



# 香港亞太研究所

## *Hongkongese or Chinese*

*The Problem of Identity on the Eve of  
Resumption of Chinese Sovereignty  
over Hong Kong*

Lau Siu-kai

### **Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies**

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## Hongkongese or Chinese

### The Problem of Identity on the Eve of Resumption of Chinese Sovereignty over Hong Kong

The recovery of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong, the setting up of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), and the implementation of the formulae of "one country, two systems," "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong," "the preservation of the capitalist system and lifestyle of Hong Kong," and "a high level of autonomy for Hong Kong" in 1997 means that within the vast socialist system of China, there is a capitalist enclave with a high degree of autonomy. The incorporation of a territory which was under British colonial rule for about one and a half centuries and which differs from the mainland vastly in institutions and culture is inevitably fraught with difficulties.

One of the difficulties concerned has to do with the identity of the Hong Kong Chinese, which has serious implications for mainland-Hong Kong relationship after the establishment of the HKSAR, when the shelter previously provided by the British disappears. As a concept, "identity" is nebulous and multi-dimensional. As the chief purpose of this study is to explore the future relationship between Hong Kong and the mainland on the one hand, and the internal politics of Hong Kong on the other, the term "identity" here refers primarily to the way the Hong Kong Chinese define their relationship to Hong Kong and to China. Since a long time ago, the terms "Hongkongese" (*Xianggangren*) and "Chinese" (*Zhongguoren*) have been used in common parlance by the Hong Kong Chinese to refer to themselves, it can be taken with confidence that "Hongkongese" and "Chinese" are the two major identities which the Hong Kong Chinese themselves consider meaningful. Accordingly, the study adopts as its starting point these two identities of the Hong Kong Chinese and seeks to



answer a number of questions: (1) Was there a "crisis of identity" among the Hong Kong Chinese in the run-up to 1997? (2) What were the attitudinal and behavioural correlates of the two identities? (3) How would the identity problem affect mainland-Hong Kong relationship after 1997? How would it affect the implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy? (4) How would the identity problem affect Hong Kong's society and politics after 1997? Would the differentiation between Hongkongese and Chinese constitute a cleavage with political overtones? (5) Would there be a blurring or merging of the two identities in the future as to make them politically meaningless?

Since 1985, in a series of questionnaire surveys conducted by myself and others, the Hong Kong Chinese have been asked about their identities.<sup>1</sup> The presentation below is based on the statistical analysis of the data collected in these surveys. Throughout the paper, the chi-square analysis is used to measure the relationship between variables, with the level of statistical significance set at .05.

### Hongkongese vs. Chinese

Hong Kong is a Chinese society in the sense that the overwhelming majority of the populace of the place is ethnic Chinese. However, though Hong Kong was a British colony for one and a half centuries, for the better part of its history it did not have a settled Chinese population. Instead, there were frequent inflows and outflows of Chinese people, depending on the situations in China and overseas.<sup>2</sup> It has only been since the 1960s, when the immigrants from China have largely decided not to return to the socialist motherland and their progeny has had no home other than Hong Kong, that the place has begun to have a settled Chinese community. Apparently, the Hongkongese identity has gradually crystallized since the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> In the last decade, the proportion of respondents who have claimed to be Hong Kong belongs has stood at a decent level. The percentages of respon-

dents who say that they have a strong or very strong sense of belonging to Hong Kong in 1985,<sup>4</sup> 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992a, 1994, and 1995 have been 79.5, 67.1, 63.3, 55.1, 66.0, 77.0, and 60.6, respectively.

Several factors have been particularly germane to the formation of the Hongkongese identity before the territory's hand-over to China. First and foremost has been the fact that, since 1949, the socialist regime in China has set up a barrier which has forbidden the movement of people between the mainland and Hong Kong. As a result, Hong Kong Chinese have become secluded from the social and cultural changes in China. Secondly, the path of development of Hong Kong has been different from China throughout the territory's history. The gargantuan divergence in developmental experiences between the two societies since 1949 — with Hong Kong pursuing *laissez-faire* capitalism and China experimenting with Maoist socialism — has been critical to the rise of the Hongkongese identity. Thirdly, while China became an inward-looking and closed society after 1949, Hong Kong rapidly transformed itself into an active member of the international economy, and became quite Westernized. Fourthly, the form of limited government practised by the colonial regime, and its cautious observation of the rule of law and human rights, were historically unknown in China. In traditional China, on the contrary, society was dominated by the state, and the individual was subjugated by the group. Fifthly, a substantial portion of Hong Kong Chinese came to Hong Kong either to flee political persecution and turmoil or to seek economic opportunities. This meant that there was in Hong Kong a strong sentiment against the socialist regime in China, which naturally became a core element of the Hongkongese identity. Sixthly, the wide disparity in the levels of development and standards of living between Hong Kong and the mainland generated a sense of superiority among the Hong Kong Chinese, many of whom manifestly held the mainland Chinese in contempt. Lastly, the dominance of vernacular Cantonese among the Hong Kong Chinese and the gradual emergence of a distinc-

tive popular culture based on that dialect played a significant role in moulding the Hongkongese identity.

Despite the political separation of Hong Kong from China for such a long time, the sheer fact that the Hong Kong people were ethnic Chinese and had families, relatives, friends, or business in China meant that Hong Kong Chinese could not be completely immunized from developments in China. Even though they did not share political fate with the mainland Chinese before 1997, Hong Kong Chinese still had tremendous empathy with their fellow compatriots. To many Hong Kong Chinese, colonial rule, though basically benign and tolerable, was still demeaning and occasionally outrageous. Racial discrimination, though increasingly taking a subtle form, was still an intrinsic feature of colonial rule which constantly reminded the colonized of their common Chineseness. Undoubtedly, communism was repulsive to the Hong Kong Chinese, but the fact that the Chinese Communists had performed the feats of shaking China off from foreign control and building China into a major power in the world had left a strong, albeit paradoxical, impression on them. Still, as Hong Kong was a sanctuary to many people there, Chinese nationalism and anti-colonialism had never been potent forces in shaping the identity of the Hong Kong Chinese. Though a small portion of the Hong Kong Chinese supported either the communist regime in the mainland or the nationalist regime in Taiwan, most were however politically detached. Public revulsion against politics in China played a significant role in the formation of the identities of the Hong Kong Chinese.

In a series of questionnaire surveys conducted since 1985, we asked the respondents whether they identified themselves as "Hongkongese," "Chinese," "both," or "neither." The findings are shown in Table 1.

The dominance and meaningfulness of the two identities of Hongkongese and Chinese in Hong Kong were vividly evident. The vast majority of the respondents had no difficulty choosing either Hongkongese or Chinese as their primary identity. Undoubtedly, the Hongkongese identity was adopted by more re-

**Table 1** Identities of the Hong Kong Chinese\* (%)

	Hongkongese	Chinese	Both	Neither	Don't know/ No answer
1985 <sup>†</sup>	59.5	36.2	—	—	4.3
1988	63.6	28.8	—	2.0	5.6
1990	57.2	26.4	12.1	1.0	3.4
1991	56.6	25.4	14.2	1.2	2.4
1992	49.3	27.0	21.1	0.7	1.9
1993	53.3	32.7	10.1	1.6	2.4
1994	56.5	24.2	16.0	0.5	2.8
1995	50.2	30.9	15.4	1.2	2.2

Notes: \* Figures in the table show the proportions of respondents who chose Hongkongese or Chinese as their primary identity.

<sup>†</sup> The answers "both" and "neither" were not made available to the respondents in the interview.

spondents than the Chinese identity. As far as the relative importance of the two identities is concerned, it can be said that in the last decade the relative proportions of Hongkongese and Chinese were not stable, testifying to the fact that they were susceptible to what occurred in Hong Kong and China. Furthermore, there was no clear-cut trend in the last decade as to which identity would surge ahead after 1997. Another notable finding is that there seemed to be a long-term though slow trend for the proportion of people claiming both identities to increase. It might even be reasonable to expect that this trend will become stronger after Hong Kong becomes part of China.

Survey findings showed that the socio-demographic differences between the Hongkongese and the Chinese were obvious. In the first place, females were more likely to identify themselves as Hongkongese than males, the proportions of females and males who chose Hongkongese as their primary identity were 67.3 per cent and 58.8 per cent in 1985, 73.5 per cent and 61.4 per cent in 1988, 55.9 per cent and 43.8 per cent in 1992, 53.9 per cent and 46.1

per cent in 1993, 58.8 per cent and 44.4 per cent in 1995. The major reasons why females identified more with Hong Kong apparently were that they were troubled less by colonial rule, had more negative feelings about China, and less enamoured with China's achievements.

The more educated people were also more inclined to call themselves Hongkongese. This phenomenon was consistently found in the 1985, 1990 and 1992 surveys. As education was closely correlated with income, it is not surprising that respondents with higher income in 1985, 1990 and 1995 were more likely to claim to be Hongkongese.

Similarly, respondents who were born in Hong Kong were more likely to see themselves as Hongkongese, as could be found in the 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995 surveys. As the older people were more likely to be born outside of Hong Kong and to have received Chinese-type education or socialization, it was natural that they identified more with China than the younger people. This could be seen in the 1985, 1988, 1990 and 1991 surveys.

Judging from the socio-demographic differences between the Hongkongese and the Chinese, it might be conjectured that, if Hong Kong were to remain under British rule beyond 1997, the proportion of Hongkongese among the Hong Kong Chinese should have gradually increased in the last decade with the expansion of education and the rise in the number of locally born. Yet, as shown before, this had not taken place, apparently because of the imminent return of Hong Kong to China and the skyrocketing range of contacts between the two places.

The distinctive characteristic of the Hongkongese as compared with the Chinese should by inference be their stronger identification with Hong Kong. They should *ipso facto* have a stronger sense of belonging to their society, as compared with people who identify themselves as Chinese. However, the available data do not seem to conclusively support such expectation.

The Hongkongese not only did not have a stronger sense of belonging to Hong Kong than the Chinese, but they were also more prepared to leave their community. In 1985, it was found

that those who claimed the Hong Kong identity were more ready to emigrate (52 per cent) as compared to their Chinese counterparts (40.9 per cent). Therefore, possessing a Hong Kong identity was not only not tantamount to having a strong sense of belonging to Hong Kong, but it also was not a powerful factor dampening the desire for emigration. Similar intriguing findings were obtained in subsequent surveys. In 1988, 1990 and 1995, 23.3 per cent, 25.1 per cent and 10.9 per cent of Hongkongese, respectively, reported that they already had plans to emigrate, the corresponding figures for the Chinese were 14.5 per cent, 13.3 per cent and 6.6 per cent, which were lower across the board. By the same token, in 1992, when asked about their emigration plans, 38.5 per cent of the Hongkongese said they would definitely stay in Hong Kong, 14 per cent would stay as far as possible, 14.6 per cent would leave if possible, 1.7 per cent would definitely leave the place, and 10.6 per cent were undecided; the corresponding figures for the Chinese were 48.1 per cent, 11.1 per cent, 8.6 per cent, 0 per cent, and 3.7 per cent.

Likewise, a larger proportion of Hongkongese (11.8 per cent in 1988, 14.8 per cent in 1990, 3.7 per cent in 1992 and 3 per cent in 1995) were likely to emigrate before 1997 as compared with the Chinese (9.4 per cent, 9.2 per cent, 1.8 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively). Besides, in 1992, it was found that a larger proportion of Hongkongese (20.7 per cent) were confident about their ability to emigrate than the Chinese (16.6 per cent). Among those respondents who said they had the ability to emigrate, a higher proportion of Hongkongese (21.7 per cent), as compared with the Chinese (19.2 per cent), had already obtained foreign passports or right of abode elsewhere. And, among those who did not think that they had the ability to emigrate, still a higher proportion of Hongkongese (9.5 per cent) than Chinese (2.6 per cent) planned to get foreign passports or right of abode overseas.

In fact, as compared with the Chinese, Hongkongese were more likely to have secured foreign passports or right of abode in another country. The percentages of Hongkongese who reported that they already had them were 3.2 per cent in 1988, 4.1 per cent

in 1990, 3.6 per cent in 1991, and 19.7 per cent in 1993, as compared with 2.7 per cent, 2 per cent, 1 per cent, and 11.3 per cent of the Chinese. The sudden rise in the figures in 1993 can be explained by the large-scale return of Hong Kong emigrants in the last several years who, after "buying their political insurance," came back to Hong Kong to seek their fortunes.

Why was it that people who identified themselves as Hongkongese did not have a stronger sense of community identification than the Chinese? The explanation is complex. It was true that the Hongkongese trusted the Hong Kong people more than the Chinese. In the 1991 survey, 69.4 per cent of Hongkongese said they trusted or very much trusted the Hong Kong people, as against 64.2 per cent of the Chinese. At the same time, more Hongkongese (72.8 per cent) than Chinese (62.2 per cent) were convinced that the Hong Kong people increasingly resorted to illicit means to advance their self-interests. Thus, the Hongkongese's trust of the Hong Kong people was to a certain extent diluted by suspicion of their morality. According to previous studies, what was startlingly absent in the Hong Kong identity was strong affective attachment to the Hong Kong society. Hong Kong Chinese were found to regard their society instrumentally as a place to make a living or prosper.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the "feeling of a sense of belonging to Hong Kong is not an expression of community solidarity and collective allegiance to a locality. The attachment of the Hong Kong Chinese is probably to something which is mobile and intangible: a way of life or an ethos that transcends geographical boundaries."<sup>6</sup> As a result of this, the finding in 1994 that as many as 72.7 per cent of Hongkongese (as against 69.1 per cent of Chinese) said that they felt some responsibility to do something for Hong Kong should not be taken seriously, for by and large this feeling had failed to translate into behaviour.

Furthermore, as compared with the Chinese, the Hongkongese were more worried about Hong Kong. In 1993, it was found that a higher proportion of Hongkongese (17.7 per cent) than Chinese (11.7 per cent) was worried about the 1997 problem. In

1988 and 1991, higher proportions of Hongkongese (58.2 per cent and 47.2 per cent, respectively) than Chinese (35.8 per cent and 29.4 per cent, respectively) were worried about political turmoil in Hong Kong before 1997. In 1994, 50.5 per cent of Hongkongese were worried about political instability in Hong Kong in the "next several years," as compared with 40 per cent of the Chinese. In 1991, Hongkongese (68.9 per cent) were more inclined than Chinese (48.1 per cent) to worry about social instability in Hong Kong before 1997.

While both Hongkongese and the Chinese anticipated some deterioration of the quality of life in Hong Kong, the former were less prepared to accept the change than the latter. Thus, as found in 1991, while 58 per cent of Hongkongese claimed they would be capable of tolerating a little bit of reduction of personal freedom after 1997, 76.9 per cent of the Chinese did so. While as few as 17.9 per cent of Hongkongese were capable of tolerating substantial reduction of personal freedom after 1997, still a higher proportion of Chinese (34.5 per cent) were capable of doing so. Similarly, while 15.2 per cent of Hongkongese could live with much reduction in personal income after 1997, a much larger proportion of Chinese (29.5 per cent) were able to do so.

These worries of the Hongkongese and their weaker tolerance for possible changes in post-1997 Hong Kong, in addition to their greater resources to emigrate, caused a stronger propensity of Hongkongese to relocate themselves elsewhere.

## Identities and Chineseness

Notwithstanding their different identities, both the Hongkongese and the Chinese are ethnically and culturally Chinese. Consequently, many common elements of "Chineseness" could be found in both Hongkongese and the Chinese. In the ethno-cultural sense, there was a strong sense of identification with the Chinese nation by the Hong Kong Chinese.<sup>7</sup> Even many of those who claimed a Hong Kong identity were also imbued with ethnic

and cultural pride. Thus, in the 1985 survey, 60.8 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Chinese culture was the finest on earth, and 78.6 per cent felt proud to be Chinese.<sup>8</sup>

In fact, both Hongkongese and the Chinese shared many values which were typically Chinese. In 1994, for instance, an overwhelming majority of Hongkongese (92.9 per cent) and Chinese (94.1 per cent) were found to agree that everyone should respect traditional Chinese moral values. By the same token, a vast majority of Hongkongese (96.3 per cent) and Chinese (95 per cent) said they respected people who performed filial duties to their parents. Similarly, like many traditional Chinese, a plurality of Hongkongese (38.2 per cent) and Chinese (37.7 per cent) had little respect for the wealthy. However, 86.1 per cent of Hongkongese and 89.5 per cent of Chinese had tremendous respect for the hardworking people, whereas people who succeeded primarily because of luck were only respected by 13.2 per cent of Hongkongese and 18.9 per cent of Chinese. Also, in line with traditional cultural contempt for entertainers, only 11.8 per cent of Hongkongese and 19 per cent of Chinese were respectful of singers and movie stars.

In traditional China, the country or the group was accorded a status and importance much superior to the individual. The findings in the 1993 survey showed that the long period of Westernization and limited governance in Hong Kong had failed to drastically transform the Hong Kong Chinese' conception of the proper relationship between the individual and the country in the abstract, as evidenced in the figures in Table 2.

With respect to half of the statements in the table, there was no statistically significant difference between Hongkongese and the Chinese. Both of them concurred in placing the individual beneath the country and in castigating localism, though here they were far from consistent in the sense that they at the same time saw the individual as the base of the country. With respect to the three statements where statistically significant differences between Hongkongese and the Chinese were found, the conclusion is still that both of them were ardent supporters of traditional values, which extolled loyalty to the country and de-emphasized

**Table 2** Attitudes toward the Country by Identity, 1993\* (%)

	Hongkongese	Chinese	Level of significance
The individual comes before the country, the individual is the base of the country."	72.8	66.4	N.S.
"Don't ask what the country has done for me, ask what I have done for the country."	68.6	79.5	.02
"The country is formed for the sake of individual well-being. If not for the individual, there is no need for the country."	33.8	37.7	N.S.
"If a local government insists on autonomy and self-government in everything, the country's affairs cannot be well managed."	51.7	56.3	N.S.
"It is every Chinese's sacred duty to recover the country's lost land in history."	68.0	82.2	.00
"Society is a big family, even minority nationalities cannot ask for secession."	76.8	82.3	.02

Notes: \* Figures in the table represent the proportions of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements.  
N.S. = Not statistically significant at .05 level.

the role of the individual or minority. In fact, incipient nationalist feelings were embedded in both the Hongkongese and the Chinese identities.<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly, "Chineseness" in the ethnic sense and in the historical-cultural sense was an integral component in both the Hongkongese and the Chinese identities and was the basis for all of them to see themselves as Chinese.<sup>10</sup> The existence of these components went a long way to narrow the gap between the two identities. As a matter of fact, instead of two totally separate or mutually exclusive identities, the identities of Hongkongese and

Chinese overlapped considerably. The interpenetrating of the two identities was also reflected in survey findings. In 1992, while there was statistically significant association between identity and whether people took pride in being Hongkongese or Chinese, the important fact however was that both Hongkongese and the Chinese were proud to be Hongkongese and Chinese at the same time. Among Hongkongese, 83.2 per cent and 63.8 per cent, respectively, were proud to be Hongkongese and Chinese. Similarly, 66 per cent and 79.7 per cent, respectively, of the Chinese did so.

Furthermore, despite their different identities, both the Hongkongese and the Chinese were proud of the same set of things about Hong Kong and China — mostly about economic development and things related to it, as can be seen from Table 3.

With respect to the political achievement of socialist China, however, it is noteworthy that, unlike other areas, both Hongkongese and the Chinese were less overwhelming in their pride. This implies that as far as the People's Republic of China and the socialist Chinese government were concerned, the Hong Kong Chinese's feelings were at best mixed, and at worst negative.

### Attitudes toward China and the Chinese Government

Despite their limited differences in the ethnic and cultural sense, the differences between the Hongkongese and the Chinese were more salient as far as their attitudes toward the real China (the People's Republic of China), the mainland Chinese, and the Chinese government were concerned. Be that as it might, both the Hongkongese and the Chinese were still largely similar in attitudes. The differences between them were thus a matter of degree rather than of kind.

**Table 3** Pride in Things About Hong Kong and China by Identity, 1992a\* (%)

	Hongkongese	Chinese	Level of significance
<b>Hong Kong:</b>			
"Hong Kong people are smart, quick to react, and acceptable."	90.7	81.3	N.S.
"Hong Kong offers good food of every kind, a lot of things to enjoy and all sorts of conveniences."	87.1	84.5	N.S.
"Hong Kong is the freest Chinese society on earth."	91.5	88.5	N.S.
"Hong Kong as one of the Four Little Dragons of Asia has miraculous economic development."	93.6	89.3	N.S.
<b>China:</b>			
"Chinese people are hardworking, persevering and able."	88.3	84.3	.00
"China has gorgeous scenarios, historical sites and relics."	85.3	87.3	N.S.
"Today's China is a superpower. The Chinese people can be proud of that."	55.3	59.8	N.S.
"China's economic growth is very fast. The Pearl River Delta area will very likely become the fifth little dragon in Asia."	72.8	82.7	N.S.

Notes: \* Figures in the table represent the proportions of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements.  
N.S. = Not statistically significant at .05 level.

In the 1992a survey, the respondents were asked a total of 12 questions probing their feelings toward China and Hong Kong. The findings are contained in Table 4.

As far as feelings toward Hong Kong were concerned, it was significant to find that the differences between the Hongkongese and the Chinese were minimal. Both the Hongkongese and the

**Table 4** Attitudes toward China and Hong Kong by Identity, 1992a\* (%)

	Hongkongese	Chinese	Level of significance
<b>China:</b>			
"Individual interest is much less important than the interest of a nation in quest for wealth and power."	48.0	65.7	N.S.
"China's interest comes first; Hong Kong's interest comes second."	18.8	33.1	.00
"China's national anthem should be sung in local schools."	15.1	27.6	.00
"Putonghua should be made the major official language in Hong Kong."	33.5	52.4	.00
"Hong Kong should use its budget surplus to help China's development."	38.4	56.5	.00
"Hong Kong should even give up Special Administrative Region status if this was in the country's interest."	16.3	23.8	.01
"Hong Kong should make every possible sacrifice to help China in need."	6.2	20.8	.00
<b>Hong Kong:</b>			
"Hong Kong sports spectators should side with the local team in its match with a Chinese team."	75.7	62.0	.02
"It is unreasonable for China to oppose the showing of films which depict the darker sides of things in China."	79.8	68.7	N.S.
"China should give support to Hong Kong to help Hong Kong finance expensive infrastructural projects."	79.2	73.9	N.S.
"Even Shenzhen could be made part of Hong Kong if this could give Hong Kong more land for further development."	29.4	30.2	N.S.
"The entire mainland should model after Hong Kong and learn from its successful experience."	56.0	44.9	N.S.

Notes: \* Figures in the table represent the proportions of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements.  
N.S. = Not statistically significant at .05 level.

Chinese could be described as siding with Hong Kong whenever conflicts between Hong Kong and China were concerned. Both of them were proud of Hong Kong's achievements. There was a superiority complex *vis-à-vis* China. Localistic sentiments were prevalent. Self-interests dominated whenever Hong Kong-mainland relationship was the issue.

Differences between Hongkongese and the Chinese were more evident in regard to attitudes toward China, *though both of them were basically not favourably disposed toward the People's Republic*. An unfavourable image of China was formed a long time ago. In 1985, it was found that despite Hong Kong Chinese's identification with China in the ethno-cultural sense, when attention was shifted to identification with the People's Republic and the mainland Chinese, however, the level of identification dropped. Less than half of respondents (42.5 per cent) were proud of the achievements of the People's Republic of China in the past several decades. Only slightly more than half (52.5 per cent) of them felt close to the Chinese on the mainland.<sup>11</sup>

As shown by the figures in Table 4, Hongkongese tended to place more emphasis on the interests of Hong Kong than the Chinese, even though the latter still were localistic in orientation when Hong Kong's vital interests were involved. Nevertheless, there was a moderate tendency for the Chinese to help China if Hong Kong had extra money. The Chinese were also more willing to replace Cantonese by *putonghua* as the official language of Hong Kong. In addition, despite the lack of fondness for the People's Republic, both the Hongkongese and particularly the Chinese still were moderately in agreement with the statement that when a nation was "in quest for wealth and power," its interests should come before the interests of the individual, though the behavioural consequences of this were not clear; it has remained so up to the present.

With regard to trust for the Chinese government, the difference between the Hongkongese and the Chinese was statistically significant, but both of them were mostly mistrustful. The proportions of Hongkongese who trusted or very much trusted the Chi-

nese government in 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993,<sup>12</sup> 1994 and 1995 were 17.8 per cent, 5.6 per cent, 7.4 per cent, 11.1 per cent, 20.8 per cent, 8.8 per cent and 10.2 per cent, respectively; the corresponding figures for the Chinese were 36.1 per cent, 18.7 per cent, 28.7 per cent, 40.9 per cent, 50.2 per cent, 21.9 per cent and 20.6 per cent. As such, the issue of trust/mistrust of the Chinese government was not a politically significant cleavage between the two identity groups.

In line with the greater tendency of the Hongkongese to mistrust the Chinese government, they were also less confident about Hong Kong's future. In 1988, a lower proportion (63.4 per cent) of Hongkongese were confident about Hong Kong's future, as compared with the Chinese (85.1 per cent). In 1994, the proportion (37.1 per cent) of Hongkongese who were confident decreased, so was that of the Chinese (56 per cent); yet, the Chinese were still more optimistic than the Hongkongese.

Hongkongese were more prone to believe that there was conflict of interest between China and Hong Kong. In 1988, as many as 71.7 per cent of Hongkongese saw such conflict of interest, whereas a smaller percentage (56.6) of Chinese did so. Consequently, a smaller proportion (13.4 per cent) of Hongkongese in 1991 thought that China had taken care of the interests of the Hong Kong people than the Chinese (35.4 per cent).

As expected, the more negative sentiments of the Hongkongese toward the Chinese government was projected to their perception of the future of Hong Kong and China. In 1994, a smaller proportion of Hongkongese (38.2 per cent) than Chinese (52.7 per cent) were optimistic about the future of China. A majority (58.9 per cent) of Hongkongese did not have confidence in the post-1997 legal system of Hong Kong, whereas less than half (45.1 per cent) of the Chinese were of the same view. Hongkongese were less confident (34.3 per cent) than the Chinese in the Basic Law — the mini-constitution of Hong Kong after 1997 — than the Chinese (48.7 per cent),<sup>13</sup> and they were less likely (39.1 per cent) than the Chinese (53.1 per cent) to think that the Chinese government was capable of running Hong Kong well. In 1995, it was also found

that a smaller proportion of Hongkongese (22.4 per cent) than Chinese (39.2 per cent) believed in China's promise of "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong." Hongkongese (65.8 per cent) were more inclined than the Chinese (59.6 per cent) to think that the HKSAR government would primarily take care of the interests of China. Likewise, Hongkongese (16 per cent) were less likely than the Chinese (41 per cent) to expect the HKSAR government to do a better job than the colonial government. And, Hongkongese (9.4 per cent) were less likely to express trust in the leaders of the HKSAR than the Chinese (18.3 per cent). But, still the differences between the Hongkongese and the Chinese on all these matters were largely a matter of degree. They shared basically similar attitudes.

By the same token, given their greater mistrust of China, Hongkongese were more ready than the Chinese to confront China as a way to protect their interests and to vent their grudges (8.9 per cent as against 7 per cent), though in view of the gargantuan imbalance of power between Hong Kong and China, the Hong Kong Chinese were frightened of confrontation. In the same vein, in 1995 more than half (58 per cent) of Hongkongese declared they would still support political leaders disliked by the Chinese government, whereas less than one-third (30.9 per cent) of the Chinese would do so. More illustrative of Hongkongese's abhorrence of the Chinese government was the finding in 1988 that slightly more than half (53.3 per cent) of Hongkongese supported political independence for Hong Kong, as opposed to only 30 per cent of the Chinese, in spite of the fact that, as previously mentioned, Hongkongese were willing to place the country before the localities.

The greater mistrust of China on the part of the Hongkongese went hand in hand with their greater support for Britain. In fact, Hongkongese had a more favourable image of colonial rule than the Chinese. A higher proportion (55.1 per cent) of Hongkongese were found in 1994 to support the retention of Hong Kong as a British colony after 1997, as against only 28.8 per cent of the Chinese. Meanwhile, just under half of Hongkongese (43.4 per



cent) were of the opinion that the Chinese people in Hong Kong had equal status with the British, while only 33.6 per cent of the Chinese saw racial equality. While both the Hongkongese (57.4 per cent) and the Chinese (68.2 per cent) accused Britain of serving primarily her own interests when she handled Hong Kong's affairs, it was the Chinese who were more cynical.

Because the Hongkongese had greater trust in the British and Hong Kong governments,<sup>14</sup> small wonder they were more inclined to demand that Britain take a strong approach to China. Since the Hongkongese were more concerned about China's interference in local affairs before the hand-over, they were more wary about the autonomy of the Hong Kong government in the last days of British rule. Thus, while recognizing the importance of Sino-British cooperation in the transitional period, in 1991 still a smaller proportion of Hongkongese (54.8 per cent) than Chinese (64.8 per cent) agreed with the view that, in the second half of the transitional period, Britain should obtain the approval of the Chinese government before making important decisions. Likewise, a higher proportion of Hongkongese (75.2 per cent) than Chinese (59 per cent) in 1992 agreed with the statement that the Hong Kong government should stick to policies which were in Hong Kong's interests, regardless of China's opposition.

In sum, the most important difference between the Hongkongese and the Chinese apparently lay in their attitudes toward socialist China and the Chinese government. Nevertheless, since their attitudes were basically similar, even this difference was not serious enough to bring about overt conflict between Hong Kong Chinese with different identities.

### The June 4 Incident and Identities

The June 4 Incident, which involved the Chinese government's crackdown on the student protesters in Beijing by military force in the spring of 1989, had caused volcanic political and emotional upheaval amongst the Hong Kong Chinese. Along many forms of

expression of support for the demonstrating students and revulsion against the Chinese regime, about a million Hong Kong Chinese took to the street spontaneously. Such large-scale political activism by the Hong Kong Chinese, though transient, was nevertheless unprecedented in Hong Kong history. It was also the most defiant popular action against the Chinese government by the Chinese people outside of China. The forceful reaction of the Hong Kong Chinese undoubtedly was connected to the imminent return of Hong Kong to China, and the anxieties, anguish and frustrations thus produced. This reaction reflects vividly the strong identification with the Chinese nation on the part of the Hong Kong Chinese. The June 4 Incident also provided the golden opportunity for the concentrated and articulate expression of the Hongkongese identity. In turn, the Hongkongese identity could be said to have been reinforced by the common experience which the Hong Kong Chinese shared in this heart-rending event.

Hongkongese played a more prominent role in the popular actions instigated by the June 4 Incident than the Chinese. In both the 1992a and 1993 surveys, respondents were asked whether they had participated in the parades or assemblies related to the June 4 Incident in 1989. In 1992a, a higher proportion of Hongkongese (25.9 per cent) than Chinese (18.8 per cent) reported that they had participated in those activities. The corresponding figures in 1993 were 26.6 per cent and 18.2 per cent, respectively, which were quite similar. Furthermore, it was also found in the 1992a survey that in 1989 consistently higher proportions of Hongkongese than Chinese paid close attention to newspapers about the development of the June 4 Incident (63 per cent vs. 59.5 per cent), paid close attention to television and radio about the development of the Incident (68.6 per cent vs. 68.3 per cent), and discussed often with friends and relatives about the Incident (32.8 per cent vs. 29.3 per cent). However, since 1989, the enthusiasm of the Hongkongese tapered off much more rapidly than the Chinese. In the 1992a survey, only 5.6 per cent, 3 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively, of Hongkongese reported that they had participated in the parades or assemblies related to the first, second and third anniversaries of

the Incident, as compared with 7.3 per cent, 3.6 per cent and 2.4 per cent of the Chinese. This showed that, after the enormous furore created by the Incident was over, it was the higher level of affective attachment of the Chinese to the Chinese nation which played the more important role in sustaining participation.

Though both Hongkongese and the Chinese interpreted the June 4 Incident in a way that was prejudiced against the socialist regime, still the Chinese were less sympathetic to the Beijing students than the Hongkongese. In the 1992a survey, 10.3 per cent of Hongkongese understood the Incident as a turmoil produced by Beijing's residents and students, 13.1 per cent of the Chinese did so. While 21.6 per cent of Hongkongese saw the Incident as the result of the work of a small bunch of trouble-makers, 30.5 per cent of the Chinese did so. While 16.7 per cent of Hongkongese thought that the Incident was merely an accident, implying that nobody was to be blamed, 19.3 per cent of the Chinese did so. As many as 86.1 per cent of Hongkongese considered the Incident as an event mishandled by the Chinese government, a smaller proportion (73.1 per cent) of Chinese did so. Similarly, an overwhelming majority (91.7 per cent) of Hongkongese defined the Incident as a bloody massacre, a smaller majority (76.6 per cent) of Chinese did so.

After the intense emotions caused by the June 4 Incident had subsided, however, it is interesting to note that it was the Chinese who were able to take a more pragmatic stance toward the Incident, apparently bearing in mind Hong Kong's interests, particularly its relationship with China. For example, in the 1992a survey, a smaller proportion (28.9 per cent) of Hongkongese than Chinese (35 per cent) agreed that "for the sake of Hong Kong's stability and prosperity, we should forget the Incident." A smaller proportion (29 per cent) of Hongkongese than Chinese (35.2 per cent) were of the view that "for the sake of good China-Hong Kong relationship, we should forget the Incident." In the same vein, a higher proportion of Hongkongese (56.1 per cent) than Chinese (45.4 per cent) insisted that "we should continue to commemorate the June 4 Incident until all the democratic activists are released

from prison." Their attitudes toward the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of the Patriotic Democratic Movement of China, a political group formed during the Incident, showed a similar difference. While 21.7 per cent of Hongkongese said that it should be dissolved, 28.9 per cent of the Chinese did so.

Hong Kong Chinese, particularly those with the Hongkongese identity, were jolted by the June 4 Incident in such a way that they were fully aware of their common political fate, which was perceived to be uncertain and miserable. They were disillusioned with the Chinese government and its promises to Hong Kong by the sudden twists and turns of events on the mainland. The sudden outpouring of emotions and political activism among the Hong Kong Chinese, especially the Hongkongese, can be interpreted as a vivid expression of the Hong Kong identity, which in this case was also shared to a substantial degree by those who identified themselves as Chinese. The year 1989 can thus be considered as a milestone in the formation of the local identity among the Hong Kong Chinese.

### Attitudes toward Democratic Reform and Identities

If the differences between the Hongkongese and the Chinese in their attitudes toward the Chinese nation, the People's Republic of China and the Chinese government were basically differences in degree rather than in kind, the same can be said of their different attitudes toward democratic reform in Hong Kong. In other words, the political differences between the Hongkongese and the Chinese were such that no serious cleavage existed to divide the Hong Kong Chinese because of identity difference.

Both Hongkongese and Chinese had mild democratic aspirations permeated with mixed feelings. Their conception of democracy represented an instrumental and partial view. It was instrumental in the sense that they expected democracy to achieve some concrete political ends. It was also partial because the Hong Kong Chinese tended to understand democracy in *negative* terms:

the purpose of democracy was to protect their rights and interests against encroachment by China and the political authorities in Hong Kong. The *positive* sense of democracy as the right to participate in politics was de-emphasized.<sup>15</sup> There was also a visible authoritarian strand in the Hong Kong Chinese view of democracy. They set great store on political stability and strong government. In the 1992 survey, a large majority of Hongkongese (83.9 per cent) and Chinese (81.4 per cent) agreed that Hong Kong needed a strong government to maintain political stability. Likewise, 82.5 per cent of Hongkongese and 77.7 per cent of Chinese thought that Hong Kong needed a strong government to maintain economic prosperity. By the same token, in the 1993 survey, most of Hongkongese (65.6 per cent) and Chinese (62.6 per cent) concurred with the view that restraining the powers of the government was not good, for that would detract from governmental efficiency. Nevertheless, this emphasis on a strong government was tempered to a certain extent by an awareness that such government should be restrained and checked to avoid the abuse of power. This consideration could be seen in several findings in 1992. Less than half of Hongkongese (37.9 per cent) and Chinese (41.6 per cent) agreed with the following statement: "To handle the problems now facing Hong Kong, it is most important that Hong Kong has a strong government. Whether it is democratic or not is of secondary importance." Even smaller proportions of Hongkongese (28.1 per cent) and Chinese (36.7 per cent) agreed with the following statement: "To handle the problems now facing Hong Kong, it is most important that Hong Kong has a government that makes efficient decisions. Whether or not it consults the public on these decisions is not important." In 1993, only minorities of Hongkongese (26.5 per cent) and Chinese (36.5 per cent) shared the view that "we can leave all public affairs to leaders with moral integrity and there is no need for us to express our views." Nevertheless, a finding in 1993 showed that the difference between Hongkongese and the Chinese grew wider, when at issue was a government which was authoritarian but at the same time more competent than a democratic government. Less than

half (37.1 per cent) of Hongkongese were willing to accept such a government, but more than half (57.1 per cent) of the Chinese preferred it.

Despite their similarities, subtle differences between the Hongkongese and the Chinese could be detected. Generally speaking, while Hongkongese had stronger democratic aspirations than the Chinese, the Chinese had on the contrary a more "romantic" or idealistic view of democracy. Behind the Chinese's lower emphasis on democratization was the fact that they were more satisfied with the performance of the existing system and the Hong Kong government, resulting in a slightly greater sense of political complacency. In 1988, for example, while 75 per cent of Hongkongese rated the existing non-democratic political system as the best available under objective circumstances, 78.1 per cent of the Chinese did so. In addition, a higher proportion of Chinese (52.3 per cent) described the performance of the Hong Kong government as good, in contrast with 40 per cent of Hongkongese.

Because Hongkongese were most mistrustful of the Chinese government, there was a somewhat stronger tendency for them to see democratization as a means to bolster Hong Kong's autonomy against Chinese interference after 1997. In 1988, for example, a slightly higher proportion of Hongkongese (35.2 per cent) than Chinese (33.3 per cent) were confident that the introduction of direct elections in Hong Kong would prevent China from interfering in local affairs.

Besides instrumental considerations, Hongkongese's greater aspirations for democracy were also based on their more modern political outlook. This point can be illustrated with several pieces of evidence. In 1992a, it was found that when asked to rank the relative importance of political stability and democratic government, a higher proportion of Hongkongese (16 per cent) than Chinese (8 per cent) picked the latter as more important. Similarly, when asked to choose between economic prosperity and democratic government, still a higher proportion of Hongkongese (17.8 per cent) than Chinese (9.6 per cent) gave priority to democratic government.

In 1993, Hongkongese were found to be more supportive of the principle of political equality. Thus, 55.8 per cent of Hongkongese, as compared with 48.3 per cent of Chinese, disagreed with the view that the more educated people should have more political influence than the less educated. A higher proportion of Hongkongese (76.3 per cent) than Chinese (68.8 per cent) disagreed with the statement that the head of government was equivalent to the head of a large family, all the big and small public affairs had to be decided by him. Hongkongese (16.7 per cent) were more likely than the Chinese (14.2 per cent) to describe the pace of democratization in Hong Kong as too slow. A larger proportion of Hongkongese (74 per cent) than Chinese (59.3 per cent) disagreed that further democratization would threaten Hong Kong's stability. By the same token, the political reforms introduced by Christopher Patten, the Governor of Hong Kong, received more support from the Hongkongese than the Chinese. In the 1995 survey, a higher proportion of Hongkongese (45.1 per cent) than Chinese (27.5 per cent) thought that Patten's reforms were beneficial to Hong Kong.

Again, the differences between Hongkongese and the Chinese with regard to attitudes toward democratization were not substantial. Both groups were by and large moderate in political mentality. The issue of democratization should not be a wedge between them.

## Discussion

After detailed presentation of findings, we are in a better position to answer the questions raised at the beginning of the paper. Undoubtedly, there are differences in ethos between the Hongkongese and the Chinese, but they were minimal as compared with the vast contrast between the Hong Kong Chinese and the mainland Chinese. Accordingly, identity differences in Hong Kong are not likely to be a major cleavage in Hong Kong with serious political or social implications. As a matter of fact, the

limited attitudinal differences between the Hongkongese and the Chinese testify to the short history of identity formation and mobilization in Hong Kong, as well as the low emotional intensity wherewith the Hong Kong identity is held.

Both the Hong Kong identity and the Chinese identity of the Hong Kong Chinese are constructed on the ethno-cultural base. They tend to be transcendental in the geographical sense, as both do not involve intense allegiance to Hong Kong or China as a geographical area. They do not involve political allegiance to concrete political regimes. Moreover, both also do not encompass intense parochial or primordial feelings, such as localism or sub-nationalism. Therefore, the kind of parochialism or primordialism which inhibits nation-building in many developing societies does not exist in Hong Kong.<sup>16</sup>

China is fully aware of the difficulty of culturally and politically integrating the Hong Kong Chinese into the motherland. Despite China's reiterations about the unity of the Chinese nation, the "one country, two systems" formula to deal with Hong Kong's post-colonial future serves to provide ample time for integration to take place. The Preamble of the Basic Law spells out the policy of China: "Upholding national unity and territorial integrity, maintaining the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, and taking account of its history and realities, the People's Republic of China has decided that upon China's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be established in accordance with the provisions of Article 31 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, and that under the principle of 'one country, two systems', the socialist system and policies will not be practised in Hong Kong." Article 5 specially stipulates that "[T]he socialist system and policies shall not be practised in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years."

In fact, China must be thinking in terms of decades, rather than years, insofar as ultimate integration is concerned. The "one country, two systems" model has substantially alleviated the seri-

ousness of any possible "identity crisis" in Hong Kong. It demands minimal changes in the attitudes and behaviour of the Hong Kong Chinese, though many of them are still worried about the possibility that China would impose changes on them. In any case, up to now there has been no sign that the Hong Kong Chinese are psychologically troubled by an "identity crisis." And there have been almost no (except perhaps for the activities in the spring of 1989) collective political actions that were caused by identity issues. On the other hand, by installing a barrier between Hong Kong and the mainland, the "one country, two systems" format in practice works to reinforce and prolong the separate identity of the Hong Kong people.

The preservation of the capitalist system of Hong Kong in socialist China, notwithstanding the "one country, two systems" format, is bound to cause conflicts between Hong Kong and the mainland, particularly when the purpose is not to segregate the two systems, but instead to accelerate contacts between them so that Hong Kong can contribute significantly to China's modernization. The mistrust and fear of the socialist regime by the Hong Kong Chinese are bound to continue to adversely affect the relationship between the central government and the HKSAR, particularly when China cannot resist the temptation to tamper with Hong Kong's affairs. Nevertheless, despite political alienation from the Chinese state, the Hongkongese identity still encompasses strong identification with the Chinese nation, which explains *inter alia* the Hongkongese's intense empathy with the Beijing students in 1989 and their tremendous pride in the achievements of the Chinese athletes in international events.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the Hong Kong identity does not entail separatism. In fact, identifications with Hong Kong and with the Chinese nation represent multiple and complementary identities. Throughout Hong Kong's history, there has been no demand for political independence in Hong Kong. Moreover, notwithstanding their anxieties about the territory's return to China, China's claim of sovereignty over Hong Kong has never been questioned by the Hong Kong Chinese.

After 1997, several factors might work to strengthen identification with the Chinese nation, and possibly even with the Chinese state, among the Hong Kong Chinese: the inexorable fact that Hong Kong is politically part of China, the growing military power and international status of China, increasing economic interdependency between Hong Kong and the mainland, the modernization of China, the increasing impact of China's development on Hong Kong, the propagation of nationalist values in Hong Kong, and the strengthening of social and cultural ties between the people in both places.

It is difficult to predict precisely the development of identity formation in Hong Kong. However, in view of what happened in the past, it is very likely that there will be a merging of the current Hongkongese and Chinese identities to form a new identity of the Hong Kong Chinese. This new identity will be different from the identity of the Chinese people on the mainland. On top of this local identity, the Hong Kong Chinese will gradually adopt a larger Chinese identity, with the People's Republic of China as the object of identification. It is also likely that, despite all sorts of conflicts, the Hong Kong identity and the larger Chinese identity will become increasingly complementary inasmuch as claiming the Hong Kong identity not only does not involve denying one's Chinese identity, but also acts to reinforce it.

## Notes

1. In all the surveys referred to in this article, only persons over 18 years old were interviewed. The sampling frame was composed of households. The respondents selected for interview were derived from the sample of households through a random selection process. Except for the 1985 survey, all the other surveys were Hong Kong-wide surveys using a common sampling method. The following is a brief description of these surveys.  
(1) The 1985 survey was conducted in the summer and autumn of 1985 in Kwun Tong, an industrial-cum-residen-

tial community in Hong Kong. The sampling frame used was based on a 2 per cent sample of the complete household list prepared by the Census and Statistics Department for the 1981 Census. The size of the systematic sample was 1,687. In all, 792 interviews were successfully completed, yielding a response rate of 46.9 per cent.

- (2) The 1988 survey was undertaken in the summer of 1988. The sample used in the survey was prepared by means of a multi-stage design, starting with a sample of 649 residential addresses from the computerized Sub-Frame of Living Quarters maintained by the Census and Statistics Department. In total, 396 successful interviews were obtained, yielding a response rate of 61 per cent.
- (3) The 1990 survey was conducted in the summer, autumn and winter of 1990. The size of the sample was 613. From it, 390 interviews were successfully completed, resulting in a response rate of 63.6 per cent.
- (4) The 1991 survey was carried out in the summer of 1991. The sample size was 718. In total, 401 successful interviews were obtained, yielding a response rate of 55.8 per cent.
- (5) The sample size of the 1992 survey was 1,568. Interviews were conducted mostly from May to November 1992. A total of 868 interviews were completed, and the response rate was 55.4 per cent.
- (6) The sample size of the 1992a survey was 1,125. Interviews were done mostly from December 1992 to February 1993. In total, 615 interviews were successfully completed, with a response rate of 54.7 per cent. The questionnaire of the survey was chiefly designed by Professors Lee Ming-kwan and Leung Sai-wing. Some of their findings were reported in their *Democracy, Capitalism, and National Identity in Public Attitudes* (Hong Kong: Department of Applied Social Studies, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, June 1995).

- (7) The 1993 survey was conducted in the summer of 1993. The sample size was 1,633. At the end of the survey, a total of 892 successful interviews were completed, yielding a response rate of 54.6 per cent.
  - (8) The 1994 survey was conducted in the summer of 1994. The sample size was 1,748. Of which, 997 interviews were completed, yielding a response rate of 57 per cent.
  - (9) The 1995 survey was carried out in the summer of 1995. The sample size was 663, 408 interviews were completed, with a response rate of 61.5 per cent.
2. See Elizabeth Sinn, "Emigration from Hong Kong before 1941: General Trends," in Ronald Skeldon (ed.), *Emigration from Hong Kong: Tendencies and Impacts* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1995), pp. 11-34; and Ronald Skeldon, "Emigration from Hong Kong, 1945-1994: The Demographic Lead-up to 1997," *ibid.*, pp. 51-77.
  3. For an overall description of the cultural content of the Hong Kong identity, particularly that of the educated and Westernized middle-class, see Helen F. Siu, "Remade in Hong Kong: Weaving into the Chinese Cultural Tapestry," in Tao Tao Liu and David Faure (eds), *Unity and Diversity: Local Cultures and Identities in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996), pp. 176-96.
  4. A four-point scale (very weak, weak, strong, very strong) question was used in the 1985 survey, whereas in all the other surveys the five-point scale (very weak, weak, average, strong, very strong) question was used. Thus, the figure for 1985 would have been smaller had a five-point scale question been used.
  5. See Lau Siu-kai and Kuan Hsin-chi, *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1988), pp. 178-79.
  6. Wong Siu-lun, "Political Attitudes and Identity," in Ronald Skeldon (ed.), *Emigration from Hong Kong*, p. 170.
  7. The importance of culture and ethnicity in the definition of a Chinese person is widely recognized. See for example Myron

- L. Cohen, "Being Chinese: The Peripheralization of Traditional Identity," in Tu Wei-ming (ed.), *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 88-108; and David Yen-ho Wu, "The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities," *ibid.*, pp. 148-66.
8. Lau and Kuan, *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese*, p. 179.
  9. Lucian W. Pye has argued that, despite common ethnicity and cultural habits among the Chinese, the historical pattern of China's modernization has left China with a relatively inchoate and incoherent form of nationalism. A major feature of this relatively "contentless" form of nationalism is the weak identification with the state. The "stateless" version of nascent nationalism of the Hong Kong Chinese can be described as an even more exaggerated version of Pye's contentless nationalism. See Pye's "The Challenge of Modernization to the Chinese National Identity," a lecture delivered at The Chinese University of Hong Kong on 9 January 1991 (*Chinese University Bulletin*, Supplement 22, pp. 12-29).
  10. The supreme importance of ethnicity and culture as the basis of Chineseness and Chinese nationalism has been underscored by many scholars. See for example Zhang Yufa, "Diguo zhuyi, minzu zhuyi yu guoji zhuyi zai jindai Zhongguo lishi shang de jiaose" [The Role of Imperialism, Nationalism and Internationalism in Modern Chinese History] in Liu Qingfeng (ed.), *Minzu zhuyi yu Zhongguo xiandaihua* [Nationalism and Chinese Modernization] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1994), pp. 99-125; Jiang Yihua, "Lun ershi shiji Zhongguo de minzu zhuyi" [On Twentieth-Century Chinese Nationalism], *ibid.*, pp. 143-57; Wang Rongzu, "Zhongguo jindai minzu zhuyi de huigu yu zhanwang" [Modern Chinese Nationalism: Past and Future], *ibid.*, pp. 187-200; and Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, "In Search of a Theory of National Identity," in Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim (eds), *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 1-31.

11. Lau and Kuan, *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese*, p. 179.
12. A four-point scale (strongly mistrust, mistrust, trust, strongly trust) question was used in the 1993 survey, whereas in all the other surveys the five-point scale question was used (strongly mistrust, mistrust, average, trust, strongly trust). The figure for 1993 would have been smaller had the five-point scale question been used.
13. It was also found in 1990 that a lower proportion of Hongkongese (37.5 per cent) than Chinese (55 per cent) were satisfied with the Basic Law.
14. In all the surveys mentioned in this study, the Hongkongese were consistently more trustful of the British and Hong Kong governments than the Chinese.
15. See Kuan Hsin-chi and Lau Siu-kai, "The Partial Vision of Democracy in Hong Kong: A Survey of Popular Opinion," *The China Journal*, 34 (July 1995), pp. 239-64.
16. See Clifford Geertz, "Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in Clifford Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States* (New York: Free Press, 1963), pp. 105-57.
17. See also Wong Ka-ying, Timothy, *Xianggangren de zuqun rentong yu minzu rentong: Yige ziyou zhuyi de jieshi* [Hong Kong People's Ethnic Identity and National Identity: A Liberalist Interpretation] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, April 1996).

# **Hongkongese or Chinese**

## **The Problem of Identity on the Eve of Resumption of Chinese Sovereignty over Hong Kong**

### **Abstract**

"Hongkongese" and "Chinese" are the two major identities which the Hong Kong Chinese themselves consider to be meaningful. Drawing upon survey data collected in the last decade, the study shows that there are significant differences between Hongkongese and Chinese in their socio-demographic characteristics, in their attitude toward the People's Republic of China and the Chinese government, in their understanding of the June 4 Incident, and in their conception of democracy and political reform in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, Hongkongese and Chinese are similar in their support for traditional Chinese values and identification with China in the ethnic and historical sense. Irrespective of their identities, Hong Kong Chinese are still quite different attitudinally from the Chinese in mainland China. Particularly noteworthy is the negative feelings toward the Chinese government held in common by both the Hongkongese and the Chinese.

Notwithstanding the pervasive anxieties engendered by the 1997 problem, the Hong Kong Chinese are apparently not suffering from a salient sense of "identity crisis," at least as far as the common people are concerned. However, in view of the vast differences in values between the mainland and Hong Kong, mutual adjustment will be difficult and inevitable in the future. In the process of intensified interaction between Hong Kong and the mainland, there is the likelihood that a new identity of the Hong Kong Chinese will appear. This new identity however will still be different from that of the Chinese people on the mainland.



# 香港人或中國人

中國在港恢復行使主權前夕  
香港人的身份認同問題

劉兆佳

(中文摘要)

對香港華人而言，「香港人」及「中國人」是最具意義的兩種身份認同。本研究通過運用過去十年來所收集的問卷調查材料，顯示在以下幾方面「香港人」與「中國人」有明顯的不同：他們的個人社經背景、他們對中華人民共和國及中國政府的態度、他們對「六四事件」的體會和他們對在香港實行民主及政制改革的立場。不過，「香港人」及「中國人」卻同樣地抱持傳統的中國價值觀，以及認同一個建基於民族與歷史意義的中國。雖然他們有不同的身份認同，但與大陸的華人比較，香港華人在態度上仍然是很不一樣的。特別值得注意的是：「香港人」及「中國人」都對中國政府懷有負面的感情。

儘管九七問題在香港引發廣泛憂慮，但香港華人卻顯然沒有「身份危機」的問題，至少就普羅大眾而言情況如此。然而，由於大陸民眾與香港華人在價值觀上有頗大差異，將來彼此之間的相互適應必然艱辛。在香港與大陸日益深化的互動過程中，香港華人很有可能會形成一種新的身份認同。不過，那個新的身份認同依然會與大陸華人的身份認同有明顯差異。