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國際學碩士學位論文

**A Study on the Construction and Reconstruction of Hong
Kong Identity: Focusing on the Post-80's Generation**

**홍콩의 정체성에 관한 구성과 재구성 연구:
80後 세대를 중심으로**

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서울대학교 國際大學院
國際學科 國際地域學專攻
譚麗灼

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A thesis presented by

by

Tam, Lai-Cheuk

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Academic Advisor: Professor Jeong Jong Ho

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Graduate School of International Studies

International Area Studies

Tam Lai Cheuk

Confirming the master's thesis written by Tam Lai Cheuk

August 2013

Chair Cho, Youg-Nam (Seal)

Vice Chair Eun, Ki-Soo (Seal)

Examiner Jeong, Jong-Ho (Seal)

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지도교수 정 종 호

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국제학과 지역학전공

Tam Lai Cheuk

Tam Lai Cheuk의 석사 학위논문을 인준함

위 원 장 _____ 조 영 남 _____ (인)

부 위 원 장 _____ 은 기 수 _____ (인)

위 원 _____ 정 종 호 _____ (인)

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ABSTRACT

A study on the Construction and Reconstruction of Hong Kong Identity: Focusing on the Post-80's Generation

Tam, Lai-Cheuk
International Area Studies
Graduate School of International Studies
Seoul National University

Recent statistics on Hong Kong identity have suggested that people in Hong Kong are still very sensitive to the contrastive difference between the authoritarian PRC state and the free and pluralistic Hong Kong. More than one and a half decade after Hong Kong's sovereignty return to her motherland China, Hong Kong people are still alert of their ethnic identity of being Hong Kongers. How and why this happens in such manner has not yet been well explained by theoretical approaches. This thesis seeks to give a normative model of analysis to the construction and reconstruction of Hong Kong identity by utilizing the framework from three distinctive yet competing theories--the primordialist theory, instrumentalist theory and the constructionist theory. Research objectives of this thesis are first, to find out the ethnic identity formation, when and how this identity came to evolve in Hong Kong. Second, it tries to find out the reasons why Hong Kong people still maintain a strong sense of Hong Kong identity even more than a decade after her sovereignty handover to China since 1997. Third, it attempts to raise attention of the identity issues of the post-80s generation in Hong Kong.

Issues like why this generation shows a stronger sense of Hong Kong identity than the other generations, what their perceptions of PRC are, etc, will be explored by a hypothetical study.

Fourth, this study would like to explore the relationships between having experience of living in mainland China/born in China and the strength of Hong Kong identity when compared to those who do not have such experience. Last but not least, this study seeks to find out whether Hong Kong identity and national identity of Chinese are mutually exclusive. Results of the research have suggested the special relationships between having experience of living in mainland China/born in mainland China and the strength of Hong Kong identity.

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Keywords: Hong Kong ethnic identity, primordialist theory, instrumentalist theory,
constructionist theory, post-80s generation

Student ID.: 2011-24208

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Research Objectives and Significance of Study.....	3
3. Research Methodology.....	5
4. Thesis outline.....	6
CHAPTER II- LITERATURE REVIEWS.....	9
1. Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity.....	9
2. Three Major Ethnicity Theories.....	10
a) The Primordialist Theory.....	10
b) The Instrumentalist Theory.....	15
c) The Constructionist Theory.....	19
3. Literature Review on Hong Kong Identity.....	21
a) A General View.....	21
b) Waves of Migration and Identity.....	27
CHAPTER III - INTERPRETATIONS BY THE THREE THEORIES.....	33
1. The Primordialist Interpretation.....	33
2. The Instrumentalist Interpretation.....	37
3. The Constructionist Interpretation.....	43
CHAPTER IV- EVOLVEMENT OF THE POST-80S GENERATION AND THEIR HONG KONG IDENTITY.....	47
1. Post-80s Generation (80 後).....	47
2. Hypotheses.....	50
3. Questionnaire Design and Interviews.....	54
4. Findings from Existing Research.....	57
5. Results and Analysis of Data.....	62
CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION.....	71
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	74
APPENDIX	76

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

"Something unique has been emerging from Hong Kong's cities: it is Hong Kong Man. He is go-getting and highly competitive, tough for survival, quick-thinking and flexible. He wears western clothes, speaks English or expects his children to do so, drinks western alcohol, has sophisticated tastes in cars and household gadgetry, and expects life to provide a constant stream of excitement and new openings. But he is not British or western (merely westernized). At the same time, he is not Chinese in the same way that the citizens of the People's Republic of China are Chinese. Almost alone in the Chinese world Hong Kong has not adopted Putonghua (Mandarin) as the lingua franca: instead Cantonese holds sway".¹

The famous quote that Hugh Baker wrote in 1984 gave a very fundamental concept of what a 'Hong Kong Man' (香港人) is like. Studies of Hong Kong Identity that came after Baker mainly focused on when this Hong Kong identity emerged. These studies tended to conclude that it was the closure of the border with China following the communist revolution in 1949 that gave Hong Kong a heightened sense of distinctiveness.² Waves of migration in the early years also has an unalienable role in the construction of Hong Kong identity as they gave this land the fundamental population whose later generations reinforce this distinctive identity. Starting from the colonial period to the return of sovereignty to China, the Hong Kong identity does not fade, it persists sternly rather than being weakened, diminished or replaced.

The year 2013 marks the 16th anniversary of Hong Kong's sovereignty return to her motherland China under the rhetoric principle of "One Country, Two Systems (一國兩制)". It

¹ Hugh D. R. Baker , " Life in the Cities: The Emergence of Hong Kong Man," *The China Quarterly* Volume 95 (1983): 478-479

² Grant Evans and Maria Tam, *Hong Kong The Anthropology of a Chinese Metropolis*, (North America: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 3

seems natural to expect that as China grows stronger, the proportion of Hong Kong people who identify themselves as "Chinese" rather than "Hong Konger/Hong Kong Citizen" will also increase accordingly. On the contrary, time proves the contrary as quite a number of statistics found the opposite. For this reason, the trend of the highly complex identity issues of Hong Kong after the sovereignty return to China as well as the long vacant issue about the identity of Hong Kong people raises concerns not only to local residents but also to the People's Republic of China as well as scholars from different fields. The identity of Hong Kong people, how this may affect Hong Kong-mainland China relationship, whether this will lead Hong Kong to a real autonomy of governance after the expiration of the 50-year "One Country Two System", etc, are very complex yet forward-influential areas of study.

Statistics from the two renowned universities in Hong Kong, which will be explored in detail later, possibly have suggested that the people in Hong Kong are still very sensitive to the contrastive difference between the authoritarian PRC state and the free and pluralistic Hong Kong society. It seems that the wider this contrast and crave for the maintenance of such in terms of independence/democracy demands grows, the more it reinforces the identity of being Hong Kongers and the harder it is for Hong Kong people to perceive a national sense as citizens of the current PRC. More ironically still, it seems that the better the environment for Hong Kong people to develop their long lost national identity is, the more they are alert of their ethnic identity of being a Hong Konger. How and why this happens in such manner has

not yet so far been well explained through theoretical approaches. With the help of the three distinctive yet competing theories of ethnicity, the primordialist theory, instrumentalist theory and the constructionist theory, this thesis attempts to give a normative model of analysis to such unanswered questions.

2. Research Objectives and Significance of Study

The research objectives of this thesis are multifold. First, it seeks to find out the ethnic identity formation, when and how this identity came to evolve in Hong Kong. Second, it tries to find out the reasons why Hong Kong people still maintain a strong sense of Hong Kong identity even more than a decade after her sovereignty handover to China since 1997. Third, it attempts to raise attention of the identity issues of the post-80s generation in Hong Kong. Issues like why this generation shows a stronger sense of Hong Kong identity than the other generations, what their perceptions of PRC are, etc, will be explored by a hypothetical study. Fourth, this study would like to explore the relationships between having experience of living in mainland China/born in China and the strength of Hong Kong identity when compared to those who do not have such experience. Last but not least, this study seeks to find out whether Hong Kong identity and national identity of Chinese are mutually exclusive. To achieve the above objectives, this thesis begins with a careful theoretical analysis, then go on to complement such analysis by a small-scale fieldwork research. Apart from that, defects of former studies on the identity issue of Hong Kong will be explored so that this thesis will

avoid repeating the same footsteps and try adapting newer perspectives in the reinterpretation of Hong Kong identity. Former studies generally focused on the historical chronologies in the interpretation of Hong Kong identity. They presented the emergence of Hong Kong Identity as one of the historical events and concluded it as a natural process which started with the Communist gaining power in China in 1949.³ However, detailed theoretical discussion and analysis on how and why such ethnic identity emerges, persists and reconstructs, why there are discrepancies between the expectation of the decline of Hong Kong identity after Hong Kong's sovereignty return and the fact which says otherwise, etc, are lacking. Moreover, studies on the newly evolved phenomenon of the post-80s generation and their identity perception, which are of great importance in understanding the emergence and reemergence of Hong Kong identity, is still rarely seen.

Seeing such defects, this thesis aims to bridge this gap by building a theories-led analytical framework for the interpretation of the formation of Hong Kong identity. Upon the above analysis, this study will also highlight how Hong Kong identity has been experienced, emerged and persisted, especially in the post-80s generation, by a fieldwork research. By the above two approaches, this study differentiates itself from other former studies as it will be able to first, answer questions like why the ethnic identity in Hong Kong emerges and persists and second, give reasonable grounds to predict the future construction and reconstruction of

³ Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2007), 180.

such an ethnic identity. These aspects are found missed in previous studies. Therefore, by doing this, this thesis hopes to give a breakthrough in the analysis of ethnic identity in order to bring in new perspectives to future related studies.

3. Research Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative research methodology are used in this study.

Quantitative research has been done with existing data obtained from the following,

- A. the Public Opinion Program (POP) of the University of Hong Kong,⁴
- B. the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey (CCPOS) of the Chinese University of Hong Kong,⁵
- C. other reliable sources from the Government Information Center of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and

Qualitative research is the author's own fieldwork and interviews made to the post-80s generations in Hong Kong. Besides, a questionnaire named "Identity of the Post-80s' Ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong" has been made for the hypothetical study of this thesis. Since the study on the identity of the post-80s generation is relatively new, not much resource from

⁴ Hong Kong University, *The Public Opinion Program (POP) of the University of Hong Kong*, <http://hkupop.hku.hk> (accessed 2012. 10. 2)

This is a consecutive research project on "National Issues" since 1992.

⁵ Chinese University of Hong Kong, *Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey of Chinese University of Hong Kong*, <http://www.com.cuhk.edu.hk/ccpos/en/index.html> (accessed Nov. 15, 2012)

This is a consecutive research project titled "The Identity and National Identification of Hong Kong People" since 1996.

previous study can be traced for as reference. This fieldwork research attempts to gain some primary data through interviewing the post-80s generation in Hong Kong in order to conduct a hypothetical analysis. Different aspects of identity will be explored through this research, for example, the relationship between being born in China and strength of Hong Kong identity, experience of having lived in China and strength of Hong Kong identity, etc. Data are carefully collected by a well-designed questionnaire, which asks interviewees about their perception of nationalistic pride, patriotic pride and xenophobic pride to China as well as their own perception to the strength and importance of different identities. Discussion based on the collected data by the framework of the three ethnicity theories and implications of such will be made at the end of the study.

4. Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of 5 chapters.

Chapter 1 is an introduction which spreads out the research objectives, significance of the study, research methodology and thesis outline.

Chapter 2 is a comprehensive literature review on the term ethnic identity and Hong Kong identity. It also details the three major theories of ethnic identity formation: the primordialist theory, the instrumentalist theory and the constructionist theory. It then deals with the history of Hong Kong identity formation with a focus on the demographic characteristics brought up by the different waves of migration inflow from China since 1940s.

It also details the sequential events of the evolvement of Hong Kong identity and the different generations of the Hong-Kong-born-and-raised with a focus on the evolvement of the young and influential post-80s generation.

Chapter 3 applies the analytical framework derived from the three ethnicity theories in the reinterpretation of Hong Kong Identity. Defects of each analysis will also be discussed.

Chapter 4 highlights the evolvement of the post-80s generation and their perception of identity(ies). It goes deep to see the emergence and reemergence of Hong Kong identity through the experience of this generation by the fieldwork research and hypothetical study. It also tries to give a forethought insight in mentioning the relationships between having lived in mainland China and the strength of ethnic identity of being a Hong Konger as well as the strength of national identity to the motherland China. This chapter hypothesizes the relationship of having lived in mainland China and identity of Hong Kong people. The hypothesis is to be proved by the fieldwork research and interviews to the post-80s Hong Kong permanent residents. It details the rationales behind the setting of questionnaire using the ideas of the three ethnic theories abovementioned. It then goes on to examine the implications and findings from the interviews done to the post-80s generation in Hong Kong.

Being the last chapter, chapter 5 serves to give a conclusion to all the research process of this thesis, the findings of the ethnic identity in Hong Kong in general, the ethnic identity issue of the post-80s generation, etc. It also objectively admits the limitations of this research

and gives a humble direction for any further research on this issue in the future.

CHAPTER II- LITERATURE REVIEWS

1. Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

The use of the terms ethnicity and ethnic identity in social science are generally interchangeable. While ethnicity may refer to the general phenomenon of how people view their ethnic identity, ethnic identity is the term which people use when they talk about their ethnicity.

The term "ethnicity" derives from the Greek word *ethnos*, meaning people, but also stock, multitude, crowd or nation. Till the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the concept of ethnicity was often linked to those of race, people and nation, and traces of this ambiguity still remain today.⁶ In sociology and anthropology, ethnicity refers to particular forms of group membership. The concept of ethnicity implies three factors: (1) membership of a group, either from personal choice or as an external imposition, but which nonetheless implies the existence of an "us" and a "them", and therefore the concept of "other"; (2) the search for a common identity on the part of the group members; and (3) the perception on the part of other groups of more or less coherent stereotypes ascribed to the ethnic group in question.⁷

Various theories on ethnicity have been developed since the beginning of the 20th century. Among these theories, three have been considered most representative and influential

⁶ Guido Bolaffi et al., *Dictionary of Race, Ethnicity and Culture* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2003), 94

⁷ *Ibid.*, 94

at different times. They are primordialist theory, instrumentalist theory and constructionist theory, which will be read in details later. Before going to the details of each theory, the approximate time of their coming to existence should first be specifically addressed because this sequential existence gives heavy weight on how each theory were formed and the reasons why each of them are criticized.⁸

2. Three Major Ethnicity Theories

a) The Primordialist Theory

In a strict sense, the primordialist theory is not exactly a theory, it is a description of a phenomenon. It brought up people's attention to the concept of ethnicity after the end of the Second World War when people realized that the end of the Second World War also meant the ending of feudalism and the beginning of modernization. However, the more the world modernized with the rises of new states, the more people got confused with the basic ethnic identity questions such as "who they are", "where they came from", "why they should belong", etc.

It was at this time that the notion of primordialism came into existence by scholars like Edward Shils(1957) and Clifford Geertz(1963). The term "primordialist" was first mentioned by the latter in his 1963 article "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States".⁹ According to this article, the essential characteristics of each

⁸ Philip Q. Yang, *Ethnic Studies: Issues and Approaches* (New York: State of New York Press, 2000), 42-47

⁹ Clifford Geertz, ed., *Old societies and new states: the quest for modernity in Asia and Africa.* (New-York/N.Y./USA: The Free Press of Glencoe & London/UK 1963) 105-157

human group are defined by certain archetypal primordial features. In his article, Geertz described that there are two powerful, interdependent, distinct and opposed motives that the peoples of the new states¹⁰ desire: "the desire to be recognized as responsible agents whose wishes, acts, hopes, and opinions "matter" and the desire to build an efficient, dynamic modern state". The aims of such desires are twofold, one is to be noticed and the other practical, as Geertz put it:

"...The one aim is to be noticed: it is a search for an identity, and a demand that the identity be publicly acknowledged as having import, a social assertion of the self as "being somebody in the world." The other aim is practical: it is a demand for progress, for a rising standard of living, more effective political order, greater social justice, and beyond that of "playing a part in the larger arena of world politics," of "exercising influence among the nations..."¹¹

The two motives abovementioned are very intimately related as they make negotiable claims to personal significance. Peoples' sense of self is bound up in the gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, religion or tradition, which are in a natural diversity as the substantial content of their individuality.¹² The nature of this can be explained by the concept of a primordial attachment which stems from the "givens", and this "givenness" in turn stems from "being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices."¹³ The congruities of blood, speech, custom, etc, themselves have an ineffable and overpowering coerciveness

¹⁰ After World War Two, numerous of new states evolved. Ethnic theories at this time used state as a background for their writings.

¹¹ Ibid., 107

¹² Ibid., 108

¹³ Ibid., 108

which in turn forms primordial bonds. The strength of these primordial bonds and the types of them, according to Geertz, "differ from person to person, from society to society, and from time to time"¹⁴. This implies that nearly every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural or spiritual affinity than from social interaction.

Besides inborn givness, Geertz also mentioned about "fellow feeling" which is a feeling of a corporate sentiment of oneness which makes those who are charged with it feel that they are kith and kin. According to Geertz, this is a double-edged-feeling, a feeling that binds together those who have it so strongly and a feeling which severs people from those who are not of their kind. The existence of this feeling, according to Geertz, is the foundation of a stable and democratic state and this fellow feeling is what a state is built on and a state is said to be stable if it is a unilingual state but unstable if it is a multilingual state.¹⁵

To put it in a nutshell, Geertz clearly defined ethnicity as a primordial sentiment, not because ethnicity is just a natural, biologically based identity, but because ethnicity is a historically important cultural identity. Moreover, the notion that ethnicity is a "natural" primordial tie seems to have tied to the following assumptions:

1. A group identity is an indispensable aspect of a person's personal identity: a person's individual identity is a complex composite formed by the quantity and quality of that person's

¹⁴ Ibid., 108

¹⁵ Ibid., 109

social experiences, especially those interpersonal relationships that are long lasting and intimate. This is what has been referred to as "primary group" ties.¹⁶

2. Ethnic attachments are a natural kind of group affiliation. Ethnic or racial ties are "natural" insofar as they possess "ineffable" significance rooted in ties of blood.

On the other hand, primordial sentiments derive their strength from two quite non-mysterious forces: one where people still live in the "primordial communities", two primordial sentiments tend to command people's loyalties under circumstances that threaten the existence, autonomy, and independence of their communities, and even then they must often compete with other sentiments such as a nationalism, which is not exclusively defined in terms of prior ethnic identities.¹⁷

Although the primordialist theory gained wide appreciation and attention in the 1960s, it started receiving quite an amount of critics around a decade later. One of the main critics was from Eller, Jack and Reed Coughlan.¹⁸ According to the article, all the three distinct ideas of the concept of primordialism give underived and socially-unconstructed emotions that are unanalysable and overpowering and coercive yet varying. The main critics of the primordialist ideas are as follow:

(1) Primordial identities or attachments are 'given' and underived prior to all experience or

¹⁶ Ibid., 109

¹⁷ Ibid., 119

¹⁸ Jack David Eller and Reed M. Coughlan "The poverty of primordialism: The demystification of ethnic attachments", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 16, No. 2 (1993): 183-202

interaction. However all interaction is carried out within the primordial realities. Moreover, primordial attachments highlight 'natural' and even 'spiritual', rather than sociological, they have no social source.

(2) Primordial sentiments are seen as 'ineffable', overpowering, and coercive. However, they cannot be analyzed in relation to social interaction. Geertz allows that the strength and type of bond may vary but offers neither notion of how such a natural and underived phenomenon could vary nor any language to describe such variation.

(3) Primordialism is essentially a question of emotion or affect. Geertz speaks of primordial 'attachments', 'sentiments', and 'bonds'. However, the concept has most often to do with feelings. These feelings make primordialism more than a mere interest theory, and primordial identities are qualitatively different from other kinds of identities (e.g. class identities).¹⁹

Other criticisms to primordialism mention that the theory does not recognize the capacity humans have in intervening their own lives. It is also doubted whether symbolic elements such as language, history, traditions, etc, are transmissible to the next generation. Some critics further argue that colonization, intermarriage and frequent migration may undermine the view of ethnic identity as static and discrete.²⁰

Regardless of the amount and content of critics, there has not been any single one critic that can completely overthrow the concept of primordialism. The primordialist theory,

¹⁹ Eller and Coughlan. "The poverty of primordialism: The demystification of ethnic attachments", 187

²⁰ John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, ed., *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

therefore till today, is still seen as an insightful ethnic theory.

b) The Instrumentalist Theory

Unlike the primordialist theory which focuses on history, givenness, kinship, etc, the instrumentalist theory focuses more on the present and the interests. Instrumentalists see ethnicity as a political phenomenon and analyze ethnicity in terms of ethnic groups who actively pursue their collective interests.

According to Barth Fredrik, ethnicity is related to interests and provides one basis for mobilizing in pursuit or defence of interest, which is sometimes referred to as ethnic politics.

²¹ Barth does not see ethnic groups as developers of cultural structures, but as coolly calculating operators intent on promoting their own material interests. Common values are important not because they contribute to an ethnic identity, but because they necessitate the formation of roles and interactions. Barth mentioned that it is the boundary that defines the group.²² He highlights the concept of continuously changing "borders" within which the principles that structure a group operate. Ethnicity is a matter of the social organization of culture difference and ethnic identity is a matter of self-ascription and ascription by others in the social interaction.²³ The cultural features are used to evaluate and judge the actions of ethnic co-members, implying that they see themselves as "playing the same game". Barth sees

²¹ Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 1969), 11-38

²² Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15

²³ *Ibid.*, 13

ethnic groups as culture-bearing units in which (1) the nature of continuity in time of such units, and (2) the locus of the factors which determine the form of the units.²⁴ If a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signaling membership and exclusion which in turn give boundaries to each ethnic group. Such boundaries are not merely or necessarily based on the exclusive territories but by continual expression and validation, which needs to be analyzed.²⁵ The identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgments.²⁶ It thus entails the assumption that the two are fundamentally 'playing the same game'. Ethnic groups only persist as significant units if they imply marked difference in behavior, i.e. persisting cultural differences. Moreover, because identities are signaled as well as embraced, new forms of behavior will tend to be dichotomized

Another famous scholar of the theory, Geoff Emberling emphasizes the issue of migration in ethnic group formation that a new ethnic identity often develops when a state conquers or otherwise encompasses previously independent groups.²⁷ The newly formed ethnic groups in these situations thus arise on the margins of expanding states. A similar situation arises when people migrate, or are forced to move, from one state to another or from

²⁴ Ibid., 14

²⁵ Ibid., 15

²⁶ Ibid., 15

²⁷ Geoff Emberling, "Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives", *Journal of Archaeological Research*, Volume.5, No. 4(1997), 295-344

one area within a large state or empire to another. In the long run, if a number of people in similar situations choose to emphasize a particular ethnic identity, whether as outsiders or insiders, the significance of that ethnic identity in structuring political and economic process will increase. Cohen Abner supports this saying by mentioning that "when men from one cultural group migrate to town they retain a great deal of their culture even without necessarily forming a corporate political group. They thus constitute an ethnic category which often becomes an ethnic group, as a result of increasing interaction and communication among its members".²⁸ Cohen Abner further mentions that Ethnicity is often associated with migrancy, and is taken to be a stage in the adaptation of the group to its new environment and in the final assimilation of its members within the new society.²⁹ A group adjusts to the new situation by reorganizing its own traditional customs, or by developing new customs under traditional symbols, using traditional norms and ideologies to enhance its distinctiveness within the contemporary situation. As time goes on the group will become more and more distinct and a group of second- or third-generation migrants will preserve their distinctiveness and make extensive use of the symbolism of their endoculture, then the likelihood that within the contemporary situation they have become an interest group is very strong. In time, class division will be so deep that two subcultures, with different styles of life, will develop. Ethnicity therefore, has normally resulted either from immigration, or of free settlers and

²⁸ Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 4

²⁹ Abner Cohen, ed, *Urban Ethnicity* (London, New York, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington: Tavistock Publications, 1974)

refugees between region san nations or from the incorporation of previously independent social units into one new unit of larger scale.³⁰

According to Cohen Abner, the problem of "belonging" is a constant in the modern world, where belonging to an ethnic group is no longer defined in religious and cultural terms, but is structured around political and economic factors.³¹ Cohen reviews concepts similar to that of Barth's. He sees ethnicity as a cultural phenomenon and the term ethnicity itself refers to the degree of conformity by members of the collectivity to the shared norms in the course of social interaction. And ethnic group can be defined as a collectivity of people who (a) share some patterns of normative behaviors and (b) from a part of a larger population, interacting with people from other collectivity within the framework of a social system. Barth follows an essentially similar line, seeing ethnic categories as classifying persons in terms of their 'basic most general identity' as determined by their origins and backgrounds.³² Therefore, ethnicity tends to be conceived by this school of thoughts as an essentially innate predisposition. People act as the members of ethnic categories because they identify themselves, and are sometimes also identified by others, with these ethnic categories.

Critics of this theory mainly focus on the overemphasis of the manipulative and tactical use of ethnicity. They argue that choices made by humans are not always rational, and "goods" desired by them cannot always be measured in terms of wealth, power and status.

³⁰ Cohen, ed, *Urban Ethnicity*, 353

³¹ *Ibid.*, xi

³² *Ibid.*, xii

Furthermore, affective and psychological characteristics, such as emotional fulfillment, psychological satisfaction and social attachment, which may be deemed important by different individuals, are not considered by this theory.³³

c) The Constructionist Theory

The constructionist theory sees the formation of ethnic identity as the result of a historical process in which identity formations are seen as the "reciprocal fluxion". History is important but it is abided by the social relation and the understanding of history can be changed. Therefore, the formation and perception of ethnic identity is continuously constructed and reconstructed by the changing interpretation of the history to different people in different times at different places.³⁴ Constructivism can be seen as a combination of as well as an inversion to the logic of the primordialists and instrumentalists. Some constructionists see similarities among primordialism and instrumentalism in a way that the two are complementing to one another. For example, John Comaroff had included instrumentalism as a form of constructivism. He identified four constructionists: realist, cultural, political and radical historicist.³⁵ Besides, constructionists agree with primordialists that social past is important to the construction of one's identity. However, the way they understand historical pasts is different from that of the primordialists'. They believe that people's understanding to their

³³ Hutchinson and Smith, ed. *Ethnicity*

³⁴ Paris Yeros(ed), *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Africa: Constructivists Reflections and Contemporary Politics* (Great Britain: Macmillan Press, 1999), 23

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6

historical past changes along with time and space. As people can constantly interpret and reinterpret their own pasts, these interpretations and reinterpretations are believed to be heavily intertwined with their own experiences in social interactions and historical happenings. Therefore, constructionists also see ethnicity as the product of human agency, a creative social act through which such commonalities as speech code, cultural practice, ecological adaptation, and political organization become woven into a consciousness of shared identity.³⁶ Paris Yeros also puts forward similar description to constructionism as he mentions that the emphasis on social construction is an ontological one which stands opposed to primordial imaginings of the world.³⁷ To Ronald R. Atkinson, ethnicity is referred to as ideology and consciousness- acquires deference as intellectual object which corresponds to its transparent impact in the real world of empirical events. He argues that primordialism can, in a sense, help 'complete' instrumentalism. Like instrumentalists, constructivists also concern interests. Constructionists believe that all interests are constructed. What is pertinent to the political analysis of ethnicity is to investigate how identities and interests are constructed in contexts of uneven power relations.³⁸

Benedict Richard Anderson's concept of imagined communities serves as a very important input for the theory of constructivism, in which he gives a new perspective in defining nation which is an imagined political community--imagined as both inherently

³⁶ Ibid., 4

³⁷ Ibid., 1

³⁸ Ibid., 15-44

limited and sovereign.³⁹ It is imagined because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion".⁴⁰ According to Anderson, all communities are imagined and these imagined communities differ only "by the style in which they are imagined".⁴¹ The new concept of "community" thus allows for the possibility of employing the concept of "imagining" for ethnicity as well. Constructionists always refer to Anderson's concept of "imagined community" as the "departure" for constructionism.⁴²

3. Literature Review on Hong Kong Identity

a) A General View

Although identity issue in Hong Kong has been a hot issue attracting wide discussions from locals to international scholars in the recent decades, it was definitely not the case in few decades further back then, especially in the early phase of colonial governance. There seemed to be no nationalistic imperative for Hong Kong people that one should belong to a nation for a long time. The massive political upheavals and movements in China in the mid to late 1900s were largely barred from entering into the colony in which the people relatively enjoyed a politically peaceful live and economic rise. The colonial government at the time also chose to discourage all forms of political participation and sought no political commitment from its

³⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso Press, 1983)

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6

⁴¹ Yeros Paris (ed), *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Africa*, 3

⁴² *Ibid.*, 3

subjects in order to prevent disturbance from their own way of governance until the late 1960s when the colonial government started implementing the "localizing" scheme which promoted "Locals Governance" (以華治華) and "non Chinese non British" (非中非英) identity to Hong Kong people. Though under the colonial governance, Hong Kong had its own administrative identity, the colonial government of Hong Kong enjoyed a wide degree of political and economic autonomy. A 1985 survey showed that three-fifths of Hong Kong's Chinese population preferred to see themselves as Hong Kongese rather than Chinese.⁴³

The colonial government's effort to create a local Hong Kong identity was seen most in adapting Hong Kong people to a more western administrative paradigm. The tackling of corruption and promoting democracy were most influential acts in achieving a remarkable level of political credibility of Hong Kong as well as breaking away from the Chinese-style governance. Governor MacLehose is best known for his fight against government corruption.⁴⁴ According to Elsie Tu "without Governor MacLehose it is certain that corruption would have continued, because the law enforcement body, the police, were themselves corrupt, making it impossible to take legal action against that heinous crime that was destroying our community."⁴⁵ In 1974, the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) was established by MacLehose and led by Jack Cater. The establishment of ICAC

⁴³ John M. Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 170

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 172

⁴⁵ Elsie Tu, *Colonial Hong Kong in the Eyes of Elsie Tu* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), 8, 15, 63.

was a remarkable feat in fighting against corruption in the 1970s. As what Goodstadt says "Almost overnight, the principle of honest administration had become part of the civil service culture. The community now looked to a professional organization... to police the colonial administration and enforce zero tolerance of corruption...In a colonial and non-democratic political environment, that change of image was an invaluable source of credibility."⁴⁶

After United Nation's admission of PRC in 1971, the UN General Assembly removed Hong Kong and Macau from its list of colonial territories and Britain ended its practice of sending annual reports on Hong Kong to the UN secretary general. Hong Kong therefore changed from a crown colony to a dependent territory, the colonial secretary became the chief secretary.⁴⁷ The Sino-British negotiation on Hong Kong's future began in 1982 ended in 1984 with its ratification in 1985. The Sino-British Joint Declaration concluded that all parts of Hong Kong would revert to Chinese rule on July 1, 1997 while Britain would administer Hong Kong until then. Hong Kong after the handover would be administer under the principle of "One Country Two system", which the then British prime minister Margaret Thatcher described as "an ingenious idea" and Deng Xiaoping called "a product of dialectical Marxism and historical materialism", for 50 years. Under such system, Hong Kong would become a Special Administrative Region (SAR) with a high level of autonomy, except in defense ad foreign affairs. Hong Kong would remain a free port, with no taxes paid to China. Hong Kong

⁴⁶ Goodstadt, *Uneasy Partner: The Conflict between Public Interest and Private Profit in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong University Press, 2005), 140, 148, 151

⁴⁷ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 176

people would continue to preserve the rights and freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion. Troops of the Chinese People's Liberation Army troops would station in Hong Kong but would not interfere in internal SAR affairs. However, local reactions to the Joint Declaration were mixed.⁴⁸ Before 1981, Hong Kong born citizen were allowed to choose either the British nationality or Chinese Nationality according to their own will once they reached 18 years old and need to acquire an identity card. This policy once gave Hong Kong people a strong sense of dual nationality until the passing of the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Act of 1981, which demoted more than 2.5 million Hong Kong Chinese entitled to carry British passports to "British Dependent Territory citizens" and excluded them from the right of abode in Britain.⁴⁹ The implication of this Act was clear. The British government knew that 1997 would see the end of British Hong Kong.⁵⁰ To some Hong Kong citizens, this was an act of betrayal. While some people still wished the continuation of British rule, some took Chinese citizenships and gave up their British awards and titles. Having weaker national ties with the Britain as well as with China, Hong Kong developed an indigenous cultural identity, affiliated with its own territory and its own way of life which was gradually known at a common set of collective values, largely the legacy of Chinese values hybridized with the British imposed rituals and norms. It had no obvious nationalistic component, nor did it have a political affiliation with any sovereign state: neither with Britain nor with mainland China.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 181

⁴⁹ Ibid., 177

⁵⁰ Kevin Rafferty, *City on the Rocks: Hong Kong's Uncertain Future* (London: Viking, 1989), 389.

In the early 1990s, British government started promoting democracy in Hong Kong so as to pave the way for Hong Kong's independence and democratic governance after the reunification with mainland China. Because of this, the drafting of the Basic Law, a law which Hong Kong would abide to after the handover in 1997, became decisive in determining how much democratic freedom Hong Kong could enjoy after the handover. A political scientist James Tang's comment gave an idea on how messy and unclear the settlement of the Joint Declaration was. He says the Joint Declaration did not settle the Sino-British differences, rather, it became "the source of these differences".⁵¹ The most controversial topic was about the phrase "constituted by election". Though both Britain and China agreed that by 1997, the Legislative Council would be "constituted by election", their interpretation was quite different. The Chinese side claimed that they were unaware of the ramifications of the British definition of the term "election".⁵² For this reason, storm of criticisms were received from Hong Kong people upon the consultation period of the Basic Law drafts. Together with the outburst of the Tiananmen Square Massacre in June 1989, Hong Kong people's distrust was thrown up high and emigration rate was the highest at this point.

On the other hand, under the Open Door Policy of PRC, the interaction between the Hong Kong and China were observed with various vested interests, blood relation and business ties. It was also from around this time onward that the government of the Hong Kong

⁵¹ Judith M. Brown and Rosemary Goot, eds., *Hong Kong's Transitions, 1842-1997* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 150

⁵² Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 185

Special Administrative Region(HKSAR) as well as the media started actively branded new identities for Hong Kong, including Asia's world city, leading finance center, and international hub for trade and business, etc.

Seeing the importance and need of tracing Hong Kong people's understanding and perception of their own identity, two systematic public research centers run by two renowned universities in Hong Kong, the Public Opinion Program (POP) of the University of Hong Kong and the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Survey (CCPOS) of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, have been systematically conducting research surveys through random telephone interviews with permanent residents in Hong Kong about Hong Kong people's ethnic identity (both identity and national identity) since 1996 and 1997 respectively. Their latest surveys have both shown shocking results. A latest research (Nov 2012) "*The Identity and National Identification of Hong Kong People*" released by the CCPOS shows that:

1. The percentage of interviewees identifying themselves as only "Chinese" is only 12.6% (a sharp drop from 1997's 32.1%) which is the lowest record in the past 16 years since 1996.
2. The percentage of interviewees identifying themselves as "Hong Kong Citizen" and "Hong Kong Citizen but also Chinese" (the priority of identifying as Hong Kong Citizens) jumps to 65.2%, the highest record in the past 16 years since 1996.

3. The percentage of post-80s answering they are “Hong Kong Citizen” and “Hong Kong Citizen but also Chinese” (the priority of identifying as Hong Kong Citizens) is 81.4% (21% higher than non post-80s).

Similarly, the latest data released in June 2012 by POP shows that:

1. Hong Kong people's identification with "Hong Kong citizens" has reached a 10-year high (45.6%), while that of "Chinese citizens" has dropped to a 12-year low (18.6%).
2. Hong Kong people's perception of identity is stronger as "Hong Kong citizens" than "Members of the Chinese Race" than "Asians" than "Chinese citizens" than "Global Citizens" and identification with "Citizens of the PRC" comes the last of the list.

In a nutshell, since 1997, the proportion of Hong Kong people who identify themselves as “Chinese” does not mark any linear increase while their recognition of their identity as “Hongkonger” remains significantly high. However, it is worth noted that there has been a trend that more Hong Kong people claim a mixed identity, seeing themselves as both Hongkongers and Chinese (regardless of priorities). As shown in the results, after 15 years since the handover of Hong Kong to PRC, not only has not the national identity of people in Hong Kong to China improved, it seems to have slightly worsened.

b) Waves of Migration and Identity

Apart from the historical and statistical approaches, some scholars see the close linkage of identity formation in Hong Kong and migration waves from mainland China in the colonial

period. Hong Kong has undergone a huge change in her population within a few decades because of the migration waves. When Britain took possession of Hong Kong in 1841, Hong Kong was home to fewer than 7,500 Chinese residents, mostly fishermen and farmers.⁵³ Hong Kong's population escalated shortly after the end of the Japanese Occupation in 1945 when population was about 600,000 to over 2 millions in 1950, 4 millions in 1970 and 7.14 millions in 2012.⁵⁴ The above statistics tell that the topic of identity formation should never be separated from the demographic characteristics and changes in Hong Kong history. In the following part, the intertwining relationship of migration waves and the emergence of the Hong Kong identity will be explored.

In the 19th century, there were little restrictions on the movement of people between the mainland China and Hong Kong. "When the small area of the Kowloon Peninsula on the other side of the harbour was added to the colony in 1860 it contained only 10 villages with a total population of just over 5,000 people".⁵⁵ There was no long-settled indigenous population with established rights in the area. The British and the Chinese who came to plant their houses and commercial buildings were both migrants. "In nineteenth century Hong Kong the European and Chinese communities formed separate entities, so that two separate

⁵³ Geoffrey Robley Sayer, *Hong Kong, 1841-1862: Birth Adolescence and Coming of Age* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1937), Appendix II

⁵⁴ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Census and Statistics Department, *Hong Kong Statistics, 1945-2012*

⁵⁵ Baker, "Life in the Cities: The Emergence of Hong Kong Man," 469

parallel systems of social stratification can be identified."⁵⁶ These separate entities were best illustrated by the residential discreteness with clear social stratification in. The European and Chinese lived with their own communities in their own areas without much disturbance by or interaction with one another. The former lived on the island side of the Victoria Harbour, the Hong Kong Island, where residents brought their own cultures, styles of architects, etc, and thus seen as more western and modern. The latter lived on the other side of the Victoria Harbour, the Kowloon Peninsula which was still largely undeveloped then. One could tell that life styles on the different sides of the harbor were as different as life styles of two different countries. According to the 1904 Hill District Reservation Ordinance, Chinese were even effectively excluded from living on the Peak. Because of this discreteness, Chinese in Hong Kong to a great extent did not mingle with the Europeans and still lived with their own Chinese Communities. The Peking Treaty signed between the Qing government and the British government in 1898 allowed Chinese people free travel to or from Hong Kong. Many people travelled for business opportunities but not so many chose to stay for good. The formation of new identity of the island was out of imagination at that time.

The dual social system soon became less apparent in the 20th century and was not more in practice after the end of the Japanese occupation. Though social stratification still appeared as it did everywhere, Chinese were able to live in the Hong Kong Island by then.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 470

Hong Kong's population was about 600,000 at the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945. This population escalated around 5 times in ten years to 2.5 millions in 1955, of whom more than 97 percent were Chinese. But this population was by no mean a homogeneous group. They came from different parts of China, spoke a variety of Chinese dialects, many of them were even mutually unintelligible. They came with them their own social customs and stayed with groups who came from the same province, spoke the same dialect, carried the same last names, etc. These people coming from different parts of China have different ideas about what it meant to be "Chinese". The perception of Chinese slowly merged since the late 1950s when a quota system was imposed to reduce the number of migrants from Taiwan and provinces other than Guangdong. From then on, only people from the bordering Guangdong province continued to enjoy freedom of movement to Hong Kong and formed a large proportion of Guangdong migrants in Hong Kong. These early migration flows can be conceptualized as a circular rural-urban migration with people moving between their native villages in China and the labor market in Hong Kong. These people "are free of cloying community ties, are spatially and socially mobile, they are people who find themselves in Hong Kong with few of the supports with which a long-established community seduces the allegiance of its children, people with little to lose and much to gain".⁵⁷

The second wave of Chinese immigrants was pushed to Hong Kong by wide spread

⁵⁷ Ibid., 470

starvation in the PRC, following Mao Tse-tung's ill-conceived agricultural policies of the Great Leap Forward in 1958. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, around 27 million people died of famine on the mainland because of the nationwide People's Commune Movement launched by Mao and his government.

The 1970s marked the third large migration inflow from China. The government responded to the growing number of Chinese immigrants by toughening regulations on legal immigration in 1974. At the same time a new instrument, the so-called "touch base" policy, was implemented. The policy provided a channel through which illegal entrants could legalize their stay. If they managed to evade immigration control in border areas and reached the urban areas of Hong Kong they were granted permission to stay. Even with the tightening of immigration control, migration kept flowing into the border of Hong Kong. For example, in 1973, 56,000 illegal immigrants entered Hong Kong and thereby managed to stay as permanent residents.

This new inflow coincided with an economic open door policy adopted in China in 1978 and the Chinese government's subsequent relaxation of mobility control over Chinese citizens. Most restrictions on population movement and household registration imposed by the Chinese government for almost three decades were lifted. This in turn encouraged a great number of rural residents to rush into urban areas, including neighboring Hong Kong, in search of better opportunities.

The benevolent immigration policy was scrapped in October 1980. Under the amended Immigration Ordinance, all people in Hong Kong aged fifteen or above had to carry their identity cards with them at all times and produce it upon demand for police checking. When caught, illegal immigrants were prosecuted, imprisoned, and then repatriated.

CHAPTER III - INTERPRETATIONS BY THE THREE THEORIES

After exploring the three ethnic theories as well as the general view about Hong Kong identity, this chapter applies the frameworks set forth by the three distinctive ethnicity theories, the primordialist theory, instrumentalist theory and constructionist theory in interpreting Hong Kong identity.

1. The Primordialist Interpretation

From the perspective of the primordialists, recognizing identity formation is relatively simple and direct as it focuses on the essential characteristics that are defined by primordial features like blood, race, language, locality, religion and tradition. These natural primordial ties are given by birth and reinforced by social interaction.

According to the primordialist view, those who were born in China should have a non-doubtable Chinese identity. This was especially true in the early phases of migration. Migrants shared the same "givenness" of social existence. Though they might have come from different provinces of China and spoke different dialects, they were tied by their blood and race as Chinese. They believed in similar values, looked similar to one another, wore same style of clothing, etc. Though they might speak different dialects, they were able to communicate with one another by the official language of China - Mandarin. Therefore, ineffable primordial sentiments, fellow feeling, belongingness or "we-ness" that were rooted in a common origin or source were shared.

Group identity as well as individual identity were also reinforced by one's social experience and prolonged social interaction among the Chinese community in Hong Kong. Many of the migrants during the early migration period were alone, either because they had lost their families or because they had left them behind in China, and a lone man or woman found it difficult to make a start in the new society.⁵⁸ This gave an attractive response to the creation of kinship bonds with those who have shared kinship and shared district of origin. Many associations were formed to welcome people of a certain surnames or people who had the shared origins. These associations created a meeting ground where common interests and strength could be forged. A distinctiveness of linguistic sub-culture was also seen with the rising number of such associations. While Cantonese became a dominant language in Hong Kong due to the advantage and relative easiness of migration of people from Guangdong province, it not only created a big group of people who spoke Cantonese, it also created chances for the clubbing together of non-Cantonese speakers. These language groups become more cohesive and attractive ties among members of each group. For example, part of the North Point district in Hong Kong Island was often called "little Shanghai" because of the large number of Shanghai settlers found there. Similarly, Chinese communities were gradually formed in Hong Kong as migrants decided to stay and raise their families here. As their families and network developed, they slowly changed their role from migrants to the

⁵⁸ Baker , " Life in the Cities: The Emergence of Hong Kong Man," 471

settled Chinese living in Hong Kong.

According to the primordialist view, a new identity was formed in Hong Kong beginning with the coming of age of the significant number of Hong Kong born. In 1931, only one third of the Hong Kong population was born locally. This number rose to almost half of the population in 1961.⁵⁹ In 1971, over 95 percent of those under 15 were born in Hong Kong. In 1996, about two thirds of Hong Kong's residents were born in the territory. Since the early 1970s, the generation of locally born people developed a distinctive Hong Kong identity and culture in contrast to the Mainland Chinese identity. Cantonese replaced Chinese Putonghua(Mandarin) as the lingua franca in Hong Kong.

The first generation of Hong Kong-born-and-raised was born with the givenness of received tradition of Hong Kong. Quoting from Geertz, it was the givenness that

"stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following a particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves."⁶⁰

This generation in Hong Kong received education locally in which the medium of instruction was both Cantonese and English. They operated outside their homes in Cantonese with their teachers, friends or any one in street no matter what languages or dialects they used with their parents at home. They grew up with the emergence of popular culture which

⁵⁹ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong Population and Housing Census, 1961

⁶⁰ Geertz, ed., *Old societies and new states*, 11

liveliness, vibrancy and readiness to borrow from other cultures also modified the language. Gradually, the Cantonese spoken in Hong Kong became recognizably different from the Cantonese then in use in Guangdong.⁶¹ This new Hong Kong culture was not only embraced by the younger generations but was also accepted by the older generations across the social classes. Television, radio and popular music, etc, helped to break the barriers and promote this new popular culture. The growth of the popularity of popular culture went hand in hand with the reinforcement of the Hong Kong identity of this generation. While the older generations still regard their "root" was in China, this Hong Kong-born generation believed their root was in Hong Kong rather than in China. Primordial community of Hong Kongers was formed with this generation and strengthened with the coming of age of the second and third local born generations.

Primordialists view that the ethnic attachment in the primordial community commands people's loyalty especially under circumstances when the community's existence, autonomy and independence were under threat.⁶² They understand the persistence of Hong Kong identity even after the sovereignty return as such. The sovereignty return under the principle of 'One Country Two System' generated uncertainty of Hong Kong's future. Hong Kong people might see this as a threat to the existence, autonomy and independence of Hong Kong

⁶¹Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 193

⁶² Geertz, ed., *Old societies and new states*, 107

which it used to enjoy.

However, there are few areas that the primordialist view cannot explain while interpreting ethnicity. First, it fails to explain the identity formation of those early migrants from China. Though they were born in China, they ended up settling in Hong Kong which was a colonial place and therefore adapted a new colonial identity. This differed from what the primordialists view might have predicted. Second, it fails to explain the loss of certain primordial ties from one generation to another like why certain dialects were not transmissible to the next generation. Some Hong Kong born generation spoke Cantonese as their mother language at home and at school without knowing any other Chinese dialects though their parents or grandparents might have come from China and spoke certain dialects. Third, it also fails to explain why early migrants who were born in China do not form primordial ties or sense of 'we-ness' with those new migrants especially those who came to Hong Kong after the 1980s. Why do they experience cultural difference in just a few decades?

2. The Instrumentalist Interpretation

From the perspective of the instrumentalists, ethnicity is analyzed in terms of ethnic groups which are defined by boundaries and are always in search of certain interests.⁶³ They believe that ethnic groups are developed as people migrate. Moreover, it is the self-ascription and ascription by others during social interaction that defines one a group's ethnic identity.

⁶³ Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15

Members of ethnic groups judge whether a person belongs to a group or not by their cultural features which are unique to every ethnic groups.

For this reason, instrumentalists see Hong Kong identity as an ethnic group formed as people migrate from mainland China.

The residential discreteness or in the other word, the geographical separation of the Vitoria harbor though gave a boundary to the Chinese and European people living in Hong Kong during the early colonial period, it did not create new ethnic group. Chinese from different parts of China came to Hong Kong for opportunities because of the free broader. Different interest groups among these Chinese were therefore formed according to their pursuing interests, dialects, place of origins, etc. Some business was staffed by one language group only and some trades had become associated with districts of origin as well. However, these various language groups of Chinese, though formed naturally after migration from mainland China, did not continue to the concrete formation of distinctive ethnic groups. Ethnic groups seen at this time might include Hakkas, Guangdong, Shianhai, Chaozhou, etc, but they were not new ethnic groups.

A new ethnic group of Hong Konger was formed when people started treating Hong Kong as their base and the river separating Hong Kong and mainland China as the boundary. The differences and distinctiveness seen among the abovementioned Chinese ethnic groups were being eroded in a relatively fast period of time. These people first came to Hong Kong

for opportunities due to the difficult situation in Mainland China and thus naturally stuck with their language groups. However, as time went by, when these once migrants decided to stay in Hong Kong for good, they realized that they could no longer stay only with their own language groups as the majority of migrants were from the Guangzhou and Pearl River estuary area where standard Cantonese and its sub-dialects were spoken. Chinese language education and mass communication like television, radio, etc, used Cantonese as the medium of communication. Because of this, old and new immigrants, even those who did not speak Cantonese when they first came, were slowly merged into the Cantonese-speaking environment. Moreover, in order to maximize opportunities and interests, one needed to adapt to the environment by speaking Cantonese and adapting Cantonese cultures. As a result, though different language groups or associations of shared district of origins still exist, their importance was greatly reduced. Instead of different language groups, a strong Cantonese speaking/cultural group emerged. Besides Cantonese, living under the governance of the British government, the settled men in Hong Kong also realized the importance of learning English. These waves of migrants might not have chosen to learn English themselves, but they generally expected their children to do so and saw good English ability as a key to success. From this point of view, boundary had been formed by the difference of language between mainland China, where Putonghua was used for mass communication, and Hong Kong, where Cantonese was used for mass communication and English as a tool for success.

A distinctive boundary was clearly formed between Hong Kong and mainland China then with the restrictions on movement especially since the 1980s. Mainland Chinese had to officially go through immigration application process in order to move to Hong Kong. For instance, in 1980, 55,452 people came to Hong Kong legally to visit their families with their visiting visas. Ethnic identity of a Hong Konger was generally formed with the formation of such border as well as the difference of life style across the border. This ethnic identity was not only claimed by people in Hong Kong who had permanent residency but also ascribed by others through such social interactions.

To instrumentalists, ethnic identity formation in Hong Kong is a perfect example of migration-led ethnic identity formation beginning with the adaptation of the group to its new environment and in the final assimilation of its members within the new society. The former groups of migrants adjusted to the new situation by reorganizing its own traditional customs, or by developing new customs under traditional symbols, using traditional norms and ideologies to enhance its distinctiveness within the contemporary situation and as time went on the group became more and more distinct. Their second or third generations then preserve their distinctiveness and make extensive use of the symbolism of their endoculture, then the likelihood that within the contemporary situation they have become an interest group is very strong. The distinctiveness of cultural differences between Hong Kong and mainland China also gradually implied understood criteria for evaluation of cultural features when judging if a

person belongs to such group. Later migrants from China were not simultaneously treated as members of the Hong Kong group due to such cultural difference. Unlike the earlier migrants, new migrants, usually young male from rural communes, found Hong Kong life much difficult to assimilate into. This difficulty even brought them discrimination and mockery from the local born. They were stereotyped as backward, less fashionable, unable of speaking Cantonese, etc. This mockery could be explained by Barth's understanding of cultural features that cultural features were used "to evaluate and judge the actions of ethnic co-members, implying that they see themselves as playing the same game".⁶⁴ Though these new migrants slowly get assimilated into the society, they seemed to have joined the locals in mocking the newer migrants after them. A sense of "us-Hong Kong people" and "them-country bumpkins from mainland China" was created and lasted probably till today. Therefore, Hong Kong identity was first formed and sensed, later on reinforced by the growth of popular culture and the difference sensed between mainland China and Hong Kong through the influx of new migrants.

"In the long run, if a number of people in similar situations choose to emphasize a particular ethnic identity, whether as outsiders of insiders, the significance of that ethnic identity in structuring political and economic process will increase".⁶⁵ what Geoff Emberling

⁶⁴ Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 15

⁶⁵ Emberling, "Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives", 310

wrote nicely described the situation of Hong Kong. The Hong Konger community, being settled by the migration waves in the previous decades, was able to fuel Hong Kong with the double-digit economic growth in 1986 and 1987. They also saw great political interests living in this distinctive land. Hong Kong in the 1980s became a place where the individual could succeed on his own merit and achievements. There is considerable social mobility, and examples of millionaires who have risen from rags in 20 years are well known to all. The effort required to raise one's economic and social status is enormous, but it has been achieved by many, and the constant changing pattern of economic activity in Hong Kong as well as improvements in universal education have both contributed to making upward mobility more possible.

In a nutshell, Hong Kong people felt a strong sense of belonging to Hong Kong and were intensely proud of it. Ethnic identity of being a Hong Konger was formed and persisted as a significant identity which implied marked difference in behaviors as well as persisting cultural differences.

Interpretation from the view of instrumentalist may explain some parts that the primordialist cannot explain, like the ethnic identity formation of the non-Hong Kong born, the transmissibility of dialects, etc. However, it seems that the instrumentalists see all people made rational choices by pursuing similar interests. They might miss the point that some people's desires are not measured by wealth or power of status. Moreover, there is one crucial

phenomenon that the instrumentalists might not be able to explain- why Hong Kong people still hold tight to their Hong Kong identity after the sovereignty return to China which has been giving a lot of economic opportunities to Hong Kong? If strength of identity corresponds to interests and opportunities, Hong Kong people should have weakened their Hong Kong identity and strengthened their Chinese identity, why it seems to have proven the opposite?

3. The Constructionist Interpretation

Constructionism takes essential elements from the primordialist and instrumentalist views but interpret them differently. Constructionists believe that the creation of ethnicity is a result of historical process in which the historical pasts can always be interpreted differently by human agency along time and space.⁶⁶ Therefore, how identity is perceived has also been constantly constructed and reconstructed by how people perceive their pasts. The experience of social interaction as well as historical happenings therefore plays an important role in shaping one's understanding of his/her pasts. Apart from this, the concept of imagined community also has a key role to play in the interpretation and reinterpretation of ethnic identity.

Similar to primordialists, constructionists see the close linkages between history and identity. However, interpretation of history is not a forever constant. Instead, the focus of history changes at different time with different people under different circumstances. In turn, these changes of historical perception change one's perception to his/her identity. Therefore,

⁶⁶ Yeros(ed), *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Africa*, 23

the formation of Hong Kong identity can be interpreted as the result of Hong Kong people's historical perception changes across generations. How the younger generations, especially those born in Hong Kong, understand history is very likely to be different from that of the first or second generation in Hong Kong who were mostly migrants fleeing from China because of the political chaos during civil wars as well as the subsequent Communist take-over in 1949. To them, Hong Kong was a political shield where they were safe from political persecution. Applying the constructionist view, these migrants possibly shared the same understanding of pasts to any other Chinese in China until they started treating Hong Kong as home and gradually discovered the difference between Hong Kong and China and that Hong Kong was a place where they could search for stability, good order and the prospect for a better life.⁶⁷ Shared past history became less a concern to these people, instead, people were creating new history of their own in Hong Kong and became more aware of how to accommodating one another. Through such efforts, a Hong Kong community was constructed and the sense of Chineseness was correspondingly weakened.

A different understanding of the Chinese historical past arises with the coming of age of the first Hong Kong born generation. Growing up under the improved economic conditions and the government's efforts to provide education to as many as possible, this first Hong Kong born generation was quite aware of the difference between mainland China where most

⁶⁷ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 182

of their parents are from and Hong Kong where they are grown. Seeing the outbreaks of politic scandals, lack of human rights issues, increasing numbers of revolutions, democracy cries, 1989 Tiananmen Incident, etc, this generation were not able to share exactly what the Chinese people felt as they were grown and living in a place where such pressing movements were rarely seen. The mutual sharing of historical pasts, therefore, distanced. Viewing such historical happenings as outsiders, this generation, whose understanding of the PRC was relatively superficial, was largely not prepared to 'give up the freedom and dignity befitting every human being to return to the mainland'.⁶⁸ If a different understanding of history began in this generation, such difference might possibly widen with time in the generations to come. And if that led to the weakening of the Hong Kong people's connectedness to mainland China, that would in turn hasten the formation of a Hong Kong identity. In this sense, constructionists can explain the formation of Hong Kong identity especially in the Hong Kong born generations.

Apart from the above, the concept of Hong Kong being a separate entity from mainland China also formed Hong Kong as an imagined community in Hong Kong people's minds and this in turn strengthens their identity as Hong Kongers. One of the obvious features of Hong Kong being a separate entity has been the use of Cantonese other than the official Putonghua/Mandarin for mutual communication. As the Cantonese community came to

⁶⁸ Ibid., 182

evolve, the people living in it also started their own construction of identity as the cultural differences of this side continuously differed to a large extent from mainland China. Such an imagined community was gradually constructed in the minds of Hong Kong people. In addition, given the lack of any serious attempt by the colonial government to turn its people in Hong Kong, especially the local born ethnic Chinese into Englishmen or required them to adopt British nationality, most people in Hong Kong were fairly relaxed about their nationality.⁶⁹ The Chinese sense Hong Kong people adapted was more an ethnic one more than a belonging to a government in China.

According to constructionists, even though the 1997 handover had Hong Kong's sovereignty returned to mainland China, the concept of Hong Kong being an imagined community could still last. Since it took long time to construct a community as well as an identity, it is unreasonable to equal sovereignty return to identity return. That might well explain why most Hong Kong people still hold tight their Hong Kong identity even after 1997.

Another aspect worth noting in the constructionist interpretation is the different understandings of pasts between the Hong Kong born and mainland born Hong Kongers. Since finding out such difference will definitely help interpret Hong Kong identity to another level, the fieldwork research of following chapter attempts to touch upon such issue.

⁶⁹ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 195

CHAPTER IV- EVOLVEMENT OF THE POST-80S GENERATION AND THEIR HONG KONG IDENTITY

From the previous chapter, we can see that though the three theories help interpret the Hong Kong identity in many aspects, there are areas that are still not explored. This chapter seeks to further narrow the gaps of these defects by bringing in a more actual and realistic study of Hong Kong identity by studying the identity perception of the Post-80s generation in Hong Kong.

1. Post-80s Generation (80 後)

The term “Post-80s” (80 後)⁷⁰ refers to the generation of Hong Kong born between 1980-1989. Its first usage could be traced back to an exchange conference named "The Social Space of the Post 80s" held in Beijing with the involvement of youths from mainland China and Hong Kong.⁷¹ The concept of the term then raised awareness in Hong Kong especially after the high-profile action of the post-80s group "P-at-riot" in remembering the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Incident. Together with their active involvement in different consecutive movements like the anti-XRL movement,⁷² protests for the government's political concepts, request for hastening democracy, etc, new voices of the post-80s activists have caught the media's attention. Some think that the radical movements of the post-80s are

⁷⁰ According to “A Study on Understanding our Young Generation” (Feb 2011, The University of Hong Kong) and “Social Attitude of the Youth Population in Hong Kong” (Dec 2010, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

⁷¹ 李照興，〈中港八十後新青年〉，明報，2010年1月10日。

⁷² The movement opposing the Hong Kong government's financial allocation to the Express Rail Link (XRL) connecting to mainland China

the colonial heritage in which democratic political concept and rationalistic movements were seeded earlier.

Lu describes the post-80s generation as the fourth generation in Hong Kong.⁷³

According to Lu, the first generation is those born before the second world war, the second generation was born as baby boomers between 1946-1965, the third generation is the second baby boomers born between 1966-1975 and the fourth generation is those born between 1976-1990. His description to the fourth generation is quite pessimistic, saying that this generation, though born in the richest time, was born to be losers and deemed to have no individuality due to the high expectations from their parents and the society. Unlike the other generations, this generation was born during the colonial period, grew with the transition from the colonial government to the special administrative government. This transition of Hong Kong brings up problems like the lack of uprising opportunities for the youth (contradictive as they received the "best" provides by parents, and improved academic qualifications, etc), discontent to the new SAR government, changing societal and economic structure of Hong Kong, expectations from their parents, etc, which in turn lead them to harsh adaptation to the "new" Hong Kong they face when stepping into the society after graduations. This generation grows up in negatives and believes these negatives are caused by the sovereignty return and the untrustworthy rhetoric of the Communist China as they see how the "One Country Two

⁷³ 呂大樂《四代香港人》(香港：進一步，2007)

System" differs from its rhetoric of promised high level of autonomy. They saw the direct interference of Hong Kong's supposedly self-owned high autonomy like the appointment of Chief Executive from the PRC, the highly lifted migration policy of mainlanders, etc. Therefore, hatred towards the mainland China and mainlanders has been gradually formed and intensified with the continuity of such.

On the other hand, the SAR Government identifies the post-80s as a certain age group that is discontent to the social mobility. They see the post-80s as a "problem" and needs to be studied and solved. The senior leader of the PRC, Jia Qinglin, once expressed his concern to the "problems" of the post-80s generation in Hong Kong, suggesting that the generation should not focus only on Hong Kong which market is relative small and limited, instead they should focus more on expanding Hong Kong's market to merge with the Chinese market in which there are more chances for certain and that their talents can be more fully utilized. He also mentions that political leaders need to "love the country and love Hong Kong" at the same time and corresponsive training on this should be hastened.⁷⁴

The post-80s caught the media's attention continuously as they showed their will of political involvement and as well as the will to protect their Hong Kong identity. How this generation see themselves has drawn wide attention to the public especially after the series of data showing their especially high percentage of perception as Hong Kongers but low

⁷⁴ 龍子明，〈龍聲飛揚：賈慶林關注香港「八十後」的啟示〉，文匯報，2010年7月24日

percentage of perception as 'Chinese'. Data collected from the Census and Statistics Department shows that this generation accounted for 20.24% of the entire Hong Kong population in 2009. Generational differences and conflicts have been the latest phenomenon arising from the term "Post-80s" (80 後) who express the lowest percentages in trusting the HKSAR Government as well as the Central Government. "Post-80s" (80 後) are now seen as potentially the most influential to the immediate future of Hong Kong. Unlike their parents or grandparents who might have connections to mainland China in different ways, they are the direct products of the Hong Kong education system, most of them come from local Hong Kong families and go to Hong Kong's universities.

Study of the identity perception of this generation is therefore significant to the interpretation of Hong Kong and her future. Whether the ethnic Hong Kong identity would continue and in what ways it would persist would be of great concern to both the local HKSAR and central PRC governments. It would also determine whether Hong Kong would continue enjoy the high autonomy of governance, whether democracy would be possible in this land, etc. However, regardless of the significance of such, not many studies about the identity issue of this generation has been done. This thesis, therefore, would like to address this issue a bit deeper. A hypothetical study has been conducted to explain the identity issue of this generation. Explanation of the finding will follow the results of this study.

2. Hypotheses

As mentioned earlier in the formation of ethnic identity in Hong Kong, those who migrated to Hong Kong in the later phase, say in the 1980s, significantly showed a stronger connectedness to the mainland China, especially before their full assimilation to the Hong Kong culture. At the time of their migration, significant cultural boundary was already formed. They experienced the mockery by the then Hong Kongers who were born in Hong Kong. Even though the strong connectedness to the mainland China might fade as they slowly assimilated to the society, the fact that they had this strong connectedness might also skew their identity perception.

The hypothetical study in this thesis will explore

1. The effect of being born in China and strength of Hong Kong identity, and
2. The relationship of having lived in/travelled back and forth Mainland China and strength of Hong Kong identity.

From the primordialist view, according to Geertz, people's sense of self is very much "bound in the gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, religion, or tradition..."⁷⁵ and that the givenness from birth gives primordial attachment to a person. "The givenness stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language"⁷⁶ will give an ineffable coerciveness in and of themselves

⁷⁵ Geertz, ed., *Old societies and new states*, 107

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 108

since one is "bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbor, one's fellow believer, etc".⁷⁷ Being born in China and being born in Hong Kong is believed to have given fundamentally different givenness from birth. The post-80s were born with the givenness stemming from Hong Kong's own cultures. Their kindred relationships are likely Hong Kong-born as well. Most post-80s did not learn any Chinese dialects, not even Putonghua, in their childhood. They acquired Cantonese as their mother tongue and English as their second language where they mostly learned from kindergarten onwards. To an imaginable great contrast, the givenness from birth of those mainland-born should be completely different from those of the Hong Kong-born. Being born in mainland China means these people or at least their parents still have strong primordial bonds with the mainland Chinese. Their families certainly did not migrate to Hong Kong during the first and second wave. Therefore, they probably have kin connection with those late migrants in the 1980s. As a result, it is reasonable to say that the mainland-born should have more kin connections with the mainland Chinese than the Hong Kong-born.

From the instrumentalist view, later migrants might see Hong Kong as a place which would give their children good education from young and thus a "good future" later. For this reason, they might have been eager to send their young children to Hong Kong for prosperity and for good. These young children, being born in China, feel the need to develop Hong Kong

⁷⁷ Ibid., 108

identity in order to maintain interests and enjoy better opportunities. On the contrary, those born in Hong Kong do not actively develop their Hong Kong identity because of the need to pursue interests. Instead, interests and opportunities in Hong Kong to them are given for granted. The different triggering reasons of Hong Kong identity formation between the local born and mainland born might likely mean difference in the strength and perception of their Hong Kong identity.

From the constructionist view, Hong Kong was already a perished city when the post-80s was given birth. They did not see the past Hong Kong and thus do not know how Hong Kong was like and how it was transformed. However, they saw the difference between mainland China and Hong Kong since they were young. Their understanding of pasts might have undergone changes as they grow. They grew with great influence from their immediate previous generation who's connectedness to China was already weakened and some even showed unwelcoming attitude and mockery to the newly migrants from mainland China. Imagining Hong Kong as a separate community from China, strong sense of identity was therefore forged and maintained. Comparing to the Hong Kong-born, the connectedness to mainland China in the mainland-born is possibly higher. The understanding to China's history and social pasts of the mainland-born is also possibly different from those of the Hong Kong-born. And such difference might likely lead to a different strength and perception of their Hong Kong identity.

For the above reasons, the first hypothesis is set forth as below:

1. *The strength of Hong Kong identity among the post 80s' ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong differs with **the place of birth**:*

Those born in mainland China have a stronger national identity but less strong Hong Kong identity than those born in Hong Kong.

Following a similar logic, the fact that those who were born in Hong Kong but have lived in Mainland China might suggest that they also have stronger connectedness with China. However, those born in Hong Kong but have lived in overseas before might have kindred network no longer in China but overseas. If this is true, they might have weaker primordial bonds with their previous Chinese generations and therefore a weaker national identity. For these reasons, the second hypothesis is set forth as below:

2. *The strength of Hong Kong identity among the post 80s' ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong differs with **the experience of living in mainland China (among those born in Hong Kong)**:*

A. Those who have experience of living in/traveling back and forth to and from China before have stronger national identity but a weaker Hong Kong identity than those who do not have such experience.

B. Those who have lived in countries other than China before have weaker national identity but stronger Hong Kong identity than those who do not have such experience.

3. Questionnaire Design and Interviews

To make it easier for measurement, the following groups are to be identified:

Group 1: Born in China, currently living in Hong Kong as permanent residents

Group 2: Born in Hong Kong, have lived in/travelled back and forth to and from Mainland China for, currently living in Hong Kong as permanent residents

Group 3: Born in Hong Kong, never lived in/ travelled back and forth to or from Mainland China, currently living in Hong Kong as permanent residents

Group 4: Born in Hong Kong, have lived in places other than Mainland China, currently living in Hong Kong as permanent residents

The questionnaire includes three parts. Part one has been designed for screening purpose, part two is for measuring interviewees' nationalistic, patriotic and xenophobic Pride of being a Chinese and Part three is for measuring their self-perceived Identities.

In Part one, if a 'No' is given in any one of the first three questions 'Were you born between 1980 and 1989?', 'Are you currently living in Hong Kong?' or ' Are you a holder of Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card? ', the questionnaire will end there. Three 'Yes'es in these three questions are the prerequisite for the screening of any of the 4 groups set forth in the hypotheses. The fourth question 'Where were you born (Mainland China/ Hong Kong/ Overseas (China not included))' determines which group the interviewee falls into.

He/she will fall into **group 1** if Mainland 'China' is chosen.

He/she will fall into group 2 to 4 if 'Hong Kong' is chosen.

Following 'Born in Hong Kong', there are two more questions. If he/she chooses 'Yes' in the question "Have you ever lived in/ traveled back and forth to and from Mainland China before?", then he/she will fall into **group 2**.

If he/she chooses "No", then he/she will fall into **group 3**.

If he/she chooses 'Yes' in the question " Have you ever lived in countries other than China (HK not include) before?", then he/she will fall into **group 4**.

Part 2 has been designed to measure the interviewees' nationalistic pride, patriotic pride as well as xenophobic pride which are important in seeing one's attitude to their own country and thus one's national identity of being a Chinese. Both questions use the 10-point-scale. In the first question ' How proud are you of China (People's Republic of China) in each of the following?', 10 indicates extremely proud of, 0 indicates extremely not proud of. In the second question ' How much do you agree with the following?', 10 indicates extremely agree, 0 indicates extremely disagree. The first question is meant to measure interviewees' nationalistic and patriotic pride. If one holds nationalistic pride, he/she will probably give high score to the items ' China's armed forces', ' China's history', ' China's achievements in sports', ' China's achievements in arts and literature' and ' China's scientific and technological achievements'. If one holds patriotic pride, he/she will probably give high score to the items ' The way its political system works in China', ' Its political influence in the world', ' China's economic achievements', China's social security system' and ' China's fair and equal treatment

of all groups in society'. The second question is meant to measure interviewees' xenophobic pride. If one holds xenophobic pride, he/she will probably give high score to statements 'immigrants from China are generally good for Hong Kong's economy' and 'immigrants from China improve Hong Kong society by bringing in new ideas and cultures', however, he/she will probably give low score to statements 'immigrants from mainland China increase crime rates in Hong Kong' and 'immigrants from China take jobs away from people who were born in Hong Kong'.

The last part of the questionnaire is designed to ask interviewees their own perception of different identities. This part has been partly adopted from the Public Opinion Programme, the Hong Kong University on "Hong Kong People's Ethnic Identity. Question 1 sees how interviewees identify themselves as. They are asked to choose an identity from 'Hong Kong Citizen', 'Chinese Citizen', 'Hong Kong Chinese Citizen', 'Chinese Hong Kong Citizen', 'Others', 'Don't Know/Hard to Say' and 'refuse to answers'. Questions 2 to 13 again use 10-point-scale, with 10 indicating extremely strong, 0 indicating extremely weak, and 5 indicating half-half. Question 2 and 3, 4 and 5, 6 and 7, 8 and 9, 10 and 11, 12 and 13 ask the interviewees to rate their strength of identity and importance as a "Hong Kong citizen", "Chinese citizen", "citizen of PRC", "Members of the Chinese race", "Asian" and "global citizen" correspondingly.

4. Findings from Existing Research

Before going to the result of the fieldwork research from this study, it is worth exploring the findings of Hong Kong People's Ethnic Identity from the two renowned and representative research projects.

The two latest researches “The Identity and National Identification of Hong Kong People” released by the Centre for Communication and the Public Opinion Survey (CCPOS) of the Chinese University of Hong Kong on November 2012, and the latest data released in June 2012 from the Public Opinion Program (POP) of the University of Hong Kong which has been conducting quarterly surveys per year since 1997 about Hong Kong people's ethnic identity and have found the following,

1. People in Hong Kong in general are more ready to agree with the identity of being as a Chinese race than to agree with the national identity of being a PRC citizen.
2. Independence (expressed in the form of the quest for democracy) is above all the first priority to Hong Kong people in general (and this phenomenon is found more intense in the post-80s generation). This is also the main reason why Hong Kong people still do not perceive a strong sense of nationality of PRC.
3. A significant amount of people, more reflected in the post-80s than the other generations, continue their claim of sole Hong Kong identity.

調查日期	樣本人數	次樣本人數	認同感	標準誤差	評分人數	認知率
Date of survey	Total Sample	Sub-sample	Strength Rating	Standard Error	Number of Raters	Recognition Rate
13-20/6/2012	1001	527	6.12	0.13	501	94.9%
12-20/12/2011	1016	545	6.28	0.12	521	95.7%
17-22/6/2011	1028	505	6.41	0.12	480	95.2%
13-16/12/2010	1013	536	6.27	0.12	506	94.3%
9-13/6/2010	1004	531	6.38	0.12	515	97.0%
8-11/12/2009	1007	527	6.92	0.12	515	97.7%
8-13/6/2009	1002	534	6.99	0.11	511	95.7%
9-12/12/2008	1016	610	6.88	0.10	585	95.8%
11-13/6/2008	1012	1012	6.84	0.10	932	92.0%
11-14/12/2007	1011	1011	6.72	0.09	940	93.0%
18-22/6/2007	1026	1026	7.28	0.07	998	97.3%

Table 1: Strength of identity as a Citizens of PRC

(With 10 indicating extremely strong, 0 indicating extremely weak and 5 indicating half-half) (Source: HKU POP 2012)

調查日期	樣本人數	次樣本人數	認同感	標準誤差	評分人數	認知率
Date of survey	Total Sample	Sub-sample	Strength Rating	Standard Error	Number of Raters	Recognition Rate
13-20/6/2012	1001	594	7.26	0.11	574	96.6%
12-20/12/2011	1016	542	7.46	0.11	527	97.2%
17-22/6/2011	1028	503	7.29	0.11	474	94.3%
13-16/12/2010	1013	550	7.42	0.10	538	97.8%
9-13/6/2010	1004	552	7.87	0.10	540	97.9%
8-11/12/2009	1007	527	7.78	0.10	516	97.9%
8-13/6/2009	1002	565	7.73	0.10	553	97.9%
9-12/12/2008	1016	579	7.84	0.10	558	96.4%
11-13/6/2008	1012	1012	8.25	0.07	962	95.1%
11-14/12/2007	1011	1011	8.23	0.07	956	94.5%
18-22/6/2007	1026	1026	7.62	0.07	995	97.0%

Table 2: Strength of identity as a Citizens of Chinese Race

(With 10 indicating extremely strong, 0 indicating extremely weak and 5 indicating half-half) (Source: HKU POP 2012)

The above two tables shows the strength of Hong Kong people's identity as a citizens of PRC as well as a members of the Chinese race. Table 1 shows that strength of Hong Kong people's identity as a citizens of PRC has been dropping slightly every year since 2007 from 7.28 to 6.12 in 2012. Table 2 shows that strength of Hong Kong people's identity as a member of the Chinese race has gone up and down slightly since 2007 but it has also recorded the lowest of 7.26 in 2012. In another word, both Hong Kong people's strength of identity as a member of a citizen of PRC and a member of the Chinese race has dropped. However, the former has

always recorded a lower score than the later when compared in a yearly basis. Therefore, the first general view of Hong Kong people's ethnic identity is that *"People in Hong Kong in general are more ready to agree with the identity of being as a Chinese race than with the national identity of being a PRC citizen"* Nevertheless, it is worth notice that the difference in the strength of identity of the two is not very big.

	Post-90s	Post-80s	Post-70s	All
	%	%	%	%
Agree / Strongly Agree	73.4	68.5	60.8	66.8
Disagree / Strongly disagree	23.2	23.7	27.6	25.1
Don't know	3.4	7.8	11.6	8.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

p < 0.001 (i.e. difference among generations is found statistically significant at probability less than 0.001)

Table 3: Democratic Development is Preferable to Government Efficiency

(Source: Central Policy Unit, HKSAR, 2010)

	Post-90s	Post-80s	Post-70s "Baseline"	All
	%	%	%	%
Too slow (太慢)	45.1	50.7	42.1	45.8
About right (適中)	49.6	42.7	48.0	46.7
Too fast (太快)	4.5	3.0	4.2	3.9
Don't know (唔知道/好難講)	0.7	3.6	5.7	3.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

p < 0.001

Table 4: Democratic Progress since 1997 (Source: Central Policy Unit, HKSAR, 2010)

For many Hong Kong people democracy is desired. Table 3 shows that the percentage of people who agree or strongly agree with the statement "Democratic Development is Preferable to Government Efficiency" to those who disagree or strongly disagree is 66.8% to 25.1%. Among the people who agree with the above, the post-90s and post-80s show more

percentage than the post-70s. The results of table 3 show that supporting democracy is the major opinion in all post-90s, post-80s and post-70s. The result that the majority of people in Hong Kong prefer democratic development can also be interpreted as the quest of the majority of people in Hong Kong for independent governance than the style of governance from the central government (PRC government). The post-80s are the most critical to the progress of democratization in Hong Kong since 1997. Table 4 shows that slightly more than half (50.7%) of them find the democratic progress of Hong Kong too slow, compared with 45.1% of the post-90s and 42.1% of post-70s. Nevertheless, around half of the interviewee thought that the democratic progress of Hong Kong has been too slow. Only 3-4% of all interviewees thought it has been too fast. It reflects that the majority (>90% of all generations interviewed) of Hong Kong people are passionate about getting democracy, an independent way of governance from the central government. Though not very directly showed, the second general view of Hong Kong people's ethnic identity is that *"Independence (expressed in the form of the quest for democracy) is above all the first priority to Hong Kong people in general, and this phenomenon is found more intense in the post-80s generation"*.

	Post-80s (under age 32)	Non post-80s (age above 33)
Hongkonger (%)	33.3	20.3
Hongkonger but also Chinese (%)	48.1	39.8
Chinese but also Hongkonger (%)	16.2	23.7
Chinese (%)	2.4	15.9
Others (%)	0	0.3

Table 5: Identity perceptions at Different Ages (Source: CUHK CCPO 2012)

Table 5 compares the identity perceptions between post-80s and non post-80s and significance difference has been found. The percentage of post-80s perceiving themselves as only "Hongkonger" is 33.3%, 13% higher than that of the non post-80s. The percentage of post-80s perceiving that they are "Hong Kong Citizen" and "Hong Kong Citizen but also Chinese" (the priority of identifying as Hong Kong Citizens) is 81.4%, 21% higher than non post-80s. As for the category of mixed Chinese-Hong Kong identity, there are altogether 64.3% of post-80s perceiving themselves as " Hongkonger but also Chinese" and " Chinese but also Hongkonger", similar to the 63.5% of the non post-80s who perceive themselves as in this category. However, there are only 2.4% of post-80s perceive themselves as solely Chinese, 13.5% lower than the non post-80s. Nevertheless, the majority of both post-80s and non post-80s perceive themselves as in the mixed Chinese-Hong Kong identity, regardless of the priority. From the above survey results, we can see that the third general view of Hong Kong people's ethnic identity is that *"Though more people are claiming for a mix of Chinese-Hong Kong identity, there is still a significant amount of people, more reflected on the post-80s than the other generations, continue their claim of sole Hong Kong identity"*.

5. Findings from Questionnaires

Selection of interviewees: random selection, post-80s generation in Hong Kong

Place of interview: Hong Kong (SAR)

Time of interview: February 2013

Number of questionnaires distributed: 80

Number of questionnaires received: 51

Number of valid questionnaires: 22

Part 1: composition of valid samples (%)

Post-80s' (born between 1980 and 1989) percentage: 100%

Currently living in Hong Kong: 100%

Holder of "Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card": 100%

Group 1: Born in China, now live in Hong Kong as permanent residents: 6 out of 22

Group 2: Born in Hong Kong, have lived in/travelled back and forth to and from mainland

China, now live in Hong Kong as permanent residents: 4 out of 22

Group 3: Born in Hong Kong, never lived in/travelled back and forth to and from Mainland

China, now live in Hong Kong as permanent residents: 7 out of 22

Group 4: Born in Hong Kong, have lived in places other than Mainland China (HK excluded),

now live in Hong Kong as permanent residents: 5 out of 22

Table 6: Nationalistic pride, patriotic pride and xenophobic pride

Items	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Nationalistic pride:				
China's armed forces	5.3	6.0	3.6	6.0
China's history	7.3	7.3	5.4	7.4
China's achievements in sports	7.8	7.5	5.9	7.0
China's achievements in arts and literature	8.2	6.5	6.1	7.0

China's scientific and technological achievements	5.8	4.5	5.3	6.6
Average	6.9	6.4	5.3	6.8
Patriotic pride:				
The way its political system works in China	2.0	3.3	2.4	3.8
Its political influence in the world	4.0	4.5	4.1	6.2
China's economic achievements	6.8	6.5	4.1	7.0
China's social security system	2.8	1.6	3.7	5.8
China's fair and equal treatment of all groups in society	2.2	2.0	2.7	3.4
average	3.6	3.6	3.4	5.2
Xenophobic Pride (the higher the *reverse of the number the more pride in statement 1-2) *indicate in the blanket				
1. "immigrants from mainland China increase crime rates in Hong Kong"	4.2 (5.8)	7.8 (2.2)	4.6 (5.4)	6.0 (4.0)
2. "immigrants from mainland China take jobs away from people who were born in Hong Kong"	5.0 (5.0)	7.0 (3.0)	4.9 (5.1)	5.0 (5.0)
3. "immigrants from mainland China are generally good for Hong Kong's economy"	5.2	5.5	4.1	5.2
4. "immigrants from mainland China improve Hong Kong society by bringing in new ideas and cultures"	5.7	4.3	4.6	4.2
Average	5.5	3.8	4.8	4.6
Average of all pride	5.3	4.6	4.5	5.5

The above data shows that,

1. Patriotic pride is lower than nationalistic pride in all groups. While all groups give more than 5 to national pride items, nearly all groups give less than 5 to patriotic pride items.
2. As for nationalistic pride, group 4 surprisingly shows high score (only 0.1 less than group 1). Without group 4, the score of nationalistic pride in descending order is group 1 > group 2 > group 3.

3. As for patriotic pride, group 4 again surprisingly shows much higher score. Without group 4, the score of patriotic pride in descending order is group 1>group 2>group 3.
4. Surprisingly group 4 give relatively high scores to both nationalistic pride and patriotic pride
5. As for xenophobic pride to China, only group 1 give score above 5.
6. Group 2 shows the lowest score in all groups. They especially agree with the two statement “immigrants from mainland China increase crime rates in Hong Kong” and “immigrants from mainland China take jobs away from people who were born in Hong Kong”.
7. Without group 2, the xenophobic pride score in descending order is group 1>group 3> group 4.

Table 7: Self-perceived Identity

Q1- You would identify yourself as a:	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Hong Kong Citizen	2 (33.3%)	3 (75.0%)	5 (71.4%)	4 (100%)
Chinese Citizen				
Hong Kong Chinese Citizen	2 (33.3%)	1 (25%)	2 (28.6%)	
Chinese Hong Kong Citizen	2 (33.3%)			
Others (please specify)				
Don't know/ hard to say				
Refuse to answer				

The above data shows that, among the 22 interviewees,

1. no interviewees perceived themselves as ‘Chinese Citizen’.

2. only 2 from group 1 perceived themselves as ‘Chinese Hong Kong Citizen’, in which "Chinese" is perceived before "Hong Kong".
3. 14 perceived themselves as ‘Hong Kong Citizen’ and 5 perceived themselves as ‘Hong Kong Chinese Citizen’, counting altogether 19 out of 22 interviewees (86%) perceiving ‘Hong Kong’ prior to ‘Chinese’ as their identity.
4. All interviewees in group 4 perceive themselves as ‘Hong Kong Citizen’.

Table 8: Self-perceived Identity

Items	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Q2: strength of identity as a Hong Kong citizen	7.7	9.5	7.9	9.0
Q3: importance as a Hong Kong citizen	7.8	8.8	7.6	7.8
Q4: strength of identity as a Chinese citizen	6.5	6.0	4.4	4.2
Q5: importance as a Chinese citizen	5.7	4.8	4.6	4.2
Q6: strength of identity as a citizen of PRC	5.4	4.3	2.7	2.6
Q7: importance as a citizen of PRC	8.5	4.0	3.0	2.6
Q8: strength of identity as a Members of the Chinese race	7.6	7.5	6.1	8.2
Q9: importance as a Members of the Chinese race	7.0	6.5	5.9	8.2
Q10: strength of identity as an Asian	7.0	8.3	4.9	8.6
Q11: importance as an Asian	6.2	5.8	4.7	8.6
Q12: strength of identity as a global citizen	6.8	6.5	4.7	6.5
Q13: importance as a global citizen	6.8	6.3	4.7	6.5

The above data shows that,

1. In general, all groups show higher score in seeing the strength of identity and importance as a Hong Kong citizen than Chinese citizen then citizen of PRC.
2. Group 2 surprisingly shows the highest score in scoring the strength of identity and

importance as a Hong Kong citizen.

3. Group 4 also shows the highest score in scoring the strength of identity and importance as a member of the Chinese race than other groups.
4. The score of strength and importance of identity as a Chinese citizen in descending order is group 1> group 2> group 3> group 4
5. The score of strength and importance of identity as a citizen of PRC in descending order is group 1> group 2> group 3> group 4

As shown from the results of part 3, no interviewees perceive themselves as "Chinese Citizen". 14 perceived themselves as 'Hong Kong Citizen' and 5 perceived themselves as 'Hong Kong Chinese Citizen', counting altogether 19 out of 22 interviewees (86%) perceiving 'Hong Kong' prior to 'Chinese' as their identity.

It means no matter where they were born, as long as they became permanent residents of Hong Kong, they no longer perceive themselves as only "Chinese".

Among all interviewees, only 2 interviewees perceived themselves as 'Chinese Hong Kong Citizen', in which "Chinese" is perceived before "Hong Kong". These two interviewees are from group 1 which means they were born in mainland China. Moreover, among the 4 groups, group 1 has most interviewees who choose their identity as either "Hong Kong Chinese Citizen" or "Chinese Hong Kong Citizen" in which both these two terms involve the perception of "Chinese" and "Hong Kong". Apart from these, group 1 show the highest scores

among the four groups when they are asked to score the "strength and importance of identity as a Chinese citizen" and "strength and importance of identity as a citizen of PRC". Last but not least, group 1 gives highest scores among the four groups when mentioning their nationalistic pride and xenophobic pride to China, which are important indicators of national identity. With all the data shown above, hypothesis 1

"The sense of ethnic identity among the post 80s' ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong differs with the place of birth: Those born in mainland China have a stronger national identity but less strong Hong Kong identity than those born in Hong Kong." is therefore, supported.

On the other hand, data collected from part 3 shows that all interviewees in group 4, which means those who have lived in overseas before, perceive themselves as 'Hong Kong Citizen'. Group 4 shows the highest score in scoring the strength of identity and importance as a member of the Chinese race than other groups. However, group 4 gives the lowest score when asked to score both the "strength and importance of identity as a Chinese citizen" and "strength and importance of identity as a citizen of PRC". This result is quite interesting. It probably means that Group 4 sees their identity as only Hong Kong Citizen, but they highly value the fact that they are members of the Chinese race (but not Citizens in China/ PRC). This finding can also explain why group 4 shows relatively high scores in their nationalistic pride and patriotic pride. They are especially proud of China's history and China's achievements in arts and literatures and thus give high score to these aspects. With the

interpretation of national identity being the sense of belonging to the present country and government, then hypothesis 2B

"The sense of ethnic identity among the post 80s' ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong differs with the experience of living in mainland China (among those born in Hong Kong): Those who have lived in countries other than China before have weaker national identity but stronger Hong Kong identity than those who do not have such experience.", is also supported.

Results different from the prediction of the hypothesis 2A have been found in group 2, those who were born in Hong Kong and have lived in/travelled back and forth to and from China before. Hypothesis 2A expects that

"The sense of ethnic identity among the post 80s' ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong differs with the experience of living in mainland China (among those born in Hong Kong): Those who have experience of living in/travel back and forth to and from China before have stronger national identity but a weaker Hong Kong identity than those who do not have such experience."

Result from part 3 shows that no one from group 2 chooses "Chinese Citizen" or "Chinese Hong Kong Citizen". They choose either "Hong Kong Citizen" or "Hong Kong Chinese Citizen" which prioritize Hong Kong before Chinese. Not only do they prioritize Hong Kong, group 2 surprisingly shows the highest score among the four groups in scoring "the strength of identity as a Hong Kong Citizen" as well as "the importance of being a Hong Kong citizen".

They also give low scores (lower than 5 out of 10) when they are asked to score "the strength of identity as a citizen of PRC" and "importance as a citizen of PRC". As for pride of China, group 2 gives the second lowest score to patriotic pride (3.6 out of 10) and the lowest score (3.0 out of 10) to xenophobic pride. They agree the most to the following statements "immigrants from mainland China increase crime rates in Hong Kong" and "immigrants from mainland China take jobs away from people who were born in Hong Kong". Among the four groups, group 2 gives highest scores (7.8 and 7 out of 10 respectively) when they are asked how much they agree with the statements.

From this observation, not only is hypothesis 2A not supported, it is somehow being strongly opposed.

CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION

To recap, this thesis has attempted to give reinterpretations to the ethnic identity issue in Hong Kong by adopting a theoretical approach as well as a small-scale research. The three major theories of ethnic identity formation: the primordialist theory, the instrumentalist theory and the constructionist theory has been reviewed in details and the analytical framework has then been developed for the interpretation of Hong Kong identity along with the demographic changes in Hong Kong's migration history. Defects of each analysis from the three theories have also been discussed in order to highlight the need of studying the actual experience of the post-80s generation identity in Hong Kong. Hypotheses on the relationship of having lived in mainland China and identity of Hong Kong people has also been explored using the interviews conducted with the post-80s ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong.

Interpreting from different aspects, the three ethnic theories are able to explain why Hong Kong identity has been formed and reinforced with time. The primordialists think that it was the deviated kindred relationship with mainland China and givenness from birth of the Hong Kong born generations that formed and confirmed the Hong Kong identity. The instrumentalists see the formation of Hong Kong identity as the result of the formation of first the different language/place of origin groups which eventually emerged into one big Cantonese ethnic group. This ethnic identity strengthens with the distinctiveness of geographic boundary between Hong Kong and China. The constructionists combined the

views of both primordialists and instrumentalists but believe that people's interpretation to past change constantly and such changes in turn change their understanding to identity. Hong Kong people, especially the Hong Kong-born interpret their history differently than their former generations. Rather than sharing a strong connectedness to China, they are more concerned with the contemporary history and connectedness to Hong Kong.

As for the Hong Kong identity of the post-80s, though the mainland-born have relative stronger kinships with mainland China, their identity has been more shaped by the common interests that they saw as being a Hong Konger than being a pure "Chinese". They have been gradually immersed to the "primordial affinities", the feeling of we-ness/belongingness as they assimilate into the community. According to Cohen, although kinship may be important within each of these categories, or within individual regions, statuses, classes, or professions, it is not the organizing principle of the category as a whole. These categories tend to be based on common interest, rather than kinship.⁷⁸

One point that this thesis wants to address is that, according to the primordialist theory, when a community's autonomy is threatened by the present-day necessity of forging a new and as yet unstable state order, then primordial sentiments may serve to define politically significant social movements.⁷⁹ Increasing number of social movements about the defence of the seeming losing/weakening autonomy, strong quest for democracy especially with the

⁷⁸ Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa*, 4

⁷⁹ Geertz, ed., *Old societies and new states*, 108

involvement of the post-80s, etc, have not been uncommon in recent years. Leaders of both HKSAR and PRC governments need to be "acutely aware of" what the desires behind all these prolonged, unceasingly happening social movements are, why they are happening, etc. Geertz also mentions "primordial sentiments tend to command people's loyalties under circumstances that threaten the existence, autonomy, and independence of their communities, and even then they must often compete with other sentiments such as a nationalism, which is not exclusively defined in terms of prior ethnic identities."⁸⁰ Moreover, we should understand that the disappearance of the clear geographical boundary between mainland China and Hong Kong does not necessarily mean the disappearance of an imagined community as well as one's identity to such community, which for almost 200 years, was not under the governance of mainland China.

⁸⁰ Geertz, ed., *Old societies and new states*, 108

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire on *Identity of the Post-80s' Ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong*

Date:

Questionnaire Number:

Part 1 (indicate by circling your answer):

- Were you born between 1980 and 1989? (YES/NO)
(End here if NO)
- Are you currently living in Hong Kong? (YES/NO)
(End here if NO)
- Are you a holder of "HONG KONG PERMANENT IDENTITY CARD"? (YES/NO)
(End here if NO)
- Where were you born (Mainland China/ Hong Kong/ Overseas (not China))?

Born in Mainland China

Born in Hong Kong

- Have you ever lived in/ traveled back and forth to and from Mainland China before?
(Yes/No)
- Have you ever lived in countries other than China (HK not include) before?
(Yes/ No)

Part 2 (indicate by writing an Arabic number next to each statement):

Q1- How proud are you of China (People's Republic of China) in each of the following?
(10-point-scale: 10 indicating extremely proud of, 0 indicating extremely not proud of)

- The way its political system works in China ()
- Its political influence in the world ()
- China's economic achievements ()
- China's social security system ()
- China's scientific and technological achievements ()
- China's achievements in sports ()
- China's achievements in arts and literature ()
- China's armed forces ()
- China's history ()
- China's fair and equal treatment of all groups in society ()

Q2- How much do you agree with the following?

(10-point-scale: 10 indicating extremely agree, 0 indicating extremely disagree)

- “immigrants from mainland China increase crime rates in Hong Kong” ()
- “immigrants from China are generally good for Hong Kong’s economy” ()
- “immigrants from China take jobs away from people who were born in Hong Kong” ()
- “immigrants from China improve Hong Kong society by bringing in new ideas and cultures”
()

Part 3 (indicate by circling or writing an Arabic number next to each statement):

(This is partly adopted from the Public Opinion Programme, the Hong Kong University on "Hong Kong People's Ethnic Identity.)

Q1-You would identify yourself as a:

Hong Kong Citizen

Chinese Citizen

Hong Kong Chinese Citizen

Chinese Hong Kong Citizen

Others (Please specify)

Don't know / hard to say

Refuse to answer

Q2-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your strength of identity as a **Hong Kong citizen**,

with 10 indicating extremely strong, 0 indicating extremely weak, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q3-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your importance as a **Hong Kong citizen**,

with 10 indicating extremely important, 0 indicating not important at all, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q4-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your strength of identity as a **Chinese citizen**,

with 10 indicating extremely strong, 0 indicating extremely weak, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q5-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your importance as a **Chinese citizen**, with 10 indicating extremely important, 0 indicating not important at all, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q6-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your strength of identity as a **citizen of PRC**, with 10 indicating extremely strong, 0 indicating extremely weak, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q7-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your importance as a **citizen of PRC**, with 10 indicating extremely important, 0 indicating not important at all, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q8-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your strength of identity as a **Members of the Chinese race**, with 10 indicating extremely strong, 0 indicating extremely weak, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q9-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your importance as a **Members of the Chinese race**, with 10 indicating extremely important, 0 indicating not important at all, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q10-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your strength of identity as **an Asian**, with 10 indicating extremely strong, 0 indicating extremely weak, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q11-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your importance as **an Asian**,

with 10 indicating extremely important, 0 indicating not important at all, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q12-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your strength of identity as **a global citizen**,

with 10 indicating extremely strong, 0 indicating extremely weak, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

Q13-Please use a scale of 0-10 to rate your importance as **a global citizen**,

with 10 indicating extremely important, 0 indicating not important at all, and 5 indicating half-half. How would you rate yourself?

—

Don't know

Refuse to answer

End of questionnaire, Thank you

