hong Kong as showed in Chan (2006)'s research, it is significant to explore the effect of the interaction of neo-liberal ideology, social class and academic "banding" of schools on the various meanings of citizenship in contrasting school settings.

Hence, based on this theoretical assumption of the effect of social class and academic banding background, a four school-types model is formulated according to the contextual reality of Hong Kong (Cross Ref: Table 2). The geographical distribution of social class in Hong Kong and academic banding of Hong Kong secondary schools is considered in the process.

I have chosen to compare Type 1 and Type 4 schools which are at the two ends of the spectrum of the model. The implication of such extreme contrast on social class background, schools' academic banding and students' academic ability, is that it could vividly demonstrate the different effect of neoliberalism on the conception of citizenship on different groups of students, particularly, how neo-liberal ideology would change the "evaluative standard" in different schools, and how it would influence teachers' expectations on students and students' social practices according to these standard to become "good students" or "good citizens". The contradictory types of school also allow the comparison of the special features of these two types of school, including aspects such as the school traditions, school ethos, school management structures, characteristics of the teachers, and the students and their parents' backgrounds (educational, occupational and socio-economic backgrounds). I assume that these different factors would influence the social, cultural environment of the schools, which enable/inhabit their students to cultivate the social or cultural capital to become "good students" or "ideal citizens".



The choice of contrasting cases not only implies my expectation of collecting different data for comparison in the two schools, I also expect different fieldwork experience in the two extreme types of schools. As this is an ethnographic study, my personal background and my position in the schools would result in different interaction with the people in the field due to the different school ethos, tradition and background of the schools. For example, I have expected to feel more comfortable and be familiar with school culture and practice in the traditional elite school (Type 1 schools) because I am a graduate of a traditional elite school with long tradition, Christianity background and has the reputation of students with good academic performances; yet, I also expect more difficulties in entering classroom in the elite schools due to my understanding of the teachers' authority and usual practice of these traditional elite schools. On the other hand, I assume that students of Type 4 schools would have more negative attitudes towards school lives, and may appear hostile towards me as stranger at the beginning when I am introduced to them by their teachers. Nevertheless, these different research experiences also imply the various understanding and interpretation of the research data collected in the types of schools.

Here, I explain the geographical distribution and academic banding of these four types of school, which demonstrate the different combinations of social class and students' intakes, as well as the related characteristics of these schools.

**Type 1 School:** are the traditional elite schools which are located on Hong Kong Island or in the major school districts in central Kowloon. Traditional elite schools in Hong Kong are normally established in the early years of the colonial era by religious organizations (mainly Catholic Churches or Protestant Churches). Therefore, these schools mostly have a long history in Hong Kong, and are located in early developed districts, which have become the most densely-populated business districts in Hong Kong. Because of their long history, their fame and traditions, these schools are very popular among students and parents, and attract students living in different parts of Hong Kong who travel every day to school. Although there are still students from lower-middle class or working class background, the majority of students are from middle-class background. One of the reasons is that students are

mainly entering the schools directly from the primary schools affiliated to these elite schools, and under the scoring system, children can get more points if their parents are alumni or their siblings are in the same schools. They can also get more points to enter these schools if they are of the same religion as the school founding organizations.

It is noteworthy that nowadays some of these elite schools have joined the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), in which these schools are given a “block grant” and are allowed to have more flexibility in financing, management and student intake. There was a wave of public discussion and concern about the DSS scheme in recent years especially when there is an increasing number of traditional elite schools joining the scheme.

**Type 2 School:** are the best schools in the New Territories, named by some people as “regional elite schools”. Although not all the students living in the New Territories are from lower-income families and, in fact, students in these schools are from diverse social class backgrounds, comprised of intermediate-class and working-class students, it is still obvious that these students do not receive as much resource as the students in elite schools. One of the reasons is that these schools were founded by the government or by local charity organizations.

**Type 3 School:** are the academically low-band schools located on Hong Kong Island. Students of these schools are not academically high-achieving, but they are normally living nearby the schools or in the same districts. In the past few years, Wan Chai District and Central and Western District on Hong Kong Island remained the two districts that have highest average household income (CSD, 2007, 2008, 2009). Therefore, schools in these districts may have a high possibility to have students from upper-middle or middle class families.

**Type 4 School:** are the academically low-band schools located in districts that have reported the least average household income, including Tin Shui Wan Sham Shui Po and Tuen Mun. Because of the population in these districts, Type 4 schools usually have more diverse students from the marginalized groups in the society, including

Pakistani students and immigrants from China. Based on the statistics of the Hong Kong Census Report in the past few years, the Northern District and Sham Shui Po District remain the two districts that have lowest average household income in Hong Kong (CSD, 2007, 2008, 2009). Therefore, schools in these districts tend to have students from lower income families.

To make it clear, the four types of schools are illustrated in the following table.

<b>Social class</b>	<b>Middle Class</b>	<b>Working Class</b>
<b>Students Intake</b>		
<b>High-achieving Students</b>	<i>Type 1</i> Traditional elite school located in Hong Kong Island or central Kowloon	<i>Type 2</i> Best school in districts in New Territories. Some people named them the “regional elite schools”.
<b>Low-achieving Students</b>	<i>Type 3</i> Academically-low band school located in Hong Kong Island	<i>Type 4</i> Academically-low band school located in Tin Shui Wan or Sham Shui Po

Table 2 - Illustration of four schools types according to students’ social class and general students’ achievement level in schools

### *Refining the school choice model*

After my progression board in October 2009, I went back to Hong Kong at the end of the year and started to send out email and printed letters to ask for permission to enter schools for my research project. In this initial stage, I tried to stick to my original research plan on researching in a traditional co-educational elite school (Type 1 schools) and an academically low-banded, co-educational working class school in Shum Shui Po or Tin Shui Wan districts (Type 4 schools). However, I failed to gain any positive reply from twenty working class, lower band schools in Shum Shui Po and Tin Shui Wan districts nor did the eight co-educational traditional elite schools in Hong Kong at the first stage of invitation. From the thirty to forty emails and letters I had sent, I had only got two written replies (one elite, one working class) which officially rejected my request to enter their school. All other

emails and letters were ignored or seemed to be lost on the way to schools when I called up the school offices to follow up the requests. The phone calls to school offices were often futile as one could never reach the school principals or anyone who could really make the decision of allowing you to enter the school. The most common replies from staff working in the offices were “if you have sent out those emails or letters, the school principal or the teacher-in-charge would have read it and replied to you” or “I am not sure whether we got your letter/email. Maybe you can send it to us again and wait for our reply”. After about a month of on-going negotiations with school staff, and to get in touch with the real gate-keepers, and with the school holidays and examinations period that prolonged my wait and mounting frustration.

I decided to change my plan and for the help of my M.Phil. supervisor Prof. Po-king Choi. After discussing my research plan, she frankly pointed out that it was quite impossible for me to gain access into any traditional elite schools if I didn't have any social connections with them. Unfortunately, she and the several professors that were able to help me, only had contacts and connections with some of the single-sex traditional elite schools in Hong Kong. And if I insisted on finding an academically high-band co-educational school, she could introduce me to several “regional elite schools” but the students of these schools might not be located in areas of high average household income, and thus might have a lower proportion of students from better-off family backgrounds than the traditional elite schools.

Here, I need to explain the meaning of, and the differences between, “traditional elite schools” and “regional elite schools”. Firstly, traditional elite schools in Hong Kong all have longer histories than the regional elite schools. Some of the traditional elite schools have been established for more than a hundred years (which is quite a long time in the short history of Hong Kong's educational development). This has also led to the second difference. For the traditional elite schools, they have long been recognized by the whole public as elite schools since the early years, and the status and fame of these schools still remains nowadays. As for the regional elite schools which have shorter histories, most of these schools are only recognized as good schools in specific school districts. Thirdly, there is a difference in the student intake.

Most parents from the middle-class (or even upper middle-class) would prefer their children to study in a school with fame and learn better English. Therefore, many students in traditional elite schools (though not all of them) come from families of higher socio-economic status. While some of the traditional elite schools have joined the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), from which they could raise the amount of the tuition fee, the proportion of middle-class students of these traditional elite schools have increased constantly.

For regional elite schools, the background of students is a mixture of different social classes according to different school districts. Although these schools are less popular than the traditional elite schools among the general public, they are still popular because of their use of English as medium of instruction. These schools would attract students with good academic results too, but students would prefer to study in schools that are around the neighbourhood to avoid extra transportation costs and time, or to avoid the academic and economic stress and competition in the traditional elite schools.

Here I faced my first critical decision-making moment in my research. If gaining access into a traditional elite co-educational school was impossible, there were mainly two dimensions that I had to consider for the choice of elite school as a comparison with the working –class co-educational school. The first dimension was gender. If I choose to research a single-sex traditional elite school, the comparison between the two school cases laid out in my original research plan might be incomplete, as I believed that gender is intertwined with social class in influencing the construction of citizenship and citizen identity. I might lose the chance to compare the gender dimension of citizenships of both sexes between the two school cases if one of the cases was a single-sex school. For example, if I entered a girls' school, I might fail to compare the dominant forms of masculinity or what is defined as "a man" or "a citizen" of the elite school with the one in a working-class school. However, I might still compare the different meanings of citizenship for girls in the two class-distinctive schools. Moreover, I might even address the kind of masculinities in the working-class school with reference to the hegemonic



masculinity discourses existing in the society, which seem to be invisible but definitely also exist in the girls' elite school.

Another dimension was about social class. If I chose to enter a regional co-educational elite school in order to make a perfect comparison with the working-class band 3 school, which would probably be a co-educational school (because of the vast majority of the number of co-educational schools in Hong Kong, except for elite schools), I might not find significant differences in the social class dimension between the two schools in my research. However, based on the literature reviews on Bourdieu's work and Choi (2005)'s review about the policies of Hong Kong Education Reform, the significance and influence of social class in my research was evidently inevitable, and surely could not be eliminated in the consideration of the choice of school cases. After considering the pros and cons of whether to try a single-sex traditional elite school or co-educational regional elite school, I finally decided to ask for Prof. Choi's help in contacting the single-sex traditional elite schools because of the overwhelming significance of the social class factor in my research.

In the process of considering the social class and gender dimensions of choosing school cases, I had also come up with some other alternatives in order to make my research project possible. For example, as entering a working class school would be more possible, I had thought about concentrating the research on a single case and comparing some of the characteristics of traditional elite schools by just doing interviews with students from these schools. However, I still believed that in-depth interviews could not compensate for a thorough ethnographic research which allows researchers to immerse themselves in the environment and atmosphere of the field, plus observing the very subtle rules or very prevalent discourses that influence the participants. Thus, I just kept this alternative plan as a backup and continued to search for ways to get access to traditional elite schools.

The struggling of process of gaining entry also gave me the chance to reflect on what kinds of underlying messages were embedded in my experience of being rejected or ignored to gain access to schools. First of all, the fact that many Hong Kong schools

appeared so difficult to engage with for me as a researcher was clearly significant. The unwillingness of these institutions to even communicate with me to refuse my access was somehow a common experience for student researchers who were not official staff or researchers based in higher education institutions. Due to the historical background of the development of Hong Kong's education system, the school organizing bodies in Hong Kong had long been given a large degree of autonomy --- at least before the launch of education reform which has emphasized managerialism and accountability since 2000. The whole education sector appeared to be an "enclosed system" because no "outsider" could easily get in and witness what is really happening inside schools. In the past, it was only the intern-teachers who would be observed in the classroom by professors from their educational degrees or examiners of the Education Department for their performance evaluations. In recent years, classroom observation between teachers, by principals/senior colleagues or by the inspectors from the Education Bureau have become more regular because of the introduction of policies including "Professional Development" scheme, "Internal/external School Review" and "Quality Assurance Inspection" under the Education Reform. However, these top-down policies and constant "scrutiny" have been identified by most of the teachers as insulting, which is disrespectful and challenges their teaching profession and intervening in their autonomy and authority in the school and classroom. Thus, the reluctance of allowing researchers to enter schools may be a result of both the lack of culture of conducting research (especially qualitative research) in Hong Kong schools from long ago, and also the recent scepticism towards all "outsiders" among teaching staff under the current atmosphere in the education sectors, so that schools would rather play safe to avoid any flaws or mistakes being recorded and made public.

Secondly, the "failure" in gaining access to school also revealed the need to have social connections with the gatekeepers of the schools under the aforementioned culture and practice of Hong Kong schools. Because of the "enclosed system" of the traditional elite schools, social connections became the easiest way to gain entry into the system. With the help of my ex-supervisor, Prof. Choi, I was introduced to a school principal because of the established relationships between Prof Choi and the

school. My dubious status as a complete “outsider” became less threatening because my identity and personality was guaranteed by Prof Choi, who was known by members of the school. However, that did not mean that I had immediately become an “insider” to everyone in the school, because my existence and my purpose in the school was not officially announced to the whole school, and teachers remained sceptical of my existence in the school sites even when they heard about my research. On the contrary, I witnessed many past students of St. Caroline’s who came back to shoot documentaries or conduct surveys with teachers and students for their universities assignments. In our conversations, I realised that all alumni are welcome to go back to the campus at any time, and that they just need a verbal approval from the school principal for them to film on the campus or do any survey or questionnaires in school. It is obvious that a direct social connection between alumni and the school is more powerful.

In the various discussions with my ex-supervisors about gaining access to schools, it appeared to me that there is a consensus among senior researchers and professors about the essentiality of having social connections with schools, particularly traditional elite schools, for the research to begin. Such shared belief or “common sense” about the power of social connections led me to think about the value of social connections and their relationships with the traditional elite schools. Obviously, social connections can be viewed as social capital as mentioned by Bourdieu (1986), and students or alumni of traditional elite schools could easily realise the value of such social capital and seem to put a high value on social connections and social networking. One of the reasons is that the long-established traditional elite schools in Hong Kong have always been the birthplace of the elites in different sectors, including senior government officials, politicians, senior managers of the commercial sector and professors in the universities. The general public, especially students, parents and employers, could easily relate these celebrities or people with power and authority with particular traditional elite schools. The traditional elite schools also rely on the fame of their alumni to maintain their elite school status, so to attract more talented students to their schools. Simultaneously, graduating from these traditional elite schools is like inheriting the

competency marked by the alumni of the schools. Thus, graduates from the traditional elite schools are also benefited by the fame of the schools in the market, while also reinforcing the legend of traditional elite schools if they can reach positions of power. Therefore, the relationship between traditional elite schools and their alumni is inter-connected. Students are educated with these “rules of the game” about social connections and social networking in the wider Hong Kong society during the schooling process. For example, in St. Caroline’s College, the school had invited many famous alumni to record their greetings in a video-clip to show in front of all the current students and some of the parents during the celebration events of the school’s over 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary while, at the same time, the school’s anniversary also attracted mass media to arrange interviews with those famous alumni to share their experiences about their ‘good old days’ in the school. The reciprocal relationships thus further reinforced the social network and added to the social value of such connections.

Hence, though I had not officially started my ethnographic research inside school settings as I had planned, the process of searching for schools to gain access actually provided me with the opportunity to rethink the very core concepts of my research, in addition, to think about the underlying meanings beneath the superficial “failure” of gaining access to school. Noticing the Hong Kong education system as a partially enclosed community, and the value and practice of social connections and social networking in the traditional elite schools culture, this experience of “failure” helped me to contextualise my research and the schools that I was going to enter.

### **Choice of research participants**

The application of ethnographic research methods is to respond to my research focus on discovering the different meanings of citizenship in the two schools under the influence of neoliberalism and social class. While the method of participant observation allowed me to observe the school culture and the daily school lives, I am also interested in exploring how human beings within such institutions would interpret and interact with the official meanings of citizenship, and their own understanding or experience of being a citizen in Hong Kong. In-depth interviews

with interviewees including the school principals, teachers and students of the two schools thus could help us to collect these significant data which contributed an important part of this thesis.

The research participants in the interviews were generally serendipitously invited but the choice of participants was not completely unstructured. For students, I changed my plan to include students of different school levels instead of my initial plan of targeting only students in their fourth year or above. My original plan was that senior students would be more articulate in describing their understanding about “citizenship” or being a citizen in Hong Kong. However, during my stay in the school, I met some other students of the lower forms who showed interest in my research and who were also articulate to share their thoughts and stories, which I found could answer some of my research questions regarding the relationship between social class and meaning of citizenship in school (E.g. Yvonne of St. Caroline’s College). Besides, South Asian students in Peterson’s Secondary School were a very significant group, but all of them were in the third form or below because they were admitted in the past 3 years after the school’s change of admission policy. Thus, I decided to include this group of students into my research even though they were in lower forms. A more fundamental problem about targeting a particular grade of students in my research was that many students in Peterson’s School were in fact older than their classmates because of late enrolment, or because they have repeated their grade of studies due to different reasons. Although there still were some students that I was unable to reach in both schools, (e.g. those who truanted constantly in Peterson’s school) I still managed to interview students of different school levels, different academic performances, different family and socio-economic background, as well as students of different ethnic origins in Peterson’s school to explore their different schooling experiences.

For teachers, I also tried to include different types of teachers in my research who might be able to share their views concerning different aspects of school lives. For example, I invited teachers of different ages, different genders, different lengths of time spent in the school, and teachers teaching in different subjects or responsible for student activities, students’ discipline or civic and moral education, so that I can



understand the evolution of school policies, curriculum, school culture, students' ability in learning and participations. While limited by the numbers of teachers willing to be interviewed, I still managed to cover different types of teachers in both schools including teachers of guidance and discipline team; teachers who were organizing students' 'Other Learning Experiences' or related activities; and language teachers or class teachers who were in the position to comment on related school policies. I also interviewed the school principals of both schools so that I could understand more about the rationale behind certain school policies. For more references, please refer to Appendix D on the Demographic Profile of Students and Teachers of the two schools.

Yet, the choice of research participants to participate in in-depth interviews is constrained by the different situation and limitations in the two schools due to the specific context of the field. The difficulties encountered in the two schools is further elaborated in the following sections respectively.

### ***Difficulties encountered in the field***

#### **St. Caroline's College**

As explained in the following about the difficulties of entering the field, the External School Review by the Education Bureau conducted in February to early April in St. Caroline's campus not only made my access for research impossible during that period, but also exhausted the teachers and students of the school. After the thorough surveillance and careful inspection of these two months, the gate-keeper, Mr. Kim explained that many teachers expressed reluctance towards additional class observations and in-depth interviews for my research. This resulted in the limited access to classroom for observations and limited interactions between me and the potential interview participants (both teachers and students) because I was expected to be low profile and behave non-intrusively in the campus. Without the official introduction by Mr. Kim or the school principal in front of the whole school or to the teachers' group, many teachers and students did not notice my existence in the campus until I introduced myself to them when we randomly encountered in the campus. This is one of the major reasons that I had to take up every opportunity to

invite teachers or students who are interested in my research to conduct interviews, without sticking to my original plan of inviting teachers and students with specific characteristics as listed above.

Furthermore, while I largely relied on Mr. Kim's help to contact teachers and specific students (e.g., the popular students, student representatives in the Student Council, and the only ethnic minority student in school) for the interview in the first place, when Mr. Kim refused to help as he had promised at the last stage of my observation in school, I had to interview teachers and students who were willing to be interviewed because of the limited time and opportunities to negotiate.

### **Peterson's Secondary School**

The situation in Peterson's Secondary School was completely different from that of St. Caroline's College. The politics between different groups of teachers had created tension among the teaching staff and posed difficulties for me to build up trustful relationships with teachers. There were mainly three groups of teachers, including (1) the group supporting the school principal; (2) the group supporting the vice-school principal and (3) the group who distanced themselves from neither of the groups but were close to students. As I was introduced into the school by the school principal, teachers of the other two groups were more reserved and reticent about talking to me, thus hindered the progress of the research and limit my access to their classroom. It took much more time to let them observe my personality and integrity and to understand about the purposes and content of my research.

Another difficulty in approaching teachers was due to teachers' engagement in school in the two extremes: the extremely uninvolved teachers and the very committed teachers. During my fieldwork, I observed that some teachers were absent constantly and left school after class immediately. It seemed that they did not engage in their work, nor did they have any interest to build up a closer relationship with the students, and of course, to talk to me. I admitted that I had not been successful in inviting this group of teachers to conduct interviews. For the teachers who are very committed to school works, they were often those who had already taken up most of the responsibilities in school to organize students' activities. Most of them not only

had to work until late evening but also spent their weekends to accompany students for their dance performances or sports event outside school campus. The difficulty was to ask them to spare time in their busy schedule for interviews but most of them were very helpful and willing to share their thoughts with me in the in-depth interview.

Many students in Peterson's school, just as some of their teachers, were slightly antagonistic at the beginning when I was introduced to the school by the school principal in the school assembly. Not only because of their mistrust in and resistance against the school authority, they were also hostile when I entered the classroom as a substitute teacher whenever their teachers were absent. It took time for me to clarify my role as a researcher and to prove my presence in the classroom or campus was for observation and research purposes instead of helping the school to discipline or scrutinize them.

Some other students, even though they later had built up a trustful relationship with me, they simply did not engage in school lives and escaped from the school site as soon as possible. It was difficult to have their agreement to participate in the interviews as they were uninterested about school or feeling indifferent to my research. They may have developed their own meanings of citizenship based on their personal experience (e.g. family, work or local community) which may not be related to the school version of citizenship or their schooling experience. However, limited to the research ethics I could not force them to participate in the research when that was against their will. Shawn was the only local boy that I could interview in this group of students, who later quitted the school before school term ended.

As I have mentioned at the beginning of this section, the major limitation of an unsystematic sampling of interview participants is that the voices of some of the special representative groups in the schools would be missed out in this research, especially for those teachers and students who may disagree with the school policies or the school's official meanings of citizenship and ideal citizen image. Although I have tried my best to include different voices, and some interviewees may have expressed their discontent towards some of the school policies, the significant voices

of those who actually showed vigorous dissent through their action of continuous truanting, or not participating would not be recorded in the interview. Such limitation implies the absence of the voice of dissent held by a non-negligible group which may affect my understanding and interpretation of the collected research data of the various meanings of citizenship in both schools.

The interview schedules were designed to be conducted at the later stage of the fieldwork. It was expected that after a period of participant observation in the field, teachers and students would be more familiar with the researcher and an interactive and trustful relationship would have developed, which made the interview invitation and the interviewing process smoother. Besides, in the interview process, I would have already understood the context of what the interviewees are talking about, and be more sensitive to significant areas that might be related to my research questions related to the construction of citizenship and the cultivation of cultural capital.

Based on the research ethics that I had laid out in previous sections, the research schedule were organized based on the participants' need. For instance, I usually invite students and teachers to be interviewed individually to ensure their privacy and a pressure-less environment to share their personal stories and opinions. However, a few pairs of students in both schools had requested to be interviewed with their close friends due to different reasons. The two pairs of senior students in St. Caroline's College preferred to be interviewed together because they had limited free time and hoped to finish the interview together in one goal; for the Nepalese boy Ashar and his friend Saila, they were both very quiet and shy so they felt more comfortable to be interviewed together. The only group interview that I had arranged with the St. Caroline's girls was because of my major aim to listen to their discussion about their experiences of different "Other learning experiences" activities. After knowing this group of girls who were in the same class and who were close friends, I discovered that they shared many similarities in their middle-classed family backgrounds, academic abilities and participation level in school activities. Therefore, the group interview was conducted in a way similar to group discussion, that I tried to stimulated them with some questions and topics related to the school's policies or events and allowed them to discuss and share more their personal opinion about their

schooling experiences. Because this group interview was the first formal students' interview I conducted with St. Caroline's students (late May, 2010), the interview content had helped me to discover more about the relationship between the school's "Extended Learning Week" programme and the official meanings of citizenship in school, and how students reflected to that.

2 Students were usually selected to be interviewed based on two criteria. Firstly, I would consider whether the students had any special personal characteristics or family backgrounds that might have opinions or stories to share related to the meanings of citizenship. For example, I had targeted to interview at least one student of different ethnic groups (Hong Kong Chinese, Chinese immigrants, Nepalese, Pakistani, Indian, and Filipinos), so that I could understand how their ethnicity, religion and culture would affect their schooling experience especially the possible conflict and difficulties when they encounter the kind of citizenship suggested by the school. The choice of interviewing students of different age, different social class backgrounds, and those who were being viewed as "special" in their class/group (e.g. studious students in Peterson's school, or Pakistani students who hated school but actively participated in sports in school) was also based on the expectations of the sharing of different stories for comparisons. However, students' interest and willingness to participate in the in-depth interview in the research would be another important factors. Although I was accepted by students and teachers of both schools at the later stage in the field, and was able to chat with them personally, not many of them were willing to be interviewed formally, especially in Peterson's school. To respect the will of the participants and to adhere to the research ethics, I could only invite every student that agreed to be interviewed to capture more of their voices. The characteristics or special background was less of my concern at the later stage of the fieldwork.

As illustrated in the reflection on my process of doing in-depth interview, the interviews were semi-structured based on the areas of topics related to the construction of citizens' identities/cultural identities and cultivation of cultural capital of teachers and students in schools. Simultaneously, questions were also developed from my understanding to the interviewee's background, knowledge, or



even incidents/observations that I encountered in the field. Sometimes, the interviewees would also contribute to the development of certain topics during our interview conversations. These semi-structured interviews had indeed increased the difficulty for the coding and interpretation of data, because the amount of data could be huge and the topics covered could be very wide-ranged. Yet, this might be exactly the advantages of conducting a qualitative ethnographic study, as it could capture the complexity of the reality and reveal the intersection of different factors influencing the construction of citizens' identities.

### **4.3 Introducing the Two Schools in this Research**

#### **Introduction**

The Education Sector (Schools) in Hong Kong has its own priorities due to historical and social changes and, mostly, to the changes in educational policies. In the following sections, I will try to analyse how these different aspects have stratified the schools in Hong Kong, and illustrate the special status of the elite schools in comparison to all other ordinary schools. This analysis may serve to reveal the reasoning process of why I considered the elite schools and the lower-classed and banded schools as extreme cases, and provide a background understanding of the two schools in this research. For an overall summary of the background information of the two schools, please refer to the table in Appendix E.

#### **Ideological Backgrounds of the Schools**

Due to the historical background of Hong Kong, most of the elite schools are missionary schools that were established about a century ago, and these schools have received government grants since early colonial years. Since the early 1980s, when the government subsidy has extended to the majority of secondary schools, including schools founded by local charitable organizations, some of the schools which have strong political connections with the communist sovereignty in China rejected the colonial government's subsidy and remained in the private sector. At that time, private schools were not that popular among parents and students in Hong Kong, and thus these schools were seen as having lower quality and student intake (Choi, 2005).

Although the quality and popularity of schools with “pro-China” backgrounds has increased significantly in recent years<sup>6</sup>, the most popular schools are what Hong Kong people call the “branded schools”, “name schools” (Chan, 2006) (or what I call “elite schools” in this research) and are those elite/prestigious missionary schools with a long-established history which are mostly located on expensive land. Therefore, although it is quite “unbalanced”, the theoretical background of the elite schools is mostly Christianity or Catholic, only a few of them are governmental schools with no religious background.

In this research, both schools are of Catholic backgrounds, but belonged to different missionary groups. St. Caroline’s College was established by a global missionary group, which was one of the earliest religious missionary organizations of European background that provided education to foreign and local young people in the early colonial years as an important part of their social services to the communities. Many of these missionary elite schools had taken up significant roles in providing educational and upwardly mobile opportunities to young people of less-privileged backgrounds after the government announced the 9-years compulsory education (Primary 1 to Secondary 3) for all children/teenagers in 1978 and subsidized by the government. The long-established history and global missionary background had influenced the school culture and tradition enormously, especially in the language policies on the campus. It was very obvious when comparing the English-speaking prayers and hymn-singing with the Cantonese-oriented assemblies in the locally founded Peterson’s School established by a local Catholic organization.

### **Medium of Instruction**

As illustrated in the Language Ecology section in Ch. 2, the medium of instruction is also another major factor that stratifies schools. In 1998 the Education and

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<sup>6</sup> In my opinion, the reasons for this change might be due to (1) the joining of Direct Subsidy Schemes (DSS) that benefited the schools’ financial situation and lowered the tuition fees which attracted more parents; (2) the public phobia towards the communist party and people from the “left”/pro-China camp has lessened after the political handover in 1997, and the fact of the rapid and close cooperation between HK and China in economic development; (3) these pro-China schools tried to play down their “left-ness” in public in recent years in order to attract more students in the educational market.

Manpower Bureau (now Education Bureau) implemented the “mother-language teaching” policy so that all schools in Hong Kong were compelled to teach in Chinese. However, due to the fierce dispute in the society, this compulsory “mother-language teaching” policy is accompanied by an “exit” which allows about 100 schools which can prove that their students have the ability to learn in English to remain as “EMI schools” (Schools that use English as the Medium of Instruction). This language policy has increased the division between normal schools and elite schools because, before the implementation of this policy, most of the schools claimed themselves to be EMI schools; but after this policy the labelling effect of being CMI schools has turned the best students away from these schools and they have tried every means to get into the 114 EMI schools. The medium of instruction factor contributed much on the contradiction of status and popularity of the two schools in this research. The details of the language policies and practices will be discussed in Ch.5.

### **Socio-economic status (SES) of students**

#### **Peterson’s Secondary School**

Students of Peterson’s Secondary School were mostly from working-class families. Many of them joined the School Textbook Assistance Scheme or School Travel Subsidy Scheme, and many of the students were living in public housing estates in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long or Tin Shui Wai: districts that were among the lowest “medium average household income” in Hong Kong based on the statistics of the Hong Kong Census Report in the past few years (CSD, 2007, 2009a, 2009b). However, there were also a few students I met that were from better-off families who were living in private estates or had the money for post-school tutorial classes.

#### **St. Caroline’s College**

Students of St. Caroline’s College were mostly from middle-class families. Many of the students were living in the middle-class private real estates or residential areas in Southern District or Western and Central District of Hong Kong Island, which were the wealthier districts in Hong Kong according to the Hong Kong Census Report in the past few years (CSD, 2007, 2009a, 2009b). However, there were some students

living far away from the school, and teachers also pointed out that there were about 3% to 5% of students joining the School Textbook Assistance Scheme or School Travel Subsidy Scheme.

### **Some characteristics of students**

#### **Peterson's Secondary School**

The intake of students to Peterson's School was quite diverse during the time I was in the field. In the past, only local students or immigrants from China (all of Chinese origin) were accepted into the school. However, since 2007, the school started to change their admission strategy by accepting Non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, including Pakistanis, Nepalese and a few Indonesian and Filipinos. This admission policy was to "save" the school from being closed down by the Education Bureau because of its under-enrolment (a minimum of 21 pupils is required to form a class). This was due to the decreasing total number of pupils (low birth rate) and the keen competition between schools. This change allowed the school to become one of the few "Designated Schools" which would continue to admit more NCS students in the future. As a result of this admission policy, the structure of students in the school was quite special: all senior forms students (F.4 to F.7) were of Chinese origin; while in junior forms, the number of NCS students increased each year and even outnumbered Chinese students in S.1 and S.2<sup>7</sup>.

Many students joined the school in the middle of the academic year due to different reasons; and at the same time, the truancy rates at the school were very high so that some of the students were suspended from school.

#### **St. Caroline's College**

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<sup>7</sup> Starting from the academic year 2009-2010, the new Senior Secondary School Curriculum was implemented in all schools in Hong Kong. Students would only have to participate in one public examination (Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education, HKDSE) after their 6 years of secondary school education (3 junior years and 3 senior years). At the same time, there were still students who were under the original secondary school system who needed to study for 7 years and participate in two public examinations (Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE). In order to distinguish the two groups of students (in different curriculum systems), the level of studies were renamed as "S1", "S2" (Secondary 1 or Secondary 2) etc. as distinct from the original way as "F.1", "F.2" (Form 1 or Form 2).

Many students studied in the primary school or even kindergarten which is directly linked to this school. At the same time, many of the students had mothers or siblings who were studying or were alumni of the school. Thus, many students had a very strong sense of belonging to the school.

The school had a history of admitting Non-Chinese speaking students. When I entered the school, a teacher told me that there were a few students from Pakistan and from the Philippines currently studying at the school. I was told that one of the students who was a Filipino could speak very fluent Cantonese and could study Chinese with all the other classmates. However, I failed to identify and interview these students during my fieldwork.

### **Some characteristics of teachers**

#### **Peterson's Secondary School**

The number of teachers in the school had changed rapidly in the past few years (according to students and teachers), and even in the half year I stayed in the school, there were two teachers who left in the middle of the academic term. The current teachers that remained in the school could be divided into two groups: one group of teachers that had worked in the school more than 10 years, who were usually the head of the academic team or administrative team (e.g. Discipline, Guidance team); the other group of teachers were usually very new to the school and had worked there less than 5 years. Some of the teachers in this group were retired teachers from other public or aided schools; the others were freshly graduated from the universities.

The politics between teachers, the School Principal and the Vice-principal somehow had influenced the atmosphere of the school and students' attitudes towards the school.

The statistics for the number of days (and the total sessions) of teachers' absence was printed out and posted on the board in the staffroom. As shown in the list, quite a number of teachers were absent from time to time, and this was supported by my own experience after I entered the school as a substitute "teacher".



## **St. Caroline's College**

Many of the teachers were alumni of this school or of other schools under the same Mission.

Each year there were a few new teachers joining the school, but generally there was a limited change in the members of teaching staff. Quite a few teachers mentioned that they were satisfied in working in this school and generally agreed with the school's traditions and culture which was upheld by the school administrative team.

Teachers also talked about the freedom they had in their own classroom in talking about sensitive or controversial issues. But there were also teachers disagreeing with the language policy the School Principal introduced.

### **4.4 Data Collection: A Reflexive Account**

As mentioned, because of all the power relations involved in the field and also the limitations in the actual research settings, the process of data collection required the researcher's flexibility to adapt to changes and to modify the original research plan. For example, originally, observation in liberal studies classes was part of my research, but I was forced to change my plan because of different reasons in the two schools (which I will explain in the following sections). Yet, the role of researchers is to cope with situations in the field so that the research can be continued, while at the same time to ensure that the validity and reliability of the data and, most importantly, the code of ethics of research have been taken into consideration when we make decisions. This section will display how I collected the research data through methods including textual materials collection, participant observations and in-depth interviews. (For lists of materials and observation occasions, please refer to Appendix I). I will elaborate the methods that I used, the action I took and the decisions I made in my ethnographic research by explaining my rationale and beliefs in the design of the method, my original plan of how to apply them, and also the actual practices of the method when I entered the "real world" of the schools. By applying a reflexive account, an illustration of the data collection process, the ethics

issue and research strategies that I applied and, most importantly, the power relations between the students and me, will also be shown in this section.

**Chronology and sequence of data collection methods**

The following table will first illustrate the chronology and sequence of the data collection methods I applied in the field.

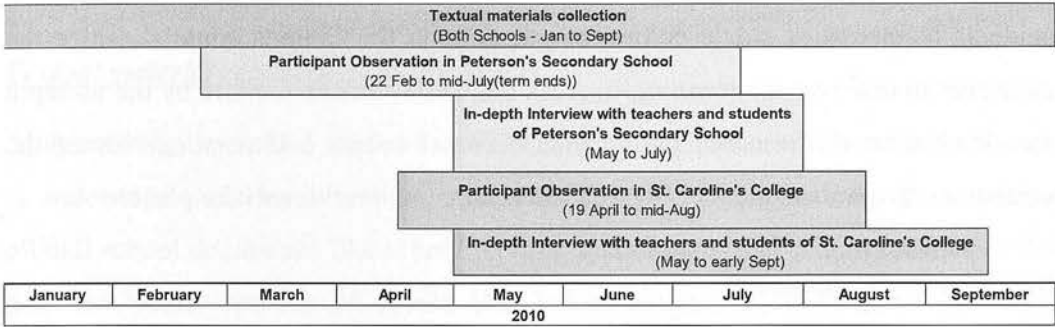


Table 3 - Illustration of the chronology and sequence of the data collection methods I applied in the field

The above graphical illustration shows the sequence of the use of different data collection methods, including the collection of textual materials, participant observations and in-depth interviews. Before entering the fields in January, 2010, I had already started to collect information about the schools on the internet, including searching of the newspaper clippings related to the schools and its students, and studying the schools' websites to understand the basic school structures and downloading digital school reports from it. The collection of text materials continued later during my fieldwork period, but it was especially significant to start before I entered the fields because it provided a wider context for me to understand the schools and the essential background for me to interpret what I encountered in the field. Also, teachers and students in the field would assume my basic familiarity of the schools. Thus, these textual materials are also indispensable for me to communicate effectively with the research participants in the field and later in the in-depth interview.

My official first date of entering Peterson's secondary school for research was 22 February, 2010; and 19 April, 2010 to St. Caroline's College. In both schools, I started off doing participant observations in the campus because this not only gave me more ideas about the normal daily practice, routine and culture of the schools, it also allowed me to gradually immersed into the school culture and developed closer relationships with teachers and students in the field. The period concentrating on observation before conducting in-depth interview is also significant because special incidents happened or subtle culture or practices in the campus could sensitize the researcher to discover the meaningful areas that could further explore by the in-depth interviews with the research participants. Critical events and personalities of the research participants could be observed too before the interviews take place.

### **Documentary Evidence**

In this research, there were two sets of textual materials that were used. First were the official documents issued by the government or governmental organizations concerning the education reform; the others were the textual materials I gathered in the two schools in the research.

#### **Education Reform Documents**

Before I entered the research field, I had gathered some of the major documents related to Education Reform and did a brief analysis of the first document and selected chapters in the other documents (Appendix A). The reason for focusing on the reform proposal (2000) is that it was the first document that officially announced the 'kick-off' of the reform, and it determined the direction of the whole education reform in the later years. The documents were essential for understanding the complete picture of the education reform which is the context of the educational system and the schools I researched. Besides, by looking into the documents, my aim was to identify how the social condition or the society's future was portrayed, which easily rationalised the education reform agenda to nurture students into the kind of future citizens with personalities, characteristics, values and attitudes that suited the needs of society.

The preliminary reading and analysis of the first two reform documents and specific chapters in the selected documents also allowed me to familiarise myself with the new curriculum and the new policies, which I expected to help me understand the effects or changes in policies and curriculum in school brought by the reform. Therefore, the reform documents also served as the background information of the research, as well as providing “sensitizing concepts” for me to observe and ask questions when I situated in the field.

### **Textual materials collections in the field**

After entering the field, I started to collect other textual materials that could help me to understand the schools and the students in schools. These materials included the official school documents like school reports, school plans and school reviews of the past few years; records of events like school magazines, pamphlets for Mass, anniversary celebrations and graduation ceremonies, and also students’ publications like student magazines. In Peterson’s School, because of my substitute teachers’ identity, I was allowed to access the teaching materials in school, which included the tailor-made Chinese language textbook for South Asian students to learn Chinese. All of these textual materials were collected with permission from the school or teachers who were in charge of the events or teaching materials.

Besides the traditional way of keeping a copy of these materials, some of the data was not collected in its original form but was made into digital copies. For example, some of the textual materials or graphics ranged from students’ compositions, photos of students in-school or outside school activities, newspaper cuttings about students’ awards or interviews of alumni or students, newsletters and photos of parent-teacher associations, announcements or core committees of clubs and societies, or even information about the members and duties of school boards and administrative arrangements of staff, were all posted on the notice boards around the campus of St. Caroline’s College. Aside from writing down some of the information in my notebook, I found my digital camera a very convenient and trustworthy equipment helping me to record quickly and accurately, especially for photos or graphic materials on the boards. In Peterson’s School, official materials such as structures of

school boards or duties of staff were not as approachable as in St. Caroline's, but the use of the digital camera was also frequent as teachers were used to displaying students' work on walls in the corridors, stairs or next to the staff's lift. Therefore, the use of the digital camera in my research was not just for ease of collecting textual materials. It also helped record some of my observations in a more concrete and illustrative way. In the example of Peterson's School, the use of space by teachers and by students could be difficult to express and record in writing or in audio recording, but it could be easily displayed by a photograph.

In addition, some of the textual or graphic materials of the schools and about the schools were originally "digital text" and were accessible to the public through the internet. In Hong Kong, the number of people aged 10 or above who use the internet on a regular basis increased from 185,000 in year the 2000 to 430,000 in the year 2009 (Census and Statistics Department, 2010). Generally, the government has invested much resource in the development of information technology in society, for example, establishing free Wi-Fi points in most of the government facilities and buildings, and providing public services and information online. In the education arena, the government also propagated the use of information technology through teaching and learning. E-learning has become the "norm" for Hong Kong students, given that they often need to complete exercises online through the schools' websites or download learning materials. Since 2003, when the Education and Manpower Bureau enforced the measures of "Internal School Review" and "External School Review" (e.g. see Education and Manpower Bureau, 2004), parents and the public could easily evaluate the performances of the schools by studying the reports uploaded on schools' websites. Thus, under the competitive educational market, the school official websites have become one of the major channels for the schools to promote themselves, because parents, students and the public are now used to gathering information from their official websites. The official school websites<sup>8</sup>,

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<sup>8</sup> I intended not to provide the official school websites of the two schools due to the concern about research ethics and to ensure the anonymity of the schools in this research.



therefore, became a very useful source of information for me to collect data with regard to the sample schools.

The official websites of both schools were visited before and during my time in the field, and some of the information was copied into 'Word' documents for future reference in case the websites updated or changed. In fact, the official school websites may be the first "research field" that I came across in my research fieldwork, and have been an important source that contributed to my understanding about the schools' structures, policies and students' activities in recent years. All kinds of information about the schools, including the schools' historical backgrounds, school missions and mottos, authority and power structures, class structures, curriculum contents, school activities and news and announcements etc. could be found on St. Caroline's College website and the descriptions and photographs of students' events in school were often updated and uploaded within a short period of time after the events. Comparatively, the website of Peterson's School was less useful for the research because many of the links in the website were broken, and many details about the school administration, class structures or teaching body etc. were unavailable. However, even the missing items on the schools' website are actually cues for the research. In fact, it triggered me to find out why the information was not provided online, and led me to realise the power dynamics between the administrative level and teachers, and the phenomenon of high mobility of teaching staff and students in schools. Therefore, official documents or materials should be viewed as "social products". Researchers should realise that official documents often would have their own purpose to exist or target particular audiences. It is necessary to examine critically what has been written and what has not, instead of relying on them uncritically as research resources (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:168). Besides, the use of the notice boards and the website itself could also be "useful" in a comparative way. For example, the comparison between the layout, the style, the use of language and ways of presentation of the websites of the two schools could reflect the differences of management level, school culture and working atmosphere in the two campuses. As Marshall McLuhan (1964) famous aphorism "the medium is the message", that not only should the content of the notice

boards or websites be noticed, but the form and characteristics of the medium itself should be studied as well.

### **Participant Observations**

Observation is one of the most commonly used methods in collecting data, especially in educational research (Scott and Usher, 1999:97). It is also the major method that I applied in this research. However, because of my different roles and identities in the two schools, the degree of participation in observation would differ according to specific situations and contexts. For instance, in St. Caroline's College, my observer role was more well-ascribed by research participants because my identities as a postgraduate student from a university and as an alumni of a related school had made teachers and students in that school define me as a "guest". Yet, in the Peterson's School, my role as a substitute teacher in the school had given me more opportunity to engage in students' activities or teachers' conversations, which meant a higher degree of participation.

Scott and Usher (1999) have explained the different purposes, concerns and the different underlying epistemologies when researchers adopt different approaches to observations, ranging from participant observation to complete observer roles based on Gold's typology (1958). In this study, my choice of adopting a participant observation position was both for theoretical and practical reasons.

Firstly, my experience illustrated that a certain degree of participation in observation could deepen researchers' understanding about the field effectively, so that the collection and understanding of participants' speeches and actions could be contextualised. As mentioned in the epistemology section, knowledge is contextual and interpersonal, and can be produced through discourses and language. Direct experience in the field could only enrich researchers' knowledge about the field and participants, but also help to experience the atmosphere or ethos of the field, or capture the emotions and attitudes of the participants. As Schwandt, (2005) put it, 'to grasp the psychological state (i.e. motivation, belief, intention or the like) of an individual actor' (2005:120). This is not to say that researchers are required to experience exactly the same events or have the same feelings or perspectives as the

participants, but it serves to contextualise the data collected through observation and through interviews with the participants in the field. Besides, the participant observation approach in fact challenges the “objectivity” of knowledge and social reality because data collected through participant observation often involves interaction between the researchers and the participants. The course of the construction of knowledge (or data) is, thus, inter-subjective. The role of researchers is no longer to detach themselves from the social setting being investigated to maintain an “objective” view. On the contrary, participant observers would be aware of the influence their existences have on the site and the participants, or would be reflective about the beliefs or agendas they have brought into the field because of the demystifying of the “objective” view of reality.

In practical terms, participant observation could also help in establishing relationships with participants in the field, which would help participants to familiarize the existence of the researcher and build up a more trustful relationship for further engagement or later interviews.

Yet, the adoption of the participant observation approach does not mean ignoring the effect of the active participation of the researcher or the complete abandonment of the “observer” side of the role. As a researcher, inevitably I would bring my own epistemological or ontological beliefs into the sites, which affect my ways of interpreting the world, and making sense of what I observed in the field. Therefore, I am, in fact, a stranger who ‘always retains vestiges of their original position and therefore can never quite go native.’ (Scott and Usher, 1999:99). This observer/stranger side of participant observation enabled me to be alien and sensitive in the research settings to capture significant incidents and moments in the research.

In my research, my degree of participation differed in both schools and in different levels which definitely would affect the data that I collected in the process. In the following sections, I will illustrate the purposes and scope of observations.

### *Classroom observation*

Initially, I planned to enter the classroom of liberal studies classes or other social sciences subjects which would allow me to observe closely how the concept of citizenship is presented and how students understand it in the formal curriculum. However, I was refused entry to any classrooms in St. Caroline's College at the very beginning when I was negotiating the entry time and method of research with the teacher-in-charge before really entering the field. As mentioned in previous sections, the strong resistance from teachers came from the pressure of dealing with the external examiner from the Education Bureau for a quality assurance inspection, and related classroom observation from the school management level throughout that school year to prepare for that inspection. Even when I approached individual teachers to enter their classroom after spending some time in the field, many of them showed considerable reluctance in having me in their classroom.

In Peterson's School, there were no liberal studies subject or other related social sciences subjects in the curriculum, but I still asked teachers' permission to enter their classrooms in the hope of observing how teachers convey messages about their own expectations or the school's ideal student images to the students in class, or to discern closely how the subtle meanings about citizenship would transfer to students through the conversation or interaction between teachers and students. Yet, despite my efforts to explain my research individually to most of the teachers, my request was rejected by many of the teachers I encountered in school. Differing from St. Caroline's, the reason for such rejection into classrooms in Peterson's School was more complicated.

First is the problem of classroom management. The discipline problem during lessons is notorious as some students often play or chat loudly in the classroom out of sheer boredom. One of the teachers told me that they would not want me to witness the offensive and disrespectful behaviour of students in their classrooms. The discipline problem during lessons also led to teachers' modulation of classroom activities, and became the excuse for refusing my entry to class. When I approached some of the teachers, their answers to my request were more or less the same, such

as, “what I am going to do is distributing worksheets and letting them do it” or “I will play a short video only.....there’s nothing to observe in my class” or “I am giving them a short quiz so nothing special will be happening.” Even when I insisted that I would still want to enter even if there was “nothing special to observe”, and explained to teachers that I was not scrutinising them, most of the teachers refused to let me in.

Another possible reason for not being able to enter the classrooms in Peterson’s School, is the atmosphere of school politics in that school. As mentioned in the previous section, my identity and my research work was perceived as suspicious to most of the teachers because I was accepted by the newly appointed School Principal. I was not trusted by teachers of the Pro-vice Principal group in the beginning because I was considered as being a spy from the Principal, nor did I gain the support from the Pro-vice Principal party because they were not the new School Principal’s supporter. At the beginning, I did not get access to any classroom because everyone was afraid that I would report their performance to their “enemies”. It was not until a later stage, when some of the teachers knew more about me personally and understood more about my research, that I finally gained access to some of the classrooms.

Although I could not enter any liberal studies classes or sit in to observe classrooms of most of the academic subjects, I still found observing in classrooms necessary because the classroom is a place where instant interactions between teachers and students, or among students, occur. I believe that in the context of a lesson, when teachers usually have the power to impose or transfer the dominant discourses to students, how students react to these dominant discourses would be significant, and that the existence of counter discourses would be evident if students were participating enthusiastically. Therefore, I decided to take every chance to observe in any of the classes even though they might not be obviously related to citizenship education. For example, I have entered the Integrated Science classroom and dance lessons, which later I found also allowed me to understand more about the school’s culture and students’ attitudes.



Though I was not welcome by most of the teachers to enter their classroom, I still tried my best to persuade a few teachers to allow my entry. With the exception of an integrated science lesson in Peterson's School, those classes that I was allowed to observe were usually the less "academic" subjects, including physical education lessons, class teacher periods, and "Other Learning Experience" sections (dance class, photography class and ceramic-making class). Because of the less formal context of these classes, I was able to move around the classroom or spaces, and even interact with students in the course of the lessons. In order to minimize the interference of my interaction or communication with students and teachers in this process, I would usually write down the key points of observations on sheets of paper during class, and elaborate them into more detailed field notes in my notebook immediately after lessons. In some of the busy days when I did not have time to write my fieldnotes immediately (for example, because I needed to shift from the classroom to the playground to meet a student or a teacher), I would simply record a monologue on my MP3 player about my observations and my thoughts so that I could transcribe these audio clips into fieldnotes later. I found this method of recording very useful as it could record much more detail of the events in a short period of time, which is important, especially when I wanted to record the exact wordings of the conversation or speech of teachers, or reflect my immediate emotions and thoughts directly after the incidents happened.

As in St. Caroline's College, although I was refused entry to the classroom by most teachers, I was able to get the approval from a part-time teacher to observe the dance lessons and examinations that took place in the school hall, and was allowed to observe the physical education lessons in the playground. Both of these lessons did not take place in formal classroom settings, although for most of the time, students were learning a planned and structured curriculum under teachers' instruction. In these settings, my observation was more passive and my participant role was less significant. I would usually stay in the outer ring of the class to listen and observe because the teachers asked me to remain silent during class. My less-noticeable position and relatively passive role allowed me to jot down what I observed and heard in my notebook immediately during the course of the class. Sometimes,

students in the PE classes would come forward to find out what I tried to record when they had a break or were free to move during lessons. I would show them what I had written and explained my research. All of the students showed interest and felt comfortable about my observation and data recording. I was able to invite some of these students who I met during observation to participate in interviews.

### **Observation outside the classroom**

In my theoretical framework, I suggested that the idea of citizenship was a discursive construction. Aside from observing closely the interaction in classrooms, how different discourses are working in schools is also one of my focuses in observation. In both Peterson's School and St. Caroline's College, I could access almost all of the places in the school, except the staff rooms of St. Caroline's College. On the contrary, because of my role as substitute teacher in Peterson's School, I was assigned a desk in a corner of the staff room, so I could observe the interaction between teachers in the staffroom of Peterson's School.

In the first week of my entry to both schools, I tried to explore the different spaces of the school by wandering around the campus. After spending some time in the field, I had developed ideas of significant locations for observation. For instance, the corridor outside the staff room or the table behind the main building would be some of the "popular" spots where lots of teacher-student interactions or even confrontations happened. Besides developing the list of spots for observation, I also reminded myself to observe the same place at different points of time of the day. Different school spaces might be occupied by different groups of people in different hours. For example, at the main school gate of St. Caroline's, there were always discipline prefects standing in front of the gate to scrutinize the school uniforms of students who entered in the early morning before the morning assembly; but when lunch time approached, groups of mothers and Filipino maids would gather in front of the school gate in order to give lunch boxes to their children or their little masters. Another example is that in Peterson's School, the impression of the same place would give me very different impressions at different points of time. For example, the green corner and fish pond, that were established by the school aiming to attract

students to learn about ecological knowledge. When I walked around the campus on my own during lesson time, I saw the Vice-principal and some other teachers spending time to decorate or take care of the plants and fishes there. However, I noticed that these facilities were never attractive to students during recess, lunch time or after school, and were quite a contrast when I saw students preferred to stay in their own classroom or hang around the hidden corners in the campus. This example showed that the dimension of time for observation could help researchers to notice the significant and the marginalized.

Apart from observations based on the dimension of space and time, disciplinary controls, differentiation practices, authority and power structures were also some of the areas that I paid attention to when I was in the field. These categories were selected because they somehow represent the exercise of power in school in different ways, and I believe that would reflect the dominant or counter discourses existing on the campus.

Participant observation in whole-school events was also a very major part of my research. These events ranged from the more general, like daily morning assemblies, bi-weekly school assemblies and seminars or talks, to the more specific like briefing sessions and activities of “Other Learning Experience” programmes, field trips, Parent-Teacher Association meetings, speech festival, variety show, graduation ceremony and school closing ceremony. For St. Caroline’s I also participated in the celebration mass and rehearsal for the musical for the schools’ anniversary celebration. Through the observation of these activities, I discovered the official “good student” or “good citizen” image of the schools.

Inevitably, the virtual digital world has become another important field site. Almost all the young people in Hong Kong would be engaged in different social networks (Facebook, twitter, Messengers, online diary etc.) albeit to different degrees. Due to ethical concerns, I did not consider using the information or messages I saw on students’ Facebook or personal homepages as part of the research data. However, the information and impressions I could find in the digital world did help me to understand more about students’ positions and their experiences in school, and had

become important sources for me to understand the emotions of students, because of the explicit “self-expression” of their own feelings in these social network media due to its personalized nature. For example, I was told by some Peterson’s students that they had set up several Facebook groups to express their discontent with unfavourable teachers, especially the Vice School Principal of the school. I also noticed Yvonne’s disappointment and loneliness from her updated Facebook status, when all her classmates were sharing excitedly about their plans and preparations for the OLE trips, especially for those who were able to go to Europe for the choir performance. Although this information was not taken as part of the research data, it helped me to understand more about what these young people felt, how they positioned themselves with others, and helped me to contextualize their experiences in my process of interview and analysis.

### **In-depth interviews**

To understand how teachers and students interpret the public image of citizen, and how they define citizenship is one of the major aims of this research. Teachers and students are not living in a vacuum. They all carry their own social and cultural background to enter the school sites. Individuals would interpret and re-interpret the definitions of citizenship and struggle with their construction of citizens’ identity throughout the process based on their own experiences and background. Through in-depth interviews, participants were allowed to illustrate the self-identification of citizenship. For some of the student participants in my research, who were usually being viewed as the “loser” or the “outcast” in the current educational system, in-depth interview were extremely significant as they could be given a voice and present the other meanings of citizenship with their life stories. The South Asian students who participated in the interviews could also challenge the notions of the ideal citizens’ image in the government’s agenda according to previous literature.

While I conducted all the interviews with teachers individually, the interviews with students were more responsive to the request of students. Their interviews were either conducted in groups/in pairs or individually. For some of the students, they would prefer to be interviewed in pairs or groups because they might not feel

comfortable and safe to have an individual interview with a researcher who is a total stranger to them initially, Group interviews may be a good opportunity to let students build up a trustful relationship with me with the company of friends. Besides, in a context of group interviews, researcher can gain more basic and background information about students, including their position in school, their family backgrounds, their personality and their social relations with other students. This information can be easily gathered during the discussion between close friends in the group interviews. Moreover, students usually will turn to their own topics of interest during group interviews, and during this process, they are more than being interviewed, but constructing their shared experience and feelings, which provide pointers for my further investigation. Surprisingly, more students chose to participate in the interview by themselves instead of with a group of friends, because they felt more comfortable about sharing their personal opinion with me while preserving their privacy.

In the first instance I targeted students in the fourth year or upper in the secondary schools because I thought they would be more articulate in describing their understanding about “citizenship” or being a citizen in Hong Kong, and have more understanding about their own school after studying in the school for few years. However, during my stay in the school, I met some other students of the lower forms who showed interest in my research. I therefore invited these students for interview as well because they were more willing to share their thoughts and stories. Besides, South Asian students in Peterson’s Secondary School were a very significant group, but all of them were in the third form or below because they were admitted in the past 3 years after the school’s change of admission policy. Thus, I decided to include this group of students into my research even though they were in lower forms. A more fundamental problem about targeting a particular grade of students in my research was that many students in Peterson’s School were in fact older than their classmates because of late enrolment, or because they have repeated their grade of studies due to different reasons. I decided to interview students who I found “interesting” and who were willing to participate in my research regardless of their grade of study or age. (For more discussion on the choice of research participants for



in-depth interview, please refer to Section 4.2 “Sampling: choice of schools and research participants”.)

I also tried to include different types of teachers in my research. I invited teachers of different ages, different genders, different lengths of time spent in the school, and teachers teaching in different subjects or responsible for student activities, students’ discipline or civic and moral education. I also interviewed the school principals of both schools so that I could understand more about the rationale behind certain school policies.

Because all the interviews were carried out in a later stage of my field work, teachers and students who agreed to be interviewed had already had some idea about my research. However, I still explained to them about my research and their rights in participating in the research. All the teachers and students fully understood that their conversation and interview with me would be part of my research. At the same time, I also made clear that they could withdraw from my interview anytime if they felt uncomfortable, and I would give them a copy of the transcript of their interviews if they would like to. Yet, it turned out that none of the participants withdrew or requested their interview transcripts. All of the participants understood that their identities would be kept anonymous. I reassured them that their privacy and confidentiality would be respected, and their interview recordings would only be listened to by my transcribers and me, and data would only be used for academic-related purposes.

The interview questions were semi-structured. Before entering the field, I wrote a list of areas of topics that I thought might be related to teachers’ and students’ identities and about their lives in Hong Kong and in schools (See Appendix H). These frames of questions were meant to be a guide instead of a checklist for the interviews. I would usually start the interviews with more fundamental, factual questions to facilitate the discussion in group interviews, and to make the interviewees feel less threatened. I would then eventually move on to discuss some of the areas of questions which I thought would be more related to the interviewees’ background or his/her knowledge. Very often, interviewees would soon feel comfortable about

sharing their thoughts, and came up with interesting stories and sincere stories about the schools and school policies, about their classmates/colleagues, about their lives as students/ teachers. In most of the interviews, I did not need to look at the list of areas at all after the first few questions. In my opinion, most of the interviews turned out to be collaborations between me and the interviewees to construct meanings about being a good teacher, a good student or a good citizen living in Hong Kong. For instances, teachers would automatically mentioned about the ideal teachers' image and the role model in school, which they would relate to the self-image about whether or not they were good teachers.

During the interviews, I mainly relied on the audio recorder to record the interviews. I did have my notebook with me but the purpose was just to jot down key words or short notes, to remind myself of some of the content of the interviews that would need further questioning, or areas of topics that would be worth developing further, or to record significant moments, such as special body languages or emotional expressions of the participants which I thought might be useful for me to understand the interview transcripts later. Scott and Usher (1999) have mentioned that the use of note-taking has the effect of introducing a formality into the proceedings (1999:110). I also realised that my note-taking action would sometimes interrupt the conversation between me and my student interviewees as they usually treated the interview as just another sharing of thoughts with me which was slightly more formal than usual. Therefore, I decided not to document the interview but recorded the interviews with two audio recorders at the same time to avoid any technical problems in either of the recordings.

#### **4.5 Transcription, Data Analysis and Translation**

This section discusses the issues of transcription, data analysis and translation in this research. Stanley (1990:62, quoted by Temple, 1997:608) suggests that the "intellectual autobiographies" of researchers would impact on their understanding and interpreting of the world. Hence, researchers' knowledge about the social, cultural and linguistic characteristics and "cultural scripts" not only affect the process of fieldwork and interviews but also affect the process of transcription, translation

and analysis (Liamputtong, 2008:7). In research which was conducted mainly in another language (Cantonese), the generation of data had to go through the multi-layer process of transcription, analysis and translation into the formal language (English). First, I explain my experience of transcription and data analysis before I describe my approach to translation.

## **Transcriptions**

My personal background of growing up and living in Hong Kong allowed me to conduct this research mainly using the local language of Cantonese (except for use of English with conversations and interviews with Southern Asian students in Peterson's school). The interview recordings were transcribed by myself and two paid transcribers who were familiar with the language as well as the educational and cultural settings of Hong Kong. All the transcriptions were verbatim accounted and as close to the original speaking form as possible. I also asked the two transcribers to highlight the pauses, unfinished sentences and the exact use of terminology. This was particularly challenging because many terms in Cantonese do not have a formal written form, and some of the synonyms of formal written Chinese could not portray the same meanings as the original Cantonese words. In doing this I suggested the transcribers to put Chinese words of the same pronunciations and highlight the words they were unsure about, so the transcripts could stay in its Cantonese form as much as possible. As a result, the "richness" or details of the transcripts were therefore retained and the tendency of transcribers to "tidy up" the "messy" features of natural conversation was consciously resisted. (Silverman, 1993:117).

After that, in order to ensure the accuracy of the data, I went through all the transcripts again while listening to the interview recordings. I also tried to "visualize" the interview experience with the aid of my interview notes taken during interviews. Here I added non-verbal cues (e.g. the tone, facial or body expressions) or incidental interaction (e.g. a teacher making an aside to a student). I found this helpful to illuminate the interview content for a deeper understanding (Silverman, 1993:95). For example, during the interview, Peterson's School's teacher Mr. Kwok stopped to talk to a Pakistani student who passed by the corner of the library where the

interview was conducted. It transpired that Mr. Kwok was not the class teacher of the student but his Physical Education teacher. However, Mr. Kwok remembered the student's name and showed his concern by asking about the student's parents' and siblings' recent status, which reflected Mr. Kwok's knowledge about the students' private life. This incident supported what Mr. Kwok said in the interview about the importance for teachers (especially of Chinese ethnics) to build up personal connections with the Non-Chinese speaking students in order to understand the needs and difficulties they encountered in the current schooling system and Hong Kong which is culturally different from their religion and culture. This reinforced my impression about Mr. Kwok's exceptionally positive attitudes towards the Non-Chinese speaking students compared with many other teachers in Peterson's school.

### **Analytical Approach**

Based on these transcripts and fieldnotes in Cantonese, my data analysis developed in a thematic approach. As mentioned, I have already developed certain "sensitizing concepts" from the review of reform documents and the pilot study. Overarching themes such as "globalization", "change", "social class" and "gender" influenced my perspective on observation and interviewing during fieldwork. However, I would not class my analytical approach as "deductive" or "inductive" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). On the one hand, the generation of themes and development of thematic codes did involve my prior knowledge and perspective the educational context and the reform related policies in schools which directly influence my interpretation of teachers' and students' lived experiences through observation and interviews. Yet on the other hand, I was sensitive to the "significant statements" (Creswell, 2013:60), special incidents, quotes and particular choice of words appeared in the fieldnotes and transcripts which enhanced my conceptual understanding of my data. For example, as to be illustrated in the analytical chapter about Other Learning Experience, the terms *global competitions* and *challenges* had been repeated themes in the campuses. While these terms could be easily linked to the dominant themes of *globalization* and *change* in the education reform documents, I also found the negative connotations of these terms to the instability, ever-changing nature and anxiety in the era of *liquid modernity* (Giddens, 1991) based on the school

principals' and teachers' reaction against such competitive and unstable nature of the society. Simultaneously, their anxieties toward the uncertainties of the future were once again turned to the emphasis of the *Lion Rock spirit* existed in Hong Kong, that students' hard work and self-reliance were believed to be the only way to cope with the challenges of global competition. In St. Caroline's College's Ms. Wong's speech during the briefing section of the Other Learning Experience programme, she stressed repeatedly the need for students to take the initiatives and responsibility to plan their studies and activities, to ensure a better presentation of their personal growth trajectory in the Student Learning Profile. This incident has explicitly showed the connections between the cultivation of the institutionalized cultural capital with individuals' making of self, i.e., students' planning and developing of traceable and presentable life paths of the accumulations of cultural capitals for the evaluation from the market/society.

In addition, the constant reminder of "knowing how to behave" (Ch. 5 and 7) in St. Caroline's College and "distinguish between right and wrong" (Ch.5) in Peterson's school both emphasized the responsibility of students to oneself in the text. The use of these terminologies seemed to echo with what Chan (2004:77) called "hyper-autonomy" which described the individual as "one is the maker of his/her own life". Although the expectations of the knowledge and skills on students were different, the two schools obviously shared the value and expectation of individual students' responsibility on planning and cultivating cultural capitals for their own future. Thus, these different incidents and terms used by teachers in their interviews were categorized under the code of "working of self" and "project of self" (Beck, 1992; Kelly, 2001; 2006; Giddens, 1991), which I later found they interlink with the concepts of "individualism" (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2000; Giddens, 1991) and "responsibilization" (Harris, 2004; Kelly, 2001, 2005) which had been discussed by various scholars in the field.

Therefore, the analysis of data was an ongoing, "flip-flop" (Bulmer, 1979) process of identifying, categorizing and linking data to prior concepts and emergent theoretical frameworks. Feedback received from conference presentations and ongoing



discussion and debate with my peers and supervisors helped me recategorized my data and further developed my coding framework.

### **Translation**

As mentioned, the data were transcribed and analysed based on the Cantonese dialect used by the participants. I carefully translated interview transcripts into English so that misinterpretation due to translation could be minimized. Yet there were ongoing challenges especially in the representation of data which involved the transfer of meaning from research participants to the researcher, and then from the researcher to the readers of this thesis who are likely to have minimal understanding of the schools in Hong Kong. Temple(1997) highlights how multiple meanings are inherent in the translation of language, ‘When different cultures and languages are involved epistemological problematic in constructing similarity and difference are compounded, if there is no one meaning to a text, then there can be no one translation of it.’ (1997:60).

The extracts of interviews and fieldnotes were translated based on the meaning conveyed rather than a literal and simple translation of words. Although I found equivalent terms in English to translate the term used by participants (e.g. “老師走狗” could be easily translated into “the running-dog of teachers”), my concern was whether the translated text conveyed the meaning voiced by teachers and students.

The example of translating the term “Jungman” (“中文”) in the discussion of the language ecology of Hong Kong in Ch.2, illustrated my commitment to address the various meanings of the terms instead of a simplified literal translation. As explained in chapter two, the choice of using the Cantonese pronunciation of “Jungman” instead of the term “Chinese” in this thesis due to the specificity of the use of this term in Hong Kong. The implied meanings of this term ranged from the spoken language of the local dialects “Cantonese” to the new official spoken language of “Putonghua”; or could be referred to the traditional written Chinese form which is also different from the spoken languages. Therefore, a simple translation of “Chinese” which may simply refers the languages used by Chinese to many of the

English-speaking readers could not reveal the complicated and diverse meanings of the term in the research context in Hong Kong.

I also found how new meanings could be produced in the process of translation (see also Muller, 2007). For example, in Ch.7 about the type of dance taught in St. Caroline's College, I used the term "Oriental Dance" ("東方舞"), instead of the literal translation of "Eastern dance", while in fact the dances taught in St. Caroline's refer to the folk dances or traditional dances of Eastern or South eastern Asian (including Chinese) region. In fact, I have been questioned by supervisors about whether "Eastern dance" or "South Eastern Asia Dance" would be better choice of terms. My position was that the seemingly "neutral" meaning of "Eastern dance" simply could not convey the meaning of the term embedded in St. Caroline's school principal's Sr. Ellen's interview. Nor could the translation reflect the positive meaning of "Oriental" or "Orientalism" in the Hong Kong context which people of Hong Kong often feel proud about is being at the meeting point of "the East and the West" (See Ch.7 for further discussion). As Temple suggested, 'Translators have a view of these words from practical encounters of their own with the social world and they translate with those encounters as benchmarks.' (1997:613). My identity as a "Hong-konger" and my personal encounters with the "social world" in Hong Kong provided me the knowledge to understand, interpret and make decisions regarding the careful selection of words for translation of my data.

The above examples showed the strength of my inhabiting in the same "social world" with most of the participants which enabled me to understand and interpret the lived experiences. Temple (2005) illustrates how sociolinguists, anthropologists and writers in translation studies have shown that there can be no single correct translation of a text. Muller suggests that 'Instead of striving for an unattainable 'correct' translation, translation must seek to confront premature closure by bolstering up the undecidability and indeterminacy of critical translation.' (Muller, 2007:210). Thus, in the process of translation, I recognized the 'impossibility of achieving equivalence' (Muller, 2007:212) but remained sensitive and endeavors to work with them rather than deny towards the meanings produced through translation.

# Chapter Five “Other Learning Experiences”, Students’ participation and Cultural capital

## 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will focus on the connections, and explore the intersecting relationships, between social class and the newly implemented curriculum of “Other Learning Experiences” (OLE) programmes in the two schools in my research. Drawing on Bourdieu’s concept of “cultural capital”, I argue that these OLE “experiences” provided by the schools have become new sets of institutionalized cultural capital. Not only were the types of “experiences” being evaluated, but how the activities were implemented, and whether the students could show that they were capable of learning, or already had, the expected skills, knowledge, virtues or personality in the “Student learning profile”, were also under scrutiny. This chapter will reveal that schools are playing a major part in the process of distinguishing the kinds of activities and experiences that should be implemented in school, based on their own resources and their expectations of students’ futures, according to the school principals’ and teachers’ understanding of the positions of their students in society because of their academic performance, class and ethnic background.

While the OLE programme is framed as a policy which provides “equal opportunities for every student”<sup>9</sup>, the research showed that the social class backgrounds of students has been a significant factor in influencing students’ attitudes and experiences of participation, and thus led to a different accumulation of cultural capital in the process. For example, St. Caroline’s students, who have middle-class backgrounds, seem to be more equipped with “embodied cultural capital”, such that their understanding of the concepts of time, space and competition would enable them to fit in easily to the middle-class school culture, and adhere to the dominant discourse of “all-round” development in the school. In contrast,

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<sup>9</sup> This is the title of Booklet 5A about the “Other Learning Experiences” programme in the “Senior Secondary Curriculum Guideline” issued in 2009 by Curriculum Development Council.

Peterson's students, who are from lower middle-class or working class families, may find "academic capital" and "technical capital" have a higher value in their lives, thus they would find the OLE programme, which focused mainly on "cultural capital", irrelevant and not attractive to them. I will elucidate the relationship between different students' participation patterns and show its relationship with students' class backgrounds and identity constructions.

Finally, I will emphasize that cultural capital should not be considered as the "ultimate good" for students, and should be discussed together with other kinds of "capital" to avoid a deficit model when evaluating students from a disadvantaged background. The rhetoric of becoming an "all-rounder", and the urge to accumulate cultural capital and having it presented in the student portfolio, could be viewed as a kind of "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 1998) imposed on students, especially in the elite school. According to the experience of Yvonne, who is from a working-class family background, it appears that the process of acquiring cultural capital can be full of psychological struggles. For most of the students in Peterson's school who come from working class families, the cultural capital and "technical capital" they acquire seems to be "less valued" in the educational system and by employers in Hong Kong society nowadays. Therefore, in the concluding section, I will discuss whether the students in these two very distinct schools would "gain" or "lose", not only in terms of cultural capital, but in a broader perspective concerning their development of self and position in society.

## **5.2 The "Classed" Schools: An Unfair Competition of Resources for Activities in the Two Schools**

As mentioned in the Ch.2 , I have explained that the rhetoric of "Society-wide mobilisation" in the reform documents in fact assumed the responsibility of parents and schools for providing students with "diversified learning experiences" to meet the aim of "all-round development" (Education Commission, 2000:48). Such assumptions actually underlie a middle-class student image because only parents of middle-class families would be able to afford the time and be able to invest financial resources to support the school in their children's education. Through my

observations, the significant roles of middle-class parents (especially mothers) is overt in St. Caroline's College, while parents of Peterson's students seem to be "less involved" in their children's education. Despite the different attitudes and degrees of involvement of the two groups of parents, I found that both schools have assumed a crucial role for them in the transmission of "capital" to students. I argue that schools have their own class orientation due to the class background of their current and past students, their financial status (economic capital), and their school reputations and social networks (social capital); the "classed" schools would tend to provide activities and experiences that they thought could benefit their students. Therefore, even though the "Other Learning Experiences" programme was introduced in both schools, how the school authorities and the teachers recognized the new "institutionalized standard of evaluation" (Lareau and Weininger, 2003:597) of the "Student Learning Profile" could be different according to their class, and the provision of activities/experiences would also be adjusted to suit the schools' agenda about educating or transmitting "capital" to their students.

Hence, I will first describe the content of the "Other Learning Experiences" programmes of the two schools, in order to portray the class orientation of the schools as well as the kind of "taste", ability, skills or virtues that the schools tried to educate or transfer to their students. Later, I will illustrate that, despite the two schools organizing their OLE programmes based on the same guidelines, the different resources available in the two schools could affect the varieties and scale of the activities organized. I will also identify teachers' expectations of students' participation and performances in the OLE programmes, which would reflect how teachers position their students in society, or what kind of "citizens" they expected them to become in the future. This would also explain the rationale behind the choice of experiences or activities they organized for their students in their school.

Based on the guidelines in the education documents, both schools had developed their own "Other Learning Experiences" programmes and systems to provide activities related to the "Five Essential Learning Experiences", including "Moral and civic Education", "Community services", "Career-related experiences", "Physical development" and "Aesthetic development" (Curriculum Development Council,



2009). I should emphasize that, although “Other Learning Experiences” referred to the compulsory component of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum, which occupied 15% of the lesson time of all senior secondary students, it is, as mentioned in the reform documents, ‘building on the foundations of the five Essential Learning Experiences in Basic Education’ (Curriculum Development Council, 2002) to achieve a “balance of personal development” alongside subject learning. Thus, like many other schools in Hong Kong, both schools in my research started to provide these learning experiences from students’ junior secondary school years, so that students could start to accumulate their experiences (capital) in good time before they entered the tight schedule of the senior secondary curriculum. While the major OLE programmes were implemented in a whole-school approach in both schools, many of the previous extra-curricular activities which included different forms of students were now being considered as part of the “learning experiences” too under the framework of the OLE programme. Therefore, I explore the OLE programme for all students in the whole-school context instead of focusing on students of senior secondary forms; and my writing will cover all kinds of students’ activities or experiences that students could record in their “Student Learning Profile”, which means that those activities and experiences are recognized as “learning experiences” by the schools. The whole lists of activities provided to the students by the two schools could be found in Appendix J.

Both the elite school, St. Caroline’s and the academically low-band school, Peterson School provided learning activities in the five essential learning experiences required by the documents, as well as additional opportunities for students to learn outside school campuses and beyond official school hours.

Although schools are required to provide activities and learning experiences under the framework of “Five Essential Learning Experiences”, there is no specific requirement as to what and how the activities should be organized. The major “guiding principle” for the running of OLE programmes in the reform document mainly emphasized that schools should ‘review and build on existing practices and strengths’ (Curriculum Development Council, 2009, Booklet 5A, Section 5.5). Such emphasis on “school-based” provision of learning experiences indicates that the

government would not invest any resources to assist schools in the execution of OLE programmes for extra activities or learning experiences to fulfil the 405 hours requirement in the new secondary school curriculum. The provision of activities depends entirely on the social and economic resources of the schools and parents. For schools that have already established an extra-curricular activities system, with sufficient financial support from donations by alumni and parents, or have parents who are willing and able to afford the additional costs and time to invest on their children's' extra-curricular activities, these schools could easily expand the scale of their existing extra-curricular activities or provide extra activities on top of the existing connections with the community or cooperative organizations. Whereas, for the other schools which have not had an established extra-curricular activities programme and have limited experiences and resources; or the majority of students are from less-privileged families whose parents struggled to afford extra time and money to support the extra activities for their children, the new OLE programmes would exert pressure to the schools to relocate their resources for organizing extra learning experiences.

St. Caroline's College had formulated a very thorough and "all-round" extra-curricular activities system long before the introduction of the OLE programme. As with many other elite schools, there has always been a consensus by St. Caroline's school authority, teachers, students and parents on putting an emphasis on extra-curricular activities as an important part of students' education. Therefore, many key components of the OLE programme in St. Caroline's are in fact students' organizations or school teams established with the help of teachers many years ago, including the student council, school sports teams, school choirs and school orchestras etc. Such continuity of policies helped students and teachers to maintain the school ethos and school traditions in the school milieu. On the contrary, because of the lack of experience and limitation of financial resources, there is much less variety of activity provided in Peterson's School. While St. Caroline's teachers could simply expand the scale of activities over and above the established system, school authorities and teachers in Peterson's School seemed to struggle a lot more in

order to build up the system to organize activities as well as a culture where students could engage or participate in these activities.

From the beginning of my research, I realised that the OLE programmes of the two schools are built on different foundations. Because of its long-established history as an elite school, St. Caroline's College has a much stronger social network of alumni and middle-class parents as its social and economic foundation to expand its OLE programme on top of its existing extra-curricular activities system. As for Peterson's Secondary School, the financial support from its founding organization is limited because it is a local charity organization operated by donations from the society; besides, the school has not built up a strong social network with the alumni and the community. In the following pages, I will illustrate the social and economic, as well as the culture of engagement of the schools to show that the students of the two schools are actually embarking from a different baseline of opportunity.

### **Social Capital: relationships with alumni and other social networks**

#### **St. Caroline's College**

The difference in the scale of organizing activities was not just based on the fact that St. Caroline's had already run the programme for several years, but also because of the strong social networking of the school. For instance, the school had established an almost permanent cooperative relationship with a high school in Singapore for students exchange programmes in the past few years. Obviously such a cooperative relationship was first based on the reputation of St. Caroline's College and its elite school status and long-established history, which gave confidence to the managerial committees of the Singapore school.

Another example is that St. Caroline's students were allowed to go back to teach in villages in GuangXi province every year because of the established relationships between the school and the local government office. In conversations with teachers, I was told that the School Principal Sr. Ellen had a good relationship with officials of the Chinese government, which allowed her access to China easily for charity works, or even to arrange for students to work as volunteers in rural areas in China. This is

due to Sr. Ellen's relationship with several alumni who had already had strong social networks in China. It should be noted that, given the school's Roman Catholic background and the tense relationship between the Chinese government and the Vatican Catholic Church, it is not that easy for clergy in Hong Kong to establish a good relationship with Chinese government officials.

There are also a number of famous alumni which regularly visit the school. Some of them give regular seminars to share their successful stories or their academic career experiences with the students. The school also made use of its strong alumni network to introduce a mentor programme, so that some of the elder alumni who have retired could meet with some of the "rebellious" students to give them guidance and support.

Because of its elite school background, St. Caroline's College built up a social network that involves alumni with power and authority in society, which enables the school to expand its network to the more powerful, or even build up international connections.

### **Peterson's Secondary School**

Compared to St. Caroline's College, Peterson's Secondary School has a smaller school-based social network, but it could still make use of the established connections with a nearby community centre and the activities organized by the school foundation's organization. For example, there were certain whole-school promotions and fund-raising programmes organized by the Catholic organization the school belongs to, including a Fun Fair in the community, Walkerton, for fund-raising, and flag selling. With limited resources and financial pressure, the school relied much more on the voluntary services from community centres and volunteers. For example, researchers like me and another post-graduate student from the University of Hong Kong were permitted to conduct our research in the school with the agreement that we were willing to take up some responsibilities to assist teachers' duties. Also, because of the low academic achievement and lack of sense of belonging of students in this school, the past-students network was not strongly established and could not offer much support to the school.

To conclude, Peterson's Secondary School has a more local and community-based social network. Such social capital of the school, in fact, could benefit some of the Southern Asian students in the school who may be isolated in the community and have less resource locally.

### **Economic Capital: financial support and financial arrangements for activities**

#### **St. Caroline's College**

The cost of joining the activities of the Extended Learning Week could be high because most of the activities were taking place abroad, and the School Principal and teachers believed that these opportunities to go aboard would widen students' horizons, enhance cultural exchanges and provide more international exposure to their students. The cost of activities varied from about \$3000 Hong Kong dollars (about GBP£240) for the Outward Bound Programme to about HK\$15000 (GBP £1250) for the choir members to travel to Europe for musical performances and cultural exchange.

Although the school would provide a certain amount of sponsorship via applications for students with financial difficulties, not every student could get the sponsorship, and therefore I knew a few students who were not able to afford to go aboard and would choose to participate in the outward bound training which took place in Hong Kong.

Another example is from an interview with S2 student Yvonne, who suffered psychologically in her schooling experience because of the lack of financial support from her family.

*Like for example, there was a choir trip to Germany, when all of my friends could go, I could not go.....I tried to apply for the subsidies for joining the OLE programme, but then the teacher said it is not for Form 2 students, but for the Form 4 students who have to compulsorily participate in the OLE programme, so they will have the priority to be subsidized first. Thus I could not apply for the subsidy to go. Later when I met my friends who came back from the trip, they were very excited and happy about it. You know I could not say 'Hey I did not go to the trip, stop being happy!', so I have to put on a fake smile.....On the other hand, I could not share with*



*my mother about my unhappiness, because if she knows about that, she will feel guilty about not being able to financially support me for going to the trip, for not being able to earn more money for the family. I therefore, could not talk to her about things like that and have to stay happy in front of her all the time.*

(Yvonne, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

Yvonne was from a single-parent family with 3 siblings and her mother applied for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) two years ago after her divorce. Yvonne was a choir member, but she could not afford to join the choir tour to Europe this year because the school could not offer her the sponsorship. The teachers explained to her that the priority had to be given to more senior students, especially for S4 students first, because they need the record for their student portfolio.

However, in an interview with the School Principal, Sister Ellen, though she admitted that the cost for students to travel abroad for activities is usually expensive, she immediately emphasized and clarified that the school has established a reserve fund for students with talents but who have financial difficulties in participating in activities.

*We do have students who are from.....financially disadvantaged family background, but we have given lots of opportunities to them. For example, even if they are recipients of CSSA, but if we identify their talents, they have the analytical skills or thinking skills, we would even pay the money for them to attend international conference, for example to the United States.*

(Sr. Ellen, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

She gave an example of one student whose family is receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), but was selected to attend the Global Young Leaders Conference (GYLC) held in Washington in the U.S.A. The student's grandfather could only afford to give her about HK\$2-3000 (i.e. about £200 to £240) while the total cost of attending the conference was about thirty thousand HK dollars (GBP£2400-£2500). Finally, a father of another student voluntarily offered to pay half of the cost and, together with the school's subsidization of the other half, the

student could join the conference at last. This example also illustrated that the economic capital of the school is closely related to its social capital, which in this case, is the social network built on the close relationships between the school and the middle-class parents that constructed a strong economic support for students in St. Caroline's.

### **Peterson's Secondary School**

As most of the students in the Peterson Secondary School were from low-income families (including non-local students), there is a high percentage of local students whose families were recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA). Due to the limited financial resources from the founding body, the school tended to arrange low costs activities for most of the time, yet still tried to sponsor most of the costs for students who were from CSSA families. For example, in the major whole-school event "Life-wide Learning Day", the activities would include locations including community parks within walking distance of the school, which required no costs for entry and transportation; or visiting country parks which are also free for entry. However, in order to attract more students to participate, and also, to make use of sponsorship from the business sectors, some of the activities organized were not so well matched with the "whole school theme" of the learning day. For instance, in the semester during my fieldwork, the whole-school theme was "The Green Hong Kong" which was supposed to be related to issues about sustainability under the global age within the OLE programme framework. However, I was surprised to find that the activities of that day included visits to the Hong Kong Ocean Park and the Hong Kong Disneyland. Later, I found that one of the reasons was that the school was offered lower fees to bring students into these parks.

The school also tried to motivate the students to participate in extra-curricular activities, so after seeking students' opinion through questionnaire, the school decided to sponsor some of the popular interest groups of the extra-curricular activities lesson. The extra-curricular activities lesson was designed within the formal curriculum timetable in order to allow students to participate in extra-curricular activities during curricular time. For most of the interest groups, they were

led by teachers of the schools; but for the more popular activities, especially for those activities that Southern Asian students tended to join, the groups were led by service providers hired from outside school. Because of the “designated school” status, the school would receive some extra funding to aid the education of Southern Asian students in school. Thus, the school was able to subsidize most of the costs of paying the instructors, and only required students to pay a lump sum of around HK\$50 - 100 (about GBP £4 to £9) for the classes for the whole academic year.

### **“Human resources” -- The different degrees of engagement of teachers and students in organizing activities**

#### **St. Caroline’s College**

The responsibility for organizing various activities in St. Caroline’s was dispersed. Different activities were arranged and organized by different groups of teachers. For instance, the Extended Learning Team arranged only the programmes for Extended Learning week, while there was another group of teachers responsible for extra-curricular activities and OLE activities. For social service, there were uniform groups like Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance Association etc. or different religious groups which constantly organized social service activities, but there were also a few teachers organizing extra voluntary work to include students not participating in those groups. Different sports teams were headed by different P.E. teachers, while at the same time there were coaches and instructors hired from outside the school. Choirs and orchestras were led by music teachers and also by outside-school directors.

For most of the time, student leaders (usually Form 6 or Form 4 students) would take up the role of arranging regular meeting or practices of clubs or teams. Student council (including the 6 house captains) also took up the responsibility for organizing some of the whole-school activities, including the Fun Fair, inter-class and inter-house sports, debates or music competitions (Music Odyssey). Student leaders had very significant roles in leading and organizing most of the school activities in St. Caroline’s College.

## **Peterson's Secondary School**

While students from senior forms in St. Caroline's would take up the leading role in many aspects of student activities and in many student organizations, in Peterson's School, the responsibility for organizing school activities rested entirely on particular teachers. For instance, most school activities were said to be arranged by an "Extra-curricular activities team". Yet, by observation, it was usually the Head of the team, Mr. Kwok, who was in charge of most of the regular school activities in school, especially the arrangement of the "extra-curricular activities" section. As Mr. Kwok was also a P.E. teacher and the class teacher of one of the Southern Asian students' classes, he was also the one who took responsibility for the sports team and activities of Southern Asian students. For many occasions where students had inter-school competitions or public performances for sports or dance, it was Mr. Kwok who took these students to the venue outside school, and that often happened during weekends or non-school hours.

Although there were F.6 students forming a Student Union, the activities organized by them were very limited. In the interview with Piano, who was one of the committee members of the union, she stated that the role of the Student Union was mainly to assist teachers in whole-school events, including Sports Meetings and fund raising events. She admitted that they would not take the initiative to organize activities, nor would they take a leading role, because they don't have the knowledge and skills to do so. Besides, during my whole period of time in the school, which was the entire second semester of the academic year, I found that the Student Union did nothing at all. Piano explained that this was because all the committee members were too occupied by their course work and examinations, so that they could not afford the time to help teachers for any of the events. It seems to me that, compared to the responsibilities taken up by student leaders in St. Caroline's College, senior students of Peterson's Secondary School were more interested in their academic performance than their responsibility to the school or to other students. The reason might be due to the lack of a sense of belonging by these senior students for this school, as the majority of them started to study in this school just one to half a year ago, because

they could not continue their senior secondary school studies in their original schools, and were forced to take up free places at a school with a poor reputation.

Other junior form students in Peterson's School also rejected the idea of assisting teachers in activities or even class issues. In the interview with Ms. Lee, she reckoned that students normally had a negative image of students who serve.

*"(.....) our students nowadays would not take the initiative to take up any public service positions. For example, when there is some class issue that needs someone to volunteer, they would think that **only those who are stupid or who they called the "jerks", or those who are "unfortunately" appointed** by teachers, would do voluntary service for the class. (.....) Even for our school prefects, many of them are **scared to be on duty** because some of them would **be bullied or teased**. Maybe we have not established the reputation and power of school prefects. As for class prefects, they would be considered as the **"running dog"** (lackey) of the teachers (by the other students)! So they are not so eager to be the class prefects too."*

(Ms. Lee, individual interviews, Petersons' secondary school)

The lack of senior students' support may be influential but the lack of teachers' support may be critical. In my first two weeks of field work in the school, what most intrigued me was the surprisingly high absence rate of some of the teachers in Peterson's School. Although not all the absent teachers were the core members of the "Extra-curricular activities team", all the teachers were supposed to be responsible for one of the activities in the formal "Extra-curricular activities lessons" that were regularly scheduled in the formal lesson time on Monday. The roles of teachers in different interest groups might vary, so that some of them might just needed to be present in the classroom when the paid instructors were teaching students, some others might be the main instructor of the interest group, which would need the teacher to be prepared before the "lesson". However, the frequent absence of some of the teachers caused chaos in the arrangements of some of the interest groups, and the Head of the "Extra-curricular activities team", Mr. Kwok, would often need to switch from one classroom to another to maintain the running of these groups. As part of the agreement to enter the school for research, I was required to substitute for absent teachers to lead some of the interest groups. Thus, the responsibility for organizing



activities and the major OLE programme mainly relies on a few senior teachers in the school.

In conclusion, the great disparity in respect of social and economic capitals between the two schools would directly affect the types and scales of activities organized by the schools, and indirectly affect the accumulation of cultural capital by the students. With less social, economic capital and fewer “human resources”, it might seem that students of Peterson’s School are fighting a battle that they can never win. However, from the interviews with the school principals and teachers in the following sections, it seems that the choice of activities or experiences also depended on the different interpretations by the two school principals about what is meant by the “whole-person development” of a student. That is, the “ideal citizen” image of the school authorities and the teachers would influence their expectations of students’ participation and performance in OLE programmes. The following section will illustrate the standpoints of the two schools towards the meaning of “all-round” versus “whole-person development” and how these were related to their expectations of students’ participation in the OLE programme.

### **5.3 School Principals’ and Teachers’ Expectations**

From the analysis in the previous section, I suggest that the different quality and quantity in the provision of “learning experiences” or activities was based on the social, economic capital and teachers’/students’ involvement of the schools, which affected their flexibility on the allocation of resources and the competency in the organization of activities. In this section, I will first elucidate that the schools’ understanding and interpretation of the concept of “all-round” or “whole-person” development, which is consistently found in the analysis of the reform documents related to the “OLE programme” (CDC, 2002; 2009), and has also guided the aims and purposes of the provision of activities and experiences in the two schools. It is found that these interpretations of “all-round” or “whole-person” development also reflected the school authorities’ and teachers’ perceptions of the current development of Hong Kong society as well as the expectations and requirements from employers.

More importantly, from the interview with the school principals and students, I found that the schools' understanding and interpretation of "all-round" or "whole-person" development of the students is in fact influenced by their perception about their students' background -- that is, how they positioned their students in the society related to their social class, gender and ethnic background, would also affect their expectations of students' participation in OLE programmes. I will therefore delineate the different expectations towards students' participation in OLE programmes by the teachers of the two schools, which also explains the kind of activities and experiences the teachers organized and emphasized as important to their students.

### **Meanings of "all-round" and "whole-person development" – the two school principals' expectations of students' futures**

Although the rhetoric of "whole-person" or "all-round" development of students has been generally accepted in the educational arena since the launch of the education reform in Hong Kong, the meaning of the terms is generally unquestioned and "taken-for-granted". As shown in Ch.2, the two terms are, in fact, used interchangeably in the documents, and their meanings are quite broad, so that they could refer to a set of attitudes, dispositions, knowledge and skills that the students are expected to develop.

Yet, how school principals and teachers use the terms would very much depend on the context because of the slightly different meanings in the Chinese transliteration. The term "whole-person education" ("全人教育") is usually understood as an idea originating from Confucianism, which advocates individuals' self-cultivation with special emphasis on their cultivation of heart and mind ("inner" quality of a person), or the personality and morality of the person. It seems that the term "whole-person education" is more generically used to relate to the traditional Chinese conception about education.

As for the term "all-round development" ("全方位學習"), it is a new term introduced in the education reform after 1997 and became "official" rhetoric when the first education document "Education Reform Proposal" was published (Education

Commission, 2000). It seems to be directly translated from English, which, in Chinese, literally means “learning in all directions”. Although the term refers to a student’s development in the domains of ‘ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics’ (“德, 智, 體, 群, 美”) (Ibid: 4) from a traditional Chinese saying of the “five virtues” which seems to cover everything, it emphasizes more the student’s achievement of ‘a wider spectrum of competencies’ (Ibid: ii), especially in performance that is non-academic. For example, the reform document has suggested the schools should ‘avoid excessive reliance on the results of public examinations and should give due consideration to the overall performance of students in order to encourage all-round development in schools’ (Ibid: 12); at the same time, it also recommended that universities in Hong Kong should ‘overhaul their existing admission mechanism to give due consideration to students’ all-round performance. Apart from public examination results, they may also consider internal assessment reports of secondary schools, portfolios prepared by students themselves and their performance at interviews.’ (Ibid: 21). In other parts of the reform proposal and in other reform documents, “all-round” development is often linked with the provision of different learning experiences to students. Thus we can see that the term “all-round” is obviously closely linked with the “Other Learning Experiences” programme, and the five essential learning experiences that are developed from the five virtues. It is a contemporary term which developed within the context of the education reform in Hong Kong with its specific focus on the skills, experiences and knowledge related to the “five virtues”.

Understanding the context and meanings of the terms “whole-person” and “all-round” development is key to understanding the interpretation of “all-round” or “whole-person” education by the two school principals.

### **St. Caroline’s College**

*“We aim at empowering our students to become multi-talented, flexible women with integrity and global awareness by providing all-round education.”<sup>10</sup>*

(School Mission of St. Caroline’s College)

For St. Caroline’s College, the provision of “all-round” education based on the virtues of Christianity has always been the major school mission, aiming to cultivate students into “multi-talented, flexible women with integrity and global awareness”. The phrase “multi-talented, flexible with integrity” is regularly mentioned by both teachers and students in interviews, as well as in casual conversation with me which is shown in the field notes. It seems that such guiding principles for students’ school lives have been deeply rooted into everyone’s minds in St. Caroline’s. While the education of being “righteous” is more subtly educated through the school ethos, assemblies or religious activities, the emphasis on “multi-talented” and its relationship with the notion of “all-round” is more overt in St. Caroline’s.

The interview with Sr. Ellen (the following extract) shows that “all-round” development is closely linked to the “cultural capital” that students could inculcate (or had already inculcated) through participation in the school’s music, sports, arts or dance clubs. It should be noted that the accumulation of “cultural capital” is also expected to start before entering secondary school, during students’ primary studies.

*Sr. Ellen: In my opinion, **human beings should have various sides, should have all-round development.** That’s why..... School A may develop their school drama, which is one form of performing arts! For our school, we emphasized dance (.....) In fact, for our students, we often said that they were divided into the “Three big companies”. These “three companies” would recruit (students) during their Form 1 and 2....*

*Researcher: Do you mean that music, dance and sports clubs are the “three big companies”?*

*Sr. Ellen: Correct! In fact, this process does not start at Form 1, but started in their primary schools, and we hope that their talents could continue when they move to the secondary school. For*

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<sup>10</sup> The sentence has been paraphrased in order to guarantee the anonymity of the school.

*example, many of them have been asked to learn a musical instrument, say, playing the violin, so in primary school they have already had some sort of music group resembling an orchestra. When they move on to the secondary school, many of the students would already have the foundations of music, then they could further enhance their musical talents through joining the orchestra, band or choir of our school.*

(Sr. Ellen, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

From the above extract, we can see that the meaning of “all-round” development is about the ability to engage in different “performing arts” or in recognized sports activities. According to Sr. Ellen, the concept of “all-round” is understood as the “various sides” of a human being, and specifically those “various sides” that refer to students’ non-academic talents including music, dance, sports or other performing arts. Interestingly, when we tried to compare the conception of “all around” between St. Caroline’s and that of the reform documents, seemingly St. Caroline’s College emphasized much more the “aesthetic and physique” aspects among the five virtues of “ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics” within the concept of “all-round”. While traditionally the cultivation of “taste” in “aesthetic” and “physique” is viewed as the “cultural capital” of individuals according to Bourdieu’s classic work, “Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of *Taste*” (1979/2010), the accumulation of students’ cultural capital is an overt and conscious aim in their organization of activities and experiences through the OLE programme.

The tradition of “multi-talented” is deeply rooted in the whole school and started even in the primary section of St. Caroline’s school<sup>11</sup>. About half of the new students are not from St. Caroline’s school, and all students who apply through the

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<sup>11</sup> The primary school that is connected with a secondary school is also called the “feeder” school. It is based on the “through-train” mode which was one of the reform proposals put forward by the Education Commission in its Report on Reform Proposals published in 2000, in order to strengthen collaboration between primary and secondary schools having the same philosophy and aspiration for education. The secondary schools should reserve a certain amount of secondary-one places for graduates of these feeder schools. In the case of St. Caroline’s, the primary section of it is founded by the same organizing body under the same name long before the “through-train” policy is invented. Therefore, the philosophy and policy of St. Caroline’s College is a continuity of St. Caroline’s Primary School.



“Discretionary places system”<sup>12</sup> are expected to be equipped with talents in either music, dance, sports or arts to get a place in the school, and at the moment they enter the school in order to fit into the school culture. Thus, certain degrees of “cultural capital” of St. Caroline’s students has been “embodied” ((Bourdieu, 1986, reprinted in Lauder et.al, 2006:106) before they enter the school, acquired over time whether from their families or from the arena of their primary schools. The tradition of “multi-talented” at St. Caroline’s does not exist by itself. It is based on the foundation of students who came from middle-class or upper middle-class families who could afford the time and economic expense for their extra-curricular activities since their early age, or students who learn this kind of “middle-class” habitus in their primary schools about the need to learn a musical instrument or perform very well in sports.

While the emphasis on “multi-talented” and the culture of participating in school-recognized aesthetic or sports activities has long been the school’s tradition, Sr. Ellen and teachers of St. Caroline’s also paid a lot of effort to providing OLE experiences related to moral and civic education, social services and job-related experiences for their students. From the school reports of the past three years, I found that social services, green education and global awareness have been the specified school themes in the past few years. This arrangement did not only respond to the requirement of the OLE programme, but because the school recognizes the need to provide experiences that could enrich students’ international exposure and build up their sense of, and relationships with people in, the community

In the following extract, when I asked Sr. Ellen to elaborate on the meanings of “righteousness and multi-talented”, she elaborated “integrity” in a more theoretical way, stating that the guiding principle for students is to follow the virtues of Christ, to uphold the love of God that guides their action of righteousness and justice for the good of others and the society. However, when she moved on to talk about “multi-

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<sup>12</sup> Each student is allowed to apply for not more than two schools for their discretionary places before participating in the Secondary School Places Allocation System. Normal aided schools have a limited number of places that they could allocate to students of their choice through the process of interviews or admitting students from its related primary schools.

talented”, she related the term with more “facts” and “reality” that she found in the society: she believed that there’s a necessity for St. Caroline’s students to equip themselves by being “multi-talented”.

*“For ‘Multi-talented’, it is aiming against the **ever-changing society**. As you can see, it is now a post-modern society which is changing all the time. If we couldn’t equip ourselves **to be knowledgeable, well-informed in all aspects and multi-talented** --- which is the meaning of **“versatility”** – we could not accommodate all the changes. Nowadays, who can work on a job position for a life-time? It was the case in the old days. Previously, people could stay and work in the same company for their whole life and they wouldn’t change to another company, not to mention the change of the nature of jobs, nowadays, even changes in the nature of jobs has become normal. (.....)Therefore, we hope our students could ..... **adapt to changes, and when they encounter different societies, different people, or different environments, they could change.**”*

*Nowadays, it is quite convenient for **international communication and transportation**. (.....) For those who can adapt to change, they will have a role in society, **to be a leader**. I hope my students could **influence the others** in the future. If they have righteous values in life and other social values, they can influence others with that to **improve society**.*

(Sr. Ellen, individual interview, St. Caroline’s College)

From the above extract, the message about students having to equip themselves with multiple talents and skills in order to keep their competitiveness in the “ever-changing society”, or even to become the leaders to influence others in the globalized economy/world, is very prominent. In fact, the rhetoric about “Ever-changing society” and “the challenges of globalization” is what the new Hong Kong SAR government claimed to be the major reasons for the urgent need to rectify and transform the whole educational reform in Hong Kong (Choi, 2005; Flowerdew, 2002). Although no specific discussion or clarification about the two terms is in the documents, everyone in society has taken these concepts for granted and accepted that we, as Hong-Kongers, in order to face the challenge of the globalized economy and to keep our advantages in the world and other cities in China, should accommodate these changes by acquiring more knowledge and skills in order to “survive”. To Sr. Ellen, to be multi-talented is vital to St. Caroline’s girls as they are expected to be the

cream of the crop among Hong Kong students and future leaders of Hong Kong. They are the group that has to face directly the challenges of the “ever-changing society” and “globalization” when capitalist economy becomes dominant. Below the new “norm” of the instability of job natures and job positions, and the fierce competition internationally especially in cross-national firms or financial sectors, St. Caroline’s girls are forced to join the fight in order to become leaders of society (or even the world). Thus, they have to be multi-talented in order to be flexible when they ‘encounter different societies, different people, or different environments’ (Sr. Ellen interview).

Therefore, the school motto, “Multi-talented, flexible with integrity” of St. Caroline’s school, and the interview with Sr. Ellen revealed that the meaning of “all-round” education mainly refers to the development of students’ skills and abilities by providing opportunities and “learning experiences” to achieve two aspects of “multi-talented”. Firstly, students should embody a certain degree of “high -brow” cultural capital in the areas of music, arts or sports, and they are expected to further accumulate these cultural capitals by actively participating in orchestras, choirs, music, arts or sports clubs inside and outside school. Secondly, “multi-talented” also implies the ability to cope with challenges and changes in the “ever-changing society” and under the competition of globalization, thus “all-round” education of St. Caroline’s also includes raising students’ awareness of social issues and news about the world, and encouraging students to develop their communication skills and international exposure by providing various overseas exchange experiences through the major OLE programme “Extended Learning Week” as shown in Table 2 and 3.

### **Peterson’s Secondary School**

*We aim to provide equal educational opportunities to children in society, to bring hope to the public under the mission and vision of the Catholic Church. Through the student-centred policy, our school provides whole-person education for students of different aptitudes and abilities in order to meet their needs for further study and career development, including meeting the requirements of*

*professional and tertiary education. We wish to develop our students to become civilians with responsibility and morality.*<sup>13</sup>

(School Mission of Peterson's Secondary School)

For Peterson's Secondary School, the term "whole-person" is more commonly used on the campus and in the interview with its School Principal, Mr. Cheung. Although the term "all-round" is also mentioned, "whole-person" development obviously has a more significant place on the school's agenda. According to Mr. Cheung, the meaning of "whole-person" development is more about the development of personalities, values and attitudes, especially those personal qualities that influence an individual's relationship with society.

*Our school mission is to help the marginalized minority communities --- we have done that; and we aim to provide "whole-person" education ---- what is it about? Firstly it is **all-round education**, that we hope students can **know every basic thing**; secondly, we hope they can become **good citizens**, so we need to work on civic education, to teach them what is our society's **social and moral norms**.*

(Mr. Cheung, individual interview, Peterson's secondary school)

*The meaning of "whole-person" is.....an **individual in society**, they have to.....what we emphasize is, firstly, concerning their values, the **correct set of values**; (secondly,) whether their **behaviour is conforming to the social norms**; apart from these two, thirdly, they should **become good citizens**. Ok, after fulfilling these criteria, they should also **try to pursue knowledge continuously**. If they could fulfil these four missions, I would call them a "whole-person".*

(Mr. Cheung, individual interview, Peterson's secondary school)

From the former extract above, we can see that the use of the term "all-round" is under the notion of "whole-person" development, and it particularly refers to students' knowledge about "every basic thing". It is more likely to refer to the basic knowledge and the different experiences or exposures that the schools provide for its

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<sup>13</sup> The sentence has been paraphrased in order to guarantee the anonymity of the school.

students, and we can see the trace of “all-round” education within the OLE programme.

From the later extract above, we can see that Mr. Cheung emphasized very much the personal qualities of individuals and their relationships with society. From the first three criteria set by Mr. Cheung, a “whole-person” should have a “correct set of values”, should understand and behave according to “social norms”, and should become a “good citizen”. In fact, the three criteria could be summed up by the third criteria – “become good citizens”. The definition of “good citizens” might be arguable, but for Mr. Cheung, understanding and behaving according to “social and moral norms”, which he mentioned many times on different occasions and at different times in the interview as shown in the two extracts above, is the basic requirement of being a good citizen. In the following extract, Mr. Cheung also expressed his trust in his students to become “good citizens in the future” who “will not commit crimes”. Mr. Cheung’s definition of “good citizen” is therefore, a lawful, moral citizen who does no harm to society.

*For our local students, em.... they **don't have much privilege** (in society). They are, after all, a group of minorities. They don't have much self-confidence. For their superiority, it is.....honestly, I think my students would all be **good citizens in the future, they will not commit crimes**. Because even in band 1 schools, many of the students would! I have a friend who is working in the prison, he knows! He said he saw many prisoners who are well-educated and smart!*

(Mr. Cheung, individual interview, Peterson’s secondary school, bold is my emphasis)

The emphasis on morality and personal qualities may be related to the Confucian idea about “whole-person”, but in the case of Peterson’s School, it may be more relevant to the relatively negative reputations of their students in their academic results and their conduct and behaviour. Although students’ behaviour has slightly improved in recent years, the emphasis on personality development and the cultivation of positive values by Mr. Cheung and the teachers of Peterson’s School may be due to their views of students’ limited abilities. The fact is that Peterson’s School students may not be able to achieve or excel either in academic performance



or in extra-curricular activities (music/sports etc.) among other local students in other schools, especially those in Band 1 elite schools. That's why, in this extract, Mr. Cheung commented that local students of his school have very few advantages compared to other students in society.

In the former extract, the last criteria of Mr. Cheung's "whole-person" definition is to "try to pursue knowledge continuously". It may seem irrelevant to the repetitive theme of "good citizen", "know the social/moral norms", and have "correct set of values". Yet it may reflect Mr. Cheung's observation about the world, about all the changes in society nowadays. It also echoes one of the dominant rhetoric of Hong Kong education reform, the emphasis on "life-long learning".

Similarly to Sr. Ellen of St. Caroline's College, Mr. Cheung also recognized the influence of the changes in this century on the world. The necessity of "life-long learning" is for young people to cope with the uncertainties of the modern world, especially in the changing of job natures and unstable job positions. However, differently from Sr. Ellen's emphasis on equipping her students to compete under globalization, what concerns Mr. Cheung is students' ability to distinguish between right or wrong, and whether they can resist the control or manipulation from others when there's excessive information on the internet. The two principals' expectation to students seem to be echoing with the uncertainty in the era of Liquid Modernity (2000) as discussed in Ch.3. This could also be shown in the following extract.

*Now the times have changed. (.....) the **professional positions that won't change, but all the other jobs will be changing.** (.....)You will need to get hold of some ability to adapt to these changes. (.....)Because the **world is changing**, when we read the newspaper, there is always something new. But how do you cope with the tone of information in front of you? **Can you distinguish between right and wrong?** Would you follow whatever others say? (.....) All of these tell us the **need to train students' critical thinking.***

(Mr. Cheung, individual interview, Peterson's secondary school, bold is my emphasis)

When we compare the description of Sr. Ellen and Mr. Cheung about their students in the "changing world", it is found that their emphasis on how to equip their

students is very different. For St. Caroline's girls, Sr. Ellen emphasized that they need to be "multi-talented" and "flexible", enrich themselves with different skills, knowledge and experiences In order to compete internationally and become leaders of society. For Peterson's students, Mr. Cheung also recognized the need for students to acquire basic skills and knowledge (especially language proficiency), but he put much more emphasis on training students' "critical thinking" or the ability to "distinguish between right or wrong" so that they won't be "controlled and manipulated". It is also echoing his claim on emphasising that students need to "know the social/moral norms" and have a "correct set of values" in the previous extract.

From the above comparison between the opinion of the two school principals, we can see that the emphasis on "multi-talented and flexible" in St. Caroline's and "know the social/moral norms" and "correct set of values" in Peterson's reflected the different orientations of the two schools on students' qualities. St. Caroline's put more emphasis on the multiple skills and knowledge in academic and the "recognized" non-academic areas (music, sports, arts) together with a "flexible", competitive, independent and self-actualising personality, which resembled the "ideal citizen" image of the "competitive individuals" or "enterprising individuals" described by Chan (2004:68) or "entrepreneurial individuals" (Kelly, 2006:24) with "entrepreneurial qualities" (Peters, 2001:60) under the influence of neo-liberalism to accommodate the changes and challenges in the "ever-changing world". As for Peterson's School, the emphasis on the development of conduct and morality of students entails an almost opposite "good citizen" image of students that is passive, obedient and conforming to the general social norms.

The different expectations on students of the two schools also shows that the choices of using the term "all-round" (St. Caroline's) or "whole-person" (Peterson's) in the school missions and also in their daily conversations on the campuses, as shown in the school principals' interviews, are not inconsequential. As I have argued, while both terms are used interchangeably, the actual meaning of the two terms is slightly different. While the term "whole-person" may entail the traditional Chinese cultural concept about the importance of developing one's conduct, morals and personality,

the “contemporary” term “all-round” is apparently more closely related to the educational reform in Hong Kong, which is more frequently used and has been given a definition (Education Commission, 2000:29), albeit loosely. From the aforementioned analysis, it is likely that the term “all-round” could be signifying the development of “entrepreneurial qualities” hidden in the education reform attributed to neo-liberalism.

It is significant that the rhetoric of “the changing world” is deeply embedded in people’s minds, especially on the negative side of the “threat” and challenges accompanied by the trend of globalization which is repeatedly emphasized in the reform documents. (Choi, 2005; Poon and Wong, 2008:50).

However, while both school principals agreed about such rhetoric, the different emphasis on the education of the schools may have resulted from their evaluations of the resources and abilities of their students at the moment, and students’ expected future positions in society. As shown in the previous section, the economic and human resources inherited from their families or from their school or primary school (especially for students originally from the primary section of St. Caroline’s School) have allowed St. Caroline’s students to obtain more cultural, economic and social capital. Because of such an impression of students’ potentials, in addition to the past experiences from alumni, it is understandable that Sr. Ellen would expect her students to become future leaders or the elite in society, who would need to excel, compete and lead in the professional, financial and public sectors. For students in Peterson’s School, not only has the school limited resources, students’ abilities are being ignored because of the general low-achieving performance in academic results. Besides, both local and non-Chinese students are generally from working class or newly migrated family backgrounds. All of these thus led to Mr. Cheung’s comment of “not much privileges” (under privilege) of Peterson’s students compared to their peers, and lower expectations of their students’ futures. Instead of hoping for students to perform in their further studies or career development, Mr. Cheung’s expectation focuses on the personal development of students and their part as “good citizens” who may not be able to contribute to society, but at least do no harm or “will not commit crimes” in the society.

## Expectation of students' participation in "Other Learning Experiences"

Based on their beliefs about the "ever-changing world", their interpretations of "whole-person" and "all-round" development, and their evaluations of the resources, abilities and the expected futures of their students, the school principals and teachers have developed different expectations of students' participation and performance in the OLE activities, and also different approaches to organizing, and choosing the content of, their OLE programmes. I will first examine the different expectations on students' participation in the OLE activities in this section; then in the next section, I will illustrate in more details the approaches of implementation and contents of the OLE programmes in the two schools, which display the different participation level of students and the types of cultural and social capitals that students acquire in the process of participating in the activities.

### St. Caroline's College

As mentioned previously, the concept of "all-round" development implies the "multi-talented and flexibility" aspects for students of St. Caroline's College. They are also expected to "influence people around them" and become leaders under the competitive globalized market in the future. Therefore, for teachers, students' engagements in OLE activities are the signifiers of their leadership skills as well as their willingness to further develop their "multi-talent".

In the following extract, it is shown that students were expected to be devoted and "go to the frontline" instead of just being a passive "audience" in activities.

*"I am very worried....that in fact you didn't have a choice, that you were only "audience" throughout the year, throughout all the OLE activities ----- "audience". This is really pathetic, as you were only "audience", instead of engineering, being the **group leaders** or participating in the frontline....not even the logistic support at the back, but sitting at the back and being the most passive 'audience'."*

(Ms. Wong, briefing session of OLE programme in school, St. Caroline's College)

In this speech given by Ms. Wong, the head of the OLE team, after a briefing session on the coming OLE activities during the summer, she mentioned that some of the class teachers had inspected students portfolios (Student Learning Profile), and found that the five activities which some of the students chose to write about were mainly activities like seminars or visits, that they only participated in as “audiences” and that “could not reflect the fruitful and diversified ‘Other learning Experiences’” they experienced.

She then explained that what she really worried about was not that students did not know how to choose what to report in the portfolio, but in fact, did not have another choice, because some students only participated as the audience instead of being the group leader of activities. She advised students to have plans and think more in the coming year about what they should do to participate in their OLE and extra-curricular activities.

This example has shown that students’ participation in St. Caroline’s is expected to be in an active, leadership role rather than being the passive “audience”, as emphasized in Ms. Wong speech. Ironically, students’ autonomy is ignored in this process, as everyone is required to act under the expectation of the school to be the leader or elite among their peers and in society in the future. Even for students who voluntarily choose to be the audience for the activities they are not interested in, or simply do not want to be the leader (because of their personality or self-evaluation of their capability), they would be regarded as “pathetic” because they are not adhering to the rules of being “competitive” embedded in the ideal image of “entrepreneurial individuals” recognized by the school. This may be viewed as a kind of “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 1998) to students when they perceived this rule, which is for most of the time embedded, but sometimes is explicitly expressed by the authority, like Ms. Wong did in the above extract.

In fact, the following extract is also an example showing that the school and teachers also cared very much about the presentation of students’ experiences in the Student Learning Profile. In the same speech given by Ms. Wong, the importance of credentials for students was explicitly acknowledged.



*“I want to remind all of you: there were so many activities throughout the year, and what you have chosen to record in your student profile now, will be the portfolio you show to others when you graduate in 3 years time, Secondary 6 grades, when you have your university entry interviews.*

*That’s why you have to think carefully --- what kinds of activities should you choose to write into your “Other Learning Experiences” portfolio? What do you want to show to others? This is very important. For example, student A and student B have similar academic performances. When the interviewers meet you with your portfolio, and find that you are an **all-rounded student** who participated in different kinds of activities, it could reflect that you are a **well-organized, well-planned person, and show your fruitful and diverse personal growth trajectory.**”*

*(Ms. Wong, briefing session of OLE programme in school, St. Caroline’s College)*

This example shows that the high expectation of teachers of their students is also influenced by their recognition of the OLE portfolio; the “Student Learning Profile” has become one of the objectified cultural capital under the curriculum reform. Although in the interview with Sr. Ellen, she also emphasized the need for students to keep the “balance” between academic performance and their engagement in music, arts or sports, inevitably the student portfolio has become another significant credential along with the academic record for interviewees of the university or future employers to examine and evaluate students’ ability, and more importantly, their personality, experiences or “cultural capital”. This objectified cultural capital of the “Student Learning Profile” requires constant engagement, organization and planning in order to accumulate records of experiences to package and present oneself.

The above extract also reveals one of the “entrepreneurial qualities” of “hyper-autonomy”. Chan (2004:77) elaborated the term as “one is the maker of his/her own life”, which means that individuals are expected to take charge of their life by making efforts to equip themselves in order to survive or “win the game” in the competition under economic globalization. From the above example, it is shown that St. Caroline’s students are also expected to take the responsibility to plan the kind of activities they should join and present their own “personal growth trajectory” in the portfolio. In fact, on the same occasion that Ms. Wong made the speech, because it

was nearly the end of the academic year, she also asked the students to review what they had joined and what they hadn't, and to start to plan and arrange their time in the coming summer vacation, and start to think and decide what to do for the next academic year. She then provided extra information about the art and fashion design courses offered by private art galleries and international art academies outside school. She suggested that students who lacked learning experiences to fill in the "aesthetic development" section in the "Student Learning Profile" of the OLE programme should grasp this opportunity to take these courses during the coming summer vacation. This episode shows that the term "hyper-autonomy" does not really guarantee the "autonomy" of the individuals. Rather, it signifies the state that individuals are expected to engage autonomously and actively in their own lives to "self-actualize" consistently. This quality of "hyper-autonomy", being "well-planned" and "well-organized" for their own life, may not be really focusing on the knowledge and skills the individuals have developed, or the level of "self-actualization" they have reached; on the contrary, the attitude and mentality of "planning", "organizing" or working out how best to package and present oneself is what matters.

### **Peterson's Secondary School**

For Peterson's School, the mission of "whole-person" development is mainly about the cultivation of students' attitudes, values and behaviour, and to become "good citizens" in society, as explained in the previous analysis of Mr. Cheung's interview. Therefore, the provision of OLE activities and experiences is more about nurturing students into "good citizens". For local students, teachers found the need to build up their "self-image" and their sense of responsibility; for southern Asian students, teachers tended to use the OLE activities to integrate them into the local community.

*The reason why they don't bother to participate is because of their low self-esteem, so if we can encourage students to participate in OLE activities, or if we provide opportunities for them to take up some positions (in class or in student organizations), they will feel that they are 'somebody' .....*

(Ms. Lee, individual interview, Peterson's secondary school)

In the above extract, Ms. Lee illustrated her understanding about students' low engagement in school lives and low participation in school activities. Therefore, an OLE programme that offers more activities and opportunities for students to engage and participate would help to build students' self-image.

Because of the persistently high truancy rate in the school, including both normal school days and for other outside-school activities like the OLE programme of "Life-wide Learning Day", teachers' expectations of students participation were very low. While the Other Learning Experiences had become part of the curriculum for the senior secondary school students, many teachers reflected that the compulsory attendance for OLE activities which emphasized learning through "experience" and "having fun", would weaken the opposition of students, attract their participation and increase their willingness to come to school. Through this process, teachers hoped that they might develop students' sense of responsibility to their studies.

For Southern Asian students, the school has set up a Social Skills Training Scheme for those who found difficulties in fitting into class and society. The training scheme is mainly aimed at nurturing these Southern Asian youngsters in to be 'contributive and socially-integrated members of the society' (quote from programme outline<sup>14</sup>). The programme also consisted of outside-school activities, including visits to community centre which provides services to the Southern Asian community in the area. It is also where the social workers who came to the school to run the Social Skills Training Scheme were based. This provides additional information and support from the community centre especially outside the campus and outside school hours to these Southern Asian students and their families.

Other trips also included hiking, "wild" cooking and night-walks in different country parks, which gave the Southern Asian boys the opportunity to explore more about Hong Kong, training their physical and mental strength, and gave them the opportunity to explore their fears and potentials. In the students' self-reflection

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<sup>14</sup> I intended not to provide the exact sources of programme due to the concern about research ethics because the programme would reveal the real name of Peterson's school.

written at the end of the course, It is found that after completing the scheme, most of the participants have improved their social skills, communications skills, manners and self-image. Some of the boys commented that they had understood more about a better way to communicate with others, especially the way to interact with local students and local Chinese people in the community in a less offensive way. The programme, designed by the Hong Kong social worker and his Pakistani assistant, seemed to have changed some of the violent or defensive attitudes of these Southern Asian boys, and had encouraged them to become “Ambassadors” of their countries, to represent and introduce their countries to other local students in the school. This scheme is found useful to help students to enjoy their school lives and integrate into society.

The school has also designed many activities to attract Southern Asian students to participate and enjoy school life, because school is almost the only place for them to feel free and safe while they are still the marginalized group in society. For instance, the cricket team, hip-hop dance and music bands are set up due to their popularity among Southern Asian students. Southern Asian students thus could explore their talents, and even perform their sports and musical talents in the whole school talent show, or even in public events in the local community. Many teachers also mentioned that parents of Southern Asian girls were not willing to let their children to go outside school, so participating in Other Learning Experiences was an authorized way to give Southern Asian girls the chance to get in touch with the community.

#### **5.4 Cultural Capitals Cultivation in the “Major Other Learning Experiences (OLE) programmes”**

In the preceding section, I have explained the issues that influence the implementation of OLE programmes in the two schools. Firstly, the differences in resources have affected the types, ranges and scale of the activities offered by the schools to their students. Secondly, it was shown that the school principals and teachers have their ideas about the image of an “ideal citizen” which might be influenced by their observations and understanding of their students’ abilities and

backgrounds. The judgements about their students' futures would also lead to the different expectations of students' participation in OLE activities. These issues significantly influenced the types of activities the schools organized in their OLE programmes.

According to the guidelines, schools should provide different activities to students in five areas which are called "five essential learning experiences", including Moral and Civic Education, Community services, Career-related experiences, Physical development and Aesthetic development (Curriculum Development Council, 2009). Most of the extra-curricular activities that existed before the implementation of OLE programmes, including the uniformed groups, sports teams, music teams and religious groups, are now classified into one of the five areas outlined in the documents (See Table 6.1). However, because the document on OLE programmes emphasizes the need to provide varieties of activities both in school and outside school, both schools have allocated some of the school days to organize OLE activities outside the campus, which I have called the "Major Other Learning Experiences (OLE) programmes" because they are particularly organized in response to the launch of the OLE programmes in the reform. Also, the kind of social, cultural capitals that the schools expected their students to cultivate would be most visible in these major OLE programmes. Thus, in addition to the cultural, social capital the schools expected their students to cultivate as discussed in the preceding section, I will elucidate the content of the OLE programmes of the two schools, and discuss the major capitals (social and cultural) cultivated (or aimed to be cultivated) by students through their participation in the "Major Other Learning Experiences" programmes. Through the following illustration, we can also have an insight into students' involvement and participation pattern in the two schools, which will be further elaborated in later sections.



<b>St. Caroline's College's "Extended Learning Week"</b>	<b>Peterson Secondary School's "Life-wide Learning Day"</b>
For F.6 students in November, 2009	Academic Year 2009-2010 (Semester 1)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outward Bound Training in Hong Kong</li> <li>2. Community Theatre Project in Hong Kong</li> <li>3. Social Service Trip to Guang-xi village, China</li> <li>4. Service Trip to Kathmandu, Nepal</li> <li>5. Students exchange programme with Singapore High School</li> </ol>	<p>Overall Theme: "Cultural Integration"</p> <p>S.1 &amp; 2: Visit Hong Kong Museum of History</p> <p>S.3: Visit Hong Kong museum of Art</p> <p>S.4: Trip to Ping Shan Heritage Trail and "Cinderella On Ice" movie appreciation</p> <p>S.5: Airport and Travel Agency Operation Learning Day</p> <p>S.6: Leadership Training Camp</p> <p>S.7: Trip to Silk Road Art Festival Exhibition, Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited and Hong Kong Monetary Authority</p>

**Table 4 - The Major OLE programmes of the two schools in the first semester of academic year 2009-2010**

<b>St. Caroline's College's "Extended Learning Week"</b>	<b>Peterson Secondary School's "Life-wide Learning Day"</b>
For S.4 students in July, 2010	Academic Year 2009-2010 (Semester 2)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outward Bound Training in Hong Kong</li> <li>2. Kung-fu and Chinese Culture Camp in Hong Kong</li> <li>3. Visual Art Study Tour to Taipei, Taiwan</li> <li>4. Cultural Study Tour to Taipei &amp; Yilan, Taiwan</li> <li>5. Service and Study Tour to Sabah, Malaysia</li> <li>6. Students exchange programme with Singapore High School</li> <li>7. Concert Tour to Europe (Choir members only)</li> <li>8. Cultural exchange trip: Dance Performance in Shanghai Expo(China) and Japan (Dance team members only)</li> </ol>	<p>Overall Theme: "The Green Hong Kong"</p> <p><u>For local students</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trip to Hong Kong Disneyland</li> <li>2. Trip to Hong Kong Ocean Park</li> <li>3. Visit recreation centre/youth camp</li> <li>4. Visit several spots in countryside with special environmental features</li> </ol> <p><u>For Southern Asian students</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visiting local town park near the school</li> <li>2. Visiting waterfront park (town park)</li> </ol>

**Table 5 - The Major OLE programmes of the two schools during fieldwork (Semester 2 in academic year 2009-2010)**

The preceding tables list the activities organized by the two schools as the major OLE programmes. The first one serves as a reference showing the “Extended Learning Week”/“Life-wide learning day” held in the first semester of the academic year before I started my fieldwork; the second shows the one held during my field work time, and I was able to participate in some of the briefing sections for the activities in St. Caroline’s School, and joined the activities of Peterson’s School with students. The tables show that the varieties and scale of the activities in the two schools are quite different, which I will discuss respectively.

### **St. Caroline’s College**

The implementation of “Extended Learning Week” in St. Caroline’s started before 2009, when the curriculum guidelines confirmed the OLE programme to be a compulsory part of the senior secondary curriculum to complement the formal academic curriculum (the core and elective subjects), because the School Principal, Sr. Ellen, perceived the trend of the educational reform and thus decided to start the programme earlier, and also include the junior secondary school students. There are normally two “Extended Learning weeks” in an academic year, one in November in the first semester mainly for S.6 students, and another in July or August at the end of the second semester or during the summer vacation for S.4 students. Because the “Extended Learning week” programmes had already run for several years, the school was quite prepared for the compulsory requirement of including OLE in the New Senior Secondary School Curriculum for S4 students starting from the academic year 2009-2010.

Aiming to widen their horizons and enrich students’ learning experiences, the programmes of the Extended Learning Week usually contain six different aspects of activities: music-related trips, dance-related trips, social service trips, cultural or historical exposure, students’ exchange programme and outward bound training. Except for the outward bound training, which took place in Hong Kong, and the community theatre project which took place in the first semester of the academic year, all the other programmes required students to travel to foreign places.

As mentioned, the organization of the programmes in the “Extended Learning Week” required the support of the strong social networks of the school authority and the alumni of the school, in order to get through the gate-keepers and establish a long-term co-operative relationship with an elite high school in Singapore for the exchange programme, and with the officials of the local Chinese government for students to work as volunteers in the rural villages in China. I argue that these social networks can, in fact, be “inherited” by St. Caroline’s students in the form of social capital. For example, through their participation in these activities, students gain the opportunity to interact and build up their social network with students in the Singapore elite school and the residents and government officials in the Chinese village. In the process of participating in the international exchange programme, conferences and performances (e.g. dance, choir and orchestras performances), the interaction with other participants from other countries also provided the opportunity for students to build up friendships with different people.

In addition, cultural capital is also transferred in these major OLE programmes. While St. Caroline’s College aspires to build up its students’ global awareness and international vision, the OLE programmes implemented overseas are obviously aiming to offer the opportunity of international exposure to students, when they get the chance to visit an environment with a different culture and language, and have the opportunity to interact with other participants or performers who are from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, another form of cultural capital that St. Caroline’s students have obtained should be emphasized. Instead of the inculcation of “taste”, “skills” or “knowledge”, the “learning experience” itself should be counted as a form of cultural capital. While the OLE programme emphasized the “learning experiences” of students, and requested students to record and write their reflections about these “learning experiences” in the “Student Learning Profile”, the “experiences” thus become a unit of evaluation and differentiation that have to be evaluated, accountable and able to be compared. On top of its accountability, because of the “hierarchy of experience” existing in society (Brown, et al., 2003; Heath, 2007), “learning experience” has to be packaged into an eye-catching, attractive and unique form in order to add its value

to the “Student Learning Profile”. For St. Caroline’s students, the “learning experiences” provided by the school are carefully chosen, so that the overseas locations, the forms of activities (exchange programmes, historical and cultural tours, international performances etc.) and stories that can be told are quite exceptional not only among general local Hong Kong schools, but are compatible with the “learning experiences” in other Hong Kong traditional elite schools. Thus, these exceptional “learning experiences” have become valuable “cultural capital” to St. Caroline’s girls. These “experiences” are not only “objectified cultural capitals” that could be included in their student portfolio, but are also the “embodied cultural capitals” to develop a “personality package” (Brown et al., 2003), so that the stories could be presented and shared as part of their “life trajectory” to build up their independent, creative and internationally-connected image in their universities admission interviews or job interviews.

### **Peterson’s Secondary School**

In response to the life-wide learning rhetoric in the education reform, Peterson’s Secondary School had also arranged two “Life-wide Learning Days” in the academic year, one in each semester. The themes of each “Life-wide Learning Day” differ every time. During my stay in the field, I was able to join one of the “Life-wide Learning Days” which had the theme of “the Green Hong Kong”, while the other “Life-wide Learning Day” in the previous semester was “Cultural Integration”. However, I found that the activities the teachers arranged may not be sticking to the so called “theme”. For example, the Form 6 students were having a trip to Disneyland, while some other local students of F.1, 2 and 5 went to the Ocean Park under the “Green Hong Kong” theme. For non-local students, it was arranged for them to visit places which were free of charge and easy to manage -- to the town park located 20 minutes walking distance away from school, and a waterfront park which is the town park of a nearby region. As could be seen in Table 6.2, under the theme of “cultural integration”, the school had arranged for students to visit government owned and sponsored museums (Hong Kong History and Museum of Art) and heritage trails with free guided tour services (Ping Shan Heritage Trail); to attend exhibitions and shows that offered bargain prices to students on a group basis

(“Cinderella On Ice” movie appreciation; Silk Road Art Festival Exhibition); and to visit different advisory and statutory bodies (Hong Kong Airport Authority, Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited and Hong Kong Monetary Authority) which would not charge for school visits. Obviously, the reasons for these arrangements were due to the limitations of budget and lack of social networks, that teachers only have limited choice in the way they could organize activities and relied very much on the public resources available from the government or in society. Therefore teachers were forced to set up an abstract theme with broad meanings in order to cover the incoherence of the activities in relation to the theme.

Another point to note is that the visits to the Airport and Travel Agency Operation Learning Day (when the Form 5 students visited the Hong Kong Airport and Airport Authority, and a travel agency), and to Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited and Hong Kong Monetary Authority for Form 7 students, were not randomly arranged. The visits to these organizations were mainly relevant to the subjects that these students were studying. For the Form 5 students, almost all of the students in the arts/business stream were studying “Tourism and Hospitality Studies”; and for Form 7 students, many of them were studying “Business, Accounting and Financial Studies”. Therefore, even though these activities were obviously unrelated to the overall theme of “cultural integration”, students reflected that they could gain knowledge and experiences which were directly related to their academic studies and future careers. Obviously, the practical knowledge and academic-related experiences were highly valued by Peterson’s students, who were much more concerned about their careers as they were approaching graduation and realized that the chances for further higher education for them were very low.

From the two tables, we can see that the activities provided by the school to students were restricted compared with the range of activities provided by St. Caroline’s College in their “Extended Learning Week”. Although the visits to Disneyland, Ocean Park and the recreational centre provided different guided tours and activities to help them to understand the so-called environment protection policies and related environmental issues in these theme parks and centres, for students, it was the



recreational aspects of the activities that attracted them to participate. As mentioned, the high truancy rate of students has always been a concern to the school. Thus, it is understandable for teachers to arrange activities in these venues to attract students to participate, in the hope of taking this opportunity to increase students' sensitivity and concerns in environmental issues. Another advantage of organizing activities in these venues is that these theme parks and the recreational centres owned by the government will usually give a large discount on the price of tickets if it is a school-organized educational activity.

The choice of visiting the nearby town park as the activity for Southern Asian students was mainly based on three reasons. According to Ms. Ting, the teacher-in-charge of the OLE programme, she claimed that they would like to provide a free-of-charge activity to Southern Asian students who are mostly from working-class families. At the same time, the teachers thought that the visit to the town park would provide opportunities for Southern Asian students to explore more about the local community, especially for some of the Southern Asian girls (especially Pakistani girls) who are forbidden to go out by their parents outside school hours. (Informal comment of Ms. Ting, fieldnote on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2010). The "Life-wide Learning day" would be a good opportunity for students to experience some "usual" entertainment that seemed to be easily accessed by children or teenagers of "normal" families; or at least, would challenge the limited mobility of these students due to financial, cultural or religious reasons. Moreover, Ms. Ting said that teachers also hoped that on the way, walking to the town park from the school, and during the time they explored the green house and the facilities in the park, these Southern Asian students could interact with and "could be seen" by local Hong Kong people, who usually ignore or do not realise the existence of this marginalized group in Hong Kong (Informal comment of Ms. Ting, fieldnote on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2010).

Although there is no explicit transfer of cultural or social capital in the OLE programme offered by Peterson's School, I suggest that the visits to theme parks, recreational centres and town parks could still be the cultural capitals of Peterson School's students. The reason is that many of the students are usually "trapped" in the local community (or even at home for some Southern Asian girls) with rare

opportunities to travel around Hong Kong, nor do they have the financial surplus to visit any theme parks or recreational centres for entertainment. Although these experiences at the theme parks or day camp may be viewed as of “low value” in the student portfolio, or in a lower rank in the “hierarchy of experience”, they indeed have widened the students’ horizons by providing experiences that they lacked. For the visit to the local town park, the inculcation of cultural capital of Southern Asian students is more obvious. Through this experience, students were given the chance to have closer interaction with local people, and for closer observation to understand and learn about the local culture and ways of life of local residents. They could also build up their knowledge and sense of belonging to the local community in the process. Though these experiences and knowledge may not be able to be transformed into concrete credentials, or being viewed as “valuable experiences”, in the “Student Learning Profile” under the “hierarchy of experience”, they are practically helping these students to integrate their lives into Hong Kong society.

To conclude, it seems that the OLE programmes of Peterson’s School relied much more on existing or available tours, museums, organizations or venues, and were rarely designed and arranged by the teachers particularly for the students. The content of the activities were usually more in a passive/receptive mode which expected students to gain practical or obvious knowledge and information, except those activities with more entertaining features (theme parks/ day camp). It seems that the capital cultivated in the process were mainly on more “substantial” aspects of capital including academic knowledge and work-related experience, but also included less obvious cultural (art/movie appreciation) and social capital (Southern Asian students integrating with the community).

## **5.5 Students’ Participation**

So far I have illustrated the role of the schools both as the institutions to reinforce the new standard of evaluation based on “experience”, and at the same time to provide opportunities for students to cultivate cultural and social capital to meet that standard.

However, the differences in students' accumulation of cultural capital was not solely caused by the schools' embedded class ethos, the kinds of experiences they provided, or the teachers' expectations. How students interpreted the OLE programmes and related to activities, and whether they conformed to, resisted against or even felt indifferent to the evaluative standard held by the teachers or the education system, influenced their acquirement of cultural capital in school.

In this final section, I will describe the general participation patterns of students of both schools respectively, and try to provide an explanation about these participation patterns through an analysis of observations and interview transcripts with students and teachers.

### **Participation patterns of students in the two schools**

#### **St. Caroline's College**

In St. Caroline's College, students seemed to be in line with the school's expectation of being "multi-talented, flexible" with "global awareness" (school mission), and being active and "to be leaders" instead of being a "passive audience" (see the previous extracts) in society and in school. The most ostensible example would be the number of students staying on the campus after school. During my field work, I found that most students would not rush out of the classroom and campus, which was quite a contrast with what I had seen on Peterson's campus. Everyone seemed to be well-adapted to the "Extended learning afternoon" arrangement implemented in recent years, in which the school required students to attend seminars once or twice a month on Wednesday after school.

Many of the weekly meetings or practices of different students' clubs and societies were held after school hours or during lunch times. Although some of these clubs meetings and practices were so-called "compulsory" as required by the senior forms' leaders who were in-charge for the meetings and practices, students usually participated voluntarily and even enthusiastically. Later, in the personal conversations with some of the students, I found that even for students who left the campus as quickly as possible, they were, in fact, rushing to attend private tutorial

classes, music instrument lessons, or rehearsals or practices for their own sports, music or dance performances, examinations or competitions which were arranged by themselves or by their families outside school.

One of the most impressive occasions for me was that one day, when I went back to St. Caroline's campus and realised that it was in fact the school holiday for Easter, I still found that many of the students had arrived at school early in the morning in casual wear. Some of them were volleyball team members who were joining the pre-competition practices arranged by the senior students privately; some came back to finish their drawing and art pieces in the art room; some other lower forms students had booked the dance room or made use of the indoor space and covered playground to discuss and practice for the self-selected piece of dance for the final examination. After talking to some of the students, I found that, although some of them complained about coming back to school instead of enjoying their Easter holiday on the street, all of them expressed similar phrases of "(but) it's something we should do/we need to do/ have to do". For example, for the girls who came back to practise for their dance examinations, they told me that they had already started late as their classmates had already settled the choice of songs and had practised several times after school or during lunch times before the holidays. For the volleyball team members, they emphasized that they were aiming high in the coming inter-school volleyball tournament and believed that, with more practice, they could achieve the goal of winning the championship, even facing their arch-enemy. It seems to me that although sometimes it is under the demands or expectations of teachers/senior form students, or under the pressure of competitions with others, most of the students were self-motivated to respond to these demands and pressures and determined to strive for excellence.

The above observations also reflected the tradition or strong culture of "transmission" in St. Caroline's College. It may be the usual practice of most of the schools that the senior form students would take up the leadership roles in students' organizations or organizing whole-school activities for students of the lower forms. Yet, in St. Caroline's, such practice may seem to be a tradition or culture rather than the administrative arrangement of the school. For example, I realized that the many



regular meetings and training sessions of dance teams and sports teams after school or even during the Easter holiday and summer vacation, were in fact arranged by senior forms' students voluntarily without the request of teachers. Even for Form 5 or Form 7 students, who had graduated in the latter half of the field work period for their public exams, or alumni who had already entered university or graduated a long time ago, they were very concerned about the performances of the current team members, especially when it came to inter-school competitions or tournaments that represented the name of the school. I have witnessed some of the alumni devoting their time to come back to the campus to lead the special training of the sports team or dance practices.

Another significant finding about St. Caroline's students' participation is that, not only was participation after school hours not a problem, the students seemed to be valuing their "freedom" and "precious opportunities" to stay on the campus. In the personal conversations with different students, many of them reflected that some of the memorable moments in school were about the drama rehearsal until late at night in the school hall, or the whole class practising for the inter-class singing contest in the classroom after school; or going through the hard times with their teammates over the repetitive, tiring practices before the inter-school dance competitions or sports tournaments. These episodes related to the extra-curricular activities not only enhanced their sense of belonging to the school, but also constituted an important part in their lifetime memories. Therefore, when a new rule about evacuating the campus and closing the school gate at 6pm had been enforced, starting few years ago, many of the students were not happy about this. In the interview with Form 6 students Mary and Karen, Karen complained that she and her teammates had been scolded by Sr. Ellen because they practised basketball until 6:30pm. Sr. Ellen was so furious that she continued to rebuke them publicly in the next day's morning assembly. Yet to Karen, the campus was the only place that they could practise basketball safely until late evening and free-of-charge. Similar discontent about not being able to stay at school except with teachers' approval, and the difficulties of finding a safe and free space for their group work and group practices seemed to be common among St. Caroline's students.



From the comments of St. Caroline's students, I reflected on why there was such a contradiction in the attitudes towards the use of after school time (and school space) between St. Caroline's and Peterson's school students. While in Peterson's School, even the extra-curricular activities had been designated to be part of "formal lessons" within the rigid timetable during school hours, the participation of students was quite low; what is the reason that led to St. Caroline's students' voluntary, active participation in these activities on the school campus during their own private time? Would such attitudes of St. Caroline's students towards their use of time for learning and participating suggest Bernstein's idea about "invisible pedagogies" where 'Inherent within this pedagogy is a concept of time—middle-class time' (Bernstein, 1997:65-66), that there was no clear framing of time to distinguish the time to play and time to learn? As illustrated by Bernstein, the boundary-less and vaguely-framed conception of time, space and social control is inherent and embedded in new middle-class ideology, which requires substantial social and economic capital to support. The unlimited "educational time" suggests the presupposed "long educational life" (Bernstein 1997: 66), which, I would argue, is similar to the rhetoric of "life-long learning" repeatedly mentioned in the first educational reform proposal (Education Commission, 2000).

Bernstein's discussion about the "invisible pedagogy" and the "new middle-class" conceptions of time, space and play had inspired me to rethink the different attitudes towards the participation in OLE programmes and the extra-curricular activities that are now included in the OLE programme as part of the formal curriculum. It appeared to me that the "new middle-class" conceptions of time, space and play was already deeply embedded in the culture in St. Caroline's College. For example, in the interview with past student Amanda, who was having her first summer vacation after her first year of university life, I was impressed with her way of describing her choice of not participating in the university's orientation camp but joining a business internship programme to work in the Dalian Commodity Exchange in China. While being on the organizing committee of the university's orientation camps are the most popular and common choice of most of the university students, Amanda told me that she preferred to just be a participant on the orientation camp because "Orientation

camp is ALL about play, and that doesn't suit me." Instead, she preferred to "Play through serious work".

*"I think I like to play, but I don't like to .....**play solely for 'play'**, I like it when I am working seriously....for example, when I am working as an intern, or when I am **learning** something, that is, while I am doing something "**value-added**", at the same time I can **relax and have fun in what I do**. I don't like to be authorized to play....I don't know why."*

(Amanda, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

At first I assumed that Amanda was simply a show-off or giving a performance of being the industrious, serious student, yet through her excitement of sharing her experience working as an intern in China, I realised that she may be truly believed that "playing through work" or even "learning" itself were the "play" she had and a wiser way to spend her time. Though Amanda may not realise it, the differentiation of different kinds of "play" is in fact another conception within the "invisible pedagogy" of the new middle-class. 'Play does not merely describe an activity; it also contains an evaluation of that activity. Thus, there is productive and less productive play, obsessional and free-ranging play, solitary and social play. Play is not only an activity, it entails a theory from which interpretation, evaluation and diagnosis are derived and which also indicates a progression.' (Bernstein, 1997, 60). If this is influenced by the middle-class ideology either in St. Caroline's school or in her own middle-class family background, Amanda's example has elucidated how these embedded conceptions about time and play would be benefiting her in the neo-liberal economy which emphasizes the unique "learning experience" or even better, "working experience" in the potential employee's résumé.

Although I have portrayed the image of the St. Caroline's girls as being active and showing initiative, I would like to address the other side of the story. While the OLE programmes claim to develop students' "generic skills" including independence, communication, organization or leadership skills, I found that St. Caroline's students may not actually have the personalities or qualities they tried to present in their students' portfolios. As shown in the previous section, the very exploratory, inspirational OLE programmes overseas were arranged and organized by school

teachers or by school-appointed professional agencies (e.g. the Outward Bound course), which were all well-planned, supervised and controlled experiences which ensured the activities were free of risks and dangers. For the cultural or service trips, because students are visiting foreign countries, only limited time is spent on participating in social service. Some of the teachers also criticized the way that some of the trips might involve music performances or social service, but the “cultural exposures” are often sight-seeing and travelling, which did not seem to be appropriate as an educational event.

In classroom observations in the Outward Bound briefing session, I was sitting next to the teacher-in-charge, Mr. Tam, at the back. When the speaker from the outward bound agency started the briefing, Mr. Tam pointed out to me that none of the students listening were jotting notes of the necessary information for the training. In his opinion, it’s because St. Caroline’s girls were from wealthier families, who were taken care of by their families at all times, which was a contrast to the students of his previous school who were mostly from working-class families, and who were more aware of taking care of their own arrangements.

In the interview with Ms. Cathy, who was the former advisor of the student council and the current advisor of the campus media and drama club, she also complained that St. Caroline’ students were “too sticking to instructions and plans”, “too obedient and too well-behaved”, which sometimes seems to be “too passive and showing lack of flexibility” especially compared with the student council of other schools. She gave the example of the characteristics of the committees of the student council, who were supposed to be the “student leaders” on the campus.

*“(.....) Our student council would not oppose what the school said. (.....)They could be administrators, they are **well-behaved**, but they will not dare to have a big confrontation with the school, they don’t have the guts. Years ago, when there was something about a change of policy, (.....) even though I encouraged them to talk to the school (authority), they **drew back** and said, “They wouldn’t accept our opinion.”, and **simply banned themselves from speaking out.**”*

(Ms. Cathy, individual interview, St. Caroline’s College)

Even Amanda, who had been the deputy head-girl of the student council, agreed that St. Caroline's students were relatively obedient and lacked the courage to be critical.

*"I think it's because....there's a **sense of helplessness**, a feeling that we could change nothing. Like, even when I was in form 6 and 7, classmates of our forms would discuss and reflect opposite opinions on certain school policies, but normally we would think that even if we speak out, the school would not listen! Most of us would think "the less trouble the better'....let's just concentrate on our A-level exam!"*

(Amanda, individual interview, St. Caroline's college)

As a former council member, she thought that the role of the student council had become more like the "official" student helpers in helping the school to organize events or doing administrative work, instead of the representatives of students to the school. For example, she said that, when some foreign teachers, introduced by the Education Bureau, came to visit our school, or there was a student exchange programme where some of the Singaporean students would have to study in class with our students, the school would ask the student council to do the arrangement and coordination work. Although they still have some autonomy in organizing joint-school or in-school activities, or the leadership training camp, very often they would need to lobby the School Principal for approval and funding. The unequal power relationship had made it difficult for them to express the students' opinions in the process.

According to Amanda, besides the student committees that could communicate with the school principal directly, in fact different channels had been set up to allow students to voice their opinions openly, including the "Democratic Wall", a wall which allow students to post the notes they have written about the school issues they are concern about; and the setting up of an email account for Sr. Ellen, so that students could express their opinion directly to the school principal. Two student representatives are also included on the official School Policy Improvement Committee of the school. Yet, Amanda said that the school authorities, when they came across important issues, the school already had a stance, and sometimes their opinions would simply be ignored.



## **Peterson's Secondary School**

The non-academic activities in the Peterson Secondary School mainly depend on the single lesson of “extra-curricular activities” which is the last one hour before school ends on every Monday.

The School Principal explained the reason for setting up an “extra-curricular activities” lesson: ‘If extra-curricular activities were organized after school, students would all be gone! They would rather prefer to play outside school unless there’s something attractive to make them stay.’

Yet, even though the “extra-curricular activities lesson” has become a compulsory lesson in the formal curriculum, the participation of local students was quite low. For example, in the aesthetic-related activities, including “Electronic Piano Class”, “Hip-hop Dance” and “Pop Song Band Training”, Southern Asian students were normally more likely to attend these activities. In a “Hip-hop Dance” class that I observed, although two local girls had chosen the class, one of them was absent, while the other one chose not to bring her P.E. clothes but just sat at the other side of the room, watching the other Nepalese girls’ dancing. She later told me that the other girl was not absent, but she was somewhere in the school with her boyfriend. While local students started to become the minority in this school, they felt more comfortable in separating themselves from the Southern Asian students and chose not to participate. In fact, even though the school claimed to make use of this “extra-curricular session” to build a friendly environment to encourage cultural integration between local and non-local students, I could only see ethnic segregation in all parts of the school. Even for a basketball group in the playground, local students and non-local students chose to play separately at two sides of the basketball stands.

Most of the local students did not participate very much in the activities. The session had become a “free” session, in which students could wander around the campus while teachers could not “catch” them. This is not only because of the relatively big campus size compared with the number of students of the whole school; it’s also because no teachers could be free from taking charge of interest groups so that they



could afford to search around the campus. Even the Discipline Head, Mr. Bruce, was in-charge of the basketball group at the playground.

To students, this “extra-curricular activities” session is a perfect time for them to relax in their own way, and spend time with their friends or lovers, especially after a long, boring day on Monday, that students just came back to school after the weekend and would easily feel exhausted about school. For example, I witnessed two girls hiding at one of the corners of the upper playground on the top floor of one of the buildings, chatting and smoking until a teaching assistant found them. I also saw student couples walking hand-in-hand without a destination but just going up and down the stairs. To them, it seems that those extra-curricular activities were meaningless and a waste of time. The moment of “freedom” was much more precious.

The Head of the “Extra-curricular Activities Team”, Mr. Kwok, had shared with me about students’ resistance to join in school-organized activities. He mentioned that, while some students tried to change to another interest group every other week, some students would just avoid joining in any group, but hide or wander around the campus. Once, he caught a few students standing at a corner to wait until school ended. He couldn’t understand at all and started to censure their behaviour.

*“You’d rather be bored, standing here doing nothing instead of going and playing and having fun?” He then concluded that “That’s how they are.....when you started to regulate something, they just try every way not to follow.”*

(Fieldnote on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2010, recorded quote from of Mr. Kwok)

Another example was the aesthetic courses organized to fulfil the OLE requirements for S4 students. The School employed instructors from outside the school’s organization to provide three modules of aesthetic learning experiences to S4 students: the modern dance class, the art of making and decorating ceramics, and a photography class. However, the attendance rates of these classes were very low. The major reason was that these classes were arranged after school on each Friday, and students were very reluctant to stay on the campus after school.

During my time in the field, I had witnessed the confrontation between students and the Discipline Head who tried to stop S4 students from leaving the school, especially 4C Class students, in which the academic achievement levels were the lowest in the form, and had a notorious reputation for truancy and inattentiveness during class. On a photography trip for 4C class, there were only 2 female students who came back to school to join on that day while there were 4 teachers (2 instructors of the course, one class teacher of 4C and I) leading the outside-school trip. Even though the trip was supposed to be full of fun and provide opportunities for students to practise the photo-taking skills they learned at beautiful parks and museums, the two students who participated did not show enthusiasm. One of the girls was upset throughout the day because she tried to wear casual wear for the trip but was caught by the vice-principal in the morning, and she was forced to wear a P.E. uniform taken from the school store room.

### **Reasons for students' participation pattern**

In the above sections, I have illustrated the participation levels and attitudes of students in the two schools, and at the same time, revealed some of the reasons that explained those participation patterns. In this section, I will summarize these reasons with the preceding examples and some of my other observations.

#### **St. Caroline's College**

##### **1. School traditions and school identity**

Many St. Caroline's students viewed their participation in sports, dance or music activities as part of their identity as 'St. Carolinas'. They were proud to be representing their school for inter-school competitions and thus voluntarily spent much time in practising and participating actively in these activities. Such traditions also led the senior students to become the leaders who passed on the spirit and passion to the lower form students.

The importance of participating in dance teams, choirs, orchestra or sports teams is not only about being the representative of school, but also became an important part of school life to students. The hours of time spent and the sweat and tears shed in the

process, together with a sense of belonging to the team and to the school, had firmly constructed the girls' identities. This could also explain the enthusiastic alumni who came back to school for their dance team or sports team because these clubs have also constituted an important part of their school identities.

When asked about the characteristics of St. Carolinas, past student Amanda said there were two things that she thought defined a St. Carolina. The first is the characteristic of a humble and serving heart. She mentioned that her mother once talked about her general impression of St. Carolinas who are usually willing to serve others and tend to find ways to serve the community or society. The second characteristic is that each St. Carolina usually has at least one talent aside from their academic achievement, either in music, in sports or in dance. Amanda's impression showed that students' identities were quite influenced by their experiences in participating in extra-curricular activities.

## 2. Conformity

As previously illustrated, most of the St. Caroline's students were quite obedient and conform to the school rules and school culture. In a school that put so much emphasis on being "multi-talented", "active" and being the "leader", and the prevalent focus on the building of the Student Learning Profile, it is not surprising that students of St. Caroline's have taken for granted the idea of participating and internalizing the pressure of competition as the self-demands of "fighting for excellence" in both academic study and their performance in the OLE programme. Yet, would this culture of being "multi-talented" or being "active" or "the leader" become the "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 2010) of the dominant group to the dominated? The experience of Yvonne who was hoping to join in the choir tour to Europe, the lack of economic capital to support her, and her loss of dignity in the process of waiting and failing to apply for the school's sponsorship to participate, may be an example of the working of such "symbolic violence". At the same time, while the school principal and teachers have always expected the cultivation of musical or sports talents since students' primary school (first extract of this chapter),

it seems that there is no choice but to participate or compete to be the “leaders” in the OLE programmes in St. Caroline’s.

### **Peterson’s Secondary School**

#### 1. Activities unrelated and alienated to their lives

Many of the Peterson’s students (especially the local students) reflected on the reasons that they would prefer to spend time on learning things that could obviously be useful for their future careers. For example, in her interview, Janet complained that, although she enjoyed the time spent in the dance, photography and ceramics-making classes, she did not understand how these OLE programmes would help her in her future career. Hoping to become a cosmetologist in the future, she would prefer to learn something more practical and concrete, and asked me to suggest that the teachers organize make-up classes or hair-styling classes next year. For many other students, they simply voted with their feet and were absent from all the OLE lessons.

For some other Peterson’s students who would like to continue their studies, they found that rather than “wasting time” by attending OLE activities, a more practical and useful way to allocate their time was to concentrate on their academic studies. For them, if the prerequisite requirement for further higher education is mainly based on their academic results, they could not see much reason for joining the meaningless activities which would not help them through their struggle in their studies.

#### 2. Sense of control of own’s time/life

As shown in the example of the “extra-curricular activities lesson”, Peterson’s students seem to be more individualistic because of the lack of sense of belonging to the school, and the rebellious emotions and sensitivity towards being surveilled and controlled. For students who have a high truancy rate, not only was participating in activities that were arranged by teachers or the school ridiculous, “going to school” itself was meaningless to many of them, because they considered all the time spent in school as a waste of time. This might explain why Shawn (and also some other

students) decided to quit school to study in the vocational training school or enter the job market.

Because of the academic pressure, the OLE programme became a burden to some of them because many of them would have to sacrifice their time for revision to participate in these non-academic related activities. For example, Piano had joined the trip to visit a Chinese Garden built in the Ming Dynasty's style one day. When I met her the following day, she complained that she felt completely lost about its educational aim because there was no guidance or information provided by teachers before and during the event, so it was a total waste of time which she would have preferred to use to revise for her coming exams.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, through the discussion of the schools' understanding of the meaning of participating in the OLE programmes and their expectations for students' participation; the comparison in the social, economic and "human" resources which led to the different scales and types of content of Other Learning Experience activities in the two schools; and the illustration of the different participation pattern of students, it has shown that the two schools attached different meanings to the quality of being "ideal citizens" of the schools.

For St. Caroline's College, the girls were expected to become the citizens who were active and take the initiative, and being the leaders of society; they were also expected to be not just Hong Kong citizens, but citizens with global horizons and international perspectives.

For students in Peterson's Secondary School, the school appears to expect them to become "good citizens" who are law-abiding and with good ethics and conduct. Therefore, the content of the OLE programme seems to be not so much in focus, but the action of participation itself was important. It shows that students of the Peterson Secondary School were expected to be responsible citizens who were responsible for



their own lives and their own studies. For Southern Asian students, the school would also expect them to be socially integrated into society.

On the other hand, the teachers and students of the two schools had very different understandings and evaluations about the cultivation of cultural capital through the OLE programmes, which may also be due to their different understandings about the OLE programmes and the “Student Learning Profile” system in relation to students’ futures.

I argued that the OLE experience itself has become another kind of “cultural capital”, which is now institutionalized through the system of the “Student Learning Profile” to record all the activities and experiences that students have engaged in and their related accomplishments related to the five areas of learning experiences. “Experiences” have become “items” to fill in the form, and should be under evaluation to distinguish their “value” or significance. Although the reform documents claim that the “Student Learning Profile” is just a reference for university educationalists and employers to understand prospective students’ or job applicants’ personality and “generic skills”(e.g. leadership skills, communication skills etc.), the student portfolio is, in fact, a differentiating tool to differentiate students with the types of “cultural capital” they possessed, and for the prospective employers to “decode” the “personal qualities as indicators of productive potential” (Brown et al. , 2003:119).

Therefore, the introduction of the “Student Learning Profile”, together with the OLE programme, is not only an implementation in response to the requirement of accountability under the neo-liberal and marketized education sector. I argue that the enumeration of the activities and the writing of personal reflections actually becomes another “institutionalised evaluative standard” (Lareau and Weininger, 2003:567) being used to evaluate students and their parents by measuring and comparing the value of the experience students have engaged in, and the students’ efficacy to deliberate on the skills, knowledge, virtues and their personality and “cultural disposition” they learnt or displayed. Although academic competence is still an essential/basic criterion for obtaining the opportunity for higher education and some

of the professional fields, it is prevalent that the “experiences” are being evaluated by employers to judge the value of the individuals under the “economy of experiences” (Brown et al., 2003:120). As vividly illustrated by Brown (1995), “It is the “personality package” based on a combination of credentials, technical skills and charismatic qualities which needs to be re-packaged and sold in the market for managerial and professional work.” (Brown, 1995:42).

I have shown that students of St. Caroline’s College are much more aware of the significance of the new evaluative standard, which led to their agreement to participate actively in OLE activities to build up their own portfolios. St. Caroline’s girls, who are mostly from upper middle class or professional middle class backgrounds, are more familiar with, and well-adapted to, the notion of becoming an “all-rounder”, thus they usually already have the experience and knowledge of the value of participating in similar activities due to their parents’ “consumption” of enrichment activities in their early age. (Vincent and Ball, 2007). I would like to argue that such recognition of the importance of the building of student portfolio, and the technique to package and present themselves in the profile, is a kind of “embodied cultural capital” of these students.

While St. Caroline’s teachers and students realised that the “Student Learning Profile” has become the credential to “package and present” the self with charismatic personalities, such discourse seem to be non-existent and invalid to students of Peterson’s School. Due to the low motivation and participation of these students in general, it seems that the school principal and teachers of Peterson’s School have very low expectations of what students’ will achieve in the OLE programmes. At the same time, it appears that they did not realize that the “Student Learning Profile” has become the new evaluative standard, and thus did not eagerly educate or help students to develop their profile by organizing more varieties of activities to present students’ personalities and strengths. I would like to argue that, due to the school’s judgement of students’ academic ability, and limited opportunities for higher education, the school would expect students to work as manual labourers, or in the sales or personal services sectors, which may not require the presentation of a “personality package” which shows a glamorous, sociable personality or

international exposure through the student profile; but on the contrary, values more the person's credibility and a perseverance personality that may not be able to be shown in the profile. The school's emphasis on students' personal conduct may be more relevant to their understanding of students' futures.

## Chapter Six                      The Policy and Practices of Languages in Schools

### 6.1 Introduction

Blommaert (1999) has pointed out that there are at least six ‘target domains’ in which language plays a significant role in society, including social change, the nation building process, the symbolic power of hegemony, language change, language and political process and also ideological discourse. (Blommaert, 1999, quoted by Lai and Byram, 2003: 315-316). In the “Language Ecology” section in Ch. 2, I discussed the roles that the three major languages play, namely, English, Putonghua and Cantonese, under the promotion of the “bi-literacy and tri-lingualism” policy announced by the post-colonial government, especially within the educational reform context in which the rhetoric of globalization and international competition is emphasized. The findings of this chapter will show that English remained the most powerful language in the symbolic market, and that the competition has slightly changed from simply the acquisition of the language to the proficiency and “style” of speaking the language. The examples from St. Caroline’s School also show that English itself could be more than symbolic capital, and could also be the medium to cultural capital. On the other hand, Putonghua seems to be developing into another symbolic capital, but only in the elite St. Caroline’s School and not in Peterson’s School which has lower academic banding and where the students have a lower socio-economic background. Last but not least, the chapter will show how English and Cantonese serve as an important part of Hong Kong’s identity.

Through the examples of the two schools, I will illustrate the relationship between language and the cultivation of linguistic and cultural capital, and additionally, to uncover the more subtle relationships between language and students’ construction of citizens’ identity. Firstly, an overview of the whole school language policies and practices in general, and the general students’ response to these practices will be given, in order to understand the different status of languages in the two schools as well as their significance with students’ identity construction. Later, there will be a more specific analysis of how English is developed into linguistic capital, and even

become “the” cultural capital and sources of cultural capital especially in St. Caroline’s School. Through juxtaposing the case of Peterson’s School with the more obvious St. Caroline’s cultivation of English, the analysis aims to delineate not only English itself as still extremely powerful in the symbolic market under the rhetoric of global competition, the “style” of the use of English seems to be highly valued, as it not only exposes one’s social and ethnic background, but could further transfer to become another kind of cultural capital. It seems that the social class background of the majority of students in the schools has a strong impact on the process of the acquisition of the English (and Putonghua) symbolic capital as well as the accumulation of cultural capital through these languages in schools.

## **6.2 An Overview: the Language Policies and General Practice of the Use of Languages of the Two Schools**

The above illustration of the sociolinguistic background and the debate about the medium of instruction policy in Hong Kong has set the scene for us to understand the situation in the two schools in this research. Although the two schools in the research followed the same educational guidelines about the medium of instruction in school, they were in totally different positions. St. Caroline’s College was qualified to be one of the 114 EMI schools which could continue to teach in English; while Peterson Secondary School has always used Cantonese as the medium of instruction since its establishment, and some classes of the school would have to switch to teach in English because the school started to admit Non-Chinese speaking students from the South Asian region two years ago.

In fact, the very first moment that drew my attention to the language policies of the two schools and their relationship with the construction of citizenship of students occurred before I started my fieldwork. I visited the schools’ official websites<sup>15</sup> in order to familiarize myself with the facts and figures of the schools before I accessed the schools. Immediately I noticed the use of language on the websites. Although

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<sup>15</sup> I intended not to provide the official school websites of the two schools due to the concern about research ethics and to ensure the anonymity of the schools in this research.



Petersons' School had changed into a designated school and an increasing number of South Asian students were admitted to it, the major content of the school website was in traditional written Chinese. Only limited content that was targeted to be read by these South Asian children's parents, or other prospective parents from South Asian origins, e.g. the parents' notice board about news or coming events, was translated into English. Because some of the South Asian parents only know their native language (Urdu, Indian, Nepalese or Pakistani etc.), the limited information provided in English on the websites was really unhelpful. On the contrary, while St. Caroline's had a majority of local Chinese students, the website was in English and a Chinese version did not exist. I could not readily access the school's official website by searching its Chinese name in the search engine because the website was entirely in English.

This finding in relation to the schools' websites sensitized me to the way in which language would influence the experiences of students. Initially, the setup of school websites was aiming to improve the transparency of the school's administration and to allow students, parents or the public to learn more about the school. For parents, it could also be a direct and time-saving way to update information, gather news and understand the lives of their children in schools. However, the limited content translated into English in Peterson's website and the absence of the Chinese version of St. Caroline's website may exclude some of the parents from important information (e.g. information or application forms about financial aids provided), or prospective students and parents, from gathering information or accessing essential resources which could affect the chances of their children being admitted to the school (e.g. admission requirements, electronic application forms to apply for school entry or tuition fee subsidies etc. ).

The use of language on the school websites is a glimpse of the whole language policies and practices of the two schools. In the following section, it will be shown that the language policies and practices of these two schools somehow echoed the linguistic ecology in Hong Kong, and the complexity of the working of language as a symbolic power of hegemony comprising influences of social class, gender and ethnicity will also be discussed.

## St. Caroline's College

St. Caroline's is one of the 114 schools (among about 400 schools in HK) which have been permitted to keep their practice of using English as the medium of instruction when the mother-tongue medium of instruction policy launched in 1998. To maintain its reputation, St. Catherine's has always emphasized the importance of the acquisition of the English Language to its students.<sup>16</sup>

While English occupies the dominant status in the school, Putonghua has been catching up as the other official language in the school in recent years. Previously, the school had all their morning assemblies in English, but, in the past two years, they have started to have assemblies in Putonghua on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, while keeping Tuesday and Thursday in English. In the assemblies, students who are chosen to be the master of ceremonies are those who can speak the language (either English or Putonghua) quite fluently to lead the prayers.

The school also started to teach the S.1 and S.2 Chinese Language subject in Putonghua instead of Cantonese two years ago. Such practice is quite unusual, especially when St. Caroline's is of Catholic background instead of founded by one of those "pro-China" local organizations, which usually have a longer history to emphasize the learning of Putonghua and Chinese culture. The school principal, Sister Ellen, explained this policy in the interview.

*"The reasons (for teaching the Chinese language subject in Putonghua) are, first of all, I want them to **nurture their hearts towards the motherland**; and secondly, Putonghua has more literary expression in the form of written Chinese than Cantonese. Of course Cantonese is a beautiful language, a good language indeed. Many of the expressions in Cantonese could be traced back to ancient Chinese society, embodied with ancient meanings, and rhythm and rhyme. However, in modern society, if **a Chinese could speak Putonghua**, I just feel like.....because it is the **official***

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<sup>16</sup> As mentioned in the "Medium of Instruction" section in Ch. 2, according to the exemption policy for the EMI schools, they were required to keep their students' English language standard, in order to maintain their EMI status and remain in the EMI pool.

*language! Therefore, I think that on official, formal occasions, you will at least know enough Putonghua to speak of formal matters. Chit-chat? It doesn't matter! So you can see that in our campus, during recess you can chat whatever you like, and we won't say something like "Hey you are in an English school, you've got to chat in English even during recess time!" We are not doing that. However, during lessons, we have to learn in such a way.....so that you will know on that occasion, you will have to use this (Putonghua); on other occasions, you can be more casual...."*

(Sr. Ellen, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

Sister Ellen's comments not only explained the policy of using Putonghua to teach the Chinese language subject, but also revealed the Putonghua connotation of the "official" and the "formal" in the school, and the attached meaning of the Chinese national identity of learning the language. Her emphasis that Putonghua as the "official language" in China and the teaching of it is to "nurture the hearts towards the motherland" reflected the political and social reality that Hong Kong has already "returned" to its "motherland", that the study of Putonghua is totally "natural". Moreover, Sr. Ellen's interpretation of the "official" and "formal" nature of Putonghua in fact echoes her expectation that St. Caroline's students will become "leaders" in the society who could "influence the others in the future" (See extract in Ch. 5). Putonghua as the power language which has its symbolic value in the post-colonial context could be easily understood.

Moreover, how Sister Ellen described Cantonese reflects the marginalized position of this local dialect in an elite school context. Although Sr. Ellen acknowledged the cultural value of Cantonese, it is being positioned to contrast with the formality of Putonghua to represent "casual", and "chit-chat", only for vernacular use. The emphasis of Cantonese's informality signifies its inferiority in the symbolic market.

In addition, one of the Chinese Language teachers, Ms. Yeung, pointed out that the real reason for such Putonghua teaching policy may be due to the competitiveness between schools in the education market in Hong Kong.

*“I think that (teaching in) Putonghua is the current trend, because many of the Direct Subsidy Schools<sup>17</sup> are now using Putonghua too, therefore our school **as an aided school and with such a long history**, should also take this step.”*

(Ms. Yeung, individual interview, St. Caroline’s College)

The address of “as an aided school and with such a long history” in Ms. Yeung’s conversation may reflect the worries of the school management committees and teachers of St. Caroline’s. Obviously, despite St. Caroline’s reputation as a famous traditional elite school, it is now facing a threat from the other traditional elite schools which have joined the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS). As St. Caroline’s is still an aided school, the school would have to join the Secondary School Places Allocation System (SSPAS), and could only have limited spaces to admit new students of their own choice; while for the DSS schools, they have the freedom to select their own students. Thus, the competition between St. Caroline’s and the other DSS elite schools became a direct competition of taking in high standard students. Teaching in Putonghua may therefore become a kind of “market strategy” to attract parents and students who realise the increasing symbolic value of Putonghua in Hong Kong.

As mentioned, in the first extract of Ch.6 of Sr. Ellen’s interview, Cantonese seems to become the inferior language which only represents informality in the school, but it is in fact not the whole truth. Except S.1 and S.2 students learning Chinese Language subjects in Putonghua, all other students are still learning in Cantonese. And in fact, in public examinations of Chinese Language subjects, the speaking sections required students to do a short individual presentation and a group

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<sup>17</sup> After the educational reform launched, there is an increasing trend of elite schools joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme. DSS schools will only receive government’s subvention if they admit enough students, which means the financial situation is not as stable as in the traditional aided scheme. However, due to their tradition, past history of students getting good academic results, and the guarantee of studying in English, these elite schools remain popular among students and parents despite the high tuition fee, and there are always much more students applying to enter the schools than the available school places.



discussion both in Cantonese. In the following extract, the Chinese Language teacher Ms. Yeung expressed her worries about the decline of students' standard in Cantonese.

*It seems like Cantonese is now out of the mainstream.....maybe in the future? But in fact the examination system is not (banishing Cantonese)....in the F.5 exams, or S.6 public exams in the future (new Senior Secondary School system), Cantonese is still being tested. Thus when the school is just concerned about written Chinese, Putonghua and English, the standard of Cantonese, like the "lan yum" (the lazy pronunciations of words) of students, and how they are incapable of giving a formal, decent speech, it is not really good.*

(Ms. Yeung, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

Being positioned as the vernacular, "informal" language may have led to the decline of the standard of Cantonese. Besides giving way to the teaching of English and Putonghua in the timetable, the provision of the German classes in the formal curriculum further marginalized Cantonese in the context of St. Caroline's. The school had built up a partnership relation with a German cultural centre and hired tutors to come to school a few times a week to provide formal German language training. Because of the amount of financial investment and the limited space available to the German class, only students who could prove themselves "capable" to study an extra foreign language could join the class. Such "capability" was judged by the students' overall academic performance in school. Thus, together with the symbolic value that has already been attached to the few European languages in Hong Kong society (e.g. French, German and Spanish), the arrangement of the German class further reinforced its symbolic power in St. Caroline's.

### **Peterson Secondary School**

The Language policy, compared with that of St. Caroline's, was more ambiguous. Peterson School used to be a CMI school that used Cantonese as the medium of instruction. However, as the school aimed to admit more Southern Asian students in the future starting a few years ago, it became a designated school and since then, the language policy became uncertain. Because of the special composition of students,



with both local Chinese and increasing numbers of Southern Asian students (named as “Non-Chinese speaking” students in the school), at the time of entry in the field, the school seemed to face a dilemma between using English or Cantonese.

As in all other academic-low band schools in Hong Kong, the English proficiency level of local students in the school is quite low, thus teachers would usually use Cantonese for most of the time and in most of the major official events, including school re-opening ceremonies, school assemblies, school closing ceremonies and graduation ceremonies. However, most of the junior students from Nepal, Pakistan and India could not understand much Cantonese. So it is not surprising to see these students not paying attention, or playing and chatting among themselves during assemblies or other whole-school functions. Although in a casual conversation with Mr. Cheung, the School Principal, when I asked about why the assemblies are held mainly in Cantonese, he said the school encouraged a bilingual policy, and emphasized that because they want the Non-Chinese speaking students to use and listen to more Cantonese, it does not matter if there is no English on public occasions. He argued that students should adopt the Cantonese-speaking environment on campus as they are also living in a Cantonese-speaking society. (Informal comment of Mr. Cheung, fieldnote on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2010) Such emphasis on Hong Kong as a “Cantonese-speaking society” is quite a contrast with St. Caroline’s emphasis on the age of “globalization” and “international competition” which English became the basic essentials to “survive” in Hong Kong society. This is particularly interesting especially when Peterson’s School had a more “international” student body consisting of a mixture of local, Chinese immigrants and Southern Asian students on the campus, whereas 99% of St. Caroline’s students were of Chinese origins.

Despite the so called “bilingual policy”, English was not usually used on most the public occasions. A typical example was the school closing ceremony, when the School Principal reported on his work over the year. He first reported in detail about different aspects of work in Cantonese for almost 15 minutes, then later, he said he would sum up some of the main points and say it in English. However, his speech in

English was given at a much higher speed and briefly touched on some of the key points, in fact the English version ended within 3 minutes.

At St. Caroline's, there was a clear distinction of the use of languages between public or private occasions; yet such division was less obvious in Peterson's School. In my observation, not only was the so called "bilingual policy" not substantially implemented on official occasions, as shown in the above example of the school closing ceremony; during "unofficial" occasions such as leisure hours during recess or after school, the mixed use of language could be found on the campus due to the mixed ethnic groups of students. Normally students would speak in their first languages in their conversation, that is, local Hong Kong students and new immigrant students would speak Cantonese (although in different accents, of course); Southern Asian students would speak in their own language (Hindi, Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese etc.), and very often, in English especially when they were speaking with other Chinese students, teachers, or even among themselves. Different kinds of language were not being labelled as being used in "official" or "unofficial" situations on Peterson's campus.

Yet, to Peterson's teachers, it was the style of speaking or choice of words that distinguished the formality of the use of languages.

*Mr. Tim: It's quite difficult (to educate them). Sometimes you will find that their values are very different from ours.....*

*Researcher: Besides the attitudes towards their studies, what else?*

*Mr. Tim: Well.....for some of their behaviour, they think it's okay, but we will disagree and think it's not. For example, about how they speak! Sometimes, their choice of words is.....maybe they are not "foul language", but it's definitely "**coarse language**"....which we will not use! You may notice that as well on the campus. It's not easy for us to correct them. For us, we will use **more gentle wordings, or very formal wordings**; but they would not follow. For a kid, if they grow up in an environment where this kind of "coarse language" is acceptable; our request to change their use of language may become a conflict to them. (.....) Within their peer group, those languages are regularly used.*

(Mr. Tim, individual interview, Peterson's secondary school)

It was true that whether on formal occasions during school ceremonies, or during informal hours or locations on the campus, the way teachers spoke seemed to be the same. It may be because of the somehow “playful” or casual attitudes of most of the students on the campus, that discipline teachers tried even harder on maintaining the “formality” of campus, and forbid all kinds of “foul” or “coarse” language being used in any time or occasions in the campus. On one occasion, a group of students were having a private basketball match in the playground, one of the male students suddenly yelled loudly a phrase of foul language, which could be heard by all of the teachers in the staffroom on the first floor. Before the discipline teacher Ms. Lee ran out furiously trying to catch the student who violated the school rules, she said, “Didn’t they know this is a school? Or did they think they are playing outside the campus?” It seems that the idea about the campus as a place of “respect” or “formality” was not shared between teachers and students.

In fact, I witnessed in many occasions that both Chinese and Southern Asian students would speak “coarse language” or even “foul language”, normally between students, but also towards teachers when some of the students got angry and could not control their temper when they were punished by teachers. For example, I once witnessed Ms. Jessica confiscating the iPhone of a male student in her class when she saw him playing with it during a public seminar. After failing to ask Ms. Jessica to retrieve his phone immediately, the student moved his lips but did not iterate the foul word in front of Ms. Jessica. As it was not the first time that Ms. Jessica had confronted that group of students, she simply pretended that she saw nothing and gave no response to what the student did.

Although teachers were very aware of the use of foul language or other inappropriate language by students, they could not stop students from using it. For Peterson’s students, it was simply normal to have foul or “coarse language” in their daily conversations. It was quite interesting that some of the Southern Asian boys were very keen on speaking “coarse language” or other flirty, “dirty” or abusive phrases and slang in Cantonese. It seems that the acquisition of the “coarse” way to speak Cantonese could prove the localness or “native-ness” of these boys who tried hard to become immersed into the local culture and community. For example, one of the

Nepalese boys, Aalam, told me that he learned his Cantonese from the basketball court in the local community. He proudly shared with me that through his friend he had learned much local slang and was able to gang up with the Chinese locals or even flirt with some of the local Chinese girls they met when they were hanging around. The speaking of “coarse” Cantonese somehow constitutes and represents part of their identities as Hong Kong residents despite their original ethnicities.

On the other hand, while the “bilingual policy” may not exist in the whole-school or public occasions, it can be viewed as an attempt by the school to promote two different languages to the two very different groups of students: learning of Cantonese and written Chinese by the Non-Chinese Speaking students, and improving the English proficiency level of local students.

For example, the school has hired a teacher assistant to develop a set of teaching materials to suit the level of the Non-Chinese speaking students in their schools, and set up a special Chinese Language and Culture Learning Room which opens during lunch time two days a week. It also introduced a “guide reading” scheme which invited senior local students to teach and help Non-Chinese speaking students to learn Chinese written forms and to speak Cantonese.

At the same time, the school also encouraged the learning of English. There is also a room with many of English movies and English books as the “English corner”; students are required to join the reading scheme (though not very enthusiastically participated); and an English native speaker is hired as the English teacher in this school.

The most striking example of the school’s attempt to raise the English learning atmosphere in school may be the introduction of the “English Ambassadors” scheme. The scheme not only encouraged students who reach certain levels of English mastery to have the title of “English Ambassadors”, while they have the responsibility to promote English in the campus, they are also offered a certain privileges in school. For example, they are allowed to wear an “English Ambassadors” jacket outside their school uniforms, and they are allowed to go out



for lunch wearing the jackets when all other students below F.6 are required to stay on the campus for lunch.

Students also realized the privileged status of English, as well as the power and authority that it could bring. For instance, one of the English Ambassadors, Janet, a Secondary 4 student, told me that many classmates were jealous of her and the English Ambassadors when they could “escape from the campus” to go out for lunch. She admitted that sometimes the male classmates would say something bad to tease them as “kissing the teachers’ ass”, but she still felt good about having the privilege. When I asked her about her feeling of being the representative of the English Ambassadors to speak to the whole school during assembly in English to introduce and explain the games and activities of the English week, she was very excited to know I witnessed her “big moment” and said that she was proud of being chosen by the teacher for the role, despite her concern about her English pronunciation and fluency (informal conversation with Janet, fieldnote on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2010)

Another example is from a private letter given to me written by a Form 5 student, Gigi. She wrote to me voluntarily to explain the reason she forgot our meeting date and time with me; she also illustrated her difficult life in school and how she worked really hard to achieve, in order to pass the public examination this year. By the time she wrote the letter, she had just finished her second attempt in the public examination (the HKCEE level). She emphasized how much effort she spent in her study, in order to improve. In the letter, I had an impression that to her, the practising of English was always linked to positive things. Not only did she emphasize that ‘I always chat and laughs with my Southern Asian schoolmates, regardless of their ethnicity.’, she also said that she helped to manage the school library and was a regular visitor to it because ‘although it is not a quiet place, I could practice my English, and can use English to manage the order and discipline in the library, which give me the chance to escape from the Chinese world temporarily.’ Of course, Gigi was genuinely industrious and eager to improve her English level, yet at the same time, her way of expressing herself seemed to show her good behaviour (being friendly to her Southern Asian schoolmates ) as well as the power and authority she



gained (being the volunteer in the library ) through her methods of practising English.

English as a significant part of the Hong Kong identity could also be shown by one of the S.4 students, in Shawn's private conversation with me. Shawn was one of the few local male students who were willing to talk to me in Peterson's School. I was impressed by him when I first met him in his classroom when I was the substitute teacher of that lesson for his class. After knowing that I was doing my research for my study in Britain, he told me that he used to live in the U.K. for a few years before coming back to Hong Kong and entered this "suck school". He also started to show off his English with the use of difficult vocabularies in front of his classmates. It was only after two months that I found that he was just bragging and he had not been to Britain ever. When I asked him why he lied to me after he quitted Peterson's School in the early summer, he admitted that he was trying to impress me. He said he wanted to show he was "a 'true Hong-Konger' who could speak English easily if I am willing to learn seriously". Shawn's obviously reaffirmed his own Hong Kong identity by comparing his ability to speak English with his new immigrant classmates who had even lower English proficiency, and the Southern Asian students in school who he "never understand what they are talking about", referring to their strong accents compared to his "clear pronunciation" of Hong Kong English which could be easily listened to.

Despite some of the Chinese students' eagerness to improve their English, the English proficiency level of the local students is generally low. An extreme case could be demonstrated by the example of class 4C. In a 4C class photography activity which was held outside the school, only two girls showed up. Their class teacher Ms. Jessica, who is the English native-speaking teacher of the school, remained satisfied that there were at least two girls who participated, maybe because her class has always had a high truancy rate. I was amazed when I found that the two local girls could understand Ms. Jessica's instructions in English, though they responded in Cantonese. Ms. Jessica then explained that although their English language proficiency level was still quite low, not to mention their "disastrous" academic results in the English subject, students could at least now understand or

guess what she is talking about or the meaning she wants to express. To Ms. Jessica, that was quite an improvement as at the beginning of the academic year (9-10 months ago), the students could not understand a word of what she said.

On the other hand, quite contradictory to the policy in St. Caroline's where Putonghua has been placed as the official language along with English, Putonghua seemed to be absent in Peterson's school. It was quite ironic because in fact quite a number of Chinese students in the school were new immigrants from mainland China, who were very familiar with the language. Not only were there no Putonghua lessons provided in the formal curriculum, the speaking of Putonghua within the campus seemed to be avoided. This was especially true for students who were being recognized as "new mainland immigrants" by other students. One of the girls told me privately that the reason she was very quiet all the time was that her classmates would take every chance to tease her or even bully and isolate her whenever she spoke Cantonese with a "mainland" accent. Therefore, not only she was very careful not to "expose" her "mainland accent", she swore that she would never ever speak Putonghua in front of her schoolmates because that would definitely give reasons for them to attack and humiliate her as a "Tai-lok Mui" (i.e. a girl from mainland China).

Another example is that although one of the teachers told me that some of the students who were competent in Putonghua would be invited to represent the school to participate in the interschool Putonghua speech festival, neither the teachers nor the students who participated would like to mention it openly in morning assemblies or any other open occasions. Thus, either in the institutional level of the school, the teachers, and in the individual level among the students, Putonghua seemed to be associated with the low status and conditions of mainland immigrants rather than the official/national language which could bring linguistic capital that is seen in St. Caroline's College. Thus, what Davison and Lai (2007) claim, might be true, 'On the one hand Putonghua-medium programs are increasingly being chosen by socio-economically advantaged Hong Kong parents to develop their children as elite bilinguals who can transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries; on the other hand similar kinds of bilingual instruction are being rejected by poorer working class

communities who associate Putonghua with the low status and conditions of mainland immigrants.’ (Davison and Lai, 2007:120).

### **6.3 The Specifics: “How” and “What” to Speak of /Write about English?**

The above illustration has demonstrated the overall language policies and practices in the two schools. From both schools, it is shown that the acquisition of English is regarded as essential, which echoes the superiority status of English and the “myth” of English linked to the personal advancement of individuals and development of Hong Kong’s economy that I have delineated in the sociolinguistic background section. However, I would like to argue that the highly-valued symbolic capital of English could not be easily acquired. The kind of oral and written English that will be recognized by employers in the job market or the general public in Hong Kong requires specific accents and style, which means that on top of the ability to speak or write in English, “how” it is spoken/written and “what” is spoken of would be measured, and is expected to be meticulously polished.

In this section, I will explore the “How” and “What” to speak or write about English in the two schools. The analysis will show that “how” English is to be spoken/written (“accents” and the style of speaking and writing) is highly relevant to whether it could be transformed into symbolic capital in Hong Kong society. Besides, English is not only a form of symbolic capital in itself, but is also the medium for students to acquire other cultural capital. From the case of St. Caroline’s, the research shows that the process of learning English in the elite school often accompanied the learning of culture and literature or even the logic of thinking. To achieve this, students have to prove that they could reach the required English proficiency level in order to participate in the process of English-related cultivation of cultural capital. This multiplying effect of the acquisition of a particular kind of English could be varied in degree according to different social backgrounds of students, even within the same school. The content of “what” is covered in the English language classroom, or the use of English on the campus, also reflected the different understanding of students’

current citizenship status, and expectations of students' future citizenship roles in society.

### **“How”: fluency, accents and writing style**

#### **St. Caroline's College**

Being a traditional elite school, it is not surprising to find that the capability to speak “nice and fluent” English is repeatedly emphasized in St. Caroline's. In both teacher and student interviews, almost all of the participants mentioned the essentiality of being “presentable” to become the student leaders or members of the Student Council, especially for the head girl or vice-head girl who often have to represent the school in formal occasions such as inter-school events or in front of the general public. One of the indexes to judge whether one is “presentable” is the fluency and accents of speaking English, and in recent years, also the fluency in Putonghua. That is, the acquisition of English is not enough, but acquiring English “fluency” somehow represents one's English proficiency level. For example, in the interview with Form 6 students Mary and Karen, they mentioned the School Principal Sister Ellen's attitudes towards students who speak fluent English:

*“Is she partial to some of the students? I don't think so.....oh, but she really likes (those who speak) fluent English! Yes, she really likes that.....that is, for instance, during our morning assemblies, when some of the students are sharing their experience in really fluent English, she will appear to be very happy!”*

(Mary and Karen, group interview, St. Caroline's College)

Besides, students' accents, especially in English, were also a focus of concern according to St. Caroline's teachers. In the interview with Ms Sung, the English teacher who has taught in St. Caroline's for 10 years, she tried to emphasize both the communication and presentation aspects of English. Yet when I questioned her about whether accents are important accents if the major aim of learning language is for communication, Ms. Sung insisted that the “correct pronunciation” is very important, instead of using my choice of term “accents” in her reply.



*“For example, when we ask students to do presentations, there are always students with **problems of pronunciation**. What we usually do is let them try first, and then we will immediately point that out, because we do not want other students to pick up the **wrong pronunciations** ..... of course we don’t want to be too discouraging, but if we heard something quite inappropriate, we will usually point it out immediately after the presentation. (...) And of course we will tell the students, especially the lower forms, why **pronunciation is important**. We will give examples or jokes about the **mispronouncing** of words which are similar, and tell them they might make a fool of themselves if they don’t **pronounce them correctly**.”*

(Ms. Sung, individual interview, St. Caroline’s College)

Despite the very common code-mixing (English words in Cantonese speech) (Bolton, 2000:277) pattern in our conversation, the choice of the word “pronunciation” (the exact term spoken in English in the interview by Ms. Sung) instead of “accent” (the exact term used by the researcher) reveals the position Ms. Sung or most of the English teachers’ of St. Caroline’s have taken. While the term “accent” obviously connotes with the way people speak in a particular region, e.g. how they pronounce words or their use of grammar; using the term “pronunciation” to replace “accent” in her answer seems to reveal Ms. Sung’s rejection or denial of the variety of spoken English that exists, therefore, spoken English only has one single way of “correct pronunciation”, and the “wrong pronunciations” or “mispronouncing of words” is considered as a “problem” or “inappropriate”.

Although unspoken, what Ms. Sung regarded as “correct pronunciation” may be referring to the “Received Pronunciation” (RP), or more commonly known as “Standard English”, the “Royal/Queen’s English” or “BBC English”, which is also commonly regarded as the legitimated “standard” of the correct pronunciation of English. In Zhang Qi’s (2010) research, she argued that in the community of Hong Kong, Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American English (GA) are normally recognized as “standard English” or “high prestige varieties”, as they are most commonly designated by Hong Kong people and are widely employed in the education system, although she also stated that the use of the terms “standard/non-



standard” is controversial within academia with regard to the variety of the spoken form of a language (Zhang, Qi., 2010: 56 -57).

Such emphasis on the speaking of “Standard English” (or Received Pronunciation (RP) in particular, in the St. Caroline’s context) would have several implications.

Firstly, the speaking of the “correct pronunciation” of Received Pronunciation could be an index to judge one’s English proficiency level. Qi Zhang’s research on Hong Kong’s university students’ (undergraduate level) attitudes towards different varieties of spoken English has shown that when the participants were asked to listen to clips, then describe the differences they have picked up, most of the participants could distinguish the difference between “Educated Hong Kong” (HKed) accent with the “Broad Hong Kong” (HKbr) accent, and their description often concentrated on whether the clippings have an intonation closer to that of Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American English (GA), or simply connect the level of English proficiency with whether it is applying the RP or GA accents. (Zhang, Qi, 2010:174-175). The general understanding of most Hong Kong people and many English teachers is that to learn English successfully is to speak/write just like a native speaker. While, for most people in Hong Kong, the major sources of listening to “native” English are BBC radio, Hollywood movies or US/UK TV dramas, it is not surprising that British and American pronunciations of English are considered “real” English. For many of the “Educated Hong Kong”, especially the English teachers, RP or GA are the only two varieties of English that they recognize as “native English/real English”: it is very natural for them to measure or judge whether the speakers’ English is “native” or “non-native ” (up to “standard” or not up to “standard”) based on RP or GA.

Also, the social connotation attached to each variety of spoken English may be another reason why teachers at St. Caroline’s care so much about the “pronunciation” of spoken English by the students. In Hiraga’s (2005) study of British people’s attitudes towards six varieties of English, she found that British people still care about the social implications connected with different types of spoken English, and that British people were highly aware of how “prestigious” the different varieties are

(Ibid: 305-306); she thus proved “the pervasive influence of British class on accent prestige” (Ibid: 289). Besides, as quoted by Zhang, Qi (2012) in Milroy (1999), “Standard English is usually connected with the upper social class and has strong institutional support because ‘the language standardisation process is historically associated with the existence of a monarchy’ (Milroy 1999: 204). Given the social connotation of “Standard English” with the upper social class, and the colonial background of Hong Kong elite schools, it would not be surprising that teachers at St. Caroline’s would regard the “correct pronunciation” of “Standard English” (RP or GA) as the representation of one’s social class background. As an elite school where most of the students (and teachers) are from middle or upper-middle class backgrounds, the acquisition of the “right pronunciation” would certainly be important to represent or even secure one’s middle-class identity.

On the other hand, since the social connotation of “Standard English” is so prevalent, St. Caroline’s teachers are also conscious that the acquisition of RP or GA accents would be, in fact, a kind of linguistic capital, thus the correction of “pronunciation” would also be preparation for students to be recognized as members of the upper middle class in the job market or in the community in the future.

Apart from the accents and fluency of spoken English, students at St Caroline’s are also being trained in their style of writing. In an observation of a seminar held by teachers of the Form 5 students who would be entering the senior curriculum (A level) of Form 6 in the following academic year, the emphasis on the English proficiency level, especially the ability to “express their own views” in writing, was repeated constantly throughout the seminar. Because of limited places for each subject available to students, different subject teachers had delineated the minimum requirement for students to be admitted to their classes on PowerPoint. Almost all of the subjects (except those which would be taught in Chinese) required a minimum result of grade C in the English language subject in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE, similar to GCSE in the UK). In subjects that required students to express their own views through writing or written reports, and would be examined in by essay writing, (e.g. Liberal Studies, Use of English, History, Psychology and English Literature), some of the teachers even required the

students to achieve at least grade C in all four papers (Writing, Reading Comprehension and Usage, Listening, Oral) of the English language exam.

According to another English teacher, Ms. Lisa, her teaching of the “Use of English” subject in the senior forms often involved argumentative essay writing, which required students to devote quite a lot of time to logical thinking and reflection. Although past student Amanda thought that St. Caroline’s teachers often only concentrated on exam-oriented training of English writing, she also agreed that it was through those writing assignments of argumentative essays on different social issues that trained her in writing English. However, Amanda added that after she entered university, she found that the English learning strategy applied by another traditional elite school (now a DSS school) which put more emphasis on logic and expression in writing would have been an even better way to learn good English.

In conclusion, there seems to be a common goal of cultivating students’ ability to express themselves through spoken and written English in St. Caroline’s. For spoken English, fluency and accents are the basic requirements, and speaking the “correct pronunciation”, which in the case of St. Caroline’s is the Received Pronunciation, is also very important as it defines one’s English proficiency level and the underlying connotation of social class. For written English, the logic of expression is emphasized, especially whether the writing could clearly and logically express one’s opinion. I would like to argue that such emphasis on the logic and expression of writing may coincide with the purpose of training students’ presentation skills, which will be discussed in the later section about what the students are learning through English.

### **Peterson’s Secondary School**

In Peterson’s School, because of the low motivation and low academic achievement level of most of the local students, English teachers seem to have higher expectations of Non-Chinese speaking students in the English subject. However, such relatively higher expectations are only limited within the school context, as teachers seem to be generally pessimistic about their students’ future.

In the interview with Mr. Tim, the English teacher, I discussed the English standard of the Southern Asian students in school, and asked whether there are any advantages if these Southern Asian students have a better acquisition of English language than local students. Mr. Tim disagreed with it, and stated that there are still many shortcomings in the kind of English they speak and write.

*“Their English is good to a certain extent, but we have different levels of “good”. Firstly, they are **speaking fluently, but their pronunciation is not good**.....and there’s a **problem with accents**. If they could speak slower, that would be better, but it’s quite difficult for them. Another big problem is their writing. You will encounter some cases in foreign countries, where some people can speak quite fluently but cannot write. They **have not got the complete mind-set**, and so (their writing) is **not quite logical and not clear**.”*

(Mr. Tim, individual interview, Peterson’s secondary School)

Because of the characteristics of how these Southern Asian students speak (fluently but slurred) and write (not logically and clearly), they have a certain level of English proficiency, but Mr Tim thought that they were not compatible with the local Hong Kong students from EMI schools. I found that in Peterson’s School, many teachers shared the same perspective as Mr Tim. Although most of the Southern Asian students could speak really fluent English, especially those from Pakistan, India and the Philippines, where English is the second language in their countries, because of the general beliefs about British or American English as the “standard English”, their English accent is considered as a “problem”. Again, the term “pronunciation” is being used by Mr Tim to highlight the unchallenged, unique status of the “standard” pronunciations and suggest that the Southern Asian accents are not “native” enough, claiming that they were speaking too quickly and the accents were difficult to listen to. I admit that, in the first place, the accents of these Southern Asian students would be difficult to comprehend, but in my experience of listening to Scottish accents as well as the accents of these students, it is only a matter of time before teachers could be familiar with the accents if they spent more time communicating with this group of students.



Coincidentally, the term “pronunciation” is used in both interviews with the English teachers of St. Caroline’s and Peterson’s School, so the embedded assumptions of the solely “correct” pronunciation referred to RP or GA accents would possibly be the same. Yet, it seems that the term is used differently in their reasoning for judging students’ accents: Ms Sung of St. Caroline’s “pronunciation” considered RP/GA accents as the ultimate “standard” for students to achieve; while Mr Tim of Peterson’s emphasis on “pronunciation” seems to be disparaging or criticizing the characteristics of Southern Asian types of English speaking style (fluent but not clear) and accents (“problem”).

As mentioned, though many well-educated Hong Kong people recognized the different types of accents and considered RP/GA accents as “standard English”, most people in Hong Kong simply assume that the nationality or ethnicity of a person could guarantee the “native-ness” of one’s spoken English; patently speaking, they simply believe that all people from the major developed countries could speak native English. This could be reflected by the “Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme” in primary schools and “Enhanced Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme” in secondary schools implemented by the Education Bureau since the 1998/99 and 2002/03 school years respectively. For example, as specified on the application guidelines on the website (Education Bureau, n.d. 1), the major qualification for appointment is that “The applicant should be a native-speaker of English or possess native-speaker English competence”, where “Native speaker” refers to “(...) are people who acquire the language in infancy and develop the language through adolescence and adulthood within a community where English is spoken as the first language.” According to the guidelines, although preference will be given to applicants with experience in teaching English as a second/foreign language, as long as there is proof of non-local nationality, any one could apply for the NET post even if they have not yet completed a Bachelor’s degree/ teacher’s certificate/Teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language (TEFL/TESL) course. (Education Bureau, n.d. 2). Besides, I found that, in the application form for the schemes, the available choices for the “Interview venue” only provided places including Hong Kong, London (U.K.), Australia, New Zealand, New York (USA)



and Toronto (Canada). (Education Bureau, n.d. 3). The above evidence shows that a simple correlation between “Native-speakers” and their nationality seems to exist not only among Hong Kong people but is also valid among policy makers.

Based on Kachru’s three-circle model of “World Englishes” (Kachru, 1992, 1998), the division between the native speakers’ English of the “Inner Circle” and non-native speakers’ English of the “Outer Circle” and “Expanding Circle” seems to be unquestionable. However, as Zhao illustrated, such division of the “native” and “non-native” does not taken into consideration the fact that even within the “Inner Circle”, not all accents or speaking styles are considered “native” by members within the “Inner Circle” themselves (Zhao, Qi, 2010:9). Though the “educated” Hong Kong elites could distinguish between GP/GA and other accents, the belief about “native speakers” from a developed “Inner Circle” would guaranteed the “native-ness” of English speaking still deeply embedded in Hong Kong society.

While under Kachru’s model, Pakistan, India and the Philippines are within the “Outer Circle” where English is the second official language and Hong Kong is only within the “Expanding Circle” with obviously less opportunity to use English compared with these countries, it seems ironic to find many English teachers in Hong Kong (like Mr Tim) belittling the English proficiency level of these Southern Asian students by setting a standard that is so exclusive that only that small group of elite students with appropriate accents is “good enough”. This might be subjective, but imagine if this group of non-Chinese speaking students were not from the aforementioned countries, or obviously with a “White” outlook, I would wonder if these English teachers would even challenge these students’ accents even if they could not hear them clearly, or compare their English proficiency level with the local elite students. Obviously, the identification of different accents serves to strongly relate the speakers to a particular social group. As illustrated by Zhang, B. (2010) and Zhang, Q. (2010), the different British accents are indicators of the speakers’ origin background or even social class; while the differences between northern and southern American accents often involve ethnic variations and are highly associated with ones’ social and ethnic background. Thus, although unspoken, the issue of

ethnicity does exist in teachers' mind, in school, and within the education sector in Hong Kong.

Furthermore, Mr Tim also criticized these students' ability to write as they were lacking the "complete mind-set" to express their ideas logically and clearly. He did not define what is meant by "complete mind-set", but the term "complete mind-set" seems to be referring to a deficit understanding of these Southern Asian students, who were simply "incomplete" and "lacking" the ability or way of thinking to be able to write. Yet, when I juxtapose the effort of St. Caroline's teachers in training students' writing/speaking ability, teachers of Peterson's School seem to expect these Southern Asian students to acquire the language on their own, and even blame the students for not having the logic or clarity of expression to be able to write and express themselves.

Apart from the negative evaluation of the level of English proficiency of the Southern Asian students, Mr Tim also expressed a pessimistic view towards the future of these students because of their incompetence in Chinese (both spoken Cantonese and written Chinese) and relatively lower proficiency level of English compared to the local elite students.

*"Under Hong Kong's educational system, they may **need to know Chinese**. For example, except for two of the universities, most of the universities are using Chinese as the medium of instruction. And even if they had acquired English, **their English may not be okay**, because they are **not capable of competing with brighter local students** in Hong Kong. For instance, those who could enter the universities in Hong Kong have probably graduated from an EMI (English as Medium of Instruction) school. The English levels of these students --- speak, they speak clearer; write, they write better. When the Non-Chinese speaking students were put to compete with this group of (elite) local students, they are certainly **under disadvantages**. On the other hand, there are many levels within the educational system....right? For those local students in CMI schools, you couldn't compete with them either, as you are not good enough in Chinese. So it's quite a disadvantaged situation for them in Hong Kong."*

(Mr. Tim, individual interview, Peterson's secondary school)

Although Mr. Tim may not have realized, he was, in fact, describing the double disadvantaged situation of Southern Asian students in Hong Kong. On the one hand, although some of the Southern Asian students do manage to speak Cantonese (though not many of them), their writing and reading abilities in Chinese are still quite weak due to the fact that Chinese characters, especially the “Traditional Chinese characters” taught and used in Hong Kong, are very difficult to memorize and write. In Mr Tim’s opinion, incompetence in the Chinese language has restrained the Non-Chinese speaking students to compete with students of the CMI schools, who are usually less competent local students who may not manage to acquire really good English proficiency level.

The relatively low ability in speaking, writing and reading of Chinese in a dominantly Cantonese speaking society has been the major barrier of the academic and career development for these Southern Asian students. During fieldwork (fieldnote, 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2010), there was a case where a Hong Kong born and raised Pakistani young man, Khezhar Hayat, was rejected for a post in the police force, and this was widely reported by newspapers (Tsang, 2010). Hayat had fulfilled the basic language requirement of obtaining an “A\*” in the British General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), however, the senior interviewer told him that his written Chinese was below standard as shown in his answer in the three essay questions in Chinese. The fact is that, according to the public submission paper written by The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) (2013), although many of the designated schools have designed a “Chinese learning as second language” curriculum for ethnic minority students based on the GCSE syllabus, the acquisition level of the GCSE Chinese syllabus is quite low, which in fact may only be equivalent to the level of primary grade 2 or 3 in ordinary Hong Kong schools. Their limited ability in Chinese writing and reading thus seriously hindered their ability to cope with their needs in further education, career development or even daily interaction and communication with others in their lives.

This case shows that the current education policy does not really take into consideration the difficulties in language encountered by ethnic minority students in their education, job opportunities or career development. As suggested by Hong

Kong Unison, a non-governmental organization (NGO) helping ethnic minorities and advocating policy reforms for ethnic minority residents in Hong Kong, since the majority of Hong Kong's government-subsidized schools use Chinese as the medium of instruction, ethnic minority students' low Chinese ability also tends to drag down their performances in other subjects, thus adversely affecting the life chances of ethnic minority students (Hong Kong Unison, n.d.). Besides, they are required to be examined under the same Chinese syllabus as all other students, despite the fact that the Chinese syllabus for the major public examinations is designed based on the assumption that Chinese is the mother-tongue of the students participating in the exam. As suggested by the founder and ex-Executive Director Fermi Wong of Hong Kong Unison, while the Chinese Language subject has always been one of the core subjects<sup>18</sup> that is essential for undergraduate admission, requiring ethnic minority students to compete with local students for whom Chinese is their first language, under the same Chinese syllabus and evaluation system is a form of "institutional discrimination". (Hong Kong Unison, 2011:10). Yet even today, the Hong Kong Education Bureau still refuses to make substantial changes to solve such language barriers for ethnic minority students, even though many NGOs including HK Unison and even the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has suggested that they should design and implement a whole set of "Chinese as second language" curriculum, referencing the similar policies implemented in other culturally mixed societies such as the U.S and Canada.

The case had also drawn the attention of teachers at Peterson's, and one of the teachers even cut out the newspaper clipping and pinned it on the board in the staffroom. During lunch time that day, a few teachers discussed it pessimistically, saying that even if they had developed a set of curriculum and teaching materials with the university, there is no guarantee that their students could reach a level to compete with students for the university entrance opportunity, nor do they think they

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<sup>18</sup> Under the new HKDSE syllabus, most school candidates will have to take four core subjects including Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies; while in the previous system, a pass in the two core subjects of Chinese Language and Culture and Use of English in the HKALE is the prerequisite to enter any of the undergraduate programmes in the universities.



could be able to compete with other local students with a high level of Chinese acquisition. This rejection case was also evidence showing that even the government is not giving any opportunity or any substantial support to ethnic minorities to help them integrate themselves into the society, not to mention the private job market.

On the other hand, despite the difficulties these students encountered because of their low level of Chinese proficiency, their English proficiency level did not help much on their education or career development either. Although their levels of English were better than their local classmates in Peterson's School, in many ways, their limited Chinese acquisition had already limited their education and job opportunities in a Chinese-dominated society like Hong Kong. Even if they could overcome the obstacles and enter the job market, their English level and "problem of accents" (as described by Mr Tim in his interview) would not be compatible with the students from EMI schools who usually could speak the GP or GA accents because of the general public's obsession with "British" or "American accents". While their other language abilities (e.g. Indian, Urdu, Pakistani, Hindi, and Punjabi etc.) were not being valued in the symbolic market in Hong Kong, their inability to capture the symbolic power of English because of their accents and style of speaking English place them in a more disadvantaged position.

### **"What": what is learned and what to gain through the language?**

In the above section, it was shown that the acquisition of the symbolic power of English requires the right kind of accents and style in the speaking and writing of the language. The interviews with teachers of Southern Asian students in Peterson's School illustrated the complicated dynamics of the symbolic market which have marginalized the Southern Asian students. In this section, I would like to show that English is not only a symbolic power in itself, but is also an important medium to cultivate and capture more cultural capital.

### ***Instrumental Value of English in the job market and higher education***

That English is the power language in the symbolic market has been illustrated in the previous section on "language in the Hong Kong context". Therefore, it is not



surprising that students in both schools all recognized the importance of the learning of English for their future careers.

As described by Trisha and Catherine, two Form 6 students of St. Caroline's, patently the instrumental value of English is significant for their future careers in the context of Hong Kong especially as it is often the language being used in interviews for most of the business firms (especially the global cooperates) or in many professional sectors.

*Researcher: Is it important to have good English in Hong Kong?*

*Trisha and Catherine: Important!!!*

*Researcher: Why?*

*Trisha: I think it's essential for you to enter the university, future job hunting.....in fact everything is related! Nowadays everything will have to be interviewed for in English!*

(Trisha and Catherine, group interview, St. Caroline's College)

As for students of Peterson's School, even though they would not be competing globally with candidates from other English speaking countries for positions in global corporates in the business sectors which provide most of the prosperous career opportunities, they also realized the symbolic power of English in the job market. For example, one of the local Chinese boys, Shawn, who later dropped out of school before the end of the academic year, told me about his plan to take extensive English classes in a later interview during the summer vacation after the end of that academic year. He had started to study a vocational training course in hotel and catering management in July of 2010, right after he quitted school, because he thought he learnt nothing at Peterson's School. However, during the interview conducted in August, he repeatedly claimed that he regretted wasting lots of time not learning properly in English and now realized how important it is even though he had just started to join the profession.

Although many students in Peterson's also realized the importance of English in the job market or for their future studies, unlike students of St. Caroline's, who accepted

that fact confidently, their realization was often accompanied by anxiety, distress and uncertainty.

In the interview with the Form 6 student, Piano of Peterson's school, she expressed her anxiety of not passing the "Use of English" subject in A-level next year, which may disqualify her from getting a place at university. By the time the interview was conducted, she had migrated from mainland China only two years previously, so she was not so confident about her own English standard. As shown in the extract below, on the one hand she agreed that the examination of English was essential and "practical" as it is very much about preparing for their future work; meanwhile, she also questioned that this kind of "training for future" did not help her to improve or cultivate her English abilities at the moment, and was sometimes too far away from her real-life experiences, which made it quite difficult for her to perform well and, eventually, may in fact inhibit her chances of continuing her studies.

*Piano: Really, they are trying to **train you in the skills that you may need for your work** in the future. It's like you are now already at work. For example, you are a secretary, so you have to mark down something something....and they really put you into many different roles! After practising for many times, sometimes I wonder "Hey, am I now working?", and it's so **practical**.....*

*Researcher: So do you think this is good or bad?*

*Piano: It's okay, but I feel it's kind of **hard to adapt** it sometimes. That is, you need to do all these at this level! Of course, they are trying to train us, for your future, **maybe there's some help for your work; but if you don't know these skills by now, you don't even have the chance to continue your studies!***

(Piano, individual interview, Peterson's secondary school; bold is my emphasis)

While the English proficiency level of Southern Asian students was better than their classmates of Chinese origin, as Mr Tim has described in a previous section, they were "only" capable in speaking fluently in English, but incompetent in the writing of good English or mastering the Chinese language. Mr Tim further explained that, due to the cultural influences as well as their future aspirations, these Southern Asian

students may, in fact, lack the motivation to acquire a higher level of English and Chinese proficiency.

*Mr Tim: For them, their Chinese is not good, their English writing is not good enough,.....so for them, or for their family members, their expectations would not be high. For example, you will find that many of the Southern Asian people in Hong Kong are limited in several types of job, especially for male, they usually only worked as....you know (.....) **for the elder generations, they usually do labour work, working in Sham-Shui-Po<sup>19</sup> for unskilled work or logistics for the factories; or guards, security guards etc.....usually that kind of work.***

*Researcher: so you mean they don't need a high level of language proficiency?*

*Mr Tim: Right! Basically, their elder generations are working in those fields. So how much change do you think they (students/younger generations) would have? Of course, that really depends on how much they expect and demand for themselves, their future aspirations. **But if they do not set a high standard.....or to them, they are already used to that kind of job, or their clan or ethnic groups are all working in those fields, which will influence how they think. They may feel that compared to their relatives or friends back in their countries, their lives in Hong Kong are already much better.** That will affect their future aspirations and demands on themselves.*

(Mr. Tim, individual interview, Peterson's secondary school; bold is my emphasis)

Although Mr Tim's opinion may not reflect the truth of the Southern Asian students' future aspirations and expectations of themselves, he was illustrating the general expectations of teachers or many other people's misconception about the Southern Asian people living in Hong Kong. Due to the lack of language support in school, as well as improvement of the education policy by the government, there is an extension in the difficult situation of different generations of Southern Asians ethnic minorities in the job market in Hong Kong. Instead of recognizing the limitations of language for the ethnic minority students, Mr Tim's opinion was in fact "blaming the

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<sup>19</sup> Sham-Shui-Po is one of the 18 districts in Hong Kong, which is famous for its majority of low-income or marginalized groups (ethnic minorities, new immigrants) population.

victims” of lacking the motivation to improve their language (especially Chinese) acquisition.

### *The Link between the use of Language with the emphasized dimension of citizens' identities*

#### **St. Caroline's College**

It was also prevalent that the use of language is often linked with the content, as shown in the examples of the speech in the morning assemblies or other formal occasions in both St. Caroline's and Peterson's School.

In St. Caroline's, it was quite obvious that the use of English and Putonghua during the assemblies often covered different topics, and usually would be related to different dimensions of students' citizen identities. For example, in days that English was used as the medium for the morning assemblies, many topics were related to the school yearly theme about international and environmental issues, or being an active learner. Other major topics concerned students' participation in outside-schools event, especially those global experience, including the experience of joining the UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) or the organization of fund-raising events for a very poor village in a developing country; other current affairs issues concerning wars, disasters or other international political issues were also discussed and shared by teachers in English. It seems that English was used to emphasize the global citizen dimension of students and was helping students to connect to the global/English world.

For the use of Putonghua, as mentioned by Sr. Ellen earlier extract, one of the major purposes was to “nurture their hearts towards the motherland”. However, the content of the sharing by teachers conducted in Putonghua about China may seem “radical” or “political” in nature compared with Sr. Ellen's wish to cultivate the sense of belonging to China, due to the fact that many of the current issues shared often involved emphatic descriptions of the depressing social realities faced by people in China, or criticisms about lack of civil qualities, or the communist party's control over freedom of speech or political accusation of opinion leaders in the society. On

the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, the Memorial Day for the world-famous “Tiananmen Square Massacre”, the teacher sharing was also introducing the incident to the young generation students who might not have knowledge about it, grieving for the deceased and their families, and hoping for the rehabilitation of the incident as well as the democratic development of China’s government. Instead of blindly advocating the political stands of the communist party ruling China, the “Chinese identities” which emphasized “concern in criticism” adopted by many of the Hong Kong citizen seems to be indoctrinated by teachers at St. Caroline’s.

Lastly, the content of the Speech Festival, which involved different grades of students to “exhibit” their language abilities in front of the whole school was interesting. While there was also content performed in Putonghua, including the duo stand-up comedies competition of the S.2 students, for most other parts, English was the major language in the event. The performance or competition included S.1 students’ role-plays of extracts from Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”; shorter public speaking of S.4 students on the topics “Manner matters” and “Why I don’t want to be a millionaire”; and a longer public speaking by F.6 students on topics such as “Shanghai-Expo” and “Facebook”. These examples showed that English was also a medium for students to understand western culture or to cultivate their cultural capital, because other than Shakespeare’s work, the exposure of other English Literature works was also emphasized in St. Caroline’s English language education. Reading of master pieces in English lessons has always been compulsory in the English curriculum in St. Caroline’s College.

In addition, the public speaking topics such as “Manner matters” and “Why I don’t want to be a millionaire” also somehow reflects the school’s deliberate attempt to educate students’ behaviour, values and conduct, which seems to be related to the education of the social and cultural dimension of citizen’s quality.

### **Peterson’s Secondary School**

As mentioned in the “Overview” section, the morning assemblies in Peterson’s School were usually conducted in Cantonese despite the fact that many Southern



Asian students did not understand what the teachers were talking about. The contents of assemblies were mainly Bible-sharing and prayers, with teachers sharing on current issues mostly about Hong Kong and China, or sometimes on teachers' views about personal conduct or social values. Because of my concern about the Southern Asian students' feelings of isolation and discomfort, I asked the School Principal the reason for using Cantonese instead of following the claim of the "bilingual policy" in school. Mr Cheung thus explained that the purpose of using Cantonese was to help Southern Asian students to be familiar with the language and help them integrate into the society. The emphasis on Cantonese as the language for communication, and its link with the Hong Kong/local identity is obvious. However, there were often moments of awkwardness because of the use of Cantonese as the major language, especially at times of prayer or some other events where the school tried to promote students' national identity or their sense of belonging to China.

For example, on the first Monday morning of each month, the school would organize a national flag-raising ceremony after a short prayer, and often include a short sharing on topics related to China by teachers or students. At the first national flag raising ceremony during my fieldwork, the teacher had chosen three Form 5 students (two boys, one girl) to act in a short role play discussing their identities whether as "Hong-Kongers" or "Chinese". In the role play, although the two boys expressed the very common opinion of the majority of the Hong Kong younger generation which emphasized themselves as "Hong-Kongers" because their living style, language, culture and the economic system (capitalist vs socialist) are different from mainland China, the major 'airtime' was given to the girl, who spoke last. She explained why she thought she recognized herself as "Chinese" instead of a "Hong-Konger" by emphasizing the same ethnicity and "consanguinity" Hong Kong people shared with their counterparts in mainland China; and asked Hong Kong people to appreciate the rapid growth, economic development and achievements of the Olympics Games, Aerospace Science and Technology, and the international influence of the state. Due to the fact that the girl's speech was very much the "official" rhetoric of people in the pro-China camp, I suspected the script was written by the teacher. Later, after talking

to the girl in person, it was proved that the script was indeed written by the teacher-in-charge but the students were trained to present as if it was their real opinion.

The point I emphasize here is that while Peterson's School was trying to promote a sense of belonging and national identity to its Chinese students, not only was the use of language (Cantonese) itself a barrier for most of the Southern Asian students to fit in, the emphasis on ethnicity and "consanguinity" was also further excluding these students, situating them into a marginalized and embarrassed position as "outsiders" in the school and in Hong Kong society.

However, in the Chinese language teaching materials particularly designed for these Southern Asian students, the school seemed to be trying to foster these students' sense of belonging and their Hong Kong identities in the content. The Chinese language teaching materials were designed by the school with the help of a research center in the university aiming to teach Chinese as a second language. In the six textbooks, almost all of the content was about the daily lives of students living in Hong Kong. Apart from the introduction of some traditional Chinese culture, rituals and festivals in Hong Kong, there were also many chapters about how to be a good student, how students should be polite; students should adhere to school rules and obeying the law etc. The content of these textbooks were quite apparently educating the ethnic minority students about integrating into the culture and everyday life in Hong Kong, as well as the qualities of "good" citizens that were expected of them.

On the other hand, the use of English seems to be more related to entertainment ("for fun"), communication and building of relationships, especially as it was presented in the English week. During the English week, activities were organized by English teachers with the help of some of the English Ambassadors students, including games like "Easter word search game", "Tongue Twister" and "Easter Game booths", "Story Writing Competition" and an "English is Fun workshop". Also, when English week started, English teachers distributed candies and little gifts to all other teachers, as the rewards for students to encourage them to speak to teachers in English. It seemed that during the English week, a more harmonious relationship between teachers and Southern Asian students was apparent. During fieldwork(e.g.

fieldnote on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2010) , I also witnessed many times that during English lessons, teachers would bring students to the English corner of the library for borrowing of English fiction books or DVD movies in English, in both Non-Chinese speaking classes and Chinese students' classes. In those lessons when I was the substitute teacher, other teachers always suggested to me to bring with me a DVD in English to play in class, though I found that the Non-Chinese speaking classes with the Southern Asian students that had higher English proficiency level were much more engaged than Chinese students who usually had a lower English proficiency level. Teachers' intentions to shape English into something "for fun" in order to increase students' learning motivation seemed to be working mostly in the Southern Asian group. Yet, because some of the industrious Chinese students would wish to improve their English, some of the students would volunteer in the library to take the chance to practise their English, some would even become friends to each other, though all of these cross-cultural friendships were limited to the female students.

### *Training in expression of opinion and presentation of 'self'*

The instrumental value of English in the symbolic market is highly recognized in Hong Kong. As mentioned, to obtain the symbolic capital brought by English, the acquisition of the language is no longer enough, and the fluency and accents seem to become essential, because that not only reveals one's proficiency level of the language, it also provides information about the speakers' social and ethnic background. Yet, I would like to argue that the "style" of speaking English seems to be important on top of fluency and accents, as shown in the case of St. Caroline's. To be particular, it seems that the English language should not be limited to the needs of international communication, but should "advance" to be able to give presentations in a natural and confident way to "express yourself".

I became aware of this training in the "style" of speaking English when I observed an audition for an English public speaking competition by two Secondary 4 classes (about 80 students) in the school hall one afternoon. The audition was to choose the candidates from the two classes for the final competition in the schools' annual speech festival, and the candidates were all speaking on the same topics of "Manner

matters” and “Why I don’t want to be a millionaire”. After 12 of the selected candidates had finished, the two English teachers gave comments in front of all the students, which lasted for about half an hour. Although the teachers did comment slightly on the content of the speeches, for most of the time they were obviously more concerned about the modulation in tones, the pronunciation of words, and also, teaching the students the importance of proper facial expressions, body gestures and eye contact. It appeared to me that the acquisition of the language, e.g. the grammar, vocabulary or sentence structures were no longer the focus of teaching and learning of English in St. Caroline’s; it was the way to express, the intonation, the cooperation of the eyes, the face and the body, which together form a “style” to present and speak which matters.

Another piece of evidence was the morning assembly which has been mentioned in the previous section, by senior students Mary and Karen. Sister Ellen was very determined to train students in presentation skills so she had turned the whole school morning assembly into a stage for them to practise. Coincidentally, another pair of Form 6 students who participated in my research interview also raised the issue of the compulsory training of spoken English in the presentations in morning assemblies. In Trisha and Catherine’s interview, they mentioned that Sr. Ellen had just started a new rule for presenters in the assemblies, requiring them not only to present simply in fluent and “accurate” English, but also to get used to not having scripts in their hands. They said that Sr. Ellen had explained the purpose is to provide more chances for the student leaders to practice their presentation skills, to share their opinions and experiences in front of the public without scripts so that they could truly “speak what they think” instead of hiding themselves behind the scripts.

Trisha happened to be the first “victim” who was “frightened to death” when she had to represent her club to share their experience of running a pseudo-trade company. She said she was shaking the whole time when she was presenting as Sr. Ellen was standing behind her and scrutinizing every word that she said. Ironically, contradictory to the original aim that students should not prepare scripts for their speech, Trisha claimed that they needed even more preparation to memorise the script they have written before getting on to the stage; and at the same time, it added



extra pressure to the presenters because the fluency of their English would be affected when there's no clue to remind them of what they have to say. Yet after all, both Trisha and Catherine agreed that this kind of morning assembly presentation helped them to build their presentation and public speaking skills. They also found that it was very obvious when they were compared with the English presentation performance of students from other secondary schools, when they participated in the public examinations.

Obviously, Sr. Ellen was aiming to train her students' into becoming confident speakers who could speak English "naturally", or to my understanding, she expected her students to manage to speak English fluently and naturally to the extent that they seem to be speaking their native language. But it seems that Sr. Ellen, in fact, expects more than that, as shown in the interview extract below.

*"Language is the most basic ability! When you don't know how to speak and write, how could you **express yourself**, and **how could you tell the others "this should be the way to do it"?** Or **"This is who I am"?** So what do you do? You can't do anything, right? For the other things, on the contrary, I think everything is changing too quickly, what you learned can be out-dated in a minute....but for the ability in language and thinking, (they could last and so) are very important."*

(Sr. Ellen, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

Although in the extract, Sr. Ellen did not specify what kind of "language" she was talking about, due to her repeated emphasis on the two official languages, English and Putonghua, obviously her concern was on students' ability in using English and Putonghua to express themselves.

Sr. Ellen's opinion about language had in fact, been repeated several times on different occasions in front of the whole school, and her opinion was supported and agreed with by many of the teachers in St. Caroline's. What she was illustrating here is the "ever-changing" nature of the world under the influence of neo-liberalism, where there were no longer stable job positions that could guarantee work for a lifetime; that students, in order to survive in this ever-changing world, should at least be equipped by their ability in language and thinking. Yet, I would like to draw



attention to the other phrase in this extract, where Sr. Ellen described the most important purposes of language in such a fierce competitive world, are for “expressing” yourself, to “tell the others ‘this should be the way to do it’ or ‘this is who I am’”. Again, it is apparent that at Sr. Ellen’s standpoint is that her students would be the future leaders or someone having power in society, so that they would have to “tell the others” what should be the way to do things. What is more intriguing is her view about language/English as the essential tools to express “this is who I am”.

“This is who I am,” in fact suggested an important dimension under the current educational reforms, that students are expected to build up, express and present the “self” in front of others. The expression of personal opinion is important in essay writing, composition or group discussion in oral examinations, but what is more important is the expression of “who I am”, which includes your stand, your personal background, your experiences, all of these which constitute an important part of your personality and your identity. As mentioned in Ch.5 on “Other Learning Experiences” (OLE) and students’ participation, the compulsory “Student Learning Profile” which recorded all the “non-academic” experiences and engagements of the students, teachers’ comments on students’ acquired “multiple abilities” and personal qualities, and the composition of personal reflections on different experiences, has all become a full package of illustrating “who I am”. It seems that what Sr. Ellen was emphasizing here, was a verbal version of such self/ personal qualities presentation, which seems to be vital especially in university and job interviews. The problem is, the image of “self” seems to be not referring to the “real” self of students, but pointing towards an imaginary ideal image of the confident, determined “self” who speaks English as if it’s their mother tongue, accompanied by the appropriate facial expressions and body language.

I would also argue that, under the influence of neoliberalism, which often emphasizes the accountability of performance (Ball, 1990) and trying to measure all productivity and services, the appropriate “style” or way of expression seems to be more important, because how one expresses and presents themselves and their work would be how their performance and ability get measured and evaluated. Therefore,

the significance of language became not only the instrument for communication, but a tool for measurement. Thus, I would argue, the training in fluency, “correct” accents, forms, style and logic of expression, would be a whole package of the training of the presentation of self --- language, especially in the form of speaking, is a revelation of one’s personal and educational background, social class and ethnicity, which are under more open surveillance in neoliberal times.

### *English as cultural capital --- “Language Art” in St. Caroline’s College*

Apart from the link between English with a Hong Kong identity as well as the international perspective, as mentioned, English is also the medium for St. Caroline’s students to acquire other cultural capital, such as the exposure to English literature and culture, as well as aesthetic appreciation in the forms of English dramas, western music or arts. However, English is not only the symbolic capital that could be transformed into economic or social capital in the symbolic market; according to Ms Sung and Amanda, English itself is an “art” which, I would suggest, could also be a form of cultural capital.

In the interview with English teacher Ms. Sung, when asked about what she think is the advantage of learning English, she shared her views about her expectations of students on the level of acquisition, that students could do “language art” in English.

*“Not only English, actually all kinds of language have a good side. And of course we will give the message to students that it is **mainly for communication**, which is the most important, or basic thing..... But of course, when they go to higher forms, we will have different expectations of them, a **higher level**. For example, they could write in **beautiful English to express themselves**, or even be capable of doing ‘**language art**’ for some of the more capable students, for instance, the learning of poems. Also, when they write an article, they can have **more diverse presentations**, and can cite more different examples. There is what we hope for.”*

(Ms. Sung, individual interview, St. Caroline’s College)

Similarly, in the interview with past student Amanda, she also described the learning of English as a “kind of art”, which could be “elegantly performed” and “beautifully spoken” like listening to music.

*“I think accent is quite important, quite important. (Researcher: Why?) Because .....I like English very much, so my opinion may be a bit subjective..... I think, if you could elegantly perform it, it is a kind of art. For accents, it could change the meaning of the same thing; for beautifully spoken English, it's like listening to music.”*

(Amanda, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

In both extracts, the value of English has been placed beyond the practical purposes of “communication”, for job interviews or for the examinations. The description of English could be “language art” for poems, or could be “elegantly/beautifully” “performed”; the way it was described was like illustrating other kinds of usual art forms such as painting, architecture or music. The emphasis on English's aesthetic value seems to be a way for St. Caroline's teachers and students to distinguish themselves from the other English learners who only value the instrumental purposes of English in the symbolic market in Hong Kong.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

Lai and Byram (2003) have pointed out that the “bi-literate and trilingual” policy promoted by the HKSAR government was an attempt to train a new type of political leader which they named “new local ruling elite”, who could fulfil such language requirements needed to survive in the “decolonized and globalized national society” (Lai and Byram, 2003:320), but would not have “close and strong ties with the former colonial authorities” as did the “old local ruling elite group”, i.e. the English speaking elites in the colonial past. Obviously, the policy of establishing English and Putonghua as the official languages in St. Caroline's College is a proactive response to the government's aim of training the new ruling elite of the future, who would be attached to the “motherland” of China whilst maintaining international competitiveness. Similar to the findings from other chapters, it appears that the school principal and teachers in St. Caroline's College expected their students to become the future leaders of Hong Kong or, more particularly, to become “new local ruling elites”. On the one hand, they were expected to be leaders in the political or business field, for which Putonghua would be essential if they had to communicate with government officials and business partners from mainland China, or organize

volunteer social services to help development and the people in the rural areas of China. On the other hand, they were expected to be competent in English in order to maintain the competitiveness of the Hong Kong workforce, especially to attract international companies to set foot in Hong Kong as a base to enter the increasingly booming consumer market of China. With the strong utilitarian discourse which is deeply embedded in Hong Kong (Choi, 2003), it would not be a surprise that students of both schools all realized the instrumental value of English; yet it is the school policy in St. Caroline's and the dominant middle-class students' background which let St. Caroline's students recognize the ascending symbolic value of Putonghua. On the contrary, while some of the new immigrant students in Peterson's School did know how to speak Putonghua originally, the discriminative label of Putonghua attached to low socio-economic status and the identities of new Chinese immigrants had made Putonghua the unfavourable language on the campus of Peterson's School. Putonghua would hardly be considered as symbolic capital in the context of Peterson's School.

Apart from the discussion of the symbolic value of English and Putonghua in the two schools, the findings also showed that the fluency, accents and also the style of English, would affect the acquisition of symbolic capital attached to the language. To the Southern Asian students in Peterson's School, their strong accents in English, influenced by their ethnic origins, was being criticised by their teachers who thought that these accents would directly affect their competitiveness with the "right" accents of the local elite students. In addition, the lack of Chinese and Cantonese proficiency would further disadvantage these students' future prospects in Hong Kong because of the domination of the Cantonese-speaking population in Hong Kong society.

Furthermore, I would argue that, together with the other observations in the two schools, there is in fact a "hierarchy of languages" embedded in Hong Kong society. From the examples of the two schools, I realised that how teachers and students evaluate a language somehow reflects the social stratification of class and ethnicity related to the language. For instance, the major European languages, such as German, French and Spanish, would be considered the "highest" in the hierarchy, because of Hong Kong people's admiration and imagination about the "high-brow"



European culture connected with these languages. As shown in St. Caroline's case, only students who were academically competent and who could prove their eligibility for learning an extra language were allowed to participate in the German class. Although English is still the significantly powerful language within the symbolic market in Hong Kong, due to the colonial past and the compulsory curriculum which guarantees access to the language (although such "equal access" to English is arguable, especially after the new Medium of Instruction policy was enforced), English seems to have a slightly lower status than the aforementioned popular European languages. However, as discussed in this chapter, within the category of English itself, the different accents would definitely be rated, and only the British Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American English (GA) would have a higher ranking in the hierarchy. In addition, with the ascending significance of Putonghua after the political transfer, and the accelerating number of tourists from mainland China that greatly influenced Hong Kong's economy, though some of the Hong Kong people began to emphasize more the "Hong-Kongers" identity through the upholding of Cantonese, it would seem that Putonghua is having a slightly higher status in the hierarchy, especially when more and more people in Hong Kong are investing money and time to learn and improve their Putonghua proficiency. Lastly, from the previous discussion, it is found that many Southern Asian languages that are unfamiliar to people in Hong Kong are being undervalued in Hong Kong society. Although there is an expanding population of Southern Asian citizens in the community, it seems that Hong Kong people have no intention to understand their culture or languages. It is also only recently that the government itself recognized the social significance of these languages and included the Southern Asian citizens into the government sectors. The hierarchy of languages seems to be a mirror to reveal the underlying ideology of Hong Kong people's attitudes towards different ethnic groups and different cultures.

In addition, it was shown that different languages were often used on the campuses to relate to the different aspects of citizenship the school would like to address. It was demonstrated that the distinction of Cantonese in the construction of Hong Kong identity is prominent, especially from the examples of Southern Asian students who



recognized themselves as both Hong-Kongers and Pakistani/Nepalese, and learned to speak Hong Kong slang or “coarse language” in Cantonese. As stated by Lau, ‘Since 1949, Hong Kong Chinese have become secluded from the social and cultural changes in China. The dominance of vernacular Cantonese among the Hong Kong Chinese and the gradual emergence of a distinctive popular culture based on that dialect played a significant role in moulding the Hongkongese identity.’ (Lau, 1997:3, quoted in Zhang, B., 2010: 57). At the same time, the cosmopolitanism represented by English was also a significant part of the constitution of the Hong Kong identity, as shown in Shawn’s view about differentiating themselves from both the new immigrant students and the Southern Asian students on the school campus.

To conclude, the findings of this chapter echo the findings of Ch. 5 about students’ participation in “Other Learning Experiences” and other extra-curricular activities, that the implementation of language policies and the usual language practices in the two schools reflected different idea about the concept of “ideal citizens”.

For St. Caroline’s College, again, the school was expecting to develop students into citizens with both the “global visions” and the sense of national identification towards China through the enhancement of students’ English and Putonghua proficiency. The schools’ expectation of students being the “future leaders” in business, political or social settings was very apparent too, because not only were the instrumental value of the two languages emphasized, but students were also being trained to “present” their opinions as well as “present who they are” in front of the public. The emphasis on the “correct pronunciation” and fluency, together with the rhetoric about “English as a form of art”, also suggested that St. Caroline’s College did realise the connotation of accents, fluency and style to the speakers’ social and ethnic background, thus the school would like to make sure its students acquired these in order to successfully obtain the attached symbolic capital and secure their middle-class status.

For Peterson’s School, the school seems to emphasize more the local Hong Kong context and the Hong Kong identities through the use of Cantonese in most of the school events and official occasions, despite the so-called “bilingual” policies due to

the intake of Southern Asian students. Although the use of Cantonese may not be entirely related to the encouragement of Southern Asian students into the local community, the school's tailor-made Chinese/Cantonese textbook and curriculum for the Southern Asian students in the school still reflected the school's expectations about Southern Asian students' immersion into the local culture through the acquisition of the language. However, many teachers still held pessimistic views about these students' futures because of their low Chinese proficiency level and the relatively "strong accents" in English.

For the local students, the school had tried to promote English and encouraged students to realize the symbolic value of learning English. Though students may recognize the symbolic capital attached to the language and the significance of English in relation to their future academic and job prospects, limited by their academic ability, their English proficiency was low, and the interactions between Southern Asian students and the local Chinese students were limited to simple English, or Cantonese if some of the Southern Asian students were able to speak the language. Despite the fact of the mix of ethnicity of students on the campus, the use of English as the major communication tool was surprisingly low.

In the next chapter, the focus will shift to understand the influence of the intersection of gender with class or ethnicity in the construction of femininities. I suggest that this classed or ethnic femininities is also a significant part of the cultural citizenship and directly affect students' construction of citizen identities.

## **Chapter Seven      Femininities: the Intersection of Gender, Class and Ethnicity**

In Chapter 6, I have shown that girls in St. Caroline's College are expected to develop their language, social and interpersonal skills as a response to the current globalized, neo-liberal world. In spite of the rhetoric of "global citizens", "innovative learners" and "knowledge explorers", in my fieldwork observation (such as the fieldnote 29<sup>th</sup> April and 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2010), the institutionalized version of femininity that connoted the traits of traditional hetero-femininities (Reay, 2006; Renold, 2005) was still emphasized in St. Caroline's. It is interesting to see that though Peterson's School had a different emphasis on developing their students into "ideal citizens", a similar kind of "restrained" traditional hetero-femininity is also preferred and regulated by disciplinary teachers on its campus. However, the school authority seemed to be less determined to police female students' outfits and behaviour because teachers appeared to have difficulty achieving a consensus on the standard of "proper" femininity.

Yet, the version of "official femininity" in St. Caroline's was not simply organized around the hegemonic structure of the "heterosexual matrix" (Butler, 1990). St. Caroline's girls are also expected to embody a kind of "middle-class aesthetic" (Walkerline, 2003), that is, the ability to distinguish between different occasions so as to perform the appropriate types of body gestures, dress codes and dispositions. Hetero-femininity and girls' sexuality should, therefore, be carefully or accurately performed, depending on the shifting occasions or contexts in which these girls are situated. However, while St. Caroline's girls seem to approve and adhere to the standard of this middle-classed version of hetero-femininity as "demure ladies" for most of the time on the campus, some girls were able to perform their "hyper-femininity" (McRobbie, 1978; Renold, 2000, 2005) on other occasions related to dance and performances.

Different from the middle-class influence in St. Caroline's, the ethnic and religious culture seemed to have more impact on the Southern Asian girls in Peterson's school on their construction of gender identities

Furthermore, the ideology of “maternal instinct”/feminine touch emphasized in the St. Caroline’s community also reflected an assumption about the appropriate femininity that the St. Caroline’s girls should incorporate to become “ideal citizens”. Through the elaboration of the discourse of “to serve the others”, it was found that such discourse is closely linked to middle-class ideology, and also the paradoxical debate about the nature of “care”. Despite the school trying to situate such ideology of “care” into the framework of “global citizenship” in recent years, emphasizing the care for the world-wide-others, on the other hand, it also seems to fall back into the sexual division about “care” as a woman’s work, as shown by the emphasis on the development of “maternal instincts” or “the role of mothers”. Such emphasis on “the role of mother” not only assumed students’ future engagement in the “private space” of heterosexual families, it also illustrated how society is imposing and expecting an appropriate form of femininity/citizenry attached to the “mother image” that entails the “softness” and “the heart to serve and sacrifice” when women are to be seen in public spaces.

### **7.1 Oriental Dance: Embodiment of “Maternal Instinct” and “Feminine touch”**

Similar to many other schools in Hong Kong, St. Caroline’s College has certain disciplinary rules which prescribe that students’ appearance and apparel should meet the standard of the school. Sexuality of students was found to be taboo in the context of school, especially in a girls’ school like St. Caroline’s. “Hyper-femininity”, including make-up and being “scantly dressed” should be displayed only on the occasion of dance or drama performances, when students are “acting” or “performing”. It is interesting to see how students take those opportunities to perform their femininities. However, it is also important to be aware that permission to perform “hyper-femininity” in the performing arts is not an exceptional moment when St. Caroline’s girls could escape from the scrutinization of teachers (and other students) of their expression of bodies. Instead, it uncovers the deepness and thoroughness of the school in its disciplinary control of students’ bodies. It is

noticeable that the dance culture of St. Caroline's College has been established for over 20 years, and even today, two oriental dance lessons are assigned as a compulsory subject to be participated in by all Secondary 1 and 2 students for the two entire academic years. Such an arrangement of the curriculum is quite rare in Hong Kong, and in the interview with Sister Ellen, it was shown that such tradition is kept for a reason.

*R: So why is there an emphasis on Chinese dance?*

*Sr. E: In fact we didn't emphasize Chinese dance, I think we as "Eastern Asians" have a better understanding of expression through oriental dance. So you will see within the 16 to 17 pieces for the annual inter-school dance competition, there will be at least 12 pieces which are oriental dance, including dances from India, Japan, and Korea etc., not limited to Chinese dance. There are also 4 to 5 pieces of western, or even modern dance pieces, but mainly concentrated on the oriental ones.....The reason for that is, **our students are "Eastern Asians"!** So, **what will be the best way, the most beautiful way to express their body gestures?** So we mainly emphasize on that.*

(Sr. Ellen, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

*R: Then what kind of characteristics do you think your students should develop, on a gender perspective?*

*Sr. E: Yes, I think it's the development of "**maternal instinct**". Right, whether you get married or not, a woman should have a certain maternal instinct...and show it. That is, you can be rough....oh no, not rough.....you can be **bold**, you can play (basket)ball, you can ....study science and be bold, but you should have that "**feminine touch**". Right?*

*For example, we will encourage our students....if they mainly play sports, they should still learn to dance, at least for two compulsory years. So you will **discover you have a "soft" (gentle) side**, and through that "**softness**" you can **appreciate the beauty** in that.*

(Sr. Ellen, individual interview, St. Caroline's College; bold are my emphasis)

From the above two extracts, it is shown that the implementation of compulsory "oriental dance" lessons in junior secondary classes is not a policy simply inherited from predecessors. The dance culture and dance lessons have an instrumental value in attracting St. Caroline's girls to develop the kind of femininity that the school



authority favours. This kind of femininity is described by Sister Ellen as one that could express students' body gestures "in a beautiful way", that could help girls to develop and discover their "feminine side" or "softness". We can see that these descriptions of the characteristics of femininity are in fact adhering to the traits of traditional femininity that are based on the usual dichotomy of contrasting female to male and femininity to masculinity.

In addition, I would like to discuss specifically on the choice of translating the term "東方舞" ("dong-fong-mo" in Cantonese and "dongfangwu" in Mandarin) into "oriental dance" instead of the literal translation of "Eastern dance" or "Eastern Asian dance". The reason for this choice is based on my understanding of how Sister Ellen interprets "Eastern Asian dance" and the fact that the terminology of "the Orient" or "The East" is not as problematic as it seems in the context of Hong Kong. After Said's book "*Orientalism*" (1978), it seems that the terms "orient" or "oriental" have inextricably been connected with negative presumptions or patronizing attitudes towards the Eastern Asian countries from a "western" standpoint. However, with a majority of Chinese population that have been colonized by Britain for decades, people in Hong Kong are always proud of having our unique culture, a mixture of the "East" and the "West" --- the preservation of Chinese culture, values and traditions, together with the adaptation of "western" "modern" values such as democracy, rule of law, capitalism and other western cultures. Therefore, while it may seem surprising to see Chinese to describe themselves as "Eastern Asians" or "from the East", the term itself remains neutral in the context of Hong Kong society.

However, the major reason that I decided to translate the dance into "Oriental dance" is based on what Sister Ellen means when she talked about St. Caroline's students practising these dances compulsorily. From the above two extracts, I suggest that Sister Ellen in fact has in mind a set of presumptions about "Eastern Asian" girls or women in terms of body physique, posture and temperament, which somehow fit into the stereotypical image of "Eastern Asian" women portrayed in western society. The expression of "we as Eastern Asians"/"our students are Eastern Asians!" to explain the reason for the school concentrating the training of folk dances on Eastern Asian

countries in fact reveals the underlying agenda of cultivating St. Caroline's girls into those stereotypical "Eastern Asian" female image of "beauty", "softness", thin, subtle, delicate, gentle and elegant etc. .... all sorts of feminine traits traditionally and stereotypically attached to Chinese and Eastern Asian women. Therefore, the translation of "Oriental Dance" may be more accurate to reflect the meaning of Sister Ellen who would like to emphasize the rationale to develop the traditional, "Eastern Asian" style of femininity of St. Caroline's students.

## **7.2 The Construction of Femininities through Dances**

This section focuses on the intersection of social class, ethnicity and gender on the construction of femininities of girls. In particular, this section tried to compare the nature of the different dances taught and practised in the two schools, which on the one hand, reinforced St. Caroline's girls to construct the middle-class femininities; while on the other hand, the interaction between the ethnic culture of Nepalese girls and the nature of hip-hop dances showed how a totally different type of femininities was produced in Peterson's school.

Firstly, Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital"(1979; 1986) will be borrowed to examine the social class nature of the "Dance lessons", which is part of the school culture in St. Caroline's and one of the extra-curricular activities and "Other Learning Experiences" programme in Peterson's School. As discussed in the literature review, it is not that the participation of the "high-brow" aesthetic activity automatically guarantees the reproduction of middle-class status, but how these different types of dance could be evaluated as sign of "distinction" and rewarded in the current school market as well as in society. Through the juxtaposition of the two types of dance in the two schools, I suggest that St. Caroline's "Oriental dance" culture could easily generate the right kind of cultural and social capital that is widely recognized in the current institutionalized school market, while the "Hip-hop" and "Jazz" dance taught in Peterson's School is less likely to be transferred into profitable capital in the field. Besides, it should be noted that this classed cultural capital is expected to be internalized by girls participating in these dances. The embodiment of cultural capital through the practice and performance of dance would

impinge on the girls' minds and bodies, influencing their understanding about the appropriate kind of femininity.

In Ch.5, how St. Caroline's students acquired and activated their "cultural capital" and "economic capital" and "social capital" to maximize their gain in the newly established "Other Learning Experiences" Programme has been discussed. In this section, I would like to use the example of the dance classes arranged in both schools, albeit in different ways, to explore the cultivation of "cultural capital", especially in its "embodied state". That is, how the "middle-class" definition of appropriate femininity is embedded in the dance lessons and dance culture of St. Caroline's school to the extent that St. Caroline's girls learn (embody) consciously or unconsciously, the body posture, disposition and etiquette that comply with the "official" standard of femininity.

Here, I suggest that this kind of appropriate femininity is as important as the other qualities required for students to become the future "ideal citizens" as described in other chapters, especially in the case of female students. As women have always been struggling for their space in the public space whilst men's have always had their legitimated existence (Patemen, 1989), St. Caroline's girls, who are expected to actively participate as "future leaders" and "global citizens", would have to acquire this "embodied cultural capital" in order to get recognition and legitimation in the public sphere. From the observation in the two schools, the middle-class influence in the construction of femininities in St. Caroline's College is highly visible compared to the class influence in Peterson's School; while on the other hand, the ethnic and religious culture and practices seemed to have more powerful impact on Southern Asian girls' construction of femininities.

It is not to say that the factor of social class did not exist in the process of "doing girls" (West and Zimmerman, 1987) in Peterson's School. In fact, in my other ethnographic study in a co-educational secondary school with a majority of students from working-class families background, I have recorded and discussed the construction of femininities of schoolgirls in relations to their bodies, sexualities, friendships and academic experiences in the context of Hong Kong (Lee, 2008). Yet

many studies have shown that the middle-class seem to be more conscious and invest much more on cultivating the cultural capital of their next generation in order to secure their middle-class status in society.(Kehily and Pattman, 2006; Ball, et al., 2004; Vincent and Ball, 2007; Vincent et al., 2004. Due to the limited empirical studies on gender and education in Hong Kong (c.f. the illustration of Choi and Chan, 2012; and the exceptional collections of articles by Chan and Choi (eds.), 2012 and Choi and Chan (eds.), 2012), and even fewer particularly on the middle-class influence on gender in the educational settings (Chan, 1996; 2004, 2011; Lam, 2005; So, 2011), this section will therefore provide the local empirical evidence on the middle-class influence to the construction of femininities and the cultivation of cultural capital through the case of St. Caroline's school. Nevertheless the influence of patently having less economic resources and the influence of students' ethnicity on the Nepalese girls in Peterson's School will also be discussed. As explained in Ch.4 the Methodology chapter, the politics between the school authorities and different groups of teachers, as well as students' reluctance to be interviewed formally posed difficulties in the collection of some data. The complex situation in Peterson's school not only led to the ambivalent attitudes of teachers and inconsistent enforcement of school rules, it proved very difficult to capture a commonly accepted or official version of emphasized femininity among teachers or students. Besides, due to the absence of formal interviews with the active Nepalese girls who participated in the hip-hop dances who were the most visible gendered beings in Peterson's school, I could only discuss their construction of femininities based on my observational field notes and from interview data with one of the class teachers of Southern Asian classes, Mr. Kwok. As a result the disparity of data which focused on gender, inevitably led to an imbalance in findings presented in this chapter.

### **Comparison of the types of dance in the two schools**

Based on the following categories, I will juxtapose the two major types of dances taught in the two schools, namely the "Chinese Dance" (under the scope of "Oriental Dance") in St. Caroline's College, and the hip-hop dance in Peterson's School, to examine the class nature of different types of dance which leads to different acquisition of cultural capital because of the assessment/standard of distinction in the



current educational system and society. (For a summary of the comparison of the dances in the two schools, please refer to Appendix K).

I would like to emphasize that although the terms “highbrow” and “lowbrow” are used in the discussion about the different types of dance, it is presenting the way that teachers and students, or even the general public perceive and evaluate the types of dance being discussed here. As Lareau and Weininger have argued, many educational studies have codified the concept of cultural capital following DiMaggio (1982), that the aesthetic practices and preferences of class of French social structure in Bourdieu’s research have developed into the dominant interpretation of cultural capital denoting the knowledge of, or competence with, “highbrow” cultural activities exclusively (2003:597). However, following Lareau and Weininger’s account of a broader scope to interpret cultural capital which concerns “the direct or indirect ‘imposition’ of evaluative norms favouring the children or families of a particular social milieu” (2003:598), a contextual reading of “dance” as a form of cultural capital in Hong Kong’s educational settings, as well as the social meanings of practising and performing different types of dance, will be applied here, to see how the “evaluative norm” is favouring St. Caroline’s girls /middle-class schools and families; while at the same time, the dynamic nature of cultural capital also benefits the Nepalese girls in other ways.

Hence, instead of assuming a simple causal relationship between the participation in “highbrow” activities and the acquisition of cultural capital, this section aims to illustrate how and why “Chinese dance” is being recognized and valued as a “proper” and “formal” art form in the educational settings and the society which could be transformed into other forms of cultural capital; while at the same time, at the micro level, allow St. Caroline’s girls to learn the cultural, social and physical attributes that are viewed as “respectable” and “middle-class” (Skeggs, 1997).

### ***The content and cultural background of the dances***

The “Oriental dance” lessons in St. Caroline’s primarily taught and practised Chinese traditional dances according to my observation in school, but according to Sr. Ellen, folk dances from other countries of the South-east Asia region are also included in



the dance lessons' curriculum, and are an essential part of the "Dance Society" in public performances and inter-school dance competitions. These Chinese traditional (folk) dances and folk dances from a South-east Asian origin usually evolved from the dances of the general public ("common folks") during folklore tradition and rituals originated from significant life events (e.g. wedding, funeral) of people of that place. Therefore, these Chinese or South-east Asian traditional dances or folk dances, just like other folk dances in other countries, put the emphasis on "tradition" and "ethnicity", pinpointing their historical, cultural, geographical and most importantly, "national" nature.

The popularity of Chinese traditional dance may not be comparable with pop-jazz or hip-hop dance among younger generations, not to mention the enduring appeal of classical ballet among (middle-class) parents in Hong Kong. Yet it has long been recognized as an important art form. A widely recognized examination (evaluation system) called the "Graded Examinations on Chinese Dance" has been introduced by the Hong Kong Dance Federation (HKDF) jointly with the Beijing Dance Academy (BDA) in the year 1989, based on the official set of curricula designed by a professor of the BDA. This Graded Exam, jointly launched by the highest institution in Chinese dance education in the world (BDA) and one of the most prominent dance organizations in Hong Kong (HKDF), is the only cross-provinces exam (and the related certificate issued) that is officially recognized by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of China. The predominant status of Chinese traditional dance in St. Caroline's was evidenced by the large number of students who privately studied and participated in the aforementioned Graded Exam.

In addition, Chinese dance is also an important performing art which is especially popular in cultural exchange events and an essential performance on official occasions related to the Chinese government or business sectors with a Chinese background. On the website of HKDF, the major purposes of the syllabus of the Graded Exam are, 'To develop learners' interest through scientific, systematic and holistic training; **focus on instilling ethnic/national characteristics, cultivating learners' enthusiasm for the art of Chinese dance, and promote Chinese culture.**'(My emphasis). The highlighted part of the major purposes evidently shows

that the Chinese traditional /folk dances could serve a nationalistic function especially in the post-colonial context of Hong Kong. With such a cultural and nationalistic influence, the institutionalization of Chinese traditional dance and its status to serve as one of the standards of “distinction” in Hong Kong society is understandable.

On the contrary, the hip-hop dance taught in Peterson’s School, though gaining popularity among adolescents or the younger generation in Hong Kong, seems to be less systematic and non-institutionalized, probably because of the cultural origin of the dance. Hip-hop dance could not be understood independently without considering its link with the whole hip-hop culture which originated from street politics and self-expression (including hip-hop dance, rap music or graffiti etc.) to reflect discontent over the difficult lives of African-American and Latino communities, or issues of oppression related to race and class in New York. Such a historical and cultural background has set the tone for hip-hop dance as an anti-authority/rebellious sub-culture or street culture. In the Hong Kong context, especially among adults (and most parents), “subculture” means it is non-mainstream, and only popular among a minority group of people. “Subculture” is not regarded as “proper” culture, nor is it recognized as a proper art form.

Besides, based on the personal communication with the teacher of the hip-hop class in Peterson’s School, the most distinctive feature of hip-hop dance is the emphasis on improvisation, that is, apart from some of the major movements of breaking or locking, the personal elements and the eclecticism of the dancer (or choreographers) should be presented in the performance. Therefore, even in her own teaching, she also incorporated different dance movements adopted from other dances. The continuously evolving nature of the hip-hop dance may be the reason that it might be difficult to have a systematic evaluation standard in the practical sense. Thus, not only is there no official examination for hip-hop dance, formal hip-hop dance training organized by major dance organizations is rarely seen. Hip-hop dance seems to be passed on through personal coaching or imitation of each other on the streets.

Despite being subordinated as “subculture” by parents and the resistance regarding institutionalization at school level, hip-hop music and dance still remained popular among the younger generations, especially among the Southern Asian students in Peterson’s school. While Korean-pop culture has been overwhelmingly popular among the local Chinese teenagers including local students of St. Caroline’s and Peterson’s schools (e.g. the Korean songs chosen to be the music for their dance exams in St. Caroline’s, see field note on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2010; discussion about Korean pop-stars with Peterson’s students), I found that Southern Asian students tended to favour the popular culture of the Anglo sphere especially that of the United States. For example, on several occasions when I looked after the Southern Asian classes as a substitute teacher, I was impressed by the students’ interest and knowledge about Hollywood movies and pop-music, and was requested by students to play DVD or YouTube of musicals or films during the free lessons (Field note: 24<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2010; 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2010). In one of the substituted lessons, the Southern Asian students were very determined to ask for my permission to use the classroom computer, in order to continue watching the American dance movie “Step up 2: the street” which was shown by another teacher in the previous free lessons. When I agreed, the students were enthusiastic about setting up the projector and were keen to start the movie as soon as possible. (Field notes 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2010)

The film is about a group of teenagers trying to pursue their dream of becoming street dancers and proving their value through dances, thus many of the scenes were the presentation of street dances or dance battles which hip-hop and tap dance were performed by the actors and actresses. The class was never that disciplined and quiet, as everyone was so attentive on the movie and they were amazed by the dances on the screen. After the end of the class, I got the chance to talk to the three Nepalese girls who were also members of the hip-hop dance club. They were extremely excited and expressed their love of the movie, and told me I should also watch “Step up” and a few other dance movies which inspired them (Field notes 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2010). Obviously, the Southern Asian students actually were not concerned about how adults evaluate hip-hop dance, or whether it could help them to gain the credentials or “institutionalized cultural capital” that could be transformed into other capitals.

On the contrary, the knowledge about popular culture and street dances seems to be a form of cultural capital that is valued among the Southern Asian groups because it could serve as the common language and reinforce the cohesion within the group. Furthermore, the knowledge about the western popular culture and the further enhancement of their mastery of the English language could be understood as cultural capital albeit it was not institutionalized.

From the above analysis, it is shown that the cultural and historical background of the different types of dance may lead to the different levels of systematization and institutionalization of the dances. I would like to argue that the institutionalization of the dances (or other art forms) is particularly significant in the Hong Kong context. As discussed in Ch. 6, the competition for obtaining different certificates or proofs of participation in arts, sports or voluntary activities has become fiercer after the launch of the “Student Learning Profile” for the “Other Learning Experiences” programme in the new curriculum. The “institutionalized cultural capital” of examinations certificates is the most wanted reward, especially for middle-class parents who have carefully planned the “trajectory” of the learning of musical instruments or particular sports for their children a long time ago.

Therefore, the institutionalization of dances could serve two major purposes: firstly, it could consolidate the “cultural” or “artistic” elements of the dance through the standardization and systematization of dance movements (clear definition of content of the dance through the design of the syllabus) and the institutionalized evaluation system of the dance (standardization of the evaluation criteria), which guaranteed that the learning of these institutionalized dances could obtain the “institutionalized cultural capital”; secondly, through this process of standardization and institutionalization, the wider social recognition of the dance would reinforce its social and cultural value, which further enhances its status as one of the “standards of distinction” – the acquisition of “cultural capital” in its embodied state.

The evaluation of the “culturally-rich” “Oriental dance” or “Chinese dance” and the “subcultural” (non-formal “culture”/“art”) or “vernacular/street dance” of hip-hop or



pop-jazz dance is distinctively differentiated in Hong Kong society. A teacher at St. Caroline's has made clear such differentiation, as shown in the following extract:

*Not many schools have such a dance culture like us. Maybe some new schools would have it, but it is **long-established** and has become a **tradition in our school**. Besides, it's quite special that the founding teacher of the dance lessons and dance society insisted on teaching **traditional Chinese dance** instead of those **popular modern dances** such as hip-hop, jazz etc. I don't know the reason for her persistence, but the good thing about this is that the teaching of dance is a **cultivation of the dance culture of China**; and also, it could teach students to behave demurely.....of course students nowadays are rougher than before, but at least the dance lessons could teach them the proper body movements and behaviour, and to learn to appreciate **the art, the beauty** of it.*

(Ms. Yeung, individual interview, St. Caroline's College; bold are my emphasis)

The way Ms. Yeung compared "those popular modern dances" with the "traditional Chinese dance" represents the view of a majority group of middle-class parents in society about the nature or value of different types of dances learnt by children or teenagers nowadays in Hong Kong. While traditional Chinese dance (and also the classical ballet, which is the most popular dance among Hong Kong middle-class children) is presented as a "tradition" which has a long history (in school and in the world), the emphasis on its historical and cultural embodiment is again reinforcing its nature as a "culture" ("dance culture of China") and form of "art" (the art, the beauty of it). In contrast, the emphasis on "popular" or "modern" hip-hop and jazz dances is, contrary to common usage of both terms, subtly connoted with the negative implication of vulgarity and "non-classy" when it is read in the above text, serving as the opposition to the "artistic", "cultural" Chinese dance.

### *Modes of expression*

Apart from the content of the dances, the modes of expression of the dances would be another factor that influences their connotation with the definition of the "highbrow" or "lowbrow" cultural capital. The ways of expression mainly focus on how the body, as the medium of expression, is used in the dances.



As I have illustrated above, Chinese dance has been long-established and institutionalized, so different episodes of dances are usually standardized and tend to be performed in particular ways. In contrast, the emphasis of the eclectic nature of hip-hop and modern jazz dances means they are less restrained by standardized forms of expression. It appeared to me that the choice of these dances by the two schools were not random and somehow revealed the different expectations about students' bodies and femininities. For St. Caroline's, the teaching of Chinese dance/"Oriental dance" seems to be aimed at teaching control of the female body (as shown in the later discussion about teaching of "etiquette"); yet for Peterson's School, the self-deterministic, free-style nature of the hip-hop and modern jazz dance was apparently more important and evidently encouraged: there seems to be more space for the expression of self through the body, or at least not viewing girls' bodies as a threat on the occasions of dance practices or performances. I believe that the styles or the culture that these dances represented revealed the different approaches towards the control of girls' bodies taken by the two schools.

In addition, in St. Caroline's College, the modes of expression of Chinese traditional dances were closely linked with the school's idea about proper "femininity". In several observations of the compulsory dance lessons, I found that the teacher Ms. Lee often emphasized "the elegance of spinning" and the "natural, sweet smile on the faces" when she observed her students' practising or performing. Besides, in one of the field notes, when Ms. Lee witnessed the way her students were sitting on the floor, she immediately criticised them as "sitting improperly", that their legs should not be "bent like puppets" after an entire year of dance training. She rectified the way they sat and demonstrated the "proper" way of laying both legs flatly onto the floor. When some of the students could not perform the exact "proper" posture, she said, 'If after a year of training you are still unable to sit like this, it's telling you that your body is not soft enough and you definitely need more practice.'

The stress on the "softness" of students seems to be a recurrent theme in the dance lessons. Undoubtedly, "softness" is one of the major aims of the implementation of compulsory dance lessons for the junior forms, and the basic requirement of practising Chinese dance. The term "soft" is often reiterated in opposition to "stiff"

bodies, which seem to assume that the flexibility and agility of students' bodies is the standard of "proper" feminine bodies.

Besides, "softness" as a standard is also applied to the evaluation of students' behaviour. As seen in the above extract, Ms. Yeung claimed that one of the major purposes of the dance lessons is to "teach students to behave demurely", "the proper body movement and behaviour" in response to the "rougher" behaviour of students nowadays. The contrast between "softness" and "roughness" is evident. According to Ms. Yeung, the purpose of the dance lessons is also to immerse the standard of "softness" into students' daily lives and every move, which is an alternative way to teach students etiquette rather than rule by rule.

*Researcher: So...just now you mentioned about the proper body movements or behaving demurely....is this anything to do with the fact that this is a girls' school?*

*Ms. Yeung: Oh yes, indeed..... (.....) I know that some other schools have designed lessons particularly for **teaching etiquette** (R: another popular girls' school?) Yes. But for our school, we decided to teach our students dancing. We do not formally teach them etiquette, but through dancing, it teaches them **how to stand, how they should move or act**, and that in fact influences us -- **we know as a girl how we should behave.***

(Ms. Yeung, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

Through the two extracts above, what Ms. Yeung emphasized was the "body posture, body movement and behaviour" that the school aimed to influence by teaching dance. Her reference to the "etiquette" lessons in another popular girls' school to illustrate the importance of the teaching of dance also reflected that the practice of dance is not only about St. Caroline's girls' feminine bodies or behaviour, but also an embodiment of the subtlety, euphemism and demureness entrenched in the "oriental dance" culture.

By recalling Sr. Ellen's comments in the earlier extract about the development of "softness" or the "soft" (gentle) side to ensure the "feminine touch" for balancing the "bold" or "roughness" of science/sporty students, we could see that "softness" represents the notion of appropriate femininity in St. Caroline's: that students not

only should acquire a “soft” and feminine body, learn to perform and speak demurely and elegantly, they should also develop that “softness” in their mind – a gentle, subtle, “soft” temperament and mild, calm attitudes. Coincidentally, this notion of appropriate femininity seems to coincide with Allan’s description of the upper-middle class “lady” image (Allan, 2009), or resemble the conduct or appearance of middle-class women to prove their “respectability” described by Skeggs (1997). Hence, the teaching of “Oriental dance” is in fact the training of middle-class femininity for St. Caroline’s students, which “allowed them to gain some power from their positioning”, or at least understand such a standard of middle-class femininity to “distinguish themselves from the ‘vulgar’ working-class masses” (Allan, 2009: 146).

By contrast, the body language required by hip-hop dance seems to be at the totally opposite end of “softness”. Not only because of the strong rhythm and emphasis on bass in the hip-hop music which requires the dance to have powerful, rapid and rhythmic body movements, the more overt and intense emotions expressed in the music also lead to more aggressive or fierce expressions of body language. Moreover, in practical terms, some of the basic and iconic moves of hip-hop dance like “downrock” or “freezes” make high demands on the dancers’ strength and muscles in order to perform these powerful acrobatic moves, like turning the body upside-down, spinning on the floor or freezing the body in the air supported by just one hand. Therefore, if Chinese or “Oriental dance” emphasizes the “softness” of the body and is connoted with middle-class femininity, hip-hop dance may be viewed as “tough” and “hard” and dominated by masculine movements.

Although in many street performances, the majority of dancers are male teenagers, all the participants in the hip-hop class in Peterson’s School are girls. The emphasis on “power” and “strength” may seem to inhabit the construction of traditional femininities of girls. Yet, through the observation of the girls’ dance performance in the school’s “Variety Show” (Fieldnote: 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2010) , I found that on the contrary, the Nepalese girls were constructing a hyper-feminine image, by wearing skinny pants, shorts, vests or shorter tops that revealed their navels which highlighted their feminine bodies. In fact, the function of this clothing was not only to show the

sexiness and attractiveness of their feminine bodies, but also to consolidate their image as energetic, passionate and fully-involved dancers, because audiences could easily see their sweat and fierce body movements. It appeared to me that such a strong, independent but sexy image of the girls demonstrated through the dance may, on the one hand, show a “performance” iterated by Butler (1990), where the girls tried to “perform” their gender identities through the expression of hyper-feminine bodies and movements; on the other hand, it was also a way to empower these girls who were usually the marginalized group on the campus as well as in society.

One of the very impressive moments of these girls’ performance in the “Variety show” was that at the end of the dance, while the music faded and they were freezing their final pose, their heavy breathing and the dripping of sweat on their faces were clearly noticeable; which at last gained a big round of applause from all the audiences, even from some of the local students who usually looked down on their non-Chinese schoolmates. I could even hear comments like, “Wow that’s so cool!” or, “They are really hot!” when the audiences cheered and applauded. Thus, for these Nepalese girls of Peterson’s School, the construction of the sexy, powerful, “cool” but hyper-feminine image did help them gain a certain respect and social recognition. Yet, despite the positive feedback gained from other students and some of general public after the girls’ performance, hip-hop dance as a “rough” or “aggressive” street dance is still an image deeply embedded in most peoples’ minds.

The class teacher of the Southern Asian class of Secondary 3, Mr. Kwok, also agreed that while Nepalese students may gain certain recognition from the communities or their fellow schoolmates, their academic results were incomparable with the more quiet and industrious Pakistani students, especially for girls.

*Nepalese are usually more actively participating in different activities, for example the band, the hip-hop dance group etc. Very often I would bring them to join the competitions or performance outside schools, and through these opportunities they are able to show their talents and be appreciated and recognized by others.....on the other hand, from the academic aspects, Pakistani students seem to be having the advantages. They usually wake up early in the morning for their prayers, and they usually master English very well.... (to describe them as) presentable might not be*



*the right words, but they definitely have much more chance than the Nepalese due to their English acquisition level; while Nepalese would have more chances and talents on the arts aspect than the Pakistani students. However, the Pakistani girls are those very helpful and willing to do services work, e.g. in the library, being the prefects etc., or even if you ask them to give me a hand they would agree to help immediately.*

(Mr. Kwok, individual interview, Peterson's secondary school)

Mr. Kwok's conversation also revealed the different characteristics of the two major groups of Southern Asian students, which echoed some of the teachers' impressions about these students of different ethnicity (e.g. Mr. Tim, Ms. Lee and Ms. Ting). The Nepalese students were usually more active in participating in performing arts related to popular cultures, such as the band and dance group in school; on the contrary, the Pakistani students were generally more studious and paid more attention in their academic studies, and the Pakistani girls were the most obedient and helpful group compared with other Southern Asian students.

While teachers' comments to the Southern Asian students were generally positive, the comments of the other local Hong Kong students provides useful insights. For example, in Sherry's interview, she mentioned that she felt much more comfortable to get along with Pakistani students and to work with them for their discipline prefect duties. She complained that while Southern Asian boys were having different disciplinary problems, very often it was a group of senior Nepalese girls who acted impolitely to the female prefects, and constantly challenged their prefect authorities. April also commented that the Nepalese girls and many of the Southern Asian boys seemed to be very rough and impolite as they often yell and shout not only in campus but in the public areas in the community. The description of "rough", "aggressive" and "tough" seems not only referring to hip-hop dance, but also to the impression of many of the Nepalese girls and most of the Southern Asian boys given to the local students. Indeed, from my observation on the campus, the activities and programme for the Southern Asian boys and the "Life-wide learning" day outside school (Fieldnote 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2010), it seems that the Southern Asian students had the habit of speaking loudly and displaying exaggerated body expressions wherever and whenever they were. Although without knowing the exact reasons, it seems evident



that it is an ethnic culture that is shared among Nepalese students and the Pakistani boys. For the Pakistani girls, maybe due to the restrictions of the Islamic religion to women, they were generally more obedient and quiet compared to the Nepalese girls.

To conclude, the above comparison has shown that because of the historical and cultural backgrounds which influence the level of systematization, institutionalization and the content and ways of expression of the dances, Chinese dance and hip-hop dance are being placed and evaluated very differently in Hong Kong. Obviously, the institutionalized Chinese dance which could assure the acquisition of cultural capital and middle-class femininity would be recognized as the “highbrow” culture; on the contrary, the essentially “non-institutionalized” hip-hop dance which evolved from the street would be automatically linked with “lowbrow” or “sub-culture”, albeit its growing popularity among the younger generations.

### **7.3 Culture of “To Serve”: A Quality of the New “Global Citizens” or merely an Exploitation of Women’s Caring Labour?**

Another social practice that I consider is classed and gendered, apart from the skills and knowledge of “knowing how to behave”, (i.e. the “sense” or techniques of performing different aspects of femininity on different occasions), is the encouragement of social service and the emphasis on “serving the others” or “the serving heart” in St. Caroline’s College.

The culture and tradition of the “serving heart”, “service to others” or “to serve” was repeatedly emphasized by teachers, students and past students in interviews and in personal conversation. The reason behind such a culture was perfectly illustrated by Past Student Amanda’s description of such a dominant theme in the school.

*“There are several things that are emphasized all the time in St. Caroline’s: our integrity, our conduct and morality, and all that is related to the **emphasis on “service”, to serve the others.** (.....)For most of the time the yearly school theme would be related to the idea about “serving” or “service”, so such a theme (of “serving”) has been **penetrated into the whole school.**”*

*Besides, because our school is a Catholic school, the emphasis on “love” and “care” is always a dominant theme, which maybe connects the idea (of service) in a **religious way**; together with the **historical background** of aiming to provide services when the sisters established our school, so the participation in “services” seems to be fitting the image of our school.”*

(Amanda, individual interview, St. Caroline’s College)

From Amanda and Irene’s response, we could find that the theme of “serving the others” is not only a culture which was reinforced by the school’s intentional policy, including the compulsory 5 hours social services regulation, or the yearly school themes that repeatedly emphasized the idea of “serving” or “service”; the culture or school policies seem to be the extension of a tradition of the school because of its religious background as well as the historical background which links such a theme of “to serve” with the school reputation, label or even school identity.

“To serve” seems to be fundamental to the school identity, an idea deeply embedded and openly announced. Sr. Ellen has mentioned in her interview that ‘For us, if there’s no care, no concern, she does not seem to be a graduate of St. Caroline’s.’ Coincidentally, in another interview with Amanda, she further elaborated the significance of the tradition and culture of “to serve” that had already become an important part of the students’ and alumni’s school identities and sense of belonging to the school.

*Amanda: You know, my mum once has said that, from her observation, she felt that no matter the past St. Carolinas (alumni) or the current St. Caroline’s students, both **apparently have “the serving heart”**, that is, they all seem to be **motivated to participate in service, having the “heart” for it**. Besides, when you graduated and started to search for jobs, **you would consider whether it could serve society, or serve the community** .....*

*Researcher: You mean you want to work in something that is good for society?*

*Amanda: Yes! And **could help the others**....this is what my mum found in her observation....*

(Amanda, individual interview, St. Caroline’s College)

Although Amanda was just reiterating her mother's observation, she seems to be sharing the opinion of her mother, or even unconsciously, using "you" as the subject to represent herself and all other alumni that would consider whether the nature of their job (or potential career) could "serve society or serve the community".

Such school identity of "the heart to serve" is also found in the plot or the main theme of the school drama that was performed in the celebration of the School Founding Anniversary, and could be proved by the reflections of alumni and students after watching the performance, repeatedly commenting that the drama had touched their heart and had reminded them of "the spirit of serving the others" and "the role of being St. Caroline's in society" etc. in the thank you cards or appreciation letters/emails sent to the school, which were posted on one of the notice boards on the campus. The tradition of St. Caroline's students engaging in social service was later further developed more systematically in order to meet the requirement of the new senior secondary school curriculum, that the compulsory "Other Learning Experiences" programme requires a compulsory 15 hours of social and community services for senior secondary school students in the new curriculum.

### **The "classed" serving heart: a middle-class virtue**

Apart from its Catholic background and historical tradition, a practical concern is about students "lack of exposure to the 'outside world'" because most of them come from upper middle-class or middle-class family backgrounds. A personal communication with Mr Au and Mr Tam, both young male teachers in St. Caroline's, also explained the school's eagerness to include at least one service trip among the few choices of activities in the "Extended Learning Week" organized by the school.

The "middle-class" characteristics could be quite easily figured out when we went through the lists of the destinations and nature of the types of service in the past two years. Except for the same service of teaching English in a poor rural village in China for several years, the other destinations were usually located in one of the South-east Asian cities, and the types of service were usually sedentary activities such as teaching, helping to build a library, visiting an orphanage or visiting homes of poor families in rural areas by joining the international charitable organizations or

the church; the “objects” of services were often children and women of developing countries or in rural areas. Very often, the service trips would also include events for “cultural exchange” or “cultural exposure” of the places; the travelling and understanding of the native culture or tradition was also an important part of the standard 5 days “service” trip.

It seems that the location, the types and time of services, and the “objects” of service were all carefully calculated by the school so as to provide St. Caroline’s girls with the opportunities to have a glimpse of “reality” at a safe distance, in a safe way. In one of the teachers’ interviews, Mr Au, a young male teacher who taught the Integrated Humanities (IH) subject in the lower form and History and Liberal Studies in the senior form, questioned whether the “exposure” of service trips could really challenge students’ existing values, which he named as “the middle-class imagination”, about the established understanding of social reality, or the “hegemonic” “middle-class” way of thinking or responding towards social issues.

*Mr. Au: (.....) I think the role of the school is to give more opportunities for students’ exposure.....I mean this is one of the missions of the school.*

*Researcher: What do you mean by exposure? And what are the purposes of these “exposures” do you think?*

*Mr. Au: If you ask me for the “real” purposes, I will say, refer back to what I have said before, they are to **further reinforce the middle-class imagination**. For example, if you ask me....in my opinion, when they (students) join the cultural trip or the service trip, among the ten of them, I **don’t believe most of them would be influenced by what they experience on the trip and change their values**. For instance, maybe they would think that providing educational opportunities (to the poor children) could solve the problem, as simple as that. But of course, during lessons I would try to challenge their thinking and ask them to think, why do the poor children need to farm? Is it possible that food is more important than books in their situation? Would it be better if you teach them the way to farm or increase their harvest instead of asking them to go to school? But they won’t think in that way. They will only think that, oh, you got a problem? Go to school. That’s it. (.....) They merely **remain on the dominant level of imagination or thinking**. It’s kind of Hong Kong, kind of middle-class. (.....) **Such middle-class imagination is so dominant, it’s a hegemony that is so strong that you could not overthrow**. (.....)*



(Mr. Au, individual interview, St. Caroline's College; bold are my emphasis)

Mr Au had repeatedly described the middle-class or upper middle-class background of his students, as well as the middle-class ideology embedded in the whole school, throughout the interview. As he had explained, the “middle-class imagination” was a kind of hegemonic, dominant way of thinking which existed also in the society of Hong Kong – that in the process of serving or engaging in service, no critical thinking or reflection is involved, but a kind of “imagination” or simplification of the reason for social issues is applied, and they could be “solved” or “saved” by using the solution that complied to the value of the middle-class or upper middle-class, such as the emphasis on “education” or “study hard”, being “self-reliant” and “perseverance” to tackle all the difficulties encountered by oneself.

Due to Mr Au's description of this logic of thinking as “It's kind of Hong Kong, kind of middle-class”, I would like to argue that such “middle-class imagination” in fact refers to the repeated “Hong Kong Spirit” that many Hong Kong middle class wholeheartedly believe in: a public or “official discourse” produced and reproduced by the post-colonial government and the society. As Lee (2005) elucidated, the “Hong Kong Spirit” was framed to represent **“perseverance and self-reliance”** as described by the former Financial Secretary, Anthony Leung, in his speech presenting the financial budget address in the year 2002 (Hong Kong Government, 2002), which “serves to mythologise Hong Kong's success story as a one of constant adaptation to market forces, and of an emphasis on work, discipline and self-reliance. The restructuring of the economy involves a painful process of adjustment, involving problems of unemployment and the downgrading of work conditions for certain sectors of the population.” (Lee, 2005:304). Thus, to Mr Au, the nature of offering help/engaging in social service is somehow, another reinforcement and reassurance of this logic of the middle class, that how people should live, why things “go wrong”, and the only way to solve it, is to “become” the middle class by once again acknowledging the importance of “perseverance”, “self-reliance”, and “education” to alter their awful fate, just as the middle class Hong Kongers transformed themselves



into a “highly flexible workforce” by “upgrading their knowledge and skills” to meet the needs of the “new knowledge-based economy” (Lee, 2005: 304).

The opinion of Mr Au might be a bit harsh on St. Caroline’s girls, but his pessimistic views about the persistence of the middle-class imagination/hegemony could be understood. There were girls admitted that they felt indifferent and “obliged” to fulfil the compulsory five hours’ of social service as a “duty” required by the school (group interviews with S.4 girls); yet undeniably, the encouragement of “to serve the others” is not only a motto, but a value that has deeply influenced some of the girls in St. Caroline’s, which has led them to whole-heartedly devote themselves to different kinds of social service, even for a lifetime. The “heart to serve” itself was promoted as a “virtue” which already comprised the values of “care”, “concern” or “love”; although such “virtue” is a “middle-class” virtue, and the act of “helping/serving” was often presented/ executed in a “middle-class” way, which would not challenge the existing institutional injustice.

What I mean by “serving” in the “middle-class” way is echoed by Howard’s (2008) observation in his research of affluent students in elite schools, where he discussed the value of “giving back” or “service” to these privileged students. Similarly to St. Caroline’s, the four elite schools that Howard (2008)’s study focused on also emphasized community service, hoping to develop their students’ civic responsibility and for them to become committed and engaged citizens. Yet, Howard pointed out that, despite many other studies that have suggested students’ participation in service did have a good influence on their civic engagement in the future, many of the service projects or activities in the elite schools ‘follow a “charity model” instead of a model that promotes social transformation, which simply emphasizes students “giving back”, that is, to “help others who are less fortunate – and to be ‘do-gooders”’ (Howard, 2008:167). To engage in social service following such a charitable model is just reinforcing the ‘privileged ways of knowing and doing by embracing certain unpleasant assumptions about people, especially those different from the service providers. One basic assumption is that any group of people would function better if only they would act like the service provider.’ (Ibid: 167).

The “middle-class” way or “charity model” of social service can be illustrated by an example of how the St. Caroline’s girls organized a fund-raising event by themselves. The following example shows the attempt to develop students into “the ethical and caring future leader of a global citizenry” (Harris, 2006:88). For the middle classes, the responsibility of these girls is not only limited to self and the broader local community, but has to extend to the global communities (Allan and Charles, 2013:11), shown especially in the way the event was organized, and the aim of serving “internationally” and “Reach the unreachable” emphasized in the event.

It was another day of my fieldwork in St. Caroline’s when I found them wandering around the campus and invited them for a short chat. I later found that they were past students of St. Caroline’s who were in their first year at university. As soon as I asked them for their impressions of the dominant values in the school, they immediately touched on the significance of social service, and that such a “serving heart” was not limited to being the participants in services but could also initiate or launch a social service event. I was intrigued by the pride in their voices when I first met Irene and Amanda and they mentioned Irene’s “glorious past”, when she was the initiator and chairlady of a fund-raising event organized in the school four years ago with the help of other Form 4 classmates.

*“That year the school theme was something about “services” and “global citizens”, things like that.....then Irene had a random conversation with Sister Rosemary one day, which gave her many new ideas. She said, ‘doing services is not only about selling of flags or visiting of elderly centres, you can **do something more international, as you can “Reach the unreachable”, to work on things that you have never seen, things that you think are far away from you.....believe that you can still help!’ So that’s why Irene initiated the event, and invited other classmates to join. All of us thought that ‘it seems fun’, then we started to plan and execute. ”***

(Amanda, individual interview, St. Caroline’s College)

I later found out that the school theme that year was ‘Connecting to the world, Caring globally’ (pseudo, but paraphrased and meaning kept), which resembled all the other school themes in the past few years. School themes usually emphasized the importance of “knowledge”, global issues such as sustainability and global poverty,

students' responsibility to be motivated and active learners or "knowledge explorers", and also their role in the global village as global citizens. The event turned out to be an 18 hour fasting event that was held on the campus, aiming to raise funds for a village in East Timor. The event would involve students fasting together and staying overnight in the school hall, while during the fasting the organizing committee had invited celebrities such as famous alumni, pop-stars and pop-singers to give short speeches, perform or sing, to support the participants in the event. It was clear that the event was fully supported by the school because an official parents' notice plus a reply slip to invite students to participate had been issued in the name of the school. Interestingly, while Irene and Amanda kept filling me in with details about the content of the fund-raising event and how meaningful it was to influence so many other students in the school in a "fun" way, it suddenly seemed to me that what was significant was not what the event would do for the people in East Timor, but what "they" – Irene, Amanda, and the other girls in the organizing committee – had done in the process. Thus, the concept of serving/helping or "charity" is particularly focused on the process of "doing" and "giving" for the charity (Allan and Charles, 2013:13).

The event was quite a success, and obviously was a proud and memorable incident, especially for Irene and Amanda. Amanda even commented that the experience was 'just like becoming the committee members of a university club/society within a short period of time.' Surely, under the notion of "girl power" as illustrated by Harris (2006), these girls would be recognized as "the ideal normalised middle-class feminine subject is one who is confident and highly self-determined, as well as capable of helping others." (Allan and Charles, 2013:4).

However, when I asked why "East Timor" was chosen to be the place for fund-raising, Irene simply replied that it was because she had just visited the village with a religious group led by Sister Rosemary, and thought that supporting the services in East Timor was "international" and could bring the message about "Reaching the unreachable" to other students. She also murmured that, although she got support from the school and the event was recognized by many of their schoolmates, there were still some "unfair" criticisms about the expensive price of donations, as the

major aim of the event was to raise funds, and she wanted to ensure that students did contribute. Though she claimed that she did not mind about this “minor flaw”, the mentioning of this “flaw” showed that, in fact, she cared.

The fact is that the high price of joining the event may have excluded some of the students who would have liked to participate, because students would have to make a minimum donation of HKD £500 (about GBP£40) in order to participate in the event. This might not be an expensive price for students from the middle-class families, but would definitely turn some of the working-class students away. Although the fundamental nature of the event was “fund-raising” or “social services”, judging from the content, the event had provided an opportunity to allow students to stay overnight with their friends and enjoy entertainment with a legitimate reason, to gain the authorization of the school and their parents. Such a minimum donation arrangement must have disappointed many students that could not afford the cost.

What I want to argue here, is that the rhetoric of “caring globally”, the “international” nature of social services, as well as “Reach the unreachable” in order to practise the spirit of “to serve the others”, may sound powerful and grand, but paradoxically it was this jargon that has blinded the girls from realizing the needs of their classmates, their neighbours, the “reachable” that may be just next to them. For example, in the formal interview with Amanda, I asked her directly about what she thought about the school mission of “serving the others”, while paradoxically, many St. Caroline’s students themselves may also need to be served. She murmured that that indeed might be a problem, as many of the activities in the “Other Learning Experiences” programme are compulsory for students to attend which really require an extra amount of money and would place extra financial burdens on students from working class families. It seems that she did realize the difficult situation of these schoolmates, but just did not know how exactly she could help, and so she simply ignored it. Here, we can see that although these girls did engage fully in organizing the fund-raising event, due to the “charity model” or “middle-class” way of “serving/caring”, that they may have built up a sense of connection with the “unfortunate” “others”, they did not develop the sensibility or critical mind to



question or challenge the structural injustice behind those “social problems”. Their act of “serving” seems to be just reinforcing the hierarchical relationship in society, in which they have a privileged status, by positioning the “others” as the “receivers” of their services. As Reay et. al commented, ‘The wider social context of structural injustices is bound to throw up impossible moral dilemmas and lead to all sorts of morally inconsistent behaviour.’ (Reay et. al, 2007:1054)

“Caring globally”, “internationally” or “Reach the unreachable” could also be understood as framing social services into a “grand” project with “great ambition”, or even a “career”, that, was awaiting the St. Caroline’s girls to achieve. This reminded me of Allan’s (2009) quote from Langland when she discussed the history of the concept “lady”, that in Victorian culture, a feminine ideal of “how women should attempt to pursue a ‘social career’, and also how they should become involved in charity as a way of ‘saving’ working-class women and ‘refining’ them” is set (Langland 1995:56, quote by Allan, 2009:146). As Skeggs suggested, ‘The ‘caring self’ is both a performance and a technique used to generate valuations of responsibility and respectability.’ (Skeggs, 1997:69). Such a concept of “social career” may be an unspoken mission of the school, that by engaging in social services “to serve the others”, the feminine conduct of being “caring” is fulfilled, and that would help St. Caroline’s girls to develop their “caring self” subject position, or to prove their “respectability”.

Lastly, from a utilitarian perspective, such experience of organizing a fund-raising event for a rural village in East Timor would definitely add the icing on the cake to the student portfolios which record all the non-academic activities for references for university entrance and job hunting. In fact, Amanda’s comment of ‘just like becoming the committee members of a university club/society within a short period of time.’ about the event also seems to point out that the organization of such a fund-raising event may be simply a replication of the experience of joining a university club/society, which has no difference in nature. It would be a memorable experience for oneself, but how the raised funds were used in East Timor, or how the people of the village in East Timor would be benefited from the event, was left unknown, or simply did not matter.



Thus, on the one hand, St. Caroline's girls genuinely believed and were committed in doing public "good-deeds" (Harris, 2006:75) by "serving" or "helping" the others; but at the same time, the current neoliberal discourse which emphasized "accountability", including the practice of the documentation and presentation of the achievement, the personality and experience of individuals through the "student portfolio", may influence the way and the mentality of how these girls think about their engagement in social service. As Allan and Charles (2013) comment, 'these practices were mediated by neoliberal discourses relating to the quest for a 'portfolio self' – the idea that every activity had to have a purpose, that even their free time had to be taken up by worthwhile activities, and that to show themselves as successful feminine subjects they had to demonstrate their ability to 'give', to 'care' and to take responsibility for vulnerable others (whether animals, humans or the environment.' (Allan and Charles, 2013:13-14)

### **The "gendered" caring labour: mothering to be "proper citizens"?**

I have shown that "the heart to serve" emphasized in St. Caroline's seems to be a "virtue" and practice to secure the girls' middle-class self; but in fact, it seems even more prevalent that "serving" is a gendered "nature", or an "instinct" or a "responsibility" of women, as shown in the interview with the School Principal and teacher Ms. Yeung.

*Sr. Ellen: Besides, to educate them how to care about others, is also a development of the "maternal instinct". That is, girls are much easier to teach than the boys to care about others. Although the boys would care about the others, girls seem to adopt that better, and often in a more attentive or mindful way. Of course, we would teach them how to care about others attentively. (.....)*

*Mothers are like this; mothers appreciate and value everyone, and think every single child of hers is good. When suddenly there is a little one that is too "weak", you will give her more attention. It's not because you are biased, but because you see her needs. I hope my students could see the needs of others.*

*Researches: last time you mentioned caring and concern....*

*Sr. Ellen: Right! That's correct. This is what we are concerned about. For us, if there's no care, no concern, she does not seem to be a graduate of St. Caroline's.*

(Sr. Ellen, individual interview, St. Caroline's College)

This extract, in fact, following the same conversation with Sister Ellen's earlier interview extract near the beginning of the chapter. While in that extract, the term "maternal instinct" was elaborated as the "softness" or "feminine" behavior, character and outlook of girls; in this one, the development of "maternal instinct" is closely linked with the act of "caring for others", and obviously related to the gender role or gender stereotype ("girls are much easier to teach than the boys to care about others"; "girls seem to be more attentive and mindful"), specifying that the "caring" activity or the "labour of care", if not their responsibility, is the inborn "nature" for girls or women to actualize. It is shown by how Sr. Ellen's conclusion after the explanation about "how to care for others attentively" with an example, that "serve", "care" and "concern" are the "natural" things that "Mothers" do ("Mothers are like this; mothers will appreciate and value everyone"). Hence, "to serve" and "to care" is not only about morality or a "virtue"; it is also portrayed as the "maternal instinct" that is inborn in girls, but needing to be released/nurtured with the help of the school's education. "Care" and "Serve" are the mothering work.

This is, of course, not a new perspective. Mothering as the "gendered care obligations" (Korteweg, 2006:314) has been central in discussion among scholars especially feminists (de Beauvoir, 1997; Chodorow, 1978; Everingham, 1994; Lister, 1997; McLaughlin, 2003; O' Reilly, 2004; Pateman, 1989; Rich, 1986; Ruddick, 1990; Skeggs, 1997). Feminist Psychologist Nancy Chodorow (1978) has illustrated that from Engels, and Marxist feminists, Levi-Strauss and feminist anthropologists, and Parsons and family theorists, women were often being placed in the centre of discussion within the sphere of "mothering", reproduction and kinship relations. (Chodorow, 1978:11-12). Yet, most of the discussion did not question such reproduction of mothering; and for non-feminist theorists, the sexual division of labour in the structure of parenting is simply "biologically self-explanatory", that such an assumption "holds that what seems universal is instinctual, and what is instinctual, or has instinctual components, is inevitable and unchanging". (Ibid: 14). In de Beauvoir's classics(1997), she also illustrated how biology, psychoanalysis, and historical materialism tried to establish the "essentialist" differences between

men and women and simply took for granted the inferiority of women; and together with the myth of the “eternal feminine “, explain the forever unfulfilling roles of wives and women. Such an essentialist view that links women’s reproduction and child-rearing ability to their mothering responsibility and “maternal instinct” for care, and is not limited to their children, but also to their husbands, family and people around her, seems to be indisputable.

On top of the essentialist assumption about motherhood and care, in the interview with Ms Yeung, it could be argued that the image of the caring mother in St. Caroline’s was also influenced by its Catholic background, which emphasized the model of the Saint representing the school and the Virgin Mary.

Another insight is yielded from Ms Yeung delineation that becoming “good mothers” was “the spiritual side” that St. Caroline’s girls should achieve in order to be recognized as “all-round”. Although Ms Yeung’s presentation seems to be refuting the essentialist assumption of motherhood and suggests that “being a good mother” is something needing to be developed, educated and nurtured (the social construction of motherhood?), what is most compelling in this extract is that Ms Yeung seems to suggest the essentiality of the role of mothers, or simply assumes the future mother roles of St. Caroline’s girls.

*R: So, after the education reform, and the current theme and emphasis of students being “all-round”, **what do you think “all-round” is about?** Is there any difference between the notions of “all-round” in school and that in the reform?*

*Y: I think ...besides their academic performance, I think the extra-curricular activities are also included. But our school would also want to develop the **spiritual side of students**, for example, their values and their interpersonal skills (... ..) And in our school, we **follow the teaching of our Saint and Virgin Mary**, that the implementation of education is to **nurture girls into good mothers in the future**. This is **one of the missions of education of our founding body and our school**. Therefore, despite talking about values and interpersonal skills, another important thing for students to acquire is **to know their roles in their families**, i.e. what is their position in it, how to maintain and connect the whole family etc. **These are the things that should be included in the notion of “all-round”**.*

R: I did not know about the school mission of “**being a good mother**”. Can you tell me what it is about?

Y: Em.....well, I am not very sure, but this is one of the directions that is mentioned by Sister, that is, to nurture students to **become good mothers in the future**.

R: So what is it to be a good mother, do you think?

Y: (Smile) I think, well, she has to be a good wife in the first place, to know how to care about her spouse and her children, and to be receptive and tolerant etc. ....

(Ms. Yeung, individual interview, St. Caroline’s College; bold are my emphasis)

From the preceding extract, it could be found that in order to become “good mothers” in the future, students should follow the model of the Saint of the school and the Virgin Mary. Although unspoken, the model of the Saint of the school and that of the Virgin Mary that the students should follow would probably be their spirit of sacrifice, love and care. Yet, I would suspect that the obedient, humble and receptive image of the Saint and Virgin Mary, which could be viewed as the embodiment or even the “icon” of “good women” with traditional femininity, was also suggested in Ms Yeung’ s opinion. In her later elaboration about her definition about a good mother, she thought that what is important is “how to maintain and connect the whole family”; “has to be a good wife” “know how to care about her spouse and her children, to be receptive and tolerant etc.” Therefore, while talking about the nurturing of “future mothers” side by side with the education of other values and interpersonal skills, it seems that Ms Yeung, in fact, has in mind the kind of values, skills or more importantly, the attributes or “femininity” (“receptive and tolerant”) that “good mothers” should embody, and thus there is a need to educate her students to follow. The link between care, motherhood and femininity should not be overlooked. Skeggs (1997) has put it:

*“The subject position of caring involves far more than having the “right skills”: it involves being a particular sort of person. And the attributes of the “right” sort of person are closely interlinked with wider cultural discourses of femininity and motherhood. The link made between femininity, caring and motherhood contributed towards naturalizing and normalizing the social relations of caring.” (Skeggs, 1997:67)*



Arnot (2002) has provided an additional “class” dimension in understanding the historical “girls education”, which prepared middle-class and working-class girls for their “domestic futures” in relation to the different notions of good mother and wife. Coincidentally, Arnot has delineated a very similar image of the ‘perfect wife and mother’ as suggested by Ms Yeung, as the ideal for middle-class girls:

*“Middle class girls were offered the bourgeois ideal of the ‘perfect wife and mother’ – an ideal which encompassed the notion of the Christian virtues of self-denial, patience and silent suffering, as well as the aristocratic values of lady-like behaviour (which meant refusing any paid or manual employment) and ladylike etiquette.”*  
(Arnot, 2002:136)

From here we can see Ms. Yeung’s portrayal of the image of “good mothers” that St. Caroline’s girls should become, which referenced the Saint of the school and the Virgin Mary, shared many similarities with the description of Arnot’s middle-class girls’ “bourgeois ideal”, especially about the “Christian virtues of self-denial, patience and silent suffering”, which apparently echoed the “receptive and tolerant” mothers who “know their roles in their family”. From the fieldwork in St. Caroline’s, to be good mothers seems to be the wholehearted devotion to “others” – her spouse, her children, her family – which often means the denial of self. For example, to understand Ms. Yeung’s opinion about the image of “good mothers” and “good wives”, it should be noted that her role as “mother” and “wife” was highly visible in the campus of St. Caroline’s because her husband is also a teacher of the same school. Her description of the ideal image of “good mothers” was not only a guideline to students, but also a self-reflected and self-required “standard” that she was working on or had achieved. Moreover, not only the majority of married women teachers were the role models to St. Caroline’s girls. From the interviews and personal conversations with students, I found that many of the mothers were actively involved in their daughters’ school lives as well as managing their time and activities outside school/after school hours. For example, many of the mothers volunteered to be committees in the Parents teachers association (PTA); some even joined the school management board. I was amazed to see how the parents, mostly mothers, were extremely nervous and active in gathering information for their daughters during PTA meeting and seminars for students’ career development. And almost



every day before lunch hour, groups of mothers and their domestic helpers would gather outside the school gate in order to deliver freshly cooked lunch-boxes to their daughters.

Rich's (1986) work, which reveals how motherhood is automatically linked with femininity and becomes an institution reinforced by patriarchy, has expressed clearly, 'Institutionalized motherhood demands of women maternal 'instinct' rather than intelligence, selflessness rather than self-realization, relation to others rather than the creation of self.' (Rich, 1986: 42)

In addition, though motherhood was not framed as an inborn, natural responsibility, as I have mentioned, there was a tacit assumption about the future mothers' roles attached to St. Caroline's girls. When Ms Yeung was describing "being a good mother" as part of the project of being "all-round" students/citizens, would that imply that the only way to achieve "proper" womanhood should include the inevitable role of "motherhood"? Carole Pateman (1989) has suggested that the state has assumed and encouraged women to be "good" mothers as an attempt to ensure the "quality" of the population; while Vincent and Warren (1998) also suggest that 'being a 'good' mother, a 'sensitive' mother, has long been the primary way in which women have been encouraged to fulfil their (highly gendered) duties as citizens.' (1998:182). So maybe Ms Yeung was right, that one of the most important aspects that St. Caroline's girls have to develop would be their roles as "mothers" , to serve society, the state or the patriarchy. Sadly, it seems Burns(2008)'s diagnosis was right, 'although the project of helping girls ....imagine themselves as self-managing subjects seems to challenge traditional meanings of "womanhood", in the end the ultimate reward....relies on the hetero-normative family as one of its core cultural units.' (Burns, 2008:353)

## **7.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have explored the classed or ethnic construction of femininities of the female students in the two schools. In the discussion, it is shown that the middle-class definition of appropriate femininity was entrenched in the dance culture, and

also in the dominant discourse of “To serve the others” which is deeply embedded in the school tradition. On the contrary, the Southern Asian girls in Peterson’s school seemed to be influenced more by their own culture of their country or religion which construct totally different kinds of femininities. Lastly, I also explored the notion of “the heart to serve” that existed on St. Caroline’s campus, which not only served as an important aspect of the St. Caroline’s identity, but also served the purposes of assuring the middle-class identity of the students as “care givers” in society or in the global context, as well as the gender identity of becoming “future mothers”. The School Principal’s reiteration of the “maternal instincts” in relation to the notion of “care” and “serve” had exposed the sex-role stereotype attached to these girls, which seems that a future role as “good mothers” has been assumed for the St. Caroline’s girls.

# Chapter Eight Conclusion and Discussion

## 8.1 Introduction

This chapter first summarizes the findings presented in the preceding chapters and aims to answer the core research questions. Then, discussion generated from the data analysis and findings will form the second part of this chapter, which will: further elaborate on the meaning of future “pathways” or life trajectories of teenagers in times of “liquid modernity” (Bauman, 2000); discuss the class and ethnic influences on young people’s citizenship under this “liquid modernity”; and also discuss the current conceptions of global citizenship in Hong Kong in relation to gender and class, considering the example shown in St. Caroline’s. Lastly, this chapter will consider the implications of this research for theoretical knowledge and educational policy making and practice.

## 8.2 Conclusion: research findings and research questions

The three analytical chapters have demonstrated different aspects of schooling in relation to the schools’ promotion of “ideal citizens” and students’ understanding of citizenship. This section will summarize the findings as shown in the chapters respectively.

### **Analytical chapter: key findings**

**In Chapter Five**, I examined the organization and participation of the “Other Learning Experiences” (OLE) programmes in the two schools. I showed that the different resources available to the schools and the contrasting school objectives have resulted in a divergent implementation of OLE programmes. Due to St. Caroline’s School’s expectations of students as “global citizens” who would be competitive in the market, the organization of activities ensured students could have “international exposure” and the opportunity to explore something extraordinary so that these experiences could be well-presented in the “Learning Profile”. Peterson’s School’s expectations of students as law-abiding and moral “good citizens” emphasized more the cultivation of students’ personalities and conduct. Though the activities also covered different aspects of the “Five essential learning experiences”, the emphasis

was placed on students' attitudes to participation and whether the process could encourage the integration of Southern Asian students into society.

Teachers also expected different levels of student participation. The majority of St. Caroline's School teachers obviously expected students to participate more actively and "be leaders", so that their "Student Learning Profile" could be more "attractive" to the universities or prospective employers. In Peterson's School, teachers had much lower expectations of students' participation due to the high truancy rate, so they would be satisfied as long as the students showed up for the activities. Yet, the reasons for students' participation patterns were not simply complying with teachers' expectations. Though many of the St. Caroline's students also realized the significance of building up their portfolio, many of the students regarded participating as a "school tradition" and formed part of their school identities. Bound by this deep-rooted tradition, students would also participate due to conformity, or what Bourdieu called "symbolic violence", as they may have internalized the requirement to actively participate as the "proper" attitude. On the contrary, Peterson's students may not have realized that participation in the OLE programmes was a process to cultivate cultural capital, but simply felt alienated and that it was a waste of time. Yet they valued more having a degree of "self-governance" regarding their autonomy and control of their time and space, and rejected engaging in activities that were under the control and surveillance of teachers or school authorities. These different reasons for participation patterns may be explained by the related class "habitus".

**In Chapter Six**, I focused on the language practices and policies in the schools to explore the impact of these practices and policies on students' understanding of their citizens' identities and the relationship of languages with their future aspirations. All teachers and students of both schools recognized the symbolic power of English, but it was the policy of St. Caroline's that made St. Caroline's students recognize the ascending symbolic power of Putonghua in society. In contrast, because of the attached meaning of language to new Chinese immigrants and the low status of Putonghua in Peterson's School, not only was its symbolic power not recognized, Peterson's students would avoid the speaking of Putonghua.

Moreover, the linguistic capital bought by English was not guaranteed by simply knowing the language. The fluency, accent and writing style of English would all be evaluated by teachers, employers and the general public in Hong Kong society, to define whether one's English was "up to standard". I suggested that this further deprived the Southern Asian students, who had already suffered from a lack of higher education and career opportunities due to their low Chinese/Cantonese acquisition level. Also, while English as the lingua franca could be seen as an essential communication tool in the global era, the ability to express and present oneself through the language with the appropriate fluency, standard and style was highly valued.

Lastly, the relationships between citizens' identities and languages have been discussed as well. Cantonese obviously constitutes an important part of Hong Kong identities, especially in the example of Southern Asian boys speaking Cantonese slang or "coarse language" enthusiastically to show their knowledge about local culture and a sense of belonging. Yet, the speaking of English seemed to be another signifier in both schools, albeit in a different sense. For St. Caroline's girls, who were expected to be the "new local ruling elites" in society, their ability to speak "standard" English would be presenting the competitiveness of the Hong Kong workforce in the globalized economy and the ability to maintain the distinctive international financial status among Asian and other Chinese cities. This representation of English in the witty, competent "Hong-kongers" image was also taken up by Shawn, one of the students of Peterson's School, to distinguish himself from his new Chinese immigrant and Southern Asian schoolmates whom he thought were not "Hong-kongers".

**In Chapter Seven**, I discussed the more latent aspect of the "ideal citizens" image by focusing on the gendered construction of identities of students. Through the example of the types of dances taught in the two schools, I argued that students of both schools would cultivate different cultural capital despite the labelling of "high-brow" or "low-brow" dance forms. The institutionalization of the "Oriental dance" promoted in St. Caroline's not only became the way to teach the girls the "middle-class ladies" etiquette (the embodied form of cultural capital), it also bought



additional advantages of “credential” cultural capital under the new “institutionalized evaluation system” of the “Student Learning Profile”. On the other hand, the group of Nepalese girls who enthusiastically performed their hyper-femininities through the performance of hip-hop dance could be empowered by gaining the recognition of their local schoolmates and even people in the local community; these girls could also exercise a certain degree of autonomy in the process of dancing due to the less rigid style and availability of the expression of emotions.

Furthermore, in the example of St. Caroline’s School, emphasis on the tradition of “the serving heart”, I elucidated the connections between this requirement of the girls “to serve/care” which is based on the stereotypical assumption of female’s “maternal instinct” and responsibility of motherhood, both to their own families as well as to the global community. I demonstrated how the interweaving concepts of middle-class femininities, motherhood and global citizenship had been indoctrinated in students through the social service practices of students, somehow reaffirmed these students’ middle-class identities in the process without questioning the institutionalized social inequalities they encountered. Thus, I would question whether the promotion of global citizenship in St. Caroline’s is extending students’ scope to understand their roles as citizens or limiting their ways of being “good citizens” (or “good mothers”).

### **Addressing research questions**

Based on the findings from my fieldwork observations and interviews, the analytical chapters had taken three different perspectives, trying to answer the core research questions, which I summarize as follow.

#### ***(1) What notions of cultural and social citizenship are promoted and presented in the schooling process under the educational reform in Hong Kong?***

To answer the first research question, I explored the notions of cultural and social citizenship at two levels. Firstly, at the curriculum and policy level, the literature review on the context of research in Hong Kong and the review of the major education reform documents preliminary to the fieldwork (See Ch. 2) delineated the dominant rhetoric of the “ever-changing world” and “globalized economy”. I found that “depoliticized” and “moralized” characteristics criticized by other scholars on

previous Civic Education Guidelines could still be applied to the situation of citizenship education in my research, but the emphasis on “national identity” and the ability to cope with globalized challenges were something new compared to the previous Guidelines. Simultaneously, it should be noted that this “depoliticized” but “nationalized”, and “moralized” citizenship agenda was accompanied by the long-established economic-oriented and utilitarian Hong Kong culture as shown in the curriculum and education policy changes. Undoubtedly, the official “ideal citizens” image illustrated in the educational reform would be of citizens who have a stronger sense of belonging with their “mother nation” China (while the local Hong Kong identity seems to be undermined); who would be proactive to “invest” and equip themselves with generic skills (communication, leadership and problem-solving skills) and knowledge (language, information technology) in order to “win” in the global competition and cope with the challenges arising at societal or individual level.

However, the implementation of citizenship education in an interdisciplinary and “whole-school” approach in Hong Kong (at least up to the point when this thesis is completed) somehow has allowed different schools to have their own interpretation and own way in the education of citizenship. This research has provided profound empirical evidence of the influence of the school culture, school ethos and school tradition in the definition of “ideal citizens” on the campus. This is particularly evident in the example of St. Caroline’s School which has a long-established tradition, strong middle-class ethos and a consensus over the school objectives between school authorities and teachers. All of these were found to have a strong impact on the way the school promoted their expected “ideal citizens” qualities, and had a noticeable impact on the more conforming St. Caroline’s students.

While the school principals of both schools were adopting the rhetoric of “the era of changes” advocated in the reform, the characteristics of the “ideal students” and (future) “ideal citizens” they emphasized were different.

St. Caroline’s College’s School Principal, Sr. Ellen’s idea about “ideal citizens” seemed to adhere more to the official citizen image suggested in the education

reform, in which the “all-rounded” development of skills and knowledge were expected. In addition to the expectations of students’ “balance” between academic achievement and extra-curricular activities as students to become “global citizens” and “leaders” of society, Sr. Ellen’s expectations also covered the personal aspects of attitudes, social dispositions and personality, such as the cultivation of the “feminine touch” and “appropriate disposition” especially the teaching of “oriental dance” and the emphasis on the “maternal instincts” and mothering role of “to serve”. Although this gendered aspect of citizenship has not been mentioned in the education reform, this aspect is inevitably significant. While requiring St. Caroline’s students to construct their heterosexualized femininity, the “masculinized” competitive and presentable “enterprising individuals” suggested by Ku and Pun (2006) were also expected.

On the other hand, Peterson’s School Principal, Mr. Cheung, also realized the challenges for his students under the “era of changes”, yet despite emphasizing the enhancement of the “competitiveness” of his students in improving their academic competence or their participation in the OLE programme, he stressed the importance of the development of the “whole-person” which evolved from the Confucius tradition, emphasizing the cultivation of personal conduct, ethics and virtues. Besides, he also recognised the need to develop the national identities of local students and the sense of belonging and localization of the Non-Chinese students in school. It seemed that Mr. Cheung’s expectation of the ideal citizen’s image adhered to the “moralized” and “nationalized” characteristics of the prevailing ideology in the Moral and Civic Education Guidelines.

***(2) What are teachers’ and students’ interpretations and experiences of “citizenship”?***

Before my entry to fieldwork, my assumptions about teachers’ and students’ interpretations and experiences of “citizenship” was that they would be very diverse in both schools. However, the findings showed that the opinions between teachers and students in Peterson’s School may be myriad, but the interpretations and evaluation of citizenship seem to be more homogenous in St. Caroline’s school.

In Peterson's School, teachers generally held a pessimistic view towards students' futures due to the generally low academic achievement level and students' reluctance to participate in school organized activities. Although many of the Peterson's teachers considered the underachievement of students was due to their disengagement and apathetic attitudes towards school, some of the teachers did realise that the working-class background of the students may have limited their potential due to the lack of time and knowledge of their parents in "investing" in their studies or seeking professional help earlier when their children had come across behavioural, psychological or academic problems during their primary school period. Some others had identified the disadvantages faced by the Southern Asian students in school due to their accents and style of speaking and writing English in addition to their difficulties in the learning of Chinese and Cantonese. It may seem that Peterson's teachers were confirming the deterministic view of social reproduction based on (the lack of) cultural, linguistic and economic capitals, which locate these students in the marginalized position in the stratified education system in Hong Kong. Yet, drawing on the data, I argue that Peterson's students were social actors who could subjectively define their self-worth and identities not simply based on the "institutionalized evaluative system" set out in the current education system. From the analytical chapter, Peterson's students were, in fact, making choices and acting based on the "evaluation system" developed among themselves or based on their understanding or personal experiences of the world. For example, from the local students' participation patterns as shown in Ch.5, obviously it was due to their sense of independence and self-governance that they chose not to participate in the activities organized by the school. The recognition of, and relationships with, friends and lovers were much more valued among students in the social field of the school, especially when they did not recognize the symbolic value of the participation in OLE activities. In the context of school, where these students realized the acquisition of English and academic achievement as an institutionalized form of cultural capital, it showed that they were in fact eager to learn and agreed with the attached value of the cultural capital of English. I argue that they were simply being "utilitarian" (Lau, 1982) in turning to construct their identities from the recognition and relationships of peers or the sense of control of their own time (and life) instead of being the "loser"



under the “rules of the game” set by the education system or under the control of teachers and adults. For Southern Asian students, although many of them were actively participating in activities and academic study, and tried to learn Chinese and Cantonese in order to integrate into the local community, similar feelings of helplessness and alienation were found in their academic experience, in addition to their experiences of isolation and discrimination both in the context of school and society. Their identities were thus mainly constructed through their connections with their own ethnic communities, religion and language and culture of their original nationality, which somehow further isolated them from the mainstream “norm” and culture to be recognized as members of the society. Thus, this study suggests that Peterson’s students’ were constructing their citizens identities mainly based on their own cultural and social identifications; their display of subjectivity is confirmed in this research, even though their choice would place them back in a disadvantaged social position or led to a potentially lower citizen status in the society as described by other studies (Chan, 2006; Lee, 2008; Mac An Ghail, 1994; Plummers, 2000; Willis, 1977).

Due to the dominance of the middle-class values embedded in the school tradition and school ethos in St. Caroline’s, teachers’ and students’ interpretations of “citizenship” seemed to be more coherent with the “ideal citizen” promoted by the school authority and the education reform. As discussed, the majority of the teachers advocated the school objectives of nurturing the competitive, confident, flexible and resilient yet feminine and caring global citizens. A few teachers even raised doubts about the development of students’ personal qualities including independence, critical thinking and confidence to express themselves through the implementation of the OLE programmes and the language policies in school; no one denied the advantages of the cultivation of cultural and linguistic capital in the process.

Simultaneously, most of the students recognized the expectation of being “all-rounders” and “leaders of the society” from the school and most of the teachers. Even though some of the senior form students, such as Catherine and Trisha, would criticize the policies established by the School Principal, Sr. Ellen, for the purposes of developing their leadership and public speaking skills, most of them still adhered



to the practices and admitted that they would be helpful for their future opportunities. For junior students, who may not realize the significance of building and planning their “Student Learning Profile”, they seemed to have internalized the inherited school culture and school identities of achieving and “performing to excel” in all aspects. Thus, even for students who may not understand fully the cultural capital bought by their performance and participation, undoubtedly they have taken for granted the “responsibility” and effort that they were expected to pay to overcome the obstacles to achieve success.

Contrary to the overarching themes of Peterson’s students’ personal experiences and consciousness of the impact of class and ethnicity on their citizenship status and citizen identities construction, these factors seemed to be concealed in St. Caroline’s College and unrecognized except for students from working-class backgrounds (e.g. Yvonne) and teachers who had a sociological perspective (e.g. Mr. Au).

**Contrasting models of ideal citizens and typologies of cultural capital in the two schools**

The findings of each analytical chapter have also illuminated the contrasting models of ideal citizens in the two schools, and the different types of cultural capital in the two schools. This is summarized into the following table:

	<b>St. Caroline’s College Global and Local Elites</b>	<b>Petersons’ School Local Good Citizens</b>
<b>OLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cultural capital and social capital through organization of activities to ensure students could have “international exposure” and the opportunity to explore something extraordinary so that these experiences could be well-presented in the “Learning Profile”</li> </ul> <p>Expected To become the citizens who are active and take initiatives, and being the leaders of the society; they were also expected to be not just HK citizens, but citizen with global horizon and international perspectives.</p>	<p><b>For Chinese students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Embodied Cultural capital</li> </ul> <p>Expected to be law-abiding and moral “good citizens” thus the school emphasized more on the cultivation of students’ personalities and conduct through activities; yet students seemed to value more on having a degree of “self-governance” regarding their autonomy and control of their time and space, and rejected engaging in activities that were under the control and surveillance of teachers or school authorities.</p> <p><b>For Southern Asian students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Embodied Cultural Capital</li> </ul> <p>the school would expected them to be socially-integrated into the society, understanding the local culture and tradition</p>

<b>Languages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Linguistic and Institutionalized form of Cultural Capital: English, Putonghua (or even European languages)</li> <li>● Cultural capital: British and western literature, drama, music and arts in the process of English learning</li> </ul> <p>Expected to become the citizens with power or authority and being the leaders of the society; they were also expected to be competitive not just among other HK citizens, but as the representatives of HK in the international level -- their ability to speak “standard” English would be presenting the competitiveness of the Hong Kong workforce in the globalized economy and the ability to maintain the distinctive international financial status among Asian and other Chinese cities.</p>	<p><b>For Chinese students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Linguistic and Institutionalized form of Cultural Capital: English</li> </ul> <p>The learning of English was a qualification for them to pursue a career or continue their studies.</p> <p><b>For Southern Asian students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Linguistic capital and embodied Cultural capital: Cantonese and written Chinese</li> </ul> <p>To immerse into the local community and essential to survive and work in the job market in Hong Kong.</p>
<b>Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Embodied cultural capital of the body through dance and social services</li> </ul> <p>Expected to become demure ladies; also expected to take up the mothering role and to serve their own family as well as the society and even as the “global carer” of the world.</p>	<p><b>For Nepalese girls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Embodied cultural capital through dance and social capital through dance performances</li> </ul> <p>The dance does not give the girls’ the sense of power and independence, but also encourage them to be visible in the Hong Kong community and be accepted and recognized by schoolmates.</p>

**Table 6 - Contrasting models of ideal citizens and typologies of cultural capital in the two schools**

### 8.3 Discussion

This study identified contrasting models of ideal citizens were developed in the two schools and different types of social and cultural capitals were cultivated in the process. The significance of the category of social class, ethnicity and gender in the construction of the notions of ideal citizens will also be discussed. The discussion also provides insights into the understanding of students' responses to the discourse of "individualisation" and their engagement in the "reflexive project of self" at times of "liquid modernity" (Bauman, 2000).

#### **The categories of social class, ethnicity and gender in Hong Kong in relations to notions of 'ideal citizen'**

The social categories of social class, ethnicity and gender are significantly important in relation to the notions of the Hong Kong context. While the government always emphasizes the notions of "unity", "social cohesion" and "social harmony", this study demonstrated how individuals' different social positions, including class, gender and ethnicity, would influence their conceptions of citizenship. The research shows that students' experienced and interpreted differently about being "good citizens" in Hong Kong due to their different social class, ethnicity and gender.

The findings illustrate that the concept of cultural capital enables the discussion on the social impact of class, ethnicity and gender in the schooling experiences of students, especially when cultural capital is understood in its broadest sense as illustrated by Lareau and Weininger (2003) as "institutionalized evaluative standard". The interpretation of cultural capital as "institutionalized evaluative standard" could displays the ideal notions of citizenship promoted by the state, or in a smaller scale, illustrates the notions of good or ideal students/citizens within the schools. Thus, how students of different class, ethnic or gender positions interpret and respond to the "institutionalized evaluative standard" would directly affect how they perceive the qualities about "ideal citizens", and how to become one.

The different analytical chapters have in fact, demonstrated the interweaving of social class, ethnicity and gender in relations to the understanding of cultural capital

and the interpretation about ideal citizens. For example, the chapter about the “Other Learning Experiences” programme demonstrated that different social classes would value the importance of the “Other Learning Experiences” (OLE) programme differently, for example, in the middle-classed St. Caroline’s College, most teachers and students consider the participation of the programme as essentially important, and learning through play which some of them could even realize the accumulation of social and cultural capital in the process. Yet for students of Peterson’s school who were mainly from working class backgrounds, they seemed to struggle recognizing the institutionalization of extra-curricular activities into the OLE programme which is now a compulsory part of the formal curriculum. These differences in interpretation itself affect and explain the different participation levels of the students, and led to the differences in the acquisition of cultural capitals and becoming “ideal citizens”.

The examples from the language chapter illustrated that the linguistic capital is not readily acquired, and is even more distinct to show that individuals of different ethnicity and social class would have different interpretations of the value of different languages and to develop different linguistic capital to become “ideal citizens” of their choice. For instance, St. Caroline’s middle-class students would recognize the linguistic capital of not only English, but also the ascending value of Putonghua in the context of Hong Kong; on the contrary, Peterson’s students who are more familiar with (or even involved in) the discriminations towards the new Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong would avoid the learning and speaking of Putonghua to distinguish themselves from the group. On the other hand, Cantonese as the local dialect is proved to be essential linguistic capital for the Southern Asian students to survive in Hong Kong. It is a language that signifies Hong Kong identities, but for many of the elite students in St. Caroline’s, its linguistic capital is much lower than that of English, Putonghua and other European languages.

Hence, the differences in the interpretation of the meanings of “ideal citizens” have directly affected their construction of citizens’ identities and development of their sense of belonging, which challenge the homogeneous image of the economic-oriented, political-sceptic citizens viewed as characteristic OF Hong Kong society.



## **Students' "individualisation" and "reflexive project of self" in this research**

The preceding conclusion section has demonstrated the myriad interpretations of citizenship. It showed that the school authorities, teachers and students of St. Caroline's were generally in agreement on the qualities of "ideal students" (in the current schooling settings) and "ideal women citizens" of the future, which concurred with the "ideal citizens" image of competitive economic beings required by the reform documents; whilst the definitions of the qualities of "good students" and meaning of "good citizens" were much more diverse in Peterson's School. Nevertheless, the study showed that teachers and students of both schools were constantly evaluating their current positions in the schooling system and the positions that the students aspired to in the future in the wider society. The obvious social stratification based on academic achievement level (banding of students and schools) and the labels of EMI and CMI schools were clearly identified by them; yet the social determinants of class, ethnicity and gender, which largely influenced the aforementioned hierarchies and the other hierarchies of the "learning experiences", "hierarchy of languages" and gender dispositions, as discussed in this thesis, may not be noticed by some of the teachers and students. Students who are from the disadvantaged groups obviously have more personal experiences for them to understand the working of how these structural inequalities become ordeals in their process of constructing citizenship, or even devalue their future citizenship status. Yet, whether or not the embedded hierarchies are identified, individuals are required to make their own choices. As mentioned in the reform documents review in chapter two, the influence of students' social class and ethnicity background to their studies, especially in the newly established OLE programmes, were being downplayed. "Students" were presented as universal and neutral individuals, and students themselves, and their parents, were expected to be responsible for their "investment" in their studies and their own choices. This rhetoric closely resembles the Harris (2004) discussion of "the developing of responsibility", in which the labelling of "failure" was attributed to 'poor choices, insufficient effort, irresponsible families, bad neighbourhoods, and lazy communities, without confronting the sexual and economic exploitation experienced by them' (2004:9).

The understanding of the formulation of the hierarchy of citizenship status and structural social inequalities should be contextualized in the current era of “late modernity” or “liquid modernity” (Bauman, 2000), which further intensifies the structural inequalities but is obscured by the notion of “individualism” (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2000; Giddens, 1991) and “responsibilization” (Harris, 2004; Kelly, 2001, 2005). This study has provided empirical evidence about the masking of class, ethnic and gender inequalities by “individualism” and “responsibilization” as suggested by various scholars. The advantages of St. Caroline’s girls or other young people from middle-class background mean that they have more opportunities to “win the game” (but not guaranteed) due to their identification of the “risks” in the current “ever-changing”, “liquid” world, the adaptation of the need to mediate “the reflexive project of the self”, and plan and organize a life trajectory, which could secure their positions in the social hierarchy, while at the same time consolidating their self-identity. I would suggest that this process of self-mediation and trajectory-planning would not succeed without the backup of the middle-class background to access the embedded knowledge and resources, i.e. economic, social and cultural capital. It is under these capitals that St. Caroline’s girls could become what Harris described as “the self-made girl” (Harris, 2004).

Findings relating to students of Peterson’s school may seem to react in opposition to St. Caroline’s girls as shown in their participation levels in the “Other learning experiences” programme and their engagement in school lives, services or school related activities. Yet, this did not lead to the conclusion that they were not affected by the discourse of “individualization” or “responsibilization”. From interviews and opportunistic conversations with the Petersons’ students, many of them had shown their future aspirations and talked about their plans for achieving their aspired career or family lives. For example, Sherry who studied very hard even she was in the low-achieving class mentioned her plan to continue her studies in higher education such as diploma or associate degree as she realised her public examination result may not be competitive enough to enter the degree programme in the universities; Janet who was in the elite class also mentioned that she plans to become a tour guide in future, and has decided to study in the related vocational programme to prepare for the

professional examinations for tour guide licences; another example is Shawn, the male student who quitted Peterson's school near the end of the academic term during my fieldwork, had started his studies in tourism and hotel management courses in the self-funded vocational school the month after quitting school. He explained making the decision because he refused to waste his time in Peterson's to study unrelated subjects when he knew what is best to prepare himself for the career he desired. Thus, though teachers expressed worries and discontent about students' inactive engagement to their academic studies and school activities, I found that most of the students I encountered in Peterson's school did have the reflexivity to evaluate their own abilities and the options and opportunities available to them, and are in fact actively and responsibly making arrangement for achieving their goals. Albeit those plans and aspiration may be unrealistic or unachievable in the longer term due to their limited capitals, undeniably, Peterson's students were aware of the discourses of "individualisation" and "responsibilization" and were actively responding to them. However, as envisaged by Peterson's school principal, Mr. Cheung and teachers Mr. Tim, these students may be facing the brutal reality that the efforts they devoted may not be enough to help them to achieve in the ever-changing globalized society. As Mr. Cheung explained in his interview, vocational skills and knowledge nowadays required constant updates, students would not be able to stay in the same job positions if they do not realize the learning of language skills and other soft skills in school could help them to accommodate these changes and be able to continue the lifetime pursuit of new knowledge and skills (lifelong learning). Mr. Tim also mentioned that while Southern Asian students may think they had the advantages in English especially compared to their local schoolmates, but in fact their non-British or American accents would not be recognized as "proper" English in the Hong Kong context. Hence, these examples may be supporting Lareau and Weininger (2003)'s theory that the "institutionalized evaluative standard" are often interpreted by the advantaged class.

## **Global Citizens or the Women Carers?**

In this research, another significant finding is that the definition of “global citizens” could be as contested as the concept of citizenship, especially in the educational sectors under the influence of the educational reform in Hong Kong.

As described in the research context and the document analysis in previous chapters, the strong rhetoric of the “threat” of economic globalization has created fierce competition worldwide, where an entrepreneurial, competitive citizen has been promoted, and the “global vision” or “global exposure” has been encouraged in order to maintain Hong Kong’s competitiveness as an international financial centre compared to the other upcoming cities in China and in Asia. Although the issues of sustainability and global warming are also raised in Hong Kong society, it seems that global citizenship in Hong Kong mainly concentrates on the economic aspects.

Yet from the example of St. Caroline’s College, through the emphasis on the notion of “to serve” and “care” in the role of being global citizens and experience of global social services, it seems that the conception of “global citizens” could transcend and extend from a limited economic scope to a cultural and social concern for social justice across countries. Some scholars in Hong Kong would argue that the civic education based on social services experience may still be limited to the “moralized” but “depoliticized” citizenship, if it is without reflective and critical evaluation of the experience (Leung and Yuen, 2012). However, scholars in the field of “ethics of care” suggest that the recognition and introduction of the notion of “care” as a “social practice” part of active citizenship, could redefine citizenship from the usual basis of “the ethics of paid-work/wage-earner”, and link such feminist ethics of “care” together with values of trust and to the field of political theory and international relations (Robinson, 1999; Sevenhuijsen, 1998; 2000,2003; Tronto, 1994).

The theory of the ethics of care suggests uplifting the social value of the concept of care/caring/servicing in the society, to confirm these values as one of the essential qualities of citizenship instead of defining it simply by participation in the labour force or the political arena. Drawing on the example of St. Caroline’s School, the



simultaneous expectations of becoming “global citizens” and “good mothers” seems to be understandable and coherent with their emphasis on the notion of “Serve” and “Care”. On the one hand, being a “good mother” would mean the caring and serving of her family, spouses, children or elderly at home; on the other hand, being a “global citizen” would mean extending the care and the service from the nuclear family to the community, the society, and to people around the world in the “global village”.

Though the theorization of care ethics may seem to encourage more engagement and participation at the societal, or even global, level of public and social activities, one of the major critiques about this “global citizens carer” is a reification of gender stereotypes, especially based on the strong connection between care ethics and femininity (Mahon and Robinson eds., 2011). From the important discussion about morality and care ethics by Carol Gilligan (1982), though she has taken into consideration that women can also think in ways of justice and men can think in ways of caring, her theory, which is based on the assumption that women are associated with the experience of being connected and men are associated with the process of impersonalization, seems to attach the morality of care to women. Sara Ruddick’s (1990) work, which also contributed to the ethics of care literature, were also being challenged to assume the essential differences in the degree of “care” between the two sexes.

Thus, whether the ethics of care could deconstruct the private/public notions of citizenship is uncertain, as women are still being associated with social matters, and being subscribed to the gendered division of care labour (Daly and Lewis, 2000). That is, the redefinition of citizenship may also reconfirm the “caring labour” of women both in the private and public sphere. In the example of St. Caroline’s College, the discourse of “motherhood” and the “maternal instinct” is dominant on the campus, and the gendered division of care labour is not questioned or challenged, but rather, reinforced. Therefore, it seems that, although the ethics of care seems to be included into the notion of citizenship, this may have happened without challenging the existing definition of women’s citizenship.



As described by Mahon and Robinson (2011), they witnessed the global trend of the “commodification and trans-nationalization of care” due to the dominance of neoliberal ideas and practices as well as changing gender relations. The commodification of care in the Hong Kong context would be characterized by the large number of domestic helpers hired from the Philippines and Indonesia by the majority of middle-class families, especially when both parents of the family had a full-time job. While the originally unpaid housework and carework in the family is now taken over by the less-privileged women who often abandoned their own families and children to work in a foreign country, it seems to me that the change of women’s citizenship status in Hong Kong is simply an extension of traditionally male pattern of “masculine-worker citizenship” (Korteweg, 2006:314) instead of a real redefinition of citizenship. Hong Kong women are still expected to be in-charge of household issues, including the “managing work” of domestic helpers to assist their primary responsibilities in the carework for children, elderly and their family.

The above discussion has, in fact, raised another question about the problem of inequalities and differences between women. Due to the neoliberal ideology, many welfare states have tried to reduce their social expenditure through the commodification of care (Williams, 2011). While the gendered division of care labour (Daly and Lewis, 2000; Lewis, 1994) is still deeply embedded in the culture of Hong Kong, it seems that only those women who have access to the material, social and cultural resources could be able to “activate emotional capital for care” (O’Brien, 2008:138). From the example of the two schools, the contrast between the actively engaged mothers of St. Caroline’s and the majority of much less involved parents who are occupied by paid jobs with long hours, we could see that this availability of the time, knowledge and resources to “care” in the private sphere is classed.

In addition, I would also like to question whether the classed and gendered “care”, or the concept of “serving the others” in St. Caroline’s, would impose a new set of criteria or “standard” of the “global carer” female citizen image (one of the aspects of the “can-do” girl described by Harris (2004), that requires all women, especially the elite girls of St. Caroline’s, to aspire and to achieve? That is, it seems that there is

a new kind of women's citizenship which requires women to have the ability to balance the responsibilities at different levels of citizenship. On top of the "balance" between the "mother/wife" responsibility and caring work in the private regime (personal/family level) and the role of worker-citizens in paid work/careers in the public regime (societal level), women are now expected to publicly engage in charity and social services for the public good in the global citizen perspective. Although, as mentioned in the earlier paragraph, the uplifting of the notion of care may be able to extend the definition of citizenship, due to the strong private/public dichotomy and patriarchal power that firmly secured the gendered division of care in the Hong Kong society, it may not be surprising to see that the social responsibility for providing social services voluntarily and charity work would mainly lie on women. I would suggest that this new standard of "global carer" image expected of women may become increasingly significant due to the shifting social welfare responsibility of the government under neoliberal influence. This may become another battlefield of inequalities because, while many women have already been struggling to "balance" work and family lives, the additional expectation on women to be an "appropriate citizen" would be another form of pressure on women in the new age.

## 8.4 Implications of the Research

This research has contributed to the theoretical knowledge of the field in several ways.

Firstly, inspired by critical theories and feminist studies, I have explored the social and cultural aspects of citizenship in schools, which would go beyond the confining political conception of citizenship in the Hong Kong academic field of citizenship education. The social and cultural aspects of citizenship suggest that citizenship is not only about legal or political membership, rights, engagement or belonging (identity), but is also involved in the social and cultural values, attitudes, accomplishments or dispositions that are embodied in the ideal citizen image.

On top of the social and cultural aspects, I also suggest the need to address the temporal dimension of citizenship too. The most commonly used model, Heater's (2004) "Cube of Citizenship" has covered the geographical level, the major elements of citizenship (e.g. identity, virtue, political citizenship etc.) and the three dimensions of citizenship education (Heater, 2004:326). However, Cogan and Derricoot's (1998) temporal dimension of citizenship seems to be regularly missed out in the literature of citizenship and citizenship education. From the findings, it was evident that "future" has always been mentioned in different ways. For the school principals, it's the "future" of the schools and the expectations of their students' future status in society which concerns them and directly affects their vision and plans for the implementation of school policies; for teachers, their concern often relates to students' present performance which would lead to "future" consequences for their lives; for students, each one of them would have different aspirations for their own future, although their different dreams are mostly related to their future pathways in careers and their family lives. Although in these conversations, the term "citizenship" is almost absent, it is evident that the students' "future" is interconnected with their present and past. The findings also highlighted the temporal dimension of citizenship, when young people in Hong Kong are being situated as "citizens-to-be"; and the concept of time in relation to citizenship in the era of late modernity, which

requires individuals to constantly plan and develop the “project of self” in the hope of securing their citizenship position in the future.

The social and cultural aspects of citizenship also suggest that the social interaction, power relations and individuals’ self-identification would all influence teachers’ and students’ conceptions of citizenship. The application of Bourdieu’s theories of cultural capital assimilated by Lareau and Weinginger (2003) of “institutionalized evaluative standard” in this research also indicated the working of power based on students’ multiple identities and the relationship between social inequalities and citizenship.

Moreover, my ethnographic study of citizenship education in the school settings also goes beyond the Civic and Moral Guidelines or any sets of education curriculums, or the civics education classroom. While previous studies only investigated the policy-making process and the curriculum of civic education and the educational reform – or mainly concentrated on the discussion of political literacy and the “political aspect of citizenship” of students – my study has filled in the research gap by providing empirical evidence through a whole-school approach, in order to cover the dynamics between the policy, the school, the stakeholders, and also the complex and fluid meanings about citizenship embedded in the schooling process. This research has addressed the significant influence of the schools, and found that, not only is the majority social class background of students significant, the embedded class ideology of the school which could be found in the school ethos, traditions, school policies, management and school culture, as well as the economic, social and “human” resources of the school, would affect students’ experiences and capability to accommodate/adapt to the changes laid out by the Education Reform to fight against the competition in the now marketized education sector in Hong Kong.

This study also shed lights on the significance of the role of language and participation levels for the production of the ‘ideal citizen’.

For the role of language, the complexity of the language policy and the language ecology in Hong Kong was illustrated in Ch. 2 and has shown that the prominent

languages, namely English, Putunghua and Cantonese have been attached with different meanings related to Hong Kong identities, and with different value as linguistic capitals.

For example, in this research, it is shown that English is not only the powerful language that could easily transferring the linguistic capital into economic, social and cultural capital. It is found that it is essential for the elite girls in St. Caroline's to become global citizens, as English is the medium for them to communicate and be connected to the globalized world. At the same time, it is also an important part of the Hong Kong identity, as Shawn (Interview on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2010) has illustrated that the ability of speaking English could distinguish them from Chinese immigrants who may be able to learn Chinese and Cantonese easily.

Besides, the language policies and practices in schools directly affect the academic experiences of students, which would also affect their future aspirations of their career and as Hong Kong citizens. For example, the medium of instruction has stratified Hong Kong students into the elites and the underachievers through the distinguishing of EMI and CMI schools (Cross reference: see Ch.2 Language Ecology section). The labelling effect is profound and it seems to have divided students into different pathways especially when English is such a powerful language in Hong Kong society and the job market. The linguistic capital of English is further complicated when the accents and style of speaking it is highly regarded in Hong Kong, which disadvantaged Southern Asian students even when they could speak English better than their schoolmates in Peterson's school.

For the exploration of students' participation levels in this study, it is especially significant as that actually could evaluate students' acquisition of cultural capital in the process of the "Other Learning Experiences" programme, which would directly affect students' opportunities to higher education and in the job market. In addition, the participation levels can also reflect students' realization of being "self-reflexive". For example, the Student Profile which requires students to record the activities that have participated in the programme, also requires them to fill in self-reflections as well as stories in the process of participation, that is, student's participation levels is



positively linked to the richness of their 'Student Profile' and the experiences they reflect on and the stories they could tell. In other words, both the OLE programme and the 'Student Profile' is revealing whether they are "self-reflective" and are responsible for planning and making decision for their studies and self-enhancement. The participation level of students evidently shows that the concept of "individualization" and "responsibilization" under the neoliberal discourse were well adapted in the educational reform.

Sociological writing have extensively discussed how language is related to one's ethnic or citizen identities. However, the complexity of the language ecology of Hong Kong has complicated the relationship between language and citizen identities, especially for students with different social backgrounds. For example, although Southern Asian students' learning of the local dialect Cantonese in order to be accepted as Hong Kong citizen may not be special in the studies about the immersion process and transforming of identities with the learning of local language, the reinforcement of the local identity by learning of a foreign language (hence English to enhance the "Hong-Kongness") might be something distinctive in the area. Besides, the acquisition of British or American accents seems to be particularly significant in the Hong Kong to be recognized as "truly" knowing the language also made the focus on language in relation to citizenship unique in relation to the Hong Kong context. These findings should contribute to the sociological theories and studies about language and identities, and inform the educational field as this review how the language policies would directly affect students' learning experiences, the ethnic minorities' students' difficulties and lived experiences in the local communities, and even students' citizen identities construction.

The focus on participation level in this research has proved to be closely related to the concept of "individualization" and "responsibilization" under the neo-liberal ideology. Clearly this would enhance sociological research by giving empirical evidence on how neo-liberalism has penetrated through the society from the educational reform policies to the school levels, and could have great impact on individual students' lives. To the educational theorist, though many of the research may have discussed about the participation levels of students in their academic

performances, as the institutionalization of extra-curricular activities into the formal curriculum is something new in the educational field, the study of students' participation level in these activities and how that would directly affect their experiences of citizenship might contribute to the field.

The preceding implications for theoretical knowledge of this research also foregrounded my proposal to transform the understanding of the meaning of citizenship and the implementation of citizenship education.

This study has provided empirical support to the hierarchy of citizen status and social inequalities which were ignored in the education sectors, especially at the policy-making level, and in many of the elite schools which sustained their privileged status within the neoliberal education reform. The ethnographic observations and interviews in this research vividly present the structural social inequalities and social injustices of the education reform policies, particularly significantly in curriculum (e.g. OLE) and language policies; and also the subtly embedded gender control in educational practices. The lived experiences of young people, who either struggle to succeed or struggle to survive in this brutal reality, make visible the ongoing request of "individualism" and "responsibilization" to conceal and rationalize the exploitation of young people who were disadvantaged because of their class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or disability, in the process of meeting the strict demands and rigorous evaluation to become recognized citizens in society. There is certainly a need for policy makers and education practitioners to realise and admit the deterministic influences of these social factors on young people's schooling experiences and their future pathways, to resolve the institutional discrimination and inequalities reinforced in the reform. For example, if the OLE programmes cannot be withdrawn, could the system of evaluation of the learning profile be cancelled, so that experiences would not be commodified and be evaluated? What measure could be taken to lessen, if not overturn, the hierarchical power unevenly distributed between EMI and CMI schools, or within schools between different groups of students? Would the government adopt the suggestions from NGOs to modify the current language policy, enabling the Southern Asian students to learn Chinese and

Cantonese at a level which takes into consideration their social milieu and cultural and linguistic backgrounds?

## 8.5 Limitations of the Research

Although my endeavour was to explore the myriad meanings of social and cultural notions of citizenship in my research, due to the practical limitations of the fieldwork as well as the length of this thesis, obviously any work could not include every aspect of the meanings of citizenship that could be found in school sites.

At the methodological level, my access to research sites was largely limited both in terms of time and space, due to the culture of managerialism and accountability instilled after the education reform, and also the lack of a culture of conducting school-based research in Hong Kong. In St. Caroline's School, my entry time was postponed due to the pressure of the "External School Review" for the "Quality Assurance Inspection" implemented under the education reform. This enormously affected my time span in St. Caroline's campus, and indirectly affected my interview invitations because of my limited opportunities to build up close personal relationships with the school principal, teachers and students on the campus. Also, I suggest that the difficulties in getting teachers' approval to enter classrooms in both schools partly resulted from teachers' insecurity and reluctance to be constantly scrutinized and challenged in their classroom performance under this managerial ideology (See Ch. 4). In Peterson's School, the major difficulties in building up close relationships with students were due to the high truancy rate, especially for the Southern Asian students who often travelled back to their hometown for family events. Interviewing Peterson's teachers was also difficult due to the politics between different groups of teachers. While I was able to thoroughly explore the cultural notions of citizenship at the school and institutional level, the above constraints limited my opportunities to conduct extra individual in-depth interviews with teachers and students to examine their personal interpretations of citizenship and their personal experiences of being citizens in Hong Kong. The methodological constraints also explain the theoretical limitations of this research, which focuses more on the institutional/school level of the elaboration of cultural and social notions of citizenship, but could still address the significance of social class, ethnicity and gender interplayed in the stratification of citizens' status embedded in Hong Kong society.

	Title of Documents	Time/Issued By	Nature of Documents	Major Focus of Analysis	Reading Proportion
1	Reform Proposal for the Education System in Hong Kong	Sept, 2000, Education Commission	Framework of the Whole Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims, Objectives &amp; Assumptions of reform</li> <li>• New Concepts introduced</li> <li>• The anticipated students image</li> </ul>	Whole Document
2	Learning to Learn: The Way Forward in Curriculum Development	June, 2001, Curriculum Development Council	Overall Framework of Curriculum Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims, Objectives &amp; Assumptions of reform</li> <li>• New Concepts introduced</li> <li>• The anticipated students image</li> </ul>	Whole Document
3	Basic Education Curriculum Guide – Building on Strengths (Primary 1–Secondary 3)	2002, Curriculum Development Council	Elaboration of new Curriculum for Basic Education and the “4 Key Tasks” (Based on <i>Document 1&amp;2</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaboration on the content and implementation of Moral &amp; Civic Education, Project Learning and Life-wide Learning</li> <li>• The anticipated students image</li> </ul>	Chapter 1, 3A, 3C, 6 & 11
4	The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher education	May, 2005, Education and Manpower Bureau (Education Bureau since 2007)	Overall framework for New Senior Secondary (NSS) education and higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The structure and curriculum framework of new senior secondary school</li> <li>• The rationale and content of Liberal Studies as New Core Subject</li> <li>• The newly introduced “Applied Learning”(Career-oriented studies) in the NSS Curriculum</li> </ul>	Chapter 2, 3, 4, 5, 7E & 12
5	The New Moral & Civic Education Curriculum Framework (in Chinese version only)	April, 2008, Curriculum Development Department, Education Bureau	Updated Moral & Civic Education Guidelines based on the framework of <i>Document 1</i> and the content elaborated in <i>Document 3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The values and attitudes emphasized in compare to the other documents</li> <li>• The examples of “life events” in the Life Event Approach in different levels</li> </ul>	Whole Document
6	Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide – The Future is Now: from vision to Realisation (Secondary 4-6)	2009, Curriculum Development Council	New Curriculum for Senior Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The anticipated students image</li> <li>• Content of “Other Learning Experiences”</li> <li>• Content of “Student Learning Profile”</li> </ul>	Chapter 1, 5A & 5B



# Appendix B Summary of "Changes" illustrated in the Education Reform Proposal (Education Commission, 2000)

Fundamental changes around the world		
Dimension	Change of Situation	Relation to Education Reform
World Economy	Industrial economy replaced by knowledge-based economy (Rigid organizations, multi-layered management and strict division of labour → lean management structures, streamlined networks and flexible staffing)	Creation, Updating and Application of knowledge have become the key to the success of industries, organizations and individuals
Job requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge needs to be constantly updated</li> <li>• Need to master knowledge in different domains</li> </ul>	People must keep on learning → "Life-long learning" as national policies
Information Technology	Removed boundaries and territorial constraints for trade, finance, transport and communication → Competition Globalized	
Situation in Hong Kong		
Dimension	Change of Situation	Relation to Education Reform
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergoing structural changes → passed the stage of competing through low wages, steadily moving up the ladder of value-addedness</li> <li>• Knowledge-based economy taking shape (p.28)</li> </ul>	Future development depend on ability to harness new technologies, develop new industries, new business strategies and new operating modes; and whether we have people who are nimble and creative
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globalized economy and high operating costs (p. 47)</li> </ul>	HK must have a large pool of talents, generalists and specialists alike, with good communication, innovative and analytical skills, to maintain our position as an international centre of finance and trade, and to further develop HK into a world-class cosmopolitan city
Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "One-country, two system" → high degree of autonomy since reunification with the mother land</li> <li>• Closer relationship with the Mainland</li> </ul>	Enhance understanding of our country, our culture, and strengthen our sense of <b>belonging and commitment</b> to our country
Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term objectives → democratic and civilized international city embracing the cultural essence of the East and the West</li> <li>• <b>Urgent need to alleviate the disparity of wealth</b></li> <li>• Rapid development of information technology</li> </ul>	

Table 8 - Summary of "Changes" illustrated in the Education Reform Proposal (Education Commission, 2000) 294

## Appendix C Report of Pilot Study

### (A) Introduction: assumptions, aims and what was done

The pilot research was done during April and May 2009 in Hong Kong. It included three individual interviews with teachers, group discussions with two groups of students with totally different backgrounds, and the collection of documents on Liberal Studies, the upcoming prescribed subject in the new high school curriculum which will start in September 2009.

There were two major purposes in this pilot research. Firstly, I wanted to understand how teachers and students understood the concepts of citizenship and how citizenship education was implemented in their school. One of my assumptions was that the concept of citizenship in the curriculum was not in vacuum. It would be transformed, interpreted and reinterpreted throughout the schooling process. While citizenship education in Hong Kong is implemented in an interdisciplinary, “whole-school” approach, the ethos of the school would have great impact on how the students understand and learn the embedded preferred image of citizen in the curriculum. In this case, my interview questions were not limited to teachers’ own perceptions or interpretations of “citizenship”, but also included aspects of how it works within the school context. Even though the terms “citizen” or “citizenship” have not been mentioned in the conversations, through the sharing of their own working experiences in school, their disappointment towards the curriculum or the policies of the schools, and their appreciation, worries and expectations for their students, the hidden image of the ideal student or future citizen became prominent.

In order to explore students’ experiences and interpretations of citizenship, I also organized group discussions with two groups of students. My assumption was that students are not passive individuals who would adopt what is taught and told. They are subjective agents who enter the school with different social backgrounds, and who would interact and respond to the meanings of citizenship based on their personal experiences and knowledge. Therefore, the pilot research included students from different kinds of ethnic, socio-economic status, religion and academic

background. One group of students were five Form 6 students who were studying Liberal Studies (AS level) in the current curriculum. They were all from middle-class families, and the school they were in was one of the academically high-band girls' schools in which almost 100% of its graduates could enter university. Another group of students were from different schools, but with similar ethnic backgrounds ---two of them (Mona and Eva) were from Pakistan and both Muslims, one of them (Malisa) was from somewhere else (I couldn't get the place she said) and her family believes in Hedonism. Meanwhile, the socio-economic status and the influence of Islamic values of Mona's and Eva's family was also very different. I had also conducted a short half-hour interview with an elder Pakistani girl, Tyra, individually. Obviously, these girls had totally different family, ethnicity, and educational backgrounds. More importantly, they had very different interpretations of school lives. While students are expected to learn and grow up according to the state-designed image of ideal citizens which is promoted by the curriculum or that of the school, I found that the girls from non-Chinese family backgrounds had much less influence from the school but emphasized and valued more how their family, parents and religion had influenced them. On the other hand, the Liberal Studies students in the academically high-band school also claimed that the mass media and their peers might have influenced their values more than their teachers did. I will explain further how the life experiences of students affected their understanding of their selves and their futures.

Aside from the discovery of the concepts of "citizenship" by teachers and students, the second purpose of this pilot research was to see how relevant and prominent the Liberal Studies subject in the research is. What was the relationship between the Liberal Studies subject and citizenship education? How did the curriculum, the teaching style, the form of evaluation and the marking scheme reflect the connection with the state's agenda? This part of the research is based on the interview with one of the teachers, Mr. P, who has taught Liberal Studies for nearly 20 years, and the group discussion with the five Liberal Studies students.

## **(B) Research methodology and research methods**

In this pilot research, the research methods I have used were interviews and group interviews. In fact, although it's hidden, I believe that the way I have done my pilot research is backed up by the research methodology, which is a set of beliefs based on a certain epistemology and ontology. That is, my certain beliefs about research have led to my approach to how the interviews were conducted and how the group discussions were organized, including the ways I handled my relationship with my research participants, and the questions that I asked (Hesse-Biber, Leavy and Yaiser, 2004: 5). Therefore, besides laying out how I did my interviews, I will also explain the reasons behind these acts.

I will start from the beginning about how I approached the research participants and why I invited them. Based on my research questions, I decided to look into the various meanings of citizenship by teachers and students. One of the assumptions was that the newly introduced prescribed Liberal Studies subject has an important role in promoting the Hong Kong government's ideal citizenship. Therefore, I invited a male teacher, who has taught the Liberal Studies of the old curriculum for many years and has been prepared for the new curriculum, to have an interview. I also asked my sister to invite her classmates, who were all in the Advanced-Supplementary (AS) level Liberal Studies class to have a group interview. The reason for having a group interview instead of a single interview with my sister was that I believe that different students may have different understandings and different opinions on the subject. In fact, post-structuralism and post-feminism has emphasized the function of social research to present the multiplicity and diversity of mankind, especially women from different social and economic classes, race, nationalities and cultures, and that these diversities could be understood in the broadest way, by realizing the differences of each individual. Although I don't regard myself as a feminist, my Masters degree in gender studies has influenced my beliefs and awareness about human diversity and differences. Besides, I believe that the group interview is also a practice which may elicit discussion among research



participants, and this discussion may actually bring new ideas about the concept of citizenship.

The concern about different experiences of students also led to my decision to interview girls of different backgrounds. Apart from a major concern about the new Liberal Studies curriculum, I also thought about the students who may be marginalised in the whole citizenship education agenda. I thought of students who were newly migrated from China, students with disabilities, and also students who grew up in Hong Kong, but with totally different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. I remembered that I had met two Pakistani girls in a Caritas Community Centre when I visited a social worker who I have known for years. Hence, I discussed the idea of interviewing these girls with the social worker, and later, I drafted a two-page letter which stated clearly my research objectives, my research questions, and some of the themes that I may ask in the interviews. I also included my personal information and contact methods in it. The letter was, in fact, the consent between me and the social worker. Though I did not need the permission from the Community Centre to continue my research, we both thought that it was respectful to inform the person-in-charge of the centre. At the same time, this letter would also be an information sheet for the Pakistani girls who would participate in the interview, so that they would have a clearer idea of what the interview was about, and so that they could decide whether they wanted to participate or not. Such a letter was also important for the girls as a proof for their parents, because their social activities are often restrained by their parents based on religious and cultural reasons.

Besides these Pakistani girls, I also tried my best to inform the other research participants of the purposes of my research and the interviews, and how I was going to use the gathered data. This was to ensure that all of the research participants were participating voluntarily and comfortably, and in fact, it's a way to build up trust, and a more fair relationship for the research participants. There is always a power relationship between researchers and research participants, and the power is often on the side of the researchers, because normally, it is the researchers who ask the questions, lead the interviews, and the researchers have the power to interpret and make use of the research data. In my opinion, a better way to tackle the problem of



my power over the research participants is to let them participate equally in the interviews. Interviews are not just a collection of facts. On the contrary, interviews are an occasion for the researcher and the research participants to collaborate in a meaning-making process, which means, to produce knowledge together (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004). Therefore, to let my research participants understand clearly what my research project was about was essential, so that throughout the interview, they were not just responding to my questions, but instead, they understood the theme of my research, and expressed their opinion in their own words.

Another strategy to manage the problem of power relations was that I asked my research participants to choose the place where they felt comfortable to have the interviews. For the Pakistani girls, it was very important for them to have the interviews in the community centre because they would feel free to talk about their own secrets without the surveillance of their family, but at the same time, they would feel uncomfortable and unsafe to go to the restaurants in their community, because they were not used to being so close to their Chinese neighbourhoods. The community centre would be the best place for us to meet, because these girls would feel safe and comfortable to speak, and they were the ones who are familiar with the place.

In addition, the picking of venues for the interviews could also reflect the position of the research participants. For example, Ms. C (the female English teacher) and Mr. K (the male English teacher in a girls' school) both chose to do the interview in a restaurant nearby the school, in which they were quite sure no colleagues and students of their own schools would go. The choice of the venue somehow reflected their opinion towards the schools' policy.

Besides making them feel safe and natural in their familiar environment, sometimes it would bring more information to the researcher by situating the research participants in their social context. For instance, Mr. P (the male Liberal Studies teacher) had invited me to interview him in the playground of his school on a Saturday afternoon. He asked me if I would like to arrive a bit earlier, so that I could also participate in a forum held by the school with some of the students, to discuss

the future direction of the school. Taking this opportunity, I did not only understand more about the school policy, and about Mr. P's feeling about the school (obviously, he loves the school and was devoted because he voluntarily worked overtime on Saturday afternoon for the forum). In addition, I could also take that chance to observe the interaction of Mr. P with his colleagues, students and the school authorities. By interviewing and observing the research participants in their complex and dynamic context, the researcher can also understand more about what the research participants really means in the interview, which can lessen the chance of misinterpreting their words.

As I have mentioned above, interviewing is a collaboration of researchers and research participants to produce or reproduce knowledge and meanings. Therefore, the type of questions that the researchers raise, and how the questions are asked are very important. Although the interviews were said to be semi-structured, for most of the time it was more like a conversation or discussion which was "unstructured". The "structured" part was only for the basic information or background information about the research participants. Normally I would asked about the recent situation, about their school lives or teaching lives, how they felt about that, and then quite quickly, they would soon feel free to talk about anything and sometimes led the interviews. I would sometimes interrupt with some hypothetical questions, in order to make them think more and elaborate more on the issue. But most of the time, I only remembered some of the themes in my mind and just let the conversation flow. However, that did not mean that I was neutral in the process of interviewing. In fact, I was always aware of my own subjective, critical views on the liberal studies subject and citizenship education, and I think that researchers should be reflective and be honest to display their own position in the research when they deliver the research materials to the readers, so that the readers can judge by themselves whether the questions that have been asked, and the way the researchers interpreted the data, were reasonable and coherent. The fact is that researchers always carry their own understanding of the topics before entering the field. Instead of pretending to be objective or neutral, researchers should rather be aware of their own influence throughout the research

process, because the researcher is also an active participant in the meaning construction process (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004).

For instance, during their discussion of what should be included in the new curriculum, I tried to stimulate their thinking by challenging what has not been included in the current curriculum, for instance, the cultural conversation of historical buildings, the discussion of the use of public space for local residences, the social security system, the extreme disparity between the rich and poor in Hong Kong etc. These challenges and suggestions not only facilitated the discussion of the students, but also made them rethink the underlying ideology of the current curriculum they were studying. Dorothy Smith (1986) has pointed out that, in doing social research, besides emphasizing the experiences of research participants, it is very important to be concerned about the subjectivity and the role of the researcher, because when entering the research field, the researcher and the research participants were always interacting. Therefore, sociological research should record these interactions and social relationships, because the two parties are constructing some unique and special experiences together, which can reflect the underlying repression and power in our daily life (Smith, 1986: 6).

The concern with power has influenced my research methods and strategies. As I believe that meaning is socially constituted, it is very important to let the research participants construct their meanings about citizenship in their own ways and their own language. I have paid particular attention to the Pakistani girls. Although one of the girls, Mona, was learning to speak Cantonese and write Chinese, for most of the time we communicated in English, not to mention the other girls who didn't know any Chinese or Cantonese. When I finished my second visit (I just spent time chatting casually with the girls and some little boys in my first visit), which was the first formal group interview with Eva, Mona and Malisa, I found that sometimes they were not able to articulate what they wanted to say and, sometimes, I simply didn't understand what they were talking about because I knew very little about their lifestyle and culture. Therefore, I bought two disposable cameras for Eva and Mona when I visited the third time, and asked them to take photographs about their lives. I

asked them to treat it as an exercise with fun, but still I listed some tips for them. These tips asked them to take pictures about anything that they thought were important to them in a week. For instance, they could take pictures of places (their house, their room, a corner in school), people (their family, their friends, their teacher), or any other objects that mean something to them. On my fourth visit, the three of us shared the photos they had taken, and I asked them to pick out their favourite one in sequence and talked about them one by one. I found that, with the image in hand, not only could they express themselves better, but the content of our conversation also went deeper, which covered their dreams, their love of their family, their opinion about their way and Hong Kong girls' way of dressing, and also their frustration and hope about marriage. This research method has helped the girls to show their lives to me and helped me to understand more in their own voices and pictures.

### **(C) Results and Findings**

As I have mentioned in the first section, there were two major purposes in this pilot study. First was to understand how teachers and students conceptualize “citizenship” or “citizen”; the second purpose was to discover the relationship between the Liberal Studies curriculum and the Hong Kong government’s agenda on citizenship. In the interviews, I found that the concepts of “identity”, “school ethos” and “globalization” emerged throughout the text and answered the first question about what influences the teachers’ and students’ conceptualizations of “citizenship”. For the second question, the critiques both from Mr. P, the Liberal Studies teacher, and all of the Liberal Studies students, have shown that the so-called “enhance critical and independent thinking” or “encourage rational and objective analysis” curriculum, was not that liberal.

First, I will begin to discuss the teachers’ cases, then the students’ cases. Seemingly, the concept of identity has nothing do with citizenship. Yet I found that teachers’ perception of their own roles in the school and their roles and influence on the students was actually closely related to their understanding of what they expect their students to be like or become in the future. That is, when the teachers talk about their



complaints or disappointment towards the school policy or about their students, they are not only portraying their aspiration to change the present situation, but also displaying their ideal image of their students, which could be “made” if the school changed or they could do better. In the following section, I will illustrate the story of the teachers and the background information of the school they are teaching in, one by one.

*Teacher 1: Mr.P. (Male Liberal Studies teacher, has taught Liberal Studies for more than 10 years, and was teaching Liberal Studies, Integrated Humanities and Religious and Ethical Studies at the time of interview)*

Mr. P. teaches in a newly-established school which only enrolls senior secondary school students from Form 4 to 7 (Form 4 to 6 in the new system starting from year 2009). It is a school under the direct subsidy scheme (which could be understood as a private school), so it is quite different from most of the other schools in Hong Kong. For instance, on the school website, it mentions that its aim is to provide quality creative education, which emphasizes providing “a new space for education and for grooming the new generations in turning them into courageous, knowledgeable, competent, committed, compassionate and delightful kids who can brave challenges in this epoch with creativity.....” (HKICC Lee Shau Kee School of Creativity website). The emphasis on creativity, freedom and respect to students, especially their approach of “adult to adult” teacher-student relationships, attracted Mr. P. to join the teaching force right after he graduated from his Masters degree (or, to be accurate, he was invited by his supervisor to the job interview and got the job before he handed in the final draft of his thesis). Mr. P. admitted that, by the time he was almost graduating, he had not thought of going back to teach, because he had taught for almost 20 years before he did his Masters, and might have wanted to try other ways of working for young people. So, he said that he took up the job just because he thought he may do something in this “non-mainstream” school. Throughout the interview, Mr. P. has emphasized many times that he appreciates very much the work of the school authorities and the other colleagues, and emphasized that all of them were educators who worked whole-heartedly for students, to raise their awareness, concern and responsibility in the civil society, and



to have a broader vision out of the textbooks and examination. Apparently, Mr. P.'s ideal image of students is matching the ideal image of the school. Not only viewing students as "citizens" (adult) instead of "citizens in waiting", his ideal image of "citizen" is someone with civic participation, who has critical and independent thinking, and who can have the courage and knowledge to challenge and speak out about the problems and inequalities of the society.

However, it is always easier said than done. After Mr. P. entered the school, he found that there were many problems about the school policies, over which he thought he was not able to really work for students or speak for them. For example, when the size of the students became much larger than the previous two years, the problem of discipline became one of the focuses of the arguments among teachers. As the school tried to maintain a more liberal, open-minded space for students, many teachers, including Mr. P., insisted that they should discuss with students the way to work out the balance between freedom and order, but of course there were many struggles in between because some other teachers found it hard to keep up to the academic schedule if they had to discuss and negotiate with students on every occasion. The struggle for Mr. P. was that he understood the rationale of his colleagues, he knew he did not agree with them, but the school authority was unable to clarify the school's standpoint on the issue. Mr. P. said the vacillation of the school authority could also be seen on many other policies, which not only confused students and frustrated the teachers, but also gave rise to many unnecessary arguments and confrontations between teachers and students.

Besides, although the school claimed to provide another path for students who are failures in the current exam-oriented/academic achievement as the single goal of education system, Mr. P. pointed out that the school is actually creating another kind of stratification system, in which students who did not perform well in art and culture aspects and also did not show their ambition to learn, will be classified into the "N/N list" (Non-art and culture and Non-academic) after two months from the start of the academic year. If these students did not show any change in the following months, they would be asked to leave the school, because they were considered not the targeted students of the school. This stratification system, together with all the

struggles due to the chaos of school policies, has finally driven Mr. P. to resign after a year of teaching, because he thought that all these policies did not provide the opportunities for students to speak out their opinions (not to mention to think independently/critically) but, on the contrary, were silencing students and making them feel more confused and helpless.

Mr. P.'s resignation has reflected his concept of teacher's identity. To him, his role as a teacher is not to control or discipline students. Rather, he prefers to be a mentor and friend of students, and have a more equal status with students. He trusts and respects his students, and provides many opportunities for them to explore themselves, but also provide guidance whenever they need. Apparently, Mr. P. thought that the school was not providing a space for students to participate in the process of building up and improving the school and found himself lost because he could not help his students to actively participate in it.

*Teacher 2: Mr. K. (Male English teacher, has taught English subject in the same girls' school for 3 years after he graduated from his Masters degree in linguistics)*

The school at which Mr. K. is teaching is a girls' school, which enrolls students whose academic achievements are in a medium to upper level in the Yau-Tsim-Mong district (the district which includes the area of Yau Ma Tei, Tsim Sha Tsui and Mongkok). However, Mr. K. claimed that there is a declining trend in the public examination performances of students in recent years. Nonetheless, the students in the school are quite obedient and easy to handle. Therefore, Mr. K. did not feel satisfied about his work in his school, especially his role as a male teacher in a girls' school. He described himself as an "instructor" or someone who teaches English instead of really performing the role of teacher. He thought that being a teacher is much more than teaching: 'I have met many great teachers when I was in my primary or secondary schools, they were role models for students, who can influence the whole life (of a student).....maybe it was just a word that happened to influence the students for a long, long time...this is the precious part (of being a teacher)'. However, because he was a young (mid-twenties) male teacher in a girls' school, there were too many taboos and constraints on him so that he could not perform his

ideal role as a teacher, which could influence the lives of students. For instance, he said that it would be quite embarrassing for a male teacher to scold the girls, and that he could not talk about any sensitive thing, e.g. sex, emotion, love and relationships with his students, because these topics would be quite embarrassing for him to talk about, and that the girls would think his words were not persuasive enough because he has not experienced girls' lives. But at the same time, these topics are those which are closely related to the girls' lives.

In fact, Mr. K. has decided to be a teacher with a mission. He said that many years ago, he promised himself to be a teacher, to be a role model for all the Hong Kong boys, to show them boys can also learn good English and they should not give up just because everyone says girls have better language skills and perform better in English. He found that, in an all-girls classroom, his ability to speak English has no inspiration for the girls. He then shared his experiences of working in a tutorial centre, in which all the students from 5 years old to 18 years old were boys. He said that he really enjoyed that four years of teaching, because he could really become a role model to his students, and he could share his experiences, his values and aspirations with his students. His satisfaction of being a teacher was that he could really influence the lives of his students, and some of his students even expressed a willingness to become him. Compared to his role in the girls' school, he found it impossible to share his experiences or his values with the girls.

Mr. K.'s discontent with the school also revealed his expectations towards the students. For instance, he thought that the school did not equip their students enough for them to compete in the real world and did not show them the reality, that the whole environment of the school was like a "greenhouse", in which most of the girls were very obedient and docile, and this might be "unfavourable for them when they went outside to the real world". Besides, Mr. K. was also dissatisfied with the school being passive and complacent. He raised an example about his proposal to increase the standard of English of the whole school in order to catch up with the level of the other two girls' schools in the same Yau-Tsim-Mong District. He thought that English was very important, based on his own experience of job searching, because most of the employers would look at your public examinations results in English

instead of other subjects. However, the Principal responded with a sneer, because the Principal thought that it was an impossible task. Mr. K. said that the school was too content to remain at the third place in the district, because no matter what they do, they won't be able to catch up with the other two girls' schools, and that they are satisfied with the current position, so no-one in the school has the ambition to improve. The feeling of muddling along in this school may be the most significant reason that hurts Mr. K.'s self-image as a teacher.

Although Mr. K.'s teacher identity seems unable to be actualized in this school, when I asked him what he would say to the girls if he was a female teacher, he could still list some things. As mentioned, he thought that English proficiency is quite important for students. At the same time, he also tried to train his students to be communicative, presentable and creative, by providing more opportunities for students to do presentations and teach a lesson by themselves. In addition, based on his complaint about not showing the cruel "reality" to the students, Mr. K. thought that the school should equip the girls with confidence and independence. He said that the obedient and docile girls would be less competitive in today's society, especially when most of them do not have any ambitions but could only imagine their future ending in "happily ever after" marriages. We can see that Mr. K.'s ideal image of students matched the characteristics of the image of the neo-liberal subject under globalization (Choi, 2005). However, Mr. K. also complained about how the girls wore their uniform, their tidiness and style of their hair and other behaviours, so we can see that Mr. K.'s ideal image of female students also included a traditional feminine image.

*Teacher 3: Ms. C. (female English teacher, has taught English subject for 3 years, it was her second year teaching English in the current school at the time of the interview)*

Ms. C.'s school is taking in students whose academic achievements are not that good, and some of the students even have problems with dyslexia or difficulty in concentrating, which makes her work of teaching quite difficult. However, what concerns Ms. C. is not to push students to work on impossible academic tasks, but to



let students find their own ways to live with dignity and responsibility and be able to take care of themselves. She talked about students' rebellious behaviours in school, and said that, although the school always emphasized "loving" and "caring", and claimed itself to be a "love and care campus", some of the teachers did not try their best to establish that kind of 'love and care' teacher-student relationships. She explained that vandalism by students is due to their lack of sense of belonging to the school. She elaborated that the students would never have a sense of taking responsibility and duty if they don't understand they are belonging to a group or to a place, which means that they would not learn the concept of citizenship, which implies a set of rights and responsibilities. In addition, she also showed her worries that her students only uphold their rights but never thought about the responsibilities that followed. What irritated her was that students only concentrated on the rights that benefited them but neglected the needs or situations of others. She commented that these egocentric students would not be good citizens.

For Ms. C., her teacher identity is to influence students' ways of thinking. She mentioned that some of her students always feel that the others are looking down on them, and that, whenever the teachers point out their problems, they think that it's the teachers' prejudice towards them. Their lack of self-confidence, being self-centred, and their ignorance about the world has made them think in extreme ways. Ms. C. regarded herself as a teacher who tried to understand them and could build up a friendly relationship with students, so that she could influence them to build up a sense of empathy, so that they would not only concentrate on themselves, but also be concerned about the feelings and situations of others. She thought that the role of teacher was quite hard because a teacher has to create a balance between managing the class's order and maintaining a good relationship with students. She said that there was a consensus in the education sector that the academic achievement of students can determine the "life or death" of the school. Therefore, it is necessary to manage the order in the classroom to make sure the teaching schedule would not be left behind. However, Ms. C. also clarified that her strategy was to maintain a good relationship with the class rather than discipline them to manage the order of the classroom.



Meanwhile, though Ms. C. tried not to use disciplinary methods to teach her students, she was very worried about the future of her students. She admitted that the competition in society is getting keener, and that, without academic achievement, she saw very little opportunity for her students. She also compared her students with those students in the academically high achievement schools, in which students were very aggressive and ambitious in many ways because they knew how keen the competition was in society.

From the above teachers' cases, we can see how teachers position themselves in school and in relation to their students. They are not only illustrating their own teachers' identities, but at the same time, they were trying to influence their students to grow in a certain way, which is in fact, their conception or understanding of what "citizen" means. Mr. P. might be an exceptional case because he is one of the most progressive teachers I have known; but in the case of Mr. K. and Ms. C., we can see that the idea of competition and the concerns about academic achievement etc., are both reflecting the influence of economic globalization on the education system in Hong Kong.

Furthermore, in the students' cases, the influence of globalization can still be seen. Yet the students' side of the story suggests that their understanding of citizenship is more about the personal or human relational level.

*Student Group 1: Form 6 Liberal Studies students aged 17 to 18. Most of them are from middle-class families, and they are regarded as being an academically achieving group because only half of the students could come back to the same school to do Form 6 after their Hong Kong Certificate Examination.*

Before the group interview with Liberal Studies students, I thought that these students, who have studied so much about Hong Kong and many other social issues of their society, must have a lot to talk about on their understanding of "citizenship". However, when I asked them what did they think "citizenship" is about, their answers were only limited to the rights and responsibilities of voting, then the group

discussion stopped. It was when I asked more about the content of the Liberal Studies subject that the concept of “citizenship” became more apparent.

For instance, when I asked them which part of the syllabus they think they like or dislike, three of the students expressed how they hated the “Hong Kong studies” section, but preferred to explore more on the “Human Relations” section. The reason was a technical one because, while Liberal Studies claimed to be a subject which allowed critical thinking, independent analysis and expression of personal points of view, the students found that it was not as free as it claimed to be when answering the questions in the test paper. They argued that, while the subject does not have a concrete marking scheme as the other subjects do, there are still some model answers in the teachers’ minds, and they worried that, when they participate in the public exam, their result would be solely dependent on the personal judgment of the marker who marks their papers. Quincy and Jody, the other two girls who said they did not hate “Hong Kong studies”, also admitted that they sometimes got discouraged after receiving the marks of the quizzes, because sometimes when they thought their personal views were backed up with logical and substantial arguments, their teachers would think their arguments were not sufficient to support the point they made. Another comment about the “Hong Kong Studies” section by Quincy and Jody was that they did like to study about the education system, mass media and rule of law in the section, but they doubted that the syllabus covered enough about the “Basic Law” section, and that in that section, the major focus was on emphasizing how important the “One Country, Two Systems” is, but never talked about the other laws under the Basic Law.

But on the other hand, when I asked them what they thought the syllabus of the new Liberal Studies should include, all of them thought that Hong Kong Studies is an essential part. Jody explained, ‘To be rational, as a Hong Kong citizen, there’s no reason that you don’t know what is Basic Law.....the school should teach some basic knowledge about that since children are young, and it should be regarded as some basic knowledge that everyone should know. I am not asking them to study the law in detail, but at least they should know how Hong Kong change, and the history of Hong Kong as a colony.’ Besides, they all thought that the other modules were

quite related to the lives of Hong Kong people. For instance, they discussed about how difficult it was to educate the children nowadays, e.g., “they don’t ever read newspaper or pay attention to the world, but just spend time in playing computer or video games or only read the tabloids.” Therefore, Jody commented that the module on “Human Relationships” is quite useful for Hong Kong people to learn how to understand the psychological development of children and learn how to educate and raise them. Also, Jenny said that the other modules of Liberal Studies in the current curriculum, including “Environmental studies” and “China studies”, are quite essential to learn too, because these problems are closely related to Hong Kong people’s lives. ‘At least they should know who the State Leader of the China government is!’ Jenny said. However, Quincy claimed that the role of the Liberal Studies subject should not only be to provide information or knowledge, but should also teach about social values and human responsibilities.

We can see that these students were actually expressing their views on what knowledge the Hong Kong citizens should have. However, when they talked about values, they obviously held very different views, especially when they discussed the issue of economic development versus environmental protection. This discussion was very interesting because the students were actually revealing their own conceptions of “Hong Kong citizen” and “global citizen”. After asking them to describe their image of Hong Kong citizens (workaholic, materialistic, smart, busy, fast living pace etc.), Quincy talked about how Hong Kong people relied too much on electronic devices and harmed the earth. Then the girls started to argue about whether it was just the problem of Hong Kong or the whole world. For instance, Vivian thought that in order to catch up with the globalization trend, it was unavoidable for Hong Kong to urbanize and develop, which might harm the environment. Vivian thought they the problem of development was a world-trend, that all countries in the globe had to face this problem, not just Hong Kong. However, Quincy pointed out that Hong Kong was developing excessively economically, just as the United States did which, at the same time, did not take up their responsibility as a member of the globe, to spend resources on environmental and cultural protection as the European countries did. Then the girls started to agree

with Quincy, because they found that the government's advertisement or promotion about 'green life' or energy saving is more about "saving the blue sky of Hong Kong", instead of joining the other countries to work against global warming. At the end of discussion, all of them found that the "HK-centric" view of the Hong Kong government lacked a "global vision" and global responsibilities.

*Student Group 2: The interviews with the South Asian girls were done separately. Tyra, a 19 year old Pakistani girl, had a half-hour interview with me separately before the other girls arrived. Eva (13 years old) and Mona (15 years old) were also Pakistani and they were good friends; their first interview was conducted with another girl, Malisa, who was from another country (which I did not take down). As I found that Malisa was always distracting the other girls' conversation, I decided to do another interview with Eva and Mona, who told me more about themselves with the help of the photographs they took.*

The focus of the interview with this group of students was a bit different from that with the Liberal Studies students. While in the previous group, my focus was more on how Liberal Studies influenced their understanding of the concept of citizenship, the interview with the south Asian girls, mainly Pakistani girls, was more about their personal lives. After the interview with the Liberal Studies students, I found that the term "citizenship" or "citizens" was really a slippery term that might easily direct the research participants to the "political ways". Therefore, in the interviews with these girls, I tried not to mention those two terms, but instead, tried to phrase it in other way. For instance, I would ask them what they felt about living in Hong Kong, or whether there were any differences for them in living in Hong Kong or in Pakistan; or at another time, I asked how they would describe themselves, would they call themselves as "Hong Kong residents", or introduce themselves as a "Pakistani", or a "Muslim"? The answers of the three Pakistani girls were quite different.

Tyra, the older girl in the group, told me that although she did not know how to speak Cantonese or read or write Chinese, she considered herself as a Hong Kong resident, and would like to spend the rest of her life living here. She said that she had made many friends here, and she had got used to the lifestyle and living pace in



Hong Kong. Although, in many ways, her religion had made her very different from her classmates, she said that she and her classmates got along well, and she even had local Hong Kong friends. But for Eva and Mona, they were more confused about my questions. As they were younger, their mobility was more restricted by their family, and so their social networks seemed to be limited to the other Pakistani girls in the community centre, their family members (e.g. siblings or cousins) or a few classmates. The situation of Eva and Mona was quite different too, because of their family background and the school they went to.

Eva was from a wealthier family compared to Mona, and she lived in private housing with her parents and her sister. Although she and her family were also Muslim, her family seemed to be less restrained by the religious laws because she had more freedom to go out, she could wear jeans (but Mona sometimes had to wear hijab (the scarf covering her head) or very loose clothes), and the school Eva was going to was an international school with students from many different countries, mainly Canada. For Mona, the religious influence was much more apparent for her. Not only how she dressed, but she also needed to travel for an hour to go to school, which was an Islamic college. Mona told me that she used to go to a similar school to Eva (same organization but different branch), but later, because her father thought the school had a bad influence on Mona, he decided to change Mona to an Islamic school.

Therefore, though Mona and Eva shared similar a religion, their interpretations were sometimes different. For example, Eva was very confident and sure that she would like to have a career in the future, and thought that even if she got married, she would ask her husband to stay with her in Hong Kong. She told me that even though her parents forbade her to have any contact with other boys, she actually chatted with boys all the time in school. On the other hand, Mona had more struggles between her concepts of marriage and career. She told me that the reason she was learning Cantonese and Chinese was that she would like to be a receptionist in the future. She said she used to imagine being a flight attendant, but later her Islamic teacher told them it is improper for girls to serve the men who are not their husband. Therefore she changed her mind and decided to be a receptionist. However, the fact is that her parents also forbade her to have any contact with boys, so when I reminded her that



she might have to meet many other men when she became a receptionist, surprisingly, Mona was not really upset. She then said that a career was not so important to her and that if her husband allowed her to go out to work, she could still be a receptionist. However, they also held similar views on some other things. For instance, they had discussed how disgusting it was to see some Hong Kong girls wearing mini-skirts or tight T-shirts which displayed so much of their body, and that both of them would never do so. Eva even complained about her sister wearing a swimming suit which showed her arms and legs when they went to the beach with her mother, her aunt and her cousins. She said that, although her sister was only 9 years old, she was growing up very fast and she didn't understand why her mother still allowed her to wear a swimming suit.

Except for the influence of their religion, both girls also showed what their family meant to their lives. Both of them said that they would tell almost everything to their mothers, and for most of the time they spent their leisure time with their family, instead of classmates or friends of their own. They did meet some friends in their school, Eva was more active in school and had more friends than Mona did. For Mona, although her school had about 80% of Hong Kong or Chinese students, she knew none of them and only made friends with other Pakistani girls.

Both girls also described themselves as "Pakistani" instead of "Hong Kong-Pakistani" girls. They both said that Hong Kong was just a place they were living now, but they may both go back to Pakistan if they have to get married. Although Eva said that she preferred to live in Hong Kong rather than Pakistan, she would not reject the idea of going back, because she has a lot of cousins living there, and she wouldn't be lonely. The fact is that both Eva and Mona would go back to Pakistan to visit almost every year with their family during summer vacation. Therefore, Pakistan is not an unfamiliar place for them. However, compared to Tyra, their sense of belonging to Hong Kong is not very strong.

On the other hand, in their interview, when I asked about why Eva did not try to learn Cantonese or Chinese as Mona did, Eva told me that her teacher in her school once said that it's the world of English. So, as long as her English is good, she could

always find a good job in Hong Kong or other places of the world. Eva elaborated that she would like to work and travel to other places around the globe instead of just staying in Hong Kong. But Mona, immediately challenged Eva that if her husband did not allow her to do so, she could not escape from her family duty.

#### **(D) Conclusion**

In conclusion, the two objectives of the pilot research could be answered by the materials collected from the interviews. Several major themes could be found in the text in response to the question about the conception of citizenship, including teachers' identities and the Pakistani girls' religious identities, and also some characteristics of the ideal citizens under the trend of economic globalization.

We can see that the teachers' interviews illustrated what characteristics they considered that their students should possess as "citizens in waiting" or "citizens". They also showed how teachers think about themselves as teachers, their own teacher identities, their role and the type of teacher they wanted to be, which was actually in relation to the way they wanted to influence students. That is, being a role model to the students, their own identities were actually how they conceptualized the concept of citizenship.

In addition, from the interviews with teachers and the Liberal Studies girls, I found that, though the school ethos may have some kind of influence on students, it may actually be because of the type of students the school enrolled. For instance, if the school enrolls students more from a middle-class background or with better academic achievement, the ethos of the school, and the kind of citizenship that the school promoted would be different. The Liberal Studies students has also mentioned that the tradition of the school from all the higher form students or alumni also influenced the whole ethos and the atmosphere of the school. Therefore, when I conduct my research, I should consider the background of the school.

On the other hand, students' own conceptions of their identities were less idealistic, but more related to their own lives which they were living. For the girls studying Liberal Studies, their understanding about what a Hong Kong citizen or a "global

citizen” should be was quite clear, but maybe quite superficial compared to what they really cared about. What I found is that they realized how important it is to be academically-achieving, and so their major focus was always about their examinations and studies. Somehow, they were those who knew the rules of the game and were “playing the game”. They might not totally agree with the government agenda of citizenship, but they tried to make an easier path for themselves to enter society by studying well and behaving as a good citizen. As for the Pakistani girls, their identities were more about their religion, their own culture and their connections with their family. Except Tyra, who expressed her sense of identification to Hong Kong, I found it difficult to draw ideas from the interview with Eva and Mona.

The theme of globalization is quite apparent in the text too. Not only Mr. K. and Ms. C. mentioned the competition of the “real world”, the Liberal studies students also talked about similar things in their discussion. Moreover, the role of English as an essential tool for Hong Kong students to catch up with the globalization trend was very apparent. Learning or mastering of English, the power language, has become one of the indexes to identify whether that student has the ability to enter the competition. In fact, the whole theme of globalization and competition has always been the major theme of the educational reform in the past 10 years after the return of sovereignty in 1997. So I could not tell whether it was the truth that the teachers and students were feeling or witnessing this pressure and competition under economic globalization, or if they were influenced by the rhetoric of the government.

For the second purpose of the pilot research in search of the relationship between the Liberal Studies subject and the citizenship education agenda of the Hong Kong government, I found that not only did the Liberal Studies students find that the subject had a hidden marking scheme that was not written in black and white but which students were expected to master, the example of Mr. P. also provided evidence that the new Liberal Studies subject which will start in September 2009 may become a tool for the government to “brain-wash” students. Mr. P. said that he had checked the results of his students in the Integrated Humanities subject last year, and found some hints about the “brain-washing” theory. Mr. P. claimed that, as

Integrated Humanities is a subject implemented three years ago by the Education and Manpower Bureau (now Education Bureau) as a transitional subject for teachers to prepare themselves to teach Liberal Studies in the new high school system, its syllabus and form of examination were almost identical to that of Liberal Studies. He found that his students, whom he thought were critical and always performed well in class, could get grade A or B in the “Technology and Society” module, but at the same time, got D, E or even F (fail) in another module, “Gender, Marriage and Human Relationships”. He explained that, in the module on “Technology and Society”, the topics were normally discussed in sociological ways, which also accepted more critical or non-mainstream opinions. On the contrary, in the module on “Gender, Marriage and Human Relationships”, he found that many other schools (the mainstream way of teaching) were applying a psychological approach to teach this module and that the concepts in this module were more fixed, personal (is political?) and often related to ethical or moral issues. Therefore, when he used the sociological module to talk about the construct of gender, the power relation of marriage or human relationships, that might become the reason that disadvantaged his students’ performance in this module. The example of Mr. P. has prompted me to question the purpose of implementing the subject of Liberal Studies: whether it is to train or develop students’ critical and independent thinking, or to ask students to realize by themselves what the “mainstream” answer is to the questions? While civil and moral education can be viewed as the apparent/formal citizenship education with a clear agenda, whether Liberal Studies would become a subtle tool for the government to teach the students to know model answers should be questioned.

## Appendix D

## Profile of Students and Teachers of the two schools

The following tables present the profile of the students and teachers participated in the interviews of the two schools. Although I have shown that the two schools had their own social class ethos based on the majority of class orientation of its students, I will indicate some of the students' possible social class with their family background to show the divergence of participants within the school. It should be noted that not all of the students have given all the details about their family members or the socio-economic status of their families, therefore, the class background of students is primarily determined by three factors: (i) students' parents' occupations referencing the class structure developed by Wong and Lui (1992); (ii) whether or not students' families were receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA); and, (iii) the geographical locations and types of housing they were living in.

<b>Students' Name (Sex)</b>	<b>Types of Research Method</b>	<b>Age and School Grades</b>	<b>Social Class /Family Background</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Identified Personal Characteristics &amp; School Engagement</b>
Yvonne (F)	Individual Interview	13 years old, Secondary 2	Working Class. (Single mother family applied for CSSA. Mother worked as manual worker. Lived in public housing in New Territories)	Chinese	Junior choir member; actor of the school anniversary drama. Failed to apply for subsidy to join the choir trip in the Extended learning week. Graduated from St. Caroline's primary school. Elder sister was also student of St. Caroline's College.



Ana (F)	Group Discussion	15 years old, Secondary 4	Middle Class. (Lived in private housing in Central western district of Hong Kong Island nearby the school)	Chinese	Joined Art Tour to Taiwan in the Extended learning week. More critical about school policies.
Jane (F)	Group Discussion	15 years old, Secondary 4	Middle Class. (Lived in private housing in Central western district of Hong Kong Island nearby the school)	Chinese	Very active in school activities who used to be members of Choir, Art club and Dance Club at the same time. Finally quitted Art and Dance Club and stayed in Choir. Later went to Germany for the choir performance trip in the Extended learning week. Soloist in the interclass drama competition
Carman (F)	Group Discussion	15 years old, Secondary 4	Middle Class. (Lived in private housing in Central western district of Hong Kong Island nearby the school)	Chinese	We first met in the Shaolin martial art class. Less expressive in the group, but very creative and love drawing (pencil sketch). She wasn't interested in joining the activities in Extended Learning week so finally chose to join the Tai O

					Chinese martial art cultural trip with Leah which held in Hong Kong.
Leah (F)	Group Discussion	15 years old, Secondary 4	Middle Class. (Lived in private housing in Central western district of Hong Kong Island nearby the school)	Chinese	We first met in the Shaolin martial art class. The most quiet in the group and the most religious. Self-identified as dedicated Catholic and actively participated in social services and religious meeting through the Catholic group in the school.
Jojo (F)	Individual Interview	17 years old, Form 6	Intermediate to middle class (Father was owner of small firm, mother was housewife. Lived in private housing in New territories)	Chinese	Choir member; Close relationship with mother though having small dispute with mother to strive for have more freedom to participate in school activities. Researcher witnessed the incident that she was critically reproached by her class teachers about her unsatisfactory final exam results at the corridor in front of the staff room where everyone could notice.
Mary (F)	interviewed with Karen	17 years old, Form	Middle class. (Lived	Chinese	Sports volleyball team leader and

		6	in private housing in Wan Chai District)		sports captain of house in school; Member of HK Youth Volleyball national team. Graduated from a CMI elite primary school in Wan Chai District.
Karen (F)	Interviewed with Mary	17 years old, Form 6	Middle class. (Lived in private housing in Southern HK Island District)	Chinese	Member of the Junior Achievement Company Programme (JACP, a worldwide youth entrepreneurial programme). Graduated from a CMI elite primary school
Catherine (F)	Interviewed with Trisha	17 years old, Form 6	Middle Class. (Lived in private housing in Central western district of Hong Kong Island nearby the school)	Chinese	Graduated from St. Caroline's primary school. Was in the experiential class of learning Chinese language subject in PTH instead of Cantonese in F. 2.
Trisha (F)	Interviewed with Catherine	17 years old, Form 6	Unknown	Chinese	F. 6 representative of the Junior Achievement Company Programme (JACP, a worldwide youth entrepreneurial programme). Graduated from CMI primary school. Was in the experiential class of learning

					Chinese language subject in PTH instead of Cantonese in F. 2.
Amanda (F)	Individual interview; interviewed with Irene	19 years old, University Year 1 (Past student)	Middle Class. Father in the business sector; mother heavily involved in 3 children's education	Chinese	Vice-chairlady of Student Union in her Form 6. Mother was committee of Parent Teacher Association (PTA); elder and younger sister both studied in St. Caroline's. Graduated from St. Caroline's primary school and Form 7 of St. Caroline's College.
Irene (F)	Interviewed with Amanda	19 years old, University Year 1 Past student	Unknown	Chinese	Chairlady of "Fasting 18" Fund-raising event for East Timor in 2006
Ivy (F)	Individual interview	19 years old, Associate degree Year 1 (Past student)	Unknown	Chinese	Graduated from St. Caroline's primary school and Form 7 of St. Caroline's College. Was studying associate's degree after failing to enter undergraduate degree in universities.

Table 9 - Profile of students of St. Caroline's College

<b>Students' Name (Sex)</b>	<b>Types of Research Method</b>	<b>Age and School Grades</b>	<b>Social Class /Family Background</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Identified Personal Characteristics &amp; School Engagement</b>
Piano (F)	Individual Interview	19 years old, Form 6	Working Class. (Parents worked in wet market; Lived in public housing in the community (New Territories))	Chinese (Immigrated from China 3 years ago)	Finished primary, junior secondary and first year of senior secondary school in mainland China. Experienced discrimination from some of her classmates because of her Chinese immigrant identity; committee member of the Student Union. Problem about language (daily Cantonese speaking and the English subject )
Gigi(F)	Individual interview	21 years old, Form 5	Working Class (Lived in public housing in New Territories; family couldn't afford to pay for tutorial)	Chinese	Repeating Form 5 after getting zero marks in last HKCEE. Repeated in previous years of studies too but didn't want to reveal. Active volunteer in the library. Very studious and obedient to teacher which made her distinctive from her fellow classmates
Janet(F)	Individual Interview	18 years old,	Working Class to	Chinese	In the "elite class" of



		Secondary 4	Intermediate class  (Mother worked for relatives in their small business firm; Lived in public housing in the community (New Territories))		secondary 4. English Ambassador and the led the assembly in English during the English week in front of the whole school. Repeated Form 2 in the school because spent her early secondary school year in South Africa (boarding in relatives' home)
Sherry(F)	Individual Interview	17 years old, Secondary 4	Intermediate to middle class (Mother had her own business. Elder brother working as professional. Lived in private housing in the community (New Territories))	Chinese	In the "academically-low" class of secondary 4 but was the few students who really study in the class. Discipline prefect but did not enjoy the role. Expressed her eagerness to transfer to another school for many times because of her discontent about the school's discipline and academic atmosphere. Pressure to achieve academically because of her brother's success (university graduate)

April(F)	Individual Interview	16 years old, Secondary 4	Working Class  ( Lived in public housing in the community (New Territories))	Chinese	In the “academically-low” class of secondary 4 but was the few students who really study in the class. The few student that had good relationship with teachers. Discipline prefect and Form 4 representative of Student Union. Had studied in another school before.
Shawn	Individual Interview	17 years old, Secondary 4	Working Class  ( Lived in public housing in the community (New Territories))	Chinese	In the “academically-low” class of secondary 4 and one of those who skip classes and had discipline problem constantly. Dropped out of school before the term ended (June) during field work period. Changed to study in a vocational training course in hotel and catering management in July, 2010
Aalam (M)	Individual Interview	17 Years old, Secondary 2	Working Class  (Father worked for car trading firm; mother was	Pakistani	Used to study in another designated school mainly for Southern Asian children in 2005 in HK. Was back to Pakistan for 3

			housewife. Lived in public housing in another town in New Territories)		years and came back to HK in 2008. Entered this school and was forced to repeat again from Form 1. Wishing to become a policeman in Hong Kong.
Abbas (M)	Individual Interview	18 years old, Secondary 3	Working Class (Father worked in construction site and mother passed away; ;Lived in public housing in another town in New Territories.)	Pakistani	Was considered by the teachers as trouble-maker because of his disciplinary problem, and was forced to participate in the social skills programmed designed for Southern Asian boys. However, he was popular among the boys and perform well in sports. Actively engaged in the cricket team in school and joined the cricket training in the community. Wishing to become a professional cricket player representing Hong Kong to become famous internationally.
Lucia (F)	Individual Interview	17 years old, Secondary 3	Intermediate to Working Class (Father	Pakistani	Had been in Hong Kong for 7-8 years. Studied 3 years of Chinese primary school and later 3 years

			worked in small business firm and mother as housewife; lived in public housing in another town in New Territories)		of Islamic primary school, thus could speak very fluent Cantonese. Had lived in England, Pakistan and Hong Kong but considered Pakistani as her identity. Had quite a few local friends and was one of the few students that could really immersed into the Chinese community and understand Hong Kong local culture.
Ashar (M)	Interviewed with Saila	16 years old, Secondary 3	Intermediate to working Class  (Father worked as white-collar; but the family was living in public housing in the community in New Territories)	Nepalese	Born in Nepal and moved to Hong Kong with his family just one year before. Close family friend of Saila. Did well academically but a bit quiet and socially isolated from the other Southern Asian boys, and was asked to participate in the social skills programme designed for Southern Asian boys. Thought Hong Kong is safer and free and has higher living standard than in Nepal

Saila(F)	Interviewed with Asbar	15 years old, Secondary 3	Unknown	Nepalese	Moved to Hong Kong 2 years ago. Close family friend of Ashar. Academic achiever and was the top 3 students of the year of her form. Loved by teachers and her classmates because she was very helpful and talented
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**Table 10 - Profile of students of Peterson's Secondary School**

The following two tables are the profile of interviewed teachers in the two schools. As all the teachers and school principals' interviews were conducted individually and privately, and all of them were of Chinese ethnics, the "types of research methods" and "ethnicity" would not be specified in the tables.

<b>Teachers' Name (Sex)</b>	<b>Years in School</b>	<b>Previous teaching experience</b>	<b>Subject areas and Duties in School (And additional relationship with the school)</b>
Sr. Ellen (F)	11 years	Worked in the educational sector over 20 years. Was school principal in another girls' secondary school of the same Catholic missionary	School Principal. She became the supervisor of St. Caroline's School Management Board after transferred to another sisterhood school for the post as School Principal after the academic year of the field work (Sept, 2010).
Ms. Yeung (F)	8-9 years	Taught in St. Caroline's 2 years right after graduated; then returned the school 6 years ago	Teacher of Chinese language, Chin. History, CLC and religion; Current advisor of the student council, debate team and the commercial programme for training gifted students. Alumni of the school. Husband was also teacher in the same school
Mr. Kim(M)	15 years	About 20 years of teaching experiences	Gate-keeper of the school when I entered the field. Head of Civic & Current Affairs Education Team; Integrated Science teacher.



Ms Lisa	4 years	10 years of teaching experiences in total. Was teaching in a new established private school	English teacher concentrating on the teaching of senior forms; Teacher advisor of school drama and Career and further studies Team critical about Extended learning week. Alumni of the sisterhood school of the same Catholic missionary of St. Caroline's
Ms Cathy	19 years	19 years of teaching in St. Caroline's; first job after graduated from university	Former advisor of the student council; current advisor of Campus TV, Drama club and the school drama for public performance to celebrate school's anniversary; Alumni of the school
Ms. Chan	10 years	About 12 years of teaching experiences	English teacher of F. 1, 2 and F.5. Judge of the English drama competition and English public speaking contest
Mr. Au (M)	3 years	Started teaching in St. Caroline's 3 years ago right after graduated from university	Teacher of History and Liberal Studies of senior forms and Integrated Humanities of junior forms. Studied Sociology and History in the university thus sensitive about the middle-class ethos in the school.
Mr. Tam	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 years teaching in a regional elite school which students were mainly from working-class background	New male teacher teaching Integrated Science (junior forms) and Chemistry (senior form); teacher advisor of the Career and further studies Team in school, and teacher-in-charge of the Outward-bound training in Extended Learning Week;
Ms. Winnie	16 years	Start teaching since 1995 after graduated from teaching diploma	Teacher of Home Economics, Chinese language and just started to teach Liberal studies because the change of curriculum under education reform. Alumni of the sisterhood school of the same Catholic missionary of St. Caroline's

Table 11 - Profile of teachers of St. Caroline's College

Teachers' Name (Sex)	Years in School	Previous teaching experience	Subject areas and Duties in School (And additional relationship with the school).
Mr. Cheung (M)	3 years	28 years in the educational sector. Was the school principal of another school for about 8 years before entering	School Principal. Had taught in Peterson's school for a year 26 years ago. Took up the position of School Principal 3 years ago but retired after the academic year of the field work (Sept, 2010).

		Peterson	
Ms. Lee (F)	3 years	18 years of teaching experiences in total; 15 years teaching in another school	The female head discipline teacher of the school and teacher advisor of form 1; Leader of the uniform group Girl Guides; Class teacher of the special vocational training class of Form 5. Teaching English, Commerce and Economic in school.
Mr. Tim(M)	3 years part-time; 1 year full-time	28 years in the educational sectors, taught in 3 other schools (private & subsidized) before retirement in 2006.	Full-time English substitute teacher for the academic year 2009=2010, but came to Peterson's school on and off as substitute teacher and was colleagues of the school principal Mr. Cheung
Mr. Kwok (M)	4 years	24 years teaching experiences in total; 20 years of teaching in other schools	PE, Maths teacher; Head of extra-curricular team; the Class teacher of the Southern Asian Class of Form 3 (had been the Class teacher of the same class in previous year). Very close relationships with most of the Southern Asian students.
Ms. Ting	14 years	Taught in Peterson's school for 14 years after graduated from university	Head of Guidance team, and continued studies in several diplomas for special education and counselling. Teaching Integrated Science of junior forms and Chemistry of senior forms.
Ms. Jan	Over 10 years	Taught in Peterson's school over 10 years since start of teaching career	Teacher of Commerce and Economics. Expressed disappointment about the politics between teachers which affected her students.

**Table 12 - Profile of teachers of Peterson's Secondary School**

## Appendix E

## Profiles of the Two Schools in the Academic year 2009-2010

Features	Peterson's Secondary School	St. Caroline's College
Year of Establishment	Mid-1970s (30-40years)	Mid-19 <sup>th</sup> century (over 100 years)
Location of Schools	A Satellite Town in New Territories	Central and Southern District of Hong Kong Island
Sponsoring Body	Local Catholic Organization	Global Catholic Mission
Religious Background	Catholicism	Catholicism
Financial Status	Aided	Aided
Students composition	Co-educational	Single-sex for girls
Number of Students	Around 500	Around 1400
Academic Banding (According to the academic achievement levels of admitted S1 students)	Band 3 – Academically-low band	Band 1 -- Academically-high band
Official Language/Medium of Instruction(MOI)	Chinese in general but English for Non-Chinese Speaking Class	English & Putonghua as official languages/ English as the major MOI
Curriculum	Grammar (Used to be Pre-vocational)	
Student Council/Board of Student Representatives	Student Union formed by F.6 students	Student Council formed by F.6 students as executive members, with F.4 students as committee members
Length of time in field	Formal entry: From 22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb to 12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2010	Formal entry: From 29 <sup>th</sup> April to 12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2010

Table 13 - Profiles of the Two Schools in the Academic year 2009-2010

## Appendix F

## Letters to School Principals for access to school for research

\_\_\_/F, Block \_\_, \_\_\_Terrace,

\_\_\_Road,

N.T., Hong Kong

\_\_\_<sup>th</sup> January, 2010

The Principal

\_\_\_ College

\_\_\_, Hong Kong

Dear \_\_\_,

I am a Ph. D student of Moray House School of Education, the University of Edinburgh (Scotland, U.K.). I am writing to ask for your kind consideration to let me conduct a research project on the education of citizenship at your school.

My doctorate research aims to explore how citizenship is taught and learned in schools in the context of educational reform and the new curriculum of the new senior secondary school system. I would investigate how students learn and conceptualize the emphasized and promoted “Hong Kong” values, attitudes, dispositions, behaviour traits or “qualities” in the schooling process, and how they construct their citizen identities. Although students’ identity construction would be influenced by many other factors (e.g. Family background, socio-economic status, religion, ethnics, societal culture and mass media etc.), school as one of the most important social institutions have much impact on students’ conceptualization and

interpretation of the embedded images of citizens. As moral and civic education is implemented in an interdisciplinary, “whole-school” approach in Hong Kong, students would hence get in touch with different ideologies and values through activities within and outside the classrooms.

Therefore, in order to examine thoroughly the dynamics between the new curriculum, the school, the teachers and the students in the interpretation of Hong Kong citizenship, I sincerely ask for your permission to conduct an ethnographic research in your school for 2-3 days weekly starting from February, 2010 until the end of the academic term (summer vacation). I promise that all my classroom observation and participation of school activities would be under the agreement of the teachers in charge. In addition, all in-depth interviews would be conducted in consideration of regular teaching activities. I would adhere to the research ethics that all the information I gathered in this research would be used solely for academic purposes. Besides, the names of the school and the research participants would remain anonymous in all academic or non-academic writings and presentations.

To provide further information for you and all the teachers in school, I have listed out my research methods, contents and research purposes (please refer to the attachment). Besides, to lessen the heavy workload of teachers, and to build up trustful relationships with students, I would like to offer the school my voluntary help on different school activities. I was an undergraduate student of the School of Journalism and Communication of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and had worked in \_\_\_\_ (newspaper) as a reporter for half year before I graduated. I had also completed my M. Phil. degree on gender and education under the supervision of Prof. \_\_\_\_\_ (CUHK). Thus I am familiarized with sociological theories, gender issues, educational studies and cultural studies. I hope my knowledge and skills could assist the teachers and staffs in your schools under the pressure of first year implementation of the new senior secondary school system. For instances, I could help in tutoring students’ homework, supervising students’ research project in their project-based learning, preparing teaching materials, and teaching or assisting classes for “Other learning experiences” or extra-curricular



interest groups (e.g. Campus-reporters training, video editing class, Chinese writing class and photography class etc.).

In Hong Kong, while previous studies had discussed about the civic or national education in schools, many studies only covered the overall picture of civic education by questionnaire or textual analysis of curriculum guidelines. Grounded educational research in Hong Kong is less valued and underdeveloped compared to western societies. Hence, your permission for my entry into your school not only benefits my research, but also significantly enhances the development of qualitative research of local educational studies.

I sincerely wish to obtain your authorization to conduct my research in your school. I am looking forward to receiving your reply. My contact details are as follow:

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Wing-huen LEE

Ph. D student,

Moray House School of Education,

University of Edinburgh, Scotland, U.K.

**Attachment: Research Methods, Contents and Purposes in schools**

<b>Methods</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Purposes</b>
Semi-participate Observation	Space: playground, corridors Time: assembly, recess, lunchtime and after school	To observe the social interactions between students and their different activities (official school activities and personal levels)
Classroom Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple ways of sitting in the classroom: either as a bystander, or join in students' group discussion or group work</li> <li>• Target students: First year senior secondary school students in the new senior secondary school curriculum (F.4 classes)</li> <li>• Target subjects/lessons: Class-teachers' lessons, Liberal Studies, Religious Studies, "Other Learning Experiences" classes and all other classes related to moral and civic education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To investigate what social issues and materials are selected by teachers, and how teachers make use of these teaching materials to present the concepts of citizenship or related values and attitudes</li> <li>• To observe the interaction, discussion and dynamics between teachers and students and among students in the classroom</li> </ul>
Participate in/observe school activities	To participate in school events including school picnic, educational tour, leadership training camp and sports meeting etc.	To discover the official "good student" or "good citizen" image of the school through these activities
In-depth Interviews	Target interviewees: representatives of the school's administrative team or school principals, teachers of liberal studies and Moral & Civic education team, and other teachers and students	To investigate (1) the school's ideal image of its students (as future citizens); (2) teachers and students own conceptions of citizenship and Hong Kong identity; (3) teachers' comments about their students
Documentary Data Collection	School diaries, school rules, school magazines/journals, or even self-evaluation reports	To obtain background information of the school, including the founding organization, the history, school mottos, school ethos and student admission, and try to figure out how much the school has influenced students' understanding of citizenship and their construction of citizen identities.

**Table 14 - Research Methods, Contents and Purposes in schools**

## Appendix G                      Letters to invite teachers for interviews

Dear Miss/Mr \_\_\_\_\_,

I am Dorothy, the Ph.D student who had worked in the campus for my research in the past few months. We have met a few times and thank you for your help throughout the research period. I would like to invite you for a research interview to share your view about the school ethos and your observation about students' culture and behaviours.

My research is to investigate how different school culture and the different class/academic background of students may influence the citizen identities construction of students. In particular, what kind of values, habits or behaviours (cultural/social citizenship) are taught and emphasized in the schooling process in different schools. Through the interview, I would like to understand the view and observation of teachers about their students and the culture and value of the school (i.e., the promoted virtues and the "actual" value/culture among students). As I did not have the opportunity to enter classroom to witness the interaction between teachers and students, your sharing will be essential to supplement what I had observed and encountered in my fieldwork in school,

The interview will last for about 1 hour, and I will try my best to do the interview at a time that is most convenient to you. It could be any date before I go back to UK on 10 September. If you have any enquiries or suggestions on the place and time about the interview, please feel free to contact me through my mobile which is \_\_\_\_\_. You are also welcome to reply me through this email which I constantly check out. It will be much appreciated if you would agree to participate in the research.

Thank you for your patience in reading this long email. I am looking forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Wing-huen LEE

Ph.D. Candidate (Education, Community and Society)

Simon Laurie House

Moray House School of Education

The University of Edinburgh

# Appendix H      Outline of Interview Questions

## School Principals and Teachers

### 1. Background Information

- Years of teaching (in that school /entire teaching or administrative experiences)
- Subjects and form/class teaching
- Other posts held in the school (Administrative team? Discipline team? Moral & Civic Education Team? PTA/Student Council? Student Club supervisors?)

### 2. The School

- How would you describe this school? What is the special thing that makes this school unique? (School tradition? Ethos? Students? The teacher team?)
- What aspects of students do the school emphasized/valued? (Academic achievement? Conduct? Creativity? Leadership? English?)
- How do you value the new senior secondary school curriculum?
- What do you consider the most valuable thing(s) in this school
- What is the thing(s) that you think the school should improve?

### 3. Their Students

- Can you describe the characteristics of students in your school
- Can you compare your students with teenagers in the society?
  - Superior? Inferior? Better? Worse?
- Do you think your students are competent to live in the society when they graduate?
- Can you describe your relationship with students? Is there any difference between your relationship with different groups of students (in relation



to age? subject? gender? ethnics?) Or compare your relationships with students of your previous schools?

- Favourite Students (in class/in school)? Why?
- If you have a chance to speak to your students, what would you like to tell them/share with them
- What is your expectation to your students?

#### 4. Teachers identities

- How do you feel working in this school?
- Do you regard yourself as a good teacher? Why? Why not?
- What kind of teachers do you want to be?
- How do you position yourself /your role in this school?
- What do you think you have influenced to your students
- What is the most satisfying experience throughout the years (in this school?)

#### 5. Others

- What is your opinion about the education reform?
- What is your view towards the values and abilities emphasized in the curriculum reform?
- In your opinion, what kind of students/graduates is needed in Hong Kong society?
- What kind of qualities/abilities you think they should have?

### **Students**

#### 1. Background Information

- Family background
  - social/economic : jobs of parents and part-time job of students
  - Where do you live? (community; types of accommodation)
  - family structure, relationships between family members

- religion, family tradition or general habits of family
- How important is your family/religion/family tradition means to you?
- How long have you been to Hong Kong?

## 2. The School

- General School life
  - How do you feel about this school?
  - What is the meaning of “going to school”?
  - What do you like/dislike about your school?
  - How do you feel about the school rules and the school tradition/ethos?
- Academic
  - How significance is your academic achievement influence you?
  - How much time do you spend in your study/homework each day/week?
  - Do you attend any tutorial classes outside the school?
- Other school activities
  - Hobbies/ Sports/ Interest?
  - Can you share your experience of joining school activities?
  - Experience of participating in school management? (Through student council? Through class representatives?)
  - What do you do after school/outside school?
- Social life
  - Popularity (most popular teachers/students; reasons behind)
  - Friendships in school (in class, in the same form, across different forms)
  - Different grouping of friends/students (Name, characteristics, status among students/teachers)
  - Romance, Love and Sexuality
- Space
  - Favourite Space for what activities?

- Hidden corner out of sight from teachers

### 3. Local Community

- Relationship with neighbourhood

### 4. Being a “Hong-Konger”

- Can you tell me the characteristics of being a “Hong Konger”?
- (To students from other ethnics) How would you describe yourself? Based on your religion? Your home country? Or as Hong Konger?
- (To Chinese students) How would you describe yourself to foreigners? (Hong Konger? Chinese? Chinese from Hong Kong? Hong Konger from China?)

### 5. Language

- The experience of learning English
- The experience of learning Cantonese/Chinese (for new immigrants students and students from other ethnics)
- How language influences your social life and your daily life living in the community?

### 6. Others

- Critical Social incidents
- Controversial issues/news related to students

# **Appendix I                      Detail about Document Collection in the field and Specific occasions for observation**

## **Document Collected in the field**

### **Peterson Secondary school**

- School Report
- School Three-Years Plan
- The Use of Special Grants for NCS students Plan 2009-2010
- The School Development Fund Plan 2009-2010
- Teaching Materials of Chinese Language for NCS students
- Newspaper cutting (about the school changing into a designated school admitting NCS students)

### **St. Caroline's College**

- Annual School Plan 2009-2010
- List of "Staff Responsibilities, 2009-2010"
- School Organization Chart 2009-2010
- List of School Management Committee 2009-2010
- Students' Publication "Concord" (Collected copies including 3 issues of the academic year 2009-2010, 2 issues of the previous year(2008-2009) and one issue dated back to December, 2006.
- Newspaper cutting (Prizes won in Music/Sports/Arts; and about the celebratory events for the anniversary of the school)

## **Observations (General)**

### **Peterson Secondary school**

- Daily Morning Assembly. Generally the morning assembly will start with a section in the bible and then prayers. Sometimes a teacher would share their thoughts on social issues but this was very rare. On every first Monday morning

of each month, the school would have the flag-raising ceremony. The Head teacher of Civic education team would talk about topics related to China (e.g. earthquakes that happened around the time) and sometimes students would be invited to share too. Although the principal claimed that the scripts of students sharing were prepared by student themselves, I heard from students and teachers that the scripts were actually written by teachers in-charged of that day's assembly.

- Bi-weekly School Assembly interchanging with Bi-weekly Class-teachers' lessons. There were different themes in each week, and guests would be invited to give a seminar to students. Sometimes even two seminars at one time for local students and NCS students. Class-teachers' will follow the themes to show movies or do some sharing with their class.
- Different Classroom as substitute teacher: in some of the classes I managed to pay some games with the students, but for most of the time the students just ignored me and did their own thing. I could chat with some of the students and I have jotted down some interesting conversation in this process.
- Formal Classes: English classes, P.E. lessons, Integrated Science lessons etc.
- Playground, Corridor and Classroom during recess and lunchtime (students normally ran away immediately and would not stayed in the school campus)
- Staffroom (I was allocated a desk in the corner of the staff room) and outside staffroom

### **St. Caroline's College**

- Daily Morning Assembly. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the assembly would be done in Mandarin; on Tuesday and Thursday in English. Two students would be leading the whole assembly including making announcement, leading prayers and singing of hymns. All of the classes took turns to present in front of the whole schools on certain topics, either on environmental issues or social issues. Sometimes students would advertise their clubs' activities, or shared their experience of an exchange programme, social service activities or attending international students' conferences to the whole school(of course, usually



suggested by teachers/principal). The sharing from teachers and school principal was very often too.

- P.E. lessons(including Kung-fu lessons) and Dance lessons (the only formal lessons that I could observe because no teachers allowed me to enter their classroom)
- Playground, Corridors and Classroom during recess, lunchtime and after school
- Corridor outside staffroom (I was forbidden to go into the staffroom as told by the teacher who arranged my entry into the school)

### **Observation (Others -- special events or activities that may be outside campus or may not be on school days)**

#### **Peterson Secondary school**

- The Social Skills Training Scheme named “Amazing you Ambassador” organized by HK Christian Service – South Asian Happy Teens Club(Social service team of a community centre at Yuen Long). A social worker together with his Pakistani helper came to school every Tuesday after school to train a group of 12 Nepalese and Pakistani boys in the school. I was assigned by the Discipline Head to follow this scheme. Besides the training in school, we had also two outdoor trips including a hiking and wild-cooking activity and a night walk challenge.
- Parents’ Day
- All-rounded Learning Day: a day trip to the Park in the district with group of S.2 & S.3 NCS students
- The “Other Learning Experience” Activities for S.4 local students, including a one day photography trip to Wetland Park & Heritage Museum; courses for making ceramics and learning pop dance
- Extra-curricular activities(ECA) “lesson” on every Monday last lesson(according to the teachers, if extra-curricular activities are arranged after school, surely no students will attend or join the activities --- that’s why there’s ECA had become part of the formal curriculum)
- The Variety show – “Result of our students’ extra-curricular activities”

- English Week Activities (including Inter-house English Quiz Competition)
- Graduation Ceremony for F.5 & F.7 graduates
- School Closing Ceremony

### **St. Caroline's College**

- Celebration & Mass for Anniversary
- Rehearsal for Musical for 150<sup>th</sup> (Musical was held in a public stadium and tickets were sold. The teachers said it would be inappropriate for me to watch the show without a ticket even I suggested to help. So I could only observed the rehearsal in school)
- Parents Teachers Association (PTA) Annual General Meeting
- Subject Choice Seminars for F.5 graduates and parents – it's about the administrative procedure and subject choices for students who plan to study F.6 in this school
- Interclass English Public speaking competition of S.4
- Inter-class Dance Competition
- Reduction of Co2 Emission Talk
- Briefing sessions of S4 students' "Extended Learning Week"
- Annual School Speech Festival
- Graduation Ceremony for F.5 & F.7 graduates
- School Closing Ceremony

# Appendix J Other Learning Experiences Activities in the two schools

Activities Categories	St. Caroline's College	Peterson' Secondary School
<b>A Major OLE programme</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Extended Learning Week"</li> <li>2. OLE seminars every month ("Extended Learning afternoon")</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Life-wide Learning Day"</li> <li>2. Extra-curricular activities lesson (A one hour formal lesson scheduled as the last lesson on each Monday)</li> </ol>
<b>B Moral &amp; Civic Education</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Morning Assembly Sharing</li> <li>2. Class teachers' lessons</li> <li>3. Uniform &amp; Religious groups</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Morning Assembly Sharing</li> <li>2. Class teachers' lesson &amp; Bi-weekly School Assembly</li> <li>3. Uniform Groups</li> </ol>
<b>C Social Services</b>	<p><b>In school services:</b> Student Council, Prefects' board, IT prefects' board, Career assistants, Campus TV, Liturgical team, Chinese and English students' magazines, Green society, Stage Management team, Student Assistant of Character development team, Student librarians and various students clubs</p> <p><b>Outside-school services:</b> 1. Religious groups (6), social services teams (2) and uniform groups(3, Red Cross, Girl Guide, St. John Ambulance Brigade) 2. Compulsory social service scheme: all students have to participate in community services/charity works for at least 5 hours in each academic year</p>	<p><b>In school services:</b> Student Council, Catholic society, prefect board, I.T. team, student librarians, English Ambassadors, student helpers for Chinese learning group</p> <p><b>Outside-school services:</b> No official social services team particularly for community services, but teacher did introduce some of the Non-Chinese students to serve in nearby community centres. In addition, some social services experience is provided to students through uniform groups including Girl Guide and Scout.</p>
<b>D Aesthetic Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formal Lessons: Art class</li> <li>2. Every student plays at least one musical instrument</li> <li>3. School Choir, School Orchestras, School Band</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extra OLE lessons on Friday after school for S.4 students, including Photography, Dance and Ceramics classes</li> <li>2. Sub-groups in the "Extra-curricular activities lesson": (Pop music) Band training, electronic piano, drama, handicraft, 4-grid comic design, learning of Japanese and Hip-hop dance. Incidentally, all of these activities related to aesthetic development were run by service providers hired by the school.</li> </ol>
<b>E Physical Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formal P.E. lessons (include teaching Chinese Ku-Fu)</li> <li>2. Sports Society and Sports and athletics teams representing the school</li> <li>3. Formal Dance class (F.1 &amp; 2) &amp; Dance Society</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formal P.E. lessons</li> <li>2. Cricket Practices for Non-Chinese Speaking Students</li> <li>3. Basketball team representing the school</li> </ol>
<b>F Job-related Experience</b>	<p>Career talks and seminars mainly at the end of semester for F.5 &amp; F. 7 students</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Constant hotels and companies visits for students studying the subject "Tourism and Hospitality Studies"</li> <li>2. Career talks and information provided by social workers and community centres</li> </ol>
<b>G Others</b>		<p>Extra after-school section for NCS boys by Discipline &amp; Guidance team</p>

Table 15 - Other Learning Experiences Activities in the two schools

## Appendix K Summary of the characteristics of the dances taught in two schools

	St. Caroline's College : Chinese dance (& "Oriental" Dance)	Peterson's Secondary School: Hip-hop dance (& pop-jazz)
<b>Forms of participation of students</b>	<p>All S1 and S2 (previous Form 1 &amp; 2) students will have to enrol in compulsory dance lessons once a cycle (including dance examination each semester). Annual Dance Competition is organized in school each year. The dance culture is very strong which can be shown in the popularity of the dance club ("Dance Society"). The dance society is representing the school to compete in the Inter-school dance competition each year and its award-winning reputation is well-known in the academic field.</p> <p>Students are invited to design their own dance in their final dance examinations in their second year (final year of the compulsory dance lesson in school).</p>	<p>Hip-hop dance class is organized every Monday during the "Extra-curricular activities lesson", students could sign up to participate in any of these extra-curricular activities so participation is voluntary. Though some local students did sign up, because the majority of the participants are Nepalese girls, the local Chinese girls choose not to come to class if their friends are not with them. However, the group of Nepalese girls are very devoted to the class and are trained by the teacher (hired from outside school) to participate in performances and some small scale competitions.</p> <p>For the pop-jazz class, it's a one-off 3 lessons course just for S4 students organized for their "Other Learning Experiences" programme. Students performed in the annual talent quest as well.</p>
<b>Content and cultural background of the dances</b>	<p>Folk dances mainly based on traditional culture (of Chinese or other South-east Asian origins), mainly dances of the general public during traditional festivals and rituals originated from significant life events of people of that place. Therefore, these folk dances often put emphasis on "tradition" and "ethnicity", pinpointing their historical, cultural, geographical and most importantly, their "national" nature.</p>	<p>Hip-hop dances and pop-jazz based on the teachers' teaching, which is mainly from her own innovation and improvisation, or adopted from dance videos in popular culture.</p> <p>Hip-hop dance originated as a specific street culture/subculture in New York city (to express urban hardship and issues of oppression related to race, class etc.)</p> <p>Often associated with violence/anger because of its historical context.</p>
<b>Ways of expression</b>	<p>Emphasized on "softness", "soft" temperament; subtlety, elegance, demureness.</p>	<p>More aggressive, fierce expression of body language, often accompanied by large scale body movements.</p>
<b>The aesthetic elements</b>	<p>Costume and props: school provided.</p> <p>Music usually with ethnic characteristics or with distinctive cultural elements.</p>	<p>Casual wear or shorts, skinny pants, vests and tops; pop or hip-hop music (Consisting of rap, sometimes aggressive or "angry" languages....); No props.</p>
<b>Cultural Capital</b>	<p>Cultural capital in embodied form (etiquette, middle-classed femininities) and institutional form (performance/award in completion record in student portfolio).</p>	<p>Emotional Gain; Social recognition from local students as well as people in the community and society; limited cultural capital because of the under-value of hip-hop dance (record in student portfolio).</p>

**Table 16 - Summary of the characteristics of the dances taught in two schools**

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