

**FROM LOCAL TO NATIONAL:
THE CREATION OF A NEW HONG KONG IDENTITY**

by

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Abstract

Hong Kong is undergoing major political change. Its citizens have expressed concern over Beijing's implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" and the Basic Law in protecting the city-state's autonomy. The socio-political discontent arising from the re-sinicization of Hong Kong since 1997 has furthered the development of localism, a process whereby Hong Kongers are beginning to prioritize a local Hong Konger identity over a national Chinese identity.

Situating this analysis within the nationalism literature, this thesis analyzes three types of localism: (1) preservationists who seek to protect local Hong Kong spaces through the discourse of cultural and socio-economic struggle (2) an ethnic localism which uses nativism to create a Hong Kong nation based on Southern Chinese traditions and an ethno-cultural superiority over China and (3) a civic localism that emphasizes an acquired identity based on liberal democratic values, universal suffrage as well as the right to self-determination. To illustrate this, an analysis of the 2014 Umbrella Movement will identify the diverging ideology of localism from other pan-democratic groups through an examination of the movement's successes and failures and the impact of localist political forces on the electoral system. This is further analyzed through a case study of the 2016 New Territories East by-election.

This thesis attempts to provide three main contributions to the study of Hong Kong: (1) to understand how the "local" is being articulated by various localist groups, (2) to analyze the process by which a Hong Konger nationality is becoming integrated into the political orientations of the people and (3) to link how the geopolitical relationship between Hong Kong and China is connected to an evolving Hong Kong identity. The transformation of localism from a social movement into political participation suggests not only a widening identity gap of Hong Kong from China, but the rising rationalism of Hong Kongers in defending their home.

Preface

This thesis is an original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Justin Patrick Kwan.

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List of Abbreviations

CCP	Chinese Communist Party	中國共產黨
CEPA	Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement	更緊密經貿關係
DAB	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong	民主建港協進聯盟
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party	民主進步黨
FEHD	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	食物環境衛生署
HKFS	Hong Kong Federation of Students	香港專上學生聯會
HKI	Hong Kong Indigenous	本土民主前線
HKNP	Hong Kong National Party	香港民族黨
HKPU	Hong Kong Polytechnic University	香港理工大學
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	香港特別行政區
HKU	Hong Kong University	香港大學
HKUSU	Hong Kong University Student Union	香港大學學生會
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	公民與政治權利國際公約
IVS	Individual Visit Scheme	自由行
LegCo	Legislative Council of Hong Kong	香港特別行政區立法會

MNE	Moral and National Education	德育及國民教育
NPCSC	National People's Congress Standing Committee	全國人民代表大會常務委員會
NTE	New Territories East Constituency	新界東選區
OCLP	Occupy Central with Love and Peace	讓愛與和平佔領中環
OCM	Occupy Central Movement	和平佔中
OCTS	One Country, Two Systems	一國兩制
PLA	People's Liberation Army	中國人民解放軍
PRNN	Peace, Rationality, Non-Violence and Non-Profanity	和理非非
PRC	People's Republic of China	中華人民共和國
REO	Registration and Electoral Office	選舉事務處
SAR	Special Administrative Region	特別行政區
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome	嚴重急性呼吸道綜合症
UM	Umbrella Movement	雨傘運動
XRL	Guangzhou–Shenzhen–Hong Kong Express Rail Link	廣深港高速鐵路

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The preparation and revision for this project first began as a larger comparative study of both Hong Kong and Taiwan. As I began my research, I realized that the vast literature surrounding these two places would become an extremely challenging project to complete for a MA thesis. After having the opportunity to visit both places, I ultimately narrowed my analytical focus on Hong Kong, saving the larger comparative project for later research. Studying Hong Kong at this moment in time is a timely endeavour, given the contemporary issues its citizens are facing.

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Justin Patrick Kwan

Vancouver, 2016.

Dedication

To my loving parents.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the second decade after Hong Kong's retrocession back to China, the question of Hong Kong's political identity has become one of the key issues discussed today. Identity politics in Hong Kong has become inherently more complex since the 1997 handover due drastic changes in the status quo. This question is not only crucially linked to Hong Kong's relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC), but is also drastically polarizing Hong Kong's society.

In March 2016, the Hong Kong University Student Union (HKUSU, 香港大學學生會) released the latest issue of their student publication *Undergrad* (學苑). A series of essays in the issue titled "Statement of the Generation" asked for the city-state's independence after 2047, the year that Hong Kong's Basic Law ceases to guarantee Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and the preservation of Hong Kong's capitalist free market society.¹ In addition to the articulation for self-determination, Hong Kong students demanded a democratic government be setup with a constitution that is written by the Hong Kong people for the Hong Kong people. The publication however was heavily criticized by Hong Kong's Chief Executive C.Y. Leung 梁振英 in his March 2016 policy address, stating that "Hong Kong has been a part of China since ancient times, and this is a fact that will not change after 2047."² Students also sent a similar message in the 2013 issue of *Undergrad* which discussed the rise of Hong Kong nationalism.

In the post-2014 Umbrella Movement era, Hong Kong's political scene continues to become polarized between the government and young activists who are disappointed in the failure of achieving universal suffrage and safeguarding Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy

¹ The direct translation of the title is "Hong Kong Youth's Declaration" (香港青年時代宣言), however the translation "Statement of the Generation" has been used frequently by online commentators.

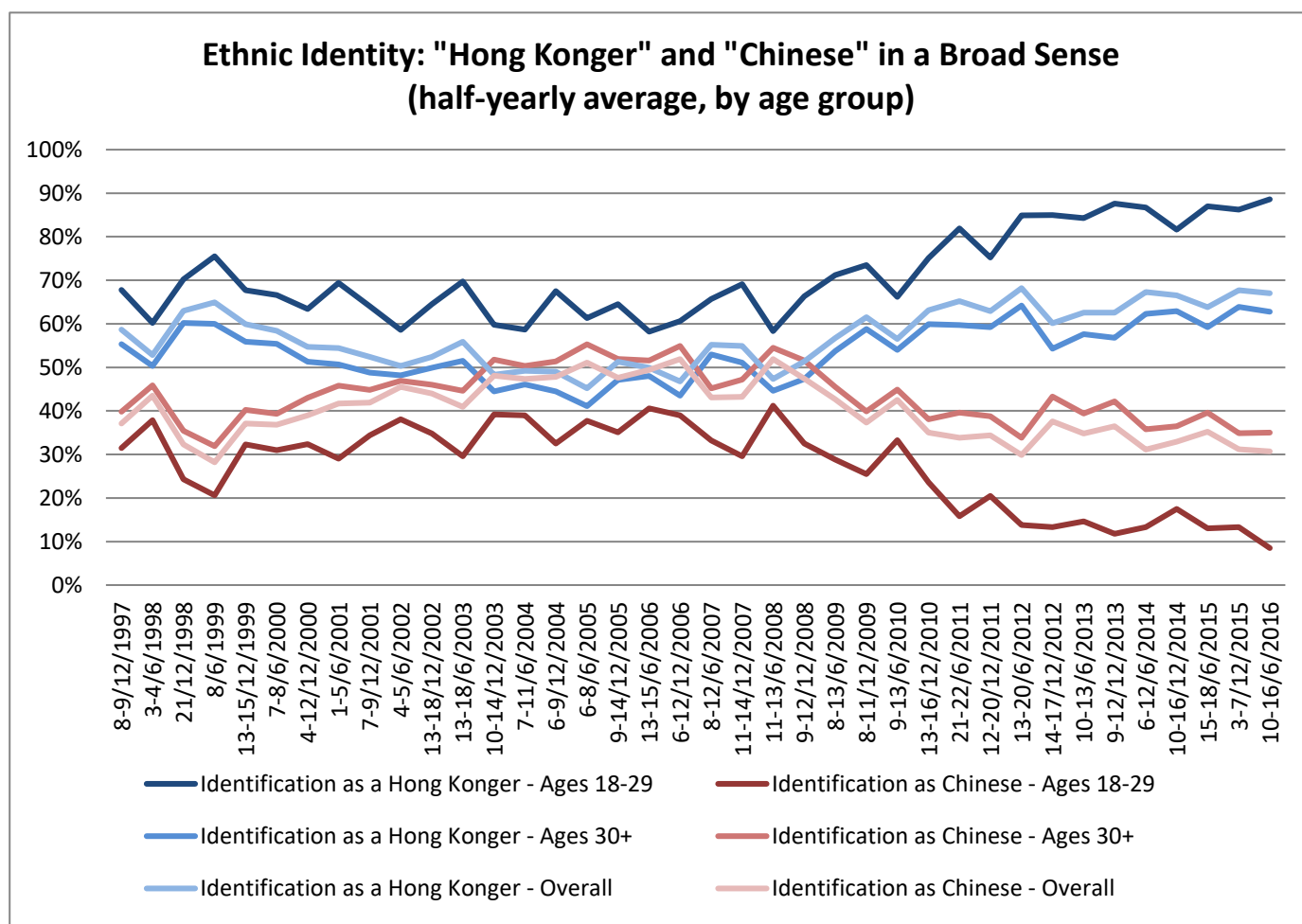
² Simon Lewis, "Students at Hong Kong's Oldest University Are Calling for the City's Independence," *Time Magazine*, March 16, 2016.

under the “One Country, Two Systems” (OCTS, 一國兩制) model. In many respects, the discussions of self-determination and the rise of an “independence movement” are a reflection of several political, economic and cultural issues stemming from the difference in ideological values between the people of Hong Kong and the Central Government in Beijing. A glance over the daily headlines in Hong Kong can reveal how every issue has become politicized in terms of a Hong Kong versus China dichotomy. The importation of water from China’s Dongjiang River in Guangdong, to use of Mandarin programming and simplified Chinese subtitles on TVB’s J5 newscast, cross-border parallel trading, missing Causeway Bay booksellers, and Hong Kong University’s appointment of pro-Beijing Council Chairman Arthur Li 李國章 are several issues that have become political battles in Hong Kong.

The University of Hong Kong’s (HKU) Public Opinion Programme is one of the most widely cited sources related to the question of Hong Kong identity. In the June 2016 Public Opinion Poll, which measures the “People’s Ethnic Identity”, 67.0% of the respondents identified themselves as a “Hong Konger” broadly defined, while only 30.7% of the respondents identified as “Chinese” broadly defined.³ These numbers indicate an increasing amount of identification as a “Hong Konger” while identification as “Chinese” has seen an overall decline in the last decade. In particular, 88.6% of youth ages 18-29 identified as a “Hong Konger”, the highest recorded score ever for this age demographic. At the same time, only 8.5% of youth 18-29 saw themselves as “Chinese”, the lowest recorded score since polling began in 1997.

³ According to the POP survey data, a Hong Konger broadly defined includes two categories from the survey. 41.9% identified as a “Hong Konger” (香港人) while 25.1% identified as a “Hong Konger in China” (中國的香港人). Meanwhile, a “Chinese” broadly defined included two similar categories. 17.8% identified as “Chinese” (中國人) while 12.9% identified as a “Chinese in Hong Kong” (香港的中國人). See Public Opinion Programme, “People’s Ethnic Identity 市民的身份認同,” *University of Hong Kong*, accessed June 04, 2016. <https://www.hkupop.hku.hk/english/popexpress/ethnic/index.html>.

Figure 1.1 Survey of the People's Ethnic Identity



Chinese identification has decreased over the last decade while Hong Kong identification has increased, especially in the age group 18 – 29.

Source: University of Hong Kong, Public Opinion Programme

As Hong Kong soon moves into its third decade after the 1997 retrocession, the data suggests that Hong Kong citizens are moving further away in their identification as “Chinese”, and are increasingly moving towards identifying as “Hong Kongers”, especially among the younger demographic. While such data has highlighted shifts in the identification of Hong Kong citizens, it still leaves a variety of questions unanswered. For instance, although respondents are asked to identify themselves based on five given categories, the question remains ambiguous without substantive definitions as to the meaning of how citizens associate themselves with the

terms “Hong Konger” and “Chinese”.⁴ Substantive definitions behind what each of these terms mean would clarify in what context people choose to identify with these labels.⁵ As Judith Nagata argues, identity “may vary according to particular factors of the broader social situation, rather than a fixed anchorage to which the individual is unambiguously bound.”⁶ Therefore, these political identities are influenced by both self-perceived factors as well as objective conditions. The integration of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) with China is generating new conversations about how Hong Kong’s unique identity attempts to defend itself against China’s increasingly powerful presence in today’s globalized world.

1.1 The Analytical Puzzle

The central research question presented in this work is to understand why more people are identifying as Hong Kongers and under what circumstances this is occurring. The development of localism provides the analytical framework for understanding the process whereby Hong Kong citizens have begun to prioritize a Hong Kong identity over a national Chinese identity.⁷ Political identification in Hong Kong has become influenced by the ideology of localism, which is the preference for prioritizing the local conditions over national interests. Localism has also become a political movement in which the people strive for autonomy and attempt to resist Beijing’s influence on the city.

⁴ The question reads, “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 or Refuse to answer.”

⁵ The polling results of HKU POP released on December 28, 2011 noted that “the people's identification with the term Hong Konger had reached a ten-year high, while that of 'Chinese' had dropped to a 12-year low.” Hao Tiechuan 郝鐵川, Director of the Central People's Government in Hong Kong openly criticized the survey as “unscientific” and “illogical” and even accused the POP of advocating for Hong Kong’s independence. Larger issues of political censorship may be limiting the scope of this research. See Robert Chung and Edward Tai, “Ethnic Identity of Hong Kong People: An Academic Question Turned Political,” in *Border Crossing in Greater China: Production, Community and Identity*, edited by Jenn-hwan Wang (New York: Routledge Press, 2015): 235-237.

⁶ Judith Nagata, “What Is a Malay? Situational Selection of Ethnic Identity in a Plural Society,” *American Ethnologist* Vol. 1 No. 2 (May 1974): 333.

⁷ Identity in this research is understood as “any social category in which an individual is eligible to be a member. See Kanchan Chandra, “What is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?” *Annual Review of Political Science* Volume 9, (2006): 400.

To explore the concept of localism further, this thesis contributes to two areas of analysis. The first is to explain the key events which have contributed to the development of localism. While localism is not a new phenomenon in Hong Kong, a new variant of has emerged after the 2014 Umbrella Movement. The failure of the Umbrella Movement to secure universal suffrage has resulted in the rise of localist groups which are redefining interpretations of what is “local” and the qualities associated with a Hong Kong identity. Localism has become divided between three similar but diverging groups: (1) preservationists who seek to protect local Hong Kong spaces through the discourse of cultural and socio-economic struggle, (2) ethnic localists who uses nativism to create a Hong Kong nation based on Southern Chinese traditions and an ethno-cultural superiority over China, and (3) civic localists who focus on the conception of a Hong Kong civic nationalism based upon principles of liberal and universal values. These different narratives of the “local” have created different interpretations of how the Hong Kong nation should be defined.

Second, this thesis will further explore how institutional questions of advocating for more autonomy and independence from China have also factored into the people’s political identity. The question of nationality in Hong Kong has become integrated into the political orientations of citizens and is impacting electoral politics. Traditionally, Hong Kong’s political spectrum has been traditionally divided between two main groups: the pro-establishment (親建制派), who are supportive of Beijing’s policies within Hong Kong, and the pan-democrats (泛民主派) who wish to expedite the process of democratization of Hong Kong within the framework of a democratic China. Localism has become a driving force of change in Hong Kong, creating a new “third force” based on ideas of upholding a local indigenous culture that is unique to Hong Kong and a closer association to the ideals of self-determination and independence. This has resulted in a

plethora of new political forces in Hong Kong party politics. Such a recent change within Hong Kong has been far less documented by academics, and has not thoroughly analyzed the current process whereby the idea of a Hong Kong nationality is becoming integrated into the political orientations of Hong Kong youth.

The development of localism has coincided with the political polarization of Hong Kong as conflicts between government and society continues. As the political polarization is intensified, the collateral damage will likely be that everyday life will become hijacked by political battles. As Hong Kong's situation continues to escalate, Beijing will continue to quicken the pace of integration. Such a conflict could escalate out of control into violent clashes if Hong Kong's youth continue to intensify their approach or if Beijing feels is necessary, to use more authoritative means to tighten its control. Considering Hong Kong's importance not only to world trade and its strategic importance to China, these issues warrant further investigation.

1.2 Chapter Overview

The rest of this thesis is divided into five main parts. Chapter Two outlines the theoretical framework of this study, defining and conceptualizing theoretically the nation, nationalism and national identity. Chapter Three examines the development of localism and Hong Kong nationalism through the Umbrella Movement. Chapter Four provides an in-depth analysis of Hong Kong politics using the 2016 New Territories East by-election as a case study to explore how localism is becoming ingrained in a Hong Kong nationality. Chapter Five addresses the conceptualization of the Hong Kong nation by localists and the city-state's future before providing a conclusion to the study.

Chapter 2: Hong Kong in Context: A Theoretical Review of the Literature

The following chapter establishes the theoretical framework of this thesis. The purpose of this section is to evaluate the broader theoretical literature on national identity as well as its place in the Greater Chinese context. A survey of the literature will then discuss how national identity has been discussed in Hong Kong followed by an examination of the interactions between local and national identification.

2.1 Situating Hong Kong in the Identity Literature

In 1882, Ernest Renan stated that “a nation's existence is...a daily plebiscite, just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life.”⁸ In Renan's often cited quote, he argues that as long as the people consent and provide a clearly expressed desire to continue common life, the nation will continue to exist by the will of the community. For the people of Hong Kong however, such a statement remains difficult to ascertain. Hong Kong has never been the centre of its own subjectivity; its history, culture and identity always defined by its hybrid identity of both “Chineseness” and “Britishness”. The rise of political protests and the idea of Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy bring to the forefront an important question; does Hong Kong have a nation of its own? It is clear that Hong Kongers embrace the idea of a Hong Kong identity, but whether this identity constitutes a Hong Kong nation and a specific Hong Kong national identity is widely debated. A discussion on both the theoretical understandings of the nation is needed to reconsider some of the arguments that have been made thus far by scholars. With this in mind, three interrelated concepts need to be framed: the nation, nationalism and national identity.

⁸ Ernest Renan, “What is a nation?,” in *Nation and Narration*, edited by Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990): 12-19.

2.2 Defining the Nation

The literature on nationalisms is an exhaustive field, as the historical debate over the conception of the nation has been extensively covered by social scientists. The difficulty of this is expressed through the words of Eric Hobsbawm. When asked to define nationalism, Hobsbawm stated that “we know what it is when you do not ask us, but we cannot very quickly explain or define it.”⁹ Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954) and Ernest Renan (1823-1892) provide two of the classical definitions of a nation. On one hand, Meinecke emphasizes that nations are large and powerful communities defined through ethnicity, stating that the nation is:

A common place of residence, a common ancestry or, more exactly, since there are no racially pure nations in an anthropological sense, a common or similar mix of blood, a common language, a common intellectual life, a common state or federation of similar states—all of these things can be important and essential elements of a nation, but that does not mean every nation must possess them all to be a nation. However, a natural core based on blood relationship must be present in a nation.¹⁰

In contrast, Renan rejected the claims that a nation is defined through ethnicity, and argued that it is a civic conception, formed through the choice of individuals. Renan described the nation as:

a large-scale social solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life.¹¹

The contrasting views between Meinecke and Renan reveal one of the difficulties of the study of nations and nationalism: that there is no singular definition of what should constitute a nation. These definitions however range on a spectrum of “objective” versus “subjective” criteria which

⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

¹⁰ Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the Nation State*, trans, Robert B Kimber. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 9.

¹¹ Renan, “What is a nation?,” 12-19.

are used to define nation. For instance, Joseph Stalin uses a definition based on “objective” factors, writing along the lines of Meinecke that “a nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.”¹² Likewise, the definition posed by Benedict Anderson, encompasses the spirit of Renan, writing that nations are “imagined political communities” which are “imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”¹³

Moving forward, this thesis uses Anthony Smith’s definition of the nation, defined as “a human community occupying a homeland, and having common myths and a shared history, common public culture, a single economy and common rights and duties for all members.”¹⁴ Such a definition is used to solve two problems. First, Smith’s definition attempts to span the “objective-subjective” spectrum by incorporating elements from both definitions. Furthermore, it also draws upon Max Weber’s ideal-types theory, and notes that moving from ideal-type to empirical instances, abstract definitions can only be used as an approximation and may find some real-world exceptions. While Smith’s definition has not been met without its own criticisms, this more flexible definition explains why some cases may be constituted as nations despite not rigidly meeting all of the “set” objective criteria. Second, Smith also argues that nations to do need to have a sovereign state of their own. Rather, the people of a nation must “have an aspiration for a measure of autonomy coupled with the physical occupation of its homeland.”¹⁵ Acknowledging that statehood is not a prerequisite for nationhood helps further the case for understanding Hong Kong as a nation of its own.

¹² Joseph Stalin, “Marxism and the National Question,” *Prosveshcheniye*, No. 3-5, March-May 1913. Translated by Carl Kavanagh. Retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1913/03.htm>.

¹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

¹⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

2.3 Nationalism and National Identity

Building on Smith's definition, nationalism can be defined as an "ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'."¹⁶ The main goals of nationalism are to foster national autonomy, national unity and national identity. This process of nation-building can result in "[a] small minority of nationalists who possess a general concept of the abstract 'nation' seek to create particular nations 'on the ground.'"¹⁷ As Hao Zhidong also points out, nationalism is also a belief in the "congruency of the nation and the state" which then "fosters a social movement of nation-building or state formation."¹⁸

Nationalism can be further split into two variants, divided along principles of ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism. While scholars have used different definitions, the main difference in both of these terms is how membership within the collective community is defined. Ethnic nationalism is based upon a "given" criteria of ethnicity presented as a form of "ascriptive identity" categorized by variously defined elements ranging from a myth of common decent or other proxies such as language or religion to demark ethnic differentiation.¹⁹ The basic premise is that this type of identity is "given" rather than chosen by the individual since ethnic identity is a "natural qualit[y] inherent in one's being."²⁰ In contrast, civic nationalism is an identity formed by the "collective enterprise of [...] members [...] rooted in an acquired rather than ascriptive identity" which is based upon common values and patterns of social interaction and

¹⁶ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷ Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 10.

¹⁸ Hao Zhidong, *Whither Taiwan and Mainland China: National Identity, the State, and Intellectuals*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 15.

¹⁹ Michael Keating, *Nations against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*, Second Edition. (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 6.

²⁰ Hao, *Whither Taiwan and Mainland China*, 17.

demonstrated through institutions and historical memory.²¹ In civic nationalism, an individual “irrespective of birth or ethnic origins” can become a member of the community through adaptation of a certain set of political and social interactions that are defined by common values and a sense of common identity.²² Therefore, the “rights and duties” of the individual is the important qualifier rather than their place of origin.²³ Such feelings of belonging, whether they are manifested in ethnic or civic nationalisms form the basis for the attributes that are shared by individuals who belong to a particular nation. National identity can be therefore understood as the bridge between individual and collective levels of thought which form a “collective identity” where patterns of memories, values, symbols, myths and traditions create cultural continuity as well as the continuous process of identification on a collective level.²⁴

2.4 National Identity as a Polemical Problem in Greater China

In the Chinese context, the term “national identity” has two translations which further complicate the idea of political identification: *minzu rentong* (民族認同) [ethnic identity] and *guojia rentong* (國家認同) [state identity]. The main reason for this is that the polysemanticism of the English word “nation” which can take on the meaning as both the “nation” and the “state” when translated into Chinese. This has created a debate as to whether or not the nation should be described as the identification with a community or with the state. However, Hao points out that “national identity can refer to an identification with a nation that is mainly a single cultural and historical community, with a state that is mainly a political community, or with a nation-state that is a combination of a single nation or multiple nations and the state.”²⁵

²¹ Keating, *Nations against the State*, 6,

²² Ibid.

²³ Hao, *Whither Taiwan and Mainland China*, 17.

²⁴ Smith, *Nationalism: Theory Ideology and History*, 18-19.

²⁵ In this research, the nation-state idea is not further discussed, given that Hong Kong is not a formal nation-state, since it does not have sovereign state status. Given Hong Kong’s de-facto nation-state status has not been enough to

On one hand, the term “*minzu rentong*” (where *minzu* is translated as “nation”) describes national identity in terms of identifying with the nation in terms of common descent, language and culture. Scholar Jiang Yi-Huah argues that the term national identity refers to “the identity of a people who share a common descent or historical culture, rather than a sovereign state. Otherwise, the assertion that every nation should have its own state would be a tautology.”²⁶ The basis of this analysis comes from the identification with a community. As Hao explains, the national identity of the Tibetan, Uyghur, Mongol and Taiwanese independence advocates are a separate national identity because they “[do] not identify with the Han in China, since they believe they are largely different from them in history and culture.”²⁷

In contrast, the other used term used to describe national identity is “*guojia rentong*” (where *guojia* is understood as the “state” or “country”). Here, the translation of *guojia* as the “state” suggests that the basis for national identification is with a sovereign political community. Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim in their study of China define national identity as a state identification since they argue that there are two “interdependent dimensions” of national identity, which include both (1) the act of identification on a scale of legitimacy and (2) the identification with the state itself.²⁸ Therefore, the identification with the state is the affirmation of the political entity that “coordinates and regulates human action...using violence when it deems necessary.”²⁹

quell the fears of localists, the nation-state concept is not applicable to Hong Kong. See: Hao, *Whither Taiwan and Mainland China*, 14.

²⁶ Jiang Yi-huah, “Is Taiwan a Nation? On Current Debate Over Taiwanese Nationality and National Recognition,” in *The Dignity of Nations: Equality, Competition, and Honor in East Asian Nationalism*, edited by John Fitzgerald and Sechin Y.S. Chien (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 148.

²⁷ Hao, *Whither Taiwan and Mainland China*, 12.

²⁸ Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, “In Search of a Theory of National Identity,” in *China’s Quest for National Identity*, edited by Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 14.

²⁹ Hao, *Whither Taiwan and Mainland China*, 12.

In the case of Hong Kong, these two definitions have important implications for understanding national identity. If national identity is based upon the nation (*minzu*), then a Hong Kong national identity is possible since it refers specifically to a community where “individuals have certain mutual rights and duties” as members of the collectivity.³⁰ However, if national identity is based upon the state (*guojia*) then a Chinese identity is only possible given the PRC’s control over the state and the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Thus far, the only conceptions of a Hong Kong state identity exist amongst independence advocates, outlining a new vision for sovereignty and national identification. However, these ideas are only political visions with no legitimization through the electoral process.³¹ Rather than justify one type of national identification over another, it is more important to understand the meaning behind these two definitions and how terminology can greatly affect our understanding of these terms.

2.5 The Local-National Dichotomy

The scholarship of the 1990s and the return of Hong Kong to the PRC have framed Hong Kong identity as a question of Chinese identity. This definition however has been based upon a state definition of national identity, since many Hong Kong citizens are ethnic Han Chinese but have not coherently identified themselves in a political sense as part of the Chinese state or part of the Chinese nation (中華民族, *zhonghua minzu*). The question of national identity has been framed by Gordon Mathews et al. as a unique post-colonial discourse; since Hong Kong’s Chinese national identity is a post-1997 phenomenon.³² The 1997 handover, while officially transferring state sovereignty over to the PRC has created a confusion as to how Hong Kong’s

³⁰ Frank C. S. Liu and Francis L. F. Lee, “Country, National, and Pan-national Identification in Taiwan and Hong Kong,” *Asian Survey* Vol. 53 No. 6 (2013): 1115.

³¹ Until September 2016 when five LegCo candidates were banned for advocating independence, these new visions of state identity were unlikely, but possible options for Hong Kongers.

³² Gordon Mathews, Eric Kit-Wai Ma and Tai-lok Lui, *Hong Kong, China: Learning to Belong to a Nation* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 1.

identity should be viewed. If analyzed through the state perspective, then a Hong Kong national identity could not exist, since the state identity, under the PRC, is one that represents a Chinese national identity and furthermore holds the monopoly over the legitimate use of violence through the People's Liberation Army (PLA). This line of argument has casted Hong Kong identity as a local or regional sub-variant of Chinese identity. This is also reinforced by the fact that in 1972, Hong Kong and Macau were both removed from the United Nation's *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples* at the request of the PRC, further preventing Hong Kong from assuming any independent capacity.

Eric Ma and Anthony Fung's study of national identification in post-colonial Hong Kong is example of the state-centered conception of national identity. The authors argues that "Hong Kong people [after 1997] are also now offered a new national identity: legal, military and political identification in relation to the sovereign state, as can be seen through cognitive and emotional recognition of popular icons."³³ In their interpretation, "Hong Kong people are claiming a mixed local and national identity" whereby the national identity is represented by a Chinese state identity and local is represented by a Hong Kong identity.³⁴ National identity is multilayered concept in which political, cultural, economic and historical layers are causing different levels of identification. According to their survey data from 1996-2008, they argue that as "Hong Kong is integrated into China, the growing habitual contacts and frequent traffic between Hong Kong and China essentially annulled the single anchoring of mainland Chinese as the significant 'other' for constructing local Hong Kong identity."³⁵ In their opinion, the merging of the national and local identifications has already begun.

³³ Eric K.W. Ma and Anthony Y. H. Fung, "Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006," *Asian Journal of Communication* Vol. 17 No. 2 (June 2007): 183.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Chan Kit-Chan building upon Ma and Fung's research argues that political identification with the Chinese state is low due to the different political values that are present in Hong Kong.³⁶ He argues that the equilibrium between identification with a "political China" and an "economic China" have become imbalanced due to the political and economic integration occurring after the handover. While economic integration has opened many opportunities, citizens are concerned that an over reliance on China will erode Hong Kong's economic and political autonomy under OCTS. Thus, the problem of identity is being exacerbated by both institutional and economic problems. Ma Ngok, a scholar at the University of Hong Kong, adds to this debate noting that Hong Kong political values have shifted from an instrumental view of democracy, neoliberal ideology and materialist values in the colonial period into values of equal political rights which are making people "less content with the inequality and semi-democratic nature of the current regime."³⁷ Furthermore, Ma explains that the OCTS model, which was supposed to function as a "mechanism [...] of separation between mainland China and Hong Kong after the handover" has failed to do so in light of the influx of immigrants, growing social inequalities, and the rise of localism in Hong Kong society.³⁸ While scholars such as Aihwa Ong argue that Hong Kongers have in the past used "flexible notion of citizenship and sovereignty as strategies to accumulate capital and power," Hong Kong youth are becoming less flexible in their citizenship preferences now that they believe both an "economic China" and a "political China" are incongruent with Hong Kong interests, therefore choosing to ground themselves in a single identity.³⁹

³⁶ Chan Kit-chan, "China as 'Other': Resistance to and ambivalence toward national identity in Hong Kong," *China Perspectives* (2014): 25.

³⁷ Ma Ngok, "Value Changes and Legitimacy Crisis in Post-industrial Hong Kong," *Asian Survey* Vol 51. No 4 (2011): 683.

³⁸ Ma Ngok, "The Rise of 'Anti-China' Sentiments in Hong Kong and the 2012 Legislative Council Elections," *The China Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring 2015): 40.

³⁹ Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 6.

2.6 Debating the Hong Kong Nation

In the Chinese context, objective-based definitions have been used to refute the idea of a Hong Kong nation. Scholar Sonny Lo draws upon Stalin's definition to argue that a nation is "a large group of people united by common descent, history, culture and language and who reside in a state or territory" which Hong Kong does not qualify under.⁴⁰ This line of logic argues that Hong Kong is not a group united by common decent since the Han Chinese are the original inhabitants of Hong Kong before the Opium Wars. Therefore, Hong Kong cannot be a nation since the idea of a Hong Kong person is still new, and was only formed after the 1967 riots when the colonial administration closed the communication with China and tried to employ a greater sense of local identity.⁴¹ Lo criticizes Hong Kong youth, writing that their ideas are ahistorical since they "turn a blind eye to the historical links between the mainland and Hong Kong" and do not acknowledge that Hong Kong's Chinese population has an "inherited Chinese culture" from China.⁴² Thus, the Hong Kong nation is "not only a serious distortion of facts" but is an "absurd factual error" which is "twisting the concept of nationhood" to suit political purposes.⁴³

On the other hand, Hong Kong youth have become nationalist architects attempting to define Hong Kong's self-determination as a movement for a Hong Kong nation. Such definitions have frequently cited Anderson's imagined communities theory, noting that the clear boundary between Hong Kong and the PRC has created both a physical and ideological discursive space to allow Hong Kong citizens to imagine themselves as a separate entity from China.⁴⁴ This is aided by the fact that Hong Kong maintains separate passports, border control, postal system, currency

⁴⁰ Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo, "Claiming HK is a 'nation' a serious distortion of facts," *The China Daily*, April 8, 2016.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Tommy Cheung, "Father' of Hong Kong nationalism? A Critical Review of Wan Chin's City-State Theory," *Asian Education and Development Studies* Vol. 4, No. 4, (2015): 465.

and legal system from China which have given it a de-facto nation-state status. Anderson's theory of "print capitalism", which argues that imagined communities are formed through the printing press and proliferated through the capitalist marketplace been used to further the argument that a unique vernacular was created in Hong Kong.⁴⁵ This is exemplified by the rise of Hong Kong popular culture in the 1970s, and the use of Cantonese which created a unique Hong Kong-based culture through the rise of television, film and popular music, which represented the collective psyche of Hong Kong culture at the time.⁴⁶

Figure 2.1 Hong Kong as a Nation?

Criteria	Facts
A Proper Name?	Yes: Officially known as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, but more commonly referred to as Hong Kong.
Common Myths?	Mixed: Han Chinese-based but also includes stories of Southern Chinese traditions from Guangdong e.g. Lingnan Baiyue and Pearl River Delta culture.
A Shared history?	Yes: Accepted history of Hong Kong under British Crown rule from 1841 to 1997. Founding moment traced to the cession of Hong Kong in the 1842 Treaty of Nanking. Codified in the Hong Kong Museum of History and in various history books written about Hong Kong.
A Common Public Culture?	Yes: Common culture found in the hybrid of eastern and western values. Emergence of a unique Cantonese culture through the rise of television, film and popular music.
Occupation of Homeland?	Mixed: Ancestral homeland of most Hong Kong people originates in Guangdong. However, more and more people are identifying Hong Kong as a geographical homeland, demarcated by the territorial borders established in the colonial era.
Common Rights and Duties?	Mixed: Law of Hong Kong based upon rule of law and originally based upon English common law (now known as the Basic Law post-1997). While the Basic Law outlines the protection of rights and freedoms as well as the protection of the "Hong Kong way of life" for 50 years under Article 5, it also advocates that Hong Kong is an unalienable part of the PRC under Article 1.
A Single Economy?	Yes: Western influenced brought market mentality which coincided with laissez-faire capitalism and economic liberalism to create a world economic financial hub for trading and investment.

Source: Framework adapted from Anthony Smith.

⁴⁵ Anderson, "Imagined Communities," 43-46.

⁴⁶ "Hong Kong Nationalism (香港民族論)," *Undergrad 學苑*, edited by Brian Leung 梁繼平 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Student Union, 2013): 53.

2.7 Localism, Self-Determination and New Conceptions of a State Identity

The dynamics of localism however have created a new discourse attempting to place Hong Kong at the centre of its own subjectivity. Chen Yun-chung and Mirana M. Szeto provide some of the early English commentary on localism, noting aptly it has become a mainstream discourse in Hong Kong identity politics after the Umbrella Movement. Localism, they argue, has allowed the Hong Kong people to “reclaim their own destiny, to reject the authoritarian rule of Beijing and to reclaim unique local cultural identities as different from China.”⁴⁷ Chen and Szeto identify two major groups of localists; noting a conflict between “new preservationists” who view localism as a “community rebuilding movement” and “nativists” who carry a xenophobic type of localism based on the idea of “blaming the immigrant.”⁴⁸ Their analysis however focuses heavily on the new preservationists arguing that this group “successfully empowers territorial communities against urban crises.”⁴⁹ While preservationists have been successful at generating attention towards social issues and economic injustices, this type of localism has had limited success in the realm of politics due to the inability for broader political coordination. These “issue-based localists” protect Hong Kong through the discourse of cultural struggle rather than form a political discourse on self-determination and political autonomy.

Using the nationalism literature as a departing point, this research offers a new perspective of attempting to categorize localism based nationalism theory. Building on Chen and Szeto’s model the following chapters will examine the divide between two types of localism: ethnic localists who offer an ethno-cultural conception of the nation and civic localists who through a civic conception of the nation, emphasize universal values of democracy, rule of law

⁴⁷ Yun-chung Chen and Mirana M. Szeto. “The forgotten road of progressive localism: New Preservation Movement in Hong Kong, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* Vol. 16 No. 3(2015): 436.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

and transparent institutions. These different interpretations of the local are competing with each other to become the “authentic” representation of localism in Hong Kong. As such, each faction defines itself as “local” in their own way, making these definitions subjective and the definition of what constitutes a local Hong Konger also subject to interpretation.

In summary, this chapter has analyzed the terms nation, nationalism and national identity to discuss how in this case study, a nation will be defined. It also provided a brief typology of ethnic and civic nationalism as well as how national identity, which has been largely based upon a state-centred definition can also be defined through a nation-centred definition. In the case of Hong Kong, the literature has primarily focused on a national identity based upon a Chinese-centred state post-1997. However, the rise of localism in Hong Kong represents a new movement for self-determination which is articulating new visions for a state and a national identity that are competing with a Chinese national identity.

Chapter 3: The Road to the Umbrella Movement

The following chapter discusses Hong Kong in its second decade of post-colonial rule. It provides a brief historical overview before analyzing the most recent developments in the post-colonial era, mainly the rise of Hong Kong localism. The goal of this chapter is to trace the origins of localist sentiments and how they became ingrained within Hong Kong's political system after the failure of the Umbrella Movement. It will also categorize and classify three types of localists: preservationists, ethnic localists and civic localists to demonstrate the ways these groups provide a discourse on Hong Kong identity. While these visions may not describe any general consensus among Hong Kongers, they do however articulate new visions for a state and a national identity that are competing with a Chinese national identity.

3.1 The History of Colonial Hong Kong: An Overview (1895 – 1997)

Historically, the majority of Hong Kong people are descendants of sojourners who travelled from China to Hong Kong. These early migrants to Hong Kong used the colony as a place of transition rather than a home. Before the arrival of the British, four sub-ethnic Chinese groups inhabited the land of Hong Kong: the Boat Dwellers (水上人), Hakka (客家人), Hoklo (福佬人) and Punti (本地人).⁵⁰ These groups today however, only comprise of a small segment of the population due to several waves of immigration from China. As such the conception of Hong Kong identity today can be regarded as one that is inherently civic, since the majority of people are not native to the land, especially those who claim, under the banner of localism that they are indigenous to Hong Kong. Rather, other characteristics are uniting the people, especially the desire for Hong Kongers to protect their current way of life under a liberal and open

⁵⁰ An in-depth history of prehistorical Hong Kong can be found in the Hong Kong Museum of History. The “Hong Kong Story” Exhibition features a section entitled “Folk Culture in Hong Kong” which describes in detail the lives of the four sub-ethnic groups.

economic society. Hong Kong's connection to China and the provincial origins of many Hong Kongers is still closely intact compared to other places such as Taiwan, whose long history has been used as a platform for distinguishing itself as a separate entity. The following historical overview outlines the trends in Chinese identification in British Hong Kong and how the emergence of a local identity also developed in the process.

During the early days of colonial rule, the Hong Kong Chinese demonstrated close ties to China. Economic migrants and refugees coming to Hong Kong had a strong connection to their homeland, with many coming from neighbouring Guangdong, attempting to make more money and achieve a better life for those back home.⁵¹ These migrants embraced a Chinese nationalism since their goals and orientation were towards their family and life back in China. The emergence of District of Origin Associations, sub-cultural communities where people identified themselves with their ancestral homes further reinforced the connection with China as not only the ancestral home but as a place of emotional attachment.⁵²

The closing however of the border between Hong Kong and China after 1949 became the first step in creating a local Hong Kong identity. The formation of the PRC meant that the flows of people would become restricted, and one result of this was that "Communist rule in China had turned the Chinese population of Hong Kong into a settled one."⁵³ The Hong Kong colonial government enforced border controls to prevent the influx of refugees from entering, while the PRC government, fearing "capitalist contamination" also closed off the border to Hong Kong. Over the next 60 years, Great Britain's colonial control over Hong Kong would become the

⁵¹ Steve Tsang, "The Rise of a Hong Kong Identity," in *China Today: Economic Reforms, Social Cohesion and Collective Identities*, edited by Taciana Fisac and Leila Fernandez- Stenbridge, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 222.

⁵² Hugh Baker, "Life in the Cities," 471. For example, on Hong Kong Island, North Point was commonly referred to as "Little Shanghai" while other industries, such as the rice trade, became dominated by Teochew (潮州) merchants.

⁵³ Tsang, "The Rise of a Hong Kong Identity," 223.

predominant influence over the city-state. Children who were “born and bred in Hong Kong” had no first hand experiences of the PRC until the latter opened up in the late 1970s.⁵⁴ However, the China that this older Hong Kong generation once knew from their lived experiences in the Pearl River Delta would be very different from the one they would encounter after the opening of the Chinese economy. In addition to border controls, economic policies were implemented to create a “de-linking with the Chinese economy” and created the basis for a Hong Kong identity that would be based upon capitalist free trade and “globally oriented export-industrialization.”⁵⁵

By the 1970s, Hong Kong’s economy had begun to develop, bringing prosperity to the British Colony. Reforms under Governor Murray MacLehose created several benefits for locals including a massive public housing program, the implementation of labour laws, increased welfare and free public education. The crackdown on corruption within government and the “arrogance of expatriate officials” represented the shift in focus of the Hong Kong people to focus on local affairs, rather than the events occurring within China.⁵⁶ Along with these reforms, the mindset of the people changed. Rather than view Hong Kong as a transient place, more people began to view Hong Kong as a permanent home. By 1971, local born Hong Kong citizens outnumbered immigrants for the first time in the colony’s history and the implementation of the Hong Kong identity card further divided locals and newcomers from China.⁵⁷

The signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984 settled the future of Hong Kong and its return to the PRC in 1997. In Hong Kong, the message was clear that the people were not pleased with the conditions under which the Joint Declaration was signed. Initially, the mood

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Alvin Y. So, “The Making of Hong Kong Nationalism,” in *Asian Nationalisms Reconsidered*, edited by Jeffrey Kingston, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 136.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 137.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

reflected protest against the lack of Hong Kong's voice within the negotiations between Deng Xiaoping of China and Margret Thatcher of the United Kingdom. However, with the future of Hong Kong tied to China, the people realized that the events occurring in China were relevant to the territory and could have an impact on their own future. Events such as the 1989 Tiananmen Square Demonstrations forced Hong Kong citizens to reflect upon themselves and created a new interest in Chinese politics. It also marked the beginning of Hong Kong involvement in Chinese affairs with organizations, such as the *Alliance in Support of the Patriotic and Democratic Movement in China* which was created to voice the opinions of Hong Kongers in Chinese politics. While some citizens wanted to maintain their autonomy and preserve their existing way of living, others also believed that the resumption of PRC sovereignty over Hong Kong meant that the people should also have the right to participate in the political affairs of China.

Despite the closer relationship between Hong Kong and China in the lead up to the 1997 handover, the democracy movement became a critical factor by the pro-democratic forces to solidify a unique set of democratic political values in Hong Kong. September 1991 marked the first time Hong Kong citizens would be able to directly vote in the election of a Legislative Council.⁵⁸ The wide plethora of political parties included pan-democrat and pro-Beijing parties which encouraged citizens to vote for parties on both sides of the spectrum. Furthermore, the construction of OCTS reflected this dual identity as it was intended to allow Hong Kong to keep its capitalist economic system and allow it to keep a high degree of autonomy in its own economic, cultural and political affairs. These rights are guaranteed under Hong Kong's mini constitution, the Basic Law until 2047. When Hong Kong's sovereignty was return to the PRC, it created the conditions where Hong Kong people could embrace dual identity as citizens of the PRC, provided that Hong Kongers were ruled by Hong Kongers and not by Chinese officials.

⁵⁸ Ibid.,140-141.

3.2 Post-Colonial Tensions in the HKSAR (1997 – 2007)

The origins of localism in Hong Kong today emerged from both institutional problems as well as economic issues which exacerbated the growing tension in the post-colonial era. The beginning of Hong Kong's troubles began in the new millennium with two critical events in 2003 that would spark the beginning of the Hong Kong nationalism movement and the emergence of a Hong Kong localism. First, the July 1, 2003 protests on the sixth anniversary of the handover became one of the earliest signs of the Hong Kong's people de-identification with a political China. The government led by the first Chief Executive Tung-Chee Wah attempted to pass legislation which would enact a security law based upon Article 23 of the Hong Kong Basic Law, which states that the HKSAR "prohibit[s] any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government."⁵⁹ The resulting July 1st protests saw over 500,000 people take to the streets to protest against the implementation of the anti-subversion law.⁶⁰ As a result, the legislation was shelved due to the lack of public support. One of the main slogans of the movement, "sovereignty to the people," alluded to the idea of "democratic western ideology" while pro-democracy legislators argued that universal and equal suffrage is a basic human right, as outlined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).⁶¹ As such, the notion of universal values became ingrained into the idea of Hong Kong values which formed the basis for Hong Kong civic nationalism.

Second, the aftermath of the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) crisis on Hong Kong drastically affected the economy. SARS impacted not only the tourism industry of Hong Kong but also the city's stability as an economic and financial centre of Asia. On June 29, 2003,

⁵⁹ Article 23, The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, retrieved from <http://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclawtext>.

⁶⁰ Ma, "Value Changes and Legitimacy Crisis in Post-industrial Hong Kong," 689.

⁶¹ Ibid.

the HKSAR Government and the Central Government in Beijing signed the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) which acted as a free trade agreement that “offered a timely economic boost by providing preferential access to Mainland markets in 18 services areas and eliminating tariffs on 374 Mainland product codes.”⁶² The “immediate and visible impact” of CEPA however came in the form of relaxed restriction on cross-boundary travel between Hong Kong and China.⁶³ Under the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS), visitors from Beijing, Shanghai, and eight other cities in Guangdong were able to visit Hong Kong. This was later expanded to other provinces and cities in China. The results of the new scheme resulted in boosting Hong Kong’s economy to pre-SARS levels through the estimated 800,000 to 900,000 Mainland visitors who travelled to Hong Kong monthly between 2003 and 2004.⁶⁴

Despite the initial positive effects of this agreement, CEPA however made Hong Kong’s economy more dependent on China’s economy. In the initial years, the restoration of Hong Kong’s economy had a positive effect on the people identifying with China. However, the deepening integration of China and Hong Kong resulted in Hong Kongers distancing themselves from the concept of economic China as well as a political China.⁶⁵ The influx of Chinese tourism created a new trans-border experience whereby the people of Hong Kong significantly changed their perception of the cross-border movement, due to the skyrocketing Hong Kong property prices, which has been commonly blamed on Mainland Chinese buyers.⁶⁶ These negative experiences created tension between Hong Kong and Mainland citizens, which caused an imbalanced relationship between these two places. Hong Kongers became increasingly

⁶² HKSAR Information Services Department, “Happy economic returns after 10 years of CEPA,” *Press Releases*, September 2, 2013, accessed on May 23, 2016. <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201309/02/P201309020603.htm>.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ma, “Value Changes and Legitimacy Crisis in Post-industrial Hong Kong,” 692.

⁶⁵ Chan, “China as ‘Other,’” 32.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

concerned that the over reliance on China will erode Hong Kong's high degree of economic and political autonomy under OCTS. This has fuelled localist actions which seek to redress these perceived social, economic and political injustices against Hong Kongers.

3.3 The Rise of Localism

The political and economic conflicts arising out of the events of 2003 created the conditions under which localism would continue to grow in Hong Kong. Tracing the process of localism however reveals that at various points, different factions have created different interpretations of what is defining the meaning behind what is "local". As Yun-chung Chen and Mirana M. Szeto explain, "localism neither shares a unified cultural imaginary and symbolic order nor a single operational logic."⁶⁷

In following section, three competing visions of localism are further explored, to explain the various competing localist factions that have emerged. The first category, preservationists, are localists who seek to protect local Hong Kong spaces through community-based movements. These localists have been responsible for cultural preservation of Hong Kong and the protection of various heritage sites. As such, these Preservationists only view Hong Kong through the discourse of cultural struggle and socio-economic change. The second category, ethnic localists, are nativists who use xenophobic rhetoric to push ethnocentric beliefs about immigration and nationalism. These localists have been active in pushing a Hong Kong ethno-nationalism to categorize people as Hong Kongers and Mainland Chinese through an "us versus them" rhetoric. Finally, the third category, civic localists, define Hong Kong through a civic nationalism which emphasizes an acquired cultural knowledge of protecting Hong Kong values and institutions.

⁶⁷ Yun-chung Chen and Mirana M. Szeto, "The forgotten road of progressive localism: New Preservation Movement in Hong Kong," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* Vol. 16 No. 3(2015): 436.

Figure 3.1 Types of Localism in Hong Kong

	Preservationists	Civic localists	Ethnic Localists
Other Names	Preservationists, progressive localists	Autonomists, “young localists”	Nativists, “old localists”
Defining Stance	Issue based localism; seek to protect local Hong Kong interests through the discourse of cultural struggle and socio-economic change.	Civic-nationalists, defenders of Hong Kong are defined by their values, cultural knowledge and protection of local institutions (e.g. universal values such as democracy)	Ethno-cultural nationalists who divide Mainlanders and Hong Kongers through an “us versus them” rhetoric. Seek the separation of Hong Kong and Mainland culture.
Examples	Star Ferry Preservation Protest, Queen’s Pier Conservation Project, Anti-Express-Rail Link Demonstrations	HKUSU Student Publications in <i>Undergrad</i> , Hong Kong Indigenous New Territories By-Election Campaign	Anti-Parallel Trading Protests, Anti-Mainland Tourism Protests, Passion Times Media
Associated Groups	Socialist Action, Land Justice League	Hong Kong Indigenous, Youngspiration	Civic Passion, Hong Kong Resurgence Order, Proletariat Political Institute

Source: Author’s Creation.

3.4 Early Signs of Localism: Preservationists and the Protection of “Local” Hong Kong

By 2006, the earliest signs of localism began to emerge through the protection of local spaces in Hong Kong through the discourse of cultural and socio-economic struggle. Preservationists emphasized social activism whereby Hong Kong citizens protested the government’s action in destroying local heritage sites.⁶⁸ The first occurred in 2006 during the Star Ferry Preservation Protest, whereby Hong Kong citizens protested the government’s action in tearing down the Star Ferry clock tower, a historical monument from the colonial period. The following year in 2007, the Queen’s Pier Conservation Project was created to protest the government’s closing of the site due to land reclamation projects and the anti-Express-Rail Link (XRL) campaign which saw the protest of a high speed rail connecting Kowloon to Guangzhou.

⁶⁸ This group of localism is classified by Chen and Szeto as the “New Preservationist movement” due to their desire to protect local Hong Kong interests through the discourse of cultural and socio-economic struggle.

Protesters also fought against the demolition of Choi Yuen Village (菜園村) in the New Territories which was needed to build the XRL.⁶⁹ The rise of this local action has been described as a call from local people to “revisit of the pace of development of Hong Kong.”⁷⁰

The particular emphasis on preservation has been described as an institutional problem whereby protestors attempted to “resist[] undemocratic consultations carried out by the Government, [the] hegemony of property developers, as well as the political-economic structure favouring collusion between the Government and the business sector.”⁷¹ Thus, preservationists can be understood as issue-based localists, who only “target only the issue at hand.”⁷² These localists focus almost exclusively on “the cultural identity of the crisis communities.”⁷³ However, due to the avocation of particular issues, these localists have not gained a stronger presence across Hong Kong since their advocacy is a reflection of community-based problems, leading to no wider conception of a Hong Kong nation. This has also been met with controversy from other localists who perceive this as self-interest motivated politics of individuals.

In the aftermath of the Umbrella Movement, preservationists have had some success in local politics. In November 2015, there appeared to be a slight resurgence in the localist preservation movement when Wong Chi-ken 黃子健 who was an “Umbrella Solider” and participant of the Umbrella Movement was elected as a district councillor for Lok Wah North (樂華北) in Kwun Tong District (觀塘區), representing the East Kowloon Community Party (東九龍社區關注組), a party which focuses on issues of livelihood within the district. Overall

⁶⁹ Commission on Strategic Development, “Hong Kong’s Relationship with the Central Authorities/the Mainland,” Paper composed for the Commission’s meeting on May 26, 2014. Annex 8, 2.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Chen and Szeto, “The forgotten road of progressive localism,” 443.

⁷³ Ibid.

however, the preservationist movement of localism has been far less successful in electoral politics due to the lack of unifying logic and the usually singular issue-based protests.⁷⁴

3.5 Ethnic Localists: Nativism and the Hong Kong City-State Faction

Ethnic localists began to form pressure groups against the government after the results of CEPA had begun to cause several conflicts between the people of Hong Kong and Mainland China. Initially, these incidents were isolated people-to-people conflicts between Hong Kongers and Mainland Chinese. This included instances such as the January 2012 Dolce & Gabbana incident in which local news reports stated that the company had prevented Hong Kong locals from taking pictures outside the store, while Mainland tourists were allowed.⁷⁵ In the same month, Peking University Professor Kong Qingdong stated that Hong Kong people were disloyal to China and continued to maintain a colonial mentality and labelled them as “dogs”.⁷⁶ This statement came after an altercation on the local Hong Kong MTR where a Mainland Chinese child was caught eating on the subway, which is prohibited according to MTR regulations.⁷⁷

The negative image of tourism and migration from China contributed to the production of ethnic localism in Hong Kong. The first was the influx of Mainland Chinese mothers arriving in Hong Kong to give birth to their children, since their children would be given the right to abode. This created the accusation that Mainland Chinese were straining Hong Kong’s public resources preventing locals from accessing the same services.⁷⁸ The second problem resulted in the form of

⁷⁴ The recent exception to this is the successful campaign of Eddie Chu Hoi-dick (朱凱迪), a member of the Land Justice League who won a seat in the September 2016 LegCo. Chu is also the candidate to receive the highest number of votes (84,121) from all electoral districts and was elected on the basis of protecting the New Territories land and fighting corruption.

⁷⁵ Ellie Krupnick, “Dolce & Gabbana Hong Kong Store Surrounded By Protestors Over Picture-Taking,” *The Huffington Post*, January 9, 2012.

⁷⁶ “HK People Labelled as Dogs by Mainlander,” *South China Morning Post*, January 21, 2012.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ This has been associated with the One Way Permit Scheme which allows 150 Mainland Chinese per day to permanently settle in Hong Kong, a policy which is controlled by the Central Government, leaving Hong Kong

parallel trading between smugglers who would travel to the New Territories of Hong Kong and purchase in large quantities items such as infant formula and household products, and then bring them back to China. Areas such as Sheung Shui (上水), Tuen Mun (屯門), Sha Tin (沙田) and Yuen Long (元朗) all became areas affected, with inflation occurring for all of these items, further creating a discontent amongst locals in these areas.⁷⁹

Ethnic localists emerged out the dissatisfaction of local Hong Kongers who most notably use nativism to separate Hong Kongers and Mainland Chinese on the basis of ethno-cultural identity. The most prominent party representing the nativist faction is Civic Passion, which holds a radical vision of localism, using “militant” approaches as a means of protesting against the CCP. Nativists, such as Civic Passion leader Wong Yeung-tat 黃洋達 are also critical of the pan-democrats in Hong Kong. These localists have attempted to distinguish themselves by criticizing the pan-democratic camp’s adherence to the four principles of Peace (和平), Rationality (理性), Non-Violence (非暴力) and Non-Profanity (非粗口).⁸⁰ They furthermore disagree with the pan-democratic stance on allowing Mainland Chinese immigrants into Hong Kong. This form of ethnic resistance is the product of political dissatisfaction by localists who see influx of Mainland Chinese into Hong Kong as the cause of rising property prices, the shortage of medical services and the congestion of border communities due to parallel trading.⁸¹ As such, the ethnic localists express their xenophobic views as a product of “[unequal] allocation of interests and resources between local Hong Kongers and Mainland Chinese” since these localists believe that Hong

authorities little control over who may enter and leave the SAR.

⁷⁹ Shirley Zhao and Stuart Lau, “Another day of clashes in Hong Kong at parallel trader protests,” *South China Morning Post*, March 9, 2016.

⁸⁰ The term here is abbreviated as PRNN (和理非非).

⁸¹ Ibid.

Kongers are “increasingly manipulated by the Central Government.”⁸² Therefore, mistrusts occurs at both the societal level and the government level creating animosity and tension.

The intellectual movement associated with the nativist discourse has been focused on scholar, Chin Wan (the pen name of Horace Chin 陳云根), a former Assistant Professor at Lingnan University. Chin became most famous for his 2011 best seller book, *On the Hong Kong City-State* (香港城邦論), a book which portrays Beijing as taking a neo-imperialist perspective on Hong Kong. A subsequent sequel *On the Hong Kong City-State II: Reclaiming Local Hong Kong* (香港城邦論 II: 光復本土) was published in 2014. The books are a reflection of the rising tide of localism and gave Chin the nickname “father of Hong Kong localism.”⁸³

The theories outlined in these two volumes can be summarized by the following points. First, Chin argues that the CCP is responsible for the damaging of traditional Chinese culture, and is suppressing Hong Kong for the sake of China’s national interests.⁸⁴ In order to address these issues, Hong Kong must establish itself as a city-state and then join a Chinese Federation once a democratic China is formed. Chin argues that although the sense of “cultural China” is strong in Hong Kong, the people must temporarily give up their identity as Chinese in order to establish a sense of nativeness and address local issues which will protect the interests of Hong Kongers.⁸⁵ Therefore, Chin argues that “Hong Kong needs no independence, only autonomy,” arguing that Hong Kong democracy must not be treated as part of a Chinese democracy because

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Tommy Cheung, “‘Father’ of Hong Kong nationalism? A Critical Review of Wan Chin’s City-State Theory,” *Asian Education and Development Studies* Vol. 4, No. 4, (2015), 460-470.

⁸⁴ Ho, Kitty Suet-ying 何雪瑩 and Kay Lam Chi-yan 林緻茵, “[Pentoy Interviews] How do you define a Hongkonger?: Wan Chin vs Raees Baig [評台對談] 何謂香港人? 陳雲 vs 碧樺依,” *Pentoy* (評台), June 6, 2013.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

the concern of Hong Kongers in Mainland politics will give the CCP more “excuses” to intervene in Hong Kong.”⁸⁶

Second, Chin emphasizes heavily on *realpolitik*, arguing that Hong Kong must resort to ethnic politics and local interests in order to achieve the first goal of becoming an independent city state.⁸⁷ Chin rejects the idea of “universal values,” arguing that the egalitarianism is a contradiction to protecting Hong Kong resources and that such an imposition of such values is also “oppressing freedom”. Therefore, universal values cannot be used as a principle to allocate resources in a way that would protect Hong Kongers interests from Mainland Chinese migrants who are utilizing Hong Kong resources.⁸⁸

Third, the Hong Kong City-State Theory also espouses a variation on ethnocultural nationalist theory. To differentiate the type of cultural restoration that Chin advocates for in Hong Kong, he uses the term “Hua-hsia Confederation” (*huaxia bangliang*; 華夏邦聯) instead of Chinese Nation (*zhonghua minzu*; 中華民族) to argue that Hong Kongers contain traits that are ethnically different from other Chinese.⁸⁹ Hong Kongers and Chinese are divided two different groups using Chin’s “Hong Kong Cultural Remnants” theory (香港遺民) which describes the people in Hong Kong after 1997 who were “left behind by the colonial government.”⁹⁰ Chin argues that these people have “have the concept of ‘Cultural China’, however, it is different from the ethnicity of mainlanders” due to the fact that Hong

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Chin Wan 陳雲, “What is a Hong Konger?,” *Local Press* 本土新聞, March 25, 2016.

⁸⁹ It is worth noting that even in English, Chin Wan uses the Wade–Giles Romanization for the term “Hua-Hsia” instead of “Hua-xia,” which is the standard *Hanyu Pinyin* used in Mainland China, noting a refusal to conform to PRC Chinese standards.

⁹⁰ Ho and Lam, “How do you define a Hongkonger?.”

Kong culture is uniquely derived from Guangdong culture.⁹¹ Chin claims that the Hong Kong Chinese of Cantonese origins preserve “original imperial [Chinese] culture” through various “Chinese classics and ancient sayings, deity worship and sacrificial rites, familial and clannish links, [and] affinity with locality.”⁹² This, along with the rule of the colonial government created a sense of belonging that would be different from those in Mainland China.

When pressed to further qualify his definition of a Hong Konger, Chin states that a Hong Konger must be a permanent resident who protects Hong Kong’s public resources, “safeguard[ing] the intactness of our natural environment, ensuring that it is free from mainland encroachment; [and] to prevent our national welfare from being robbed by the mainlanders.”⁹³ Thus, while Chin argues that there is an ethnocultural basis of Hong Kongers which derives itself from a traditional Chinese culture, his primary definition for inclusion and exclusion is birthplace, followed by citizenship and/or a permanent residence. Chin bases his conception of a Hong Kong identity on an “us versus them” nativism which attempts to create categorical definitions of inclusion and exclusion. Furthering these ideologies, Chin has attempted to move from a theoretical discourse into party politics, founding the Hong Kong Resurgence Order (香港復興會), a political party which aims to “restore the ancient Chinese civilization.”⁹⁴

3.6 Civic localists: Student Autonomy and the Rise of “Hong Kong Nationalism”

Civic localists are a reflection of the newest category of political activists in the form of Hong Kong youth. This faction of localism describes those students who advocate for the right for Hong Kong’s self-determination. The degree of autonomy varies from group to group, with

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Chin, “What is a Hong Konger?”

⁹⁴ His guest contributions on Passion Times (熱血時報), a localist media outlet, have also given him the association with the nativist fraction which organized Anti-Parallel trading protests in the 2010s. For more about the party, see: Hong Kong Resurgence, “About Us,” accessed on June 10, 2016. <http://hkresurgence.com/about-us>.

some groups (e.g. Youngspiration) arguing that Hong Kong must decide through a referendum whether self-determination also means independence, while other groups have out rightly proposed the formation of an independent Hong Kong state (e.g. Hong Kong National Party). Rather than categorically split these groups, the purpose here is to organize them based upon their similar origins as well as their use of a civic nationalism to put Hong Kong interests first.

The earliest variation of some of these proto-localists can be found in the protests against the 2011 Moral and National Education (MNE) curriculum which attempted to enhance and foster a stronger sense of Chinese identity amongst Hong Kong youth. In particular, the response to the MNE plan was significant, since the intense opposition against the proposed curriculum resulted in the formation of several pressure groups. In particular, the creation of Scholarism (學民思潮) by Joshua Wong 黃之峰, who was 16 years old at the time, helped mobilize 90,000 people to participate in a rally against the MNE curriculum, which had been labelled as government sponsored brainwashing and the political indoctrination of students.⁹⁵ The MNE has also been described by some scholars as an “ethnocentric language calling for national unity based on geography, blood, and ethnic commonalities.”⁹⁶ The rejection of the curriculum further indicated the growing sense of resistance among youth. Eventually, C.Y. Leung’s decision to repeal the mandatory 2015 deadline and the victory of the students marked the beginning of Hong Kong’s prioritization of local interests over Chinese national interests.

The intellectual discourse around civic localism was further advanced in 2013 when the Hong Kong University Student Journal *Undergrad* (學苑) published one the earliest works related to rise of Hong Kong nationalism and the solidification of a Hong Kong identity among

⁹⁵ Syaru Shirley Lin, “Bridging the Chinese National Identity Gap: Alternative Identities in Hong Kong and Taiwan.” *Joint U.S.-Korea Academic Studies* Volume 25 (2014): 123.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

youth. The journal issue titled *Hong Kong Nationalism* (香港民族論) was most famously criticized by C.Y. Leung for promoting separatism and “fallacies of self-determination”.⁹⁷ The text more importantly however, can be seen as the beginning of the Hong Kong student nationalist movement to create an intellectual discourse on localism.

In attempting to define the Hong Kong nationalism movement, the student authors in the issue *Hong Kong Nationalism* made an effort to reinterpret and understand the current literature, in order to create a theoretical discourse that legitimizes the idea of a Hong Kong nation. In part, the students acknowledge Benedict Anderson, noting that “the basis of an imagined community is the collective imagination of place, so that the origin of the nation is based on a subjective perception.”⁹⁸ Although the students declare that “different factions of nationalism are not necessarily mutually exclusive” the students move towards a civic nationalism to conceptualize Hong Kong nationalism.⁹⁹ *Undergrad* contributor Wong Chun-Kit 王俊杰, writes in response to this that “Hong Kong is not a nation connected by blood, but can be defined through its borders, history and culture coupled with the common psychological desire to ‘escape totalitarian, in the pursuit of freedom.’”¹⁰⁰ Although the student writers of *Undergrad* stress a common Cantonese culture, they argue that “the culture and values of Hong Kong are essentially open, and can be obtained through study,” further building upon a discourse of a civic nation.¹⁰¹

3.7 Interpretations of the 2014 Democratic Movements

The culmination of dissatisfaction by the Hong Kong people led to the eventual 2014 democratic movement for universal suffrage after the Standing Committee of the National

⁹⁷ So, “The Making of Hong Kong Nationalism,” 156.

⁹⁸ “Hong Kong Nationalism (香港民族論).” *Undergrad* 學苑. Edited by Leung Kai Ping et al. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Student Union, 2013): 15.

⁹⁹ “Hong Kong Nationalism ” 15.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

People's Congress (NPCSC) came to a decision on August 31st 2014 that the 2017 election for the Chief Executive would allow for the democratic election of the chief executive, as long as the candidates were pre-selected by a nominating committee.¹⁰² This decision however was met with intense opposition from the pan-democrats since Article 45 of the Hong Kong Basic Law states that “the aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by Universal Suffrage upon nomination by a broadly represented nomination committee with democratic procedures.”¹⁰³ The subsequent sit-in protests between September 28, 2014 to December 15, 2014, colloquially known as the Umbrella Movement, became a sign of opposition against these reforms.

Mainstream media and academics have interchangeably used the terms Occupy Movement, Umbrella Movement and Umbrella Revolution to describe the events of 2014. In actuality, these terms refer to the different interpretations of the events by key players within the movement. While the common goal of the movement was to secure the universal suffrage of the Chief Executive, society was fragmented between the different visions for Hong Kong and their means of achieving such goals. The next section digresses to discuss the importance of each of these three names, their origins and their subsequent influence on Hong Kong politics.¹⁰⁴ It argues that the different forces within the movement composed of a spectrum from moderate to radical positions on how the movement should achieve universal suffrage. The most moderate was the Occupy Central Camp; the Umbrella Movement student leaders from Scholarism and HKFS advocated a more aggressive set of tactics by occupying various locations in Hong Kong and the Umbrella Revolution localists who were the most militant and uncompromising.

¹⁰² Jason Ng, *Umbrellas in Bloom* (Hong Kong: Blacksmith Books, 2016), 64-67.

¹⁰³ Article 45, The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

¹⁰⁴ Despite the different names, the term “Umbrella Movement” is used throughout this research to describe the Democratic Movement from September to December 2014, since the student coalition comprised of the largest group amongst the three different factions.

3.7.1 Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP)

The Occupy Movement, formally known as Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP) was inspired by University of Hong Kong law Professor Benny Tai. The idea originated in a January 2013 article published by Tai in the *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, arguing that “any act of the civil disobedience, which aims to fight for realizing a democratic universal and equal suffrage in Hong Kong though illegal, has to be absolutely non-violent.”¹⁰⁵ Chan Kin-man, an associate professor of Sociology at Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and Chu Yiu-ming a local Baptist Church Minister were also recruited by Tai to help further the OCLP movement. Tai had also worked closely with founding pan-democrat member Martin Lee and was seen as having close ties with the pan-democrats.¹⁰⁶ In the end, 18 pan-democrat lawmakers participated in the Occupy Central sit-in, which created some tensions between them and the student movement.¹⁰⁷ The student movement perceived the Occupy Central group of “hijacking” the student movement when OCM organizers initiated the peaceful sit-in three days in advance after students had already launched their own campaign to occupy the Government Buildings.

3.7.2 Umbrella Movement

In contrast, the term Umbrella Movement refers to the part of the movement which was created by two major societal groups in Hong Kong: Scholarism, led by Joshua Wong and the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS), the student union formed by eight accredited universities in Hong Kong. At the time, Alex Chow 周永康 from HKU and his deputy Lester Shum 岑敖暉 from CUHK led the federation. Wong, in response to OCLP’s peaceful

¹⁰⁵ Occupy Central With Love and Peace, “OCLP: Manifesto,” accessed March 20, 2016. http://oclp.hk/index.php?route=occupy/eng_detail&eng_id=9.

The original declaration can be found at Benny Tai, “Civil Disobedience is the Most Lethal Weapon of All 公民抗命的最大殺傷力武器” *Hong Kong Economic Journal* (信報財經新聞), January 16, 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Ng, *Umbrellas in Bloom*, 60.

¹⁰⁷ “OCCUPY CENTRAL - THE FIRST 12 HOURS: Full report as events unfolded,” *South China Morning Post*, September 28, 2015.

demonstration stated that it was not “meaningful or adequate” in “send[ing] a message to the government” or having Beijing listen to the concerns of the students.¹⁰⁸ The students eventually took control of Civic Square, an action at the time was seen as “radical” in comparison to the previous action of students creating limited cooperation with the OCM and pan-democrats.¹⁰⁹

3.7.3 Umbrella Revolution

The final term, Umbrella Revolution, was a term used by localists who believed that a more aggressive militant approach was needed instead of the strict principles of non-violence advocated by the three promoters of Occupy Central.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, since many localists celebrated “Hong Kong culture as the original Chinese culture, and modern Chinese culture existed as a low-end cultural invasion of the uncivilized Chinese,” they believed that a revolution was needed in order to change the status quo.¹¹¹ Thus, the term “revolution” is used by localists rather than “movement” because the mindset of the localists believed that in order “to defend Hong Kong against incivility, there had to be a revolution for things to change”; otherwise, the use of the word “movement” would imply a downgrade of its historical significance.¹¹² Localist groups however had limited control over the events since they were perceived as having radical perspectives on dealing with Beijing which appealed less to the wider movement.

3.8 A Sequence of Events during the Umbrella Movement

The Umbrella Movement began on September 25th when the Class Boycott organized by HKFS merged with the demonstrations organized by Scholarism and moved their protests

¹⁰⁸ Joshua Wong, “Scholarism on the March,” *New Left Review* 92 (March/April 2015): 43-52.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. The only exception to this is the radical Democratic Camp, which comprises of the fringe pan-democrat party, The League of Social Democrats (LSD), who filibuster every bill proposed by the Pro-Establishment Camp in the LegCo. LSD became one of the few pan-democrat groups who stood by and supported the students throughout the movement.

¹¹⁰ Chung Ho Fung, “A Tale of Two Societies: Fragments of an Ethnography on Umbrella Revolution,” 9.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

outside of the LegCo.¹¹³ When the student leaders were arrested the next day, Benny Tai and the Occupy leaders officially launched on September 28th the beginning of the Occupy Movement. This however, was notably three days ahead of schedule from the original October 1st date that Tai had announced. The Occupy Movement however quickly failed when police released tear gas on the protestors, therefore contradicting the peaceful mandate which was set out. Tai had only intended to occupy Chater Garden (遮打花園) for a short 48 hour period of time but the rapid escalation of events meant that he would have little control of the situation. After a month, the occupy leaders returned to work and a large majority of the pan-democrats remained low profile throughout the movement. The student coalition was met with opposition from ethnic localists who described the student movement and the occupy supporters as “leftards” (左膠), a term used to describe “those who blindly support changing the social order in order to reach a more even distribution of wealth and rights.”¹¹⁴ Throughout the movement, the localists believed that the shouting of slogans, singing of pro-democracy songs and displays of public artwork were all ineffective means of bringing real political change to Hong Kong.

Towards the end of the movement, several masked men attempted to break into the LegCo after false reports stated that the Copyright Amendment Bill was going to be passed.¹¹⁵ Some of the men, who were members of Civic Passion urged other protestors to occupy the LegCo but were unsuccessful. The localist groups later returned and challenged the HKFS questioned their legitimacy to lead the movement, accusing the student leaders of being

¹¹³ Ng, *Umbrellas in Bloom*, 71.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. The term is also used in a pejorative sense to describe a person who is “left wing to the point of stupidity and delusion.” It is used mostly by localists to describe those who are part of the Pan-Democratic Camp. A detailed definition can be found at: “Glossary,” *Hong Kong Columns Translated*, accessed April 20, 2016. <http://hkcolumn.blogspot.com/p/glossary.html>.

¹¹⁵ The Copyright Amendment Bill was a set of proposed ordinances regulating the internet in Hong Kong. Critics were concerned about the limitation on the freedom of creative expression, thus creating fears of self-censorship.

“leftards” and too similar to the pan-democrats.¹¹⁶ This rhetoric resonated with protestors who were waiting for a reason to escalate the movement. In response to such pressures, HKFS called on protestors to siege the government headquarters but ultimately failed when police deployed water cannons.¹¹⁷ The movement ended in December after pro-government groups obtained court injunctions in order to remove protestors from the streets.

3.9 Effects of the Umbrella Movement on Hong Kong’s Growing Political Spectrum

Before the Umbrella Movement, pan-democrats were regarded as the key players in securing democratic reforms through filibustering and their voice in the LegCo. However, pan-democrats were bounded by their principles of non-violence and as politicians were unable to participate in the movement as the students did. As youth became more radicalized in their political views, the moderate views put forth by pan-democrats became increasingly irrelevant. In January 2015, two new localist political parties, Youngspiration (青年新政) and Hong Kong Indigenous (HKI, 本土民主前線) were created. The inability of the Umbrella Movement to achieve its goals drove many dissatisfied students to shift their affiliation with new civic localist parties. The manifestos from both parties are revealing of their sentiments towards the student leadership and pan-democrats.

HKI became a party known for advocating the use of more aggressive tactics.¹¹⁸ It expresses discontent for the CCP stating not only that OCTS is “a scam under the Communist Party rule” but that pan-democratic legislators have failed, since “day after day we local Hong

¹¹⁶ Ng, *Umbrellas in Bloom*, 144-145.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Hong Kong Indigenous, *Facebook page*, accessed April 25, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/hkindigenous/info>.

Kong people lose our rights and indigenous values to the Chinese Communist Party, while the pan-democratic legislators indulge in their own ‘China Dream.’”¹¹⁹ To directly quote HKI:

Hong Kong Indigenous was founded after we learned from the lessons from the Umbrella Revolution. We want to break away from the pseudo democratic roadmap and put direct pressure on the government with the right means of protest. We have to alert the government that the indigenous value of Hong Kong cannot be washed away or sold. Thus we are upholding indigenous virtues [...]¹²⁰

HKI differed from previous ethnic localists since their formation was the product of dissatisfied students who rallied against the MNE and development in the New Territories.¹²¹ The discontent against the student movement’s principles created the grounds for HKI to accuse pan-democrats and student leaders of being pseudo-democrats who “time after time created fake protests which achieved nothing but keeping the peace for the authorities.”¹²²

Likewise, the rise of Youngspiration also demonstrates the failure of the mainstream student movement in implementing democratic reforms. As Youngspiration writes:

After 79 days of fruitless Umbrella Revolution, the Hong Kong society has come under even more ruthless suppression. The Hong Kong communist government has made itself the people’s enemy by following a policy of disregarding the will of the people and doing everything it can against the people. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist regime has accelerated on a daily basis its unscrupulous invasion into Hong Kong in terms of population, economy and culture, etc.¹²³

Similar to HKI, Youngspiration also maintains the principles of localism, rejecting pan-democrats and the student coalition and instead advocating the idea of “priority to Hong Kongers” as well as “safeguarding our home and in establishing and strengthening the Hong Konger

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

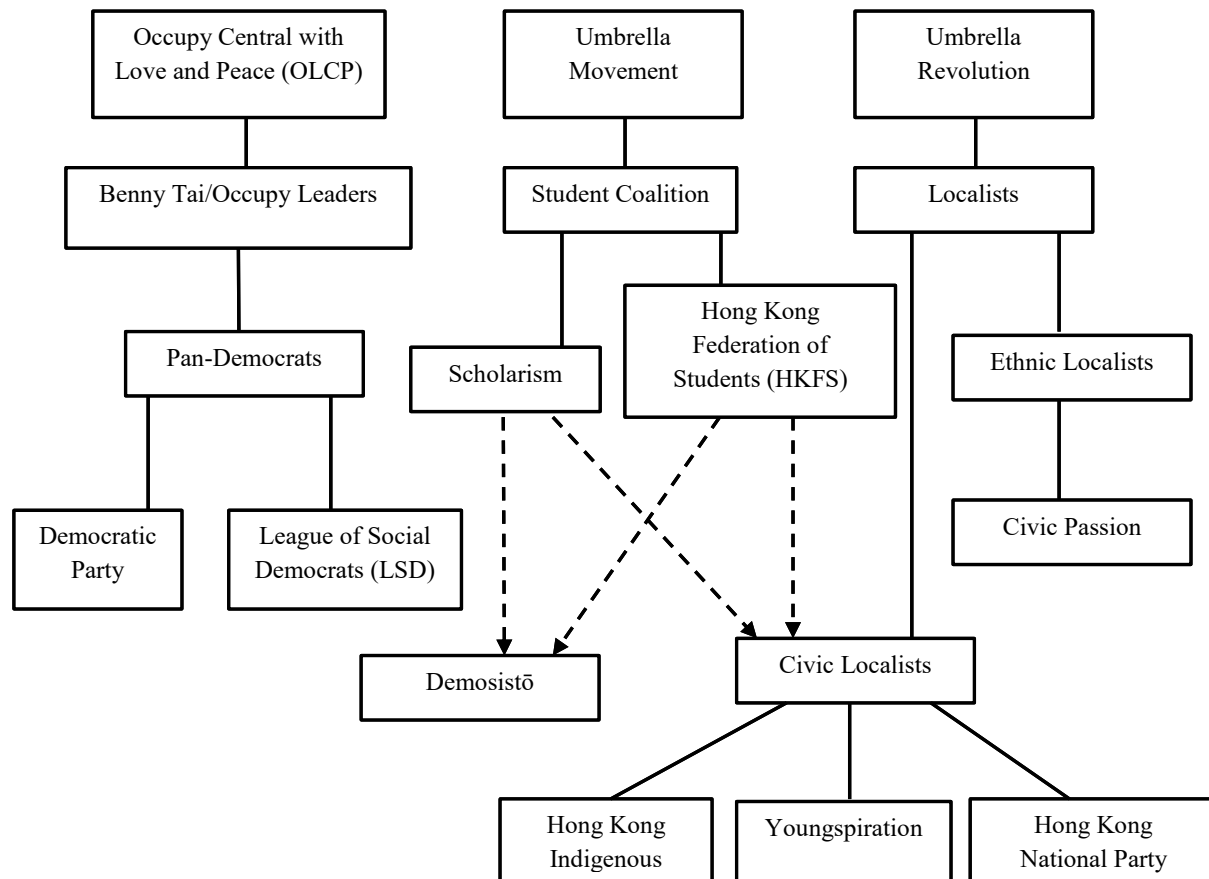
¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Youngspiration 青年新政, “About Us 關於我們,” accessed April 28, 2016. <http://www.en.youngspiration.hk/>

identity through council participation.”¹²⁴ The inability for solid leadership to emerge during the movement created factionalism, especially with the student movement.

Figure 3.2 Typology of the 2014 Democratic Movement



The divide within the Student Coalition became a turning point whereby some students became civic localists.

Source: Author’s Creation.

The rise of localism is not necessarily antagonistic with pan-democratic ideology since in principle, both groups are attempting to fight for the same democratic and constitutional reforms which would benefit Hong Kong. However, the dividing principle that separates both groups is the issue of political identity. For pan-democrats, the vision of a democratic Hong Kong is connected to the long term vision of building a democratic China. Likewise, HKFS also has

¹²⁴ Ibid.

within its own mandate a mission to “build a democratic China” with the rationale that China’s democratization would speed up the process of democratization in Hong Kong.¹²⁵ From a localist perspective, the inability of the pan-democrats to produce results after nearly two decades of HKSAR rule suggests a further departure from this logic, since the principles of incorporating a democratic China into the future of Hong Kong will diminish the ability of pan-democrats to represent the interests of the city.¹²⁶

The fallout from the Umbrella Movement also saw further reverberating effects across society. In particular, the referendum conducted by the Hong Kong University Student Union (HKUSU) and other university student unions to separate from HKFS became a major setback for the student federation. The rise of localism was suggested as a large part of the breakup and the separation of the HKFS because the changing mindset of students shifted Hong Kong’s focus away from a democratic China principle to the issue of Hong Kong’s self-determination.¹²⁷ The critical point of separating Hong Kong’s democratic future with the democratic future of China is not only a difference of political values, but the attempt to separate Hong Kong nationalism from Chinese nationalism. These issues took prominence during the 2015 and 2016 Hong Kong Tiananmen commemoration events when groups, such as the HKUSU, who had previously participated in the yearly protests, began to hold other events related to the future development of Hong Kong. Youngspiration, issued a statement during the 2015 Tiananmen commemoration stating that it “disagrees with the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China on the Alliance’s goal to ‘build a democratic China’” and also contests that the “format of the annual candlelight vigil is no longer relevant to Hong Kong’s current

¹²⁵ Fung, Fanny W. Y. and Joyce Ng, “Federation of Students suffers biggest split in 57-year history as HKU quits over Occupy,” *South China Morning Post*, February 14, 2015.

¹²⁶ Subsequently, the term “Greater Chinese Leftard” (大中華膠) also became used to describe those within the pan-democratic circles.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

struggle.”¹²⁸ Overall, youth further distanced themselves from China, and created a closer affiliation with localist groups supporting Hong Kong’s priorities as a main goal.

In summary, this chapter has outlined three types of localism: (1) preservationists, (2) ethnic localists and (3) civic localists all who have different conceptions of how the local should be defined. However, after the events of the 2014 democratic movement which comprised of the Occupy Central Movement, Umbrella Movement and the Umbrella Revolution protestors, many students from the Umbrella cohort and became civic localists due to the shifting political mindset of putting Hong Kong priorities first and separating Hong Kong’s democratic future from the democratic future of Mainland China’s. As such, this new rise of localism is further discussed in the next chapter when a critical by-election is held in the New Territories East constituency.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 4: Localism and Electoral Politics: A Case Study of the New Territories East By-Election

The following chapter investigates the rise of localist politics and the competing visions of Hong Kong identity present in society. This chapter is based upon field work conducted in Hong Kong in February 2016, the time in which multiple events in Hong Kong politics occurred, both the Mong Kok Lunar New Year civil unrest and the LegCo by-election in the New Territories East Constituency. Using the 2016 by-election as a case study, the chapter explores various political issues surrounding some of the electoral political campaigns revealing further insight into the reasons behind the public's shifting identity.

4.1 Case Study Selection

Virginia Sapiro argues that “nationality becomes integrated into the political orientations of real people,” to the point that “particular cohorts may be moved to change their conceptions.”¹²⁹ Frank C.S. Liu furthers this argument by stating that “ethnicity and political preferences are components of national identification” which are factors that contribute to a cohorts changing conceptions.¹³⁰ Hong Kong is an example of a case whereby the people are becoming divided along the issues of national identification, oscillating between both a “Chinese” identity and “Hong Konger” identity. The selection of the New Territories East by-election as a case study is particularly revealing for two main reasons. First, given the rapidly changing political situation in Hong Kong, it is difficult to capture all the various actors who are entering and exiting the political arena. As the political situation rapidly changes, the full scope of events cannot be covered within this research. However, the duration of the by-election, which

¹²⁹ Virginia Sapiro, “Not Your Parents’ Political Socialization: Introduction for a New Generation,” *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 7 No. 1 (2004): 7.

¹³⁰ Liu, “The Complexity of State Identification in Taiwan,” 2-3.

lasted over a two-month period provides a comprehensive yet narrow scope of analysis. Second, the time of the by-election coincided with many societal events including the Lunar New Year civil unrest, the Guangzhou-Kowloon XLR debates and the rise of new political parties. Hong Kong's last LegCo Election in 2012 (before the Umbrella Movement) saw no prominent localist candidates fielded into any of the electoral constituencies. Thus, this by-election serves as an important basis of analysis to further understand how localist groups political impacted the September 2016 LegCo elections and beyond.

4.2 The Call for a By-Election in the New Territories East Constituency

Despite the inability for Hong Kong citizens to elect their Chief Executive, Hong Kong's quasi democratic system functions through elections for seats in the parliament known as the Legislative Council (LegCo). Hong Kong's general elections for the LegCo are conducted through a proportional representation system using the hare quota method. However, in the case of a by-election, the First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system is used to determine the winner.¹³¹

On June 22, 2015, pro-democratic politician Ronny Tong Ka-wah 湯家驊 from the Civic Party resigned from his position after a legislative vote took place to implement electoral reforms for the 2017 Chief Executive Election. Tong was dissatisfied with the Civic Party, which he co-founded due to his belief that the party since 2009 had deviated from its founding values leaving the pan-democratic camp with one less seat in the LegCo.¹³²

In many cases, by-elections are seen as generally unimportant due to the minimal impact a single seat can have on a legislative assembly. In Hong Kong's case however, the number of

¹³¹ The LegCo is separated into two nearly equal sized groups which totals 70 seats. The Geographical Constituencies represent members elected from electoral districts while the Functional Constituencies represent the members elected from special interest groups.

¹³² Jeffie Lam and Gary Cheung, "Tearful Ronny Tong quits as legislator hours after resigning from Civic Party amid rift in Hong Kong's pan-democratic camp," *South China Morning Post*, June 22, 2015.

seats in Hong Kong's geographical constituencies became tied for both the pro-establishment and the pan-democrats camps after Tong's resignation, with each side taking 17 seats each.¹³³ Therefore, the winner of this by-election would tip the balance of power depending on who was elected. If the pro-Beijing camp won the by-election and gained a majority of seats, they would be able to modify the rules of procedure since they would hold a majority in both the geographical and functional constituencies. The pan-democrats feared that if this happened, they would modify the rule of procedures to block filibustering, a tactic which had been used against the bills of Chief Executive C.Y. Leung that pan-democrats felt were unreasonable. The opposition camp attempted to emphasize on this point, while the pro-establishment countered that the winner of this by-election would be unimportant since the seats would be dissolved in less than seven months due to the upcoming September 2016 LegCo elections.¹³⁴

The opening of the nominations began in January 2016, coinciding with a series of events which had escalated the political atmosphere of Hong Kong. In particular, the appointment of pro-Beijing Council Chairman Arthur Li to HKU by C.Y. Leung raised questions about the academic freedom in post-secondary education. Meanwhile, the disappearance of five book sellers from the Causeway Bay bookshop brought further concerns about the freedom of speech in Hong Kong. These items contributed to the growing sentiment across Hong Kong that the "One Country, Two Systems" (OCTS) framework was deteriorating quickly in favour of rapid integration with the mainland. Citizens became increasingly concerned about the fate of Hong Kong after 2047, where the guarantee for Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and free capitalist economy for 50 years after the handover would expire.

¹³³ Owen Fung, "Why Hong Kong by-election today matters: rifts in two main blocs could make localists the big winners even if their man loses," *South China Morning Post*, February 28, 2016.

¹³⁴ Jason Y. Ng, "Yeung or Leung? Who to vote for in upcoming Legco by-election," *EJInsight*, February 22, 2016.

Figure 4.1 Overview of New Territories East By-Election Candidates

#	Name	Political Party	Political Affiliation	Profession
1	LAU Chi-shing	Independent	Neutral	Company Director
2	WONG Sing-chi Nelson	Third Side	Former Pan-Democrat	Social Worker
3	CHOW Ho-ding Holden	DAB	Pro-Establishment	Lawyer
4	LEUNG Sze-ho Albert	Independent	Former Pro-Establishment	Lawyer
5	FONG Kwok-shan Christine	Independent	Former Pro-Establishment	City Councillor
6	LEUNG Tin-kei Edward	Hong Kong Indigenous	Localist	Student
7	YEUNG Alvin Ngok-kiu	Civic Party	Pan-Democrat	Lawyer

Source: Hong Kong Registration and Electoral Office.

In total, seven candidates put their names forward for the February 29th 2016 by-election where 970,000 eligible voters could cast their vote.¹³⁵ Representing the pro-establishment camp was Holden Chow Ho-ding 周浩鼎 vice-chairman of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) – the largest pro-establishment party in Hong Kong. From the pan-democratic camp, Alvin Yeung Ngok-kiu 楊岳橋, a lawyer and member of Hong Kong's Civic Party was also nominated. Yeung was selected after other democratic parties agreed to field only one candidate from the pro-democracy camp.¹³⁶ The remaining five candidates nominated over the next week included: Christine Fong Kwok-shan 方國珊, a former engineer and Sai Kung District Councillor who was also a previous member of the pro-establishment's Liberal Party until 2010, Wong Sing Chi 黃成智, leader of the Third Side, a spin-off from the Democratic Party and Edward Leung Tin-kei 梁天琦, a Philosophy major at Hong Kong University and a member of Hong Kong Indigenous. The final two candidates were independents Lau Chi-shing 劉志成 and Albert Leung Sze-ho 梁思豪.

¹³⁵ Information about all candidates retrieved from: Hong Kong Registration and Electoral Office “2016 Legislative Council NT East Geographical Constituency By-election,” accessed on February 20, 2016. <http://www.elections.gov.hk/legco2016by/eng/brief.html>.

¹³⁶ While Youngspiration abided by these terms and did not field a candidate in the by-election, Hong Kong Indigenous did not attempt to coordinate with the pan-democrats and selected Edward Leung as their candidate.

4.3 The Fishball Revolution: Impacts on Hong Kong Politics

After nominations ended on January 18, 2016, the initial weeks of the campaign were centred upon issues of filibustering which had been occurring in the legislature as well as the balance of power within the legislature between the two camps. However, three weeks after the nominations closed, civil unrest occurred during the eve of the Lunar New Year when unlicensed hawkers were ordered by Hong Kong's Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) to close after conducting surprise inspections. These events triggered the "Fishball Revolution," coined after the common snack sold at hawker stands when protesters, who came to defend the unlicensed hawkers, were confronted by the police. This led to a battle between both groups where officers wore protective gear including helmets and shields while carrying pepper spray and batons. Meanwhile some protestors were equipped with home-made shields, goggles, helmets and gloves, throwing projectiles at the police. While the majority of the 2014 protesters emphasized peace and nonviolent and adopted civil disobedience as core principles of the movement, the "Fishball Revolution" saw violence that resulted in 130 people injured, and 69 people arrested.¹³⁷ The majority of protestors here were linked to the localist group Hong Kong Indigenous (HKI), which according to Facebook posts, were planning days before to sit and protest against the government's crackdown on unlicensed hawkers.¹³⁸ The inability of the Umbrella Movement to secure universal suffrage encouraged localist groups to seek greater use of violence, indicating their discontent for the lack of progression for Hong Kong's democratization and the behaviour of the police. As one student writes about the event:

¹³⁷ Gary Cheung, "'An inquiry into the Mong Kok riot would only create a new battleground': former Central Policy Unit chief compares Star Ferry and Hong Kong riots," *South China Morning Post*, February 16, 2016.

¹³⁸ A post was made by Hong Kong Indigenous a day before the Mong Kok protests calling supporters to meet at 9pm in Mong Kok. See: <https://www.facebook.com/hkindigenous/posts/1684844058436166:0>.

On the night of the Mong Kok unrest, we clearly saw the pent-up anger explode. The protesters unleashed the displeasure nurtured since the failure of the Umbrella Revolution, fanned by the unreasonable actions of the government, the ire from waiting for Hong Kong's democratization combined with the questionable behaviour of the police. The tension that existed already between the people and the police was pushed to tipping point by the FEHD's treatment of street hawkers.¹³⁹

This greater use of violence became intertwined with the New Territories East by-election due to Edward Leung's role as both a participator in the Mong Kok demonstrations and as the electoral candidate for HKI. In the aftermath, Leung was subsequently arrested by police for rioting and was seen as a radical candidate in comparison to traditional pan-democrats due to his localist affiliation and his motto of promoting "resistance with no bottom line" (抗爭無底線). Days after the Lunar New Year civil unrest, Philip Hammond, Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs stated in a 2016 Six-Monthly Report on Hong Kong that the "unexplained disappearance" of bookseller Lee Bo 李波 "constitutes a serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong and undermines the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems'"¹⁴⁰ These comments in conjunction with the political happenings in Hong Kong gave further traction to localists and their argument that the OCTS framework was deteriorating. This allowed the localist movement to gain traction among the younger segments of society.

4.4 Electoral Issues after the Lunar New Year Civil Unrest

After the events of the Mong Kok demonstrations, the political agenda was shifted. Each of the candidates attempted to convey to voters their visions for the future of Hong Kong. In part, the public reaction to the Mong Kok riots acted as a litmus test for the support for both pro-

¹³⁹ "Statement of a Generation (香港青年時代宣言)." *Undergrad 學苑*, edited by Marcus Lau (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Student Union, 2016): 45-52.

Translated by Chen-t'ang (鎮棠) et al., "Statement of the Generation," *HK Columns (Translated)*, accessed on May 30, 2016. <http://hkcolumn.blogspot.com/2016/03/statement-of-generation-11-our-2047.html>.

¹⁴⁰ Philip Hammond, "The Six-Monthly Report On Hong Kong: 1 July to 31 December 2015," *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office*, February 11, 2016.

establishment and pro-democracy candidates. Reactions from the various localist and student groups revealed a debate about the use of peaceful protests and violence, similar to those that led to competing visions of the Umbrella Movement.

4.4.1 Holden Chow and Pro-Establishment Localism

Holden Chow and the pro-establishment attempted to play on the Lunar New Year civil unrest by appealing to more conservative voters under his slogan “get HK back on the right track” – arguing that voters will “determine whether our society is to turn to violent clashes, or return to rationality and inclusiveness, whether the legislature continues to be crippled by filibuster, or resume normal operation.”¹⁴¹ Chow emphasized the idea that parliamentary filibustering was dividing Hong Kong society giving the opposition camp the power to “do whatever they want” and that illegal occupation was destroying the Rule of Law in Hong Kong.¹⁴² Most importantly however, he criticized localism, stating it is xenophobic and preventing societal stability.¹⁴³ One of Chow’s strategies to combat localism was the attempt to reclaim localism as a local identity that must be subsumed under a Chinese identity. As Chow explains:

In Hong Kong, using the words “local” (本土) and “native” (在地) to describe “Hong Kong people's priorities” is absolutely reasonable. But places such as Beijing and Shanghai also have a “local” as well. Some people are distorting the word “local”. The words “local” (本土) and “Hong Kong priorities” (港人優先) are being used as a smoke cover to call newcomers to Hong Kong “locusts” (蝗蟲), thereby differentiating Hong Kong people into two groups and intensifying the difference between these two places, deliberately creating xenophobia and advocating “independence”. We sincerely believe that Hong Kong people do not believe in these values.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Hong Kong Registration and Electoral Office “2016 Legislative Council NT East Geographical Constituency By-election.”

¹⁴² Holden Chow, “Political Platform,” accessed on February 20, 2016. <http://holden.nt3.hk/tc/PoliticalPlatform>. Note: This webpage was subsequently taken down after the by-election; however, this information was also reproduced by State-owned Newspaper *Wen Wei Po* (文匯報) under the titled 扶港行正路 靠選民「鼎」力支持.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Chow's line of argument here understands Hong Kong identity as a regional identity, similar to those of citizens in Beijing or Shanghai. These statements are further emphasized by Chow after the by-election in which he states, "in order for Hong Kong to find its way, it must rely on the motherland to face the world...Hong Kong's superiority depends on One Country Two Systems. Shanghai and Beijing both have localism, but the idea of the "local" should not be hijacked by others."¹⁴⁵ This further supports the argument that the post-colonial discourse under the PRC has been an attempt to "renegotiate the spatial distance between the national and the local" as well as "subsume the local identity under the national identity."¹⁴⁶ However, localism Chow argues is not an idea that is patented by the opposition camp, and therefore tried to promote the idea of "establishment localism" (本土建制) which encompasses a "Hong Kong voice" and a Hong Kong way of thinking of matters.¹⁴⁷ He uses the example that since Cantonese is the mother tongue of Hong Kong people, there is no need to carry out Mandarin teaching education.¹⁴⁸ This is contradictory to the government's stance of attempting to implement Standard Mandarin (Putonghua) in schools. However, these comments reaffirm that although pro-establishment parties hold a pro-Beijing political stance, candidates must still appeal to some local interests.

4.4.2 Edward Leung and the Localist Campaign

In opposition to the pro-establishment view, Edward Leung's campaign demonstrated the rise of localist ideology that had been widely discussed since the Umbrella Movement. To quote at length, Leung's campaign can be summarized his campaign platform:

¹⁴⁵ Holden Chow expressed such views on a Facebook on April 1st, 2016, linking the post to the article: Holden Chow, "Everyone is discussing Localism, Holden Chow wants to create an Establishment Localism" (大家談本土, 周浩鼎: 我要做「本土建制」) *LinePost Hong Kong*, April 1, 2016, accessed on May 20, 2016. <http://linepost.hk/?uid=5236>.

¹⁴⁶ Fung, "What Makes the Local," 595.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Holden Chow, *Facebook Page*, April 1, 2016, accessed April 5, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/chowhoding/posts/584743155014768>.

I am Edward Leung of the Hong Kong Indigenous party. I am a Philosophy student at HKU minoring in political science and civil administration. I chose to run for LegCo to bring long-ignored localist ideologies into mainstream politics. We seek to awaken more Hongkongers and lead them in resisting sinicisation and protecting Hong Kong's core values and local culture. Our generation no longer looks to China, but to ourselves. We no longer rely on the old political parties, but take our future into our own hands. Active participation in politics is the only way for Hongkongers to save themselves.¹⁴⁹

The civic localist ideology can be distinguished not only from the pro-establishment but also the pan-democratic camp both in the group's tactical political manoeuvrings and its position on China. The contested interpretation of how China is imagined within HKI's platform rejects any ethnic and cultural elements associated with China and instead emphasizes local culture and values. It suggests that active participation and political reform are needed to protect the interest of Hong Kongers. For instance, Leung's platform highlights the desire to "implement self-governance in Hong Kong through dual universal suffrage of the chief executive and legislature" and to "conduct talks immediately regarding's Hong Kong post-2047 future, ensuring Hongkongers' wishes are respected."¹⁵⁰ Such issues are grounded in a civic nationalism which puts forth liberal and democratic values as the core of a Hong Kong civic nation. While Leung's campaign did contain ethnocultural elements of division between Hong Kongers and Chinese, some commentators have noted that "Leung's position is simultaneously overlapping with but also contradictory to the *raison d'être* of the older [localist] groups' platform," noting that Leung supporters state that those who identify with Hong Kong's distinctive values can be localists, unlike older localist groups who define a Hong Konger as someone born and raised there.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Edward Leung, "Edward Leung Tin-Kei: 2016 LegCo New Territories East By-Election Candidate," accessed on February 27, 2016. <http://edward2016legco.hk/about-2>. Note: These materials were subsequently removed after the end of the by-election.

¹⁵⁰ Edward Leung, "Our Vision for Hong Kong," accessed on February 27, 2016. <https://edward2016legco.hk/our-vision-for-hong-kong>. Note: The website has subsequently been removed after the by-election.

¹⁵¹ Victoria Hui, "We are all localists!," *Voice of Hong Kong*, March 10, 2016.

HKI's campaign however suffered several serious obstacles, when it revealed that the Registration and Electoral Office (REO) had rejected Leung's election campaign materials, claiming that keywords in the election materials fundamentally breached Hong Kong's Basic Law, including the terms "autonomy" (自治), "self-determination" (自決前途), "brave resistance" (勇武抗爭) and "a history different from that of China" (異於中國的歷史).¹⁵² Hong Kong Indigenous responded by calling the act a form of political censorship on both Edward Leung and HKI principles, only reaffirming their position that the freedom of speech and the values upheld in the OCTS were being diminished since it prevent Leung from "expressing his political opinions and destroying the right of electorate from New Territories East in a democratic election."¹⁵³

4.4.3 Alvin Yeung and the Pan-Democratic Status Quo

Alvin Yeung's campaign in contrast to the previous two campaigns emphasized the implications if the pan-democratic camp lost its veto power in the LegCo. The implications of the pro-establishment gaining the individual seat would mean that Pro-Beijing forces could take control of the legislature and modify the rules of procedure in order to prevent filibustering. The Civic Party's affiliation with the pan-democratic camp raised questions however as to whether or not Yeung's party would be able to implement change, since the mantra of the core pan-democrats has been to emphasize Hong Kong's democratic future within China's democratic future. Along with this, the pan-democrats had been emphasizing the values of PRNN. From the youth's perspective, these pan-democratic parties are out of touch with the issues of young voters

¹⁵² Hong Kong Indigenous, "Registration and Electoral Office abuses authority and tramples freedom, High Degree of Autonomy is left burnt and vanishes," *Hong Kong Indigenous Facebook Page*, February 15, 2016, accessed on February 20, 2016. www.facebook.com/hkindigenous/posts/1688249598095612.

More information and further reporting by: Chantal Yuen, "Pro-HK self determination candidate's election materials rejected by Electoral Office again," *Hong Kong Free Press*, February 16, 2016.

¹⁵³ Hong Kong Registration and Electoral Office "2016 Legislative Council NT East Geographical Constituency By-election"

and have shown little results of democratic reform since the handover. In order to address these issues, the Civic Party began in this election the process of moving towards the ideals of localism, in the sense that the party reaffirmed the idea of putting the priorities of Hong Kongers first. Yeung's campaign literature emphasized that "in recent years, Hong Kongers have begun to care about their own identity, emphasizing the local because we cherish our own political system, our own culture and our core values."¹⁵⁴ It also highlights several areas where the OCTS system has begun to deteriorate, noting the NPC's August 31 decision, the appointment of Arthur Li to the HKU Chairman position and the implementation of the high speed rail project from Guangzhou to Kowloon. Of these aforementioned items, Yeung's stated that he would create a monitoring project to oversee spending of the XLR project as well as the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau bridge project and repeal the Chief Executive's power over the University System Chancellor.¹⁵⁵ However, compared to the HKI campaign by Leung, Yeung's campaign was relatively safe, keeping a moderate standpoint which could appeal to traditional pan-democratic voters. Despite trying emphasize the needs of Hong Kongers, the platform did not address the issues of integration and one way permit entry of Mainland Chinese into Hong Kong and was considered as more of the status quo. Thus, concerns were raised that vote splitting between HKI and the Civic Party may give Holden Chow a victory if both sides could not coordinate.

4.5 Election Results and Implications

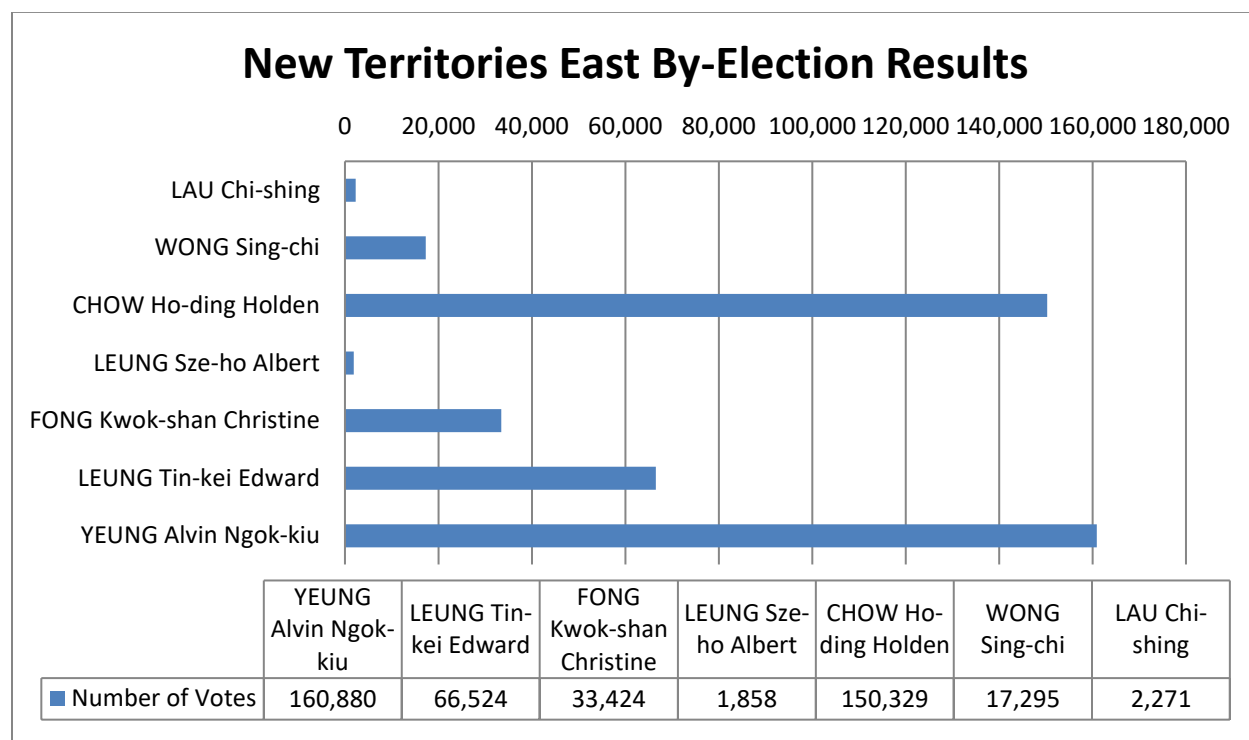
On February 29, 2016, over 200 polling stations across the New Territories East electoral district opened to voters from 7:30 am to 10:30 pm. Despite the highly politicalized atmosphere,

¹⁵⁴ Alvin Yeung 楊岳橋, "《Q & Alvin》政策篇 001 (Q & Alvin: Policy Sheet 001)," *Facebook Page*, February 24, 2016, accessed May 20, 2016. <https://goo.gl/4JKBul>.

¹⁵⁵ Alvin Yeung 楊岳橋, "《Q & Alvin》政策篇 002 (Q & Alvin: Policy Sheet 002)." *Facebook Page*, February 25, 2016, accessed May 20, 2016. <https://goo.gl/2znP6s>.

the by-election only saw an overall turnout of only 46.18% - with 434,220 votes casted.¹⁵⁶ As the results were updated at Tiu Keng Leng Sports Centre, the tight race between Holden Chow of the DAB and Alvin Yeung of the Civic Party became evident. In the end, Alvin Yeung emerged victorious with 37.19% of the popular vote, a slim victory over Holden Chow's 34.75% of the popular vote. The Civic Party's victory ensured that the pan-democrats maintained a majority in the geographical constituencies, enabling them to continue filibustering against the pro-establishment. However, the widely discussed topic was not the victory of Yeung or the defeat of Chow, but the rather strong finish of localist Edward Leung, who managed to obtain 15.38% of the popular vote. On the election night, supporters of Leung were strong and fierce, chanting Leung's name and wildly cheering each time the results were updated.

Figure 4.2 Results of the New Territories East By-Election



Source: Hong Kong Registration and Electoral Office.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

4.5.1 Revitalization in the Pan-Democratic Camp

From the results of the New Territories East By-Election, three important implications for the future of Hong Kong politics can be drawn. First, the narrow victory of the Civic Party highlights the potential troubles for mainstream pan-democrats in the future, due to the competition from both the localist camp and the pro-establishment camp. While Yeung and the Civic Party have been representative of a newer rising generation of pan-democratic politicians, their collaboration with the traditional democratic parties, who are still closely associated with the values of PRNN are becoming marginalized by youth voters.

The Civic Party has attempted to adapt to the changing political dynamics, by claiming localism as part of their platform, despite not identifying as a localist party. In March 2016, after the by-election, the Civic Party released the its 10th Anniversary Manifesto which extensively used the word “localism” (本土) in its revised platform.¹⁵⁷ When the party was founded in 2006, the Civic Party described the uniqueness of Hong Kong through both its “historical, economical, and cultural ties with the Mainland of China” as well as the city’s “dedication to bringing about a democratic China.”¹⁵⁸ The updated 10th Anniversary Manifesto however, marks a drastically different departure from the old platform, eliminating the word “China” entirely from the document. Instead, the party emphasizes that “[the] Central Government’s policies have increasingly prioritized One Country and slighted Two Systems” creating “lasting consequences” on Hong Kong society which have resulted in the “growing tendency and sentiment among the Hong Kong people to defend their local cultures and institutions.”¹⁵⁹ The indigenization of the

¹⁵⁷ In the English translation, the term 本土 was simply translated as local, rather than localism. The full text can be read in both English and Chinese at: Civic Party, “Founded for Hong Kong: Local, autonomous, and pluralistic – The Civic Party Tenth Anniversary Manifesto,” March 2016, accessed on May 20, 2016. <http://www.civicparty.hk/?q=en/node/7026>.

¹⁵⁸ Civic Party, “Founded Manifesto,” 2006, accessed on May 20, 2016. <http://www.civicparty.hk/?q=en/node/148>.

¹⁵⁹ Civic Party, “Founded for Hong Kong.”

party's platform reveals a growing tendency towards civic localism since the new manifesto also alludes to the mainlandization of Hong Kong, arguing that Chinese authorities are "penetrating into various layers of established rules and institutions" which is not only threatening the "core values embedded in [the] local way of life" but is also "corrupt[ing] the integrity of the unique system" within Hong Kong which "differentiate[s] [it] from the mainland system adopted in other Chinese cities" ¹⁶⁰

Further evidence that the Civic Party has begun to embrace civic localism can be seen in the party's definition of a Hong Konger, which it defines as "any new inhabitant who becomes a resident through the legal means, who shares our core values, accepts our culture, becomes an integral part of the society we build together, and is ready to contribute to its general well-being, would be received as a fellow Hong Konger."¹⁶¹ Such principles emphasize Hong Kong identity as not one that is tied to an ethno-cultural identity based on birthplace, but rather that the embracement of a Hong Kong civic nationalism can constitute further solidarity among the people. However, the party does attempt to overlay some elements of ethnocultural nationalism by attempting to claim Hong Kong as a cultural preserver of Chinese heritage through its use of "complex characters" (繁體字) and the daily use of Cantonese, arguing that the "local way of life" is now embedded in the city's core values – from the fact that the "the rule of law has taken root in the local soil" thus framing the mainlandization of Hong Kong as a force which is depriving the city of its "original distinctiveness".¹⁶²

In the future, cooperation across pan-democratic and localist camps will remain difficult since proportional representation system will encourage vote splitting, diverting votes from the

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

pan-democratic camp to the localist camp. However, limited cooperation has occurred between Alvin Yeung and Edward Leung who have publicized their multiple meetings of cooperation on Facebook. Thus, a general trend is occurring whereby more of Hong Kong's opposition camp are adopting more localist based principles. However, since the self-labelled localists hold monopoly on the use of the term, and have brought the association of violence with localism, the term has been used less broadly as a term for defending Hong Kong values until after the by-election.

4.5.2 Polarization of the Hong Kong Political Spectrum

Second, the relatively successful performance of Edward Leung, from an unknown character in Hong Kong politics into a figure for the localist camp represents the gaining traction of civic localism among youth. While the issue of violence and non-violence appeared repeatedly in the campaign after the Lunar New Year events, the overall result of 66,524 votes for Leung suggests that the substance for political change in Hong Kong is more important than the means of resistance. As Hong Kong's political spectrum continues to become polarized, the centrist and moderate views have become widely alienated. The performance of Wong Sing-Chi, the leader of the Third Side, a spin-off from the Democratic Party placed in a relatively poor fifth place with only 4.00% of the popular vote. Throughout the campaign, Wong labelled himself as a centrist politician which could bridge the voices between the pro-establishment and the pan-democrats.¹⁶³ However, Wong's campaign failed to gain traction in a political system where voters continued to voice discontent against the government's economic and closer political integration with China. The by-election results suggest that, in its current state, there is little room for centrism and moderate political views. Even the pan-democrats are losing traction for their moderate views since in the eyes of younger voters, there have been little results for the

¹⁶³ Submitted electoral campaign items from Wong Sing-Chi can be found at: Hong Kong Registration and Electoral Office "2016 Legislative Council NT East Geographical Constituency By-election."

democratization of Hong Kong since the handover. The gaining traction of localism in Hong Kong's political climate further suggests that the substance for political change among young voters is highly desired, regardless of the means to achieve such goals. Localism, therefore, suggests a widening in Hong Kong's political spectrum, offering a third choice for voters, who are in belief that different political tactics as well as a political platform are needed. Hong Kong's lack of political progress has therefore created a situation where "radicalization is more by circumstance than by choice" since Hong Kong's government is "forced to capitulate on important policy issues and take direct orders from the communist leadership."¹⁶⁴ As this argument stands, dialogue is commonly described as a two way path, but the imbalanced relationship between Hong Kong and Beijing results in directions sent from Beijing, and less negotiation from the Hong Kong side.

4.5.3 Hong Kong Indigenous and the Rise of Civic Nationalism

Third, in the aftermath of the election, one of the headlines that became a point of media sensation was the revelation that Edward Leung was actually not born in Hong Kong, but was actually born in China, to a Mainland Chinese mother who immigrated to Hong Kong 24 years ago.¹⁶⁵ This was seen by some critics as problematic, given that Leung's campaign focused on a localism based on the assumption that Hong Kongers' priorities should be put forth over Mainland Chinese, noting that "Hongkongers have no choice but to reinforce the barrier between Hong Kong and China and defend our homeland."¹⁶⁶ These comments called into question whether he could be considered a localist himself due to his birthplace. In response, Leung stated what was important issue was not birthplace, but rather that he defended Hong Kong values,

¹⁶⁴ Jason Y. Ng, "Is the 'third road' a political dead end?," *South China Morning Post*, March 23, 2016.

¹⁶⁵ Edward Leung, "Our Vision for Hong Kong."

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

culture and institutions.¹⁶⁷ The most frequently analogy raised at the time was the comparison of localist Edward Leung to the Chief Executive C. Y. Leung, noting that despite Edward Leung's birthplace in Mainland China, he was more of a Hong Konger in comparison to the Chief Executive, who although was born in Hong Kong is widely regarded as pro-China in his political stances. Viewers raised the irony in such a comparison to draw out the point that both ethnicity and birthplace should not be a factor in defining who is a Hong Konger.

These ideas brought to the forefront again the debate as to who and what defines a Hong Konger. Within the localist camp, these issues were further discussed on the localist radio program *Good Morning Hong Kong* (大香港早晨). It is of significance that the program is affiliated with ethnic localists due to the program's affiliation with Passion Times. The episode featured a section entitled "Localism has no relation to Blood lines, opposing the Communist Party is what makes a Hong Konger" (本土無關血緣 反共才是真港人).¹⁶⁸ The program asked viewers, "What defines a Hong Konger?" (有咩價值先係香港人?) in which several items were listed as potential choices: opposing the Communist Party, not being Chinese, speaking Cantonese, having three star status on your Hong Kong Identity Card (full citizenship) or having a British National Overseas (BNO) passport. Through the results of the informal poll, the results were broadcasted through Passion Times. Reports quoted radio host Chan Sei 陳四 who argued that "Hong Kong local consciousness is based on the formation of chasing away the CPP, therefore if you are anti-communist, then you are a Hong Konger. If you do not oppose the

¹⁶⁷ Owen Fung, "New storm: Hong Kong Indigenous candidate Edward Leung admits he was born on the mainland," *South China Morning Post*, March 7, 2016.

¹⁶⁸ "Localism has no relation to Blood lines, opposing the Communist Party is what makes a Hong Konger (本土無關血緣 反共才是真港人)," *Good Morning Hong Kong* 大香港早晨 (Hong Kong, March 7, 2016), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKJdlePQbOE>.

Communists, then you are a Hong Kong Chinese.”¹⁶⁹ Despite the unscientific results of the poll, the larger implication of such actions is the reframing of what the boundary is between a Hong Konger, a Hong Kong Chinese and a Chinese according to localist principles with notably the term Hong Kong Chinese denoting someone who is born or raised in Hong Kong but still maintains some association with a “political” or “economic-cultural” China.¹⁷⁰ This however demonstrates that even ethnic localists have attempted to borrow and emphasize some elements of a civic nation in their definition of inclusion and exclusion, and due to the revelation of Edward Leung’s birthplace, are no longer solely relying on ethnicity and birthplace as the main criterion for defining Hong Kongers.

Pan-localism however lacks a unified vision, and despite the wide success of HKI and the civic localists who have attempted to create a Hong Kong nation based predominantly on the notions of a civic nation, the persistence ethnic localists will continue to compete for legitimacy. It is worth noting that Civic Passion, Hong Kong Resurgence Order and Proletariat Political Institute – all self-identified localist parties which carry a nativist outlook, declared a joint platform to field candidates in all five geographical constituencies in the September 4, 2016 LegCo elections.¹⁷¹ Notably, this coalition excludes Edward Leung and Hong Kong Indigenous. Meanwhile, Chin Wan also announced he is running as a LegCo candidate under the Hong Kong Resurgence Order in New Territories East, where Edward Leung plans to contest again.¹⁷² This

¹⁶⁹ Chen Sei’s comments were used as a promotional advertisement on Passion Time’s Facebook page. *Passion Times Facebook Page*, accessed April 25, 2016, <http://facebook.com/passiontimes/posts/1062152950514538>.

(香港既本土意識，基於中共迫而形成，所以會反共既，先係香港人。唔反共既，就係中國香港人)

¹⁷⁰題目：有咩價值先係香港人？投票結果：維護香港人利益：47 (49.47%) 反共：21 (22.11%) 唔認係中國人：18 (18.95%) 講廣東話：4 (4.21%) 身份證有無三粒星：3 (3.16%) 有 BNO：2 (2.11%).

¹⁷¹ “Localist groups suffering from internal conflicts,” *China Daily*, March 9, 2016.

¹⁷² Hui, “We are all localists!.”

not only suggests a division within localism, but also a debate as to the criteria for inclusion and exclusion into the Hong Kong nation.¹⁷³

4.6 Moving Forward

In summary, the political campaigns of the Hong Kong New Territories East by-election represent the changing dynamics not only in Hong Kong politics, but the beginning of a shift in the national identity of the people. The rise of localism in Hong Kong has created a branch of politics whereby a Hong Kong nationality, fueled by localism, is being ingrained in the political orientations of voters. Supporting the DAB, and in principle the pro-Beijing camp has become synonymous with the government's current process of re-sinicizing Hong Kong. When contrasted with the localist camp, which has attempted to ingrain a sense of Hong Kong identity, by claiming the need for Hong Kongers to be ruled by Hong Kongers. It also advocates for Hong Kong's autonomy, some through the conception of formal independence, and others through maintaining the idea of Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. If national identification is then based upon such political identifications whereby citizens can be compelled to change their conceptions, then the rise of localism only suggests the gaining prominence of the new group within the opposition camp.

¹⁷³ Ethnic localists formed the alliance CP-PPI-HKRO (熱普城) which comprised of the parties Civic Passion, Proletariat Political Institute and Hong Kong Resurgence Order. Meanwhile, civic localists formed the electoral alliance ALLinHK which comprised several post-Umbrella groups including: Youngspiration, Kowloon East Community, Tin Shui Wai New Force, Cheung Sha Wan Community Establishment Power, Tsz Wan Shan Constructive Power and Tuen Mun Community.

Chapter 5: The Future of the Hong Kong Nation

Based on the results of the by-election discussed the previous chapter, the following chapter outlines some of the current issues related to the political identity of Hong Kong, in relation to the rise of localism and the future of the city-state. It then sets out to re-evaluate the question of Hong Kong's national identity and the status of the Hong Kong nation.

5.1 Statement of the Generation: Our 2047

In the aftermath of the Lunar New Year civil unrest and the performance of Edward Leung in the New Territories East by-election, civic localists continued to push the boundaries for political change within their society. The *Undergrad* (學苑) publication by the University of Hong Kong Student Union made headlines again in March 2016 when the latest issue, titled “Statement of the Generation” (香港青年時代宣言) declared that Hong Kong should become a sovereign state recognized by the United Nations in 2047. In response, the Chief Executive stated that “Hong Kong has been a part of China since ancient times, and this is a fact that will not change after 2047.”¹⁷⁴ In particular, the issue describes the preparations needs for the “second negotiation of Hong Kong's future” with the following demands: (1) Hong Kong becomes an independent sovereign state recognised by the UN; (2) establishment of a democratic government and (3) design of the Constitution of Hong Kong by the entire community.¹⁷⁵

Civic localists, despite their ambitions desires, unwaveringly acknowledge however that Hong Kong's fate ultimately lies within China's hands, writing that “even though constitutionally speaking it is not impossible for such thresholds [of independence] to be crossed,

¹⁷⁴ “HKU student magazine says Hong Kong should become independent from China after 2047,” *South China Morning Post*, March 15, 2016.

¹⁷⁵ Statement of a Generation (香港青年時代宣言).” *Undergrad* 學苑, edited by Marcus Lau (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Student Union, 2016): 45-52.

Translated by Chen-t'ang (鎮棠) et al., “Statement of the Generation,” *HK Columns (Translated)*, accessed on May 30, 2016. <http://hkcolumn.blogspot.com/2016/03/statement-of-generation-11-our-2047.html>.

unless the proposed amendments have the approval of the Communist Party, there is no hope of them going through.”¹⁷⁶ Hong Kong’s political options are slim, despite the fact that legally, succession is possible but extremely unlikely given such a law would need approval from the People’s Congress.

Hong Kong is undergoing a process of change whereby boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are beginning to change. Civic localists collectively emphasize the conception of a civic Hong Kong identity, writing that “the Hongkonger ethnicity is not founded on the basis of bloodlines or race. Membership is formed from history, language, law, peasant culture tradition, geography and civic values.”¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the students attempt to re-understand their Chinese identity by arguing that there must be a “common ethnic confirmation of identity but without the precondition of unanimous identification.”¹⁷⁸ John Lim Chuan-tiong 林泉忠, a Taiwanese scholar from Hong Kong, describes at length the conflict of identity among Hong Kong youth:

The next generation of Hongkongers will be the natural independents, bearing by birth rich identification with the Hongkonger identity. This generation will oppose local communists’ collusion with the Chinese Communists and support Hong Kong’s right to independence. Unlike us, they will not have to fumble to find their identification nor will they be confused by the same conflict we felt about dual identities. They will inject energy into the independence movement and become our staunch ally.¹⁷⁹

Civic localism has quickly gained momentum after the results of the New Territories by-election beginning the process of legitimizing localism as a third political force in Hong Kong, next to the pro-establishment and the pan-democrats. However, localism lacks appeal from older generations who regard the young activists as “trouble-makers who do not contribute [to society] and are “disrupters to social stability” since they perceive the issues of universal suffrage and

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

democracy as “a fake creation from the game of politics” which is not worth attention.¹⁸⁰ Instead, the older generation seeks “harmony and solidarity” which can be produced through the ethic of “hard work, patience and unity.”¹⁸¹ As one young localist explains:

We do not want to see our society tearing apart. We are sick of bickering with the seniors. We once tried to talk rationally to the last generation but no one seems to comprehend the real world. Some of us came out and strived for changing problems that the last generation failed to against all odds. We carried the sin of “wasted youth/rioters” and neglected the backfire from the last generation. We stood until dawn on Nathan Road or Connaught Road Central. We threw bricks with anger and despair, because we do not want Hong Kong to die.¹⁸²

If localism can continue to maintain this momentum among youth, then the implications of its growth over multiple decades can produce an entire generation that will be dedicated to a Hong Kong nation. Thus, the evolution of the current discourse suggests the birth of a Hong Kong national identity which has been linked to a new state identity by localists who support self-determination and some visions for an independent republic.

5.2 De-sinicization and Indigenization

In order for localism to further grow as a unified movement, the intellectual discourse must be further beyond a few dominant voices (e.g. Chin Wan) who have advocated for a xenophobic conception of a Hong Kong nation based on ethno-cultural values and nativist principles. Both civic and ethnic localists express with alarm the view that the city-state is being absorbed by a rising China and both groups are further utilizing principles of both ethnic and civic nationalism to change the political discourse in their favour.

Hong Kong’s largest obstacle and by far the most difficult task is the legitimizing of the Hong Kong identity through localism. Unlike Taiwan, where the Democratic Progressive Party

¹⁸⁰ Chung Ho Fung, “A Tale of Two Societies: Fragments of an Ethnography on Umbrella Revolution,” 3.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² “Statement of a Generation (香港青年時代宣言),” Preamble.

(DPP) acts the main party which has traditionally supported independence, Hong Kong's nationalists are hindered by the fact that they are alienating the pan-democratic camp in their goals for autonomy. This of course is a product of the differing visions of how a democratic China should or should not be incorporated into Hong Kong's future, but Taiwanese student activists have had much less difficulties in coordinating with the DPP on such issues due to their united stance against the KMT on questions of Cross-Strait economic interdependence and Taiwanese identity.¹⁸³ Furthermore, Hong Kong's nationalists are still relatively young, a movement which has only emerged out of the past decade. Their intellectual discourse thus far has been limited to the pieces written in *Undergrad*, which made major headlines in both 2013 and 2016 respectively and public media, domestically and internationally.

Other groups have also taken a social media presence, such as the Hong Kong Language Movement (香港語文運動) which has attempted to promote Cantonese as a language instead of a dialect.¹⁸⁴ These efforts have also contributed to the process changing the discourse around Hong Kong's national identity by using online hashtag's to label Cantonese as the "speech of Hong Kong" (香港話) rather the more normally used "Yue Chinese" (粵語) or "speech of Canton" (廣東話). Localists have attempted to change the lexical vocabulary of Cantonese to reflect these changes. One example of this is the effort to promote the use of the phrase "go to China" (去中國) instead of the commonly used phrase "return to the Mainland" (返大陸) in order to designate China as a separate place rather than the "Mainland" of Hong Kong.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ This can be seen in the 2016 Taiwanese General Election whereby the youth-based New Power Party coordinated with the Democratic People's Party (DPP).

¹⁸⁴ Hong Kong Language Movement (香港語文運動) *Facebook Page*, accessed April 25, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/HongKongLanguageMovement/>

¹⁸⁵ This can be seen online in the video: WarmWaterFrong, "Let's Make This Clear, [the phrase that should be used is] 'Go to China,' not 'return to the Mainland'. The Power of Localism will show our strength and determination" (講明, 係去中國 ; 唔係返大陸 | 本土力量 何志光) *YouTube*, accessed June 3, 2016.

On social media, new ideas in the localist discourse are appearing; with some localists rejecting Chin Wan's *Huaxia* City-state theory in favour of an "independence theory" which argues that Hong Kong is a product of Lingnan culture, colonial culture and modern values.¹⁸⁶ While its principles are similar to other localists by affirming that Hong Kong must continue to protect the values of OCTS so that it may eventually establish an independent nation-state, its major defining stance is that Mainland China and Hong Kong should not attempt to colonize each because they are two different cultures which should be respected. By using Lingnan culture, which shares its origins in Guangdong culture situated around Hong Kong, Macau and the Pearl River cultural circle, its implicit suggestion is that the origins of Lingnan culture are distinct from other types of Chinese culture. These points, although portrayed as radical, highlight some important historical undertones that are far less discussed. Historically, Guangdong was opened to various forms of internationalization and trade during the Ming and Qing periods, causing eastern and western culture to merge earlier than other parts of China, with Lingnan culture therefore "develop[ing] its own special features with distinct differences from other Chinese culture."¹⁸⁷ These characteristics include features less traditional influence of the Confucian order, and embraced the features of being more "open, diverse (pluralistic), export-oriented, compatible and innovative, freer and more democratic (such as Sun Yat-sen's ideology)."¹⁸⁸ The utilization of these historical events may bring about new interpretations and myths of the nation which can be grounded in a culture that is, although not unique to Hong Kong, is unique to Guangdong province which can be argued to be uniquely different from the rest of China.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrJ-NoTqNnM>.

¹⁸⁶ Kevin Lee, "Discussing Localism in the middle of Greater Chinese Poison (Part 4): Huaxia False Deception and the need for Hong Kong to Root Itself in Localism" (論本土主義中嘅大中華餘毒 (四): 華夏虛妄, 本土須植根香港). *VJ Media*, July 12, 2014. Note: Article also featured on the Hong Kong Language Studies Facebook Page.

¹⁸⁷ Hu Biliang, "Informal Institutions and Rural Development in China," (New York: Routledge, 2007): 78.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

5.3 The Rise of New Political Parties

Since the Umbrella Movement, pan-localists have been divided along two camps: civic localists and ethnic localists. Ethnic localists who comprise of older localist groups of Civic Passion, Hong Kong Resurgence Order and Proletariat Political Institute focus on a nativist narrative that has “exclusive ethnic identity” which rejects the notion of China. This can be contrasted with civic localists groups such as Hong Kong Indigenous and Youngspiration who hold a more liberal and inclusive civic identity. The rise of localism and the several associated parties belonging to the different factions has been popularized by the success of Edward Leung and HKI. Such as a rise however has created another wave of student activism in Hong Kong, which has attempted to define itself as a unique bridge between localists and pan-democrats. Political parties such as Demosistō have emerged as centrist group, although adopting some localist principles, do not self-identify as a localist party. The commonality however, regardless of how these parties identify themselves, all force us to reconsider and re-examine what is localism in Hong Kong.

5.3.1 Hong Kong National Party

Nearly a month after the New Territories East by-election, localist groups attempted to capitalize on the success of Edward Leung and HKI. On March 28, 2016, Chan Ho-tin 陳浩天, an undergraduate student at Hong Kong Polytechnic University announced the formation of the Hong Kong National Party (香港民族黨) and its platform of advocating for Hong Kong independence. The emergence of the HKNP demonstrates the further polarization of society since the party attempts to include an even more radical platform focusing nearly exclusively on the concepts of “a self-reliant Nation” and “an Independent Hong Kong” along with six other main goals which include “build[ing] an independent and autonomous Republic of Hong Kong,

end[ing] the colonial tyranny of China in Hong Kong, and bring Hongkongers back to their normal life.”¹⁸⁹ Chan, an undergraduate student at Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU) was also a participant of both the 2014 Umbrella Movement and at the forefront of advocating the HKPU student union’s separation from HKFS.¹⁹⁰

Unlike other civic localists who acknowledge that the threshold of having the PRC approve the legal succession of Hong Kong is low, the HKNP manifesto departs from this logic. The party however still embraces civic localism, attempting to unite the people based on the principles of a nationalism that defends the local interests of Hong Kong. For HKNP, the only way that Hong Kong’s core interests can be protected are through its principle of building “an independent and free Republic of Hong Kong.”¹⁹¹ These changes transform local Hong Kong interests into a national discourse, creating the vision for a new state identity of Hong Kong which attempts to imagine a separate legal, military and political identification for Hong Kong in relation to a sovereign state. The intent to directly “consolidate the national consciousness of the Hong Kong nation” and to “define Hong Kong citizenship” within an independent framework which is separate from autonomy under OCTS, creates a discourse whereby a national identity which does not rely either on China’s democratic future.¹⁹² This discourse attempts to interpret Hong Kong at the centre of its own history, arguing that the Sino-British Joint Declarations have “deprived the Hong Kong nation of its right to self-determination, a right guaranteed by the international law.”¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Hong Kong National Party, “Declaration of Establishment of the Hong Kong National Party,” *Facebook Page*, March 28, 2016, accessed on April 1, 2016. www.facebook.com/hknationalparty/posts/478117092387250.

¹⁹⁰ Chan would later be banned by the electoral returning officer in the 2016 LegCo elections due to his avocation for Hong Kong’s independence, which violated Article 1 of the Hong Kong Basic Law.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

5.3.2 Demosistō

On March 20, 2016 Joshua Wong announced the disestablishment of his group Scholarism. However, three weeks later on April 10, 2016, former members of both Scholarism and the Hong Kong Federation of Students announced the establishment of a new political party, Demosistō. The party appointed several familiar faces with Nathan Law 羅冠聰 the former secretary-general of HKFS becoming the chairman of the party, while Joshua Wong and Oscar Lai 黎汶洛 from Scholarism both became Secretary-General and Vice-Chairman respectively.¹⁹⁴ The party however faced several public relations disasters, rejection from major banks as well as several attacks from localist parties who considered Demosistō a threat to the progressive youth vote which supported Edward Leung.¹⁹⁵

In the past, both Scholarism and HKFS represented the non-incorporated forces which were ideologically between the non-violent approaches of the pan-democrats and the more militaristic actions of localists. The creation of Demosistō attempts to give formal representation of these voices in the LegCo. However, the party criticizes the pan-democrats stating that “mainstream parties hold massive resources, yet fail to convert the power of such resources into the hands of civil society, marginalising themselves from social movements.”¹⁹⁶ Meanwhile, Nathan Law has stated that he and his party does not ascribe to localism, although it supports the vision to “reimagine the future of Hong Kong” without xenophobia and nativism, stating that Demosistō upholds a “diversified Hong Kong identity” which seeks to embrace people of all

¹⁹⁴ Jeffie Lam and Stuart Lau, “Occupy movement leaders reinvented? Joshua Wong to launch Hong Kong’s newest political party Demosistō,” *South China Morning Post*, April 6, 2016.

¹⁹⁵ Jason Ng, “Joshua Wong’s new political party is off to a rocky start,” *EJInsight*, April 12, 2016.

¹⁹⁶ Demosistō, “Mission Statement,” accessed on June 13, 2016. <https://www.demosisto.hk/mission?lang=en>.

origins of Hong Kong, whether they are native-born Hong Kongers, seven year permanent residents from China or other ethnic minorities of Hong Kong.¹⁹⁷

Ideologically, Demosistō also holds conception of a civic nation, although it differs from the localist conception by attempting to incorporate China into the democratic future of Hong Kong. The party states that the “defining the character of Hong Kong relies neither on the superiority nor inferiority of specific groups of people. Rather, it is constructed by society as a whole along with its historical background, humanitarian values and common experiences of citizens. Demosistō attempts to focus more on a civic culture which embraces a multiplicity of identities, writing in the party platform:

Crises of our national identities develop, rather, due to the fact that the performance of our current government has shown never Hong-Kong-oriented (sic), and always ignoring the legitimate rights and the basic dignities of Hong Kongers, without any effort of building a free and democratic system for us to choose our own future pathways. What we have to do is to re-grasp our bargaining power by constructing an analysis of Hong Kong’s present and an imagination of its future based on our historical experiences, and liberate ourselves from the dictating, imperialistic governance of the CPC, without falling into the emotionally-appealing trap of populism that divides among “us” and “them” based on nationality.¹⁹⁸

Both Law and Wong strive to “convert the China factor into a driving force for local democratic development” by helping immigrants adopt to Hong Kong’s civil society and creating more opportunities for newcomers to learn about the history and culture of Hong Kong.¹⁹⁹ The party attempts to embrace some ideals of localism, while also attempting to incorporate them into a Greater China framework. This centrist model however risks alienation from voters, where democrats may regard the party as too radical in its motto for “self-determination” but too closely connected to the principles of a Greater Chinese nationalism by localists. Political interests appear to divide the opposition camp, even if all groups share the common goal of

¹⁹⁷ Nathan Law, “Democracy in Hong Kong: Before and After the Umbrella Movement” Presentation at St. John’s College, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, April 28, 2016.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

democratizing Hong Kong and protecting the interests of the city.²⁰⁰ These ideas however will be ultimately tested in the upcoming September 2016 LegCo election, determining whether moderate or more radical voices will gain traction in Hong Kong.

5.4 Beijing's Response: Policy Concerns and the Return to Ethno-nationalism

Hong Kong's Commission on Strategic Development noted in its May 2014 report that "[i]t has been 17 years since the Reunification and still many Hong Kong people have yet to fully identify with their national identity."²⁰¹ Rising concerns over the development of localism have further accelerated the process by which China seeks to integrate Hong Kong. The views expressed by individual members indicate that many of the issues in Hong Kong, such as the influx of Chinese in to Hong Kong, were foreseeable events that the HKSAR government could have prevented but lacked a proper "planning mechanism" that could deal with these problems. As one individual from the Commission on Strategic Development expressed:

It took time to resolve the conflicts between Hong Kong and the Mainland which should be tackled with patience. Relevant Government measures should not be pushed too hard at this stage, as this would cause greater resistance. The Government should not try to change things unless change was really warranted, at least for the time being. For example, there was no need to push for the use of Putonghua and simplified Chinese characters, as they would naturally be more widely used over time when people saw their benefits.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ For instance, Demosistō and localist group Youngspiration both advocate for the right to self-determination and the use of referendums to decide the future of Hong Kong beyond 2047. Both groups however have declared that an alliance is not compatible. Youngspiration argues that the referendum should be held in 2022 when the election of the Chief Executive occurs so that such a decision can put pressure on a new leader to concede some reforms to localist groups. Demosisto argues however that the referendum should be held after 2025, giving the people more time to think about the future direction of the city-state.

²⁰¹ Commission on Strategic Development, "Hong Kong's Relationship with the Central Authorities/the Mainland," meeting held on May 26, 2014, 19.

²⁰² Commission on Strategic Development, "Summary of Views Expressed at the Fifth Meeting of the Commission on Strategic Development," meeting held on May 26, 2014, 1.

Figure 5.1 Hong Kong's Political Spectrum in 2016

	Opposition Camp							Pro-Beijing Camp
	Localism 本土派			Pan-Democrats 泛民主派				Pro-Establishment 親建制派
Faction	Ethnic localists 土著派	Civic localists 公民本土派	Preservationists 進步本土派	New Social Activism Camp 新社會運動派	Radical Democratic Camp 激進民主派	Moderate Democratic Camp 溫和民主派	Centrist Camp 中間派	Pro-China Camp 親中派
Main Goals	• Promote Hong Kong as a City State	• Promote self-determination in Hong Kong	• Preservation of local HK culture	• High degree of autonomy under OCTS	• Filibuster and seek to stop Pro-Establishment in LegCo	• Build democratic HK within democratic China	• Bridge gap between pan-democrats and Pro-Establishment	• Promote PRC business and policies in HK
Examples of Political Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Passion • Hong Kong Resurgence Order • Proletariat Political Institute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hong Kong Indigenous • Youngspiration • Hong Kong National Party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Kowloon Community • Land Justice League 	• Demosistō	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • League of Social Democrats • People Power • The Frontier • Democratic Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Party • Civic Party • Labour Party • Neighbourhood and Workers Services Centre • The Professional Commons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Side • Path of Democracy • Professional Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) • Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong • New People's Party • Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions (FTU)
Example of Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chin Wan • Wong Yeung-tat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggio Leung • Edward Leung • Chan Ho-tin 	• Eddie Chu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan Law • Joshua Wong • Oscar Lai 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raymond Chan • Erica Yuen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alvin Yeung • Albert Ho • Emily Lau 	• Nelson Wong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starry Lee • Regina Ip • Holden Chow • Andrew Leung

The expansion of Hong Kong's political spectrum.

Source: Author's Creation.

This has becoming further evident over the course of 2016 as the missing Causeway Bay booksellers resulted in the ban of any negative propaganda against the Central Government, civil unrest during the Lunar New Year and the banning of pro-independence election materials during the NTE by-election. The intensity and speed at which the Central Government seeks to emphasize Hong Kong as an inalienable part of China continues to exacerbate the situation between the populous and the government.

Despite, the Hong Kong people's grievances against the Central Government for refusing uphold the principles of OCTS, the Basic Law has been still described as a "creature of Chinese law" which is still subject to Beijing's restrictions.²⁰³ As Pitman Potter notes, the erosion of the "two systems" element of the Basic Law derives from the fact that term autonomy (自治) used in the sense to promote Hong Kong's "high degree of autonomy" does not "connote the sense of insulation from outside authority that is conveyed in the English term 'autonomy'".²⁰⁴ Although Hong Kong is embedded with the traditions from English common law, the handover of Hong Kong meant that the PRC's Chinese law became the basis for the interpretation of any legal questions regarding Hong Kong, and therefore "underscores a limited interpretation of the ideal of local autonomy" that is possessed by the people.²⁰⁵ Some elements of the Basic Law, such as Article 5, state that the socialist system and policies shall not be practised in the Hong Kong and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years. However, more recently, Article 1 stating that Hong Kong is an unalienable part of China and Article 23, which prohibits acts of treason, succession and sedition and been more heavily enforced to silence the localist forces.

²⁰³ Wang Hongwei quoted in: Pitman Potter, *Law, Policy and Practice on China's Periphery: Selective Adaptation and Institutional Capacity*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 142-143.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

While pan-democrats have struggled with the issue of implementing universal suffrage in Hong Kong, their position always reaffirmed that Hong Kong's democratic future is inherently linked to that of the PRC's future. The contention has been on the interpretation of these reforms, since the proposed revisions to the election of the Chief Executive do not conform to the notions of western democracy whereby the candidates are nominated and elected through an open and transparent process. In contrast, the development of localism has further complicated these notions given that the elements of self-determination and independence questions within localist campaigns are viewed by the central government as not only the undermining of PRC authority in Hong Kong, but are also an issue of national sovereignty. What becomes evident is that localism and the Basic Law, as it is interpreted by the PRC cannot continue to mutually exist since the Basic Law is constitutionally interpreted to undermine local autonomy, as long as localism continues to promote Hong Kong's self-determination. The inability of the Hong Kong people to elect their Chief Executive through universal suffrage and the fact that Hong Kong's LegCo has been designed to give power to the pro-establishment (due to the imbalanced representation of the Functional Constituencies) means that the design of the current political system will allow for limited change.

5.5 Future Collaboration and Coordination with Localism

For localism to further develop, it will need more support in order to have a larger mainstream presence. Hong Kong's localist movement cannot survive on the project of "independence" alone, since as most student architects realize, this is a highly improbable event. Rather, localism must learn to encompass a greater audience, which not only includes issues of Hong Kong's political future but also attempts to embrace other issues such as local preservation and restoration projects across the city, along with issues of integrating newcomers, protecting

the local language as well as developing a full discourse on Hong Kong. The term Hong Konger must be expanded to anyone who is invested in the local interests of Hong Kong. Although Hong Kong's localists are still relatively inexperienced, its architects are quickly learning to adapt to the even-faster changing political environment. Localism must not only look within Hong Kong for assistance, but should also seek inspiration from outside sources as well. Three possible avenues of cooperation with Taiwan, the Western world and Guangdong currently exist.

5.5.1 Taiwan and Cross-Strait Collaboration

Taiwan is a neighbouring ally with similar ideals and goals which has become a source of inspiration for Hong Kong localists who seek to build their own movement based upon the Taiwanese model. Beijing's approaches to both Hong Kong and Taiwan are somewhat similar, emphasizing that each of these places constitutes one greater Chinese Nation since the people in Hong Kong and Taiwan are predominantly Han Chinese. However, Frank C.S. Liu notes that although people from these two regions may "acknowledge their Chinese roots...this does not translate easily into a common national identity."²⁰⁶ Hong Kong and Taiwanese youth activists have collaborated together and have closely followed the events of their fellow neighbours since the Sunflower and Umbrella Movements have become prominent symbols of youth activism. However, Beijing has frequently stopped Taiwanese activists from entering Hong Kong, such as the Chen Wei-ting 陳為廷 and Lin Fei-fan 林飛帆, leaders of the Sunflower Movement, who attempted to fly to Hong Kong to participate in the 2014 July 1st annual demonstrations.²⁰⁷ During the 2016 Taiwanese General Election, Huang Kuo-chang 黃國昌, the leader of the youth-based New Power Party was also denied a Visa to Hong Kong. However, Hong Kong activists

²⁰⁶ Frank C. S. Liu and Francis L. F. Lee, "Country, National, and Pan-national Identification in Taiwan and Hong Kong," *Asian Survey* Vol. 53 No. 6 (2013): 1112-1134.

²⁰⁷ Cindy Sui, "Why Taiwan is watching Hong Kong protests," *BBC News*, September 30, 2014.

have been freely able to travel to Taiwan. Joshua Wong, Nathan Law and Alex Chow travelled to Taiwan to speak at a press conference for the New Power Party, a youth-based party founded by post-Sunflower Movement politicians. Localism as a “third force” in Hong Kong politics has been inspired by the similar “third force” movement (第三勢力) of Taiwanese politics. Wong aptly noted that, “whether it is the issue of Taiwanese sovereignty or the future of Hong Kong, both face the China factor,” revealing a converging activism against Beijing.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, Alex Chow emphasized the special relationship between Hong Kong and Taiwan, noting that:

The Taiwanese government’s policy towards Hong Kong is part of China’s policy, but going forward we need to have a new direction. Hong Kong will be Taiwan’s ally. We face the same threats; we have to guard our own places, to our own destiny (sic). We need to have stronger alliances in all areas.²⁰⁹

Hong Kong has become a warning for Taiwan and a compelling reason to believe that OCTS cannot be used as a system to unite Taiwan with China. These concerns have been expressed through the phrase, “Today’s Hong Kong, Tomorrow’s Taiwan” (今天香港，明天台灣). However, the rise of Hong Kong and Taiwanese identities against Greater Chinese nationalism defined by Beijing does not mean that both groups reject a cultural notion of China. Taiwan and Hong Kong share both similar Chinese cultural values (such as the use of Traditional Chinese characters) and also share a similar civic identity which embraces ideas such as free open markets, rule of law and democratic values. If a Chinese nationalism, not defined by Beijing, can unite both groups in a broad sense, then potential solidarity between both groups may spark new and innovate ways constructively address their concerns with Beijing.

²⁰⁸ Tony Cheung, “The Sunflower and the Umbrella: Hong Kong activists travel to Taiwan, call for closer ties, new policies from incoming government,” *South China Morning Post*, January 17, 2016.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

5.5.2 Democratic Allies in the West

Hong Kong activists in their search for global support may continue to seek the aid of the United Kingdom the United States and Canada, by attempting to obtaining political support under the norms of a largely democratic international system. Already, Demosistō's Spring 2016 tour of American and Canadian universities are an example of the types of new engagement Hong Kong's youth are attempting to make.²¹⁰ These ideas however are not new, and are inspired by the North American tours of an older generation of pan-democrats, Anson Chan and Martin Lee, when they visited various American leaders and government institutions. While nationalists efforts in Hong Kong have both aroused sympathy and admiration of outside observers, these leaders must be careful to not push Beijing to far in threatening them to enforce Article 23 of the Basic Law which "prohibit[s] foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region" and "political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies."²¹¹ Some Hong Kongers have also called upon the United Kingdom to assist in condemning the crackdown on Human rights abuses. As a former British Colony, some localists argue that Britain has a role in ensuring that the execution of the Sino-British Joint Declaration is upheld. However, observers were disappointed when former British Prime Minister David Cameron did not hold a more affirmative stance with Xi Jinping during his 2015 to the United Kingdom. Likewise, when the UK published its six-monthly report to parliament on Hong Kong, which notably condemned the disappearance of the missing Causeway Bay booksellers, Hong Lei 洪磊, a Chinese official stated that the report had "groundless accusations against China" and firmly opposed the report, stating that Hong Kong is a domestic Chinese affair in which "no foreign country has the right to

²¹⁰ Janice Wong, "Nathan Law, Joshua Wong plan US tour" *Radio Television Hong Kong*, April 11, 2016.

²¹¹ Article 23, The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

interfere.”²¹² The Chinese spokesperson asked that the UK stop “interfering in Hong Kong affairs” noting that “the so-called ‘responsibility’ that the British side claimed to have over Hong Kong does not exist.”²¹³ Despite the fact that Beijing continues to limit the political cooperation between Hong Kong and the outside world, pressure will be exerted from outside political forces through the international norms of a largely democratic international system.

5.5.3 Guangdong and Pearl River Delta Collaboration

Given Hong Kong’s close proximity and the close ancestral ties to neighbouring Guangdong province, scholars such as Peter Cheung have identified the new wave of political activism by youth which has exerted influence in major cities such as the adjacent Shenzhen and Guangzhou. For instance, some of the rally’s which support the use of Cantonese instead of Mandarin created cross-border demonstrations in 2010 where people in both Guangzhou and Hong Kong defended the use of Cantonese after it was suggested by the government to replace Cantonese with Mandarin on major broadcast TV channels.²¹⁴ During the Umbrella Movement, Guangzhou activists Wang Mo 王默 and Xie Wenfei 謝文飛 along with eight others were arrested in Mainland China for holding banners which supported the movement. Both Wang and Mo belong to the Southern Street Movement (南方街頭運動) which promotes slogans such as “abandon one-party dictatorship” and “establish a democratic China.”²¹⁵ Both similar Cantonese cultures and political goals suggest the ability for larger Pearl River Delta collaboration. However, the cases of Wang and Xie, despite its relevance to Hong Kong has picked up

²¹² “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Remarks on Six-Monthly Report to Parliament on Hong Kong Published by UK “*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China*, February 12, 2016. Retrieved from http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1340140.shtml

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Peter T.Y. Cheung, “Who’s Influencing Whom? Exploring the Influence of Hong Kong on Politics and Governance in China,” *Asian Survey* Vol. 51 No. 4 (July/August 2011): 722.

²¹⁵ Mo Zhixu, “The Southern Street Movement: China’s Lonely Warriors, *China Change*,” April 13, 2016. For more information see also: “China: Release Supporters of Hong Kong Pro-Democracy Protests,” *Amnesty International*, September 28, 2015.

relatively less attention in the city-state, suggesting that localism's goal of focusing on a system which puts "Hong Kongers priorities first" may actually be limiting long term goals of cross-border collaboration. Therefore, a Chinese nationalism, not necessarily as defined by the CCP, but in its broad cultural definition, emerges as a variable that has the potential to connect the minds of people in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. If the emergence of a pan-localist faction can learn to utilize such a significant commonality between each of these groups, localism has the potential to expand, rather than alienate potential allies.

In summary, the growth of localism in Hong Kong is producing a student discourse which attempts to push for a civic conception for a Hong Kong nation, based on the principles of a shared history, language, law, geography and civic values. However, localism is divided still between these younger localists who fight for Hong Kong's autonomy and older nativists who have used an ethno-nationalism to attempt to divide Hong Kongers and Chinese in an "us versus them" rhetoric. As localism continues to grow among youth, it will continue to gain traction amongst a unique post-colonial generation who are becoming further separated from their ancestor's ancestral home. Culturally, through the process of indigenization and de-sinicization, localism can continue to grow as young actors attempt to push the theoretical discourse. Politically, localists realize that gaining control within the legislature is the important goal for advancing the groups interests, which can allow them to potentially change Hong Kong's political system through official channels rather than through militant and violent means.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In order to understand the political tensions arising between Hong Kong and China, this study examined the development of localism within Hong Kong, to identify and characterize the process in which the people continue to identify with a Hong Kong identity. The rise of the Umbrella Generation and new political forces within Hong Kong are for the first time in the colony's history, are re-centering Hong Kong at the centre of its own subjectivity. While localism does not have a unified ideology, the ideals of self-determination and putting Hong Kongers first are reshaping the concept of a modern Hong Konger in the post-colonial era.

Situating this study within the nationalism literature, both ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism have been analyzed within the localist camp, giving way to two similar but diverging campaigns that have acknowledged Hong Kong's past and seek to redefine its future. Localism has acted as a paradoxical process in Hong Kong, attempting to transform Hong Kong from a local identity into a national identity, a process which has been facilitated by the transformation of the Hong Kong political spectrum. The polarization of Hong Kong society is helping facilitate the rise of localism and the vision of a new Hong Kong national identity based on both ethnic and civic elements, depending on the vision provided by the civic and ethnic localist groups.

Localism however is not a new movement. Yet, its unique development after the 2014 Umbrella Movement revealed a strong reaction by localists to the way mainland Chinese authorities have interfered with Hong Kong affairs. In this respect, the transformation of the student movement into a political force is representative Hong Kong youth efforts to continue fighting to preserve their current way of life. Victoria Hui at the University of Notre Dame argues that the two overlapping but different ideologies of the pan-democratic and localist camps are not contradictory, arguing that both demonstrate similar principles of "upholding Hong

Kong's separate system under 'one country, two systems,' resisting China's encroachment into Hong Kong, and preserving the city's unique values and institutions.”²¹⁶

The results of Hong Kong's September 2016 LegCo Election indicate some important societal shifts for the immediate future of Hong Kong. With a 58% turnout, the highest in several years, Hong Kong citizens have taken a renewed interest in politics, given that the political stakes are high.²¹⁷ The victory of six new localist and radical lawmakers reveals increasing support in the opposition camp for localism and the weakening appeal of the pan-democrats. Localists from all factions were able to make an impact. For instance, Eddie Chu 朱凱迪, a leading activist in heritage and preservation issues since 2006 became one of the most successful stories of the election, receiving 84,121 votes, the highest amongst any candidate. Chu's victory was reliant on his platform to combat corruption in the New Territories and represented an unprecedented revival of preservationist localism. Ethnic localists were able to claim a seat with the victory of Dr. Cheng Chung-tai 鄭松泰, a teaching fellow at Hong Kong Polytechnic University who represented radicalist party Civic Passion. Meanwhile, the student coalition of the Umbrella Movement also saw a revival through the victory of Nathan Law and his party, Demosistō. Youngspiration however represented a large victory for civic localists, claiming two seats, with leader Sixtus “Baggio” Leung 梁頌恆 now controlling the largest localist party. Youngspiration worked closely with the disqualified Edward Leung from HKI, who was poised to win in this election, further demonstrating ways in which civic localists adapted to Beijing's manipulation of the elections. The CCP is undoubtedly concerned about the Hong Kong situation, failing to curb the rise of localism even after banning five pro-independence candidates from

²¹⁶ Hui, “We are all localists!”

²¹⁷ For a detailed analysis the 2016 LegCo election, see: Suzanne Pepper, “The Kids Are Alright: Hong Kong's Latest Elections are Proof the Umbrella Movement Did Not Fail,” *Hong Kong Free Press*, September 11, 2016.

running. With another election for the Chief Executive set for 2017, the pro-Beijing election committee will need to re-evaluate whether C.Y. Leung's performance warrants his re-election or whether a more hardline candidate is needed to deal with localism in Hong Kong.

In the short term, localist and radical parties may need to learn to put their differences aside. All parties have successfully legitimized their political beliefs as timely discourses that address the issues of mainlandization and the autonomy of Hong Kong. Pan-democrats and localists may also need to learn to cooperate and coordinate to avoid the pro-establishment parties from dividing the opposition camp. Self-interest is the biggest obstacle to splitting these groups, despite their similar goals of protecting Hong Kong. For instance, Demosistō's and Youngspiration both advocate for the right to self-determination and the use of referendums to decide the future of Hong Kong beyond 2047. Both groups however have declared that an alliance is not compatible. Youngspiration argues that the referendum should be held in 2022 when a future Chief Executive election occurs so that such a decision can put pressure on a new leader to concede some reforms to localist groups. However, Demosistō argues however that the referendum should be held after 2025, giving the people more time to think about the future direction of the city-state.²¹⁸ The entrance of youth however into politics suggests their rising rationalism. Political participation and gaining control within the LegCo are more effective means of defending Hong Kong interests rather than the escalation of violence on the streets. These victories however, open a new set of questions as to how these actors must compromise their political self-interests in the better interest of Hong Kong society.

In the long term, the development of localist values indicates potential shifts over the next two decades. Despite localisms limited influence on the older generation, the political

²¹⁸ "New Parties Take Different Routes," *The Standard*, July 4, 2016.

landscape will continue to shift in favour of localism as Hong Kong's youth become the dominant age group in society. If localism can sustain its momentum, the future adults of Hong Kong may allow for pan-localism to become a dominant discourse, especially if Beijing refuses to engage a meaningful dialogue. From Beijing's perspective, localism has become a threat to the national unity of China, a destructive force that impedes upon the central government's authority in Hong Kong, forcing it to emphasize "one country" rather than "two systems". It has attempted to dispel localist groups through the heavy enforcement of the Basic Law to reaffirm Hong Kong as an inalienable part of the PRC. Despite the roadblocks created by these challenges, localists have begun to imagine Hong Kong's self-determination in relation to a de-sinicization project in order to elevate the idea of a "local" Hong Kong culture into a "national" Hong Kong culture. If the intellectual discourse on localism is further developed over the next decades before the year 2047, China will have the near-impossible task of attempting to reduce the level of local identity.

While time is still needed to better ascertain the nature of localism in Hong Kong, localism has already solidified itself as a new political force in Hong Kong that should not be ignored. Identity matters, and unless China is willing to respect the values of Hong Kong, it will find it difficult to address the identity gap. As Shirley Lin suggests, "China may have to propose a new identity based on common civic value rather than ethnicity, and develop a formula for governance that guarantees even greater autonomy to Hong Kong and Taiwan."²¹⁹ While the "China factor" will continue to play an important role in Hong Kong politics, Hong Kong civil society continues to develop, its influence spreading further, from public sphere into the political arena. Identity has become an active and powerful idea that continues to shape the socio-political landscape of Hong Kong in the twenty-first century.

²¹⁹ Lin, "Bridging the Chinese National Identity Gap," 128.

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