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ON HONG KONG IDENTITY



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On Hong Kong Identity

Being Hong Kongese is to be special and separate from being Chinese. It is in opposition to a former Chinese identity that has given rise to a unique Hong Kongese identity. Previously, they were connected: To be a Hong Kong person of Chinese ancestry was to be part of the broader Chinese nationality and culture even when the people of Hong Kong were British colonial subjects. How that connection became severed and how a Hong Kongese identity came to fruition is the primary purpose of this paper. It explores earlier attempts to define a Hong Kongese identity, the evolution of that identity, and its fate in the face of an effort by People's Republic of China officials and their local Hong Kong collaborators to expunge it or to reduce it to a geographic affiliation. As will be discussed at the end of the paper, the prospects of sustaining this Hong Kongese identity are bleak and it may become just a footnote in Hong Kong's local history within a generation.

Chinese Identity

As the putative Middle Kingdom, China was an empire that incorporated other sovereign states and peoples such as the ancient Dan people (蠻家), Yue people (越人), and Fulao people (福佬) living in the Hong Kong area. Some scholars regard these early residents as "sea people" who made their living from the South China Sea.¹ These sea people were imbued with a sense of exploration and a desire for freedom, traits that were passed on to subsequent generations.² Presumably, this legacy can be found among those living in Hong Kong and serves as a foundation for a Hong Kongese identity as well as help explain their resistance to the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to impose its will on them.³ While this

inheritance offers insights into current opposition to Chinese Communist rule and provides a story that can serve as the basis for a national identity, it is difficult to extrapolate from it to explain the Hong Kongese identity that emerged in 2019. Much has happened in between the ancient and contemporary periods.

As with other empires, China expanded and contracted according to the vicissitudes of fortune during its long history. In the early 19th century, after losing the Opium War, it ceded Hong Kong Island to the British empire “in perpetuity” as part of the Treaty of Nanjing (1842). From the Qing dynasty’s perspective, Hong Kong was not much of a loss since it was a desolate, sparsely populated rocky island, with some fishing and farming villages. It had, however, an excellent natural harbor, making it a watering hole for British traders.

Chinese, mainly from Guangdong Province and the other maritime provinces of southeast China, migrated to Hong Kong to work in the British colony. Besides being a place for gainful employment, Hong Kong became a destination for refugees fleeing China’s economic dislocations and political upheavals. Towards the end of the Qing dynasty and during the Republican Period (1912-1949), many Chinese fled there for survival and safety, including reformers and revolutionaries who sought to change China from within the sanctuary of the British colony. For them, Hong Kong was a provisional place. Their “old home” (老家) was elsewhere in China. They expected to return there eventually, though many never did.

The migrants and refugees may have been in Hong Kong, but they were not of Hong Kong, at least not initially. To the extent that they had a Hong Kongese identity, it was “based on daily life, institutional rationality, freedom, consumer experience, and common people’s culture,” according to Ma Kit Wai.⁴ Given the need to navigate between Chinese and Western, that is, British, cultures and politics, their identity tended to be “flexible in nature, inclusive, and not hostile.”⁵ It was an indifferent identity, even an apolitical one.

Some scholars point to Hong Kong's establishment as a crown colony as the start of a dual identity (雙重身份). It was an identity based on an admixture of British politics and Han Chinese culture.⁶ This dual identity was promoted by the colony's Chinese elite who sought recognition as "Hong Kongese" entitled to special rights and privileges.⁷ For instance, Sir Kai Ho, the colony's first Chinese barrister and first Chinese member of its Legislative Council, later Chinese Consul-General to the United States, wanted the colonial government to officially certify that they were Hong Kongese committed to the British crown. Other Hong Kong inhabitants should be considered transients, that is, Chinese who were merely living and working there temporarily.

Several things undermined the viability of this dual identity: first, it was a restricted identity since it excluded most other residents in Hong Kong by reason of class status; second, it was an inferior identity since the British regarded the Chinese elite with contempt and relegated them to second-class status even though they emulated them by acquiring a university education and having posh manners; third, it was an ambivalent identity since there was the potential conflict between their political allegiance to Britain and cultural affinity with China.⁸

There were instances in which the former outweighed the latter as in the case of the Canton-Hong Kong strike and boycott (1925-1926), a nationalist and anti-imperialist movement. During the strike and boycott over 250,000 people left Hong Kong, turning it into a veritable ghost town. The colony's Chinese elite decided that their interests were better served by the British, so they threw in their lot with them and tried to subvert the strikes and boycott. They had crossed the proverbial Rubicon in doing so. They subordinated themselves to the British colonial hierarchy and became a conservative social force in the colony.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong people's participation in the Canton-Hong Kong strike and boycott contributed a significant chapter to their local history and enhanced their sense of

community. Similarly, during World War II during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, their shared suffering strengthened their sense of community. But both experiences -- the strike and occupation -- were in the context of Chinese nationalism and affirmed their Chinese identity rather than serving as a basis for a separate Hong Kongese identity.

For the people of Hong Kong to have their own identity, they would have to forsake their Chinese identity, though not necessarily Chinese history and culture to which they were forever linked. And they would also have to forge a Hong Kongese history and culture that they could claim exclusively as their own.

Incipient Identity

It was the beginning of the Cold War (1947-1991) and the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, that an incipient Hong Kongese identity began to emerge. During this period, some Hong Kong people began to draw a distinction between themselves and the Chinese because of changing political and economic circumstances on the mainland and in the colony. This was particularly pronounced for the post-World War II baby boomers who were born during the years 1946 to 1966 and raised in Hong Kong. For them, a Chinese identity became increasingly attenuated, though never disavowed because of the hold that Chinese nationalism had on them.

Demarcating the difference between the people of Hong Kong and the people in the Chinese mainland was the border. Previously, it was a permeable border that allowed them to cross whenever it suited them. It was understood that inhabitants on both sides had access to the roads and waterways. But during the immediate post-World War II period, the British colonial government had to contend with the flood of Chinese refugees fleeing the renewed Nationalist-Communist civil war (1945-1949) raging in the mainland. These displaced persons dramatically increased Hong Kong's population from 600,000 to 2.1 million, creating a predominantly refugee society. The colonial government also had to deal with the newly

founded People's Republic of China (PRC) as an adversary when Chinese "volunteers" fought alongside North Koreans and against them during the Korean War (1950-1953). In response to these changing circumstances, the colonial government began to restrict travel to and from Hong Kong and sought to gain control over its residents by employing the Japanese wartime practice of population registration and issuing them identity cards. These actions officially set Hong Kong people apart from the Chinese in the mainland. The border became an ideological as well as an identity dividing line.

Hong Kong's Chinese and British leaders were aware of the colony's increasing insularity and looked inward to make life better there. Expatriates established political organizations such as the Reform Club of Hong Kong(革新会) and teachers, professionals and businessmen established the Hong Kong Civic Association (香港公民協會) to improve governance of the colony by campaigning for the direct election of Hong Kong's and Legislative Council. Reform-minded Chinese leaders such as Ma Man-fai set-up civic organizations such as the United Nations Association of Hong Kong (聯合國香港協會) to promote the newly founded UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Ma was particularly keen on the right of colonized people to self-government. In 1963, he and like-minded individuals established the Democratic Self-Government Party of Hong Kong (香港民主自治黨) to advocate for self-government. While these organizations and activities never gained political traction among ordinary Hong Kong people, who were preoccupied with mundane day-to-day issues, they did awaken them to the problems besetting the colony and the failure of the colonial government to solve them.

A particularly noteworthy Hong Kong leader was Elsie Tu, an English-born expatriate and a social activist who was an ardent opponent of colonialism and the endemic corruption pervading the colony. She was accused of inciting the 1966 Kowloon riots that had started with her opposition to a 25 percent Star Ferry fare increase. The initially peaceful

demonstrations against the increase degenerated into three nights of clashes with the police that led to one death, dozens injured, and over 1,800 arrests. The 1966 Kowloon riots were the first large-scale social movement in the colony involving substantial numbers of young people. It was the immediate antecedent to the protracted colony-wide 1967 riots, which many people consider the crucible from which emerged a palpable Hong Kongese identity.

1967 Riots

Giving birth to an incipient Hong Kongese identity was never the goal of the Chinese Communist-inspired leftists responsible for the 1967 Riots. It was an unintended consequence of their effort to ameliorate the Dickensian conditions of the impoverished people who lived and worked in Hong Kong.⁹ By 1967, leftists had fomented labor strife across the colony.¹⁰ In May, a labor dispute in a factory producing artificial flowers led to 18 months of violent clashes between demonstrators and police. Contrary to the Chinese Communist Party's policy of "take the long-view, make full use" (長期打算, 充分利用) of Hong Kong, leftists acted precipitously. Influenced by the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) occurring across the border and encouraged by some of its radical leaders, leftists started a "Struggle Committee" to organize mass protests to end British rule of Hong Kong. The leftists engaged in acts of terrorism, planting as many as 8,000 innovative explosive devices, of which 1,500 were real, killing civilians and police alike. The terrorism finally ended in December 1967, when PRC Premier Zhou Enlai intervened and ordered left-wing groups to cease and desist from the bombing campaign.

Before 1967, leftists had broad popular support among the Hong Kong people who perceived them as fighting for the well-being of the common people; after 1967, popular support had evaporated. The leftists became social pariahs. A popular saying at the time, "We would rather have hooligans than leftists" (甯要阿飛, 不要阿左), shows how marginalized they had become. The leftist bombing campaign succeeded in terrifying Hong Kong residents

and alienating them from the Chinese Communist Party to which the leftists were inextricably tied. The 1967 Riots created a feeling among residents of being under siege and inculcated in them an enmity toward Chinese Communists. Meanwhile, the British colonial government furthered these feelings by launching what the mainland Chinese scholar Qiang Shigong called a “winning hearts and minds” campaign (洗腦贏心工程).

In addition to demonizing the leftists, the campaign purposefully used such terms as citizen, community, and sense of beginning to promote a group identity among Hong Kong people and sponsored popular events such as the first Festival of Hong Kong in 1967.¹¹

The 1967 Riots motivated many residents who could afford to do so to leave Hong Kong. But for those who remained, their lives gradually improved when British officials realized that there was a yawning gap between themselves and those they governed. They carried out reforms to address serious social problems in housing, education, and health.¹² In 1967, the labor law was revised to give laborers shorter working hours; 1973, a ten-year housing program was started to solve the housing shortage problem; 1975, the Independent Commission Against Corruption was established to improve policing and the relationship between the people and the police; and 1978, a nine-year compulsory education system was instituted to improve the people’s education. Besides making people’s lives better, these measures changed their self-perception and perception of Hong Kong. In the words of Chief Superintendent Bob Steele, who witnessed the 1967 Riots and the improvements that followed them, “There grew an increasing sense of belonging to Hong Kong among large sections of the population, and the idea of a “Hong Kong Belonger” or “Hongkonger” was born.”¹³ The people began to imagine themselves as belonging to a community and wanting to be part of it. Hong Kong became more than a refuge from the turmoil across the border or a workplace to earn a living, but a place they could call home.

Divergence: Hong Kongese vs. Chinese

While Hong Kong people saw their lives steadily improve, they saw the lives of the Chinese in the mainland worsen. PRC Chairman Mao Zedong's misguided policies such as the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) had led to economic catastrophe, and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) had caused political turmoil. During the latter, "China represented a world that was closed and dark and strange," according to Gordon Mathew.¹⁴ What most shocked residents who grew up during that period were "the bodies [that] floated down from China into Hong Kong waters."¹⁵ Increasingly, Hong Kong people began to view themselves as essentially different from those across the border. They began to perceive the Chinese in the mainland as an impoverished and uncultured "Other," stereotyping them as A Chan (阿 灿), a greedy, unruly, impatient, outdated, and poor TV character from the mainland.¹⁶

The growing estrangement between the people of Hong Kong and the Chinese in the mainland during the late sixties and seventies was also due to demographic changes. In 1931, just 32.9 percent of Hong Kong residents were born in Hong Kong; in 1961, it was 47.7 percent; and in 1971, 56.4 percent.¹⁷ Even mainland Chinese historian Liu Shuyong admits that after the 1970s, "The people of Hong Kong are more concerned about the status quo and future of Hong Kong than ever before. Hong Kong has begun to become the living and spiritual home of millions of Hong Kong people."¹⁸ This later generation lived during a "Golden Age" when Hong Kong's economy was growing rapidly and they were upwardly mobile. They created a singular culture known for Cantopop (Cantonese pop music) and churned out world-beating martial arts movies, though these films were rife with Chinese nationalistic themes and sentiments. Hong Kong baby boomers increasingly identified with their place of birth rather than their parents' homeland.

Various scholars have emphasized the life experiences of this later generation for giving birth to a Hong Kongese identity. Leung Kai Chi noted that the new generation widely believed that they were individuals who through their own efforts had taken advantage of the

opportunities afforded them to better their lives.¹⁹ It was an accomplishment that they could take pride in. This was in marked contrast to their counterparts in the mainland who were part of a planned economy where individual efforts went unrecognized and a politicized society where they had to endure upheavals such as the Cultural Revolution. Similarly, Eric Tsui argued that because Hong Kong baby boomers had been spared the disasters in the PRC and were able to lead markedly different lives, they should be considered as members of a separate ethnic group.²⁰

While knowing that they were different from the Chinese in the mainland, it was far from having an exclusively Hong Kongese identity. Hong Kong people continued to share the same nationalistic sentiments as Chinese people elsewhere. It can be argued that such attitudes were an integral part of their identity at the time. Indeed, a substantial proportion of the city's residents exhibited Chinese nationalist sentiments. They supported such causes as having the Chinese language recognized as equal to English and participated in the Defend the Diaoyu Islands Movement to protect China's territorial claims against Japan. The above-mentioned Eric Tsui's explanation for this blended identity was: "Hong Kong people still embrace the ideology of Greater China. In their heart, they knew they were different from people who lived north of the Shenzhen River, but they were still closely tied to China."²¹

The Chinese side of their blended identity was enhanced during the post-Maoist period when Deng Xiaoping became PRC's paramount leader in 1978 and initiated a Reform and Opening-Up policy based on a market economy and world trade. The policy produced unprecedented economic growth, changing the PRC from an underdeveloped country in 1980 into a world power by the early 21st century. Pundits in Hong Kong along with many others believed that the PRC's economic changes would be accompanied by political ones. They thought the PRC was on an inexorable path to becoming a liberal democracy and Hong Kong would be part of an evolving democratic state. Chin Wan characterized this as a "golden age"

between China and Hong Kong.²² The golden age proved to be short-lived, however. It was “interrupted by the Chinese Communist Party’s violent repression of the Tiananmen Square Democratic Movement. Hong Kong people’s rekindled patriotism was severely traumatized.”²³

The Tiananmen Massacre

An unintended consequence of Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms was a pro-democracy movement in spring 1989. Demonstrators, mostly students, demanded the rights of free speech and a free press, and challenged the legitimacy of the country’s one-party Communist political system. Among their other grievances were inflation, corruption, lack of opportunities for students in the now free-wheeling market economy. Hong Kong and the rest of the world were horrified when Deng sent in People’s Liberation Army troops to violently repress the demonstrations on June 4 and 5, 1989, killing and wounding hundreds if not thousands of protesters.

The Tiananmen Massacre outraged the people of Hong Kong. A million of them (close to 20 percent of the population) gathered to protest Deng’s actions.²⁴ Even the pro-Beijing *Wen Wei Po* published an editorial consisting of only the words “With Bitter Hatred” (痛心疾首), which clearly condemned the actions of the Beijing government. Ever since the bloody repression, the Civil Human Rights Front (民間人權陣線), a coalition of 50 human rights and pro-democracy groups, have held annual commemorations of the Tiananmen Massacre. The commemorations were occasions for Hong Kong people to re-examine their personal identity and their relationship with the PRC. Law Wing Sang observed that these commemorations reinforced Chinese nationalism in Hong Kong, making the people there realize they had a profound connection with the PRC. But it was a dissenting nationalism that impelled them to ponder the relationship between Hong Kong and the PRC, and the compatibility of Hong Kong culture with Chinese nationalism.²⁵ Eric Tsui, however,

contended that the commemorations in Hong Kong should not be categorized as Chinese nationalistic ones. Instead, they were about Hong Kong freedom and democracy, and an independent Hong Kong.²⁶

“One Country, Two Systems”

The Tiananmen Massacre made the people of Hong Kong anxious about the 1997 handover of the city to the PRC. It motivated many of them to leave Hong Kong and apply for foreign citizenship. More than 300,000 immigrated to other countries, especially the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and the United States. They had little faith in the Sino-British Joint Declaration (1984), setting the conditions under which Hong Kong was to be transferred to the PRC in 1997. Deng facilitated the negotiations with his “one country, two systems” policy. The policy allowed Hong Kong to remain much as it was, retaining the democratic values and practices it had under British colonial rule combined with the people’s southern Chinese culture. Hong Kong could retain an independent judicial system and police force as well as its education system, Cantonese language and customs. As Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), it was to be governed by local “Chief Executives” who would eventually be elected by “universal suffrage.” The policy led to a brief “Reunion in Democracy” period when many people believed that Hong Kong would be able to develop its democratic system after the handover.²⁷ But as the section below on the Umbrella Movement discusses, the policy proved to be a hollow for PRC officials decided that solely candidates who “love country [China] and Hong Kong” were eligible for the Chief Executive position. This was widely perceived as a prescreening of candidates, which was a violation of the international standard for a free and fair election.

While Deng Xiaoping’s “one country, two systems” policy made the negotiations between China and Britain easier, it unwittingly made nurturing a national Chinese identity more difficult since a prerequisite for national integration invariably include such things as a

common market, tariff zone, currency, legal system, and education system.²⁸ It also gave rise to the idea of “Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong” (港人治港) implicitly affirming the existence of a Hong Kongese identity as well as encouraging discussions about how to define that identity.²⁹ Though the policy implicitly asserted a separate Hong Kongese identity, the early negotiations failed to include Hong Kong people. As John Chuan-tiong Lim pointed out, “Hong Kong people were excluded from the negotiation about the future of Hong Kong in the early 1980s. The absence brought a pre-existing obstacle to national integration and an inexhaustible resource to Hong Kong local protests.”³⁰ Indeed, it provided the people of Hong Kong with a strong rationale for challenging PRC control of their city.

Identity Emergent

Since the historic handover of Hong Kong to the PRC in 1997, there have been repeated protests against the HKSAR government. Some protesters experienced an identity crisis for they began to raise questions about who they were or who they wanted to be – Hong Kongese or Chinese. They had to confront their feelings about Hong Kong being part of the PRC and where their loyalties were, whether they were for separation or unification. They had to examine their Hong Kong values to determine whether the much talked about “freedom and democracy” and the rights associated with them such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and the rule of law were worth defending.

Participation in these protests, large and small, raised people’s consciousness of themselves as Hong Kongese, provided them with a collective experience, and produced a commitment to Hong Kong. This was particularly true of the young who were creating a new historical memory. The first major protest occurred in 2003 to object to HKSAR Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa’s attempt to implement Article 23 of the Basic Law allowing the government to enact laws to “prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People’s Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political

organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies.” Article 23 caused considerable controversy. On July 1, 2003, an estimated 500,000 people participated in a demonstration to oppose it. Under such a massive opposition, Article 23 was withdrawn.

Afterwards, Hong Kong activists organized other, smaller protests. They emphasized the conservation of Hong Kong’s local culture and resisted the HKSAR government’s plans to destroy or rebuild historical sites. They fought against the government’s plan to demolish Lee Tung Street in 2004, sought to preserve Star Ferry and Queen’s piers between 2006 and 2007, and campaigned against the Guangzhou-Hong Kong high-speed rail in 2009.³¹ They saw themselves apart from the Chinese in the mainland, whom they viewed with increasing disdain.

For many young people the identity crisis began to be resolved in 2012 with their resistance to the moral and national education curriculum for Hong Kong schools and students; 2014, to the proposal to reform Hong Kong’s electoral system; and 2019, to the proposal for an extradition law. The street demonstrations and the HKSAR officials’ heavy-handed treatment of demonstrators answered the question of who they were. Gradually an integrated Hong Kongese identity had crystallized. Many of them objected to having their values such as freedom and the rule of law replaced with restrictions and the rule of men, especially the Chinese Communist Party leaders in Beijing; to having their Cantonese culture, with its arts, customs, and civic institutions, displaced by Chinese Communist controlled culture.

Survey research conducted in the city seems to support this. Studies conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong’s Center for Communication and Public Opinion Survey (CCPOS), and the University of Hong Kong’s Public Opinion Program (POP) reveals the

existence of a Hong Kongese identity in a broad sense. CCPOS 2016 research shows that 66.8 percent of the individuals surveyed viewed themselves as Hong Kongese, while 33.2 percent considered themselves Chinese.³² Similarly, the POP June and December 2016 studies show that of those surveyed, 67 and 63.7 percent, respectively, viewed themselves as Hong Kongese.³³ They also revealed that 33 and 36.3 percent, respectively, considered themselves Chinese. A stratification of CCPOS and POP data shows that this Hong Kongese identity was primarily associated with young people.³⁴ More than 80 percent of the younger people (between 18-29 years old) considered themselves Hong Kongese while older people around 60 percent. There was a concomitant drop in people who see themselves as Chinese. This is correlated with people's declining trust of PRC leaders to govern Hong Kong and to manage its society properly.³⁵

The development of a distinct Hong Kongese identity began with the protests aimed principally at compelling the PRC government to honor the "one nation, two systems" policy rather than to demand independence from it. These protests (and those who participated in them) occurred in four acts, to use the lexicon of the theater. The prologue was the protest over the proposed moral and national education curriculum; the first act was the 2014 Umbrella Movement (September 26 to December 15, 2014), also known as the Occupy Central Movement; the second act was the 2019 Uprising (March 15, 2019 to c. 2020), also known as the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Protest; and the epilogue was the prosecution of protesters as well as anyone else deemed a threat to PRC control of Hong Kong, a process that is on-going.

These protests were in a word, transformative. Participation in these protests was a defining experience that changed them into Hong Kongese who identified solely with Hong Kong. Hong Kong people, especially among the young (late Millennials and Generation Z members), developed a Hong Kongese identity that was distinct from a Chinese identity.³⁶ It

was an identity that was built on the traditional value of hard work and the belief that Hong Kong people could overcome adversity, leading to a better life for yourself and your family. This identity was usually understood in socioeconomic terms, that is, having a higher standard of living, but now it was also understood in political terms, that is, attaining universal suffrage. Across the social spectrum, there was a political awakening.

This new Hong Kongese identity was the exact opposite of what the HKSAR authorities wanted but brought about through their heavy-handed response to the demonstrations. Instead of a politically apathetic but economically productive people, the protests served as a catalyst to raise Hong Kong people's political consciousness. Unlike previous generations, the young people born after the 1980s placed greater importance on post-materialistic values such as freedom and democracy over material security. They were in the vanguard to challenge the PRC's plans for the integration of Hong Kong into the national polity. Among them were moderate activists who advocated for an authentic semiautonomous Hong Kong and radical activists who fought for an independent Hong Kong.

Hong Kong people became acutely aware that their way of life -- a composite of Cantonese culture and British politics -- was ending even before 2047, when the city was to be absorbed into the PRC. So, they participated in protests in part to defend themselves and what they came to understand as their homeland, one that was separate from the PRC in every meaningful way. In the process, protesters developed a discrete Hong Kongese identity. Ironically, the protests began as a conservative reformist movement to fulfill the terms of the Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini-constitution, and the spirit of the "one nation, two systems" policy, but ended up as a violent insurgency to liberate Hong Kong from Chinese domination. While the protests failed to do this, they proved that the "one nation, two systems" policy was an illusion.

Truth or Propaganda

How the protests gave rise to this Hong Kongese identity requires a discussion of these social movements as well as the HKSAR government's response to them. The first of these was the 2012 campaign against the proposed moral and national education school curriculum that aroused the antipathy of Hong Kong students and by extension those who supported them. From this protest emerged some of the young leaders of the Umbrella Movement that followed it such as Joshua Wong, Agnes Chow, and Nathan Law. It showed the efficacy of a mass movement to change ill-conceived government policies and it revealed the fate that awaited Hong Kong's students in 2047 when the freedoms and rights under the Basic Law expired.

In 2010, Hong Kong's Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen announced the government planned to introduce a mandatory moral and national education curriculum (aka the Patriotic Education Plan) in the primary schools in 2012 and secondary schools in 2013. Moral and national education (MNE) was designed to encourage support for the Chinese Communist Party in the guise of supporting the PRC and to denounce the partisan politics practiced in the United States. It was to train the young to identify with the PRC (what it called "recognition of identity") and to implicitly undermine campaigns for freedom and democracy, which were associated with the West and the United States in particular. In the PRC, the goal of cultivating a Chinese identity in lieu of an ethnic identity or a local identity was made manifest in 2018 with the issuance of new elementary school textbooks.³⁷ The first lesson for sixth graders learned was that they were Chinese and the second was how to sing a back-to-school song that included the words, "When I grow up, I want to serve the fatherland."³⁸

Tsang did not anticipate the blowback that this educational change would cause. Students were opposed to MNE because they realized from the start that its goal was to "instill communist ideals in students, a love for collectivism, and a 'correct' understanding of

China's history and national sovereignty."³⁹ It was an indoctrination vehicle for promoting Communist propaganda that would "whitewash" history, cancel ugly chapters of Chinese history, and perhaps even rewrite their own local history.

In July 2012, with the publication of a *Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide*, an alliance of 15 organizations was formed to oppose its implementation. Scholarism (學民思潮), organized by Joshua Wong and his fellow secondary-school classmates, were in the vanguard against MNE. On July 29, Scholarism led the alliance in a massive protest march that attracted an estimated 100,000 people, including students and parents. The marchers were met with government intransigence, which in turn led to further demonstrations and a Scholarism led street-petition drive that collected 120,000 signatures. With the beginning of the new school year imminent, Scholarism audaciously decided to hold a sit-in in the plaza in front of the Legislative Council building on August 31 to force the HKSAR government to cancel MNE. They called the occupied area, "Civic Square," a rebuke of the government's effort to erode Hong Kong's civil society. It has been known by that name ever since.

By the end of the tumultuous week (August 30 – September 8, 2012), the "Civic Square" protesters, mostly secondary school students, some of whom were willing to engage in a hunger strike (perhaps in emulation to those who had done so during the Beijing democracy movement in 1989), had attracted an estimated 120,000 supporters. Among the supporters were well-known pan-democrats such as Martin Lee, prominent Human Rights activist and known as the Hong Kong's "Father of Democracy"; Cardinal Joseph Zen, well-known advocate of human rights and religious freedom in the PRC; and Jimmy Lai, longtime pro-democracy advocate and media mogul.⁴⁰ As Joshua Wong has observed, "It was the largest assembly without prior police approval in Hong Kong's history and the highest turnout ever for a rally organised by secondary school students."⁴¹ On September 8, Chief

Executive Leung Chun-ying announced his decision to “temporarily” suspend the MNE curriculum. The protesters had won.

Victory emboldened and empowered the protesters to oppose further government encroachment on their rights as Hong Kong people. Their experience in facing down the HKSAR government imbued them with a collective identity as young “resistance fighters” who had engaged in a shared struggle that transcended their individual lives. It held them in good stead two years later during the Umbrella Movement when they fought for universal suffrage by occupying the central business district and other areas of the city, paralyzing it, holding it hostage, at least for a while. An estimated 85 percent of those active in the Umbrella Movement had previously participated in protests against the MNE and in other social movements.⁴²

Umbrella Movement

The Umbrella Movement began when students protested the August 31, 2014, PRC National People’s Congress’ framework for reforming the Hong Kong electoral system.⁴³ The August 31st decision called for the direct election of the HKSAR Chief Executive but without a civil nomination of the candidates. This was contrary to the wishes of the Hong Kong people. Earlier, in June 2014, Occupy Central with Love and Peace (讓愛與和平佔領中環) had organized an eight-day referendum to ascertain public sentiment on electoral reform proposals for the 2017 election of Hong Kong’s Chief Executive. The referendum offered three options for conducting the Chief Executive election in 2017, with the most progressive being “civil nomination.” Civil nomination allowed individuals to put forward a person to serve as Chief Executive rather than having the National People’s Congress select three candidates, all of whom would serve the interest of the PRC rather than Hong Kong. One-fifth of the registered electorate in Hong Kong turned out for OCLP’s “civic referendum,” proving that the city’s civil society was flourishing.

The August 31st decision meant that the PRC government would handpick the Chief Executive of Hong Kong and the ones eligible were those deemed “patriots,” that is, people whose primary loyalty was to the PRC government (and by extension to the Chinese Communist Party). This was essentially a continuation of the previous practice of having the Chief Executive elected by the PRC’s 1200-member Election Committee and an outright rejection of the proposal to have the Chief Executive selected by universal suffrage, that is, by Hong Kong voters in the 2017 election. From a commonsense perspective, the August 31st decision rigged the election in the PRC government’s favor. From an international law perspective, the decision violated international standards for universal suffrage and was a direct challenge to democratic practices, eliciting international opprobrium.

The PRC government justified this by claiming to have comprehensive jurisdiction over HKSAR and therefore unfettered control over its political affairs, violating the spirit if not the letter of the Basic Law. Hong Kong people believed the August 31st decision was clearly designed to maintain the PRC’s control of Hong Kong, making a mockery of HKSAR’s semiautonomous status under the “one nation, two systems” policy. Thus, most Hong Kong people opposed the decision. The call for allowing people to vote for their own officials (a necessary step toward self-governance) was made abundantly clear with banners throughout the city, especially the giant banner hung on its highest mountain, Lion Rock, reading “I need real universal suffrage.”

Not surprisingly, the students were the first to take umbrage at the decision and took to the streets to protest it. On September 13th, Joshua Wong’s Scholarism organized a demonstration outside of Hong Kong government headquarters; September 22nd, the Hong Kong Federation of Students (香港專上學生聯會) announced a week-long citywide boycott of university classes and organized a mass student protest at the City University of Hong Kong; and September 23rd, the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS) and Scholarism

demonstrated in front of government headquarters. Meanwhile, Scholarism joined HKFS's class boycott, calling on secondary students to withdraw from their classes. On September 26, 2014, Scholarism and HKFS students stormed Civic Square, which the government had enclosed with a 10-foot fence. To reclaim Civic Square, Joshua Wong and other demonstrators scaled the fence. Wong, HKFS's Alex Chow, and Lester Shum, along with 75 other protesters were arrested. Wong, Chow, and Shum became the Umbrella Movement's three most prominent student leaders.

Two days later, on September 28th, Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP) headed by Benny Tai, professor of law; Chan Kin-man, professor of sociology; and Reverend Chu Yiu-ming, Baptist minister, the "Occupy Central Trio," joined the students. They announced the beginning of a non-violent civil disobedience campaign to compel the PRC government to change its decision regarding the election of the Chief Executive. OCLP's civil disobedience campaign on September 28th began with the occupation of the central financial area in the Admiralty District in Hong Kong Island. It then spread to other parts of the city, notably Mongkok, a mainly working-class area, in Kowloon, and Causeway Bay, the city's counterpart to New York's Fifth Avenue, near Admiralty in Hong Kong Island. As many as 100,000 Hong Kong people participated in the occupation of these key areas of the city. The Umbrella Movement was now in full swing.

HKSAR officials perceived the Umbrella Movement as a threat to the city's social order. Opponents to the Movement blamed it on foreign forces (Western governments, NGOs, and agitators) who supposedly exploited young Hong Kong people's idealism and sacrificed Hong Kong people's interest to promote their own agenda under the banner of democracy. Critics such as the well-known tycoon, Li Zhaoji, majority owner of the Henderson Land Development, considered the movement tantamount to a form of "vandalism" that adversely affected the economy, undermined its prosperity, and damaged

the city's reputation, perhaps irreparably. Government authorities and their supporters called for a severe response.⁴⁴

The HKSAR authorities decided to do just that. They used harsh measures against the protesters, from sending armed riot police to assail demonstrators and manhandle them to employing Triads (members of criminal organizations) to assault demonstrators and destroy their encampments. Most commonly, the Hong Kong police force (HKPF) began firing tear gas at peaceful protesters in a futile effort to disperse them and end the occupation. The protesters used umbrellas to protect themselves from the tear gas and pepper spray, giving birth to the name Umbrella Movement, and symbolized the beginning of the social movement for many.⁴⁵ For the protesters, the unusual severity of the HKPF graphically showed how the authorities were perverting their institutions. Once recognized as one of Asia's finest police forces, with an enviable reputation for honesty and impartiality, the HKPF had been transformed into a tool of repression, an extension of the PRC's public security force. The politicization of the HKPF would diminish the legitimacy of and trust in the HKSAR government.

Arguably, it was the HKPF's excessive use of force that stimulated the growth of the Umbrella Movement as more and more people joined the protests with each instance of heavy-handed policing. The violence and intimidation were intended to discourage demonstrations, but it had the opposite effect. If anything, it raised the ire of ordinary people who saw their children being harmed for simply standing up for their rights and joined the demonstrations to support them. This became worst in the 2019 Uprising when there were increased instances of police brutality, which, in turn led to demonstrators taking retaliatory actions.⁴⁶

The Umbrella Movement lasted 79 eventful days, starting on September 28, 2014, with the occupation of the central financial district, until December 15, 2014, when the police

cleared remaining protesters from Causeway Bay, the Movement's last occupied area. While there were leaders of organizations that supported the Movement, there were no leaders of the Movement per se, which in part explains the conflicting agendas and strategies of protesters. While demonstrators came from all over the city and from different socioeconomic strata, it was predominately a student movement. The students would be forever marked by their involvement in the Movement. They came of age during the Movement and saw themselves as part of a cause that was larger than themselves, giving meaning to their lives. While some students engaged in excesses, it was an overwhelmingly non-violent social movement with demonstrators engaging in passive resistance. They have been described as the world's "politest protesters," who being Hong Kong students tried to keep up with their school studies and cleaned up their campsites. Joshua Wong also considered them the "most resourceful, creative and disciplined."⁴⁷ They would stand in marked contrast to those who participated in the 2019 Uprising.

Unlike the opposition to the Moral and National Education curriculum, the Umbrella Movement failed to attain its goals of universal suffrage through rescission of the August 31st decision and the resignation of the Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying, who became the face of the government's repressive actions. HKSAR officials adamantly refused to repeal or revise the August 31st decision and Leung Chun-ying rejected calls for his resignation. Though the Umbrella Movement failed to achieve its objectives, it did raise the political consciousness of protesters and their supporters, particularly about democracy and independence, paving the way for the 2019 Uprising. Perhaps more important in the long run, the Umbrella Movement activists came to the realization that PRC government was just interested in controlling Hong Kong and uninterested in nurturing a real democracy. According to a Breakthrough Institute survey (突破機構), activists had attained a heightened appreciation of the idea of independence and 64 percent of them came to believe that if Hong

Kong (and by extension themselves) was to have a future it would have to be as an independent city-state.⁴⁸

Not surprisingly, this awareness alienated Umbrella Movement activists from the PRC government. It imbued them with a clearer sense of being Hong Kongese in opposition to the Chinese against whom they were fighting. Indeed, it is estimated that more than 81 percent of the Movement activists had developed an exclusively Hong Kongese identity.⁴⁹ For them the Chinese became the enemy who threatened their home and the things they valued.⁵⁰ This was especially true for so-called localists, a few radical activists with a strong native identity.⁵¹ Moreover, these radical activists eschewed peaceful demonstrations, which they considered ineffective, and were willing to take direct action against the authorities as an act of self-liberation and a declaration of their Hong Kongese identity.

To the HKSAR and PRC officials, the localists represented what they feared most -- separatists who wanted an independent Hong Kong.⁵² Acting on the mistaken assumption that those who opposed them were all separatists (or closet separatists) who sought an independent Hong Kong, the authorities treated them as such. By treating everyone as separatists, they became separatists. Failing to make a distinction between the moderates and radicals and unwilling to negotiate with the moderates who demanded the political rights promised them, they gave rise to radicals who desired an independent nation, a previously peripheral idea. The authorities would have been better advised to take a more nuanced approach to those opposed to them.

The aspiration for independence and a willingness to use forceful measures found expression in the 2019 Hong Kong Uprising.⁵³ Localists believed that with a self-governing state it would be possible to have an authentic democracy and to preserve the Hong Kong way of life. They were willing to use any means possible, including violent confrontation, to achieve these ends. Ironically, the government authorities agreed with them, and it is for that

reason they opposed them most of all. The existence of a democratic Hong Kong let alone an independent one threatened an authoritarian PRC. Indeed, it might inspire other parts of the country to aspire to be an independent state where democracy would flourish. Equally ironic, it is because of this understanding that the authorities adamantly refused to make any concessions to the Umbrella Movement protesters, whom they mistakenly considered separatists, unwittingly giving localists, some of whom were separatists, an opportunity to advance their agenda and to expand their ranks. Though their numbers were comparatively few, they had attracted a disproportionate amount of attention from the media and police.⁵⁴ The authorities created an oppositional force that challenged the PRC's sovereignty over Hong Kong and affirmed a local Hong Kongese identity to the exclusion of a national Chinese identity.

In the wake of the failed Umbrella Movement emerged many localist groups such as Hong Kong Indigenous (本土民主前線) and Youngspiration(青年新政).⁵⁵ Hong Kong Indigenous is a radical nativist organization that was established in 2015. It is known for its militancy and for engaging in violent clashes with the HKPF. It opposes the incorporation of Hong Kong into the PRC, advocating autonomy rather than semi-autonomy, and even calls for the city's outright secession. An example of its nativist position is its opposition to the use of Mandarin instead of Cantonese as the key language as well as the language of instruction in Hong Kong schools and to the influx of mainland Chinese into Hong Kong. It sees the coming of Chinese immigrants as the de facto colonization of the city, exploiting its resources, and depriving its people of their identity. It criticizes moderate political rivals for their ineffectual non-violent civil disobedience tactic and advocates a confrontational approach. Later, its spokesman Edward Leung Tin-kei had planned to run for a seat on the Legislative Council and had as his campaign slogan, "Reclaim Hong Kong! Revolution in our Times!" (光復香港，時代革命) But he was disqualified for espousing pro-independence

sentiments and arrested and sentenced to six years in prison for his involvement in the “Fishball Revolution,” which will be discussed below.⁵⁶

Youngspiration is like Hong Kong Indigenous. It too was founded in 2015 and resisted the PRC’s undermining of Hong Kong’s autonomy and defended the city’s interests against the influx of Chinese from the mainland. It argues that Hong Kong is a de facto nation with the right to self-determination.⁵⁷ Its leaders, Sixtus “Baggio” Leung and Yau Wai-ching, were elected to the Legislative Council but denied their seats when they made pro-independence statements such as vowing to serve the “Hong Kong nation” during the oaths of office.

Localist ideology and militancy came together in the Fishball Revolution, named fishball after a popular street food. When HKSAR authorities tried to crackdown on unlicensed street vendors in Mongkok on February 8, 2016, the first day of the Lunar New Year, hundreds of young activists from Hong Kong Indigenous as well as other groups arrived on the scene to shield them from the police. The confrontation between the activists and police degenerated into ten-hour melee, which the *Economist* described as “the worst outbreak of rioting since the 1960s.”⁵⁸ There were injuries on both sides and 61 people were arrested. During the chaos, a policeman fired two warning shots to deter the protesters, an action that contravened police procedures that many people perceived as an escalation of police violence that made the police the outlaws. For many protesters, the Fishball Revolution was “a symbol of inequality, political disenfranchisement and a local identity that is being slowly erased.”⁵⁹ Many Hong Kong people blamed the Fishball Revolution on PRC’s increasing influence on and interference in the city’s society and culture. For many of them, especially the young, the incident portended a dismal future. They needed to do something to avert it and the next major opportunity came nearly five years later with the 2019 Uprising.

2019 Uprising

The 2019 Uprising started with opposition to an extradition bill and evolved into an anti-HKSAR and anti-PRC governments movement, with demands for an investigation of police brutality, amnesty for arrested protesters, and universal suffrage for Hong Kong people. The Uprising was precipitated by the HKSAR government's attempt to enact an extradition bill allowing criminals to be extradited to China for trial and punishment.⁶⁰ People objected because the PRC's criminal justice system was highly suspect, with a long history of prosecuting political dissidents. Their fears were expressed in a demonstrator's sign that said, "Extradiction [sic] to China = Extradiction [sic] to Black Hole."⁶¹ The extradition law would further erode Hong Kong's autonomy guaranteed under the "one country, two systems" policy. Hong Kong's respected judicial system based on the "rule of law" was in danger of being replaced by the "rule of men," meaning the law was whatever the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party decided it was. Since government officials called protesters enemies of the state and had unleashed what has been called a "white terror," insidious, creeping authoritarianism, the people of Hong Kong had every reason to be worried about the enactment of the extradition law.⁶²

Resistance to the extradition law began with a sit-in at government headquarters on March 15, 2019, spreading throughout city and continuing into early 2020. Besides sit-ins and marches, the people of Hong Kong showed their support by participating in various strikes – work stoppages, school walkouts, and business boycotts. The 2019 Uprising was markedly different from the 2014 Umbrella Movement in its size, scope, and strategy; so was the government's reaction to it. The response was noticeably harsher and prolonged. Moreover, the government has continued its repression after the mass demonstrations had ended, launching a purge of anti-government protesters of whatever stripe, intending to prevent future protests from occurring to oppose its efforts to assimilate the people of Hong Kong into PRC society.

The Uprising had demonstrations that were notably larger than those that took place during the earlier Umbrella Movement. The Civil Human Rights Front organized several marches, with its third on June 9th attracting over a million protesters and on June 16th twice that number.⁶³ Clearly, a sizable part of the Hong Kong population turned out to support these pro-democracy rallies. Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, who had succeeded the ineffectual Leung Chun-ying as Hong Kong Chief Executive, withdrew the extradition bill on June 15th and apologized to the public on June 18th, but it was too little too late. By then, the demonstrators had other demands largely stemming from how the police had manhandled the demonstrations. The protesters engaged in actions that enraged government officials, notably besieging the PRC's Central Liaison Office and defacing the country's national emblem over the entrance, and using the slogan, "Hong Kong independence." In doing so, they were challenging the PRC's sovereignty over Hong Kong.

The HKPF's response was to declare the predominately peaceful 2019 Uprising a riot and to call the protesters rioters. The police used severe measures against them that included firing tear gas, which along with the umbrella has become a symbol of Hong Kong demonstrations, kettling demonstrators, and firing bean bags and rubber bullets at them. Perhaps most disturbing, after the June demonstration, the police began firing live rounds to disperse peaceful protesters. The police also coordinated its actions with violent counter-protesters and employed Triad members to intimidate them and suppress their activities. In short, the HKPF used excessive and disproportionate force against demonstrators, violating their own protocols without consequences.

While the Umbrella Movement occupied several key areas of the city, the 2019 Uprising encompassed all eighteen city districts where smaller protests popped up spontaneously. Adopting martial artist Bruce Lee's philosophy of "be water," protesters effectively used social media to initiate and spread information about pro-democracy actions

in different places and to disperse when the police arrived to arrest them. These maneuvers dumbfounded an already frustrated police force increasingly unable to cope with demonstrators. Radical protesters met police violence with violence, hurling bricks and gasoline bombs at them. It became a vicious cycle with protesters using aggressive tactics to compel the government to concede to their demands and the government citing these tactics to justify greater repression.

Perhaps the most moving action against the extradition law, as well as an assertion of a Hong Kongese identity, was the peaceful “Hong Kong Way” campaign on August 23rd when an estimated 200,000 formed a 31-mile human chain stretching from Victoria Harbor across the top of Lion Rock, a dramatic display of community support for the Uprising. For those participating in the 2019 Uprising, Lion Rock had come to symbolize the spirit of the Hong Kong people, namely perseverance and solidarity. Holding these values enabled previous Hong Kong generations to not only overcome trials and tribulations but to improve their standard of living and make Hong Kong one of the world’s most cosmopolitan cities and a world class financial center. Now Hong Kong people believed that it was this spirit and these values that were at the core of their identity and would allow them to attain universal suffrage.

For the PRC government, Lion Rock and the protests symbolized something entirely different. The fact that the “Hong Kong Way” was inspired by the Baltic Way had ominous meaning for the PRC leaders since it had led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and had given rise to the Color Revolutions that had swept Europe 30 years earlier. Zhang Xiaoming, Director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, saw signs of a “Color Revolution” and feared that Hong Kong might become a base for a similar revolution in the PRC.⁶⁴ Given such an understanding, it is little wonder PRC leaders were adamantly opposed to demonstrators’ demands. They believed that the color revolutions were sponsored by Western

nations, most notably the United States with its recent history of engaging in regime change and promoting American-style democracy, rather than the result of internal demands for democracy. They were convinced that American diplomatic agents, the so-called “Black hand,” were responsible for the outbreak of protests. It was an assertion that resonated with the Chinese in the mainland whose history was replete with instances of foreign interference in their internal affairs, and it appealed to their nationalistic sentiments. For that reason, the authorities would make collusion with foreign forces a crime.⁶⁵

To the extent that the HKSAR and PRC officials thought that there were internal causes for the protests, they were economic in nature rather than political. They assumed that what really distressed young protesters were economic inequities between social classes, the lack of gainful employment let alone upward mobility, and the lack of affordable housing in one of world’s highest priced real estate markets. That is why in the aftermath of the failed Umbrella Movement, Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying focused on so-called livelihood issues to the exclusion of electoral reform. It is also why when the 2019 Uprising had ended, his successor Carrie Lam pledged to townhall attendees that her administration would address the housing shortage to assuage the frustrations of the young people of Hong Kong.⁶⁶ They had hoped to replicate the British colonial government’s successful reforms that followed the 1967 Riots.

Leung and Lam’s initiatives may have resonated with PRC leader Xi Jinping’s idea of “common prosperity,” which seeks to narrow the inequalities that threaten to undermine China’s economic progress and the CCP’s legitimacy, but they missed the mark with the people of Hong Kong.⁶⁷ Increasingly, the people of Hong Kong did not trust them to do what they said or to have the competency to carry them out. The protesters, especially the young, were undoubtedly upset about their livelihood, but their main demand for greater freedom and democracy was because they believed that without them none of the other issues would

be solved and there would be no future. At the very least, freedom and democracy would allow them to select leaders in whom they could trust and who would serve their interests rather than Hong Kong's commercial elite and Chinese Communist leaders.

The 2019 protests reached their peak in the fall, with weekly rallies that became increasingly violent and destructive. Things appeared to be spiralling out of control. To contain the demonstrations, the police sought to control Hong Kong's university campuses from whence many radical protesters came. The most dramatic was at Polytechnic University. On November 16, students used the PolyU campus as a base to blockade the Cross Harbor Tunnel, a vital transportation artery, to force the government to hold the postponed district council elections. The police tried to enter the campus but were turned back by the students. Finally, the police laid siege to it, trapping the students. Instead of surrendering, they dug in and fought back. And when they could, they tried to slip through the police cordon, including daring escapes through the sewer system. After the siege had ended, over a 1000 people were arrested.

During the 2019 Uprising, demonstrators made five demands: full withdrawal of the extradition bill, retract the "riot" charges against protesters, release and exoneration of arrested protesters, establish an independent commission to investigate into police misconduct, and resignation of Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, and universal suffrage for the Legislative Council and the chief executive elections. During the demonstrations, the protesters chanted, "Five demands, not one less." HKSAR officials, however, were willing to make just one concession, withdrawal of the extradition law, which was the original demand.

If not for the 2019 pandemic halting all activities, the mass demonstrations might have continued. On the one hand, further demonstrations might have compelled HKSAR authorities to concede to the rest of their demands; on the other hand, the authorities might

have resorted to the use of lethal force to end them. The authorities took advantage of the lull to engage in a city-wide purge of those who had participated in the protests. Using the pretext of national security, the police began arresting anyone associated with the demonstrations, especially those deemed separatists.

Identity Suppressed

By the end of the 2019 Uprising, most young protesters identified themselves as Hong Kongese rather than Chinese. Their Hong Kongese identity was based on resistance to and hostility toward the PRC and Chinese in the mainland.⁶⁸ They used the rallying cry “Hong Kong independence -- the only way out” and in Cantonese sang “Glory to Hong Kong,” which is considered by many to be their unofficial national anthem.⁶⁹

The development of this Hong Kong identity took years to achieve rather than just during the 2019 Uprising. But the fermentation of this identity speeded up in 2012 when Xi Jinping ascended to power to become PRC paramount leader. He sought to tighten his personal control of the CCP and the country, including its peripheral areas such as Xinjiang and Hong Kong. For Xi, Hong Kong protests was just another manifestation of localism that Chinese governments have had to contend with throughout China’s long history. From his perspective, it was necessary to subjugate the city if he was ever to realize his “Chinese Dream” of making the People’s Republic of China a respected as well as a powerful nation. Rather than wait until 2047, when Hong Kong was fully integrated into the PRC, he sought to incorporate it economically sooner through grandiose schemes such as the Greater Bay Area Project and politically through the HKSAR government.

Xi betrayed the Hong Kong people who assumed that they were allowed to be semiautonomous for fifty years rather than being integrated into the PRC in half that time.

He lost the trust of Hong Kong people, but that might not have been something he was much concerned about. Instead, he was more interested in having his role in quelling the 2019 Uprising, which he regarded as a “color revolution,” listed as one of his achievements.⁷⁰

Xi reneged on the original promise because he could. The PRC that he ruled was far stronger and more prosperous than it was when Hong Kong was handed over in 1997, allowing him to be more assertive domestically and internationally. He could treat the city in a more cavalier fashion than his predecessors because Hong Kong’s importance had diminished. Hong Kong was once considered an indispensable commercial center, but no longer. Now there were other places, notably Shanghai, through which the PRC could acquire capital and technology. Hong Kong was no longer the model for future unification with Taiwan through the “one nation, two systems” policy. Now a coercive approach is being used to force Taiwan to reunify with the PRC. So far, without success. What Xi wanted to avoid was for Hong Kong to serve as a model for other places seeking greater autonomy and even independence such as Xinjiang and Tibet.

Ideally, Xi would like to replace the local Hong Kongese identity with a national Chinese identity, changing former adversaries into supporters. Since that is unlikely, he has decided to employ coercive measures to control them rather than try to win them over. According to some reports, this decision can be traced to a 2014 white paper that argued the PRC should exercise “comprehensive jurisdiction” over Hong Kong, and to Xi Jinping’s trip to the city to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its handover to China in July 2017.⁷¹ While there, Xi said threats to the PRC’s sovereignty over the city would not be tolerated and he meant it.

National Security Law Redux

The instrument Xi used to eliminate the threat was the draconian National Security Law (NSL) imposed on the city on June 30, 2020. He managed in one sudden and swift

stroke to achieve what the protesters feared most, the loss of Hong Kong's autonomy.⁷² The NSL was ostensibly to prohibit acts of treason, secession, sedition, subversion, and colluding with foreign forces, with penalties up to life in imprisonment. Its real intent was to provide the legal framework for exploiting Hong Kong's acclaimed legal system for political purposes, namely the prosecution and punishment of the protesters. As Jimmy Lai Chee-ying observed, the enactment of the NSL would "destroy [Hong Kong's] rule of law," which was not just central to the protection of individual human rights but a major pillar of Hong Kongese identity."⁷³

With the enactment of the National Security Law, HKSAR officials sought to eliminate internal dissent forever.⁷⁴ They justified the suppression of their adversaries as simply a matter of upholding the law and maintaining order. Since its passage, the authorities have launched numerous national security investigations. The first case was in 2021, when the city's High Court found Tong Ying-kit guilty of a charge of incitement to secession, that is, advocating the separation of Hong Kong from China, and of engaging in terrorist activities.⁷⁵ According to the High Court, Tong committed a crime when he drove his motorcycle carrying a flag bearing the banned slogan, "Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution in Our Times," into a group of HK police officers, injuring three of them. The slogan was the mantra of the 2019 Uprising and chanted by thousands during demonstrations. Tong was found guilty of intimidation while pursuing a political agenda and sentenced to nine years in prison, a punishment intended deter others from engaging in dissent.

HKSAR authorities have carried out the new NSL retroactively to extirpate pro-democracy followers, separatists, and anyone else they deemed enemies of the state.⁷⁶ This included those who had engaged in peaceful and non-violent demonstrations. By criminalizing protests, the authorities also undermined Hong Kong people's right to free speech and assembly, which were their main means for peaceful dissent, and central to Hong

Kong's civil society, which was supposed to be unencumbered by political pressure. Under the NSL, the authorities arrested 138 pro-democracy activists, former politicians, and journalists. Three-fourths of them for speech-related offenses. The numbers continue to grow.

The August 10, 2020, arrest of Jimmy Lai, and the closing of his prodemocracy newspaper reveals the real purpose of the NSL -- to control the media and its vocal opposition to the HKSAR government.⁷⁷ HKSAR officials considered the newspaper, *Apple Daily*, to be subversive. In its inaugural issue on June 20, 1995, *Apple Daily* declared it was a newspaper for Hong Kong people.⁷⁸ In a 1995 interview, Lai said: "As a newspaper, all we have to do is to love the freedom we have been enjoying. We don't need to hate those who oppose those values. All we need is to love what we love most, which is freedom of speech and freedom of the press."⁷⁹ But, as some journalists noted, "it would be the very act of defining Hong Kong people as everything the mainland was not that would prove to be part of its undoing in later years."⁸⁰ The *Apple Daily* practiced advocacy journalism, supporting the 2014 Umbrella Movement and the 2019 Uprising. To its supporters it was a defender of freedom, its opponents a threat to PRC sovereignty. When the *Apple Daily* closed, it sold a million copies of its last issue, a telling indication of support for the newspaper and what it had stood for among the people of Hong Kong.

Besides arresting dissenters, HKSAR authorities went after civil society organizations that they believed promoted or supported dissent such as the Civil Human Rights Front. The Civil Human Rights Front was accused of committing several crimes:

Many of the illegal assemblies and violent confrontations that took place since the city's handover to Chinese rule were actually incited, planned or organised by the front . . . It has colluded with foreign forces, challenged the red line of the 'one country, two systems' principle and the city's constitutional order and severely poisoned the social atmosphere, which has pushed the city towards the

abyss.⁸¹

High on their list for investigation of violations were educational institutions. They were the source of student protesters and were blamed for encouraging them to protest. Chief Executive Carrie Lam, for instance, accused the 95,000 member Hong Kong Professional Teachers Union (香港教育專業人員協會) of “‘hijacking the education sector’ and sowing ‘anti-government’ and ‘anti-Beijing’ sentiment among students.”⁸² The Professional Teachers Union (PTU) was described as a “malignant tumor” that needed to be excised because of its political activism. During the 2014 Umbrella Movement, the PTU had called for a strike after the police fired tear gas to disperse student demonstrators for the first time on September 28 that year. During the 2019 Uprising, it had encouraged teachers and students to skip classes following clashes between police and protesters, who had taken to the streets over the extradition bill.

The PTU took conciliatory steps to appease its critics that included the creation of a task force to raise awareness of Chinese history and culture, and the elimination of all teaching materials from its website that were considered political. Ultimately, under pressure the PTU decided to disband in the hopes of avoiding being investigated for violating the NSL.

HKSAR officials are seeking to shape higher education in Hong Kong to conform to PRC requirements. In the process, they are encroaching on universities academic freedom and undermining students’ critical thinking skills. They pressured Baptist, Lingnan, and Polytechnic universities to require their undergraduates to study the Beijing-imposed NSL as a prerequisite for graduation.⁸³ Sensitive topics such as Hong Kong independence were no longer to be discussed.⁸⁴ Ugly chapters of PRC history are in the process of being erased, beginning with public remembrances. Hong Kong University officials are planning to remove from campus the “Pillar of Shame” memorializing the Tiananmen Massacre. Activists view

its removal as “an egregious example of an official campaign to make Hong Kong more like mainland China, in the process stripping the city of its freedoms and identity.”⁸⁵ Officials have already banned the annual Tiananmen vigil and closed a museum documenting the crackdown.

Officials would like nothing better than to turn Hong Kong’s Generation Z into China’s Generation N, young nationalists who support the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” a political slogan similar to former President Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again.”⁸⁶ But that seems unlikely given the widespread participation of Generation Z in the 2019 Uprising, so their best hope may be to foster a Chinese identity in the next generation, which the reform of the city’s schools and curriculum is designed to do. But as the previously mentioned survey data indicates, to accomplish this depends on whether Hong Kong people will trust the government and its leaders and whether they will be satisfied with their lives, which is unlikely.⁸⁷

At present, the HKSAR authorities have all but won the struggle against the dissidents through their campaign of intimidation -- instilling fear of prosecution in political activists, media representatives, school officials and other would-be opponents. Hong Kong’s civil society is slowly disappearing and the city is morphing into an ordinary Chinese city. Hong Kong may become a city devoid of dissenters but filled with Chinese loyalists. As one pundit noted, “China wants to keep Hong Kong. They just want to get rid of Hong Kongers.”⁸⁸ The authorities may get their wish. In the past year, nearly 90,000 have emigrated from the city, resulting in a 1.2 percent drop in the population, which is the greatest outflow of people in nearly a half century.

For the present, internally Hong Kongese have found indirect ways to express their identity and to resist the authorities. Pundits noted that the success of Hong Kong athletes at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games “rekindled Hongkongers’ pride in their identity, injecting a

sense of positivity and togetherness after two years of frustration and dejectedness over the city's political turmoil.”⁸⁹ At shopping malls and sports centers, they cheered them on, chanting “We are Hong Kong!” And when the athletes stood on the podium to receive their medals, some Hong Kongese booed when China's national anthem “March of the Volunteers” was played.

Externally, Hong Kongese who escape the police dragnet may continue their opposition from abroad, but émigré resistance has proven to be more of an annoyance than a threat to the PRC. As with earlier groups who have sought to oppose the PRC from abroad, they will spend their time trying to mobilize the support of mainly Western governments to restore Hong Kong's semi-autonomous status and to oppose the PRC's violation of Hong Kong people's human rights. Émigrés will undoubtedly get rhetorical support but little else since Western governments are much more interested in maintaining good relations with the PRC and are reluctant to interfere in its internal affairs, which includes Hong Kong being part of China.

Concluding Comments

Through their involvement in various protest movements to maintain their way of life that had emerged after the 1997 Handover, Hong Kong people, mainly the young, developed a Hong Kongese identity based on their opposition to the People's Republic of China's government. By 2019, Hong Kongese identity was essentially an oppositional identity that emerged from Hong Kong people's engagement in collective actions and putting themselves in harm's way to preserve their culture and their values. Doing this in the company of others imbued them with a sense of solidarity and purpose that transcended their individual lives. It gave them relationships with and empathy for those outside of their immediate friends and family. As such it was a consensual identity based on a shared emotional experience.

The development of this oppositional identity involved a political awakening as well as a political disillusionment. Hong Kong people became acutely aware of who they were and what they valued when those things were in jeopardy. Instead of remaining Hong Kongese, a cosmopolitan people, they were in danger of becoming Chinese, a parochial people they stereotyped as soulless and faceless. Hong Kong people saw such precious values as freedom of speech and assembly, and the rule of law being suppressed and perverted. They feared being assimilated into mainstream PRC culture and losing those qualities that had allowed them to make Hong Kong “Asia’s world city.”

¹ Eric Tsui, *The History of Hong Kong in 12 books* (城邦舊事：十二本書看香港本土史) (Hong Kong: Red Publish, 2014), 36.

² Chin Wan, *On Hong Kong’s adherents of former dynasties* (香港遺民論) (Hong Kong: Subculture, 2013), 124.

³ While not tracing Hong Kongese identity to the Dan people, some scholars do see an analogy between Dan relationship to the Song dynasty and the Hong Kongese relationship to the Chinese Communist government. Hung Ho-Fung, *The Rise of China and the development of Hong Kong Subjectivity* (浮誇中華：打過雄起與香港主體的前世今生) (Hong Kong: Roundtable Publishing, 2012); Leung Kai Chi, *Lesson 1 in Hong Kong, simplified Chinese Version* (香港第一課, 簡體版) (online), 15.
<https://matters.news/@leungkaichihk/%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF%E7%AC%AC%E4%B8%80%E8%AA%B2-%E7%B0%A1%E9%AB%94%E4%BF%AE%E8%A8%82%E5%90%88%E6%9C%AC-zdpuAnfes8gK8YAhWXnmJdkGWstH1AJCUfE3NRJs8vZheffzz>.

⁴ Ma Kit Wai, “Local Identity and Ethnic Conflicts” (本土認同削尖, 族群衝突見血), *Ming Pao*, October 2019.

⁵ Ma Ngok, *Rebellious Community: Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Movement in 2019* (反抗的共同体: 2019 香港反送中运动) (Hong Kong: Rive Gauche Publishing House, 2020), 330.

⁶ John Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005); John Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Chinese version), (Hong Kong: Zhonghua Book Company, 2013).

⁷ Eric Tsui, *The History of Hong Kong in 12 books*, 57-62; Eric Tsui, *A National History of Hong Kong, kindle version* (香港, 鬱躁的家邦：本土觀點的香港源流史) (Xinbei: Left Culture, 2019). Also see Cai Rongfang, *The Hong Kong People’s History of Hong Kong* (香港人之香港史) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2001), 27-29.

⁸ Law Wing Sang, “The Development of Hong Kong Local Consciousness” (香港本土意識的前世今生) in *Reflexion* (思想), 26 (2014): 113-142. Even though it was a Hong Kongese identity confined to the Chinese elite, Eric Tsui, *The History of Hong Kong in 12 Books*, 66-72, argues that it nevertheless laid the foundation for popular localism since the 1970s.

⁹ John M. Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, Chinese version (Hong Kong: Zhonghua Book Company, 2013), 186.

¹⁰ Zhang Jiawei, *The 1967 Riots*, 8.

¹¹ Ibid., 10-12, 201-202.

¹² Whether the reforms after 1967 resulted from the 1967 riots is debatable. See Zhang Jiawei, *The 1967 Riots: A Watershed of Hong Kong History After the World War II* (六七暴動：香港戰後歷史的分水嶺) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 200-201.

¹³ R.A. (Bob) Steele, “The “1967 riots and the making of ‘Hongkongers’ -- a police officer’s account,” *South China Morning Post*, January 24, 2021.
<https://scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/longreads/article/3118476/1967-riots-and-making-hongkongers-police>

¹⁴ Gordon Mathews, “Heunggongyahn: On the Past, Present, and Future of Hong Kong Identity,” *Bulletins of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 29, No. 3(1997): 7.

¹⁵ Ibid. Also see Zhou Yongxin, *Hong Kong People’s Identity and Values* (香港人的身份认同 与价值观) (Hong Kong: Zhonghua Book Company, 2019), 32-33.

¹⁶ Ma Kit Wai, “A Historical Analysis of Television Culture” (電視文化的歷史分析), in Ng Chun Hung and Cheung Chi Wai, eds, *Reading Hong Kong Popular Culture, 1970-2000* (閱讀香港普及文化) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2002), 685-686. Also see Leung Kai Chi, *Lesson 1 in Hong Kong, simplified Chinese Version*, 46.

¹⁷ Liu Shuyong, *A Brief History of Hong Kong* (簡明香港史) (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 2009), 365.

¹⁸ Ibid., 365.

¹⁹ Leung Kai Chi, *Lesson 1 in Hong Kong*, 42.

²⁰ Eric Tsui, *The History of Hong Kong in 12 Books*, 230.

²¹ Eric Tsui, *A National History of Hong Kong, kindle version*, 4993/8821, 5384/8821.

²² Chin Wan, *On the Hong Kong City-State*, 167.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Mathews, “Heunggongyahn,” 7.

²⁵ Law Wing Sang, “The Development of Hong Kong Local Consciousness,” 130-131.

²⁶ Eric Tsui, *A National History of Hong Kong, kindle version*, 5928, 6143-6158/8821.

²⁷ Brian C. H. Fong, “The End of An Era (一个时代的终结),” Inmediahk, August 28, 2014.
<https://www.inmediahk.net/node/1025635>.

²⁸ John Chuan-tiong Lim, “Hong Kongese? Chinese? Identity Between One Country and Two Systems (香港人？中国人？一国与两制拉锯中的身份认同),” *Ming Pao*, August 2, 2007.

²⁹ John Chuan-tiong Lim, “Hong Kongese—A Trial of a New Identity” (香港人—新生身份认同的试炼), Chinathinktanks.org, May 23, 2016. <https://www.chinathinktanks.org.cn/content/detail/id/ruf6bk67>.

³⁰ John Chuan-Tiong Lim, “The formation of Hong Kong community (香港共同体的形塑),” *Ming Pao*, May 13, 2016.

³¹ Eliza W. Y. Lee et al., eds, *Public Policymaking in Hong Kong: Civic Engagement and State-Society Relations in a Semi-Democracy* (London: Routledge, 2013).

³² CCPOS's surveys includes people who identify themselves as "Hong Kongese" and people who identify themselves as "Hong Kongese but also Chinese." According to those surveyed, 24 percent consider themselves Hong Kongese and 42.8 percent Hong Kongese but also Chinese. Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey, Chinese University of Hong Kong, "The Identity and National Identification of Hong Kong People: 1996-2016." <https://ccpos.com.cuhk.edu.hk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/The-Identity-and-National-Identification-of-Hong-Kong-People-ENG.pdf>.

³³ According to the POP survey, 41.9 percent consider themselves Hong Konger and 25.1 percent Hong Konger in China. Public Opinion Program, University of Hong Kong, "People's Ethnic Identity." <https://www.hkpop.hku.hk/chinese/popexpress/ethnic/eidentity/poll/datatables.html>.

³⁴ Anthony Daprian, *City on Fire: The Fight for Hong Kong* (London: Scribe, 2020), pp. 276-277, provides complementary statistical information.

³⁵ For the survey data see <https://www.pori.hk/pop-poll.html>. Also see Li Lanzhi, Shi Lei, and Li Jian'an, "Beyond Zero-Sum Game: Re-analyze Hong Kongers' Identity" (超越零和角度：重新剖析香港人的身份认), Cityu.edu. <https://www.cityu.edu.hk/cshk/files/PolicyPapers/CSHKPP4-CHI.pdf>.

³⁶ Ben Bland, *Generation HK: Seeking Identity in China's Shadow* (Penguin Specials: The Hong Kong Series) (Penguin Australia, 2017) provides an analysis of those who came of age since the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997.

³⁷ Johnny Erling, "Beijing's new textbook: "I am a disciple of Xi Jinping," *China.table*, no. 60 (September 3, 2021). <https://table.media/china/en/opinion/beijings-new-textbooks-i-am-a-disciple-of-xi-jinping/>

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Prior to the emergence of student protesters, political activism was mainly between the pan-democrats who called for incremental democratic reforms based on the Basic Law, Hong Kong's post-1997 constitution, and the pro-government groups that consisted mainly businesspeople with ties to China. The pan-democrats considered themselves Chinese, supported the country though not the Chinese Communist Party dominated government. They believed that the development of Hong Kong's democracy was tied to that of China's, which is why they were avid supporters of the ill-fated 1989 democracy movement that culminated in the Tiananmen Massacre and subsequently sponsored annual June 4th commemorations.

⁴¹ Joshua Wong with Jason Y. Ng, *Unfree Speech: The Threat to Global Democracy and Why We Must Act, Now* (Penguin Australia: Penguin Books, 2020), 33.

⁴² Zheng Wei and Yuan Weixi, eds, *The Era of Social Movements: The Trajectory of Hong Kong* (社运时代: 香港抗争政治的轨迹), Hong Kong: Hong Kong Chinese University Press, xx.

⁴³ Jason Y. Ng, *Umbrellas in Bloom: Hong Kong's Occupy Movement Uncovered* (Hong Kong: Blacksmith Books, 2019) and Kong Tsung-gan, *Umbrella: A Political Tale from Hong Kong* (Pema Press, 2017) provide detailed histories of the Umbrella Movement.

⁴⁴ "李嘉诚李兆基等多名香港商界名人齐反占中 (Many Hong Kong Merchants including Li Ka-shing and Lee Shau-kee Oppose Occupy Central)" *Sina*, October 25, 2014. Li Zhaoji is the pinyin version of Lee Shau-kee. <https://news.sina.com.cn/c/2014-10-25/211931044805.shtml>

⁴⁵ On October 1, 2014, District Councilman Paul Zimmerman, Civic Party, opened a yellow umbrella outside the cocktail reception for the National Day celebration in a show of solidarity with the Occupy Central protesters. Since then, the "Yellow" Umbrella has become the symbol of the movement.

⁴⁶ Police brutality led to such retaliation as the three-day sit-in at the Hong Kong International Airport from August 12-14, 2019, which brought air traffic to a halt for two days.

⁴⁷ Joshua Wong, 49.

⁴⁸ Kuang Jianming, “Hong Kong Consciousness after Umbrella Revolution,” 57; Also see Zheng Wei and Yuan Weixi, eds., *The Era of Social Movements: The Trajectory of Hong Kong* (社运时代: 香港抗争政治的轨迹) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Chinese University Press, 2018), 196-197.

⁴⁹ Zheng Wei, “The Framework and Repertoire of the Burgeoning Social Movements in Hong Kong (香港新兴社运的架构和剧目)” in Zheng Wei and Yuan Weixi, eds, *The Era of Social Movements*, 50-51.

⁵⁰ Kuang Jianming, “Hong Kong Consciousness after Umbrella Revolution,” 71.

⁵¹ Some observers believe that localism was initially a phenomenon arising out of a nativist ideology whose foremost intellectual is Horace Chin Wan-kan, “godfather” of localism. Chin’s popular book *On the Hong Kong City-State* (Hong Kong: Enrich Publishing Limited, 2011) precipitated a public debate on Hong Kong’s autonomy. He argues for a policy of “Hong Kong First” and “Hong Kong-China separation.” However, in doing so, he is not equating Hong Kong with an independent nation but considers it an autonomous region that is part of a Chinese confederation and based on the Basic Law, which is its irrevocable constitution.

⁵² PRC leaders are quite fearful of “separatism” and have tried to eradicate its existence beyond Hong Kong. Recently, they have tried to threaten “separatists” in Taiwan, that is, “diehard” supporters of Taiwan independence, with criminal charges for as long as they live. They and their families are banned from the mainland, Hong Kong, and Macau. Amber Wang and Laura Zhou, “‘Diehard’ supporters of Taiwan independence face mainland China ban and criminal charges for life,” *South China Morning Post*, November 5, 2021.

⁵³ Among them were those who were allegedly planning to use extreme violence. The Hong Kong Police Force have been investigating 17 cases involving the possession or production of explosives during the 2019 Uprising. For example, Louis Lo Yat-sun, a former member of the pro-independence Hong Kong National Front, was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment for possession of explosives with the intent to subvert the government and to push for Hong Kong’s independence. Brian Wong, “Hong Kong protests: pro-independence group member jailed for 12 years over explosives found wanted to ‘create terror’ in city, judge says,” *South China Morning Post*, April 23, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3130813/hong-kong-protests-pro-independence-group-member>

⁵⁴ Ying-ho Kwong, “The Growth of “Localism” in Hong Kong: A New Path to Democracy?”, *China Perspectives* (September 1, 2016): 63-68. <https://journals.openedition.org/chinaperspectives/7057>

⁵⁵ In a city-wide poll, 83 percent of the respondents recognized Hong Kong Indigenous a localist group, followed by Youngspiration and Civic Passion, with 78 and 77 percent, respectively. Chloe Kwan, Stanley Lam, and Tiffany Tsim, “The rise of and rise of localism among Hong Kong youth,” *Hong Kong Free Press*, November 20, 2016. <https://hongkongfp.com/2016/11/20/the-rise-and-rise-of-localism-among-hong-kong-youth/>

⁵⁶ As of this writing, besides disqualifying Legislative Council members, the HKSAR has ousted 55 district councilors and over 250 have been pressured to resign for political reasons. Owen Churchill, “US, Britain and EU voice objections to Hong Kong’s disqualification of opposition district councillors,” *South China Morning Post*, October 22, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/3153223/us-and-britain-voice-objections-hong-kongs-disqualification-opposition>. For the Chinese government’s response, see Tony Cheung, “Western politicians ‘fishing for fame’ by criticising ousting of district councillors, Beijing office in Hong Kong says,” *South China Morning Post*, October 22, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3153377/western-politicians-fishing-fame-criticising-ousting>

⁵⁷ Youngspiration was not the first political party to advocate for an independent Hong Kong. Hong Kong National Party, established in 2016, was the first to do so and has the additional distinction of the being banned because of it. Its goal was nothing less than to end Chinese rule of Hong Kong, take back sovereignty from China to establish a Republic of Hong Kong.

⁵⁸ “Street Violence and Politics: The Fire Monkey Stirs,” *Economist*, February 13, 2016. <https://www.economist.com/china/2016/02/13/street-violence-and-politics>

⁵⁹ Christopher DeWolf, “Fishballs Worth Fighting For: A Brief History of Hong Kong Hawkers,” *Zolima City Mag*, June 10, 2016. <https://zolimacitymag.com/fishballs-worth-fighting-for-a-brief-history-of-hong-kong-street-hawkers/>

⁶⁰ Anthony Daprian, *City on Fire: The Fight for Hong Kong* (London: Scribe, 2020) provides a history of the 2019 Uprising.

⁶¹ See picture “March of one million, 9 June 2019” in Anthony Daprian, *City on Fire: The Fight for Hong Kong* (London: Scribe, 2020), between pages 150-151.

⁶² Editorial Board, “Opinion: The ‘white terror’ is sweeping through Hong Kong,” *Washington Post*, August 6, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/08/06/white-terror-is-sweeping-through-hong-kong/>; Yan Sham-Shackelton, “What is white terror? The slipping of norms in Hong Kong’s flawed democracy,” *Hong Kong Free Press*, September 2, 2019. <https://hongkongfp.com/2019/09/02/democracies-dictatorships-ideal-political-system/>

⁶³ Gary Cheung and Tony Cheung, “Organiser behind many of Hong Kong’s biggest protests to disband but police crackdown against group ‘won’t stop’”, *South China Morning Post*, August 13, 2021. <https://scmp.com/news/hongkong/politics/article/3144979/hong-kong-activistsunions-vow-gh-t-ahead-expected-break>

⁶⁴ “Zhang Xiaoming Quote Deng Xiaoping: Chinese Government will Intervene if Hong Kong Is in Turmoil” (張曉明引鄧小平：港動亂會干預), *Ming Pao*, August 8, 2019. <http://www.mingpaocanada.com/VAN/htm/News/20190808/HK-gaa1.htm?m=0> Zhang Xiaoming led the Chinese government’s opposition to Hong Kong’s democratic movement and was later demoted to deputy director as a consequence of the 2019 Uprising. In August 2020, he was among the Chinese officials sanctioned by the US Treasury Department for undermining Hong Kong’s autonomy.

⁶⁵ This crime is detailed in Article 29 of the new National Security Law. Anne Marie Roantree and Greg Torode, James Pomfret, “EXCLUSIVE China’s attacks on ‘foreign forces’ threaten Hong Kong’s global standing - top US envoy,” *Reuters*, June 11, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/exclusive-chinas-attacks-foreign-forces-threaten-hong-kongs-global-standing-top-2021-06-11/>

⁶⁶ Cannix Yau, “Hong Kong leader defends efforts to ease housing woes as she holds first town hall meeting in 2 years,” *South China Morning Post*, August 22, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3145947/hong-kong-leader-defends-efforts-ease-housing-woes-she> Carrie Lam’s promise to ease housing shortages may prove meaningless since it is estimated that it would take as long 20 years to meet the demand. Jack Tsang and Joyce Ng, “Hong Kong lawmakers demand government shorten 20-year projection to meet public housing target” *South China Morning Post*, October 20, 2021. <https://scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3152988/hong-kong-minister-says-it-could-take-20-years-government>

⁶⁷ Kevin Yao, “Explainer: What is China’s ‘common prosperity’ drive and why does it matter?” *Reuters*, September 2, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/what-is-chinas-common-prosperity-drive-why-does-it-matter-2021-09-02/>

⁶⁸ Ma Ngok, *Rebellious Community*, 330-331.

⁶⁹ For the official lyrics to “Glory to Hong Kong” go to <https://genius.com/Thomas-dgx-yhl-glory-to-hong-kong-official-lyrics-lyrics>.

⁷⁰ William Zheng, “China’s Communist Party backs Xi Jinping’s firm hand on Hong Kong and Taiwan,” *South China Morning Post*, November 12, 2021. <https://scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3155755/chinascommunist-party-backs-xi-jinpings-rm-hand-hong-kong>

⁷¹ Chris Buckley, Vivian Wang and Austin Ramzy, “Crossing the Red Line: Behind China’s

Takeover of Hong Kong,” *New York Times*, October 11, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/28/world/asia/china-hong-kong-security-law.html>

⁷² Sonny Shiu-hing Lo, “Hong Kong in 2020: National Security Law and Truncated Autonomy,” *Asian Survey* (2021) 61 (1): 34–42. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2021.61.1.34>

⁷³ Agence France-Presse, “Pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai arrested under Hong Kong security law,” *Hong Kong Free Press*, August 10, 2020. <https://hongkongfp.com/2020/08/10/breaking-pro-democracy-media-mogul-jimmy-lai-arrested-under-hong-kong-security-law-sources/>

⁷⁴ This US Department considers the NSL “a political weapon to silence dissenting voices in Hong Kong and suppress protected rights and fundamental freedoms.” Kari Loo Lindberg, “Hong Kong jails activist for 9 years in first security trial,” *Bloomberg*, July 30, 2021. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-30/hong-kong-jails-activist-for-nine-years-in-first-security-trial?mpid=BBD073021_BIZ&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_term=210730&utm_campaign=bloombergdaily.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Jeffie Lam, “Hong Kong protests: as Civil Human Rights Front folds, police and Beijing warn legal troubles far from over,” *South China Morning Post*, August 15, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3145093/hong-kong-protests-civil-human-rights-front-confirms-it>. The effort to extirpate “threats” to its security includes censoring recent films that “glorified” or “incited” protests, and old films that promoted democracy or denigrated the Chinese government. Since this undermines Hong Kong’s vibrant film industry, which has produced world-class Cantonese cinema, it is implicitly an assault on Hong Kong culture. And culture is, of course, an integral part of identity. Agence France-Presse in Hong Kong, “Hong Kong to scour old films for subversive themes under new censorship law,” *Guardian*, August 25, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/25/hong-kong-to-scour-old-films-for-subversive-themes-under-new-censorship-law>

⁷⁷ Lai was charged with conspiring and colluding with foreign forces to endanger the security of the nation, a crime punishable by life in prison. Lai’s “crime” was his alleged financial support of the Umbrella Movement and its call for political reform. He had been previously arrested for illegal assembly for his participation in the 2019 Uprising.

⁷⁸ Chris Lau and Gary Cheung, “Defender of freedoms or defiler of national sovereignty? What exactly was Hong Kong’s Apple Daily?” *South China Morning Post*, June 24, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3138491/defender-freedoms-or-defiler-national-sovereignty-what>

⁷⁹ Ng Kang-chung and Chris Lau, “Hong Kong’s forbidden fruit and the national security law: the rise and fall of Apple Daily and its founder,” *South China Morning Post*, June 24, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3138502/hong-kongs-forbidden-fruit-and-national-security-law-rise>

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Jeffie Lam, “Hong Kong protests: as Civil Human Rights Front folds, police and Beijing warn legal troubles far from over,” *South China Morning Post*, August 15, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3145093/hong-kong-protests-civil-human-rights-front-confirms-it>

⁸² Chan Ho-him and Ng Kang-chung, “Hong Kong’s biggest teachers’ union drops political bombshell, announcing its disbandment after authorities cut ties,” *South China Morning Post*, August 10, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3144518/hong-kongs-biggest-teachers-union-set-disband-after>; Tony Cheung and Lillian Cheng, “Hong Kong’s Professional Teachers’ Union saw no choice but to disband after Beijing emissaries warned it could no longer exist,” *South China Morning Post*, August 12, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3144834/hong-kongs-professional-teachers-union-saw-no-choice>

⁸³ Chan Ho-him, “At least 3 Hong Kong universities make national security education compulsory for students,” *South China Morning Post*, July 26, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/3142592/hong-kong-baptist-university-makes-national-security>

⁸⁴ Jessie Lau, “Hong Kong’s National Security Law creeps into education sector,” *The Diplomat*, October 14, 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/hong-kongs-national-security-law-creeps-into-education-sector/>; Phila Siu, “National security law: Hong Kong teachers should ‘take police advice’ to help them comply with Beijing-decreed legislation in class,” *South China Morning Post*, April 3, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/3128233/national-security-law-hong-kong-teachers-should-take>

⁸⁵ Shibani Mahtani, Hong Kong’s ‘Pillar of Shame’ sculpture for Tiananmen victims faces removal,” *Washington Post*, October 13, 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/hongkong-pillar-shame-tiananmen/2021/10/13/2a897036-2b0a-11ec-b17d-985c186de338_story.html

⁸⁶ Jun Mai and Amber Wang, “China’s Generation N: the young nationalists who have Beijing’s back,” *South China Morning Post*, August 29, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3146785/chinas-generation-n-young-nationalists-who-have-beijings-back>

⁸⁷ See notes 29 and 30.

⁸⁸ Keith B. Richburg, “There are two Hong Kongs. China is betting one can survive without the other,” *Washington Post*, September 5, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/09/05/hong-kong-two-universes-china-national-security-law/>

⁸⁹ Lilian Cheng, “Tokyo Olympic Games successes rekindle Hong Kong’s pride in identity, but anti-mainland China sentiment comes through too,” *South China Morning Post*, August 1, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3143377/tokyo-olympic-games-successes-rekindle-hong-kongs-pride>