Struggling for Democracy Under China: The Implications of a Politicized 'Hongkongese' Identity

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Introduction

Since Hong Kong's political transition back to China in 1997, Hong Kong is undergoing a continuous struggle for a reconfiguration of its political system. The provisions within Hong Kong's Basic Law sanctions Hong Kong's struggle toward electoral reform and universal suffrage. However, China's "one country, two systems" policy emphasizes the upholding of "one country" and not "two systems". In examining the cultural-political rationalization for China's interference in Hong Kong's current political climate, the Chinese government will never fully endorse universal suffrage in Hong Kong; especially because electoral reform strengthens Hong Kong's local identity, heightens political culture and threatens absolute reunification to the motherland.

This paper will examine the implications of Hong Kong's strong localized identity within the parameters of the Chinese government's collectivist policies, propaganda and campaigns. Full comprehension of the political conflict between the Chinese government and the Hong Kong citizens requires a historical background between both entities. This historical relationship is laying down the foundation for predicting future relationships between Hong Kong and Mainland China.

The Political History of Hong Kong Leading Up To 1997

Hong Kong's political history is forever tinted with the complicated relationship between China and Britain which is intricately woven through a series of wars and political struggles and agreements. Hong Kong Island was ceded to the British in the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 when the British attacked China during the First Opium War. In 1898, following the Second Opium War, China was forced to lease the Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories to the British for 99 years in the Convention of Peking. As a result, Hong Kong was handed over to British for 150 years under which Hong Kong functions under the British Law[1].

Talks aimed at negotiating a settlement on Hong Kong between China and Britain began in 1982 in which Deng Xiaoping introduced the policy of 'one country, two systems' in his speech 'Our Basic Position on the Question of Hong Kong', ''Hong Kong's current political and economical systems and even most of its laws can remain in force. Of course, some of them will be modified. Hong Kong will continue under capitalism and many systems currently in use that are suitable will be maintained.'[2] These talks resulted in a series of political agreements to ensure Hong Kong's entitlement to self-government, namely, the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right.

The Joint Declaration (officially the Sino- British Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong) was signed on December 19, 1984 by the British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher and the Chinese prime minister, Zhao Ziyang. The Joint Declaration stated Hong Kong will be 'restored' to the Republic of China with effect from July 1997 and China will 'resume the exercise of sovereignty' from that date under two main conditions. Firstly, China must guarantee that Hong Kong will 'enjoy a high degree of autonomy, except in foreign and defense affairs which are the responsibility of the Central People's Government'.

Secondly, Hong Kong must be able to continue its capitalistic economy and enjoy the existing rights and freedoms. The Joint Declaration aims to reflect the 'one country, two systems' and is to remain in force for fifty years. However, it has been argued that the Joint Declaration was more concerned about maintaining Hong Kong's economic and monetary systems rather than establishing or upholding democracy; the validation of this notion stems from the

[1] Section: History, Hong Kong, July 3, 2004, <www.encycolpedia.com>
[2] Deng Xiaoping, On the Question of Hong Kong (Hong Kong: New Horizon Press, 1993) 3.

marginal role that Hong Kong played in the drafting process of the Declaration. There were also many ambiguities present within the Joint Declaration such as its failure to clearly state wording such as 'constituted by elections', elaborate on how the 'high degree of autonomy' of Hong Kong was to be exercised and maintained that the appointment of the Chief Executive must be 'through consultation'. [3]

The 'Basic Law' for Hong Kong was adopted by China's National People's Congress (NPC) on April 12, 1990 and provides a constitutional basis for Hong Kong. The Basic Law was drafted by the Mainlander dominated Basic Law Drafting Committee. The aim of the Basic law was to achieve 'prosperity and stability' under the guidance and control of the CCP. The Basic Law primarily operates in the economic and monetary sectors[4]. While the Basic Law stipulates that the ultimate goal is for universal suffrage, more importantly, there are provisions within the Basic Law that restricts the scope for democratic decision making. For example, The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (SCNPC) is vested with the power to amend and interpret the Basic Law[5]. The Basic Law has continually been 'reinterpreted' by the SCNPC to much controversy and will be discussed in further detail later in this paper.

There were also other measures to try to sustain Hong Kong's democratic movement after the handover. The British applied the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in Hong Kong. The ICCPR is a fundamental law of Hong Kong which guarantees many democracy-related rights such as freedom of expression, association and processions. More importantly, the ICCPR 'recognizes and protects the right of every citizen to take part in the conduct of public affairs, the right to vote and be elected and the right to have access of public service.[6]' However, the United Nations Human Rights Committee and democracy advocates in Hong Kong have voiced their concerns in the compliance of the ICCPR in Hong Kong, especially since Hong Kong functions in an electoral system which only allows 30 out of 60 legislative seats to be directly popularly elected.

At the stroke of midnight on June 20, 1997, Hong Kong's handover back to China was complete. Hong Kong will now be known as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under Chinese sovereignty. Whether or not Hong Kong will enjoy a 'high degree of autonomy' or if the state will become a manifestation of the Chinese government's promise of 'Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong', the answers to these questions lie in a series of debates, people's struggles and the emergence of a sustained democratic movement by the Hongkongese.

Defining the 'Hongkongese' Identity

Hong Kong people are ethnically Chinese and share the same roots as their mainland Chinese counterparts. Although Hongkongers sustain much of the Chinese culture, Hong Kong adds on a different dimension by cultivating the distinct Hongkongese identity. The Hongkongese identity not only stemmed from 150 years of British colonial rule, it was also a consequence of negative feelings towards the Chinese government. A substantial portion of the Chinese from the Mainland who did take residence in Hong Kong were under conditions of fleeing

[3] Edited by Christine Loh and Civic Exchange, Building Democracy, Hong Kong University Press, 2003
[4] Hong Kong Basic Law, access date: July 3, 2004, <http://www.free-definition.com/Hong-Kong-Basic-Law.html>
[5] " Hong Kong polls: The Law's on China's side" Asian Times April 29, 2004 access date 6/12/04 <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/FD29Ad04.html>
[6] Edited by Christine Loh and Civic Exchange, Building Democracy, Hong Kong University Press, 2003

"political persecution and turmoil or to seek economic opportunities"[7]. Thus, the Hong Kong Chinese's strong sentiments against the Chinese government; including feelings of mistrust and disagreement with the Chinese government's actions and policies became a core element in the Hongkongese identity.

More importantly, different paths of development between Hong Kong and China factors into the formation of the indigenous Hongkongese identity. In juxtaposing Hong Kong's pursuit of laissez-faire capitalism and China's evolution into Maoist socialism, the differences in economic and historical trajectories of either Hong Kong or China is obvious.[8] From the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 until the 1980s with an opening China under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping, China was a closed society while Hong Kong transformed into an active member in the international economy and community sector.

Thus, Hong Kong's access and exposure to the 'Western' community as well as pre-existing democracies is in stark contrast to China's later development trajectory and openness. In China, the traditional hierarchy of power is still intact where the government is given the highest extent of power over its people. Politics in China is grounded in the traditional Confucian thought, where the collective supersedes the individual and adherence to authority is required.[9] The translation of this Confucian notion in the national sense indicates the state's emphasis on national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Language is another factor that promoted and hyper intensified the establishment of the Hongkongese identity. Language is a systematic way of communicating feelings and is the speech of a certain group, a country or a particular region thus, language and culture are inexplicitly linked. The dominance of the vernacular Cantonese and not the putonghwa or Mandarin Chinese which is the motherland tongue, reinforces the very basic discrepancies in the ability to communicate and relate between both parties.[10] Although Cantonese is categorized as a different dialect from putonghwa and not an altogether different language, it did produce a distinctive Hongkongese 'popular culture' and definitely made a contribution in the heightening the localized Hong Kong identity as opposed to strengthening ties and forming formal relationships with their Mainland counterparts.

Identity and cultural affinities influences an individual's choices and perceptions; therefore, with identity as a concept, identity is important in assessing the existing and predicting the future relationship between the Mainlanders and the Hongkongers. The correlation between defining what is identity and the consequent 'cultural clash' between the Chinese government and the Hongkongese depicts differing interpretations, interactions and understandings of politics and issues.

In order to gage how the Hong Kong people really see themselves, recent released polls have indicated the trend of how the Hong Kong population classify themselves. In the recent polls from the Hong Kong University's Public Opinion Programme (POP)[11], the statistics illustrate the dual Chinese-Hong Kong identity as what most people identified with. However, if just given the option of the "Hong Kong person" or the "Chinese person" in the broader sense, there is a higher margin towards the Hong Kong people classification. The higher affinity

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[7] Lau Siu –Kai , ed. Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000) 257.
[8] Lau Siu –Kai , ed. Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000) 257.
[9] Christine Loh, "Boomtown II: Face Off," Boomtown Re-Enter The Dragon July 2004 release: 27-28.
[10] Lau Siu –Kai , ed. Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000) 257.
[11] Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme "Ethnic Identity" June 21, 2004 chart. <http://hkupop.hku.hk/english/release/release192.html>

towards the localized identity amongst the Hong Kong people reflects the community pride and reverence towards Hong Kong.[12]

One would assume that after the Hong Kong handover to Mainland China in 1997, there would be a revitalization of pride from the Hongkongese because Hong Kong is returning to the Mainland from the imposing imperialist forces. However, one can argue that not only did the handover not strengthen the 'Chinese' identity or sentiments of going back to the motherland in Hong Kong but that instead, the handover reinforced the Hongkongese identity that is opposed to or at least apprehensive of China's Central government.

In a survey commissioned by Civic Exchange in collaboration with the Hong Kong Transition Project, "Listening to the Wisdom of the Masses", the statistics from the report reflect the trend of a strong local identification of the population as the Hong Kong people. However, one cannot ignore Hong Kong's cultural bonds with the Mainland; the strength of the bond transcends historical trajectory and geography. In the same Listening to the Wisdom of the Masses report: "Not withstanding their different identities, both the Hongkongese and the Chinese are ethnically and culturally Chinese."[13] Numerous overlapping elements of "Chineseness" could be found in both the Hongkongese and Chinese; especially in terms of Confucian influences[14].

The Hong Konger's observations of national holidays such as, Chinese New Year, the Lunar Festival and Duan Wu (Dragon boat) Festival, are reflections of the inherent Chinese culture. These traditions are definitely an integral part of Chinese culture therefore, "in the ethno-cultural sense, there was a strong sense of identification with the Chinese nation by the Hong Kong Chinese."[15] Whereas there was a strong Hong Kong local identity, when it came to culture and history, there was a strong cultural affiliation with being 'culturally Chinese'. The familial and traditional part of being Chinese is not something the Hongkongese deny. It is the Chinese government and the government's actions that have caused tense relations with the Hongkongese.

This notion can be qualified and quantified through the large numbers of Hong Kong emigrants in the years prior to the handover. The emigration numbers for 1996 was 40,300 emigrants while the numbers peaked in 1992 with 66,200 emigrants.[16] The Hong Kong emigrants chose with their feet by leaving the enigmatic future of Hong Kong. In fact, the act of leaving the Hong Kong due to apprehension over China's method of ruling (whether China will abide by the rule of law or just enforce the rule of man) emphasizes the politicization of the emigrants. Thus, the high emigration rates are a manifestation of political push factors and not due to external pull factors.

In defining the Hong Kong ethos, minimal governmental control over business and society epitomizes the Hong Kong ethos. Dr. C.H. Leong (an independent legislator who served in the Legislative Council from 1995-2000) reinstates the Hong Kong people's commitment to the law.[17] In Hong Kong, the political norms include freedom of speech and press; thus

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[12] Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme "Ethnic Identity" June 21, 2004 chart. <http://hkupop.hku.hk/english/release/release192.html>

[13] Civic Exchange and the Hong Kong Transition Project. "Listening to the Wisdom of the Masses: Hong Kong People's Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform" (Hong Kong, released January 2004) 10-12.

[14] Lau Siu –Kai , ed. Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000) Please see table 2 on page 265.

[15] Lau Siu –Kai , ed. Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000) 263.

[16] "Hong Kong SAR: The First 12 Months" access date July 10, 2004 <http://www.info.gov.hk/info/sar1/overview.htm >

[17] Bob Beatty, Democracy, Asian Values and Hong Kong (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003) 72.

creating a safe space for dissidence among the population and supplements as a means of checks and balances on political matters for the average citizen.

In understanding the values distinctive to Hong Kong culture, Hong Kong values incorporate an emphasis on "entrepreneurship" and strong work ethics.[18] The economically free and dynamic Hong Kong stems from the laissez faire ways of the old colonial government which encourages Hong Kong's development into a thriving commercial city. Wong and Lui's article "Morality, Class and the Hong Kong Way of Life" studies the Hongkongese identity and the implications of this distinct identity on the "Hong Kong experience". Both authors stated that the Hong Kong value of freedom was "making possible successes, both personal and societal."[19] Thus, Wong and Lui view Hong Kongers as prioritizing the importance of material well-being and regarding society as an instrument to earning wages and prosper.

Lau Siu Kai's and Kuan Hsin-Chi's article, "The Partial Vision of Democracy in Hong Kong" also implies that the Hong Kong view of democracy and rights "selfishly"; Lau and Hsin continues to argue that the selfish Hong Konger is more susceptible in thinking that there is nothing wrong with taking rights away from "other people" if they do not deserve it.[20] The notion of rights and democracy as a reward reflects the capitalistic undertones of 'earning' rights and 'receiving' rights. Ultimately, the emphasis remains on utilitarian concerns and not moral claims. Therefore, one of the largest obstacles in Hong Kong's pursuit of democracy is the drive for sustenance and not in addressing impractical ideologies.

Hong Kongers feel that the politicians should be invested in the public's interests but whether or not the politicians are directly voted into the office is only a secondary factor.[21] This type of attitude is reminiscent of the famous quote by the late leader of China, Deng Xiaoping, who noted that "It matters not whether the cat is black or white as long as it catches the rat" Therefore, as long as the politicians are striving for the prosperity of the population, elections do not matter in the larger picture.

The Apathetic Hongkonger?

The 'Hongkongese' understanding of democracy characterizes democracy as a vessel for increased dialog and interactions with the Hong Kong government. Lau Siu Kai notes that "Democracy [to Hongkongers] is regarded as an instrument to ensure efficient government, which, in turn, can bring about prosperity and stability. In a sense a democratic government is one that delivers, and it can deliver more efficiently if it is more consultative".[22] Therefore, the proposed resolution to the tense situation between the government and the people does not call for the obliteration of the present form of government.

In fact, the public leans towards reformation as the key not an outright revolution. In the 'Hongkongese' understanding, the proliferation of parties and campaigns are not the essential factors in a democracy. To the Hongkongese, it is far more important to incorporate elements of transparency, efficiency, dialog, prosperity, higher standards of living and finally more public control.

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[18] Bob Beatty, Democracy, Asian Values and Hong Kong (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003) 72.
[19] Thomas W.P. Wong and Lui Tai-Lok, "Morality, Class, And the Hong Kong Way of Life," Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong, ed. Liu Siu Kai (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000) 12.
[20] Kuan Hsun-Chi and Lau Siu Kai , "The Partial Vision of Democracy in Hong Kong" The China Journal July 1995: no. 34 page 251.
[21] Kuan Hsun-Chi and Lau Siu Kai , "The Partial Vision of Democracy in Hong Kong" The China Journal July 1995: no. 34 page 259.
[22] Kuan Hsun-Chi and Lau Siu Kai , "The Partial Vision of Democracy in Hong Kong" The China Journal July 1995: no. 34 page 258.

The common stereotype attributed to Hongkongers is that "Although they [Hongkongers] are attentive to political news and have high expectations of the government, they are neither prone to political action nor aggressive in challenging the incumbent authority".[23] This quote reflects the general notion of a large apolitical and apathetic Hong Kong population. However this notion is no longer true. On the topic of political issues, there is a noticeable trend of Hongkongese people stressing and demonstrating the importance of political stability and strong governance. These new trends contradict the assumed laissez faire attitude associated with Hongkonger's stance towards economics.
In evaluating the 'Hong Kong' understanding of democracy, the notion of democracy in the negative sense becomes apparent. The Cambridge Dictionary defines democracy as: "The belief in freedom and equality between people, or a system of government based on this belief, in which power …is directly elected by the people themselves".[24] However, in applying the notion of democracy to the Hongkongese, Hong Kong is unique because China is an external force; China continues its' interventions in Hong Kong politics therefore shifting the Hong Kong understanding of democracy. It has been argued that there is almost a sacrosanct status attached to freedom in Hong Kong where the main purpose of the law is in protecting people's rights.[25]

The universal understanding of democracy is 'positive' in that democracy follows the definition and is a concept used for an efficient government. However, in Hong Kong, the understanding of democracy is 'negative' in that it is used to protect Hongkongers from potential infringements of human rights by China or various other political authorities.[26] Thus, in the Hong Kong sense, democracy then turns into the 'negative' role through the emphasis on checks and balances. In addition to being a concept and an ideology, democracy also turns into a safety net that protects the people's human rights.

Recent studies and polls have indication of the increasing role of the civil society in Hong Kong. According to the Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme, the recent surveys depict Hongkongers as most concerned with economic problems which is a continuation of previous trends but more importantly, Hongkongers are also most dissatisfied with the current political condition.[27] In previous polls set forth by the Public Opinion Programme, the Hongkongese economic dissatisfaction was well above social and political dissatisfaction. However, recent trends depict a divergence from past trends with political dissatisfaction on the rise. Although the surveys continue to reflect the economic priorities of the Hongkongese, the increasing political dissatisfaction is indicative of an increasing civic political awareness.

China's Strive for Reunification through a Nationalistic Identity

One of the main catalysts for political dissatisfaction in Hong Kong would be China's continued intervention with Hong Kong's political reform, despite China's promise of 'high

[23] Kuan Hsin-Chi, "Power Dependence and Democratic Transition: The Case of Hong Kong", The China Quarterly December 1991: 777.
[24]Cambridge Dictionary online access date : July 20, 2004
< http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=20618&dict=CALD >
[25] Thomas W.P. Wong and Lui Tai-Lok, "Morality, Class, And the Hong Kong Way of Life," Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong, ed. Liu Siu Kai (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000) 11.
[26] Thomas W.P. Wong and Lui Tai-Lok, "Morality, Class, And the Hong Kong Way of Life," Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong, ed. Liu Siu Kai (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000) 12.
[27] Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme, "People's Dissatisfaction" access date June 21, 2004. <http://hkupop.hku.hk/english/popexpress/mostcon/dissat/poll/chart/poll3.gif>

autonomy' in the reunified region. The importance of absolute reunification has always been at the forefront of China's policy with Hong Kong and has also been used to justify actions taken against Hong Kong. However, the vibrant existence of the Hongkongese identity has created many complexities concerning China's aim for reunification.

According to international law, it is the sacred right of each and every sovereign state to safeguard their national unity and territorial integrity[28]. China's struggle in defense of their state sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity is reflected in China's firm adamancy in its reunification with Hong Kong. China's unyielding stance on Hong Kong's reunification with the motherland is reaffirmed in the speech 'Our Basic Position on the Question of Hong Kong' given by the then Chinese Premier, Deng Xiaoping. Deng addressed this issue to the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, on September 24, 1982. In Deng's speech, he states that, "On the question of sovereignty, China has no room to maneuver. To be frank, the question is not open to discussion. The time is right for making it unequivocally clear that China will recover Hong Kong in 1997. That is to say, China will recover not only the New Territories but also Hong Kong Island and Kowloon."[29] The importance of Hong Kong's reunification with motherland is demonstrated by the designation of the handover. Reunification with China is as one of the three major tasks of socialist modernization designated by the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party[30].

However, the reunification process comes with many complexities. China must not only negotiate many aspects such as territorial, economical and political concerns; China also has to win over the spirit of the Hong Kong people who have been living under British rule for 150 years. Despite Deng's claim of 'Reunification with the motherland is the aspiration of the whole nation'[31], it is imperative for the Hongkongese to feel a sense of belonging and identification with the motherland. In other words, a complete and absolute reunification would require the people of Hong Kong to become 'patriots' as defined by Deng, '… one who respects the Chinese nation, sincerely supports the motherlands resumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong and wishes not to impair Hong Kong's stability and prosperity. It doesn't matter whether they believe in capitalism, feudalism or even slavery.'[32]Therefore, the prioritization of respect for the motherland is clear.

In order to achieve this spirit of reunification, China has continually made references to brotherhood and cultural kinship with compatriots of un-reunified regions, appealing to their loyalty to their original ancestries and blood ties. As Hong Kong struggles with the return to the motherland, the Hongkongese's Taiwan counterparts are another example of China's hard-line policy. China's insistence on Taiwan's return to the Motherland reflects the 'intolerance' of a 'renegade province'. Therefore, China's actions and policies towards Taiwan can influence China's actions in Hong Kong in order to prevent another 'renegade province' and vice versa.

In the case of Taiwan, the Chinese government also utilizes the importance of cultural affiliation with the Mainland as a way to garner support from the Taiwanese masses. Claiming that all Chinese are fellow descendants of the Yellow Emperor, statements such as,

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[28] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China', The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China', Auguest 1993, Beijing

[29] Deng Xiaoping, On the Question of Hong Kong', (Hong Kong: New Horizon Press, 1993) 1

[30] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "How did the Chinese Government settle the question of Hong Kong through negotiations?" , 2003

[31] 'One country two systems' only solution to reunification', China Daily, February 19, 2004 access date: June 8, 2004 < http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-02/19/content_307602.htm>

[32] 'One country two systems' only solution to reunification', China Daily, February 19, 2004 access date: June 8, 2004 < http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-02/19/content_307602.htm>

'The 23 million Taiwan compatriots are our brothers and sisters of the same blood' and 'To achieve complete reunification of the motherland is a common aspiration of all sons and daughters of the Chinese nation both at home and abroad'[33] scatter around speeches and statements of the Chinese government, thus emphasizing the importance of returning to their original Chinese identity and China as a nation.

However, the argument for unity through a common national identity has been used to achieve means contrary to the aims of reunification of the Chinese government. Appeals for a distinct 'Taiwanese identity' in order to campaign for Taiwanese independence have recently been prominent in Taiwanese politics[34].

While ten years ago the majority of the 23 million Taiwanese people described themselves as 'Chinese', the recent polls show that the majority of them feel 'Taiwanese' before they feel 'Chinese'.[35] The call for the people of Taiwan to unite under a unique 'Taiwanese identity', distinct from that of a Chinese identity, in order to increase Taiwanese nationalism and urging them to join the struggle for Taiwanese independence has been lead by two main political leaders: Former President, Lee Tung-hiu and the current President Chen Shui-bian. The Former President has made considerable effects at promoting a Taiwanese identity during his ten-year presidency. He advocates the emerging 'New Taiwanese' philosophy and believes that the 'rising Taiwanese sentiment' should be used to consolidate the people's root and turn the island into a 'normalized country'.[36] He has recently launched a new campaign in hopes of promoting the Taiwanese identity with the imagery of the 'Taiwanese Man'.

The current President Chen Shui-bian belongs to the Democratic Progress Party which favors Taiwanese independence and supports the creation of a separate Taiwanese identity as opposed to a Chinese identity. Designating himself as the 'son of Taiwan', one of his lines during the 2004 Presidential Campaign asks voters to choose who they think they are- native Taiwanese or Taiwanese with Chinese links: 'If you're Taiwanese vote for me, if you're Chinese vote for them. With his 'Taiwan First' line, Chen managed to increase his share of vote from 39% in 2000 to just over 50% in 2004[37]. Results of the March 20 Presidential Elections resulting in a second term for Chen demonstrates that the sense of Taiwanese identity has been rooted in the mind of a majority of the Taiwan people. This implies that there is strong support for Taiwanese independence among the Taiwanese population, further dissipating China's hope for reunification with Taiwan.

China fears that the prominent Hongkongese identity would trigger a similar effect similarly to Taiwan thus, becoming a threat to China's goal of absolute reunification. A unique and distinct identity has evolved in both Taiwan and Hong Kong due to many years of political and cultural separation from China. As demonstrated by our previous research, a majority of Hong Kong people feel that they are 'Hongkongese' rather than Chinese. This Hongkongese identity has fueled the call for further democratization of Hong Kong and towards universal suffrage. Therefore, as an increase in Taiwanese identity appears to have led to a growing sentiment for Taiwanese independence, it can be assumed that an increase in Hongkongese identity would lead to further democratization. The hyper- democratization would continue to alienate Hong Kong from the rest of China and foster the growing Hongkongese identity.

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[33] Jiang Zemin's Report at the 16th Party Congress on June 18, 2003, 'One Country, Two Systems and Complete National Reunification'

[34] 'Lee Urges Unity Under Taiwanese Identity', Taiwan News, June 10, 2004

[35] 'Taiwan- China: Reunification goal fast becoming fiction', IPS-Inter Press Service, March 29, 2004

[36] Taiwanese pool sign of rising identity', South China Morning Post, June 6, 2004

[37] 'Sense of national identity established after March 20 election', Central News Agency- Taiwan, May 26, 2004

Despite China's 'one country, two systems' policy, China fears that should Hong Kong achieve absolute democracy, it would heighten their sense of Hongkongese identity and further separate the spirit of the Hongkongese from their counterparts in China. Therefore, this may be seen as one of the motives for China to intervene in Hong Kong's political reform such as through the reinterpretation of the basic law and denying universal suffrage in Hong Kong in 2007/2008.

The SCNPC's Reinterpretation of the Basic Law

On April 6, 2004, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (SCNPC) announced that they have reinterpreted Annex I of article 7 and Annex II of article 3 of the Basic Law. However, the reinterpretation was done without prior consultation with the people of Hong Kong or releasing draft interpretations.[38] Annex I to the Basic Law previously stipulated that 'If there is a need to amend the methods for selecting the Chief Executive for the terms subsequent to the year 2007, such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of LegCo and the consent of the Chief Executive, and they shall be reported to the SCNPC for approval'.

Annex II stipulated that 'With regards to the method for forming LegCo of the HKSAR, and its procedures for voting on bills and motions after 2007, if there is a need to amend the provisions of this Annex, such amendments must be made with the endorsements of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Council and the consent of the Chief Executive, and the shall report to the SCNPC for the record'[39]. However, under the new interpretation, it now states that the Chief Executive is required to make a report stating whether there is a need to amend the methods of selecting the Chief Executive and forming LegCo and its voting procedures to the Standing Committee for its determination[40].

On April 15, 2004, the Chief Executive, Tung Chee-wah, made this report under the interpretation stating that the methods in both cases should be amended and set out factors in which 'we should have regard' in considering how the methods should be changed. Tung made this report to the Standing Committee without any prior notice to or consultation with the Hong Kong people.[41] On April 26, 2004, the SCNPC announced its 'decision' according to the new interpretation which denies universal suffrage in the Chief Executive election in 2007 and the LegCo elections in 2008.

The 'decision' of the SCNPC was made clear to the Hong Kong public in a speech by Qiao Xiaoyang, the deputy secretary-general of the Standing Committee. On April 26, 2004, Qiao's speech to the Hong Kong community leaders and foreign envoys stated that the SCNPC believed the implementation of universal suffrage in 2007/08 would be detrimental to the future of Hong Kong, especially to the sovereign nation.[42] Qiao maintains that according to the 'one country, two systems' policy constructed in the Basic Law, Hong Kong must ensure 'political development is conductive to the country's exercise of its sovereignty over Hong

[38] On the Interpretation of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Annex I and Annex II of the Basic Law of 6 April 2004 and on the Chief Executive Report to the Standing Committee of 15 April 2004, Article 45 Concern Group, Opinion No. 3
[39] Christine Loh, 'Hong Kong Politics Special Report', March 3, 2004
[40] On the Interpretation of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Annex I and Annex II of the Basic Law of 6 April 2004 and on the Chief Executive Report to the Standing Committee of 15 April 2004, Article 45 Concern Group, Opinion No. 3 page 4
[41] On the Interpretation of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Annex I and Annex II of the Basic Law of 6 April 2004 and on the Chief Executive Report to the Standing Committee of 15 April 2004, Article 45 Concern Group, Opinion No. 3 page 4
[42] 'Striving in a pragmatic spirit to find the right path to political development', South China Morning Post, April 29, 2004

Kong, and consistent with the general interests of the country, and must not damage either.[43]' As Hong Kong plays an important role as China's international trading and financial center, it would be unwise to carry out political reform with economic conditions are unstable.

Qiao views drastic reforms such as the implementation of universal suffrage and taking one further step into democracy may harm and damage Hong Kong's long term economic prosperity; which will result in adverse effects on national sovereignty and the country's overall welfare.[44] Qiao's emphasis on the need to ensure the compatibility of Hong Kong's political agenda is reminiscent of the importance of 'national identity' and China's sovereignty over Hong Kong. Qiao also brought up the issue public opinion; he believed that if political reform was allowed to progress despite the lack of consensus in the society, it would result in negative confrontations and radical actions.

However, while Qiao acknowledged that the majority of public opinion is in favor of universal suffrage in 2007/08, he added that public policies cannot be made according to public opinion. Qiao's view is in line with the traditional hierarchy of power in China's history. Qiao reinstates that any responsible government 'must consider what the real demands of the people and their interests are."[45] Thus, the Chinese government keeps the people's interests at heart. While it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the people's livelihood, the people should trust that the government is acting on the people's best interests.[46]

Qiao admonished the people of Hong Kong for subjecting the Basic Law to queries because Qiao interprets the questions as a perverse and negative attitude. As the Basic Law opts for a path of 'gradual and orderly change' in the political reform of Hong Kong, Qiao argues that the implantation of universal suffrage in 2007/08 would deviate from what was written in the Basic Law.[47]

Qiao states the importance of the 'gradual and orderly change'[48] even though the conditions and variables in this 'gradual and orderly change' are ambiguous. More importantly, the fundamental reason for the SCNPC's reinterpretation of the universal suffrage clauses within the Basic Law was primarily because the SCNPC were concerned about the serious implications of the issue. The struggle for universal suffrage had initiated 'endless bickering and even some radical actions'[49] in Hong Kong by the concerned Hongkongese; the SCNPC saw the demonstrations, political commentaries and international attention as creating a diversion from resolving the imminent issues at hand including creating a healthier economy and social welfare in Hong Kong.

The SCNPC's reinterpretation of the Basic Law raised many constitutional questions that go to the heart of the 'one country, two systems' policy. The legal and constitutional implications of the reinterpretation hints that such reinterpretation was used to impose unconstitutional

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[43] 'Striving in a pragmatic spirit to find the right path to political development', South China Morning Post, April 29, 2004
[44] "Chinese official says ruling on suffrage in Hong Kong's best interest", BBC Monitoring International Reports, April 26, 2004
[45] Striving in a pragmatic spirit to find the right path to political development', South China Morning Post, April 29, 2004
[46] "The curtain comes down" The Standard, April 27, 2004
[47] 'Striving in a pragmatic spirit to find the right path to political development', South China Morning Post, April 29, 2004
[48] 'Striving in a pragmatic spirit to find the right path to political development', South China Morning Post, April 29, 2004
[49] 'Striving in a pragmatic spirit to find the right path to political development', South China Morning Post, April 29, 2004

restraints onto Hong Kong to delay its path to democracy and restricting it's promised autonomy.

Two main issues are raised concerning the reinterpretation and autonomy and democracy in Hong Kong. Firstly, the interpretation requires for the Standing Committee to make a 'determination'. However, according to the Basic Law, this determination is not within the scope of the power of the Standing Committee.[50] The Standing Committee may only determine whether or not there is the need to amend such methods and cannot provide actual amendments to the methods which are left to the disposal of the Hong Kong SAR. Therefore, the Standing Committee's interpretations are implementing dangerous restraints onto the HKSAR.[51] As these restraints are not in accordance with the Basic Law and violate the promise of 'high autonomy' as stated in the Joint Declaration, the Standing Committee's actions through interpretations of the Basic Law may be used as a guise to introduce further or impose continual political restraints on the HKSAR.

Secondly, according to the Basic Law, no amendments can contradict the established policies of the People's Republic of China which includes its policies towards Hong Kong as stated in the Joint Declaration. This law was created so that there would be a constitutional guarantee for the Hong Kong people as well as a means of accountability to the international world. Should any lines be crossed, it would undermine the power of the policy, turning China's concept of 'one country, two systems' as honored in the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law into one country, one system', forcing the Standing Committee and the NPC to honor the 'one country, two systems' policy[52].

China's method in creating, drafting and introducing the new interpretation without the consultation and agreement of the Hongkongese has attacked the emotion of the people and led to a polarization of views. The public concern for democracy was already ignited by the public and media's attention of Article 23 and the July 1st Protests however, if that were not enough, China's continued reinterpretation of the Basic Law has further divided the pro-democracy and pro-government camps of Hong Kong. Despite China's attempts to 'reconcile' and maintain control over Hong Kong after the July 1st protests which included economic 'help' to Hong Kong, vocalization of China's support for the Tung administration and the formation of a task force to study Hong Kong matters, the cry of the Hongkongers were not appeased. As a result of China's hard line stance, the people of Hong Kong vented its frustration to the Tung administration which resulted in cries to replace Tung.[53]

Demystifying the Apathetic Hongkongese

Hong Kong's exposure to politically sensitive issues such as reinterpretation are unique to other political issues on the international stage as it includes a highly volatile balancing act between Hong Kong and China and the issue of sovereignty and of pre-established agreements. This unique experience has lead to the creation of a unique understanding of democracy in Hong Kong.

[50] On the Interpretation of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Annex I and Annex II of the Basic Law of 6 April 2004 and on the Chief Executive Report to the Standing Committee of 15 April 2004 ,Article 45 Concern Group, Opinion No. 3 page 6
[51] "Lawyers, academics angered by decision", The Standard, April 27, 2004
[52] On the Interpretation of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Annex I and Annex II of the Basic Law of 6 April 2004 and on the Chief Executive Report to the Standing Committee of 15 April 2004 ,Article 45 Concern Group, Opinion No. 3 Page 6
[53] "Tung's popularity drops to a record low", The Standard, August 30, 2002

In evaluating the 'Hong Kong' understanding of democracy, the notion of democracy in the negative sense becomes apparent. The Cambridge Dictionary defines democracy as: "The belief in freedom and equality between people, or a system of government based on this belief, in which power …is directly elected by the people themselves".[54] However, in applying the notion of democracy to the Hongkongese, Hong Kong is unique in that because China is an external force and continues its' interventions in Hong Kong politics, the Hong Kong understanding of democracy has shifted a little. It has been argued that there is almost a sacrosanct status attached to freedom in Hong Kong where the main purpose of the law is in protecting people's rights.[55]

The universal understanding of democracy is 'positive' in that it follows the definition and is a concept used for the efficiency of the government. However, in Hong Kong, the understanding of democracy is 'negative' in so much that it is used to protect Hongkongers from potential infringements of human rights by China or various other political authorities. Democracy then turns into the 'negative role' through the emphasis checks and balances. In addition to being a concept and an ideology, democracy also turns into a safety net that protects the people's human rights.

However, recent studies and polls have indication of the increasing role of the civil society in Hong Kong. According to the Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme, the recent surveys depict Hongkongers as most concerned with economic problems which is a continuation of previous trends but more importantly, Hongkongers are also most dissatisfied with the current political condition.[56] In previous polls set forth by the Public Opinion Programme, the Hongkongese economic dissatisfaction was well above social and political dissatisfaction. However, recent trends depict a divergence from past trends with political dissatisfaction on the rise. Although the surveys continue to reflect the economic priorities of the Hongkongese, the increasing political dissatisfaction is indicative of an increasing civic political awareness.

The Rise of Political Culture

Therefore, although many scholars (like Liu and Hsun) propose that Hongkongers have always been an apathetic body, these pre-conceived perceptions do not account for the recent political vocalization of the Hongkongese nor the grassroots organizations that rose prominently in the 1960s and the 1970s.[57] Not to mention, the fateful post Tiananmen march in 1989, when a million Hong Kong residents took their sympathy, their anger and protest on the streets.[58] The Hongkongese reaction to the Chinese government's brutality against the democracy seeking demonstrators shatters the myth of an apolitical Hong Kong. Hongkongers have already demonstrated a high level of political awareness in 1989, thus predicating the recent increasing levels of politicization and active participation of the Hong Kong civil society.

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[54]Cambridge Dictionary online access date 7/15/04
<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=20618&dict=CALD >

[55] Thomas W.P. Wong and Lui Tai-Lok, "Morality, Class, And the Hong Kong Way of Life," Social Development and Political Change in Hong Kong, ed. Liu Siu Kai (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2000) 11.

[56] Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme, "People's Dissatisfaction" access date June 21, 2004. <http://hkupop.hku.hk/english/popexpress/mostcon/dissat/poll/chart/poll3.gif>

[57] Michael E. Degoyler and Janet Lee Scott "The Myth of Political Apathy in Hong Kong", Annals AAPSS, September 1996: 68.

[58] Michael E. Degoyler and Janet Lee Scott "The Myth of Political Apathy in Hong Kong", Annals AAPSS, September 1996: 69.

The June 4th candlelight vigil has become a part of the Hong Kong civil participation movement; the vigil is not only in commemoration of those who fought and died for democracy in Tiananmen Square, but also a statement to the international community and the Chinese government about Hong Kong's personal struggles in "Giving the power back to the people" and "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong". An estimated 80,000 + participants attended this year's candle light vigil on June 4, 2004.[59]The massive turnout is a testament of the Hong Kong people's faith and perseverance in their struggles for democracy.

Hongkonger's political aspirations are becoming increasingly apparent. In a co-sponsored survey report, Civic Exchange's and Hong Kong University's Public Opinion Programme released statistics on July 8, 2004 which quantified that the economy took up a large percentage of the concerns set forth by the Hongkongese. However, concerns with political undertones were also largely represented in the surveys.[60] Concerns categorized as democratic government and safeguarding freedoms all fall under the umbrella of politicized concerns.

Social issues also ran very high on Hongkonger's minds, where 85% of the study group considered livelihood policies proposed by the candidates to be either important or very important.[61] This survey promotes a new understanding of the Hongkongese prioritization of important issues, whereas the economy continues to be a huge concern amongst the population, it does not mean the Hongkongese population does not care about anything else. In fact, the statistics reflect social and political awareness in the Hongkongese. Whereas the words social and political issue were not literally translated into the transcript, the problems and issues within the survey

Article 23 and the genesis of the July 1 protest in 2003 serve as concrete examples of the rising political culture in Hong Kong. On September 24, 2002 the Hong Kong government released the government's proposals for the "anti-subversion" laws. Article 23 of the Hong Kong Basic Law stipulates that Hong Kong will enact laws in order to protect Hong Kong's national security.[62] Article 23 was intended to protect civil rights because the power to enact these laws fell into the hands of the Hong Kong government. Among other things, it allowed the Hong Kong government to ban certain organizations (the banning of organizations law has rarely been enforced since the 1960s; one of the few examples of a banned organization is the Kuomingtang).[63]

However, controversy over Article 23 began in mid 2002 when Qian Qichen, the Vice Premier of the State Council (which is the chief administrative body in Beijing) expressed Beijing's desire to expedite the required legislation.[64] The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR, Tung Chee Hwa then proceeded to draft the legislation. This law, passed by the National People's Congress of China states: "The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political

[59] Christine Loh. Boomtown II "Hong Kong Political Analysis" numbers from July 1st Significance chart. Boomtown Conference. July 7, 2004
[60] See Civic Exchange and the University of Hong Kong "2004 Legislative Council Direct Election: 2nd Survey" Press release July 8, 2004. 4.
[61] See Civic Exchange and the University of Hong Kong "2004 Legislative Council Direct Election: 2nd Survey" Press release July 8, 2004. 4.
[62]Hong Kong Basic Law Article 23 access date July 12, 2004
<http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Hong_Kong_Basic_Law_Article_23 >.
[63]Hong Kong Basic Law Article 23 access date July 12, 2004
<http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Hong_Kong_Basic_Law_Article_23 >
[64] Hong Kong Basic Law Article 23 access date July 12, 2004
<http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Hong_Kong_Basic_Law_Article_23 >

organizations or bodies."[65] This announcement instigated concerns about the legislation because of the Chinese government's authoritarian tendencies towards administration and governance.

The law contains concepts of "treason" against the People's Republic of China, however, the conditions and circumstances of these treasonous acts are ambiguous and up to interpretation. There was a large population concern over the erosion of freedom of speech and the press under the provisions of the article. Concerns increased even further when the government refused to issue a White Paper on the legislation.[66] The provisions under Article 23 equate opposing the government the same act as opposing the country. Sedition was also another highly contested topic because the act of treason will be interpreted by the government. Therefore, any speech or written work can be deemed as opposition to authority; these are dangerous implications for a society that has always had the freedom of expression and has had access to all the vehicles that disperse information.

There were also global implications if Article 23 was to be enacted since permanent resident of Hong Kong, no matter where they reside, will also be held under the conditions and laws of Article 23, thus can be jailed for violating any of the article's terms. The Foreign Correspondents Club (FCC) in Hong Kong articulated the Club's main concerns of the implementation of Article 23, many of which reiterate the public's concerns, especially over the freedom of speech and press. The FCC's main concerns include the broad notions of "national security" and "state secrets", the possible persecution of journalists who may have created offenses but more importantly, it increases the government's power to restrict the flow of information without a "corresponding statutory right to access information."[67]

The ambiguous and potentially dangerous implications of fully enacting Article 23 instigated the July 1, 2003 protest and consequently became the catalyst for revitalized public awareness and involvement. The power of the people was apparent during the protest when 500,000 demonstrators mobilized and made the clear the statement that the people opposed the Hong Kong and China government's decision.[68]

The immense civil turnout on July 1, 2003 can be partially attributed to the public's reaction the dismal state of the Hong Kong economy, especially in Hong Kong's slow recovery from the Asian financial crisis in 1997. However, the political factors far outweigh the lone economic factor. Firstly, there was the lack of government transparency during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak.

Secondly, there was the public's concern over the lacking of government accountability. Top Hong Kong officials Chief Secretary Donald Tsang and Home Affairs Secretary Patrick Ho stated that there are flaws in the Hong Kong government's system of political accountability. Financial secretary Harry Tang explained: "The government should consider establishing a system to discipline errant principal officials".[69] In 2002, Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa established an accountability protocol which involved fourteen appointed ministers, however

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[65] Chang Kuo Cheng, "What Article 23 Means for Taiwan" December, 22, 2002. access date July 5, 2004
< http://taiwansecurity.org/TT/2002/TT-122702-1.htm>

[66]Hong Kong Basic Law Article 23 access date July 12, 2004
<http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Hong_Kong_Basic_Law_Article_23 >

[67] The Foreign Correspondents Club, Hong Kong access date July 18, 2004
<http://www.fcchk.org/media/bl23-1.htm >

[68] Christine Loh. Boomtown II "Hong Kong Political Analysis" numbers from July 1st Significance chart. Boomtown Conference. July 7, 2004

[69]Mary Kwang, "Top HK Officials Admit Tung's Accountability System Is Flawed" access date July 20, 2004 <http://www.straitstimes.com.sg/eyeoneastasia/story/0,4395,260569,00.html >

many intellectuals criticized the system because "the concept of accountability was vague and that the ministers were accountable only to the Chief Executive". [70] Therefore, the implementation of Hong Kong's current accountability system is a conflict of interest and therefore, inefficient.

Thirdly, the public discontent over the Chief Executive's maladministration also triggered the July 1 protest. The people's power movement was finally in full momentum from being politicized under the aforementioned political events; especially after the Hong Kong government's announcement of upholding Article 23.

Whereas July 1st is the anniversary of Hong Kong's transition, the date July 1st no longer commemorates or evokes feelings of Hong Kong's handover back to China. In fact, July 1st has become a symbol and a rallying cry. July 1st has become a day where the Hongkongese march to the streets, shouting, singing and artistically displaying the Hongkongese's challenge to the government.

As a consequence of the people's perseverance and efforts through the demonstration on July 1st 2003 the Hong Kong SAR saw the resignation of two key cabinet members. Regina Ip who was under the post of the Secretary of Security resigned after the July 1st protests. Ip has been criticized because of her push for Article 23. Another cabinet member, Antony Leung (the Financial Secretary) also stepped down after public discontent over Leung's acquiring of a luxury car right before his proposal for tax increases.[71] More importantly, the Article 23 bill was shelved indefinitely. [72] The first July 1st protest brought about a huge reformation and will become the precedent for future rallies and demonstrations.
The legitimization of the demonstrations through concrete results spurred the continuation of the tradition set last year. On July 1st 2004, exactly one year after the first July 1st protest on Article 23, there were estimates of 450,000- 530,000 protestors who took to the streets of Hong Kong island.[73] After the second July 1st protest, Health Secretary Yeoh Eng Kiong resigned over his disappointing role during last year's SARS outbreak. However, because Yeoh's resignation came after the July 1st protest, it can be inferred that the protests caused a stir in the administration and the rising political pressure pushed for Yeoh's resignation. Yeoh was criticized for misleading the public about the severity of the SARS situation in Hong Kong as well as dismissing the initial SARS outbreak in China.[74]

A day after Yeoh's resignation from his post, a second high ranking health official, Hospital Authority Chairman Leong Che-hung also declared his resignation. Leong "said he resigned to demonstrate the spirit of political accountability". Leong's resignation was a result of his slow reaction in monitoring hospital executive's performances during the SARS outbreak.[75] While the first demonstration on July 1st 2003 was focused on poor government administration that resulted in the resignation of high officials, the second July 1st demonstration included a plurality of issues; thus exhibiting increasing political activism, rising awareness and growing dissent in Hong Kong politics.

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[70] Mary Kwang, "Top HK Officials Admit Tung's Accountability System Is Flawed" access date July 20, 2004 <http://www.straitstimes.com.sg/eyeoneastasia/story/0,4395,260569,00.html >
[71] Francis Markus "Tung's Uncertain Future" BBC access date: July 16, 2004 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3074573.stm >
[72] "The Summer of Discontent", South China Morning Post. December 30, 2003.
[73] The number 450,000 is from: Marianne Bray, "Mass Protest in Hong Kong", July 1, 2004 <www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/asiapcf/07/01/hk.anniversary/>
The number 530,000 is from: Christine Loh. Boomtown II "Hong Kong Political Analysis" numbers from July 1st Significance chart. Boomtown Conference. July 7, 2004
[74] "2nd Top Hong Kong SAR Official Resigns" access date July 9, 2004 <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/07/09/1089000333326.html?oneclick=true>
[75] "2nd Top Hong Kong SAR Official Resigns" access date July 9, 2004 <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/07/09/1089000333326.html?oneclick=true>

There is speculation on whether or not the demonstrators are isolated individuals from the rest of the Hong Kong community; however the survey report "Listening to the Wisdom of the Masses", it detailed how "the great majority of those who did not demonstrate, support the same aims [as the actual demonstrators] …even though they are the silent majority, but increasingly, its "representatives, those who protest, are speaking out for those who do not."[76] Thus, the full emergence of a collective stance on a better administered Hong Kong has become integrated into the Hong Kong identity and way of life. While the politicization of the Hongkongese culture becomes a recognized force, there is still room for improving and sustaining the social democratic movement as the struggle progresses and the need for solid party platforms and more experience with civic participation continues.

Conclusion

The cultural reconciliation of China's intervention in Hong Kong politics especially with the opposing interpretations of the same core issues in Hong Kong lie in the fear of a hyper-developing Hongkongese identity. The emergence of a stronger Hongkongese identity may be reinforced if given the option of 'one man one vote' especially with the integration of politics in Hong Kong culture. Thus, universal suffrage conflicts with the Chinese government's goal of a unified 'one country, two systems'. If the Chinese government allows universal suffrage it will further develop the Hongkongese identity away from the collectivist identity and affiliation with the Central government; especially through incorporating elements of local patriotism into civil society's struggle for absolute democracy.

Hong Kong politics and Hong Kong identity are becoming increasingly linked therefore, China should adopt a more cooperative and 'soft-line' approach in order to appeal to the masses. However, ultimately, that is not to say that China will not resort to hawkish measures in order to maintain 'peace'. Even though the ultimate goal of universal suffrage might not be in the near future given the internal and external pressures of the Chinese government, Hongkongers should continue aiming for party platform sophistication and the maturation of Hong Kong's civil society, especially as part of Hong Kong's long term democratic trajectory. Thus, Hongkongers will play an important role in turning the reactive administration of the Hong Kong government to a more proactive government.

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[76] Civic Exchange and the Hong Kong Transition Project. "Listening to the Wisdom of the Masses: Hong Kong People's Attitudes Toward Constitutional Reform" (Hong Kong, released January 2004) 40.