

Contemporary Chinese Identity: Legal vs personal

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Abstract

What is 'China', what is 'Chinese'? These concepts often lack precise definition, and even if there is a definition, it is often not universally agreed upon. This paper examines the opinions and perception of 'Chinese' people of different legal citizenship status, different background views and think about these concepts, and those surrounding it.

The biggest differences in opinions and perceptions are between Mainland China persons and non-mainland China persons, as defined in the paper by the participant's legal citizenship status. This paper explores the possible reasons such as political, ethnicity behind this divide.

This paper found that the concept surrounding 'China' and 'Chinese' is highly complex and controversial, and while mainland China persons tend to identify as 'Chinese', non-mainland China persons, despite their legal citizenship status of 'Chinese national', tend not to. In the foreseeable future, this lack of definition and conflicting viewpoints will only make the controversy surrounding these concepts continue.

Contemporary Chinese Identity: Legal vs personal

Due to the complicated political realities, China, as constitutionally claimed by two states at the same time, consists of four distinct legal jurisdictions, entities, and subjects of international law, mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. The complication in the political reality, in part, leads to the complicated answer to a simple question: Who is Chinese? Someone who identifies themselves as Chinese does not necessarily mean that they are a Chinese national legally, vice versa. Furthermore, distinct identities that exist alongside or as a replacement for Chinese identity have existed or developed in the Greater China region, such as Taiwanese, Hongkonger, Macanese. This paper aims to provide an insight into the relationship between one's legal identity vs one's cultural identity as Chinese, following the drastic political changes of Taiwan's political landscape, and the on-going protest in Hong Kong.

For the purpose of this paper, China will be used to refer to mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, short form for the Greater China region. A Chinese national is referred to as a national of either the PRC, People's Republic of China, or the ROC, Republic of China (Taiwan). PRC might also be referred to as mainland China, and ROC as Taiwan.

Chinese identity is often linked with patriotism and leveraged in politics (Wu, 1991). As the political environment is changing due to the rise in power of the PRC, and the resumption of Chinese sovereignty in the former British Hong Kong and Portugese Macau, among other events, so is the legal and cultural identity of the people who live in what is legally defined China changing.

Literature review

There are many words in Chinese that are similar to the meaning of Chinese in English, including ‘*zhongguoren, huaren, zhonghua minzu, huaqiao, tangren, huaren*’ etc (Wu, 1991, P.159). All of them have similar but slightly different meanings in different social contexts. The modern concept of *zhonghua minzu*, the Chinese nation, is one that is created in the modern times. This concept is incorporated into the Constitution of the PRC, which states in its Preamble that ‘The People’s Republic of China is a unitary multi-national State created jointly by the people of all its nationalities’ along with repeated mentions of ‘the Chinese people of all nationalities’ (National People’s Congress, 2004), recognizing the diverse and multi-national nature of the Chinese identity.

As political instability and divide continues, the Chinese identity often is a political issue. In Hong Kong, the overall population having the ethnic identity of Chinese has been found to be in decline in recent years across all age groups (HKU POP, 2019). The people of Taiwan overwhelmingly identify themselves as solely Taiwanese and not Chinese, with 83.2% of participants in a recent survey reporting their ethnic identity as such (Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation, 2020).

The Chinese language is also considered by some as a fictitious idea as the languages of China that share the same Chinese characters, though considered dialects of Chinese, some of which are in fact ‘mutually unintelligible in the spoken form’ (Wang, 2007). Therefore, they argue that the Chinese language in its spoken form does not truly exist (Wang, 2007).

There are 56 official recognized nationalities of the PRC that constitutes the ‘Chinese nation’ of which the ethnic Han is the absolute majority. The list includes ethnic Russian,

Korean, Mongolian, among others (Central People's Government of the PRC, 2006). It is not hard to see that some nationalities that are recognized as Chinese actually have countries that are the majority of such nationalities. Naturalized citizens of the PRC & ROC also bring additional complications of the Chinese identity despite both being countries that traditionally do not rely on immigration, which only further complicates the Chinese identity.

Methodology

Online surveys and interviews were used to gather data required. The online method allows both for satisfying the requirement of social distancing, due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, and allows reaching to a wider group of Chinese people, not limited by geographical barriers, making a broader data point available.

Each person is asked a series of questions, included in Appendix I in order to assess both their legal and cultural Chinese identity. Legal Chinese identity is divided according to the laws of different jurisdictions. Questions are designed in a way to assess one's views on their own Chinese identity, and Chinese identity as a whole.

The legal Chinese identity to be used in this paper is as follows.

	Definition
Mainland China person	PRC National with Household Registration in mainland China
Taiwan person	ROC (Taiwan) National with Household Registration in Taiwan area
Hong Kong person	Hong Kong resident of Chinese nationality
Macao person	Macao resident of Chinese nationality
Chinese national	Person of Chinese nationality without Household Registration in Mainland China

	and/or Taiwan Area and resident status in Hong Kong and/or Macao
Self-identified Chinese	Self-identified Chinese person without Chinese nationality and Hong Kong, Macao resident status
Multiple status	Applies to person with multiple status

The survey is available in English, Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese with different explanations regarding the legal status according to the laws of the PRC and/or ROC, in order to make sure the legal status can be understood properly.

Findings

The survey generated 26 responses, 26 of which are valid. Question 8 was used as a validation question where participants are required to select C as their answer. All 26 participants have done so.

Participants range in age from 15-25. Most participants are classified either as Mainland China people or Hong Kong people (Appendix I, Fig. 1). The majority of the participants were also born in (Appendix I, Fig. 2), and currently live in either Mainland China or Hong Kong (Appendix I, Fig. 3). 24 out of 26 participants are of Han ethnicity. 1 participant each provided ethnic Manchu and ethnic Chinese as their answer.

Question 5: ‘For you, what does the word China mean in terms of geographic area it contains?’

Mainland China	Taiwan	Hong Kong	Macao
26 (100%)	10 (38.5%)	15 (57.7%)	16 (61.3%)

In terms of the geographic area the word ‘China’ contains, all participants believe that Mainland China is a part of that area. Majority of participants believe that Hong Kong and Macao are also a part of that area, and a minority of participants believe that Taiwan is a part of that area.

In question 6 & 10, participants are asked to evaluate on a linear scale of 1 to 10 regarding how likely they are to provide ‘China’ as the answer to the question ‘Where do you come from’ in a foreign country and how compatible is Chinese identity with other identities, respectively. In question 6, 1 represents most unlikely with 10 being the opposite. In question 10, 1 represents cannot co-exist (with other identities) at all with 10 being the opposite. Average number for question 6 & 10 is 5.3 and 5.1, respectively.

In question 9, participants are asked to select the word(s) that describe their identity, with ‘other’ being an option for them to better describe their identity.

Chinese	Ethnic Chinese	Overseas Chinese	Taiwanese	Hongkonger	Macanese
16	20	6	1	11	1

Participants also provided other answers, including 2 participants writing ‘Cantonese’, 1 writing ‘Citizen of the Earth’ and describing it as ‘more important than other identities’. 1 participant wrote ‘e-residency’ as their answer, presumably referring to the Estonia e-residency program and choosing to identify as an e-resident of Estonia, along other identities.

Questions 14 to 16 are a series of questions asking participants to determine whether the person featured in the image is considered to them to be either ‘Chinese’, ‘Person of Chinese

nationality’, ‘neither’ or both. 3 people were featured. They are (in order of the images), Stephen Chu, Shiwen Ye, and Paul Zimmerman. Stephen Chu is a US citizen of Chinese descent, Shiwen Ye is a PRC citizen born in Zhejiang province. They are both ‘Chinese looking’. Paul Zimmerman is a naturalized citizen of the PRC, he gave up his Dutch citizenship. He is a permanent resident of Hong Kong. He is not ‘Chinese looking’. The English name for Stephen Chu was provided and the Chinese names of Shiwen Ye and Paul Zimmerman were provided.

	Chinese	Person of Chinese nationality	Neither	Both
Stephen Chu (English name provided)	19	0	4	3
Shiwen Ye (Chinese name provided)	14	3	0	9
Paul Zimmerman (Chinese name provided)	4	8	8	4

With regards to questions 5, 6, 9, & 10, notable differences occur within people of different legal status and cultural identities. For example, in question 6, if the participant is classified as a mainland China person, their answer will have an average value of 7.4, significantly higher than the average value of 3.5 for participants that are not deemed as mainland China persons, indicating that a mainland China person is far more likely to answer ‘China’ as the response to the question ‘Where are you from’ when asked in a foreign country. In question 10, a mainland China person’s answer has an average value of 5.75, slightly higher than the average value of 4.5 for non-mainland China persons, indicating that mainland China persons tend to believe that ‘Chinese identity’ can coexist with other identities more than non-mainland China persons.

A non-mainland China person also only has a significantly less chance of identifying with 'Chinese' in question 9, having only 35.7% of participants identifying as such, while mainland China persons have a 91.7% of doing so. Non-mainland China person is also marginally less likely to identify as ethnic Chinese than a mainland China person, at 71.4% vs 75%. Non-mainland China persons are far likely to identify as identities other than Chinese, while mainland China persons are far likely to identify as Chinese.

In question 5, every participant except one agrees that all of mainland China is considered to be 'China' geographically. The notable exception believes that it should only include Han dominant areas of mainland China, this ethnic centric viewpoint will be discussed later. Regarding the status of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, the majority (around 75%) of mainland China person believe it is part of 'China' while only 21.4% of non-mainland China person believe that Taiwan is part of 'China' and slightly less than half believe that Hong Kong and Macao is part of 'China'. The result of this question will be discussed later.

In the optional questions of 11-12, participants are asked to explain their personal interpretation of the word 'Chinese' and the reason that they do/do not identify as Chinese, respectively. For question 11, the general sentiment is that the word 'Chinese' describes either a culture in a region, the concept of Chinese nation, ethnicity such as Han, or a word used to describe the people living in/originated from the Greater China region. One opinion described it as 'a narrow definition under the thinking of Great Unity (the concept of a unified China)', which is potentially motivated by their political stance. In question 12, participants answered in a more diverse manner. The reasons that participants identify as Chinese are: descent, language, birth place, and/or ethnicity. Some participants do not identify as Chinese due to political

reasons, holding foreign citizenship, dislike towards nationalism, and identifying more as ethnic Han, and identifying with the broader concept of ethnic Chinese.

Alongside the survey, three interviews have been conducted, all with permanent residents of Hong Kong with Chinese nationality, the transcripts of which are included in the Appendix section. All three participants have expressed a similar sentiment of sharing a common identity of Hongkonger, which is usually their most prominent identity. None of the three interviewees identify as solely Chinese. They all share a similar sentiment seen from the survey results for non-mainland China persons, such as that Chinese identity is more related to mainland China and it is often more political than cultural (fostered by the Chinese government), 'China' being geographically limited to mainland China, Hongkonger being a distinct identity apart from Chinese. However, they differ in that they believe that 'Chinese' as an identity can co-exist with other identities, more so than the participants classified as non-mainland China persons.

Discussion

Findings section presented evidence that participants of different legal status tend to have different cultural identities and interpretations of 'Chinese' identity. Legally, all participants apart from participants classified as 'Self-identified Chinese' are legally Chinese nationals. However, it is not hard to see that not everyone shares similar opinions all the time.

Chinese nation, or ethnic Chinese, is a concept that is highly ambiguous. We can see this from the responses to question 14-16. When the image of the person displays a stereotypical 'Chinese looking' face, the vast majority of participants believe the person in question is either Chinese, a person of Chinese nationality, or both. It is interesting to see that when only an English name is provided (as opposed to only a Chinese name), despite having a 'Chinese

looking' face, 4 participants believed Stephen Chu, a Chinese American, to not be Chinese. Furthermore, only 3 participants (out of 26) believed he is a Chinese national. On the contrary, when only a Chinese name is provided, in the case of Shiwen Ye and Paul Zimmerman, an equal number of participants (12 out of 26) believed they are Chinese nationals, despite Paul Zimmerman being originally a Dutch citizen and not having a typical 'Chinese looking' face. Participants seem to have the mindset that a Chinese name equals Chinese nationality, and a 'Chinese looking' face equals being Chinese. However, this might also be the result that participants are familiar with Paul Zimmerman, as many participants are Hong Kong residents and Paul Zimmerman is an active political figure in Hong Kong.

This highlights the complexity of the Chinese identity and how hard it is to define it. Furthermore, no legal definition of Chinese identity exists. Laws of Hong Kong, which are usually thorough and define things clearly, only offer more uncertainty in this case. The Immigration Ordinance (2018) states in Schedule 1, 1(3)(a), that 'a new born infant, who appears to the Director to be of Chinese descent, is taken, in the absence of evidence to the contrary...' (Hong Kong Government, 2018), essentially leaving the question of Chinese descent open without any precise definitions, instead relies on the intelligence of the Director of Immigration without any formal guidelines.

The differences between the responses of mainland China persons and non-mainland China persons is very notable. It highlights the dramatic difference in ways of thinking, such as in question 5 & 6. Mainland China persons are far more likely to answer 'China' as the answer to the question of where they are from and far more likely to believe that Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan are part of China. Such differences in thinking have sparked incidents. Due to the

internet censorship in mainland China, mainland Chinese often cannot access information other than what the government approves without the use of tools to bypass this censorship. For non-mainland China persons, the narrow definition of Chinese, or zhongguoren, is often not one of their identities, and they come from their respective hometowns, rather than 'China'. One such instance where differences in thinking is shown happened in Spain, 2019. Pro-China protestors were staging a counter protest against protestors supporting Hong Kong's democracy movement, they held up banners such as 'Hong Kong is forever part of China' and questioned a Hong Kong reporter whether they are 'Chinese' when they accepted to interview the Pro-China protestors and refused to listen to what the reporter is trying to say (Zhou, 2019). It is important to note that the website belongs to mainland Chinese media, therefore it, although might be biased, still shows what would be eye catching to mainland Chinese. The fact that such instances are even reported in mainland China highlights the disconnect in identities and perceptions between mainland Chinese and non-mainland Chinese. As shown in Findings, most non-mainland China persons do not even consider the question 'Are you Chinese' to be up for debate. It is clear 'Chinese' is not one of their identities for the majority of them. However, this also shows the complexity of the 'Chinese' identity, as shown inherently in the article, many believe that being 'Chinese' somehow creates an obligation of not questioning the government, and supporting the unity of 'China'. The political nature of the 'Chinese' identity has also been discussed in other academic works, such as 'The Construction of Chinese and Non-Chinese Identities' where the author explores how Chinese identity is linked to Chinese nationalism (Wu, 1991).

Identities in Hong Kong and Taiwan have been shifting towards an independent identity, separate from 'Chinese' as shown in Findings and external surveys (HKU POP, 2019; Taiwanese

Public Opinion Foundation, 2020). This trend is only likely to continue in the future as long as mainland China's internet censorship and political environment maintain their current state.

Future political events might cause people in Macao, or other parts of mainland China to develop a distinct identity and reject the identity of simply 'Chinese', as seen in Hong Kong's protests in 2019 (Wilson, 2020) and the development of the Taiwanese identity.

Identity is deeply and inherently personal, and one that is the hardest to change. It is clear that mainland Chinese and non-mainland Chinese have developed different identities and perceptions toward the concepts surrounding 'China' and 'Chinese'. Therefore, the concepts of 'China' and 'Chinese' will only become more complex as time goes on, and we may never have a clear definition of these concepts, apart from legal citizenship status.

Limitations & Recommendations

Due to time and resource limitations, this survey only captured (number) of responses.. A survey that has a larger amount of responses might yield a clearer picture. Furthermore, due to the political reality of mainland China, and the survey being in Google Form, responses have been limited as Google is censored in mainland China. The political reality of an authoritarian regime also affects the truthfulness of the responses from mainland China as some might be worried that their true answers might be detrimental to them.

The survey was conducted using the internet, this leads to the advantage of not being limited by geographic location, but also ignores the opinions of those without access to the internet. Survivorship bias might also have existed as a survey of voluntary participation can only capture those who are willing to give their response to a survey. Furthermore, due to the relative small sample size of the survey, caution needs to be exercised when interpreting the

results of the study. A research that is allocated more resources would potentially draw a better picture. Furthermore, only people who have access to the link to the survey could have completed it, making the results limited to those groups the survey was posted in. A survey conducted on the streets to random passersby, for example, might yield less biased results.

The result might also be limited to the younger generation, as participants range from age 15-25. A longer word limit would also accommodate for more in depth discussion of the findings.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that significant differences in opinions and perceptions surrounding the concept of 'China' and 'Chinese' exist between 'Chinese people', the largest difference is found between mainland China persons and non-mainland China persons, who often have their own distinct identity. The legal status of 'Chinese national' does not have any bearing towards the actual, personal identity of someone. Furthermore, the concept of 'China' and 'Chinese' is complex and lacks precise definitions, involving a multitude of factors. As such, these concepts will only remain as controversial, if not more, in the foreseeable future.

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Retrieved May 14, 2020, from

https://www.guancha.cn/international/2019_10_30_523298.shtml

Appendix I

Legal status breakdown

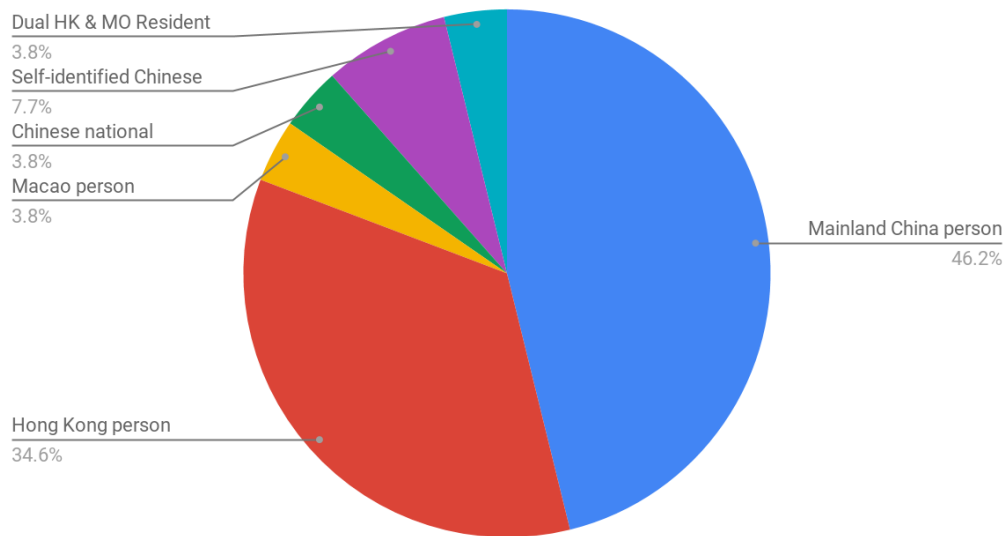


Figure 1

Current place of residence

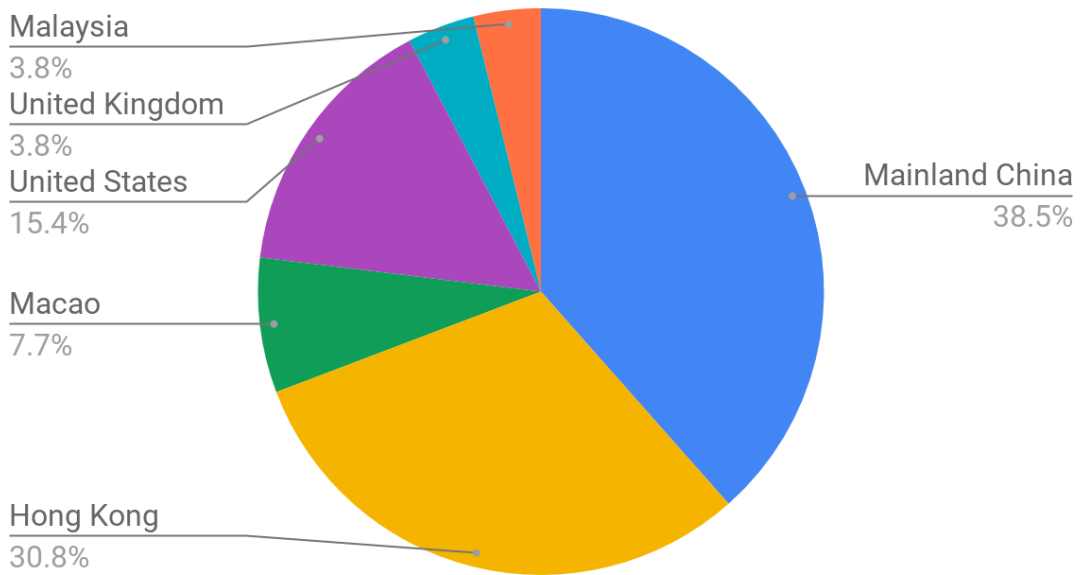


Figure 2

Place of birth

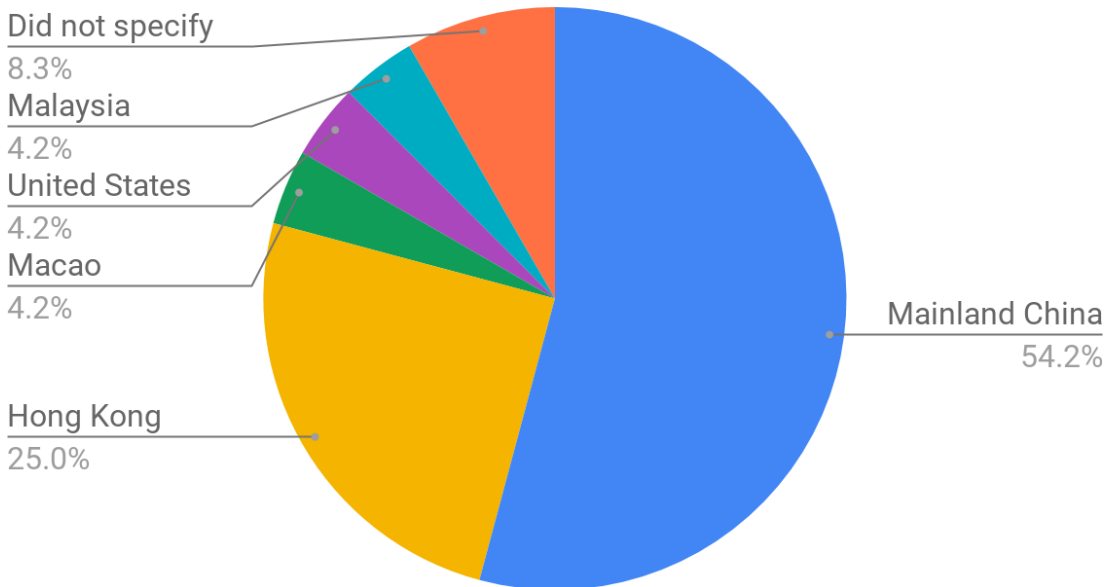


Figure 3

Appendix II

Survey questions (Translated into both Simplified and Traditional Chinese)

Survey has a total of 15 questions, Questions 13-15 was mislabeled as questions 14-16, in order to keep the consistency, the supposed questions 13-15 has been referred to as the questions 14-16 throughout the paper.

1. Do you identify as a Chinese person (Chinese, ethnic Chinese, overseas Chinese etc)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What is your legal citizenship status?
 - a. PRC national with Household Registration in Mainland China
 - b. ROC national with Household Registration in Taiwan Area
 - c. Hong Kong resident of Chinese nationality
 - d. Macao resident of Chinese nationality
 - e. Chinese national without Household Registration, Hong Kong/Macau resident status
 - f. Self identified Chinese person without Chinese nationality/Hong Kong/Macao resident status
3. Where were you born and what is your age?
4. Where do you currently live?
5. For you, what does the word China mean in terms of geographic area it contains (multiple choice)? (Questions 4 & 5 share the same choices)
 - a. Mainland China

- b. Taiwan
 - c. Hong Kong
 - d. Macao
 - e. Other:
6. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being least likely and 10 being most likely), how likely are you to provide 'China' as the answer to the question 'Where are you from' when asked this question in a foreign country
7. Is your ethnicity Han?
8. Please select the option labeled as C (data validation)
9. Please select the following that is fitting to your identity (can select multiple)
- a. Chinese
 - b. Ethnic Chinese
 - c. Overseas Chinese
 - d. Taiwanese
 - e. Hongkonger/Hong Kong person
 - f. Macanese/Macao person
10. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being it can co-exist entirely and 10 being it cannot co-exist at all), to what extent do you think Chinese as an identity can coexist with other ethnic/national identities?
11. What does the word Chinese mean to you?
12. What is the reason that you do/do not identify as Chinese?

13. What do you consider this person displayed above to be (3 questions in total displaying 3 different people's images)

- a. Choices
 - i. Culturally/Ethnically Chinese
 - ii. Person of Chinese nationality
- b. 1st person: Stephen Chu 朱棣文 (Only English name provided)
 - i. United States citizen, Chinese American
- c. 2nd person: Shiwen Ye 叶诗文 (Only Chinese name provided)
 - i. Chinese citizen, born in Zhejiang province
- d. 3rd person: Paulus Johannes Zimmerman 司馬文 (Only Chinese name provided)
 - i. Naturalised Chinese citizen (originally Dutch), Hong Kong permanent resident

Appendix III

Transcript 1

A Hong Kong permanent resident with Chinese citizenship who was born in Hong Kong

Mixed ethnicities

18, Male

Q1: Do you identify as a Chinese person

I think that is kind of a weird question to ask, kind of but not really, I mean, if someone asks 'are you Chinese' I might say yes, or no. Yes because I and my mother were born here, I'm local and have lived here all my life. I'm not a huge part of the culture, there is not really a need for me to identify as Chinese, if someone asks me are you Chinese I might say yes but it is not anything important, my nationality is not Chinese although legally it is. I realized that is ambiguous but that is what my feelings are. No strong connection to Chinese nation/Israeli nation, I'm not proud to be either of those, I am not ashamed but I feel no reason to be proud. I have many other reasons to be proud of myself, but nationality is not one of them.

Q2: Where were you born and what is your age

Born in Hong Kong, 18 years old.

Q3: How likely are you to provide 'China' as the answer to the question 'Where are you from'

when asked this question in a foreign country

Extremely unlikely. I'd probably say Hong Kong if someone doesn't know what that is. I would say it is a special city in China, because technically, legally I am a citizen of PRC, but I don't feel the need to say I'm from China, I'd probably say Hong Kong. And ofc, I didn't say no chance, but it is a very very small chance. I'm not going to say Hong Kong

is a country in East Asia because it is not a country.

Q4: Is your ethnicity Han?

I don't think so. Legally I genuinely don't know, my father is not Han Chinese, my mother is Han Chinese. I am a mixed breed, it doesn't really concern me either.

Q5: Please select the following that is fitting to your identity

1st Hongkonger, 2nd to a much lesser extent ethnic Chinese, maybe Chinese but highly unlikely so no. I mean it depends, I like science, my name is Oz, that is my actual legal name, I don't know, I don't really say, I'd rather not. When I introduce myself, I'm a Hongkonger unless they ask. And if the situation calls for it I'd say ethnic Chinese/Chinese, 1st choice is Hongkonger but I'd rather not introduce myself in that way. It depends on the audience, I've told ppl many times I'm from Hong Kong and they think I'm from Japan and (Hong Kong is) not in China. But given the recent news, sth is going on, it is in China and it is not in Japan.

Q6: To what extent do you think Chinese as an identity can coexist with other ethnic/national identities?

I like that phrase. I think to a large or significant extent, the identity that I prescribed (Hongkonger) is compatible with other identities. At the end of the day we are more than nationalities/ethnicities, if you do happen to associate yourself with other groupings then as an individual, I think you have the full right and anyone who say otherwise what right do they have to impose the rules of identity upon you its that's why I think it's fully compatible I identify as Hongkonger and Jewish but if someone say I know some of the Israeli culture from my father and from living here, so if I would say Hong Kong Israeli that is fine, Chinese Israeli is also fine, no if I don't identify as any of them, not (in the sense) you're from China/Hong Kong/half Israeli

therefore you are (forced to identify as) this (identity). I don't identify as Chinese, just because I was born there doesn't mean it's important to me or I care about it I think my culture is more the generational internet culture, Gen-Z meme culture over the internet and nerd culture like einternational nerd culture I mean stuff that transcends nations cuz I feel like those talk to me more I feel like we have progressed past the need to strongly identify as a nationality I mean you can if you want and with the advent of the internet and talk to someone living anywhere in the world even if the person is living in a country that is officially at war with the country you live in. I don't care, I have someone to associate with.

I can't care less if the Chinese/American state loses or wins, because it's so far up, I don't feel association with them, I don't feel they care for me I just want to express my freedom, identify as who I am, pursue my freedom without overhead from some mechanism above and I think that strongly identifying as a nationality (not necessarily ethnicities) is a detrimental mindset. I don't care about the so-called Chinese nation /American nation/Israeli nation. I don't want war but its just kind of irrelevant to me if I more strongly identify as internet culture/gaming culture for example

I didn't choose to be born in Hong Kong but I do choose the friends I make. I don't want an international state but if we move towards that that will be much better for humanity as a speci and for ourselves.

Q7: For you, what does the word China mean in terms of geographic area that it contains

(multiple choice)?

The extent of Ming dynasty's direct control. China geographically is from Hainan, Yunnan to Beijing, excluding Inner Mongolia, excluding Manchuria, including Guangzhou,

maybe including Taiwan. (He agreed when asked if the ideas he was expressing was the concept China proper).

Q8: What does the word Chinese mean to you?

It depends on the context, it really depends on the context. If someone seems like a Chinese nationalist and they say I'm Chinese loyal to China stuff like that or even something where the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is somehow praised while the speaker is connecting it to the word Chinese then I'll react to it as internally disgusted I think the CCP is worse than disgusting, I have strong opinions about the CCP but I don't think that is relevant but if someone attaches the word Chinese to the ccp to put it lightly I don't like it I think it's disgusting if someone attaches it to their ethnicity. I don't really care I would honestly say the same things sometimes if someone says im Chinese but they don't necessarily seem they are Chinese nationalist or attaching it to CCP, where from China are you (go into more detail) at the end of the day, China or the PRC is a country, Taiwan or the ROC is a country. If you want to refer to yourself as Chinese without attaching yourself to the very strong nationalism or the CCP in the PRC I think that is perfectly valid. I probably associate with them more if they speak english, because I don't want to speak Chinese. If they speak english and say they are Chinese I might associate with them more initially than someone from Poland if I know nothing about them than the Chinese person I can share experiences with. Just because we share an identity doesn't mean I need to associate with the Chinese person. If I know nothing about them

I want to associate myself with the one I have the most shared experience with. These experiences are not something crucial to my identity but at least there's sth to talk about. I know I kind of rest that I don't like nationalism or a strong identity of nationality but I think one

positive aspect of nationality is small but you can associate with someone based on their nationality even if you don't know them. If you only know their nationality you can have more shared experience with them. More shared experience with someone from Guangzhou than someone from Xi'an for example. This calls into question, why do I know this person's nationality before anything else? If it is because they identify themselves like that it is not a bad reaction to me it becomes a little suspect, why do you hold your nationality in such a high regard. If the organizer makes us sit at the same table to represent China/students from China, it is not the fault of the student. I think if someone introduces themselves as that, it is a lot more complex than what I made it seem like for that I apologize, it just occurred to me afterwards.

Q9: What is the reason that you do/do not identify as Chinese?

Just to clarify, the reason why I would identify as Chinese is because I was born and raised here, Hong Kong yes, different from the mainland but at the end of the day I still have the emblem on my passport which bears my name. I'm a citizen, sort of the PRC.

The reason I wouldn't regard myself as Chinese, I would rather identify as Hongkonger because it is a different identity in itself. Furthermore, based on what I've said before I think identifying strongly as a nationality is just detrimental to personal progress, personal growth, making good relationships cuz you tie yourself to a state, a nation, like you don't have to. It's more complicated than you don't have to, but internally, I thought about it a lot, because of my mixed race identity and I don't have a concrete answer to what my identity is Jewish, Israeli, Chinese, Cantonese, Hongkonger, I'm sure I can think of some that are less common that doesn't pop up into my head the fact that it's so muddled for me kinda forced me to think about it. I don't want to strongly identify myself with a nation/state because it's detrimental both for me

individually and society, peace, internationalism, equality, freedom, that kind of stuff. I would much rather be introduced as the prior maniac from high school than Hongkonger

Q10: How do you define the contemporary Chinese identity and what do you think of it?

I dont think it's fair for me to define (it) because if someone identifies as Chinese (they) has a valid reason to. I am not saying that someone that lived in Africa, America, Middle East with no connection with China, (for example) descent, born there, lived there, should say they are Chinese but otherwise it is not fair for me to define. I'm not comfortable with answering this question, but if you are talking about Chinese patriots, that I think is disgusting.

Appendix IV

Transcript 2

A Hong Kong permanent resident with Chinese and British citizenship who was born in Hong Kong

Mixed ethnicities

19, Male

Q1: Do you identify as a Chinese person

Yes. To a certain extent, I'm half white and half Chinese but I was born and raised in Hong Kong.

Q2: Where were you born and what is your age

Hong Kong, 19.

Q3: How likely are you to provide 'China' as the answer to the question 'Where are you from' when asked this question in a foreign country

From people who don't know anything about Asia I'd have to explain a whole thing about how Hong Kong is and link it to china but not say it's part of china because not many ppl know where Hong Kong is. When I'm in the UK I would also introduce myself as British to explain a Chinese looking guy drinking a lot of alcohol.

Q4: Is your ethnicity Han?

Yes.

Q5: Please select the following that is fitting to your identity

Euroasian/Hongkonger.

Q6: To what extent do you think Chinese as an identity can coexist with other ethnic/national identities?

If you're mixed Chinese and sth else, you know. There's a lot of Chinese people that immigrated to different countries over time so you get a lot of these mixed races around the world and a lot of them are (identify as) something else apart from chinese so I guess (yes).

Q7: For you, what does the word China mean in terms of geographic area that it contains (multiple choice)?

Mainland China.

Q8: What does the word Chinese mean to you?

It's a nationality.

Q9: What is the reason that you do/do not identify as Chinese?

I don't live in mainland China.

Q10: How do you define the contemporary Chinese identity and what do you think of it?

There are a lot of people uncultured around the world. First country that pops into their mind (when mentioning Chinese) is probably China. For people who are cultured when they hear Chinese they'll think mainland China/Taiwan/Hong Kong. Sure they're cultured but they don't know about the political things happening here (in Hong Kong) and all the different regions (other parts of Greater China region). I don't have any documents for Chinese citizenship (apart from travel document to mainland China for Hong Kong residents who are Chinese citizens) because I don't plan on living here after I finish school because when the industry I'm studying in and going into doesn't have a huge ground for me in Hong Kong so there's not much that goes with in answering that question.

Appendix V

Transcript 3

A Hong Kong permanent resident with Chinese and United States citizenship who was born in California

Han Chinese

18, Female

Q1: Do you identify as a Chinese person

I identify as Chinese as my immediate family is of Chinese descent and I grew up being taught to embrace this part of myself.

Q2: Where were you born and what is your age

I was born in California, (my age is) 18.

Q3: How likely are you to provide 'China' as the answer to the question 'Where are you from' when asked this question in a foreign country

Unless it is the only option available, I usually say I'm from Hong Kong.

Q4: Is your ethnicity Han?

I think I'm recognised simply as Han Chinese if I'm not mistaken.

Q5: Please select the following that is fitting to your identity

Hongkonger all the way - from the culture to the values of this city, it will only be appropriate for me to identify myself this way.

Q6: To what extent do you think Chinese as an identity can coexist with other ethnic/national identities?

I think it can coexist if an individual feels comfortable identifying themselves as such based on their upbringing/place of birth/cultural values. In today's world where we're constantly moving and settling into different places, we're from everywhere!

Q7: For you, what does the word China mean in terms of geographic area that it contains (multiple choice)?

What is now recognised as Chinese soil excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

Q8: What does the word Chinese mean to you?

As a Chinese myself, it represents my cultural heritage, for example, the language I speak, my lifestyle, my beliefs - to a certain extent.

Q9: What is the reason that you do/do not identify as Chinese?

My parents were raised by Chinese parents and I was too. It's difficult to not take on this identity growing up surrounded by this culture and its values. Even though many of us are impacted by Western culture, some things are so ingrained that it's become a really significant part of us that we don't even realise it. From the things we eat to the ways we eat, this is all part of our cultural heritage that we pass on to future generations to keep this culture alive.

Q10: How do you define the contemporary Chinese identity and what do you think of it?

As I've said, the current generation is more international than ever. Even if people may look Chinese, they could be from anywhere in the world (possibly speaking an entirely different language or doing things traditional Chinese people would never do). This form of internationalisation is a part of society's evolution and the move towards a more diverse and multinational community.