

Chapter 5

A Comparative Analysis of Educational Policy for Citizenship Following Political Transitions: A Case Study of Egypt, Nepal, and Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a comparative policy analysis of education for citizenship in Egypt, Nepal, and Hong Kong. Having undergone significant political transitions, these countries provide useful case studies for examining the policy borrowing process for citizenship education before and after significant regime change. Using comparative policy discourse analysis framed by Phillips and Ochs's policy borrowing model, the authors examine the intersections between international expectations with national policy around citizenship education in countries which experienced drastic political transitions. This comparative policy analysis seeks to answer the following questions: How has national level policy on education for citizenship changed before and after shifts in regime governance? How are the examples of Egypt, Nepal, and Hong Kong reflective of global trends in citizenship education?

INTRODUCTION

Egypt, Nepal, and Hong Kong have all undergone significant political transitions since the 1990s. These contexts are useful case studies for examining the ways in which principled beliefs filter the application and adaptation of educational policies related to citizenship before and after significant regime change. Using comparative policy discourse analysis we examine national governments' strategic plans for Hong Kong, Nepal, and Egypt before and after recent regime changes. In 1997, the transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China (PRC) officially ended British colonial rule. After a ten-year civil war ended in 2006 and the dissolution of the monarchy in 2008, Nepal is in the process of transitioning to a federal democracy. Egypt is also undergoing a democratic transition following the 2011 uprisings that overthrew nearly three decades of the authoritative Mubarak regime. In each of these contexts, national education policy was used as a vehicle to transmit national beliefs related to changing understandings of citizenship. However, understandings of citizenship in each case are not context-dependent and are influenced by external factors, including international trends related to citizenship education.

Citizenship education has largely been developed from stable, "western" societies (Haste, 2004) as well as international organizations like UNESCO. However, during times of political instability and transitions, countries face challenges and require institutional and social change. In countries experiencing this type of change, an understanding of citizenship education, which is limited to the contextual experiences of stable democracies, may be neither sufficient nor contextually appropriate. As a result, examining these unique, influential windows of opportunity for change is necessary to fill the gap in research regarding citizenship education during times of transition, and the multilevel forces influencing the policy process.

This comparative policy analysis seeks to answer the following questions: How has national level education policy on education for citizenship changed before and after shifts in regime governance? How are the examples of Hong Kong, Nepal, and Egypt reflective of global trends in citizenship education? This analysis is framed by examining national level adaptation of international discourse on citizenship education as a national project. The objective is to analyze the policy relationship between international organizations and national governments pertaining to policy borrowing for citizenship education. In addition, a critical analysis of the socio-cultural norms that shape policy in each national context will be undertaken to highlight the strengths and limitations of citizenship education policy legitimization, implementation, and internalization.

INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE ON EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship education has been embedded in educational systems since the beginning of universal public education, as schools were often sites for the development of a nation's future citizenry (Tawil & Harley, 2004; Thornton, 2008; Westheimer, & Kahne, 1998; Wiseman, Astiz, Fabrega, & Baker, 2010). While this may take the form of a specific class, it also refers to promoting values related to individuals' societal roles (Waddell, 2013) and the institutionalization of political knowledge, values, and attitudes (El-Naggar & Smolska, 2009). Using the case of post-conflict Guatemala, Rubin (2016) argues that citizenship education is a "common prescription" to rebuild or develop democracy, especially as education is considered essential to creating "peaceful, tolerant, and democratic civic identities" (p.639).

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