

## CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AS BASIS OF EDUCATIONAL WORK IN MODERN PR CHINA

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**Abstract.** In modern world through education children and adults are supposed to learn how to be active and effective citizens. Citizenship education is about enabling people to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own lives and communities. Educators all over the world supporting the idea of directed and controlled citizenship education as the new area of education use as an argument that citizenship education is an ideal tool for exploring national and human values. China throughout centuries made a complex original system of educational activity which always aimed to make a Citizen of China and a Chinese from a human being. In different historical periods this process belonged to sphere of ethics, state service, philosophy, education etc.

The aim of this article is to represent the experiences of China as to organization of citizenship education and its dominant position in the whole educational system of the country today. Modern China is one of 15 countries of the worlds where citizenship education (in forms of political and patriotic education) is an official part and subject of the state educational program.

**Keywords:** P.R.China, citizenship education, patriotic education, political education, deliberated citizenship, directed education

## Introduction

A child is born just as a human being. At the time of birth, he\she is only a candidate to become a person. He\she cannot become a person and a personality in isolation: it needs to be learned how to become a person and a personality. It is the society that introduces him\her to the world of people; it regulates and fills its behavior with social content. In other words, a child is born as a human, but he\she is not born a person, but becomes it. A man acts as a person when he\she becomes able to make independent decisions and take responsibility for them to society, he\she is a relatively autonomous, free and independent subject of activity that is responsible for decisions and actions made, as well as for the community where he\she lives and feels as a part of it. Nowadays the processes have place in modern world need active, informed and responsible citizens; citizens who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and their communities and contribute to the state and worldwide process as well.

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In 2002 the UK officially became the first country in the world to introduce Citizenship education as a statutory subject in the National Curriculum, following the recommendations of the Crick Report of 1998. By now already 15 countries of the world have this subject as a part of educational programs to get people ready to live in the society (among them are Poland, France, China, Norway etc.) (Kalashnyk, 2017). But in fact the Chinese educational system can be seen as the first one to make citizenship education as the method and aim of educational work. In any historical period in this country education in all its forms (socialization, social education, formal and informal education, postponing knowledge by the means of schooling, training etc.) aimed to make a person to be a patriot of China, a worthy member of local community, a part of the society whose physical and moral qualities fit the general idea and social requirements of the Chinese state. In other words citizenship education was and is basis of educational work in China.

## Theoretical framework

### Terminological issues

In different historical periods the process of making a human child to become a Chinese whose aim of being was serving the state belonged to different spheres of ethics, state service, philosophy, education etc. That's why in Chinese pedagogical literature there are several terms for this educational process which can be used in parallel. The most common parallel used two are "citizenship education" and "patriotic education". In "Xi han jiaoxue cidian" (*Xihan pedagogical dictionary*, 1988) the term "patriotic education" and the term "citizenship education" presented at "Zhongguo zhongxue jiaoxue baike quanshu" (*Encyclopedia on Chinese Middle School education*, 2015) have the same definition as to the general idea and aims of this kind of education.

This phenomenon also can be explained in one hand by the specifics of the Chinese language and characters used for depicting the words "patriotism" (爱国 — loving the state/country) and "citizenship" (国籍 — being a part of the state/country). In the other hand it can be explained by the tradition of the Chinese society to have all the spheres of a person's life to be regulated by the state through ideology, religion, local community, educational system, traditions etc. According to the Chinese state ideology in any time of Chinese society's development a Chinese had a strict set of duties and rules for him/her to follow and fulfill. The state regulated and appreciated only the social deeds of a person and in time the characteristics, ideas, likes and dislikes of a person himself lost their value. A person became be charged and seen by his fitting or not the social ideal regulated by the state. That's why at a certain period social and personal parts of life of a Chinese became spliced and traditional for other cultures personal feeling of patriotism became a social requirement and "obligatory to be produced set of rituals" in China.

Citizenship education of young people is also considered in China as the introduction of the new generation into the system of values of the Chinese democratic (civil) society, that envisages the formation of the foundations of its civic culture (Liu, 2014). Civic culture is a deep awareness of a person of

his/her belonging to a certain state, a sense of civil dignity, social responsibility, and the ability to defend social and state interests in difficult situations. The defining characteristics of civil culture are: patriotism, legal consciousness, political education, morality, and labor activity (Liu, 2010). The term “civic culture” in the Chinese professional literature is also not widely used, but can be seen in the researches which are translated from other languages or are made together with the abroad scientists.

Also in modern pedagogical literature of China the term “citizenship education” is not commonly used. More often they use traditional for the Chinese science term “patriotic education” if it concerns history, culture, economics, ecology and other humanitarian spheres of life and the term “civil education” or “political education” if it turns to law or politics.

## **Historical and social issues**

The tradition of loving own country, awareness of its exclusivity are inherent in Chinese society for a long time. The great merit in this field belongs to the Chinese state authorities. For example, back in the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC), the territories that surround China, were officially declared to be unfit for life due to the lack of oxygen there and the settling of bizarre creatures that are not related to the human beings. And it was the Qin Dynasty to begin the construction of Great Wall to separate China from the rest of the world. Throughout history, love for the Motherland, the Emperor as the personification of the State, father as the personification of the Emperor was considered to be the greatest virtue in the Chinese society.

The ancient Chinese philosopher and thinker Confucius (551-479 BC) created a system of ethical norms and rules that include: honesty, modesty, thrift, loyalty to duty, humanity and charity, respect for parents and elders, rejection of denunciations, striving for compromise, stability, order and discipline. As for respect and veneration ruling class, the thinker made it necessary if the representatives of the upper class are honest with the Emperor and follow their duties as to the state. Confucius considered education and moral self-improvement of a person to be an essential factor of human existence, a condition for the prosperity of the entire nation and country (he did not share these concepts). Confucius tried to raise a new type of a person who could eventually turn into a “perfect person” or “noble man” — a person with high moral qualities, educated and brought up within the spirit of observing rituals and devotion to the country. It was during the period of active Confucianism as a state ethical-political doctrine that under the Emperor was made a state “Committee on Morals and Ethics”. This Committee even had the right to remove the emperor from the throne if it recognizes that his actions are “harmful for China”. For the sake of justice, however, it should be noted that for almost 600 years of such a body’s existence the Committee has never used the given right (Maliavin, 2000).

The task of elaborating a clear concept of patriotic / citizenship education came to the forefront of the PRC in the very first years of its existence. General impoverishment of the state and nation, political turmoil, invasion of foreign troops, civil war, faced China with general apathy. In such a situation

the government under the leadership of Mao Zedong also needed to solve the problem of the economic development of the county which could have guaranteed the very existence of the country and the state. The problem was solved thanks to the program of citizenship / patriotic education, which became the basis of the “Big Leap Policy” (an assessment of its economic, cultural and social consequences is not the task of the article). The patriotic / citizenship concept of that period resulted in introduction to the Constitution of the PR China of the statement that “every Chinese, firstly and foremost, should be a worthy citizen of the PR China, contribute to its development and be the creator of its achievements” (Article 4) (*Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*, 2014).

Later on this Constitutional provision was expanded in Constitutional Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens of China; in particular:

- 1) Citizens of the People’s Republic of China have the right as well as the duty to work. Work is the glorious duty of every able-bodied citizen (Article 42);
- 2) The exercise by citizens of the People’s Republic of China of their freedoms and rights may not infringe upon the interests of the state, of society and of the collective (Article 51);
- 3) It is the duty of citizens of the People’s Republic of China to safeguard the unity of the country and the unity of all its nationalities (Article 52);
- 4) Citizens of the People’s Republic of China must abide by the constitution and the law, keep state secrets, protect public property and observe labor discipline and public order and respect social ethics (Article 53);
- 5) It is the duty of citizens of the People’s Republic of China to safeguard the security, honor and interests of the motherland; they must not commit acts detrimental to the security, honor and interests of the motherland. (Article 54);
- 6) It is the duty of citizens of the People’s Republic of China to pay taxes in accordance with the law. (Article 56) (*Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*, 2014).

It is also worth noting that the social orientation of the Chinese economic reforms is also of a civil character (buying Chinese, traveling in China, promoting Chinese goods etc.) ensures their success: makes each Chinese an active supporter and participant of the process having place. The educational policy of the Chinese state also contributes to the effectiveness of the work over the coordinated feeling of citizenship by all means cultivated in the Chinese nation. The very purpose of this policy is understandable and close to all segments of the Chinese population, it addresses the patriotic / citizenship and national feelings of the Chinese in their desire to develop the country and revive its greatness.

## Results

Citizenship education can be seen as the most important idea of Chinese pedagogical theory and educational practice. It is, to the greatest extent, based on the concept of “Chinacentrism” which was proclaimed by the Secretary-General of the CPC Central Committee Hu Yaobang in 1982 when he noted that “patriotism is the best tradition and highest moral quality of the Chinese nation, the main criterion for individuals, classes, parties, doctrines, theories and ideological trends” (Wu, 2000). In modern China, citizenship education solves very practical problems of nowadays Chinese nation as a union and forces people to follow such values as reunification of the Motherland (this aspect aims to reduce the level of hidden and overt sepretism in certain regions of the PRC, introduces the official state position towards Taiwan, adjoining and disputed territories), proves the ratio of “socialism with the Chinese tradition” as the political system, harmonizes it with the capitalist democracy trends of the West; forms the attitude of the Chinese towards the world, China, its leading position in the world, human rights etc.

In the middle of the XX century Chinese educational and pedagogical science adopted the Foremer Soviet Union’s idea of 9 types of educational work (moral (ideological), labor, physical, patriotic citizenship, aesthetical, religious, legal, environmental and intellectual). At the same period the Chinese science itself (basing over the works of Mao Zedong, in particular, the article “How to educate people properly”) from above mentioned nine types of education isolated four which were called “Great Four”. The “The Great Four” forms the basis of Chinese educational theory till now and includes moral, labor, physical and patriotic / citizenship education with the leading role belongs to the patriotical / citizenship one. All the other kinds of educational work (the list of it was expanded since 1950s) in China are to be seen through the citizenship education and the idea of “Chinacentrism”. Table 1 shows some kinds of education and their tasks seen through prizma of citizenship education in China.

Today, the whole system of values, beliefs, world outlook of the Chinese people, as well as the social structure of the country is based on citizenship education. It also includes issues of the spiritual state of the Chinese nation. Using the experience of generations, the Chinese government plays a great role in the forming of conscious citizenship among the inhabitants of the country.

In China, patriotism and citizenship is seen as the basis and prerequisite for the normal and natural development of a child. Lou Shizhen (an expert over citizenship education, Beijing Normal University) mentions that citizenship education of a child should start from the family, which from the very first days should form a child’s attitude towards the Motherland, people in order to eliminate negative behavior and promote a healthy lifestyle. This attitude should be positive, emotional and rational at the same time. The family should be fully aware of the content and means of citizenship education create a special family environment for the education of a new Chinese, taking into account age characteristics and needs of the child. It is also important to apply all situations and various sides of family life form conscious citizenship at every stage of a child’s development. Lou Shizhen gives a number of recommendations on citizenship education for a family.

Type of educational activity	Task of the educational activity
Ecological Education	People are to take care of nature and avoid pollution because all the natural resources belong to the state and polluting makes harm to the common property of the Country
Religious Education	China is a multicultural nation and being a part of the culture religion and beliefs of other citizens are to be respected if their beliefs and religious values do not pay harm to the Country and Chinese society
Labor Education	People are to work well and do as much as they can on their working place to have an opportunity to be useful for their country. Any work or labor is appreciated by the Country.
Health Education	People are to take care of their health because they are to work well. Any person in China is seen as property of the Country and that's why not taking care of health is seen as making harm to the common property of the State.
Physical / Sport education	The Chinese are to go in for sports because they are to be healthy workers and sports achievements make good image of the Country.
Aesthetical Education	Chinese material and non-material culture heritage makes an integral part of world cultural heritage. A lot of traditional Chinese cultural achievements are unique and cannot be seen elsewhere but China. That's why from year to year more and more foreigners come to China.
Hygienic Education	People are to take care of their hygiene because it is a part of your health education and today a low level of hygiene in some parts of China makes harm to the image of the country in general.
Sexual Education	People are to be well educated in sexual sphere, be responsible for their sexual relationships, adhere the idea of responsible parenthood because in one hand it is a part of the health program of the Country and in the other not controlled childbirth pays harm to the economics and social sphere of China as a state.
Mental education	People of China are to study well and adhere the idea of life-long education because economics of China needs well-qualified workers for the state to be one of the economical leaders of the world.

Table 1. Task of the educational activity through prism of citizenship education in China

According to them, parents should:

- 1) understand what is “patriotism” and “citizenship”;
- 2) pay attention to their own moral attitudes, determine the meaning and direction of personal citizenship development;
- 3) understand the importance of citizenship education and produce it their everyday life focusing the child over this particular issue;
- 4) pay attention to forming and development of patriotic and citizenship emotions in the child;
- 5) direct the child to show citizenship in day-by-day life;
- 6) give children a personal example of citizenship and patriotism;
- 7) use different motivations to educate the child with proper citizenship position (Ouyang, 2011).

In the educational institutions of the PRC, spirituality, citizenship and morality are proclaimed as the fundamental basis of education. It is believed that society as a social union of people can function and develop only with directed, systematic and organized educational work over each individual. Today, the Chinese society and educational institutions face the task of developing the personality as a conscious citizen, who combines the universal values with the specific features of the Chinese nation (Dzhgun, 2012).

Systematic citizenship education in modern China starts with a kindergarten through ethical conversations with children, in the process of playing and learning of Chinese language, in the course of general elementary knowledge, aesthetical education and physical culture. In elementary school, a special subject is studied - moral and ideological education; in the middle - - political and ideological education. In high school “Politics” is an obligatory course for all the students (Boyenko, 2006).

For the needs of moral, ideological and political education the Chinese educational system uses singing and music lessons. The State Education Committee of the People’s Republic of China recommends about 100 different songs and musical works to be learnt at primary and secondary schools, including: National Anthem, Songs About Motherland, “Without the Communist Party, there is no China”, “In union we are strong”, etc. The Department of Moral Education of the State Committee for Education of the People’s Republic of China published and recommended for use by all schools of the country a teaching manual entitled “The ceremony of raising the national flag - moral and patriotic / citizenship education” (Boyenko, 2006). All the methods mentioned aim to implement the strategic task to educate the Chinese youth according to the state order, in particular - to focus all the educational tools to form at the students the citizenship spirit.

In the primary school, the patriotic / citizenship education is carried out in the spirit of “five points of love: for Motherland, people, labor, science and socialism”: It aims to acquire such students’ qualities as patriotism, collectivism, sense of responsibility and duty, teach children to be organized and disciplined, to give necessary knowledge about the Chinese society, Constitution and the basic laws of the PR China; centers on studying of Chinese history, culture and traditions, as well as the history of the Chinese Revolution.

In secondary school, the content of citizenship education includes the following components: patriotic education, education in the spirit of collectivism, socialist education for socialist modernization and creating of socialism with the Chinese specifics, social morality and Chinese moral and ethical traditions, labor ethics, Chinese culture and traditions, labor education, religious education, hygienic education, socialist democracy and the foundations of legal education, basic rights and duties of a citizen, Constitution and other laws of the PR China, forming the habit and taste for work, being organized, reliable, truthful and honesty, following healthy lifestyle (Li, 2007).

In high school, the content of citizenship education has a more political and ideological character. It includes the following programs and courses:

- 1) patriotic education (revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people, unity of the Chinese people and the unity of the Chinese state);
- 2) education in the spirit of collectivism (Marxism-Leninism and modern citizenship education, Deng Xiaoping's theory of building socialism with the Chinese specifics, a course of knowledge on dialectical and historical materialism);
- 3) political education and traditional Chinese morals;
- 4) labor education (education for socially useful work and practical activities);
- 5) socialist democracy, legal education and education of a builder of a socialist society;
- 6) moral and psychological education (self-education and self-motivation; healthy lifestyle, psychological and physical health, family relationship education, sexual education, team and society, education of a sense of friendship and good attitude towards people).

If at secondary school, the compulsory subject "Politics" accounts for 8.5% of the school time released for compulsory subjects. At high school the time for this discipline goes up to 15 % (Luo, 2005).

The leading role in the implementation of the official state policy towards education (state order) to school belongs to teacher. As part of the professional training of teachers in China it was created a special program of citizenship education of teachers-to-be nowadays used in all the Normal (Pedagogical) universities of the country. Mainly it's issues are closely related politics and ideology and are as following:

- 1) theory of Marxism-Leninism, the ideas of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping's theory of building socialism with Chinese specifics;
- 2) patriotic education, education of the Chinese spirit, Chinese traditions, Chinese history and culture;
- 3) domestic and foreign policies of the Communist Party of china and the state government of the PR China;
- 4) legislative system of China and socialist democracy, the development of discipline and responsibility;
- 5) general education of a person, ideals, forming of the social position and correct relationship with the other people;
- 6) socialist ethics, social and professional ethics;

- 7) development of the correct style of study, life and work, forming taste and need of self-education and self-improvement;
- 8) labor education;
- 9) aesthetic education on the basis of Chinese culture inheritages;
- 10) psychological, spiritual and physical health of a person (Lu, 2011).

Start September 2001, in China, the third Saturday of September is declared to be a national day of patriotic \citizenship and defense education as a part of citizenship education state concept. This decision was adopted at the 23rd session of the Standing Committee of the National Congress of the PR China according to Article 55 of the Constitution of the PR China “It is the sacred obligation of every citizen of the People’s Republic of China to defend the motherland and resist aggression” (*Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*, 2014). According to this article in April 2001 the National Congress of the People’s Republic of China adopted the National Law of the PR China “On Patriotic / Citizenship and Military Education”. Start then in the programs of primary and secondary schools in China, as well as of colleges and universities, there appeared the obligatory theoretical discipline “National Defense” that aims to develop national, patriotic / citizenship and defense thinking of students. Practical component of this subject contains different activities, that teach children and youths to take care of themselves in wild nature, get them acquainted with fauna and flora of their native region and China in general (special attention is paid to edible plants), give initial medical training courses, work in teams, follow the orders, help each other, cherish the national flag, be engaged in strategic planning process etc.

## Discussion

Patriotism and a national idea are considered to be two main conceptual ideas of citizenship education in China today. Patriotism is seen as a set of practical actions and the sum of theoretical knowledge that leads to the formation of national consciousness and self-consciousness of the Chinese people. In practice, patriotism manifests itself as love for China, hope and faith in better future of the country, readiness for practical activities for the benefit of China and the Chinese people. The national idea is viewed as the orientation of the individual to the interests of the state and society, and the corresponding system of relations of the individual with others in the conditions of the state, the formation of the ideal of a progressive democratic, legal, social, state (*20 details about moral education in modern China*, 2007).

Citizenship reflects the world outlook and attitudes of a person as a citizen, focuses him / her on the identification of personal, civil, professional and family development. One of the most important tasks of citizenship education in China today is to provide young people with following practical skills: critical consciousness, ability to make conscious decisions, implementation of free choice, understanding and following of norms and rules of behavior, knowledge of laws, basic human rights, joint work for the benefit of society, personal social responsibility, mutual understanding and mutual respect for each individual, ethnic group, people and their cultures.

For recent 8–10 years the Chinese official educational science began to revive the Concept of Consciousness Patriotism / Citizenship which was quite

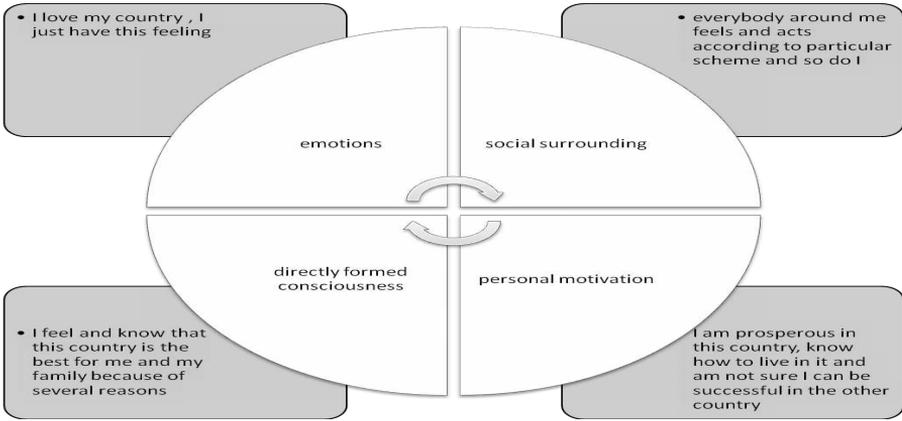


Figure 1. Types of citizenship motivators

popular in the Chinese historical genesis. Modern Chinese Pedagogical science following the Western trends also allocates 4 types of underground that force a person and make him / her to feel himself as a citizen of the country, a part of a particular social or national union. Figure 1 shows the types of undergrounds according to the Chinese contemporary pedagogical and sociological theory<sup>1</sup>.

If the Western sociology and education science pays much attention to forming the emotional component of citizenship of a person, the Chinese focus their attention over the more practical ones, using “Social surrounding” as a method of citizenship education. And defining it as directed process, the Chinese traditionally delegate all the powers to the state and to the educational system as the state’s authorized body. This phenomena also has the ideological and historical background and basis upon the requirement of Han Yu (philosopher, educator, state servant; 768–824) who obliged teachers to persuade their students that China is the most progressive, economically developed and logically organized state using concrete examples, but not limiting to the classic postulate, that “behind the Great Wall there is no air and life is not possible there” (*History of the Chinese education*, 2001)

From a substantive point of view, the directed consciousness citizenship education of young people in Modern China is, first of all, “the formation of a national consciousness, the feeling of belonging to the native land, the people” (Pan, 2010). This process has two stages, which respectively indicate different levels of assimilation of national values. At the first stage, ethnic self-consciousness is realized on the basis of assimilation of the native language, family customs, traditions, national mythology, art; folklore, convictions, ideals, generally accepted norms of behavior and so on. At the second stage, social and patriotic self-consciousness is formed in the process of a person being included in practical activities directed on the development of the state, its ordering and strengthening; studying the history of China, its cultural heritage; introducing of various elements of Chinese culture into one’s own life and world perception; establishing of friendly and partner relationship with representatives of other

<sup>1</sup>Western sociology quits “Directly formed consciousness” as a motivator for citizenship and uses “Philosophical motivators” to define the process of self-motivation of a person over some social issues

countries and nations, cultivating of the best features of the Chinese mentality and national character, developing of self-identity as the Chinese etc.

The Chinese Government assigns the school the most important role in this process and has prepared a whole package of documents specifying the peculiarities of forming the patriotic and citizenship consciousness of the Chinese youth: “The CPC Central Committee’s resolution on work over moral and citizenship / patriotic education in primary and secondary schools”, “The CPC Central Committee’s resolution on the implementation of citizenship / patriotic education and strengthening work on moral education of schoolchildren”, “The CPC Central Committee’s resolution on citizenship / patriotic and political education of students and young workers” etc.

## Conclusion

Citizenship education in China is based on modern principles of economic, democratic and information society, demands of the Chinese state taking into account the process of globalization of the world economy as well as the interests of the particular country. The task of citizenship education is defined as strengthening the collective spirit; forming the mass consciousness of the nation; assisting to rational, open, calm, confident authority of the state and state leaders; realizing the importance of collective work over the implementation of innovations; increasing the level of social responsibility of all citizens of the country. That’s why following the historic and educational traditions of their own country the Chinese till now make the citizenship \patriotic education the main part and the task of the educational work in the country. All the other directions of the pedagogical influence over children, youth and just any citizen of China are to follow the “Chinacentrism Concept” and go through the prism of citizenship education to check out their expediency, usefulness and simply vitality in Modern China’s social and educational space.

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