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Hong Kong Identity on the Rise

ABSTRACT

The rise of the Hong Kong local identity vis-à-vis the Chinese national identity has been particularly pronounced in recent years. This article argues that the “Mainlandization” of Hong Kong since 2003 has alienated Hong Kongers and threatened their sense of distinctiveness, which in turn has intensified their resistance to Beijing’s top-down assimilation.

KEYWORDS: Hong Kong identity, Mainlandization, nationalism, demographic changes, social tension

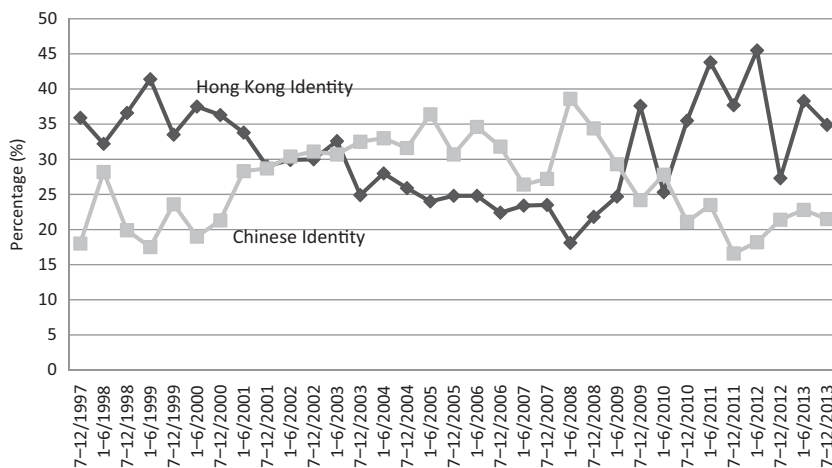
INTRODUCTION

Ernest Renan famously proclaimed that a nation’s existence is an everyday plebiscite. The waxing and waning of the Hong Kong identity vis-à-vis the Chinese national identity since 1997 seem to attest to Renan’s declaration. In the first few years after Hong Kong’s return to China up until 2003, the proportion of people who identified themselves as Hong Kongers exceeded that of those who identified themselves as Chinese. From mid-2003 to 2009, however, the trend reversed, with the percentage of people identifying themselves as Chinese reaching new heights when the 2008 Beijing Olympics was held. Yet, from 2009 onward, the trend has seen another reversal. In June 2012, the percentage of those who identify themselves as Hong Kongers hit a historic high since 1997, doubling that of those who see themselves as Chinese (see Figure 1). The higher proportion, moreover, is accompanied by an increase in identity strength. From Figure 2, it is very evident that both the Hong Kong and Chinese identities share similar patterns in the rise and fall of identity strength, until they start to diverge in 2008. From then on, we see

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FIGURE I. Identity Trends in Hong Kong, 1997–2013



SOURCE: Public Opinion Program, University of Hong Kong (HKU POP), “People’s Ethnic Identity,” accessed November 5, 2012, <<http://hkupop.hku.hk/english/popexpress/ethnic/index.html>>.

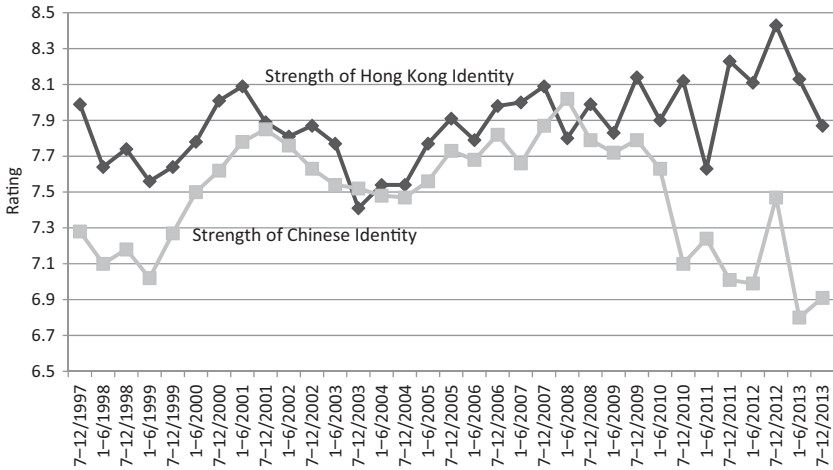
a decline in the strength of the Chinese identity and a corresponding rise in the strength of the Hong Kong identity.

How may these fluctuating trends be broadly explained? After the hand-over in 1997, Hong Kong’s first Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, spoke specifically about the need to make Hong Kong more Chinese; he advocated civic education so that youth “would have national pride as Chinese.”¹ Following his espousal of patriotic education, a series of measures was launched. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government organized activities such as inviting in 2003 the first Chinese astronaut, Yang Liwei, who was lionized as a national hero; after the 2004 and 2008 Olympics, Mainland medalists also visited and performed in Hong Kong.² Civic education was reintroduced as an elective school subject. School

1. Paul Morris, “Civics and Citizenship Education in Hong Kong,” in Kerry J. Kennedy, ed., *Citizenship Education and the Modern State* (London: Falmer Press, 2002), pp. 51–52; Thomas Tse Kwan Choi, “Civic and Political Education,” in Mark Bray and Ramsey Koo, eds., *Education and Society in Hong Kong and Macao: Comparative Perspectives on Continuity and Change* (Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Center, 2004), p. 189.

2. Peter T. Y. Cheung, “The Changing Relations between Hong Kong and the Mainland since 2003,” in Lam Wai-man, Percy Lui Luen-tim, and Wilson Wong, eds., *Contemporary Hong Kong Government and Politics* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), p. 337.

FIGURE 2. Strength of Identity, 1997–2013



SOURCE: Ibid. to Figure 1, accessed January 21, 2014.

syllabuses and curriculum guidelines were revised to emphasize students' Chinese identity; instruction in *putonghua* (Mandarin Chinese) was instituted, whereas English was downplayed as a medium of instruction.³

The puzzle is, if the government's continuous efforts to instill national pride had paid off and resulted in more Hong Kongers identifying themselves as Chinese citizens from 2003 to 2009, why have these efforts lost their efficacy since then? If anything, Hong Kongers' vociferous objection to the introduction of patriotic education to the school curriculum in 2012 demonstrates that top-down indoctrination clearly has its limits.

Notably, although more people identified themselves as Chinese citizens than Hong Kongers from 2003 to 2007, the gap between the two identities narrowed significantly in 2007, after which the slide in Chinese identification was arrested. Indeed, Chinese identification peaked in 2008. However, if this sudden burst of national pride was a result of China's hosting of the Olympics and/or its top ranking on the medal index for the first time, it proved to be short-lived.⁴ As seen from Figure 1, Hong Kongers' sense of pride to be

3. Tse, "Civic and Political Education," p. 189.

4. Ivo van Hilvoorde, Agnes Elling, and Ruud Stokvis, "How to Influence National Pride? The Olympics Medal Index as a Unifying Narrative," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 45:87 (2010), pp. 94–95.

Chinese in the context of the 2008 Beijing Olympics later plummeted as swiftly as it had surged from mid-2007 to 2008.

Sporadic events such as sports success, therefore, may effect temporary fluctuations, but they appear to be ineffectual in instilling a lasting sense of national pride. Empirical evidence even suggests that a sense of national belonging must *precede* identification with sports success in order for the latter to boost national pride.⁵ This paper proposes that Hong Kong's shifting identity trends over the long term may be better explained by Hong Kongers' need for differentiation of the self and assimilation with others in their group identification.⁶ In elucidating why more and more people today identify themselves as Hong Kongers, the paper looks to both history and contemporary developments in Hong Kong. It argues that Beijing's endeavors to foist a Chinese national identity on Hong Kongers has provoked an identity conflict, not least because of the presence of a marked Hong Kong identity distinct from the Chinese national identity. Already in existence before the handover, this identity has been institutionalized through the reiteration of the principle of "one country, two systems" encapsulated in the Basic Law and the discourse on Hong Kong core values, further consolidating its uniqueness vis-à-vis the Chinese identity.

Rapid China-Hong Kong socioeconomic integration, along with Beijing's increasing interventions in Hong Kong's affairs since 2003 both have alienated Hong Kongers and threatened their sense of distinctiveness. This, in turn, has intensified their resistance to assimilation. From 2009, the question of "What Should Our Home Be?" has become an agenda as the society tilts toward post-materialism amid expanding youth participation in politics. The influx of Mainlanders over the past decade, resented by locals, built up to a tipping point in early 2012. This hostility toward Mainlanders has been fanned by politicians who foregrounded local identity issues to gain popular support. Altogether, these developments contributed to the upward trajectory of the Hong Kong identity as the society reacted to what seemed like an

5. *Ibid.*, p. 99. The authors suggest, "The strength of this 'sense of belonging' can vary, depending on the importance of the event and depending on the role that narratives of expectation play in the anticipation before the start of the event."

6. The two forces operate in opposition: the need for individuation or differentiation is heightened as the drive for inclusiveness or assimilation increases, and vice versa. Refer to Marilyn B. Brewer, "Multiple Identities and Identity Transition: Implications for Hong Kong," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23:2 (1999), p. 188.

insidious and intentional erosion of Hong Kongers' distinctiveness as a people. Amid this predominant trend of a rising Hong Kong identity, it is noteworthy that certain segments of the society have taken a radical turn in their identity. These radical groups include those that are staunchly pro-Beijing, bearing names such as Loving Hong Kong Power and Voice of Loving Hong Kong. Others advocate localism and even separatism, including the Hong Kong Independence Movement and Hong Kongers First. How representative these groups are of Hong Kongers in general is yet to be known; there is currently no survey that can provide a gauge of how pervasive this trend is. Nonetheless, the objective of our paper is not to address the radicalism of certain groups but to seek an explanation for the general trend of a rising Hong Kong identity.

In what follows, the paper defines the indigenous Hong Kong identity and briefly reviews some theoretical perspectives. It then traces the formation of the Hong Kong identity and outlines its key components before delving into Beijing's growing interventionist approach to Hong Kong's governance since 2003 and reactions from the society.⁷ The paper concludes with some thoughts on the implications of a renewed and strengthening Hong Kong identity for the city's governance and China-Hong Kong relations.

DEFINITION AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The nation, in Anderson's words, is "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."⁸ Rooted in culture but decidedly political, the nation is based on a sense of solidarity of a free people living within a bounded territory. Although Hong Kong is not sovereign, it appears to possess all the characteristics of a nation by Smith's definition: "named populations possessing an historic territory, shared myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members, which are legitimized by the principles of nationalism."⁹ To avoid confusion, however, this article uses the generic term "Hong Kong identity" to refer to a Hong Kong "national" or "sub-national" identity, in order to distinguish it from the broader Chinese

7. Cheung, "The Changing Relations between Hong Kong and the Mainland since 2003," p. 341.

8. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2003), p. 6.

9. Anthony D. Smith, "Theories of Nationalism: Alternative Models of Nation Formation," in Michael Leifer, ed., *Asian Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 1.

national identity. Unless otherwise stated, “Chinese identity” in this article refers specifically to the Chinese national identity and not the Chinese ethnicity.

According to Dahbour, there are two concepts of national identity: “a strict one that regards nationality as based on a belief in common ancestry or ethnicity and a loose one that views nationality as a malleable term without fixed properties.”¹⁰ Notwithstanding that both the Hong Kong identity and the Chinese national identity are predicated on a common Chinese ethnicity, this paper suggests that the former is shaped upon a separate cultural repertoire of language, symbols, tradition, history, and collective memory.¹¹ Although Hong Kongers are ethnic Chinese, as Mainlanders are, top-down assimilation by Beijing has induced Hong Kongers to accentuate their identity to distance themselves from the latter.¹² Identities are constructed in relation to the Other, as Hall suggests, and this “production of difference and exclusion” is being played up by Hong Kongers striving to distinguish themselves from Mainlanders. To that end, there is renewed emphasis on Hong Kong values and norms, as well as the spoken language (Cantonese Chinese versus Mandarin) and written language (traditional versus simplified Chinese).¹³

Under what conditions do people affiliate with a particular identity? How do Hong Kongers reconcile their Hong Kong identity with the Chinese national identity? In their study of Hong Kong identity, Kim and Ng suggest that perceived rapid social change would prompt people to minimize uncertainty and confusion by preferring a single identity to dual identities.¹⁴ The authors measure the perceived pace of social change and uncertainty by participants’ responses to statements such as: “Since the reunification with the PRC (People’s Republic of China), the economic situation in Hong Kong

10. Omar Dahbour, “National Identity: An Argument for the Strict Definition,” *Public Affairs Quarterly* 16:1 (2002), p. 17.

11. Elaine Chan, “Defining Fellow Compatriots as ‘Others’—National Identity in Hong Kong,” *Government and Opposition* 35:4 (2000), p. 503.

12. This means that even a single identity such as the “Hong Konger” is layered, constituted by, primarily, the local identity and, secondarily, the Chinese ethnic identity. Refer to Brewer, “Multiple Identities and Identity Transition: Implications for Hong Kong,” p. 192.

13. Stuart Hall, “Who Needs an Identity?” in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996), p. 4.

14. Kim Jungsik and Ng Sik Hung, “Perceptions of Social Changes and Social Identity: Study Focusing on Hong Kong Society after Reunification,” *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 11 (2008), p. 238.

society has changed at a fast pace” and “Since the reunification with the PRC, the economic situation in Hong Kong society has become uncertain.”¹⁵ Their hypothesis is backed by the “need for closure” theory, which postulates that “people have a desire to secure a firm answer to a question in order to avoid uncertainty, confusion, or ambiguity.”¹⁶ Using regression to test their hypothesis, Kim and Ng find that the results affirm what they propose: “The more rapidly people perceived social change, the more they preferred a single identity over dual identities.”¹⁷ However, because the authors have recoded the two single-identity choices—“Chinese” and “Hong Konger”—into one category, their study does not delve into the conditions that drive people to gravitate toward either element of the single identity. In other words, the study does not explain the causality between perceived rapid social change and the Chinese identity *or* the Hong Kong identity.

Some clues to the preference for one identity over the other are found in Brewer’s 1999 article, “Multiple Identities and Identity Transition: Implications for Hong Kong.” Brewer observes that “signs of identity conflict” have emerged in the transition period of Hong Kong’s return to China, during which the Hong Kong identity is increasingly defined vis-à-vis the Chinese identity.¹⁸ Fu et al. suggest that in order to satisfy Hong Kongers’ needs for differentiation and assimilation, Beijing needs to strike a balance in its policies pertaining to Hong Kong.¹⁹ In Brewer’s view, one critical factor is “whether administrative actions on the part of Beijing authorities are seen as encouraging both assimilation and accommodation of differences or as demanding assimilation without respect for distinctiveness.”²⁰

Based on her analysis, Brewer conjectures that “[p]erceived threats to Hong Kong’s distinctiveness may motivate withdrawal, but the depth of regional identity with Hong Kong itself suggests that the more likely response would be political resistance and conflict (fight rather than flight).”²¹ In other words,

15. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

18. Brewer, “Multiple Identities and Identity Transition: Implications for Hong Kong,” p. 195.

19. Fu et al. also find that those who identify themselves as Chinese prefer Hong Kong to assimilate with China more than those who identify themselves as Hong Kongers. See Ho-ying Fu, Sau-lai Lee, Chi-yue Chiu, and Ying-yi Hong, “Setting the Frame of Mind for Social Identity,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23:2 (1999), pp. 199–214.

20. Brewer, “Multiple Identities and Identity Transition: Implications for Hong Kong,” p. 195.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

the undermining of Hong Kong's distinctiveness would trigger a backlash. This seems to dovetail with Hong Kong's situation today, as the society's antagonism to integration with China grows more commonplace and intense.

Building on the above perspectives, this paper hypothesizes that the "Mainlandization of Hong Kong" in terms of rapid integration, the large influx of Mainlanders, and Beijing's interventionist approach toward Hong Kong's affairs since 2003, has led more people to gravitate toward the Hong Kong identity predicated on a distinctive set of values and norms. This resuscitated Hong Kong identity is rooted in history, as briefly explicated in the next section.

THE FORMATION OF THE HONG KONG IDENTITY

From a historical perspective, the Hong Kong identity comprises two key elements that are at odds with the Chinese national identity: Hong Kongers' sense of entitlement in politics, and a psychological resistance to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The former is exemplified by the expansion in political participation since the 1970s that has helped nurture a sense of belonging and an imagined community among locals. The latter largely emanated from immigrants who fled the Mainland to Hong Kong after the CCP came into power and during periods of sociopolitical turbulence from the 1950s to the 1970s, such as the 1966–76 Cultural Revolution.

Notable riots in 1966 marked a shift from the "refugee mentality" of early immigrants to a greater sense of belonging of post-war baby boomers. Instead of treating their sojourn in Hong Kong as transient, locals became more aware of the city's affairs and were less hesitant to voice their discontent.²² In response to the riots, the colonial government prioritized fostering locals' trust through improving the state-society relationship. Its "administrative absorption of politics" approach acceded to the claims and demands of Hong Kongers, acknowledging these as their rights and entitlements. Social movements helped put in place basic welfare and rights, including labor holidays, public housing, and the establishment of the Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). This growing sense of entitlement rested upon a new and narrower definition of community.

22. Gordon Mathews, Eric Ma Kit-wai, and Lui Tai-lok, *Hong Kong, China: Learning to Belong to a Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 38.

By the late 1970s, Hong Kongers had grown to be more defensive and protective as a community in the face of newcomers. As the economy grew, so did concerns over disruptions to public services brought about by new Chinese immigrants. Instead of welcoming Mainlanders as Chinese relatives following in their footsteps, Hong Kongers began to treat them as strangers to be scorned. This attitude was exemplified by derogatory names such as “Ah Chan,” a country bumpkin-like character depicted in a 1979 television drama.²³

The 1984 signing of the Joint Sino-British Declaration regarding the colony’s future precipitated much anxiety among Hong Kongers and led to an exodus of “the best educated, well trained, and highly skilled.”²⁴ To assuage the fears of Hong Kongers, Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping coined the principles of “one country, two systems” and “Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong.” These two principles de facto institutionalize Hong Kongers’ psychological distance from the Mainlanders.

The 1989 Tiananmen massacre evoked great panic and resistance in Hong Kong toward the CCP, triggering a landmark protest against the party’s military suppression of protests. In response, Beijing’s political leaders asked the Hong Kong people to stay clear of Chinese politics, citing a Chinese saying that “well water should not interfere with river water (*heshui bufan jingshui*).”²⁵ The general mood of indifference and tepid displays of patriotism on the eve of the 1997 handover could be seen as an aftereffect of the Tiananmen incident.²⁶

The July 1 protest in 2003, which saw half a million Hong Kongers rally against the impending enactment of the National Security Ordinance, was a turning point. Since then, the public has demonstrated stronger support for democracy and political participation, and a greater sense of political efficacy.²⁷ The landmark protest not only derailed the HKSAR government’s plan to legislate the anti-subversion section of Article 23 of the Basic Law. It also empowered the pan-democrats, as evidenced by their strong showing in

23. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

24. Ronald Skeldon, “Emigration from Hong Kong, 1945–1994,” in Ronald Skeldon, ed., *Emigration from Hong Kong: Tendencies and Impacts* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1995), p. 57.

25. Mathews, Ma, and Lui, *Hong Kong, China: Learning to Belong to a Nation*, p. 47.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

27. Ma Ngok, “Value Changes and Legitimacy Crisis in Post-industrial Hong Kong,” *Asian Survey* 51:4 (2011), pp. 689–90.

the elections from 2003 to 2004, and forced Chief Executive Tung to step down in 2005 before his term ended. The marked shift in the political landscape alarmed Beijing, which then began to take a more interventionist role in the affairs of Hong Kong, departing from its previous relatively “hands-off” approach. From that point on, Beijing has strategically shored up its influence over Hong Kong by stepping up its intervention in governance and deepening socioeconomic integration. Notably, for instance, Beijing has coopted more Hong Kong elites into its united front and political support network, pushed for patriotic education, and played a more active role in the Legislative Council (LegCo) and Chief Executive elections through the Liaison Office in Hong Kong.²⁸

The following sections broadly trace the social/cultural, economic, and political developments from 2003 and explicate the impact of these changes on the Hong Kong identity.

THE MAINLANDIZATION OF HONG KONG

(I.) Rapid Economic Integration and the Rise of Localism

Prior to the handover, Hong Kongers’ ability to amass wealth through their efforts reinforced their sense of superiority over their poorer counterparts in the Mainland. To the locals, colonial Hong Kong was a safe haven that offered them refuge from the turmoil of Chinese politics and where they could earn a decent living through hard work.²⁹ The discourse of the “Hong Kong Dream” thus evolved: with hard work and a stroke of luck, one could achieve great success. As the city prospered and its economy expanded by 6.5% annually since 1980, Hong Kongers’ sense of superiority over their Mainland counterparts was augmented.³⁰

Following the handover, however, Hong Kong’s economy was hit by downturns in 1998 and 2001. These were followed by the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak and the 2009 financial crisis. The

28. For further details, see Cheung, “The Changing Relations between Hong Kong and the Mainland since 2003,” pp. 325–30. See also Yew Chiew Ping, “For a United Front: Hong Kong Delegates to the National People’s Congress and Chinese People’s Political Consultative Committee,” EAI (East Asian Institute), *Background Brief*, no. 924, June 5, 2014.

29. Mathews, Ma, and Lui, *Hong Kong, China: Learning to Belong to a Nation*, p. 39.

30. International Monetary Fund, *Hong Kong, China: Growth, Structural Change, and Economic Stability during the Transition*, accessed January 7, 2013, <<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/nft/op152/chapt.htm>>.

Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) with Beijing implemented in 2003 to facilitate economic integration has helped boost Hong Kong's economy during the downturns. From 2004–07, the economy rebounded with an average growth rate of 7.3%. Yet, much as CEPA promoted interdependence between the two regions, it also contributed to China's expanding economic influence on Hong Kong. Mainland China is now the leading investor in Hong Kong. According to the HKSAR Census and Statistics Department, the Mainland's cumulative direct investment in Hong Kong was US\$401 billion, 36.7% of Hong Kong's total stock of inward direct investment, at the end of 2010. China's share in Hong Kong's trade also increased from 36.3% in 1997 to 48.5% in 2011.³¹ In addition, Hong Kong's economic supremacy has been eclipsed by the stellar economic performance of top-tier Chinese cities such as Shanghai.³² Contrary to the country-bumpkin image of "Ah Chan," today's Mainlanders in Hong Kong are increasingly well-educated. Mainland-born women in Hong Kong, for instance, are acquiring postsecondary education at the same relative rate as Hong Kong-born women.³³ These factors may have dented the pride of Hong Kongers who used to look askance at their Mainland counterparts.

To Beijing, which implemented CEPA with the aims of ensuring Hong Kong's prosperity, reducing social discontent, and thus cultivating loyalty to China, the resistance to economic integration in this epitome of a capitalist society must have come as a surprise. Although the Hong Kong government and many Hong Kongers are still concerned that the city may be sidelined by China's rising economy, the prioritization of economic gains above other values is no longer sacrosanct.

Survey results show that the Hong Kong society began to embrace post-materialist values after the 2003 SARS epidemic. Results also pointed to growing dissatisfaction with the government's neoliberal measures after the economic downturns such as the privatization of public assets, which aggravated income inequality. By 2006, as many as 80% of respondents indicated

31. The Hong Kong Trade Development Council, *Economic and Trade Information on Hong Kong*, accessed December 10 and August 14, 2012, <<http://www.hktdc.com/info/mi/etihk/en/>>.

32. Sophie Leung, "Hong Kong's Economy Overtaken by Shanghai in 2009 (Update 2)," *Bloomberg*, March 5, 2012, accessed December 4, 2012, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aL_WOYEIntiE>.

33. Michael E. DeGolyer, *The Changing Faces of Hong Kong: Women in the Community and National Context, 1994–2010*, p. 26, accessed April 25 2014, <http://www.civic-exchange.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/1302gender_report2.pdf>.

that government spending on environment protection should increase. The rise of young people's participation in politics is also a contributing factor to the trend toward post-materialism.³⁴ These social changes further strain tensions between the local and national identity, in two ways. Not only have more people started questioning the government's philosophy of putting the economy first, there is also a greater emphasis on the government's procedural legitimacy on top of its performance legitimacy.

Opposition to the "economy first" philosophy was manifested in the anti-high speed railway construction project campaign of 2009–10, in which the demolition of a small village to make way for the railway was amplified to become the center of controversy. Activists accused the government of treating land solely as a money-making commodity, disregarding its meaning and bonds to the lives of people.³⁵ The campaign also called for rediscovering Hong Kong's identity and rethinking how people are linked to land. This later turned into a response to the growing dominance of China over Hong Kong's political and economic affairs, foreshadowing the resistance to subsequent integrative measures. In January 2011, The Action Plan for the Bay Area of the Pearl River Estuary, another project fostering the integration of Hong Kong and Mainland China, was criticized as an act intended to enable Guangdong Province to "annex" Hong Kong, compromising the HKSAR's high degree of autonomy directly under Beijing as provided by the Basic Law.³⁶

There was also a wave of dissent against a government plan to allow more Mainlanders to drive their private cars into Hong Kong. Although Mainland visitors are big spenders in the property market and in luxury shops, thus

34. After the SARS epidemic, more people started to reflect upon the meaning of life. Economic interests are no longer the sole concern of Hong Kongers. They have given more weight to ideals rather than just tangible materialistic benefits in constructing their meanings of life. The ongoing "Umbrella Movement," in which participants endure the inconveniences and hardship of occupying the streets in their quest for genuine universal suffrage may be seen as a reflection of this trend. See Ng Chun-hung, "After the Crises: Changes in Social Ethos," in Lau Siu-kai, Lee Ming-kwan, Wan Po-san, and Wong Siu-lun, eds., *Indicators of Social Development Hong Kong, 2004* (Hong Kong: Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2006), p. 68. By 2005, as many as 89% saw income inequality as "very serious," up from 65% in 1992. See Ma, "Value Changes and Legitimacy Crisis in Post-industrial Hong Kong," pp. 701, 706–08.

35. Ma, *ibid.*, p. 709. See also Hong Kong Transition Project, *Parties, Policies, and Political Reform in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Transition Project, 2006), p. 48.

36. See the Basic Law, Article 12: "The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be a local administrative region of the People's Republic of China, which shall enjoy a high degree of autonomy and come directly under the Central People's Government."

boosting the local economy as asserted by the government, they are accused of driving up rents, forcing out small businesses, and destroying the social network built up by local communities over decades. Amid the outcry, commentaries challenging Hong Kong's reliance on China started to surface. For example, a specialist on social welfare policies argued that Hong Kong does not need babies from Mainland parents because local birth rates are stable and sufficient for local needs. An economist seemingly changed his stance on the substantial benefits of integration to Hong Kong.³⁷

Social activists' efforts since 2006 in advocating post-materialist values, such as the importance of preserving communities marginalized in the business-dominant approach to urban renewal, stimulated many Hong Kong residents to rethink the vision for the city's future. Pondering over the question "what makes our home better?" fostered greater affection for Hong Kong, strengthening Hong Kongers' sense of belonging to the city. This is evident in the renewed interest in Hong Kong's past and the rise of "localism," advocating the protection and prioritization of local interests, values, cultures, and way of life. Television programs and websites with pictures and memories of old Hong Kong sprang up. In 2011, the ideology of localism was articulated in a controversial book titled *Hong Kong as a City-State*, which provoked heated debates and became a bestseller. The trend has also been boosted by political figures such as Claudia Mo, Gary Fan, and even incumbent Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying trumpeting localism to win public support. For example, during his 2012 election campaign, Leung suggested adopting protective measures such as "Hong Kong Land for Hong Kongers" (Gang Ren Gang Di) so as to limit the land supply for property development targeting Mainlanders.³⁸

(II.) Political Intervention and Reactions

On top of supporting Hong Kong's economic integration with mainland China, Beijing has also been increasing its intervention in the governance of

37. In an interview in January 2012, Francis T. Lui, an economist, asserted that benefits from Mainland visitors to Hong Kong outweighed the costs. In March 2012, however, he contradicted his earlier stance and said that the economic benefits by Mainland visitors were very limited, and the influx of visitors had created significant social problems.

38. Since the handover, Hong Kong's chief executives have been chosen by an electoral college dominated by pro-Beijing elites. In the 2012 chief executive election, three candidates, including a democrat, contested the position after obtaining the support of at least 150 members of the 1,200-member election committee. The incumbent Leung eventually won the race with 689 votes.

Hong Kong. Some forms of intervention, such as efforts toward enlarging the united front and political support network, and cultivating the younger generation of Hong Kong's tycoons and other elites as political leaders, may be less conspicuous to the public. But the central government's assertion of its constitutional authority, namely, in the interpretation of the Basic Law, and more recently its promotion of patriotism, have stirred profound unease within Hong Kong.

As early as 2004, there were already doubts on whether national education should be used by the state regime to assimilate Hong Kongers. In November that year, Hong Kong's Secretary of Education and Manpower was asked whether a program for kindergarten, "I Love China," would teach kindergarten students "to distinguish between 'I love China' and 'I love the Communist Party of China'."³⁹ His negative response was criticized by the press.⁴⁰

To Hong Kongers, the love of China does not necessarily entail the love of the CCP. This illustrates the complex nature of the Hong Kong identity: it does not wholly repudiate the notion of being "Chinese" but defines it in a different way through linking the affection to Hong Kong's norms. Among the debates over patriotism in 2004, one discourse has become popular: We love the classic culture, long history, ordinary people, and beautiful landscape of China, but not the regime. This sentiment, apparent in the display of nationalism in Hong Kong over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands issues and the high level of concern over human rights and moral issues in mainland China, is not acceptable to the CCP, which equates loyalty to China with loyalty to the party.⁴¹ In the words of Chun:

[T]he absence of a political culture or national identity . . . allowed Hong Kong's peculiar sense of Chinese cultural consciousness to become quite divorced from questions of political allegiance in a way which was quite

39. Hong Kong LegCo, Legislative Council Questions (LCQ), LCQ 20 (2004), "National Education," press release, November 3, 2004.

40. C. Yau, "Students Get Select View of History," *The Standard* (Hong Kong), November 5, 2004.

41. The complicated nature of the local identity can be further translated into four different modes of nationalistic sentiment: antagonism (seeing Mainlanders as outsiders and the Mainland as a foreign land); pragmatic nationalism (conditional nationalism largely for one's self-interests); liberalized nationalism (held by immigrants from China, redefining their love to China by linking it to their experiences in Hong Kong); and reactivated patriotism (a small group of old patriots in Hong Kong stigmatized by mainstream media, pro-CCP). See Mathews, Ma, and Lui, *Hong Kong, China: Learning to Belong to a Nation*, pp. 108–12.

different from the assumed synonymy of one family, one people, one civilization and one ethos that had been systematically cultivated in Taiwan, for example.⁴²

Since 2007, the Chief Executive's Policy Address has begun to devote a section to "national education," following a reminder from then-President Hu Jintao. In 2008–09, more resources were invested to inculcate nationalist sentiments in youth, including boosting the quota of students taking part in subsidized exchange programs, and the funding of national education activities.⁴³ In his 2010 policy address, then-Chief Executive Donald Tsang made further proposals to enhance the national education curriculum, teaching schedule, and activities. Among these were encouraging students to sing the national anthem, attend flag-raising ceremonies, understand the Basic Law, support national sports teams, and to "appreciate and understand Chinese culture," i.e., ideas such as filial piety, broadmindedness, and solidarity.

In 2011, Tsang's proposals encountered strong resistance from secondary school heads, teachers, and students, suspicious that they might be part of the CCP regime's "brainwashing" propaganda.⁴⁴ The resistance grew stronger particularly after Hao Tiechuan, the culture chief of the central government's Liaison Office in Hong Kong, called national education in schools a "necessary brainwashing (*biyao de xinao*)," suggesting that the Hong Kong curriculum should promote the state's way of thinking. The opposition subsequently snowballed into a sustained movement demanding the abolition of the national education curriculum in 2012; this united activists from across generations and galvanized Hong Kong youth into contentious politics.

To a large extent, Hong Kongers' rejection of Chinese-style patriotic education may be seen as a predictable outcome of the cumulative fears over "Mainlandization," changes undermining Hong Kong's core values and its autonomy under "one country, two systems." As early as 2004, over 300 professionals, concerned that core values were being eroded under Chinese

42. Allen Chun, "Discourses of Identity in the Changing Spaces of Public Culture in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore," *Theory, Culture & Society* 13:51 (1996), p. 59.

43. Cheung, "The Changing Relations between Hong Kong and the Mainland since 2003," p. 339.

44. The proposals were given the cold shoulder by secondary school heads, with the Grant Schools Council that represented 22 top schools urging the government to drop the plan. A group of secondary school students also started a Facebook page to oppose the proposals.

rule, issued a declaration in the press to uphold the values of human rights, rule of law, democracy, freedom, and others. The attenuation of these core values, however, does not seem to have abated. If anything, the curtailment of various freedoms and the rule of law seems more pronounced in today's Hong Kong. For instance, during Chinese Vice Premier Li Keqiang's visit in August 2011, only some of his activities were open to reporting by the local media. Some reporters were blocked from coverage by unidentified security guards, and two students wearing T-shirts with June 4th slogans alluding to Tiananmen were confined by police at the Hong Kong University campus where Li was visiting. In the *Press Freedom Index 2011–2012*, Hong Kong plunged 20 places to number 54. According to the index's publisher, Reporters Without Borders, "Hong Kong (54th) saw a sharp deterioration in press freedom in 2011 and its ranking fell sharply. Arrests, assaults and harassment worsened working conditions for journalists to an extent not seen previously, a sign of a worrying change in government policy."⁴⁵

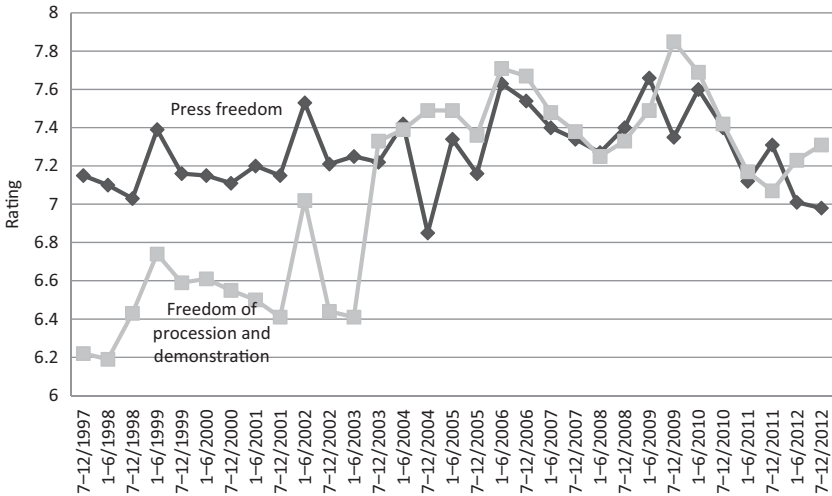
Other incidents abound. The police set more restrictions for organizers in getting approval for the June 4 Tiananmen candlelight memorial and July 1 protest in 2011. In August, Hong Kong's top court, the Court of Final Appeal, ruled that the Democratic Republic of Congo could not be sued in the SAR, deferring to the interpretation by the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress of the Basic Law. Contradicting its established common-law system, the ruling was seen as undermining Hong Kong's judicial independence.⁴⁶ In October, when the Chief Executive delivered his Policy Address, journalists complained that security guards were impolite to reporters and repeatedly blocked cameramen from taking pictures during the proceedings. In November, the government-owned Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) made a controversial decision to fire several radio hosts, including one whose political views were persistently attacked by local pro-Beijing leftists.

The perceived erosion of press freedom and the freedom to demonstrate was not lost on Hong Kongers. Public opinion polls conducted by the

45. Reporters Without Borders, *Press Freedom Index, 2011–2012*, accessed January 7, 2013, <<http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2011-2012,1043.html>>.

46. The Court of Final Appeal made its decision after China approved an interpretation of the Basic Law stating that Hong Kong should follow central government rule on absolute immunity for sovereign states. However, under Hong Kong's British-derived law, immunity does not apply in commercial cases. Critics argue that Hong Kong's role as an international business center has been undermined by China's decision.

FIGURE 3. Freedom Indicators



SOURCE: Ibid. to Figure 2, “Freedom Indicators,” accessed January 3, 2014.

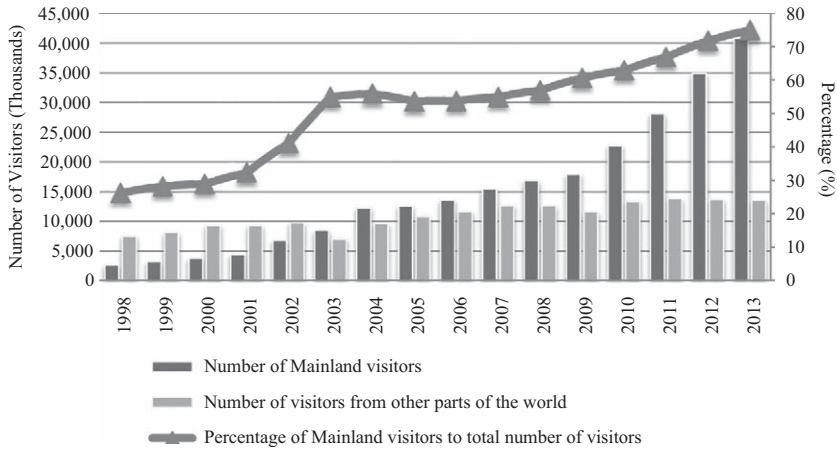
University of Hong Kong show that respondents perceived these freedoms to be in decline in the past few years (see Figure 3).

The degree of fairness and autonomy in Hong Kong appears to be shrinking too. Fears of vote rigging for a District Council (DC) election in November 2010 arose when a significant number of dubious voter registrations were uncovered by the media after the election. There is also evidence of the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in Hong Kong playing an active role in elections. Cheung asserts that the Liaison Office “was very active in influencing the 2008 LegCo elections such as in coordinating different pro-government candidates behind the scene and nurturing more qualified candidates with pro-Beijing background(s) . . .”⁴⁷ The same may also be said of the Liaison Office’s role in shaping the outcomes of the DC, LegCo, and Chief Executive elections from 2011 to 2012.⁴⁸

47. Cheung, “The Changing Relations between Hong Kong and the Mainland since 2003,” p. 329.

48. Yew Chiew Ping, “The 2012 Chief Executive Election and After,” in Zheng Yongnian and Yew Chiew Ping, eds., *Hong Kong under Chinese Rule: Economic Integration and Political Gridlock* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2013), pp. 237–53.

FIGURE 4. Visitors to Hong Kong, 1998–2013



SOURCE: Partner Net, accessed April 29, 2014, <http://partnernet.hkbt.com/tc/research_statistics/index.html>.

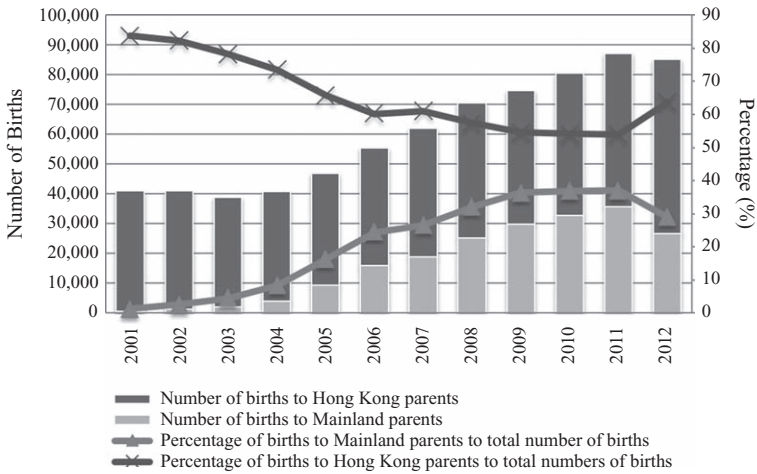
It is amid such fears of “Mainlandization” that Hong Kongers’ pent-up frustration erupted over a slew of incidents from late 2011 to early 2012, which brought their simmering resentment against the Mainlanders to the surface, as elaborated in the next section.

(III.) The Influx of Mainlanders: Us Versus Them

In 2001, the Hong Kong government stressed the need to facilitate the flow of people and capital across the Hong Kong-China border to take better advantage of economic opportunities from the Mainland. The idea encountered little resistance from the public then as Hong Kong had been badly hit by the economic downturn following the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Since then, however, public sentiments have taken a negative turn with the increased inflow of Mainlanders.

Figure 4 shows the changing influx of Mainland visitors from 1998 to 2011. Because of the relaxed controls on the flow of people across the border in 2002 and 2003, the number has increased by tenfold from 1998 to 2011. The significance of Mainland visitors for Hong Kong’s tourism has changed drastically. In 1998, only 26.3% of visitors to Hong Kong were from Mainland China. Thirteen years later, in 2011, the ratio had increased to 67%, which

FIGURE 5. Births to Hong Kong and Mainland Parents, 2001–2012



SOURCE: Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, *Demographic Trends in Hong Kong, 1981–2012*, December 2013, accessed April 29, 2014, <<http://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B10100022013MM12Bo100.pdf>>, p. FA 4.

was two times higher than that of tourists from other parts of the world. The number of Mainland visitors hit a record 40.7 million in 2013, accounting for 75% of all arrivals, and is expected to reach 45 million in 2014.⁴⁹ This is around six times Hong Kong's population of 7.2 million.

Animosity toward Mainlanders was exacerbated by incoming Mainland expectant mothers who strained hospital resources at the locals' expense. As early as November 2006, a small group of local pregnant women had already protested against the influx of Mainland mothers they claimed were overloading the local medical system. In 2007, the government tightened the spigot. Nonetheless, the inflow of Mainland mothers persisted, albeit at a slower pace.

Figure 5 shows the changes in number of births to Mainland parents. The number has increased rapidly since 2003, particularly between 2003 and 2006. Around 2003, private hospitals capitalized on relaxed border controls to take in more expecting Mainland mothers. The difference between the percentage of births by Mainland parents and by locals has narrowed from

49. Tourism Commission, HKSAR, *Tourism Performance in 2013*, accessed April 25, 2014, <http://www.tourism.gov.hk/english/statistics/statistics_perform.html>.

about 80% in 2001 to 20% in 2010. In 10 years, the number of births by Mainland mothers increased 52-fold.

In January 2012, the Hospital Authority released data on Mainland mothers entering emergency departments in Hong Kong hospitals to deliver their babies. According to the data, there were more than 1,600 cases of Mainland mothers who rushed to accident or emergency departments to give birth in 2011, doubling the 2010 figure. More than 70% of them had no advance booking, implying that they were probably prohibited from giving birth in Hong Kong.⁵⁰ This trend has angered local Hong Kongers, who point to hospital overcrowding. To quell public anger, the Hong Kong government has since tightened restrictions for Mainland expectant mothers entering the city.⁵¹

Altogether, the surge of Mainland arrivals in the city has sparked anxiety over the erosion of Hong Kong's indigenous culture and way of life as well as stiffer competition for scarce resources in the densely populated city. The portrayal of Mainland visitors as the "nouveau riche" in both mainstream and new media accentuated the differences between Hong Kongers and Mainlanders. Media reports and Internet posts spotlighted anti-social behavior of numerous Mainlanders—e.g., queue-cutting, and children urinating and defecating in public—which set them apart. There was also wide media coverage alleging that babies from Mainland parents used up local resources, depriving local children's shares of medical care, education, and other social support. Small local retailers were also squeezed by the rising rents driven up by luxury shops targeting the Mainland China big spenders. In some districts, shops catering to the needs of local residents have been replaced by others serving Mainland visitors, hence disrupting daily life.⁵²

The perceived threat of incoming Mainlanders prompted Hong Kongers to assert their rights, interests, and cultural identity. In January 2012, for instance, more than 1,000 people gathered outside a luxury store to protest

50. This was followed by a series of negative media coverage including a case of impatient Mainland parents assaulting a doctor over the long waiting time, another case involving Mainland mothers deliberately seeking imprisonment to prolong their stay in Hong Kong, and others using fraudulent documents in order to give birth in Hong Kong.

51. Those who are at an advanced stage of pregnancy must produce a booking confirmation certificate issued by a Hong Kong hospital if their aim is to give birth in Hong Kong; those whose aim of visit is not to give birth in Hong Kong must also provide proof.

52. "Impacts of Mainland Visitors on the Daily Lives of Hong Kong Residents," accessed April 24, 2014, <<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201403/19/P201403190220.htm>>.

against the alleged discrimination by the management against Hong Kongers that forbade them, but not Mainlanders, from taking photographs outside the store. In April 2012, netizens were angered by the use of simplified Chinese characters on the menus at an *agnes b.* café instead of the traditional forms conventionally used in Hong Kong. The café later apologized. Debates over the cultural significance of written traditional Chinese in Hong Kong ensued. Proponents often argue that its use shows that the city is superior in preserving Chinese heritage, whereas Chinese culture in the Mainland has been “destroyed” by the CCP.

Mounting tensions boiled over in February 2012. A group of locals demonstrated their resentment and resistance to further integration by running a full page advertisement featuring an image of locusts (*huang chong*)—a label used by some netizens to refer to Mainlanders—and calling for a stop to the influx of Mainland mothers to prevent the Hong Kong government from “spending HK\$ 1,000,000 (US\$129,000) on their babies every 18 minutes.”⁵³ That members of an online forum raised more than HK\$ 100,000 (US\$12,900) in just a matter of days to fund this front page advertisement is an indication of the extent of unhappiness within Hong Kong society.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Before the handover, Hong Kong’s history, higher level of economic development, and a vibrant popular culture in the film and music industries helped Hong Kongers distinguish themselves from Mainlanders. The 1989 Tiananmen incident alerted local people to the difference between them and their compatriots by highlighting the freedoms enjoyed in the city. These factors reinforced Hong Kongers’ psychological resistance to the CCP regime. After the handover, as the gap between the economic performances of China and Hong Kong narrowed, locals have increasingly turned to their “norms” to distinguish themselves from Mainlanders and to redefine their own local identity. As evident from the growing revulsion to integration from 2010, the strengthening of local identity is achieved through the revision and

53. The small text of the advertisement reads, “According to the Census Department, there were 29,000 babies born to Mainland parents in 2009, which means that one such baby was born every 18 minutes. From the day he attends kindergarten to the day he graduates from university, each baby born to Mainland parents spends at least one million Hong Kong dollars in government spending, not including other expenditures.”

expansion of “norms” to encompass post-materialist values in the changing socioeconomic context in both China and Hong Kong.

This rising local identity today is proof that Beijing’s attempts to inculcate a sense of belonging in Hong Kongers have not only failed but also backfired. Extolling China’s sports success or dangling economic carrots has but limited and transient impact on Hong Kongers’ sense of national pride. Recalling Brewer’s arguments cited earlier, Beijing’s nation-building exercise is misguided in demanding the assimilation of Hong Kongers without accommodating their differences. In particular, officials’ interventionist approach to the governance of Hong Kong since 2003, construed as a snub of the city’s autonomy and its core values, has elicited “political resistance and conflict” from the society.⁵⁴ This is evident in the resuscitation of a local identity through a renewed emphasis on what is unique to Hong Kong, a search for a *raison d’être* for the city and its inhabitants in the context of a rising China, as well as in local people’s frequent protests of what they see as Beijing’s transgressions and the erosion of the principle of “one country, two systems.”

Politically, it is inconceivable that tensions between the national and local identities in Hong Kong can be easily resolved in the short term. This is because a pervasively negative impression of the CCP has taken root in Hong Kong, reinforced by news and commentaries on how ordinary Chinese have suffered over food and building safety issues, *inter alia*, because of an immoral and corrupt government. There is also considerable focus on how activists such as Liu Xiaobo and Li Wangyang have been persecuted by the authoritarian regime. Hong Kongers feel impotent and uneasy about the transplantation of the CCP style of governance to Hong Kong and Beijing’s high profile interventions in the city’s affairs. These sentiments have translated into skepticism over the HKSAR government’s capacity to defend local values and interests, as well as a deep-seated mistrust of the central government. In 2013, Hong Kongers’ distrust in the central government reached the highest level, 38.9%, since May 1997. From 2011, confidence in “one country, two systems” has also dipped to the pre-1997 levels.⁵⁵

54. Brewer, “Multiple Identities and Identity Transition: Implications for Hong Kong,” p. 196.

55. As analyzed by the HKU POP, the trend is related to the incidents of Bo Xilai, Chen Guangcheng, and Li Wangyang. HKU POP, “HKU POP Releases the Latest Trust and Confidence Indicators,” accessed January 3, 2013, <<http://hkupop.hku.hk/english/release/release936.html>>.

Neither can further economic stimulants from Mainland China help to effectively resolve the tension. New measures announced before the 15th anniversary of the handover such as the development of a new economic zone across the border in Shenzhen and the strengthening of Hong Kong's position as an offshore RMB business center have little relevance to ordinary people struggling with rising property prices and declining social mobility. Perhaps most important, as more local people, especially the younger generation, incline toward post-materialism, the "economy first" approach will no longer serve to allay public fears over the perceived diminution of freedoms and civil liberties, as well as Beijing's open incursions into the city's autonomy. That the 2012 July 1 protest was the third largest in turnout since 2003 and 2004 brings home this point.

In sum, this study proposes that by disregarding Hong Kongers' needs for differentiation and demanding their assimilation, Beijing has inadvertently contributed to the rise of the Hong Kong identity and a concomitant decline of the Chinese identity in the SAR. It implies that Beijing's governmental and elite approach to transplanting patriotic feelings and a sense of national identity has been fundamentally flawed. What is lacking is the incorporation of a popular perspective from below, the sort of approach that is often seen by the regime as contesting, rather than complementing, its authority. The long term solutions to reconciling the national and local identities are also what the CCP is loath to consider: genuine respect for Hong Kong's autonomy and its core values, the granting of universal suffrage, and political liberalization for the city. If, as Cheung surmises, CCP's interventionist administration from 2003 on has put the city "in China's tight embrace," societal reactions in recent years should have made it very clear that Hong Kongers are also striving to break free of that embrace.⁵⁶ If Beijing persists in its interventionist approach, it is foreseeable that the rise of the Hong Kong identity vis-à-vis the Chinese identity will continue unabated.

The 2014 "Umbrella Movement," a civil disobedience campaign to demand genuine universal suffrage in the 2017 Chief Executive election, seems to confirm the above thesis.⁵⁷ Not only has it ushered in a new age

56. Cheung, "The Changing Relations between Hong Kong and the Mainland since 2003," p. 341.

57. According to the decision by China's rubber-stamp legislature, the National People's Congress, a candidate running for office has to be endorsed by more than half of the members in the 1,200-person nominating committee, to be modeled after the existing election committee made up of mostly Beijing loyalists. This high nomination threshold effectively rules out any possibility that

of a pro-democracy movement that will see Hong Kong youth succeeding the older generation of democrats, it has also, with far-reaching impact, rejuvenated and deepened the sense of Hong Kong identity and the values it embodies. The movement has cultivated among the mostly youthful protestors and their supporters a profound sense of pride in being Hong Kongers.⁵⁸ Younger generations of Hong Kongers, already inclined to see themselves as Hong Kong people and not Chinese citizens, through this wave of protests have further estranged themselves from Mainland China and the communist regime.⁵⁹ Whatever the eventual outcome of the Umbrella Movement, it appears that Beijing and the Hong Kong government have alienated a generation of Hong Kong youth. This has serious implications for the city's future and its governance.

How the dynamics of identity politics may play out also depends on future demographic changes: the evolving population of Hong Kongers residing in the Mainland, those in cross-border marriages, and Mainland migrants to Hong Kong. According to 2009 statistics, 155,400 Hong Kongers above the age of 18, or 2.8% of the population in the same age group, had taken up residence in Mainland China.⁶⁰ In 2012, there were close to 27,000 marriages between Hong Kongers and Mainlanders, a number that has increased by 30% from 2001 and constituted 44.6% of all marriages in the same year.⁶¹ As of June 2011, there were 171,322 “persons from mainland having resided in Hong Kong

a democrat or a candidate not approved by Beijing may successfully contest the 2017 election, ensuring that the five million eligible voters in Hong Kong would only get to choose among pre-vetted candidates.

58. The “umbrella” aspect refers to the protestors’ use of open umbrellas in an effort to stave off tear gas fired by police. In the early days of the protest, participants’ civil behavior made headlines in several international media, giving a boost to the Hong Kong identity. For example, a student helping to sort trash at the protest site was quoted in the media as saying, “In this protest, we want to show our citizenship and our will to have a democratic government. Although this cleanup is a small thing, it is something that shows the values that all Hong Kong citizens should have.” Chris Buckley and Austin Ramzy, “Hong Kong Protests Are Leaderless but Orderly,” *New York Times*, September 30, 2014, accessed November 8, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/01/world/asia/in-hong-kong-clean-and-polite-but-a-protest-nonetheless.html?_r=0>.

59. Refer to HKU POP, “Ethnic Identity—Hongkonger (half yearly average, by age group),” accessed November 8, 2014, <http://hkupop.hku.hk/chinese/popexpress/ethnic/eidentity/hkCitizen/halfyr/eid_half_chart.html>.

60. Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR, *Thematic Household Survey Report No. 38 Hong Kong Residents’ Experience of and Aspiration for Taking Up Residence in the Mainland of China* (2009), p. 5, accessed January 20, 2014, <<http://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11302382008XXXXB0100.pdf>>.

61. Idem, *Women and Men in Hong Kong: Key Statistics* (2013), p. 43, accessed February 10, 2014, <<http://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11303032013AN13B0100.pdf>>.

for less than 7 years” (PMRs), constituting 2.5% of the entire population. This is a decline from 266,577 PMRs in 2001 and 217,103 in 2006.⁶²

Today, the total population size of these three groups is still insignificant as a proportion of the overall Hong Kong population. The future impact of these population segments on the identity issue hinges on how their numbers may grow in proportion and how these individuals define their identity. For instance, although the proportion of the population born in Hong Kong has been constant at around 60% since 2001, births to One-way Permit Holders (OWPHs) in Hong Kong have been a key constituent. From 2012–13, the number of births to OWPHs was 57,100, and its ratio to Hong Kong’s overall population increase was 137%.⁶³ In view of these demographic trends, the possibility of these population segments serving as a mediating force to reconcile differences between the Hong Kong and Chinese identities cannot be totally ruled out.

62. Idem, *Thematic Report: Persons from the Mainland Having Resided in Hong Kong for Less Than 7 Years*, p. 18, accessed July 12, 2013, <<http://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11200612012XXXXB0100.pdf>>; Kahon Chan, “Number of Mainland Immigrants Declines Sharply: Census Dept.,” *China Daily*, December 17, 2012, accessed July 18, 2013, <<http://www.chinadailyapac.com/article/number-mainland-immigrants-declines-sharply-census-dept>>.

63. Idem, *2011 Population Census Main Report, Volume I*, p. 36, accessed April 26, 2014, <<http://www.census2011.gov.hk/pdf/main-report-volume-I.pdf>>; idem, *Press Release: Year-end Population for 2013*, February 18, 2014, accessed April 26, 2014, <http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/press_release/press-ReleaseDetail.jsp?charsetID=1&pressRID=3405>.