

China as “Other”

Resistance to and ambivalence toward national identity in Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT: Existing research shows multiple articulations of national identity by Hong Kong's people since the handover in 1997. An issue of contention is whether the dichotomy of China as the “other” vis-à-vis Hong Kong's local identity still prevails in the context of top-down renationalisation and new developments in transborder spatiality. While the existing literature has illustrated Hong Kong people's steady growth of pride and affinity for national symbols, re-examination of three representative surveys (2006, 2008, and 2010) demonstrates that resistance to these cultural icons is also growing. Furthermore, while previous studies have revealed that a “cultural-economic China” is more welcome than a “political China,” the three surveys mentioned above indicate that even the former is meeting growing local resistance. The otherness of China hence should be re-visited in light of the ambivalence of Hong Kong identity. The theoretical and social implications of this sense of the otherness of China are also significant. Specifically, this article argues that the ambivalence of Hong Kong people's articulation of national identity is closely connected to the uneasiness generated by encounters between China and Hong Kong in recent years: controversies and contentions arising from national education, the transborder flow of population, and the provision of goods and public services for non-locals. In this paper, I shall look at the development of local and national identities in some states of contested equilibrium.

KEYWORDS: national identity, China, Hong Kong, local identity, renationalisation, contested equilibrium.

On 26 December 2013, six people referring to themselves as members of a group called “Priority to Hong Kong People” (香港人優先) trespassed upon the headquarters of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Hong Kong Garrison in Tamar.⁽¹⁾ They carried with them the flag of colonial Hong Kong. The issue sparked strong reactions from the pro-Beijing press. Communist partisan paper *Wen Wei Po* accused the group of advocating “Gang Du” (港獨, Hong Kong independence).⁽²⁾ *Global Times*, a mouthpiece of the Chinese government, described the protest as an unprecedented “raid” on the PLA's Hong Kong Garrison and suggested that swift measures must be adopted in order to prevent similar incidents in future.⁽³⁾ Meanwhile, arguments over constitutional reform were topics of political contention between Hong Kong and Beijing, and the Chinese government felt that the pro-democracy politicians and their followers did not respect its constitutional authority.⁽⁴⁾ Strong feelings originating from arguments concerning resource allocation between locals and mainland visitors – public health service, educational opportunities for children, and even consumer goods such as milk powder – are widespread.⁽⁵⁾

Hong Kong, which resumed its Chinese identity 16 years ago, still shows ambiguity toward her ties with China. Polls indicate that in December 2013, 21.8% of Hong Kong locals called themselves “Chinese” (中國人), while 34.8% of respondents identified with the appellation of “Hongkonger” (香港人).⁽⁶⁾ Despite the aforementioned blatant political and cultural clashes, more than one fifth of Hong Kong inhabitants still called themselves Chinese, and 42.6% of people claimed a mixed identity (27.6% opted for “Hongkonger in China” 中國的香港人 and 15% chose “Chinese in Hong Kong” 香港的中國人). Hong Kong continues to wrestle with the reconfiguration between national identity and local distinctiveness, even though its handover from Britain to China was settled long ago. Obviously, the strike for an “optimal distinctiveness” – a balance between inclusion of and differentiation from the Chinese identity experienced by Hong Kong people –

is a core focus.⁽⁷⁾ This is the research question that this article tries to address. The Hong Kong identity, given this former British colony's history and its path towards returning to China, has always been a mixture of resistance and ambivalence resulting from contested national and local identities. It is suggested that China was regarded as a backward and inferior “other” when Hong Kong was developing its own identity as the colony experienced rapid socio-economic growth and development.⁽⁸⁾ However, after the return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, together with an increase in the transborder population flow (though at that stage, this was primarily Hong Kong people

I want to express my gratitude to the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for their generosity in allowing me to re-analyse the survey data.

1. “Shiwei zhe chi gangying qi chuang zhu junzongbu, junren chichong fengqiang quzhu” (Protesters trespassed upon PLA's headquarters with flag of colonial Hong Kong, soldiers with submachine guns expelled them), *Ming Pao*, 27 December 2013.
2. “Gang du' chuang jun ying, 'huan shi' cu yi fa chu li” (Hong Kong Independent seekers trespassed upon military base, *Global Times* urged legal follow-ups), *Wen Wei Po*, 30 December 2013.
3. *Idem*.
4. “Liu Zhaojia: Gangren bu zun chong zhong yang zhuan qiang ying, chen zhong yang ying xiang jie guo 'yi fu yi guo liang zhi’” (S.K. Lau said central government becomes tough as Hong Kong people do not respect it, and claimed its influence on election result “is in line with one country, two systems”), *Ming Pao*, 31 December 2013.
5. “Zhong Gang jia su rong he, tong shi jia ju mao dun” (Accelerating integration between China and Hong Kong intensifying conflicts), Editorial, *Hong Kong Daily News*, 24 January 2014.
6. Public opinion polls conducted by Public Opinion Programme, The University of Hong Kong, <http://hkupop.hku.hk/chinese/popexpress/ethnic/eidentity/poll/datatables.html> (accessed on 25 January 2014).
7. For the concept of “optimal distinctiveness,” see Marilyn Brewer, “Multiple identities and identity transition: Implications for Hong Kong,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1999, p. 188.
8. Anthony Fung, “What makes the local? A brief consideration of the rejuvenation of Hong Kong identity,” *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3-4, 2001, pp. 591-601; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, “Resinisation, nationalism and the Hong Kong identity,” in Clement So and Joseph Chan, *Press and politics in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong, Chinese University Press, 1999, pp. 497-528; Eric Ma, “Bottom-up nationalisation,” in Chun Hung Ng, Eric Ma, and Tai-lok Lui, *Hong Kong style cultural studies*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2006, pp. 257-283.

taking holidays or buying post-retirement homes in nearby mainland counties), Hong Kong identity was hybridised, with growing attachment to Chinese national icons and a persistent articulation of local symbols at the same time.⁽⁹⁾ I am interested in not only identifying the pattern of change but also in making sense of a continuously reconstituting Hong Kong identity.

The ambiguous "Chineseness" of Hong Kong identity

Hong Kong identity has always interacted with Chinese identity. Hong Kong, since its colonisation by the British in 1841, was inhabited by Chinese, and they constituted the majority of the population. Most of them were migrants from China, and they brought with them their original culture and traditions. It was in the 1960s and 1970s that we gradually witnessed the emergence of a more distinguishable Hong Kong identity.⁽¹⁰⁾ That was the period when Hong Kong experienced its transformation to first a manufacturing hub and then a centre for financial and professional services. Substantial improvement in the standard of living and a significant change in the urban landscape in Hong Kong marked an interesting contrast with the economic backwardness found in the mainland. While the residents of Hong Kong, many of whom were migrants, found themselves settling down in the colony, they saw their kin and relatives in the mainland engulfed in endless political mobilisation and campaigns. Their impression of Communist China was further dampened by social unrest in 1967, with spill-over from the Cultural Revolution across the border. This perception of mainland China being plagued by political campaigns and ruthless power struggles among different factions in the political leadership (as evident in the devastating Cultural Revolution and 20 years later during the Tiananmen Incident in 1989) remained in the minds of a significant portion of Hong Kong people. All these elements together helped construct China as an alien, backward, and chaotic "other," whereas the image of Hong Kong was one of a modernising and increasingly international city.⁽¹¹⁾ In such mental constructs of Hong Kong and China, Hongkongers were perceived as the opposite of Chinese, and this shaped identity politics in Hong Kong before the handover in 1997.⁽¹²⁾

However, it would be imprudent to conclude an outright dichotomy between the formation of the Hong Kong identity and the perception of "Chineseness." If "China" is broadly defined as an ethnic tie and racial identification, Hong Kong people somehow got along well with this cultural label even when they were under colonial rule. While a sense of local communal consciousness could be found among social movements in the pre-handover days,⁽¹³⁾ nationalist passion was also displayed – long-lasting protests against the Japanese "occupation" of the Diaoyu Islands (disputed territory between China and Japan) and urging the colonial government to recognise Chinese as an official language in 1970s were typical examples. "Pan-Chineseness" has played a significant role in Hong Kong identity, to which Chinese folklore and ethno-cultural ethos have been widely attributed by Hong Kong inhabitants.⁽¹⁴⁾ Identity formation in Hong Kong has therefore always been shaped by complicated and ambiguous dynamics with the national identity of China. While China was positioned as a cultural "other" vis-à-vis a modernising Hong Kong, it simultaneously provided an ethnic and racial basis for the perception of an abstract nationhood of Hong Kong people.

Contested post-handover re-nationalisation

The established Hong Kong identity, as described above, was shaken in the course of the Crown colony's return to Chinese sovereignty as a Special Administrative Region (SAR). With the resumption of Chinese rule, projecting China as a cultural "other" to the local identity seemed to be contradictory to expectations after the completion of the political transition. The post-handover years of Hong Kong have featured a contested project of re-nationalisation. Official hegemonic discourse and patriotic initiatives have met with sustained resistance from civil society. Transborder interaction at the socio-economic level has ignited both shared living experience and emotional response to Hongkongers' perception of China. While Hong Kong people have also demonstrated a new-found sense of pride and identification with well-known icons representing Chinese national identity in the post-handover decade,⁽¹⁵⁾ survey findings indicate that adherence to the local label of "Hong Kong people" and its distinctiveness continue to prevail.⁽¹⁶⁾ Such overlapping nexuses could be conceptualised through three perspectives: official political discourse, national education, and the cultural perception of mainland people by Hong Kong locals.

After the handover, Hong Kong's first Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, attempted to construct a political discourse of Hong Kong featuring Confucian and "Asian" values, to which "Chineseness" and ethnic ties with China as motherland ostensibly adhered.⁽¹⁷⁾ Tung highlighted the opportunities brought by China's modernisation, and the historical and ethnic legitimacy of Chinese rule over Hong Kong.⁽¹⁸⁾ Tung's narrative represented an official will to (re)define Hong Kong identity by strategically employing the cultural ethos of "Pan Chineseness." It was built upon an ethnic Chinese nationhood and opportunities brought about by China's modernisation. However, due to the failure to enact national security laws in 2003, and the political aftermath of the mass rally on 1 July, Bei-

9. Anthony Fung, "Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities," *Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2007, pp. 399-414; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, "Re-sinicisation, nationalism and the Hong Kong identity," *art. cit.*; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, "Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006," *Asian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 17, 2007, pp. 172-185.
10. Gordon Mathews, Eric Ma, and Tai-lok Lui, *Hong Kong, China: Learning to belong to a nation*, London, Routledge, 2008.
11. Anthony Fung, "What makes the local? A brief consideration of the rejuvenation of Hong Kong identity," *art. cit.*, pp. 591-601; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, "Re-sinicisation, nationalism and the Hong Kong identity," *art. cit.*; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, "Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006," *art. cit.*; Francis Lee and Joseph Chan, "Political Attitudes, Political Participation, and Hong Kong Identities After 1997," *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 2005, pp. 1-35.
12. Siu Kai Lau, "'Hong Kong' or 'Chinese': The identity of Hong Kong Chinese 1985 – 1995," *Twenty-first Century*, Vol. 41, 1997, pp. 43-58.
13. Ngok Ma, *Political Development in Hong Kong: State, Political Society, and Civil Society*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 2007, pp. 200-204.
14. Edward Vickers and Flora Kan, "The Reeducation of Hong Kong: Identity, Politics and Education in Postcolonial Hong Kong," *American Asian Review*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 2003, pp. 179-228.
15. Anthony Fung, "Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities," *art. cit.*; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, "Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006," *art. cit.*
16. Anthony Fung, "What makes the local? A brief consideration of the rejuvenation of Hong Kong identity," *art. cit.*, pp. 591-601; Anthony Fung, "Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities," *art. cit.*
17. John Flowerdew, "Identity Politics and Hong Kong's Return to Chinese Sovereignty: Analysing the discourse of Hong Kong's first Chief Executive," *Journal of Pragmatics*, No. 36, pp. 1551-1578, 2004.
18. *Idem*.

ing started to readjust its approach to managing the Special Administrative Region.⁽¹⁹⁾

Meanwhile, the democrats and other social activists from different civil society organisations continue to push for democracy and protection of human rights.⁽²⁰⁾ While the situation in Hong Kong is hardly comparable to that of Taiwan, where ethnicity and local identification have had significant impact on public life, the changing Hong Kong identity in the post-handover years is increasingly found to be a pertinent factor in people's political attitude and participation. Studies show that those labelling themselves as “Hongkongers” without any “Chinese” affiliation tended to be more supportive of democracy.⁽²¹⁾ Moreover, those recognising themselves as “Hong Kong Chinese” showed a higher level of political participation (such as demonstrations, protests, and voting), because they thought that “it is more capable of generating the public's participation in political activities that relate the city to the country.”⁽²²⁾ All in all, what we observe in Hong Kong's civil society is something very different from the picture promoted by the official discourse.

Apart from the promotion of a political discourse of “Pan-Chineseness,” national education is another pivotal apparatus for re-nationalising the Hong Kong identity. However, the process is far from a unilateral top-down indoctrination of Chinese nationalism. While post-handover curriculums (notably History and Liberal Studies) and school activities have been deliberately re-constructed to highlight Chinese nationalism (e.g., raising the national flag on campus) and China's contribution to Hong Kong's development, it is difficult for the government to keep some of the widely respected cultural elements of Hong Kong (such as the so-called core values of the rule of law, civic rights, and duties) out of the formal and informal school curriculum. Such practices continue to distinguish the SAR from the mainland and reinforce local identity.⁽²³⁾ Indeed, government officials, anticipating a strong reaction from the education sector and the general public, have been cautious in handling sensitive matters related to nationalistic rituals and propaganda.⁽²⁴⁾ The promotion of national education was carried out with restraint.⁽²⁵⁾

Last but not least, post-handover Hong Kong witnessed a new mode of interaction between Hong Kong locals and mainlanders. On the one hand, Hong Kong people showed a new-found sense of pride and identification with well-known icons representing the Chinese national identity in the post-handover decade.⁽²⁶⁾ Growing national pride could be attributed to the rise of China as a world power, a flourishing flow of population and capital between Hong Kong and the mainland, and an expanding cultural horizon espoused by Hong Kong people due to transborder living experiences and business opportunities. On the other hand, an antagonistic sentiment treating mainlanders as a cultural “other” remains in the public discourse. A typical instance was the controversial ruling on granting right of abode to mainland-born offspring of Hong Kong residents in 1999, which sparked off criticism based on an alleged population crisis and the labelling of mainlanders as a disruptive force to the social order of Hong Kong.⁽²⁷⁾

Revisiting identity formation in post-handover Hong Kong

The building of a Chinese national identity in post-handover Hong Kong has been an unstable journey. We witness both appropriation and contestation of “Chineseness” in this formation process. People's robust articulation of a local identity could be regarded as, at least to some extent, a

“collective resistance to domination imposed through labels such as ‘Chineseness’ or ‘Chinese identity’.”⁽²⁸⁾ Hong Kong people could get excited and be proud of China during mega events like the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008; yet, public sentiment could also quickly regain its critical edge when the dark side of Chinese society (suppression of civic rights and food safety concerns, for instance) was revealed.⁽²⁹⁾

In the years following the handover, more and more people in Hong Kong showed a mixed form of identification by seeing themselves as both Chinese and Hongkongers. But a closer look at their narratives suggests that the Chinese label they adopted included three different aspects, namely shared cultural roots and history, an acceptance of the political regime of People's Republic of China, and the belief that the Chinese market would provide them with business opportunities.⁽³⁰⁾ First, most people in Hong Kong distanced themselves from a “political China” – downplaying identification with the Communist regime but embracing Chinese cultural ties such as the icon of the Great Wall.⁽³¹⁾ The differentiation of a “political China” from a “cultural China” enabled Hong Kong people to adhere to the identity of Chinese while decoupling themselves from an authoritarian and corrupt Communist regime. Meanwhile, they also adopted an instrumentalist approach by focusing on the economic benefits of the Chinese market. Hong Kong people, especially those with higher incomes and plenty of transborder experience on the mainland, tended to separate their sense of optimism about business opportunities in China from their sense of unease with social problems they witness when travelling in China.⁽³²⁾ Emphasising a prosperous

19. Suzanne Pepper, *Keeping Democracy at Bay: Hong Kong and the Challenge of Chinese Political Reform*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008. Also see recent comments from Hong Kong sociologist Siu Kai Lau: “Liu Zhao Jia: gang ren bu zun chong zhong yang zhuan qiang ying, chen zhong yang ying xiang jie guo ‘yi fu yi guo liang zhi’” (S. K. Lau said central government becomes tough as Hong Kong people do not respect her, and claimed her influence on election result ‘is in line with one country, two systems’), *Ming Pao*, 31 December 2013.
20. Ngok Ma, *Political Development in Hong Kong: State, Political Society, and Civil Society*, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–221.
21. Francis Lee and Joseph Chan, “Political Attitudes, Political Participation, and Hong Kong Identities After 1997,” *op. cit.*
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.
23. Edward Vickers, “Learning to love the motherland: ‘National Education’ in post-retrocession Hong Kong,” in Götterlinde Müller (ed.), *Designing History in East Asian Textbooks*, Routledge, 2011, pp. 85–116.
24. Thomas Tse, “Xue zuo zhong guo ren: hou zhi min shi dai xiang gang guo min jiao yu de wen hua zheng zhi (Learn to be a Chinese: cultural politics of post-colonial national education in Hong Kong),” in Tai Lok Lui, Chun Hung Ng, and Eric Ma, *Xiang gang, sheng huo, wen hua* (Hong Kong, living and culture), Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 21–53.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Anthony Fung, “Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities,” *op. cit.*; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, “Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996–2006,” *op. cit.*
27. Edward Vickers and Flora Kan, “The Reeducation of Hong Kong: Identity, Politics and Education in Postcolonial Hong Kong,” *op. cit.*, pp. 185–186. Also see Agnes Ku, “Constructing and Contesting the ‘Order’ Imagery in Media Discourse: Implications for Civil Society in Hong Kong,” *Asian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2007, pp. 187–190.
28. Anthony Fung, “What makes the local? A brief consideration of the rejuvenation of Hong Kong identity,” *op. cit.*, p. 594.
29. Eric Ma, Anthony Fung, and Sunny Lam, “Hou jing ao xiang gang shen fen ren tung (Hong Kong identity after Beijing Olympics),” in Tai Lok Lui, Chun Hung Ng, and Eric Ma, *Xiang gang, sheng huo, wen hua* (Hong Kong, living and culture), Hong Kong, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 54–67.
30. Anthony Fung, “Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities,” *op. cit.*; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, “Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996–2006,” *op. cit.*
31. Anthony Fung, “Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities,” *op. cit.*
32. Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, “Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996–2006,” *op. cit.*, p. 182.

and marketised Chinese economy but critical of the political regime, most Hong Kong people recognised the business prospects of this vast Chinese market while continuing to value the modernised aspect of being Hongkongers.

Simply put, strategic calculation and instrumentalism continued to play a part in shaping Hong Kong identity in the early post-handover years. A hybridised Chinese and Hong Kong identity⁽³³⁾ prevailed. Without giving up their local identity, Hong Kong people also had no difficulty identifying themselves with Chinese culture and seeing China as a new land of opportunity. This new-found Chinese identity did not require much compromise in terms of their identification with Hong Kong; it represented a new state of mind in the context of Hong Kong's renationalisation and people's expectations of maintaining a strong sense of autonomy as a SAR within China.

However, the aforementioned hybridised identity has been fiercely challenged by recent events related to a growing sense of national-local tensions. As mentioned in the beginning of this article, antagonism between national identity and local distinctiveness resumed recently. Conflicts over Hong Kong's autonomy and democratisation, as well as distribution of social resources between Hong Kong locals and mainlanders, have become sources of growing uneasiness. Yet, to contemplate this phenomenon systematically, we need a more in-depth understanding of identity formation in Hong Kong, particularly during the second post-handover decade when locals began to feel China's growing influence on Hong Kong. Clashes over the question of democratisation constitute one source of grievance. Equally important is that locals have become aware of socio-economic changes at the community level. In June 2013, mainlanders accounted for 70% of all tourists visiting Hong Kong (42 million visitors), with an annual growth of 25.3%.⁽³⁴⁾ Also by June 2013, there were 176 H-share enterprises (mainland companies that list in Hong Kong's stock market) with a market value amounting to 20.37% of the total value of Hong Kong's stock market, while there were only 92 H-share companies accounting for only 7.36% of the total market value in 2003.⁽³⁵⁾ These statistics best reflect how the mainland is making its impact on Hong Kong economically. The figures reflect the growing significance of the China factor in Hong Kong's social life. Hence, apart from *ad hoc* hot issues such as a milk-powder shortage due to rising mainland demand, locals' changing identity is likely to be associated with their accumulated feelings toward the growing influence of China in the past few years.

Given rising national-local tensions, could Hong Kong locals still cling to Chinese identity without hurting their identification with Hong Kong? This question caused me to revisit some of the research carried out by researchers who drew their conclusions largely on the basis of their observations of Hong Kong society in the first post-handover decade.⁽³⁶⁾ The observations above point to a new research question on the study of Hong Kong identity: with the growing tensions between the mainland and Hong Kong, how would locals regard China and the SAR in the second decade after the handover? It seems premature to characterise the growing uneasiness in Hong Kong simply as moments of impulsiveness stemming from tensions arising from resource distribution. I suggest that the question of identity formation in Hong Kong in the context of renationalisation should be re-opened for discussion and study. It is important to acknowledge that most people embrace multiple identities within which one identity may well be given heavier weight than others.⁽³⁷⁾ While preserving a larger collective affiliation, many people also show strong emotional identification

with a specific social group. In short, social identity is dynamic, multiple, and very often hierarchical in the sense that one identity is seen as closer to the individual than the others. We can therefore identify three different forms of such hierarchical multiple identity: mutually exclusive dual identities, subordinated nested identities (one identity is subsumed under another), and nested dual identities (partial overlap between different identities).⁽³⁸⁾ These concepts indicate the possibility of blending assimilation and maintaining cultural distinctiveness. Before the handover in 1997, the Chinese and Hong Kong identities were mainly mutually exclusive, yet there were signs of finding a new balance in the post-handover period.⁽³⁹⁾ However, have the growing conflicts between the mainland and Hong Kong, not just over matters of social resources but also over democratisation and institutional changes, made an impact on that balance? Are we witnessing the emergence of new forms of local and national identities?

Research methods

In the process of making sense of the changing national and local identities, researchers on Hong Kong identity have started using "emotive identification"⁽⁴⁰⁾ to capture the emergent identities and to decipher meanings of different descriptions of one's identification. Previously, researchers working on this issue asked their respondents to indicate their identity as "Chinese" (中國人), "Chinese Hongkongers" (中國香港人), "Hong Kong Chinese" (香港中國人) or "Hongkongers" (香港人). This was intended to probe the respondents' identification with either Chinese or Hongkongers.⁽⁴¹⁾ While these pre-coded answers were significant and were adopted in quite a number of surveys, other researchers looked for indicators that could reflect the respondents' feelings and emotions attached to such identities. Not only did they ask about one's identification with Hong Kong or otherwise, they were also interested in finding out which dimension of the identification (pride 自豪, affinity 親切, and resistance 抗拒) was regarded as significant. A list of key national and local cultural icons, including the national flag, national emblem, *Putonghua* (official Chinese spoken language), Chinese police, the Great Wall, the Hong Kong Legislative Council Building, and Victoria Harbour (an iconic sightseeing spot in Hong Kong), just to quote a few examples,⁽⁴²⁾ was prepared for the interview. Respondents were invited to give the score "1" (the least) to "5" (the strongest) to express their pride, affinity, and resistance to those cultural icons. This set of probes was aimed

33. Eric Ma, "Bottom-up nationalisation," *art. cit.*; Gordon Mathews, Eric Ma, and Tai-lok Lui, *Hong Kong, China: Learning to belong to a nation*, *art. cit.*

34. Data from Hong Kong Tourism Board: http://partnernet.hktb.com/tc/research_statistics/index.html (accessed on 16 August 2013).

35. News report of Xinhua News Agency: http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2013-07/18/c_116585986.htm (accessed on 16 August 2013).

36. For a notable example: Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, "Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006," *art. cit.*, pp. 172-185.

37. Marilyn Brewer, "Multiple identities and identity transition: Implications for Hong Kong," *art. cit.*, pp. 187-197.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 187-197.

40. Anthony Fung, "What makes the local? A brief consideration of the rejuvenation of Hong Kong identity," *art. cit.*, p. 597.

41. Lau Siu-kai, "'Hong Kong' or 'Chinese': The identity of Hong Kong Chinese 1985 - 1995," *op.cit.*

42. For details and research results of emotive identification, please refer to Anthony Fung, "What makes the local? A brief consideration of the rejuvenation of Hong Kong identity," *art. cit.*, pp. 591-601; Anthony Fung, "Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities," *art. cit.*; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, "Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006," *art. cit.*; Eric Ma, Anthony Fung, and Sunny Lam, "Hou jing ao xiang gang shen fen ren tung" (Hong Kong identity after Beijing Olympics), *art. cit.*

Table 1 – Construct variables for national identity of Hong Kong people (2006, 2008, 2010)

Construct Variables	Icons	N*	Mean: feeling toward the icon (5: very strong feeling / 1: no feeling)	SD	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
Pride for political China	People's Liberation Army (PLA)	2808	2.76	1.14	0.877
	National Flag		3.37	1.41	
	National Emblem		3.41	1.43	
	Chinese Police		1.96	1.13	
	Great Hall of the People		2.78	1.39	
Pride for cultural-economic China	Great Wall	2884	4.01	1.05	0.691
	Putonghua		2.89	1.35	
	Bank of China (BOC) Building		2.82	1.36	
Affinity for political China	People's Liberation Army	2840	2.54	1.37	0.876
	National Flag		3.3	1.39	
	National Emblem		3.35	1.42	
	Chinese Police		1.84	1.08	
	Great Hall of the People		2.56	1.36	
Affinity for cultural-economic China	Great Wall	2911	3.55	1.35	0.708
	Putonghua		2.92	1.33	
	Bank of China Building		2.68	1.33	
Resistance to political China	People's Liberation Army	2861	1.73	1.13	0.798
	National Flag		1.47	0.90	
	National Emblem		1.51	0.97	
	Chinese Police		2.42	1.45	
	Great Hall of the People		1.53	0.95	
Resistance to cultural-economic China	Great Wall	2921	1.26	0.70	0.678
	Putonghua		1.53	0.93	
	Bank of China Building		1.45	0.87	

*Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Source: Work of the author based on data collected by the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey, CUHK.

at capturing people's emotive response to a wide range of cultural objects, showing their feelings toward various aspects of the Chinese and Hong Kong identities in a refined and succinct way.⁽⁴³⁾ It was suggested that respondents were more proud of a national icon representing ethnic and cultural roots of China (e.g., the Great Wall) than symbols implying the Communist regime (Chinese police, for example). It was further argued that Hong Kong people related to the cultural aspect of their national identity but kept their distance in terms of a political recognition of China.⁽⁴⁴⁾

It is my intention here to further probe emotional attachment to various aspects of Hong Kong people's Chinese and Hong Kong identities. I was able to gather survey data about "emotive identification" – respondents' indication of pride, affinity, and resistance to various national cultural icons – from three representative surveys in Hong Kong. These surveys were conducted by the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in October 2006, 2008, and 2010, with satisfactory response rates (ranging from 52% to 65%) and an acceptable sampling error (ranging from +/- 3.1% to +/- 3.2%). Respondents were Cantonese-speaking adults (aged 18 or above) whose contacts were drawn from a random sampling of Hong Kong household telephone numbers. They were interviewed by interviewers in the form of Computer-Assisted Telephone Inter-

view (CATI). If there was more than one eligible member for a successful phone call, "Next Birthday Method" was used to pick those whose birthday came soonest.⁽⁴⁵⁾

The lists of cultural icons adopted by these surveys are largely compatible with the requirements of our following comparative analysis. They have been well-known icons to Hong Kong people for decades, and are closely related to the research focus of this study. As stated earlier, one of the objectives of this paper is to examine how Hong Kong people articulate their identification with China and Hong Kong. To be more precise, I shall try to distinguish a "political China" from a "cultural-economic China" in Hong Kong people's articulation of their national identity. Items revealing an identification with a "political China" comprise the People's Liberation Army (解放軍), the national flag (中華人民共和國國旗) and national anthem of People's Republic of China (中華人民共和國國歌), Chinese police (中國公安),

43. Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, "Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006," *art. cit.*

44. Anthony Fung, "Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities," *art. cit.*

45. For details of the three surveys, please refer to the website of the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, www.com.cuhk.edu.hk/ccpos/en/tracking3.html (accessed on 16 August 2013).

and the Great Hall of the People (人民大會堂) (an iconic building in the Chinese capital, Beijing, that hosts numerous important meetings at the national level). They are icons that are highly indicative of the sovereignty and state power of the People's Republic of China. For "cultural-economic China," three cultural icons were solicited: the Great Wall (萬里長城), which signifies a shared history and the ethnic roots of being Chinese, the official spoken language of China *Putonghua* (普通話) (which for many people in Hong Kong is not only the official language but also a symbol of the cultural influence of the Mainland), and the building of the Bank of China (BOC) in Hong Kong (香港中銀大廈) (which carries with it the economic power of the Chinese economy and its enterprises). For each icon, respondents were separately invited to evaluate first their "pride" in it, then their "familiarity" with it, and lastly their "resistance" to it, each time on a scale from 1 (least) to 5 (strongest).

A reliability test of Cronbach's Alpha, a statistical measure showing if different variables share a consistent pattern that could be combined into a construct variable, was conducted for each of emotive identification (pride, affinity, and resistance) in order to see if it was warranted to draw the division between a "political China" and a "cultural-economic China." Data were weighted by the variables of age and gender in order to avoid the issue of imbalanced representation. Results of the reliability test of those construct variables showing multiple aspects of Hong Kong people to Chinese identity are listed in Table 1. The satisfactory results of the reliability test allow me to say that the items covered in the surveys do reflect the existence of two clusters, "political China" and "cultural-economic China." These surveys allow me to investigate the emotive affiliation of Hong Kong people toward different types of national icons, covering both political and cultural and economic aspects, before the large scale outburst of ill-feeling and conflict between the locals and mainlanders in 2011 and 2012.

Upon completing the reliability test, I constructed variables of "pride 自豪 in political China," "affinity 親切 with political China," "resistance 抗拒 to political China," "pride 自豪 in cultural-economic China," "affinity 親切 with cultural-economic China," and "resistance 抗拒 to cultural-economic China" for further analysis. I compared the data of these constructed variables over 2006, 2008, and 2010 to see if there was any difference over the years. If a kind of strategic identity politics suggested by previous research on Hong Kong identity is to be substantiated – best shown in a selective affiliation to the ethnic cultural and historical roots as well as to the economic success of China while holding some negative feeling about the authoritarian Communist regime – such a tendency, theoretically speaking, should be reflected in an increase in the scores of pride and affinity and a decrease in resistance to a "cultural-economic China." Likewise, pride in and affinity with a "political China" is not expected to rise substantially despite efforts toward renationalisation, while resistance is likely to increase owing to continued controversy over human rights and civic liberty issues in China. Accordingly, four hypotheses are developed:

H1: Pride and affinity to a "cultural-economic China" increased from 2006 to 2010;

H2: Resistance to a "cultural-economic China" decreased from 2006 to 2010;

H3: Pride and affinity to a "political China" remain static, and even decreased from 2006 to 2010;

H4: Resistance to a "political China" increased from 2006 to 2010.

The hypotheses provide a testing ground to examine the strategic articulation of a national identity in Hong Kong in the period 2006-2010. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for detecting means differences across the constructed variables of the three surveys. Apart from ANOVA, Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) was employed for a *post hoc* test so as to reduce Type 1 error when I interpreted the data.

Findings

Table 2 reports the survey respondents' affiliation to various aspects of cultural icons in 2006-2010. As mentioned earlier, the six constructed variables represent people's pride, affinity, and resistance to a "political China" and a "cultural-economic China." The significance of F-values implies whether respondents' feelings toward the corresponding cultural icons varied across these three surveys. Table 2 indicates that H1 only partially stands, as people were more intimate with, but not more proud of, icons representing a "cultural-economic China" from 2006 to 2010. Respondents' pride toward "cultural-economic China" shows no significant variation (illustrated by insignificant F-value), while their affinity with a "cultural-economic China" has increased. *Post hoc* test shows that there was no significant change of affinity for a "cultural-economic China" during 2008 to 2010, thus the increment of affinity mainly took place from 2006 to 2008. It happened that 2008 was the year of the Beijing Olympic Games, a mega event that boosted national identity.⁽⁴⁶⁾ The result of the *post hoc* test may suggest the effect of a mega event on people's feeling of affinity.

A striking observation is the rejection of H2. While people's affinity to a "cultural-economic China" has increased, their resistance to the same cluster of cultural icons has paradoxically risen. Significant F-value and the *post hoc* test for "resistance to cultural-economic China" show that Hong Kong people were more reluctant to accept the cultural icons standing for ethnic roots and the economic power of China from 2006 to 2010. While previous studies indicate the strategic articulation to national identity through a selective upholding by respondents of cultural ethnicity and the economic benefits of the Chinese market, the nullification of H2 poses an intriguing finding to the post-handover identity politics of Hong Kong. Moreover, H3 predicts that people's pride and affinity with cultural icons representing a "political China" should remain static and even decrease. This is because the Communist regime is somewhat controversial, if not often a topic of public criticism in Hong Kong, owing to, just to quote a few examples, the traumatic historical events of the Cultural Revolution, the Tiananmen Incident, and the conflicts between Beijing and the Hong Kong public over democratisation. China's suppression of renowned social activists in recent years, such as Ai Weiwei and Liu Xiaobo, has also dampened the image of the Communist government in the mind of Hong Kong people. However, Table 2 illustrates a persistent increase in people's pride in cultural icons relating to "political China" throughout 2006 to 2010. The falsification of H2 and H3 thus raises a second possibility as to the identity politics of Hong Kong – specifically, to what extent the differentiation of a "political China" and a "cultural-economic China" could explain people's attachment to the national identity of China.

Last but not least, H4 stands, since respondents' resistance to a "political China" increased from 2006 to 2010. Nonetheless, people's reluctance to

46. Eric Ma, Anthony Fung, and Sunny Lam, "Hou jing ao Xianggang shen fen ren tong" (Hong Kong identity after the Beijing Olympics), *art. cit.*

Table 2 – Hong Kong people’s feeling toward cultural icons (2006-2010)

Construct variables	Mean (SD)			F-value (df)
	2006	2008	2010	
Pride for political China	13.71 (5.49)	14.31 (5.63)	14.88#@ (5.52)	10.25 (2)*
Pride for cultural-economic China	9.60 (3.13)	9.72 (3.09)	9.85 (3.12)	1.49 (2)
Affinity for political China	12.85 (5.26)	13.80 (5.49)	14.17# (5.45)	14.88(2)*
Affinity for cultural-economic China	8.88 (3.15)	9.26 (3.19)	9.30# (3.20)	5.17 (2)*
Resistance to political China	8.38 (3.94)	8.67 (4.15)	8.96# (4.12)	4.80 (2)*
Resistance to cultural-economic China	3.96 (1.77)	4.23 (1.91)	4.58#@ (2.16)	23.67 (2)*

* $p < 0.05$.

Significant difference from the mean of 2006.

@ Significant difference from the mean of 2008.

Source: Work of the author based on data collected by the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey, CUHK.

identify with the cultural icons representing a “cultural-economic China” increased in a more persistent way than those signifying a “political China.” There was no significant change in people’s resistance to “political China” from 2008 to 2010, yet resistance to “cultural-economic China” rose significantly during this interval. The findings suggest that Hong Kong people’s resistance to icons standing for ethnicity (Great Wall, *Putonghua*) and the economic power of Chinese enterprises (the BOC building) had been increasing, while resistance to the Chinese Communist regime ceased to rise from 2008 to 2010.

To recapitulate, Table 2 illuminates mixed and ambivalent connections to national identity by Hong Kong people after the first decade of the handover. While people’s pride in icons standing for the Communist regime (national flag, national emblem, PLA, Chinese police, Great Hall of the People) increased from 2006 to 2010, their resistance to the same cluster of cultural icons also rose from 2006 to 2008. Likewise, the increment of people’s affinity to icons representing the ethnic roots and economic power of China was associated with simultaneously increasing resistance. Concurrent uplifts of both positive (pride or affinity) and negative (resistance) feeling toward the same icons suggest a possible implication: articulation of national identity may become polarised. People have stronger opinions as to their affiliation or resistance to the Communist regime and the cultural ethnicity of being Chinese. This suggestion is consistent with recent observations on collective actions in Hong Kong. In September 2012, thousands of people marched to the headquarters of the Hong Kong government and held night rallies for more than a week. They called for the withdrawal of national education, and successfully pushed the government to suspend introduction of a new curriculum in this regard.⁽⁴⁷⁾ However, the anti-national education movement stirred up another social group called “Voice of Silence” (沉默之聲), which advocated national education in Hong Kong and criticised those who opposed it.⁽⁴⁸⁾ If the Hong Kong government had not withdrawn the new curriculum, social conflicts with regard to national education, which is essential to the building of national identity in the long run, could have intensified.

Apart from polarised views on national identity, another possible explanation for the concurrent increase of both positive and negative feelings toward national cultural icons is the ambivalence of striking an optimal distance between national identity and local distinctiveness. Identity formation is a delicate balance between the desire of being included and the aspiration for a distinctive status.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Despite official effort and the social circumstances of renationalisation in the post-handover years, local aspirations for a distinctively local identity, though not necessarily a rejection of the Chinese identity, remain salient.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The enhancement of pride in cultural icons standing for the Communist regime (i.e., a “political China” in our discussion) represents the renationalisation of national identity. On the other hand, increasing resistance to national icons indicates that people are distancing themselves from some kind of “Chineseness.” The paradoxical findings hence underline the uneasy balance between the social learning of national identity and retaining a prominent local affiliation.

A notable observation is that local uneasiness toward China has rapidly diffused from disapproval of an undemocratic Communist regime to the cultural and economic aspects. The current outburst of detestation against China is not limited to the political aspect. My reanalysis of the findings of three surveys conducted in 2006, 2008, and 2010 suggests that resistance to a “cultural-economic China” has been increasing. In fact, social conflicts

47. For details of the social movement, please refer to the webpage of Scholarism (xueimin sichao, <http://scholarism.com>) and Parent Concern Group on National Education (PCGNE, <http://parentsconcern.hk/?lang=en>), civic organisations formed by students and parents respectively opposing a official proposal for the subject of Moral and National Education (MNE) (accessed on 25 January 2014).

48. “Chen mo zhi sheng ji hui cheng guo jiao” (“Voice of Silence” gathered supporting national education), *Apple Daily*, 12 September 2013, <http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20130912/18419565> (accessed on 25 January 2014).

49. Marilyn Brewer, “Multiple identities and identity transition: Implications for Hong Kong,” *art. cit.*, pp. 187-197.

50. Anthony Fung, “What makes the local? A brief consideration of the rejuvenation of Hong Kong identity,” *art. cit.*, pp. 591-601; Anthony Fung, “Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities,” *art. cit.*

Table 3 – Factors of feeling toward cultural icons (2006-2010)

	Pride (political China)	Pride (cultural- economic China)	Affinity (political)	Affinity (cultural- economic China)	Resistance (political China)	Resistance (cultural- economic China)
(Constant)	12.18*	8.02*	12.18*	7.15*	11.08*	5.93*
Gender	0.47	0.56*	0.45	0.68*	-0.78*	-0.26
Age	0.04*	0.02*	0.04*	0.03*	-0.00	0.01
Education	-0.41*	-0.07	-0.45*	-0.05	-0.11	-0.18*
Family income	0.11	-0.02	-0.01	-0.43	-0.03	0.01
Transborder experience in China	1.59*	0.72*	1.65*	0.85*	-0.89*	-0.43*
Adjusted R-square	0.11*	0.08*	0.14*	0.10*	0.04*	0.06*

* p < 0.05.

Source: Work of the author based on data collected by the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey, CUHK.

pertaining to China-Hong Kong tensions no longer focus on political defiance toward the Communist regime. A vivid example is Hong Kong people's negative response to the increasingly noticeable presence of mainlanders and *Putonghua* in everyday life. People voiced their discontent of Hong Kong being "mainlandised," with inbound tourism from the mainland causing drastic changes in the landscape of local communities.⁽⁵¹⁾ Mainlanders are blamed by locals for disturbing everyday life. The rampant purchase of daily necessities and "uncivilised" behaviour such as urinating in public areas are notable instances listed by locals. Although such "uncivilised" scenes hardly represent the normal behaviour of most mainlanders, online opinion and daily conversations among locals tend to paint a negative picture of the mainlanders with a broad brush, and hardly accept any appeal to cultural tolerance.⁽⁵²⁾

Deepening integration, intensifying conflict

Why has the identity politics of clinging to a "cultural-economic China" and keeping "political China" at arm's length, a strategy that has enabled Hong Kong people to strike a delicate balance between acquiring a national identity while hanging onto a strong local sense of belonging, become less effective in recent years? It seems that, very ironically, the deepening integration of China and Hong Kong is provoking conflicts between national identity and the Hong Kong identity. The strategic manipulation of separating a political from a cultural identification with China seems to have worked primarily in the social, economic, and political contexts of Hong Kong society in the first decade after the handover.⁽⁵³⁾ The second decade after the handover, however, has witnessed rapid, substantial, and intensified interaction between Hong Kong people and their mainland counterparts. In the early post-handover years, public discussion was primarily about Hong Kong people "going north." It was largely a picture of how Hong Kong people from different walks of life could make use of opportunities and resources in the Pearl River Delta and other parts of China. Some believed that there were opportunities for career development in the mainland, while others saw nearby counties as ideal locations for post-retirement living. However, by the time Hong Kong moved into the second decade after the handover, an upsurge in mainland tourism to Hong Kong took place.⁽⁵⁴⁾ This has significantly changed the way Hong Kong people perceive the transborder experience. With the influx of main-

land tourists, even those who seldom visit Shenzhen have had to adjust to this new encounter with mainlanders. This reversal in the transborder population flow between the mainland and Hong Kong has assuredly made its impact on Hong Kong people's mixed and ambivalent articulation of national identity in the second post-handover decade. An illustrative instance is mainland buyers of Hong Kong property, blamed for causing an asset bubble in Hong Kong⁽⁵⁵⁾ and eventually pushing the HKSAR government to introduce extra stamp duties for overseas buyers of local property.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The economic power of China, coupled with the everyday life experience of skyrocketing property prices in Hong Kong, is no longer perceived as a lucrative opportunity for locals. As shown in Table 2, pride in icons standing for "cultural-economic China" (Great Wall, *Putonghua*, and the BOC building) remained static from 2006 to 2010. Affinity with icons rose from 2006 to 2008, probably attributed to Hong Kong's compassion for Sichuan earthquake relief work, and subsequent enthusiasm for the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. The rising affinity has nevertheless been suspended in subsequent years. On the contrary, we witness an apparently growing resistance to the same group of cultural icons. This observation is indicative of the continuous negative encounters between Hong Kong people and mainlanders in recent years. Increasingly, Hong Kong people find it difficult to take the cultural differences between the mainland and Hong Kong lightly. The recent stronger socio-economic integration of the mainland and Hong Kong has in fact magnified these

51. News report of *Hong Kong Economic Times*: <http://hk.news.yahoo.com/%E5%A4%B1%E5%AE%B6%E7%9A%84%E6%84%9F%E8%A6%BA-%E6%B8%AF%E4%BA%BA%E7%A7%BB%E6%B0%91%E5%8D%87B-224629423.html> (accessed on 12 August 2013).

52. A typical instance is the cyber bullying of artist Ella Koon, who suffered personal attacks after urging Hong Kong people to be tolerant of the cultural differences of mainlanders. See "Huyu bao rong jing zao ji jin wang min peng ji, Guan Ennuo wei qu shen su: wo dou shi Xianggang ren" (Bullied by netizens for urging tolerance. Innocent Ella Koon appealed: I am a Hongkonger too), *Wen Wei Po*, 28 January 2014, <http://paper.wenweipo.com/2014/01/28/EN1401280033.htm> (accessed on 28 January 2014).

53. Anthony Fung, "Postcolonial Hong Kong identity: Hybridising the local and the national, social identities," *art. cit.*; Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, "Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006," *art. cit.*

54. Hang Seng Economic Report (issued on 20 April 2011): www.hangseng.com/cms/tpr/chi/analyses/PDF/ecof_c_2011apr.pdf (accessed on 16 August 2013).

55. This concern drew question from a Hong Kong lawmaker to HKSAR government. See the question asked by lawmaker David Li, www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201205/16/P201205160256.htm, (accessed on 25 January 2014).

56. "Chong shui leng que gang lou shi ye zhu pi jia qiu shou" (Heavy tax cooled Hong Kong property market, landlords lower selling price), *Wen Wei Po*, 29 October 2012.

differences. Tensions are growing, and Hong Kong people are beginning to look for a new way to work out their own identity.

So far I have only described and discussed Hong Kong people's changing identity in a rather broad way. In order to probe further into the factors that determine the identification espoused by locals, I conducted multiple regression tests to see if respondents' feelings toward national icons (as in the six constructed variables) are shaped by certain key variables. My analysis included basic demographic factors, namely gender, age, and the respondents' educational level. “Age” and “education” to some extents are indicative of the result of national education, particularly for the post-handover generation of Hong Kong people. Also, I included family income, which served as an indicator of the respondents' socio-economic position, in my statistical analysis, in order to see if one's position in social ladder has any impact on feelings toward national icons.

Furthermore, a composite index called “transborder living experience in China” was constructed, and it served as one of the independent variables in our analysis. The “transborder living experience in China” is comprised of three components, namely, frequency of travel to China (defined as “low” if only one visit or less was undertaken within every two months or in a longer period of time; and “high” for one to three visits per month or more), contact frequency with relatives in the mainland, and whether the respondent has lived in the mainland continuously for one year or more.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The index thus effectively measured the experience of respondents' contact with mainland society. Previous research showed that Hong Kong people who were economically better-off tended to have mixed feelings toward the economic opportunity and social ills of China.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Meanwhile, locals with closer connections to the mainland were also more positive in terms of their identification with China.⁽⁵⁹⁾ The findings of my analysis are reported in Table 3.

A point to note is that the adjusted R-squares for some of the constructed variables, for example, “pride in cultural-economic China,” “resistance to political China,” and “resistance to cultural-economic China,” are below 0.1. Thus, we need to be cautious in interpreting the data and not overstate their results. Nevertheless, Table 3 does show that demographic factors have partial and limited impacts on respondents' feeling toward national icons. Firstly, female respondents tended to be more proud of and intimate with a “cultural-economic China,” and were less resistant to a “political China.” This is quite an unexpected finding, as previous studies showed no significant gender implications in Hong Kong identity research. On the other hand, age has an impact on some of the constructed variables, but the extent is slight (as illustrated by the small betas). What is quite interesting is that people at a higher education level tended to be less proud of and intimate with the “political China.” As discussed in the literature review of this article, the implementation of post-handover national education is far from a unilateral top-down indoctrination of Chinese nationalism. While China's role and contribution to the development of Hong Kong is highlighted, subjects such as Liberal Studies have arguably shed light on Hong Kong's own distinctive values vis-à-vis those of China. In fact, the subject of Liberal Studies is also credited as a driving force in youngsters' participation in public affairs and social movements.⁽⁶⁰⁾ The impact of post-handover education on people's identity formation therefore may not be effective in boosting nationalist feeling as once conceived by the government.

Meanwhile, family income has no significant impact on respondents' feelings toward any clusters of national icons. It seems that socio-economic background is not a key factor in Hong Kong people's articulation of national identity. It is interesting to observe that the respondents' own trans-

border experience in China displays significant impact on all aspects of national icons. Specifically, respondents' own connections and living experience in the mainland could enhance their pride and affinity while lowering their resistance to national identity. It is experience in China and not encounters with mainlanders that make people more likely to accept China and their own Chinese national identity. But then, of course, the fact that one has more experience in China may well be a self-selected outcome, meaning those who are likely to accept China would travel to the mainland more frequently.

Conclusion

This article revisits the formation of the Hong Kong identity in the second post-handover decade. I show that while Hong Kong people maintained their pride and affinity for Chinese national icons, their resistance to the same cultural constructs has also increased. The concurrent existence of positive and negative emotive affiliation toward national identity suggests the presence of a sense of ambivalence towards the notion of “Chineseness.” The identity politics of this kind of ambivalence has intensified in the post-handover decades, especially in the second decade when China and her administrative arm began to exert tighter control.

Previous research on Hong Kong identity suggests a contested interaction of a developing national identity. Locals' negative attitude towards China in terms of politics goes hand-in-hand with an endorsement of China in the light of ethnic/cultural affiliation and a perception of the mainland as a land of opportunity. The differentiation of a “political China” from a “cultural-economic China” effectively helped strike an equilibrium between an acceptance of Chinese national identity and the desire to retain Hong Kong's own local distinctiveness as a modern cosmopolitan city in the early post-handover years. The above equilibrium, however, has been upset by recent developments. My re-analysis of three opinion surveys conducted in 2006-2010 shows an increase in resistant sentiment toward both a “political China” and a “cultural-economic China.” Hence, the identity politics of upholding a “cultural-economic China” but rejecting a “political China” is gradually fading in Hong Kong. Moreover, closer scrutiny reveals that both positive (pride or affinity) and negative (resistance) images of Chinese national icons increased as Hong Kong began experiencing its second decade under Chinese sovereignty. The ambivalent articulation of national identity suggests plausible polarised opinions with regard to national identity in a changing social and political context.

Further research on this question should firstly look at the double-edged effects of regional and national integration. The concomitant increase in both positive and negative feelings toward national icons best expresses contradictions in the current situation. Official accentuation of “Chineseness” in political discourse, emphasis of China's role in Hong Kong's school curriculum, and the attempt to foster transborder socio-economic ties between the mainland and the HKSAR facilitate the cultural perception of nationhood by Hong Kong people. However, closer integration also ignites

57. Eric Ma, Anthony Fung, and Sunny Lam, “Hou jing ao Xianggang shen fen ren tung” (Hong Kong identity after Beijing Olympics), *art. cit.*, p. 61.

58. Eric Ma and Anthony Fung, “Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006,” *art. cit.*

59. Eric Ma, Anthony Fung, and Sunny Lam, “Hou jing ao Xianggang shen fen ren tung” (Hong Kong identity after Beijing Olympics), *art. cit.*, pp. 54-67.

60. James Fung and Cherry Wong, “Study and Society: Is Liberal Studies driving young people's social participation?,” *Varsity*, No. 129, 2013, pp. 4-7.

conflicts ranging from social resource allocation to cultural clash between the locals and their mainland counterparts.

Secondly, hegemonic top-down renationalisation is inextricably linked to bottom-up resistance. A typical instance is the post-handover education reform. While China's contribution to Hong Kong has been reiterated, reverberation from the education sector and civil society has contained further political intervention from above. Moreover, the reform of the curriculum *per se* has also induced an unintended consequence – the subject of Liberal Studies and its impact on youngsters' awareness of Hong Kong's distinctiveness and even motivation for social participation is an example. The regression findings – the mixed impact of age and educational level on correspondents' emotive affiliation to national icons – also to some extents echoes this inference. Renationalisation and the formation of national identity are hence, in the Gramscian tone, a "war of position" moving back and forth among various stakeholders. Further study of this "war of position" in different sectors and dimensions is crucial to understanding the interaction between Chinese national identity and locals' aspirations for maintaining their cultural distinctiveness. Last but not least, the regression test shows an intriguing finding: female correspondents tended to be more positive

and less resistant to national icons (Male = 0, female = 1). So far, I have not seen any research on renationalising Hong Kong identity that focuses on gender. The explanation may require further investigation.

Instead of drawing a conclusion on the current state of local and national identities espoused by the people of Hong Kong, I suggest that it is important for us to recognise the impact of the changing social environment and, more importantly, the formation of identity as a dynamic process. With the intensification of regional and national integration, a new agenda of identity politics will emerge. Recent heated debates over "China-Hong Kong" conflicts – the scramble for daily necessities by mainlanders, crowding out of locals' living space by mainland visitors, and the emerging discourse of "Gang Du," all point to a much-needed re-investigation and re-interpretation of Hong Kong identity.

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