

Discrimination Against the Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong's Defense of Local
Identity

Wai-Kwok Benson Wong

Introduction: Contextualizing the Discrimination

Although Hong Kong is part of China according to the foreword of the Basic Law, a mini constitution of the Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the increasing institutional and political differences between the city and the People's Republic of China (PRC) have been salient since the establishment of the PRC in 1949 at a time when Hong Kong was a British colony. A series of political campaigns since the 1950s, and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), led to residents of mainland China migrating illegally to colonial Hong Kong in order to escape political troubles, establish stable and safe lives, live with relatives, and/or improve their family finances. Since the 1980s, Chinese migration to Hong Kong has used a quota system by the mutual agreement of the Beijing and Hong Kong governments. It was initially set at 150 people per day in 1980, revised downward to 75 persons per day in 1983, then increased to 105 per day in 1993, and finally increased to 150 per day in 1995, where it now stands (Wan, 2006, p. 2).

Given the political, cultural, and social divergence between the two locations due to political separation and the fact that China was less advanced economically than Hong Kong before the 1990s, mainland immigrants were devalued in different ways, as Siu (2009) has observed:

Although Hong Kong has been a land of immigrants and emigrants,
a new social ethos emerged in the 1980s that centered on

discrimination toward this population influx. Those who identified with urban Hong Kong society perceived the newcomers as rural and desperately poor. For example, the media popularized the images of “Ah Chan,” (a country bumpkin from the mainland), and Sheng Gang Qibing (criminal mercenaries from Guangdong province). As these newcomers arrived in overwhelming numbers, symbolizing a China reeling from decades of isolation and deprivation, anxious Hong Kongers labeled them as *Xin Yimin* (new immigrants) to mark their differences in cultural orientation, social status and economic well-being from people like themselves.

However, given China’s rise since the 2000s, with its increasing economic and international influence, the social background of mainland Chinese immigrants has changed tremendously. Before 1997 rural working-class and poor men made up the majority of immigrants. After the handover, immigrants included rich families as well. However, it proved difficult for some immigrants to adapt to the new environment smoothly and joyfully, given differences in language, dialect, and custom. For example, in Hong Kong, people speak Cantonese, but many mainland immigrants can only speak Putonghua and their own regional dialect. Although most of the immigrants eventually learn to speak Cantonese, their original accent may still be obvious, leading to embarrassment in everyday life and sustaining the existing prejudice against new immigrants. In addition, wage differentials exist between locals and post-1980s Chinese immigrants, proving that discrimination is prevalent (Wan, 2006).

Discrimination as a Reaction Against China’s Political Domination

Another important cause of discrimination against mainland Chinese is the unequal relationship between increasingly powerful Beijing and powerless Hong Kong during the pre- and post-1997 periods, constituting another reason for the projection of Hong Kong's aversion to the communist regime onto the mainland Chinese. This has several causes:

1. The enduring nightmare of the 1967 riot that resulted from political chaos in mainland China after the Cultural Revolution led to a negative view of the communist regime.
2. Hong Kong residents were not allowed to determine their own destiny during the Sino-British negotiations between 1982 and 1984, a frustrating situation.
3. The Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 only increased negative feelings toward the authorities who bloodily and violently suppressed the student movement.
4. Infiltration of pro-Beijing elites into the political setting during the 1990s showed that Beijing intended to influence local politics by appointing "Hong Kong affairs advisors" and "district affairs advisors" and by establishing "the provisional Legislative Council" (Wong, 1997), causing Hong Kongers to question its determination to uphold past promises of "One Country Two Systems," "Hong Kong People Ruling Hong Kong," and a "High Level of Autonomy."
5. The increased political intervention into local politics after the handover has furthered political and institutional decay, including the backstage orchestration of the chief executive elections; political intervention within the Liaison Office—a *de facto* representative of the Beijing government—in shaping the local administration and power structure; the unfolding of the

United Front, a political strategy in which the PRC co-opts the social, political, and economic elites so as to influence local politics informally (Lam & Lam, 2013).

6. Finally, the PRC devalues and suppresses local democratization and liberalization, as reflected in the executive-led governance that maintains soft authoritarianism, the dominance of the legislature by the pro-establishment force, including Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), Federation of Trade Union (FTU), Liberal Party and New People's Party, aiming to defend proposed government bills and reject opposition-proposed bills, notably from the pan-democratic force, including Civic Party, Democratic Party, Labour Party, League of Social Democrats, and Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (So, 2002)

Overall, political imposition and distrust have become salient in shaping the relationship between China and Hong Kong, as well as the antagonism of the populace toward China, and also toward the mainland Chinese, who are regarded as the “symbols” of China. They are perceived and treated in a negative and even discriminatory manner, regardless of whether they are tourists or businesspeople or actually immigrants to Hong Kong.

The escalating confrontation between China and Hong Kong has furthered discrimination since 2012. Due to the anger and dissatisfaction about current social development among local Hong Kong residents, mainland Chinese immigrants have become targets of severe criticism (Society for Community Organization, 2014, p. 7). It is interesting to note that the government has excluded new immigrants from

mainland China from the Race Discrimination Ordinance, which means that immigration status and ethnic differences between China and Hong Kong are not considered (Society for Community Organization, 2014, p. 9), thus unintentionally facilitating the discrimination.

The discrimination against mainland Chinese (both visitors and immigrants) has become a critical issue in the media, and confrontations have been taped, reproduced, and circulated on the Internet in order to arouse the public and put pressure on the government. Unfortunately, the government has so far ignored the public outcry, and some Hong Kong citizens feel that their interests are neglected because the government only considers and defends the interests of China on the grounds of achieving political, economic, and social integration. Therefore, Hong Kong residents believe that collective action should be taken to defend the local interests and retain local identity by rejecting the unrestricted arrival of mainland Chinese.

Chinese Mainlanders as Locusts: A Newspaper Campaign

In February 2012, some Hong Kong netizens placed an advertisement in *Apple Daily*, one of the popular tabloid-style newspapers in Hong Kong, expressing their grievances toward the Chinese mainlanders, notably the pregnant women who come to Hong Kong to give birth (see Figure 1). The ad was paid for by an online fundraising campaign on Facebook and the local site Hong Kong Golden Forum, which received more than HK\$100,000 (US\$12,900) from 800 donors in a week (“About That Hong Kong ‘Locust’ Ad,” 2012). With reference to Article 24(1) of the Basic Law, Chinese citizens born in Hong Kong would automatically be entitled to the right of abode. In order to get the right of abode, mainland women come to Hong Kong to

give birth, leading to problems within the health services, notably overburdened doctors and hospitals, as well as education and social welfare problems, and thus arousing public concern.

The advertisement asks:

Are you willing to spend \$1,000,000 every eighteen minutes to keep “double-no” [meaning that both parents are mainlanders, not Hong Kong people] children?

Hong Kong People. You cannot endure this any longer!

We permit you to purchase cans of milk powders without restrictions because we understand that you have been tormented by poisonous milk powders.

We offer a warm reception to the free individual visitors because we understand that you are not free [in Mainland China].

We share our resources for education with you because we understand that your education system is backward.

We present the following idea in **simplified Chinese** because we understand that you do not know traditional Chinese: “**Please respect the local culture when you come to Hong Kong. Without Hong Kong, you have no other recourse.**”

We urge the government to revise the Article 24 of the Basic Law, and stop the double-no pregnant women coming to (and giving birth) in Hong Kong without restriction.

This ad chastises mainland pregnant women for giving birth in Hong Kong in order to receive specific benefits, including education, housing, social welfare, medicine, and right of abode. Note that the ad shows a huge locust standing on the

Lion Rock, a hill representing Hong Kong, and facing the Victoria Harbor and Hong Kong Island. The locust dominates the landscape and demonstrates its might by ignoring the local people's criticisms and grievances. Overall, the advertisement not only expresses the dissatisfaction of the local people with the mainlanders' practice of trying to get benefits that they do not deserve, but also demonstrates the increasing worries and anxieties of Hong Kong citizens about the Chinese influence that shapes their everyday life.

This issue also adds fuel to concerns about the possibility of, in effect, re-colonizing Hong Kong by populating it with Hong-Kong-born mainlanders and marginalizing the Hong Kong natives accordingly. This concern is expressed by the term "New Hong Kong people" [*Xin Xianggang Ren*], as introduced and promoted by the mainland Chinese and Hong Kong pro-government media. As *South China Morning Post*, a local English newspaper, reported:

Mainland migrants are needed for Hong Kong's development, according to a Communist Party mouthpiece that described them as "new Hongkongers."

The signed commentary in yesterday's overseas edition of the *People's Daily*—the latest sortie by state media into the debate over the mainland-Hong Kong relationship—drew a mixed response from lawmakers and academics.

Prominently displayed on page three, the 1,600-word article was illustrated by a picture of actress Tang Wei, the *Lust, Caution* star who obtained Hong Kong residency in 2009 through the quality migrant scheme.

“Most of [the new migrants] earn their own living rather than relying on social security. Some of them are absorbed to become the city's new elites,” the article read.

“But while mainlanders today are no longer seen as ‘Ah Chaan’ [a derogatory nickname for their shabby looks], they become feared ‘locusts,’” it added, in a reference to a popular term for the growing cross-border influx.

The article concluded by quoting Chief Secretary Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor saying that mainland migrants were an important source of Hong Kong's population growth. (*South China Morning Post*, 2013)

Based on the above article, three salient points can be addressed. First, the mainland Chinese migrants are officially endorsed as a positive force as they revitalize the economy and supply manpower. Second, the official discourse deliberately avoids the controversial issues in relation to mainlanders, especially the Double-No babies and the associated problems mentioned above. And finally, how and why mainlanders came to be labeled “New Hong Kongers” is not explained, leaving the impression that “new” is only a pseudo term used to confuse the local people. The word “new” is used by the regime to give the mainlanders a positive image. When the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) founded the government in October 1949, it regarded itself as the “new” China [*Xin Zhongguo*], denoting modernity, progress, and transcendence to distinguish itself from the “old” China, founded by the Nationalists in 1912 and forced to flee to Taiwan in 1949, that represented backwardness, corruption, and decay. It is important to note that this term has been used in 2007 by Donald Tsang, an ex chief executive of the HKSAR, when

he claimed that Hong Kong people had become unsure about their identity and economic prospects vis-à-vis a rising China after 1997. Hong Kong can only prosper as a fully integrated part of the PRC and the HKSAR's citizens must look at the city's development from the perspective of China's future (Quoted from Kaeding, 2011).

In retrospect, the ad in *Apple Daily* defends the local identity in an assertive but controversial manner. As mentioned above, the placement of an advertisement indicates that some Hong Kong people are convinced that their concerns about mainlander-caused problems are not only unheard and ignored but also distorted and devalued. Therefore, they felt the need to draw public attention to them. However, the use of the locust symbol aroused frustration and anger among mainlanders. Locusts have been used in history and literature as symbols of robbers and those who laid waste to resources like locusts, which eat and destroy crops, causing starvation. For example, in a book entitled *Mount Omi and Beyond: A Record of Travel on the Tibetan Border*, Archibald John Little (1901/2013) commented on

this locust-like propensity of the Chinese to destroy every green thing wherever they penetrate, for when the trees are gone comes the turn of the scrub and bushes, then the grass, and at last the roots, until, finally, the rain washes down the accumulated soil of ages, and only barren rocks remain. (p. 257)

In response to that advertisement, which has been circulated and shared on such mainland China websites as sina.com and renren.com, some netizens have reversed and framed the identical advertisement so as to criticize Hong Kong natives for openly and assertively discriminating against the mainlanders without considering the “contribution” made by mainlanders to Hong Kong. These netizens were anxious to show the dominant position of China and the inferiority of Hong Kong, making the

point that Hong Kong depends on China just as a son depends on his father for all things, illustrating a top-down and hierarchical mentality. However, this comparison falls apart under analysis. The Beijing government provides no support to Hong Kong: water is purchased at great cost from the mainland, which also does not supply electricity to the city. The supposedly great contribution of the Beijing government to Hong Kong has shaped the mentality of the Chinese mainland visitors, enabling them to feel a sense of superiority to their hosts.

Discrimination Through Internet Subculture

In Hong Kong, the mainstream media tend not to focus on this controversial issue and to adopt the official discourse, focusing on the view that (1) the contribution of mainlanders, especially tourists, in revitalizing the local economy, providing job opportunities, and, therefore, improving people's livelihoods; and (2) Hong Kong should be grateful to the Beijing government for preventing a recession in Hong Kong after the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003 by offering benefits, notably the introduction to the Closer Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), and Individual Visit Scheme – a policy aiming to allow mainland residents to visit Hong Kong and Macau on an individual basis, to the Hong Kong residents (Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, 2013). Because these benefits were only available to certain entrepreneurs, proprietors, and shop owners who were, therefore, able to earn huge profits, adverse effects impacted the local people in different ways. Antagonism, frustration, and opposition were thus produced and reproduced, and then circulated and shared by the local netizens, with the purpose of limiting potential threats arising from the unrestricted influx of mainlanders. By

focusing on pictures, songs, or video clips being produced and circulated on the Internet, discrimination can be manifested in the following ways:

First, the Internet propaganda portrays how mainland visitors have had harmful impacts on everyday life in Hong Kong. Some examples follow:

1. A drastic increase in rent, thereby small-scale shops are forced to close down;
2. An increase in chain pharmacies and jewelry shops that small- or medium-scale local businesses are unable to compete;
3. Streets have become overcrowded, and the local people feel uncomfortable;
4. City hygiene is getting worse due to the bad behavior of tourists;
5. The predominance of mainland visitors leads to fewer foreign visitors;
6. The popularity of parallel trade disturbs the local residents (as large number of parallel traders from mainland China and Hong Kong, as well as mainland visitors, occupy the space and then engage in transactions);
7. Low-level industry does not help to transit (as the local economy heavily relies on visitors and tourists from China);
8. Using simplified Chinese to please the mainland visitors undermines the (local) culture;
9. Boundary customs (between mainland China and Hong Kong) are overcrowded; that increases the expenditure (on facilities maintenance);
10. Being unable to stop the arrival of illegal laborers and sex workers.

As a result, if the Individual Visit Scheme introduced and enforced by the Beijing authorities is not effectively monitored, Hong Kong will suffer the consequences.

Given the consumption of luxury items by mainland visitors, some shop owners may decide to close small shops because they are incapable of making huge profits, and then offer the premises to shops that sell the expensive, luxurious, and popular items that mainland visitors are interested in. This trend is supported by *China Daily*, a mainland Chinese newspaper, which reported that

While the rest of the world cuts back on spending, Chinese customers bought 47 percent of all luxury goods in the world in 2013, according to a report by Fortune Character Institute....[the] Chinese appetite for luxury is the reason why all major European designers, such as Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Christian Dior, have a large presence in China. ...By focusing on unique Chinese design characteristics and use of culturally auspicious materials like jade and gold, jewelry brands such as Luk Fook and Kin Hung Lee are becoming a big name in the domestic market. (Chang, 2014)

In addition, apart from jewelry shops, pharmacies are also popular because of food and medicine safety problems in China. The huge demand for Western and Japanese milk powder is a typical example. The spark that lit China's wildfire demand for Western milk powder was ignited in July 2008, when 59 babies in northwestern Gansu province were diagnosed with kidney stones. The babies had fallen ill, it turned out, after drinking infant formula made locally from milk adulterated with melamine, a toxic chemical that artificially boosted the milk's protein count. By year's end Chinese authorities were admitting that at least 22 dairy companies had perpetrated the heinous deception. This was one of the biggest food-tainting scandals in Chinese history, causing six children to die and nearly 300,000 to fall ill. As a result of those poisonings and a series of subsequent food-tainting scandals, sales of imported baby formula skyrocketed as alarmed Chinese parents

abandoned local dairy products (Guilliatt, 2014). Some mainland visitors come to Hong Kong just to purchase the Western and Japanese milk products in bulk, leading to baby milk powder wars, as *Global Voices* mentioned:

Hong Kong has been facing a shortage of infant milk powder ever since December 2010, when mainland Chinese customers purchased large amounts of baby milk formula in Hong Kong and stockpiled it in preparation for the Lunar New Year break. Local Hong Kong parents have called for intervention policies from the government, suggesting a milk powder departure tax to stop smugglers from carrying it across the border for resale. (Ko, 2011)

In terms of city hygiene, some of the visitors are criticized as selfish and inconsiderate, urinating and defecating in public areas when traveling in Hong Kong, showing a lack of respect for their hosts. However, the government responded to the public criticism by claiming that the Hong Kong people should welcome and tolerate [*Baorong*] mainland Chinese visitors. Gregory Kam-leung So, the secretary for commerce and economic development of Hong Kong, has asked that the Hong Kong people should respect mainland visitors and try to understand why they behave the way that they do, given the cultural differences between the two places. However, his remark has come under severe attack by the netizens, who say that his view is unfounded and ridiculous (*Apple Daily*, April 24, 2014). The understanding of inclusiveness has also been severely challenged, with some residents saying that inclusiveness does not mean that the Hong Kong people should tolerate and even rationalize the unhygienic, rude, and unreasonable practices of mainland Chinese visitors:

The basis of inclusiveness is about being respectful to different life styles, customs and ideas. Despite differences, both sides should not

violate the mores of each other. Without such a foundation, inclusiveness becomes a pretense or a connivance. In light of cases of defecating and urinating in the public areas and continuous conflicts between China and Hong Kong, mutual respect is impossible.

Some Mainland netizens think that the Hong Kong people exaggerate the whole issue and that they grasp any opportunity to malign the Mainland Chinese. They believe that taking videos of children defecating and urinating in public is a violation of privacy and even claim that they will bring their children to Hong Kong and then allow them to defecate and urinate wherever they want. The overseas version of the *People's Daily* published an article condemning some of the Hong Kong people who regard themselves as “civilized” but advising them to be empathetic toward the Mainlanders views and practices. Thus, Hong Kong people are being reminded and even warned about saying “bad things about the Chinese family should not be disseminated” but rather that they “should be covered up.” Additionally, Mainland media promote the theory that the prosperity of Hong Kong is dependent on the free visit scheme, which allows Mainland visitors to consume goods and services in Hong Kong. Therefore, the theory asserts that the Hong Kong people should express their gratitude.

However, such mainland netizens adopting the subservient approach to understand the relations between China and Hong Kong turn out to arouse the antagonism of the Hong Kong people. As Zhou (2014) questions, do the Hong Kong people regard the actions of

Mainland visitors as bad behavior within the family? Frankly speaking, do the Hong Kong people regard the Mainland visitors as family members? On the contrary, many Hong Kong people regard the Mainland visitors as usurpers and do not think that the Chinese have made a contribution to the economy of Hong Kong. Therefore, why does the Mainland insist that Hong Kong should warmly welcome the visitors to come and spend money at their ease, and excuse their misconduct as well? Do such Mainland visitors assume that they are showing due respect to a different culture when they are simply imposing their own living style and attitudes on the places and people that they visit? (Zhou, 2014)

Overall, people in Hong Kong have become increasingly angry due to the official negligence of the issue, which could therefore be seen as facilitating discrimination in an unintentional manner by defending local interests, notably the survival of the Hong Kong people.

One Hong Kong reaction to all this is to take photos of misconduct on the part of mainland Chinese visitors and upload the photos, adding personal comments, to such social media platforms as Facebook and YouTube with the aim of circulating messages such as the following:

1. Mainland visitors are impolite, uncivilized and inconsiderate.
2. Such misconduct is disturbing and undermining to everyday life.
3. The Hong Kong people should not only circulate the clips and attach their own comments but also take concrete actions to defend the city's interests.

4. Those people who express the view that there must be understanding and tolerance of mainland Chinese visitors' misconduct should be severely condemned.

One such example is a video clip entitled "Full of Shits During the Golden Week" that appeared on *Apple Daily's* website that showed mainland Chinese visitors, especially children, who urinated and defecated in public areas. These actions took place, in particular, during the week of Labor Day, known as the "Golden Week," a 7-day vacation in mainland China, which means that visitors can stay longer. As of April 25, 2015, it had 200,471 clicks with 153 likes and 82 dislikes. At the end of the clip, the narrator says:

Although clean toilets are available in this shopping mall, such [mainland Chinese] visitors choose to defecate and urinate in the public area. Actually, netizens have collected pictures of the Great Wall and Jiangxi and found that this may be the common practice in Mainland China. (abc341177v's channel, 2010)

The narrator suggests that mainland visitors are unable to respect the local culture and insist on their own bad practices no matter where they are.

Another video clip, titled "A Mainland Chinese Beautiful Lady was Drunk and Scolded the Hong Kong People," got 443,330 clicks with 229 likes and 154 dislikes as of April 25, 2015. The video shows an apparently intoxicated woman who loses control (erichowc's channel, 2010). She complains that she spent US\$77,000 (about HK\$600,000) on expensive Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and Armani goods in Hong Kong. However, when she was shopping, a shopkeeper addressed her as "Mainland Girl" [*Dalu Mei*], and even "Northern Auntie" [*Beigu*, commonly used to refer to female sex workers in China], and claimed that she could not afford to buy these

items, so she felt unhappy and angry. In her intoxicated state, she called an ambulance but refused to enter the hospital. As a result, she lost control at the hospital entrance and was arrested by policewomen. In the face of such misconduct by mainlanders, local netizens have organized to collect such pictures and video clips and are then forwarding and sharing them to disseminate the message to others, drawing public attention to such misconduct, and forging a collective force to resist it.

The mainland visitors, in general, irritate Hong Kong residents by displaying their economic might and their purchasing power, the basis for their demand that the Hong Kong people should express their gratitude to mainland Chinese visitors who help to maintain the local economy thanks to the aforementioned Individual Visit Scheme that was introduced and enforced by the Beijing authorities in July 2003. For example, a YouTube video clip shows an interview with a mainland visitor who could not return to China as planned due to a typhoon. When a reporter interviewed him about the need to change his travel plans, he said assertively and impolitely that “If the Central Government does not take care of Hong Kong, Hong Kong is over!” (hkcube888’s channel, 2008). This video clip was uploaded on August 6, 2008, and has 202,988 clicks as of April 25, 2015, with 152 likes and 1,790 dislikes. Another mainland visitor said: “[If] we do not come [to Hong Kong] and buy things, they [the Hong Kong people] will have nothing to eat” (meaning that they will be unable to survive). Overall, the persistence of such expressions of superiority provide a solid justification to the Hong Kong people who believe that discriminating against the mainland Chinese is a reasonable, and even a necessary way to express their grievances and point out the misconduct that they witness. It is their belief that mainland Chinese visitors and immigrants show a lack of respect for the local culture

and customs, present themselves as the saviors of Hong Kong, and in general display an unfriendly and superior attitude.

An article entitled “Origins of Mainlanders’ Mentality of Benevolent Masters [*Enzhu Xintai*]” (2014) posted on qq.com, a mainland Chinese website, vividly examines this superior attitude, which has led to increased discrimination against the mainland Chinese, whether they are visitors, immigrants, or central government officers. Based on these observations, many mainlanders, when scolded by the Hong Kong citizens, state that if they do not go to Hong Kong and spend their money there, Hong Kong cannot sustain further growth and the city will fall apart. This attitude can also be reflected in the Beijing government’s purchases of American bonds, which the Beijing authorities regard as helping to save the American economy from collapse after the economic recession of 2008 and thus helping to sustain the global economy. One can see that the mainland Chinese regard themselves as patrons while those they benefit are clients. Clients should express their gratitude to patrons. The official discourse further endorses this assertion, as reflected in a white paper on the practice of “One Country, Two Systems” in Hong Kong issued by the State Council in June 2014 mentioning that [Beijing was]:

supporting Hong Kong in developing its tourism and retail sectors, and Hong Kong-invested companies on the mainland. At the request of the HKSAR government, the central government gradually expanded the Individual Visit Scheme to 49 pilot cities, with a total population of over 300 million. By the end of 2013, some 129 million mainland residents had visited Hong Kong under the Individual Visit Scheme. According to [the] estimate of the HKSAR government, in 2012 alone the Individual Visit Scheme contributed to [a] 1.3 percent increase of Hong Kong's GRP of the year, and it created more than

110,000 jobs, accounting for 3.1 percent of the local employment. (“The Information office of the State Council, 2014)

Although the figures of economic growth and job creation are presented as the contribution of the Beijing authorities to Hong Kong, this assertion sweeps any adverse impact under the rug, including the overcrowding of public transportation, shopping malls, and private hospitals, in Sha Tin, Mong Kok, and Causeway Bay. This overcrowding has made a significant number of Hong Kong people feel that so many visitors from the mainland coming to such a small place only serve to make their city too congested. The shortage of baby milk powder mentioned above has added to the negative sentiment of locals against Chinese visitors (Wong, 2014). The impressive economic growth, figures and increased job opportunities did not significantly improve the lives of the underprivileged, given that the widening gap between the rich and the poor intensifies social polarization, as reflected in the fact that about 1.3 million people or 19.6 percent of the population were below the poverty line in 2012, with a Gini coefficient of 0.537 in 2011 (Hu & Yun, 2013).

Taking a historical perspective, the pre-communist Chinese dynasties also regarded themselves as benevolent leaders that offered material benefits to neighboring countries that were willing to show their subservience, thus enabling China to demonstrate its political and moral strength.

It is paradoxical that the Hong Kong people are criticized for discriminating against the Chinese mainlanders. In fact, the mainlanders discriminate against the Hong Kong residents because they regard Hong Kong as economically and politically dependent on the Beijing authorities, without whom this city-state would be unable to cope in the face of economic difficulties and political misgovernance under the current SAR government.

Also, the discrimination by mainlanders awakens the local sense of identity. The Hong Kong natives argue that the only way to resolve the chaotic situation is to arouse the local consciousness to resist China's influence. Local identity can be reestablished by defending local interests, focusing on regaining the power to approve the arrival of prospective mainland immigrants, rejecting those who present, for example, fraud marriages, the abandonment of "China" mentality, and the elimination of "Hong Kong traitors" [*Maigangzei*], i.e., the Democratic Party and leftists who support inclusiveness that facilitates connivance without considering the political and social contexts. Most importantly, some forms of separation between China and Hong Kong can ensure Hong Kong's uniqueness and the maintenance of local customs and practice without interference by visitors and immigrants ("Local Consciousness Is the Only Way of Hong Kong People's Resistance," 2014). Therefore, discrimination becomes rationalized in the ground of defending local interests, notably the space for survival and living.

Conclusion

This chapter uses the issue of discrimination against Chinese mainlanders as a theme to introduce this controversial discussion of conflicts between China and Hong Kong. Summarizing the above discussion, three points are highlighted: First, discrimination is a way of responding to mainland Chinese visitors and immigrants. To a certain extent, discrimination can be understood as a resistance to Beijing's Individual Visit Scheme and mainland Chinese immigration to Hong Kong without Hong Kong's involvement in allocation and decision-making. As the current HKSAR government is appointed by the central authorities and the chief executive is selected by the pro-Beijing and pro-business elites without civic consent, the public interest can be neglected. In this way, discrimination against mainland Chinese visitors and

immigrants can also be seen as a tactic to embarrass the HKSAR and even Beijing authorities in order to make them review the tourist and immigration policy. Second, power relationships between China and Hong Kong should be highlighted in reviewing the discrimination. As I have mentioned above, Hong Kong was an immigrant society before the 1980s, and Chinese immigrants were generally accepted by the local society despite the fact that tensions existed; many poor rural immigrants were socially marginalized and excluded. However, the status of new immigrants changed after 1997, and the rich and privileged moved to Hong Kong, regarding it as a place to shop and obtain a good education for their children—getting benefits without adapting to, and respecting, the local environment and customs. They regarded themselves as superior to the Hong Kong people, whose inferiority was reflected in their dependence on mainland China. In addition, the Beijing authorities have actively suppressed democratization and even intervened in the local affairs through the Liaison Office. As a result, the Beijing authorities and the mainland immigrants and visitors are viewed as one entity, an adverse force in local society that undermines the city in the eyes of the Hong Kong people. The unequal power relationships deepen the discrimination. And finally, although overt discrimination can serve as a tactic to respond to policies that undermine local interests, it also contributes to the deepening of social and ethnic conflicts between the Hong Kong people and the mainlanders, without subjecting such conflicts to the force of rational argument. In other words, although local identity is reestablished by discriminating against the mainland Chinese, the exclusion of some mainland Chinese immigrants will lead to social confrontation. Some Hong Kong people seem to forget that local identity can be inclusive, dynamic, and pluralistic, inducing immigrants to be more adaptive and to ultimately become the local people, which is what Hong Kong people

did in the pre-1990s period. This can be a more effective way to respond to political and institutional intervention from Beijing, as the attractiveness of “Hong Kong’s heritage,” such as rule of law and the existence of civil liberties, can be an influential force linking and binding the local people and new immigrants together.



你願意香港
每18分鐘
花\$1,000,000
養育「雙非」兒童嗎？*

香港人，忍夠了！

因為同情你們受毒奶粉所害，所以容忍你們來搶購奶粉
因為可憐你們沒有自由，所以恩賜你們來港「自由行」
因為明白你們教育落後，所以分享了教育資源給你們
因為了解你們看不懂正體字，所以下面用了殘體字
「來香港請尊重本地文化，要不是香港你們全完蛋了」

**強烈要求政府修訂基本法24條！
阻止大陸雙非孕婦逃難式入侵香港！**

This city is dying, you know?

* 統計處資料顯示，二〇〇九年出生的「雙非」嬰兒約二萬九千名，即每18分鐘出生一名「雙非」嬰兒，未計算其他損失。每名「雙非」嬰兒由幼稚園至大學畢業，最少使消費一百萬政府支出。

** 內地孕婦來港產子，父母均非港人數字，於2001年為62人，於2010年為32,000人，數量大幅增加的500倍。

反對內地孕婦來港產子！
10 萬人 Like 俾政府慳！
Facebook 活動詳情

<https://www.facebook.com/talinefosayno>

Figure 1. Newspaper advertisement for the anti-locust campaign.

Retrieved from <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/zh/b/bd/Locust-ad.jpg>

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