Democratic Values, Political Structures, and Alternative Politics in Greater China

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Peaceworks

Contents

Summary

This study addresses the relationship among popular attitudes toward democracy, a state's political structures—parties, elections, and the government bodies to which candidates in these societies are elected—and the ways in which people participate in politics. It argues that high levels of popular democratic consciousness and strong demands for participation, in the absence of legitimate democratic institutions, lead citizens to resort to nonformal political strategies, including civil disobedience, to meet their needs. Thus, despite the existence in East Asia of some democratic institutions, formal constitutions often emasculate or limit the role of the political institutions so that political outcomes are controlled by extraparliamentary alliances, local political factions, or political oligarchies, leading to the emergence of "illiberal democracy." But when social forces cannot use democratic institutions to assert their interests, they will resort to informal procedures. While some of these are highly democratic, such as legal, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), others involve social protest and extralegal political activity.

This study analyzes political consciousness, political institutions, and patterns of participation in three Chinese societies—Taiwan, Hong Kong, and rural China. Overall it finds that Chinese citizens in all three societies possess a strong democratic consciousness. Many believe that they have the right to participate and seek the information necessary to participate in a knowledgeable way. However, the political structures of the three societies vary significantly. While Taiwan has evolved into a "full" democracy with all political positions subject to free and competitive elections, Hong Kong is at best a "partial" democracy. Its chief executive is selected by an 800-member committee composed of Hong Kong's oligarchy, political parties compete for only half the seats in the legislature, and the legislature itself has extremely limited decision-making authority. In the People's Republic of China, many villages are holding reasonably democratic elections, but elected officials, as in Hong Kong, cannot influence how the political system allocates many economic and political resources.

Taiwanese now rely primarily on formal democratic procedures as their main mechanism for political participation, while the importance of "black money," civic protests, and local factions appears to have declined. By contrast, in rural China, because of the weakness of the electoral system and the limited powers of the village committees, villagers turn to their elected officials only 20 percent of the time to solve problems. Instead, they petition higher-level government officials, contact local Communist Party officials, and increasingly engage in civil disobedience. Similarly, the enormous disjuncture between political consciousness and political institutions in Hong Kong means that while Hong Kongers do vote, they, too, are forced to create NGOs and engage in civil protests, thus placing social stability and the political system at risk.

International pressure has affected democracy in these three societies. The United States and other countries pushed the Kuomintang (KMT) to liberalize Taiwan's polity in

the 1980s. Popular revulsion against corrupt local oligarchs and the KMT helped opposition leader Chen Shui-bian win the 2000 presidential election. By contrast, Britain (except during 1992–97, when Chris Patten was governor) opposed political change in Hong Kong, as did Beijing and Hong Kong's ruling oligarchy. Continued economic downturns and weak political institutions could push Hong Kongers to rely increasingly on alternative political institutions. In the PRC, international support has helped advocates of village democracy to promote village elections, to educate villagers about democratic procedures, and to gain the attention of local governments. Chinese leaders also recognize the public relations value of grassroots democracy. However, whether village elections will allow rural Chinese society to challenge local power structures remains unclear; protests and petitions remain key elements of the political repertoire of rural citizens.

U.S. policy should reflect the nature of these societies' political institutions. The U.S. government should encourage its mainland interlocutors to recognize that Taiwan's future is intimately linked to its democratic institutions and that the PRC should deal with Taiwan's democratically elected leader. In Hong Kong, the U.S. government should urge the chief executive to begin a public debate on political reform and to strengthen Hong Kong's democratically elected body, the Legislative Council. Direct elections for the post of chief executive will enhance government legitimacy and undermine social unrest. U.S. policy toward the PRC should encourage the idea of extending electoral politics from the villages into the townships, the lowest level of state administration and a major source of corruption, unfair taxation, and rural instability. If China is to make a slow but stable democratic transition, it must allow citizens to elect government representatives directly.

Chinese culture is not inherently undemocratic; indeed, citizens in all three Chinese societies actively engage in formal politics. Given representative structures, they will spread democracy within one of the world's great cultures.

One

Introduction

What is the relationship among popular attitudes toward democracy, political structures—including parties, elections, and the government bodies to which candidates are elected—and the ways in which people participate in politics? Does the existence of democratic structures ensure that citizens can meaningfully participate in the process by which political goods and services are distributed? Do those institutions fulfill the societal need for political participation generated by popular democratic consciousness? Or must citizens resort to nonformal political strategies to meet their needs?

It has been suggested that when elections are controlled by central or local oligarchies, citizens in East Asia form civic organizations or NGOs, join social movements, or turn to public protest.[1] This study examines this proposition in three societies within Greater China: Taiwan, Hong Kong, and rural China. This comparison lets us control for the impact of Confucian culture on political behavior, and highlights instead the influence of democratic values and political structures on the decision to rely on formal versus alternative politics.

A hallmark of Asian politics is the existence of oligarchs who dominate political processes and ensure that, despite the existence of some democratic institutions—such as election campaigning and voting—popular social forces cannot successfully use democratic institutions as channels for asserting and pursuing their interests. Formal constitutions may emasculate the political structures so that political outcomes are controlled by extraparliamentary alliances, local political factions, or central oligarchies, leading to the emergence of what is now called "illiberal democracy."[2] Under these conditions, people are more likely to resort to informal procedures, some highly democratic, such as the formation of legal, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), while in other cases they turn to social protest and extralegal political activity to win concessions from political elites.

In this study, I ask two sets of questions. First, how deeply are democratic values imbued in the minds of Chinese citizens? Do they believe they have the right to participate in the political process? Do they have the information necessary to participate in a knowledgeable way? Here I hypothesize that the greater the level of democratic consciousness, the greater the demand for meaningful political participation, through either formal or alternative political means.

Second, what is the nature of the political structures for which elections are held? Is the process by which candidates and winners are selected open and competitive? Are elected officials able to influence the allocation of resources by the political system? Can the opposition party, if it wins at the ballot box, actually come to power?

The answers to these questions help explain the extent to which citizens in three Chinese societies rely on formal rather than alternative forms of political participation. The

evidence suggests that if political consciousness is high but institutions are weak or non-representative, citizens are more likely to use informal political strategies, form NGOs, petition leaders, engage in public protest or social movements, or even turn to violence to influence government policy.

Democratic Consciousness: The Role of Political Culture

By "level of democratic consciousness," I refer to the subjective attitudes of citizens toward political participation. In many ways, such attitudes reflect standard aspects of a society's political culture, including views about the process of political activity, tolerance for overt political conflict and opposing views, awareness of political information, and efforts by citizens to attain such information. While the absence of democratic values within a society should complicate the creation of a participatory or democratic polity, their presence in the face of nondemocratic political structures could trigger social unrest or political repression. For democracy to succeed, political elites must themselves tolerate political conflict and accept the norms of rotation and compromise—that is, willingly turn over power to the opposition if they lose elections.[3]

To what extent can democratic values develop within an Asian, and particularly a Chinese, society? According to Lucian Pye and others who share a culturalist view, Chinese political culture is fixed and relatively passive, with Chinese society governed by elites who rule by moral example. These elites favor the idea of a static, conformist social order, a form of "antipolitics" that has "precluded the kinds of activities associated with using power competitively in support of different values."[4] Fears that social disorder might follow a transition to a full-fledged democracy can weigh against most forms of popular political action. The culturalist view would expect little tolerance for differing opinions and little public contestation for political power. Moreover, with formal government the sole legitimate basis of power, societal pressure becomes illegitimate and a manifestation of corruption.[5] The result is a highly paternalistic political culture that reflects society's deeply rooted need for social and political stability.

While this study will look at these three Greater China societies separately, cross-national data on levels of attention to politics show that between 11.7 percent and 15.5 percent of citizens in all three societies are quite interested in gaining political information (see table 1). Moreover, despite major differences in levels of socioeconomic development and political structures, there is a distinct similarity along this particular dimension, with Hong Kong, not rural China, the most traditional society.

Political Structure

A second component of the argument concerns the nature of the formal political structures. Is the system democratic, with multiple parties competing in free, democratic elections? Do victors in elections constitute a legitimate political authority that can influence the allocation of political and economic resources? The extent of this formal democracy can be determined by standard measures such as the number of political parties, rates of participation in political campaigns, and the share of resources, such as budgets, allocated by the freely elected political authorities.

I am also interested in whether the parties and elections are truly a mechanism for the competitive selection of political elites, and whether a multiplicity of social forces, including the poor, find channels for political expression through these structures. In East Asia, political systems are often dominated by political oligarchies even though numerous parties compete in relatively free elections. As Joel Rocamora argues regarding the Philippines, the parties are really the instruments of individual politicians and have few links to social forces. They cannot serve as a mechanism through which society can pursue its interests, so citizens turn to informal democracy and NGOs as an alternative means of pursuing these interests.[6]

The People's Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan, and Hong Kong vary significantly in their electoral systems and party structures, as well as in the ability of elected officials to affect public policy. In the PRC, villagers can elect a fully constituted political authority, the village committee, but its influence is limited to local economic issues. In Hong Kong, despite the existence of real political parties that compete for public office through a democratic process, the constitutional arrangement imposed on Hong Kong by China and Britain under the Basic Law—Hong Kong's mini-constitution—makes it impossible for these parties to perform many of the functions prescribed for them by democratic theory. In Taiwan, the 1990s saw the establishment of a fully democratic system with competitive elections among party candidates for all key public offices, including the presidency. I characterize these three Chinese societies as "village," "partial," and "full" democracies.

Formal versus Alternative Democracy: Politics and Protests

How do levels of democratic consciousness intersect with a society's political structures to determine the pattern of politics within that society? If political structures respond to demands for democratic or responsive politics, citizens will rely more on formal, rather than alternative or informal, kinds of political activity. But what do I mean by "alternative democracy"?

Alternative democracy—efforts by citizens to affect political outcomes through means other than electoral politics—should be viewed as a continuum running from lobbying efforts targeted at elected representatives, as is common in the United States but not legal in some European democracies, through petitions or personal contacts to nonelected representatives, ending with public protests targeting the state and its representatives. (While civil disobedience may reflect democratic activity, violence should not be seen as a form of alternative democracy.) We should also differentiate among participatory institutions, such as political parties, and alternative democratic institutions such as NGOs, social movements, and informal political networks. We must also keep in mind that political liberalization and the emergence of civil society often allow for the growth of religious institutions, which may become alternative centers of power when formal political institutions are slow to respond to popular demands for political change.[7]

Where the political system fulfills or incorporates those demands through a fully democratic process, as in Taiwan, we should anticipate lower levels of social protest, particularly illegal or violent political activity, especially when compared with the years before the development of the multiparty system. We should also anticipate less of a need for alter-

native democratic institutions, such as NGOs, and less reliance on informal political structures or networks.

In rural China, despite increased democratic consciousness and greater institutionalization of village democracy, many injustices, including corruption and the imposition of unofficial fees and taxes, are perpetrated by elites beyond the reach of village elections.[8] In response, villagers turn to informal associations, such as religious or clan organizations, contact local Communist Party officials, or write formal petitions to higher-level officials in order to meet their needs. Should these institutions fail to redress social grievances, we would anticipate high levels of political and social unrest in the absence of state suppression or alternative mechanisms for seeking redress.

Finally, the existence of competitive parties in Hong Kong and the citizens' high level of democratic consciousness, combined with Hong Kong's unique constitutional arrangement—which prevents parties from playing an effective role in making policy or distributing social resources—create a significant role for informal political institutions such as NGOs. But these same conditions also generate political disaffection and social protest. Continued efforts at this "democratic denial" could lead to serious levels of social unrest.

Taiwan

Public Consciousness, the Electoral Mechanism, and Formal Democracy

Taiwan's democratic transition reflects a classic case in which a disenfranchised and excluded majority—native Taiwanese who were subjugated by mainlanders in 1947—employing a mass movement to assert its rights, created a political party to challenge the ruling oligarchy and eventually both democratized the political system and took political power. This remarkable process occurred relatively peacefully, due in part to the enlightened leadership of President Chiang Ching-kuo, who realized that Taiwan's future stable development depended on political liberalization and the emergence of a multiparty system. Still, while many observers see Taiwan's transition confirming the argument that socioeconomic development leads inevitably to political reform, the role of "the electoral mechanism" and the impact of democratic participation in promoting democratic consciousness are too frequently downplayed.[9] According to Fu Hu, partial democracy with limited electoral process undermined the authoritarian system and promoted political democratization. Similarly, ethnic identity, and the fact that Taiwanese felt like an oppressed ethnic group on their own soil, encouraged the emergence of democracy.

Democratic Consciousness

Various studies of Taiwanese political culture suggest that structural changes in the political system, as well as the experience of democratic participation, changed people's attitudes toward politics. According to Hu, between 1983 and 1989 the value orientations of voters in Taiwan underwent a distinctly prodemocratic transformation, altering the political culture of Taiwanese society. And while support for "individual freedom" and the "separation of powers" remained under 75 percent,[10] with the former supported by only 50.1 percent and the latter by 64.4 percent, dramatic increases of 16.4 and 17.6 percentage points, respectively, indicated that between 1983 and 1989 Taiwan moved toward a far more democratic political culture.[11] Creating a measure combining individual evaluation on four democratic value orientations, Hu shows that while the majority of Taiwanese still remained "modern authoritarians"—an orientation that increased from 63.7 percent in 1983 to 68.3 percent in 1989—the number of "traditional authoritarians" fell by more than half, from 23.5 percent in 1983 to 11.1 percent in 1989, while the proportion with "liberal democratic" values rose significantly from 12.8 percent to 20.7 percent.[12]

In another study, William Parish and Charles Chang found a significant decline between 1985 and 1991 in authoritarian political values and therefore little support for the culturalist argument of "change-resistant political values."[13] The percentage of people

disagreeing with statements such as "elders should manage politics" (in 1985 = 49 percent), or "many political parties lead to bad politics" (in 1985 = 34 percent), increased by 32 and 44 percentage points, respectively.[14] But modernization alone did not explain these changes; based on their own statistical analysis, Parish and Chang argue that slow socioeconomic modernization, combined with rapidly shifting political structures, explained these shifts in values.[15]

Responses to a series of questions about attitudes toward freedom, political pluralism, and separation of powers also reflect significant changes in political values in Taiwan between 1984 and 1996 (see table 2).[16] The average change for the six questions was 66.5 percentage points. However, further dissection of the data shows that changes in attitudes toward politics occurred soon after the lifting of martial law in 1987 (see table 2, last column), supporting the argument that changes in political structure can affect attitudes rapidly, and that what are perceived as deeply held Chinese values may be altered by changes in political structure.[17] Thus, for all questions but number four, more than half of the change recorded took place between 1984 and 1987. For question four, however, the experience of a multiparty system in the 1990s, more than just the lifting of martial law, probably convinced people that such systems did not necessarily lead to chaos.[18]

Another driving force behind increased democratic consciousness is ethnic consciousness *(Taiwan yishi)* among native Taiwanese. When asked in 1995 whether they saw themselves as Taiwanese, Chinese, Taiwanese and Chinese, or Chinese and Taiwanese, citizens in Taiwan, even before the 1996 Taiwan missile crisis, showed a clear preference for expressing a Taiwanese identity (see table 3). Those selecting "Taiwanese" (30.3 percent) or "Taiwanese and Chinese" (27.9 percent) totaled 58.2 percent, as compared with those selecting "Chinese" (18.9 percent) or "Chinese and Taiwanese" (17.2 percent), who totaled 36.1 percent. Moreover, between 1995 and 2000 the preference for Taiwanese identity increased dramatically, with the percentage of people identifying themselves as Taiwanese rising by 22.6 percentage points to reach 52.9 percent. By contrast, those identifying themselves as Taiwanese and Chinese dropped from 27.9 percent to 24.0 percent, those identifying themselves primarily as Taiwanese rose to 76.9 percent, and those identifying themselves as Chinese or Chinese and Taiwanese declined to 19.2 percent.[19]

Data from another survey by Ly-Yun Chang, Yu-Hsia Lu, and Fu-Chang Wang show a strong relationship between political action and political consciousness. The study focused on three aspects of political consciousness—democratic consciousness, Taiwanese independence consciousness, and "provincial consciousness"[20]—and three forms of political participation—discussion of politics, electoral participation, and protest behavior—as the factors that might influence the level or type of political consciousness. Chang, Lu, and Wang found that people who engaged in political discussions had both a democratic consciousness and a provincial consciousness, while those who participated in protests favored Taiwan independence and had a democratic consciousness. However, the relationship between participating in elections and both democratic consciousness and provincial consciousness was not very strong.[21] Although the more interesting issue is the impact of political consciousness on levels and modes of participation and protest behavior, these data do suggest that identity as Taiwanese is related to one's level of political activity.

Changing Political Structures: The Emergence of the Multiparty System

Soon after moving to Taiwan in 1949, the defeated Kuomintang (KMT) introduced local elections as a means of legitimating its rule. Controls over local political factions or local oligarchs and the co-optation of local Taiwanese elites helped it totally dominate the electoral process from the 1950s through the early 1970s. Beginning in the 1977 local elections, a loosely coordinated opposition group, bearing the label of "Dangwai" (or "outside the party," that is, outside the KMT), began to make inroads on the KMT's power base. Over the next seven years, the opposition created various semiformal campaign organizations, and in 1986, established a formal party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). During this period, the KMT was hard pressed to undo this process and arrest the movement's leaders since many of them had emerged through local elections sanctioned by the KMT itself and had political immunity as elected representatives. To stabilize the political and economic system, President Chiang Ching-kuo tried to incorporate the opposition into the political system by allowing the DPP to compete openly as an organized political party in all-island elections. These elections for some seats in the Legislative Yuan, Taiwan's parliament, in 1986 and 1989 transformed the Taiwanese political landscape by allowing the local population to participate in nationwide elections, which further democratized popular political consciousness.

Further critical structural changes were under way. For decades, the Legislative Yuan had been controlled by mainlanders who had fled to Taiwan in 1949 and who claimed their seats based on the 1947 elections on the mainland. By the late 1980s, most of the old guard had died, so in 1993 all seats in the Legislative Yuan were put up for grabs, affording the opposition a real chance to expand its representation. Unfortunately, the electoral format for the Legislative Yuan—single, nontransferable voting in multimember districts, with each district choosing as many as sixteen representatives—encourages factionalism and catering to small constituencies, since each candidate often needs less than 10 percent of the votes in his or her district to win.[22] Nevertheless, the opening of the electoral system allowed the DPP to become the largest party in the Legislative Yuan. In 1996 Taiwan held its first free and open election for the presidency, completing a cycle of reforms that has created a fully democratic political system.

Social Protest, Social Movements, and Alternative Politics

Political liberalization in Taiwan, particularly before the official sanctioning of an opposition party, triggered a dramatic increase in social movements and the incidence of social protest. The number of social protests rose from 143 in 1983 to 183 in 1984, 243 in 1985, 271 in 1986, and 676 in 1987, the year that martial law was lifted.[23] Many of these protests were part of social movements, which, though generally apolitical, challenged the KMT to respond to society's concerns, dismantle its corporatist controls, and establish new rules for dealing with politically sensitive subjects.[24] For example, led by a powerful environmental movement, public protests over environmental degradation grew dramatically. While there was an average of 13.8 environmental protests per year between 1980 and 1987, the average jumped to 31.3 protests per year in 1988–90 and peaked at 258 in 1991.[25] Yun-han Chu attributes this rise in public protest to a lack of secondary

associations or other functional intermediaries to translate popular discontent into effective policy responses, as well as the inability of the authoritarian state to respond in a timely fashion to emerging popular demands.[26]

The institutionalization of democracy has led to fewer, and more civil, political protests. As Shelley Rigger observes, "The frequency of demonstrations has diminished steadily as reform has progressed."[27] So, too, has the occurrence of violent assemblies and parades since the peak of 1989, when twenty-eight cases were reported. There were eight violent protests in 1996, three in 1997, and four in 1998.[28] The number injured in political protests has fallen significantly since 1988, when 486 people were hurt. This number stayed above 100 through 1994, but only 25 people were injured in 1997 and only 32 in 1998.[29] In the late 1990s, however, citizens took to the streets en masse to protest the government's inability to halt "gangster" politics.

Informal political networks have been a hallmark of Taiwan's politics. When the KMT moved to Taiwan it empowered local factions or clans across the island, giving them control over local politics while linking them to Taipei through patron-client networks. These factions ensured the KMT's political hegemony, even as it allowed relatively free and fair elections.

However, over time these local factions and networks, which formed overlapping formal and informal structures, found winning local elections more and more difficult. As society grew wealthier and levels of education rose, aspiring local political entrepreneurs used elections to compete for political power. Drawing on issues such as national identity and Taiwanization, terrible environmental degradation, and political reform, they challenged local power structures. Once a mechanism for control, dominated by informal politics, elections became a public process of political contestation through which local interests competed for government resources.

Still, despite the emergence of a stable electoral system, increasing wealth and autonomy among local politicians allowed alternative politics to continue to play a major role in Taiwan. With elections the "sole, legitimate channel for upward mobility and access to key public offices,"[30] winning elections became supremely important for local KMT bosses. With the DPP able to field popular local candidates, money became a key determinant of electoral outcomes. Local politicians, factional leaders, and powerful clans became power brokers who negotiated with the central KMT authorities more as equals than as supplicants, demanding a variety of payoffs for turning out the vote. According to Michael Kau, since the KMT had to rely more and more on the rich and powerful to deliver votes, "it is now quite commonplace to see the forces of factional bosses, big clans, business conglomerates, and Mafia-type gangsters take control over local political campaigns."[31] The rise of criminal elements among local politicians—in 1994, 35 percent of 858 first-term councilmen at the township and village levels had criminal records or associations with illegal gangs—has particularly harmed the KMT, which lost to the DPP in the 2000 presidential election largely over the issues of political reform and "black-money politics."

Wisely, the DPP targeted "black-money politics" as part of its campaign for political reform. This strategy increased its legitimacy in the eyes of the Taiwanese electorate and its

own leverage vis-à-vis the KMT. Thus vote buying by KMT candidates was not significant in the December 2001 elections for the Legislative Yuan, reflecting the Justice Ministry's successful crackdown on this practice.[32] Moreover, Taiwan's economic difficulties left the KMT with little money to spend on buying votes. These reforms are likely to result in further declines in alternative politics and a greater role for formal political institutions.

Three

Hong Kong

Parties without Power in a "Partial Democracy"

Hong Kong has a hybrid political system that is neither strongly authoritarian nor completely democratic. The population has a strong sense of democratic consciousness, and formal political parties, established in 1991, compete vigorously in the electoral process. However, the constitutional arrangement imposed on Hong Kong by the Beijing government has created a "restricted" or "partial" democracy.[33] Political parties face serious constraints when they try to influence government policy because elected legislators cannot initiate public policy. As a result, the role of political parties in the allocation of political resources is limited, weakening a key channel for state-society communication, confidence building, and elite-mass linkages. Social and political discontent, too, is poorly managed by parties and political institutions.[34] Moreover, Hong Kong's government is increasingly dominated by clientelist parties and elites without strong grassroots support,[35] and leaders in this "executive-led" political system are widely seen as excessively probusiness. The result is great dissatisfaction with the government and its top leaders.[36] The summer of 2000 witnessed unprecedented levels of public protest, while surveys conducted in the fall of 2001 show a significant rise in concerns about social stability. Little wonder that some observers now assert that political instability is no longer beyond the realm of possibility.[37]

Democratic Consciousness

Hong Kongers are commonly characterized as politically apathetic, caring only about making money. Because of the political constraints imposed by British colonial rule, Hong Kong's position next to a soon-to-be-sovereign China, and the refugee status of so many inhabitants, Hong Kong began to develop a more active political culture only in the early 1970s.[38] As political structures were erected that encouraged grassroots activities, however, a foundation was laid for rapid political development in the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, the Tiananmen crackdown in Beijing woke the population to the dark side of the soon-to-be-sovereign power, while the political reforms of Governor Chris Patten (1992–97) allowed greater political expression of those concerns.

   Hong Kongers are voracious consumers of political and economic information (see table 4). According to surveys, 61 to 68 percent of Hong Kong residents read a newspaper every day. In April 1998, 48 percent of people reported watching news or current affairs programs on television for seven hours or more per week, while in April 2000, 38 percent were still doing so.[39]

   Hong Kongers also have a high tolerance for political conflict, with about 80 percent finding multiparty competition in elections and party debates in the legislature acceptable

(see table 5). Approximately three-fourths of those interviewed accept the legitimacy of disagreements between the Legislative Council (Legco) and the Executive Council (Exco), while more than two-thirds of the population believe that people have the right to express their political opinions through public protests.

Hong Kongers resent nondemocratic political activities. While the findings are less than conclusive, only 50 percent of citizens accept the idea that Exco should veto proposals by Legco, even though this power is enshrined in Hong Kong's Basic Law. Although the number of those who did not find such actions acceptable fell from 28 percent in 1998 to 22 percent in 2000, 22 percent responded "don't know" in 1998 and 28 percent in April 2000. Clearly there is great ambivalence on this issue. But when asked about the right of business groups to veto grassroots proposals, people showed a strong support for pluralist democracy and strong resentment of the influence of the ruling oligarchy. As table 5 shows, in 1998 more people found business groups' vetoing of grassroots proposals unacceptable than acceptable (45 percent versus 34 percent), although in 2000 more people found it acceptable than unacceptable (39 percent versus 36 percent).[40] (In April 2000, 25 percent of those interviewed responded "don't know" to this question.)

Political Structures:
A Legislature with Parties but No Powers

The political structures of Hong Kong were carefully crafted to ensure a strong chief executive and to weaken society's and Legco's ability to influence policy. Moreover, the current chief executive is not very democratic. Even before taking office, Tung Chee-hwa demonstrated what Lau Siu-kai calls an "abhorrence of politics" and political parties, as well as a political conservatism that has led him to reject even a watchdog role for the elected legislators.[41] He has disbanded the elected municipal councils; generally refuses to meet with the Democratic Party (DP), the strongest party in Hong Kong; and treats the legislature as a gadfly he must tolerate but can generally ignore.

Political parties in Hong Kong are weak. Since decolonization was a top-down affair rather than a struggle led by political parties against the colonial power, parties did not earn legitimacy as forces for political liberalization. Public support for parties thus remains "shallow and fragile," with only 21.7 percent of Hong Kongers identifying with any party.[42] Hong Kong's partial democracy and the political context—its recent transition to mainland sovereignty—still impede party development.

Even so, following the Tiananmen crackdown in Beijing, parties were seen as key institutions that could promote rapid democratization and protect Hong Kong from Beijing. In a 1998 survey, 44.7 percent of Hong Kongers believed that parties were needed; only 18.2 percent said that they were not needed.[43] In particular, the Tiananmen crackdown strengthened the popularity of the DP, which was seen as the major opposition to authoritarian rule by Beijing. Even in 1998, people who were concerned about the pace of democratization in Hong Kong favored the DP over other parties, while those who trusted Beijing and the Hong Kong government favored the pro-Beijing Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) or the probusiness Liberal Party.

Yet as Tip O'Neill, former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, once said, "All politics is local," and in the past few years, particularly following the 1997 East Asian

financial crisis, people's concerns have shifted from a focus on democratic freedoms to greater concern about economic opportunity and livelihood issues. The number of people in Hong Kong concerned about "economic prospects" rose from 9 to 40 percent between February 1996 and April 2000, peaking at 47 percent in April 1999, while the proportion of those concerned about security and freedom dropped from 25 to 6 percent.[44] The result has been a decline in the popularity of the DP, which has failed to address these livelihood issues, and the rise of the DAB.[45] The DAB has benefited from strong support from Hong Kong's business elite, which has been encouraged to assist the DAB by pro-mainland forces in Hong Kong. For example, a Hong Kong tycoon funded courses in management training at Qinghua University in Beijing for DAB cadres. While members of the DP must turn over some of their Legco salaries to the party to help pay its administrative costs, the DAB is flush with cash and funds two full-time staff in each electoral constituency who respond to complaints from local constituents about grassroots issues. As a result, the DAB is building a strong political machine within the community which is likely to result in its becoming the largest party over the next few years.[46]

The unique characteristics of the Hong Kong legislature prevent parties from serving as interest articulators or representatives of societal interests. Both Beijing and the British colonial authorities favored keeping Legco weak so that even if a single party came to dominate the legislature, it would not be able to veto bills proposed by the chief executive. Also, Article 74 of the Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini-constitution, limits the right of private members to propose any bills "with meaningful policy implications."[47] The only real power granted Legco is the right to veto government bills, particularly budgets, the threat of which gives it some negotiating power. But even this power is limited, because the electoral system has been structured to ensure that even a party popular with the majority of citizens may have difficulty controlling the legislature. In 1999 only 33 percent of Legco seats (twenty seats) were directly elected from geographic constituencies, 50 percent (thirty seats) were elected by unrepresentative "functional constituencies"—where only leaders in professional associations can vote for representatives to the legislature—and 17 percent (10 seats) were elected by a pro-Beijing, probusiness selection committee. Governor Patten tried to democratize functional constituencies by allowing employees and elites in each sector to vote, but Tung Chee-hwa reversed those reforms after coming to power, again allowing only leaders and owners of businesses in each sector to vote.[48] Even in September 2000, the Election Committee still selected six members of Legco; the number of legislators elected from geographic constituencies had risen only to twenty-four seats, or 40 percent. Moreover, the proportional representation system used in the geographic constituencies further weakens liberal forces in Hong Kong. Under the electoral system, citizens vote for a party list with multiple seats (three to five) in each constituency rather than a "first-past-the-post" system. This system favors less popular parties, such as the DAB, since they can win seats despite receiving less than 30 percent of the vote in any district. Moreover, parties have no access to the chief executive, who is the initiator of most legislation, since he refuses to meet with them, in part out of fear of legitimizing the DP. Not surprisingly, political parties remain most popular among those who are disaffected with the political authorities.[49]

Alternative Politics, NGOs, and Public Protests

The emergence of political parties in 1991 and the political liberalization of the Patten years did not obviate the need for public meetings and public processions, both indicators of informal political activity. According to data from the Hong Kong police, the number of public meetings increased from 365 to 1,203 between 1990 and 2000 (see table 6), with the greatest increase occurring between 1990 and 1991, after the Tiananmen crackdown in Beijing. Similarly, the number of public processions rose from 272 in 1990 to 526 in 1996, with a jump of over 25 percent in 1993–94. The number of public processions continued to rise after the handover of Hong Kong to the PRC.

With weak parties and the business oligarchy dominating the formal institutions of political authority, Hong Kongers resort to forming civil society organizations and other grassroots bodies to promote their interests. The number of registered societies has continued to grow since the early 1980s (see table 7), increasing by 75 percent between 1991 and 1998 despite the legalization of political parties in 1991.

The stature of the parties has been declining over the past few years because of their inability to affect the legislative agenda, precipitating political disillusionment and a period of "party stagnation if not decline."[50] Party competition, for example, is seen to reflect power struggles among elites more than battles over public policy. As table 5 shows, there has been a significant decline in popular acceptability of both multiparty competition in elections, from 85 percent to 78 percent, and party debates in Legco (from 83 percent to 77 percent).[51] Most important, Hong Kongers have recently expressed views that they feel neglected by politicians: only 14.1 percent of people interviewed thought that politicians were concerned about their problems, while 61.5 percent found politics and government complicated and difficult to understand.[52] Similarly, when asked whom the chief executive and the civil servants should listen to about livelihood issues, only 2 percent said the government should listen to political parties and pressure groups, while 16 percent favored directly elected Legco members, the majority of whom are affiliated with political parties. The most important group to be consulted was the "general public" (approximately 43 percent).[53]

As support for parties has declined, so too has popular support for street demonstrations. In June 1998, 72 percent of citizens found such protests acceptable and 18 percent found them unacceptable, while in April 2000 only 67 percent found them acceptable and 23 percent found them unacceptable (see table 5). Since the spring of 2000, however, the number of protests seems to have increased; on July 1, 2000, the anniversary of the handover, five different groups staged various protests throughout Hong Kong, leading the *International Herald Tribune* to call Hong Kong the "City of Protest," not the "City of Light."[54] A group of young turks within the DP who are more concerned with social issues than lofty concerns about democracy would prefer more street-level activity. Even the probusiness Liberal Party felt it necessary to bring people into the streets to protest the decline in property values.[55] No wonder some observers believe that "democracy in Hong Kong may have to hit the streets."[56]

In fact, in November 2001 the share of the population that was "very worried" about social unrest returned to its peak of 19 percent (see table 8). Although the number of people who were "very worried" or "fairly worried" dropped from 49 percent in October

1998 to 44 percent in November 2001, the fact that 44 percent of people have real fears about social instability underlines Hong Kong's political problems. As more people come to see elections as "window dressing that creates an illusion of democratic development,"[57] the elite-mass gap could deteriorate. Add to this alienation growing economic inequality and the feeling that the government is increasingly unfair and you have a "political time-bomb for the HKSAR."[58] Ironically, while Hong Kongers consume massive amounts of political information, generally turn out to vote (despite the low efficacy of such activity), and support democratic, rather than nondemocratic, practices, the business elite portrays them as unprepared for full democracy.[59] However, the ongoing "democratic denial" by the wealthy and pro-Beijing forces in Hong Kong may backfire, generating the very political instability that they fear democracy creates.

Four

The PRC

Village Democracy without Parties

Of our three Chinese societies, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has undergone the most limited amount of democratic development. Nonetheless, since 1987 the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has instituted basic grassroots democracy in the form of village elections for village committees that have effective control over certain aspects of the local economy. Overall, these village committees cannot challenge local CCP authority, although they were introduced in part because village-level CCP committees had seriously deteriorated in almost 80 percent of villages following decollectivization. The CCP felt it was losing control over the countryside, so when a group of young rural specialists approached some senior party officials and recommended the introduction of village democracy, these leaders felt that the party had little to lose.[60] These village committees, although theoretically autonomous, are under the authority of the township government, the lowest level of official government in the countryside. I have labeled this form of political structure "village democracy."

Do these elections and the village committees mesh with the level of democratic consciousness in the countryside? Given the level of democratic consciousness in rural China, as well as the extent of social unrest, is this type of democratic development sufficient to maintain social and political order? Or do villagers need to turn to alternative forms of democratic activity, including protests, in order to pursue their interests?

The Strength of the "Democratic Idea" in Rural China

Despite the low level of economic development in rural China, data from a survey in the summer of 1999 reveal strong support for the "democratic idea" in rural China.[61] Villagers were asked to respond to a series of six questions about democracy and electoral politics (see table 9). For example, we asked villagers to respond to the following statement: *"Only people with specialized knowledge and ability have the right to speak during periods of decision making."* Since this statement reflects nondemocratic values, those who "strongly supported" it were given a score of –2, those who "agreed somewhat" received a score of –1, those who "disagreed somewhat" received +1, while those who "strongly disagreed" were scored +2. Interestingly, almost 45 percent of villagers disagreed with this statement: 27.6 percent "disagreed" and 17.3 percent "strongly disagreed." On the other hand, over 30 percent "agreed somewhat," while only 12.1 percent "strongly agreed." Only 12.9 percent selected "don't know."[62]

Responses to another question showed that villagers strongly believe they have the right to petition the upper levels of government. Over 80 percent "strongly agreed" (41.1 percent) or "agreed somewhat" (40.3 percent) with the statement *"If villagers disagree with*

local policies, they have the right to send accusatory petitions to higher levels," while only 6.4 percent "disagreed" and 2.4 percent "strongly disagreed." On this issue, 9.8 percent of villagers had no opinion. Finally, villagers reject the argument that Chinese accept nondemocratic politics as long as they can make money. In response to the statement *"As long as village economic development is stable, there is no need to increase the level of democracy,"* only 6.6 percent "strongly agreed," while 14.4 percent "agreed somewhat." In contrast, 32.3 percent "disagreed somewhat," and 33.1 percent "strongly disagreed." Finally, 13.6 percent "didn't know." Clearly, the oligarchs are wrong in arguing that Chinese villagers are politically apathetic.

Combining each person's score for all six questions created an overall score in terms of a "democratic ideal" and placed them on an anti- versus pro-democratic continuum (see figure 1). The distribution of villager attitudes in figure 1 shows a rather strong prodemocratic tendency among these 2,400 villagers from 120 villages, with very few villagers expressing antidemocratic values; over 40 percent had strong prodemocratic values, in that they took a strongly democratic position in response to at least one of the six questions.[63] Since these villages were relatively poor and had seen little industrialization, democratic consciousness seems to have emerged without significant socioeconomic development. Perhaps, as in Taiwan, participating in elections itself helps promote democratic consciousness.

We also asked people about the level of attention they pay to politics and public affairs. As table 10 shows, 21.4 percent were "very interested" and another 51.5 percent were "relatively interested." Over 50 percent had engaged fairly frequently in some form of discussion of economic and political affairs in the last month, although the number of discussions seems to be less than would be expected from the asserted level of interest in public affairs. Finally, many in this group may be illiterate or simply rely on the radio for their political information.

Again, we also found strong support for free and fair elections. In response to the statement *"If the existing cadres are capable and trusted, there is no need for democratic elections,"* about 55 percent "disagreed somewhat" or "disagreed strongly" (see table 9). Only 23.9 percent "agreed somewhat," while only 12.4 percent "totally agreed." The assertion that Chinese people prefer order and economic development to democracy may not hold true in these localities.

Political Structure: The Institutional Framework for Village Democracy

Village democracy was introduced step-by-step based on draft regulations passed by the National People's Congress in 1987. Since 1987, almost all provinces in China have introduced their own regulations, while the central government has further codified this grassroots phenomenon. Estimates vary, but in 2000 perhaps 40 percent of villages employed secret-ballot and multiple-candidate elections to choose the director, vice director, and members of their village committee (committees usually have five to seven members). Villages have also been called on to draft "village charters," which commit the elected representatives to run village affairs democratically or face recall, and have been directed to open their financial records to their citizens by posting them on public billboards. The

goal is to reduce corruption and increase public confidence in elected officials. Finally, in 1998, the National People's Congress called on villages to select their candidates through a public and open nomination process.

How democratic are these structures? Can local CCP officials manipulate the outcome? Did villagers see the CCP as having too much influence over the electoral process? In our localities, when villagers were asked, *"What do you think of the CCP's level of influence over elections?"* only 9.6 percent saw the party's influence as "very great"; 22.3 percent saw the CCP having "a certain level of influence"; 22.3 percent saw it having "not much influence"; while 20.6 percent saw it having "no influence." Again, 21 percent said that they "did not know." Even if we assume that those who selected "did not know" did so because they were afraid to say that they saw the CCP having influence, 42.9 percent did express the view that the CCP did not have much influence. Responses to a similar question confirmed these findings. We asked, *"If a ministry or bureau wants to control the election, they can do so by controlling the selection of candidates."* The responses? "Totally agree," 6.5 percent; "relatively agree," 18.4 percent; "don't agree much," 20.9 percent; "totally disagree," 20.4 percent; "don't know," 27.1 percent. Again, we find about 41 percent of villagers agreeing that outside or local established political forces cannot readily control the selection of candidates or the outcomes of elections.

One key reform of the electoral process—the introduction in some localities of *hai xuan,* or "selecting candidates from the sea"—further weakens the local authority's ability to manipulate outcomes. Under this system, villagers can nominate any person in the village who possesses democratic rights, and through a series of ballots the less popular candidates are weeded out until only two or three candidates remain. They then compete for the public office.

Among the villages we surveyed, 19.7 percent of villagers reported that their village used this method in the most recent election, 17 percent reported that their village had used some other direct-nomination process, which also undermined the hidden power of local oligarchs, while another 4.9 percent reported that a small group of villagers collectively nominated their candidates. These choices, plus self-nomination (0.6 percent of cases), suggest that more than 42 percent of villagers participated in a relatively democratic process for selecting candidates. Even so, if one sees nominations by various local organizations, including the party secretary, the local election committee, or the village assembly, as inherently nondemocratic, then 36 percent of villagers participated in more nondemocratic procedures.[64]

Looking at other indicators of democracy (see table 11), 79.3 percent of villagers reported that they had voted in the most recent election and by secret ballot. Also, 69.6 percent of villagers reported multicandidate elections, while only 11.3 percent reported that there had been only one candidate. Only 22.4 percent reported that their village had allowed candidates to speak publicly before the election, while 57.8 percent reported that they had not.[65] Finally, as table 11 shows, a significant percentage nominated candidates (13.1 percent) or encouraged others to vote (20.6 percent). These data suggest a robust local political climate relating to this new form of formal democracy, with only 12.5 percent not participating at all.

Yet even when villagers freely nominate their own candidates, a form of anticipated reaction may be at work if villagers select people whom they believe will be acceptable to local party officials and do not select people who oppose CCP rule or are at odds with the local party officials. Thus when we asked, *"Who should be elected for office?"* and allowed respondents to select more than one choice, the largest number of people, 60.3 percent, selected "People who keep close ties to the party." Villagers recognize that the CCP is the most important organization in rural China and a major channel through which the state distributes resources, so they benefit when their leaders have good party ties. Nevertheless, these institutions were relatively legitimate in the eyes of the villagers. In our survey, 15.3 percent of villagers saw the level of competition in the recent elections as being "much more intense" than in the previous one, with 39.5 percent seeing the level of competition as "somewhat more intense," while 22 percent saw no change. Only 6.6 percent saw the level of competition becoming less intense. Similarly, 17.6 percent saw the most recent election as "much fairer," 41.3 percent saw it as "somewhat fairer," and 20.6 percent saw no change. Only 6.5 percent saw the most recent election as less fair than previous ones.

These findings were particularly characteristic of villages that had established more democratic institutions. Statistically, the best predictors of "perceived fairness" were villages did not allow voters two or more ballots and whether there were more candidates than positions. Also, in villages in Anhui province that had used a direct-nomination process (hereafter DN),[66] when asked to rank the level of fairness of the electoral process, 69.7 percent of villagers whose village had used DN selected "much fairer" or "fairer," while only 52.3 percent of villagers in non-DN villages did so.[67]

Similarly, villagers whose village used DN saw the recent elections as more competitive, another boost for the argument that good structures breed legitimacy. Thus 20 percent of villagers in villages with DN procedures saw the level of competition under the electoral system as "extremely intense," versus 11.6 percent of villagers in non-DN villages. And when we combine "extremely intense" and "comparatively intense," 78.2 percent of villagers in DN villages held these views as compared with 52.8 percent of villagers in non-DN villages.[68]

The state's ability to make villagers feel that elections are becoming fairer also has some effect on other aspects of governance. Villagers' perceptions of the electoral system's level of fairness are related to their views that elections increase peasant support for government policies.[69] Perceived fairness was also linked in people's minds with the belief that elections and the village committee can solve problems. Also, perceived fairness increased enthusiasm for participating in village affairs. Furthermore, perceived fairness correlates with satisfaction about how the village government is using the funds that villagers give it, as well as the level of openness of village accounts, both of which are important innovations designed to make village politics more transparent and democratic. Finally, there is a relationship within villagers' minds between perceived fairness of elections and the stability of rural life over the past five years. Thus there is a relationship between the perceived fairness of elections and issues that increase stability and support for the government and the electoral process.[70]

Elections in rural China are also restructuring political power. In our villages, elite turnover increased significantly between 1996 and 1999. The percentage of village leaders

taking office for the first time grew substantially year to year, from 36.8 percent in 1996 to 43.2 percent in 1997, reaching 52.5 percent in 1999 (32 out of 61).[71] Much of this turnover in 1999 occurred in our Anhui villages, where the introduction of DN led a significant number of cadres to decide not to run for reelection (see table 12). Moreover, of those Anhui village directors who ran for reelection, approximately 50 percent lost. Rural elections are changing the specific officeholders. The only issue is whether those officeholders actually wield much power.

Alternative Forms of Political Action in Rural China

Besides election-related activities, what forms of political activity occurred in these villages? We asked the following hypothetical question: *"If you heard that village cadres were considering carrying out what you considered to be inappropriate policies, what would you do?"* More than 30 percent of villagers said they would directly confront the local officials (see table 13). They would also work with others to solve these problems. Yet cynicism is strong; 37.6 percent did not want to get involved or felt that doing so would be of no use.

But what had they done in real life? We proposed a list of the main problems people confronted in their daily lives and asked whether they had done anything to solve those problems. Of 2,367 people interviewed, 441 (16.7 percent) said that they had done something to solve their problem, taking part in 739 different actions. Table 14 shows the range of strategies they pursued.

Although villagers had been able to elect the village committee and its leaders, only 20 percent of actions taken to solve problems involved approaching them for help. About 30 percent involved approaching the local Communist Party committee or its members. Another common strategy—and a key part of informal democracy in rural China—is to contact higher-level officials directly. Thus 237, or 32 percent, of responses involved going over the heads of local officials and petitioning higher levels to become involved. Here, then, is a good indicator that the formal democratic structures being established in rural China are not seen to have the capacity to solve important problems. Despite the limited usefulness of these new structures, villagers in our four counties rarely engaged in protest, since public assemblies or protests combined to account for only 2 percent of the actions adopted.[72]

Finally, what is the impact of elections and democratic structures on village stability? Unfortunately, we were unable to get good measures of social unrest in the localities we studied; the hard data were not available.[73] Reports from China suggest that elections for village committees reduce the number of complaints by villagers, largely because the establishment of committees leads to greater transparency in village finances. In Pingyuan village, Shandong province, collective complaints and crimes reportedly fell by 21 percent and 18 percent, respectively, in 1997 due to the more open political atmosphere in the village.[74] On the other hand, Lianjiang Li argues that the more democratic the election, the more likely villagers are to approach their elected officials to seek redress for unfair taxes usually imposed by the township; moreover, as democratically elected officials, village directors are more likely to help the villagers resist the township's demands. To that extent, democracy may be leading to some instability.[75]

Our study suggests that elections build support for the regime's policies. When asked if people support government policies because of elections, 23.2 percent "strongly agreed" and 42.8 percent "agreed somewhat." Only 3.9 percent "totally disagreed." Also, 17.8 percent said that elections had greatly increased the level of stability within their village, while 53 percent thought elections had brought some stability. Only 2.1 percent thought that elections had "somewhat decreased" (1.7 percent) or "significantly decreased" (0.7 percent) stability in their village.

To better assess this relationship, we created a statistical model based on village-level data to explain why villages had experienced an increase in social stability over the past five years.[76] Villagers' feelings that their locality was "stable" were strongly related to whether they felt that "their overall level of participation had increased in the previous 5–10 years" and whether they perceived the "contract" between cadres and villagers as useful.[77] Hence, people perceive a relationship between stability and democracy. In more stable villages, the villagers were also less likely to have taken steps to oppose unfair actions by cadres—perhaps the cadres simply behaved better—and had not taken many actions to solve problems in general. Overall, then, these villages were probably better run, so people participated in formal electoral politics rather than using informal procedures such as contacting higher-level officials.

It is important to note that, in its drive to limit social unrest and cadre corruption, the CCP has itself sanctioned alternative forms of "democratic" activity beyond village elections. As mentioned above, villagers are allowed to petition higher-level officials—in part because they inform the party about local problems—and in 1990 the government instituted the Administrative Litigation Law, which allows citizens to sue public officials in court. However, the success of these measures, and this strategy of establishing alternative democratic institutions as a means of ameliorating social unrest and strengthening political institutions, remains questionable.[78] Rural protests remain widespread and continue to threaten the regime's stability.[79]

Although the state has legitimized these alternative forms of political behavior, which reflect greater political liberalization and the institution of more open procedures, it strongly resists the formation of autonomous NGOs and the emergence of civil society. According to a report by Human Rights in China, the "Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations" introduced in 1998 were even more comprehensive and controlling than similar rules introduced after the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown.[80] The way the CCP deals with the Falun Gong religious movement shows that it sees autonomous religious organizations as highly threatening. But repressing essentially nonpolitical, civil society organizations such as Falun Gong could force these organizations underground and turn them into new vehicles for political dissent. Still, NGOs have become more active in the environmental sector, where the state needs a counterbalance to local government "developmentalism," and in the alleviation of poverty. Moreover, despite the government's recent decision to shelve its long-awaited NGO legislation, NGOs are increasingly seen as an important way in which society can help itself and alleviate the growing welfare burden faced by the shrinking Chinese state.[81]

Five

Conclusion

Three factors help to explain the varied experiences of the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong with democracy: the role of external forces in promoting or retarding democracy; the power of the ruling oligarchy; and the relationship between political culture, political structure, and political development. Here, I briefly examine each of these factors before asking what the U.S. government and U.S. NGOs can do to promote democratization in Greater China without generating instability.

International Pressure

International pressure has contributed significantly to the form of democracy—full, partial, or village—existing in each of the three Chinese societies, though the direction of influence varies across the cases. Whereas foreign forces greatly affected democratic development in Taiwan and played a positive, albeit less important, role in the PRC, external influences have slowed the pace of democratization in Hong Kong.

In the PRC, domestic advocates of village democracy consciously played the "international card" as part of their strategy to overcome domestic opposition to village elections. Advocates of village elections in the central government used incentives—in particular, trips overseas to study how self-government and elections were implemented—as a way to encourage local officials in the Ministry of Civil Affairs to introduce village democracy in their county. They also turned to foreigners for financial support for training, publications, and overseas education, and for help in gaining the attention of local governments throughout China.[82] The Ford Foundation, the International Republican Institute, the Asia Foundation, the United Nations Development Program, the Carter Center for Democracy, the European Union, and other donors helped this homegrown drive to promote village democracy. Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter brought village elections to the attention of Chinese President Jiang Zemin, whose recent support for village democracy has increased the pressure on local officials to carry out the relevant directives.[83] At the same time, officials in China, including top leaders, recognize the public relations value of grassroots democracy, particularly vis-à-vis the United States, since it helps counterbalance a rather dismal record of political reform.[84]

In the case of Taiwan, all observers agree that the loss of international status in the 1970s, beginning with the loss of Taiwan's UN seat and culminating in the breaking off of diplomatic relations with the United States in 1979, increased pressure on the KMT to "turn inward and to rely more on the legitimating function of electoral institutions."[85] As a result of these external pressures, then president Chiang Ching-kuo made the critical decision to lift martial law and institute widespread democratic reforms. Fear of international condemnation made it harder for the KMT to crack down on elected officials who became opponents of the regime in the early 1980s. (Indeed, Chyuan-jeng Shiao argues

that the assimilation of Taiwan into the world capitalist system was a positive force for the emergence of civil society because it reinforced society's capacity to resist state domination.)[86] Finally, Taiwan's effort to position itself in a positive light in contrast with the continuing authoritarian regime on the mainland further propelled it to adopt democratic structures.

The impact of international pressure has been the greatest in the case of Hong Kong, where it has generally impeded, rather than promoted, democratization. In 1987 Britain ignored popular demands for democracy and postponed political reform by doctoring the findings of its own survey, which contrary to the public pronouncements actually showed strong support for political change. Then China, through its control over the committee establishing the constitutional arrangement that would govern Hong Kong after the 1997 reversion, created a legislature with minimal authority, preferring instead to vest almost all political power in the post of the chief executive, whom the PRC then proceeded to hand-pick.

The Power of Local Elites

The dominance of local elites has characterized both Taiwan and the PRC. While electoral politics enabled the emergence of new Taiwanese elites in the 1970s and 1980s to challenge the dominant local KMT factions, in the 1990s economic power allowed local oligarchs to reassert their influence over a competitive and expensive democratic process. However, demands for political reform and an end to "black-money politics" helped Chen Shui-bian defeat the KMT candidate in the presidential elections of March 2000. His challenge is to reform the political system and further undermine the authority of local oligarchs.

Although village democracy has taken root in China, there is little sign that it is challenging the local power structure. Villagers in my survey selected candidates who were acceptable to the local party elite. Local corruption, often on the part of cadres at the township and county level, remains rampant and seems beyond the reach of village democracy. Moreover, the CCP resists introducing electoral politics at the township level despite the demands of some local governments for the right to experiment with these procedures.[87] Villagers must turn to alternative forms of democracy, particularly sending petitions to higher-level officials, contacting local party officials, joining illegal local organizations, or even organizing violent protests, if they wish to solve their problems.

In Hong Kong, the rule of the oligarchs seems secure. Their control of the functional constituencies and the Election Committee, which still account for over 60 percent of the seats in Legco, enables them to prevent serious political and economic reforms that challenge their dominance. Also, all but one of the seats on the Executive Committee, which advises the chief executive, are held by the business elite. Having successfully transferred their political allegiance from London to Beijing, Hong Kong's business elite has used this alliance, and Beijing's desire for stability and economic growth in Hong Kong, to protect its own economic and political position. For example, pro-worker legislation passed on the eve of the handover was annulled after July 1997. In March 2002 the business elite was able to orchestrate Tung Chee-hwa's reselection despite concern about his abilities and

unpopularity. Moreover, some members of the elite may even be favored with formal positions in his new ministerial system.

Political Culture, Political Structure, and Political Development

What kinds of future democratic and political development are likely in these three Greater China societies? First, relatively high levels of political consciousness in all three societies, despite different political structures, suggest that the available structures and structural reform, rather than simply socioeconomic development or modernization, will help determine each society's political future. China may not need significant changes in people's values before undergoing a democratic transition. On the eve of democratization, mass culture in Taiwan was more authoritarian than the political culture prevailing today on the Chinese mainland, so perhaps the PRC's political culture is not a deterrent to democratic breakthrough.[88] Although Tianjian Shi may argue that the key to democratic development lies with the values and attitudes of the ruling elite—as shown by the role of Chiang Ching-kuo in Taiwan—the experience of Taiwan also suggests an alternative source of democratization: the experience of electoral politics itself. Thus the PRC may have opened the genie of democratic transition by instituting village democracy. Indeed, the willingness of the KMT to use elections to co-opt local elites and legitimize its authoritarian rule had major implications for the democratic process in Taiwan. Elections became the local elites' source of identity and the basis of their power. Moreover, the KMT itself came under increasing pressure from both inside and outside the party to open up elections at the national level.[89] Moreover, as discussed above, Hu strongly believes that elections themselves fostered democratic practice and democratic consciousness within the entire population.[90]

Interestingly, Peng Zhen, a member of China's old guard who strongly supported village democracy in the late 1980s, argued the same position for the mainland back in the 1940s. In a 1941 report, he wrote that "if we conduct popular elections, we should seriously follow democratic principles and the spirit of rule of law in doing so. . . . This will enable the majority of people to understand, from their own personal lives, that democratic politics is far better than authoritarian politics." [91]

The case of Hong Kong probably supports this argument as well, in that the political reforms introduced by Governor Patten in the early 1990s appear to have taught Hong Kongers the value of democracy and encouraged them to want to participate. Yet it is in Hong Kong where we find the greatest mismatch between levels of democratic consciousness and established political structures. While Hong Kongers are strong supporters of democracy, their political structures may be the least democratic in the three societies, in that in village democracy the elected representatives do have direct control over funding for village programs. If the elites in Hong Kong do not respond to this incongruity by speeding up the process of democratization, one of two possibilities is likely. Cynicism could set in, and rather than "partial democracy" transforming into full democracy—as it did in Taiwan—citizens might give up on the formal political process entirely. Or they could turn instead to large-scale protests, resulting in increasing political instability.

Policy Implications for the United States

Taiwan's democratic transition places enormous pressure on the U.S. government to maintain its support for the Taiwanese regime. Taiwan's democratic transition is a remarkable story, but one that the PRC, as it formulates its Taiwan policy, refuses to incorporate into its calculations. The U.S. government should encourage its interlocutors on the mainland to recognize that democratic politics plays an absolutely critical role in the making of cross-straits policy in Taiwan. Taiwan's future is intimately linked to its fully democratic institutions, and the mainland must be encouraged to deal with Taiwan's democratically elected leader. Taiwanese have used their political institutions to express their views on cross-straits relations and the result is the continuing rise of the DPP.

At the same time, while formal political institutions are robust, vote buying has played too big a role in Taiwanese politics. The U.S. government and NGOs should support DPP efforts to eradicate corruption from Taiwanese democracy. Finally, despite Chen Shui-bian's efforts to solve Taiwan's problems, the KMT has placed party interests above national ones. The U.S. administration, Congress, and NGOs should encourage their friends in the KMT to work with the DPP to solve the island's crisis. A strong, united Taiwan is far better positioned to negotiate with the PRC than a divided one, which would hesitate to make the concessions that may be necessary to reduce cross-straits tensions.

Although Hong Kong is a very free society, its political system is not democratic. The U.S. government should encourage the chief executive to begin a serious debate in Hong Kong about the nature and pace of political reform. Many structures in the future political system will be created over the next five years. As the Basic Law states, at some unspecified time after 2007 Hong Kong *may* change its political system; but the shape of that system is not spelled out except that the "ultimate aim" is "universal suffrage."[92] While the Basic Law does not mandate direct elections for the chief executive, such a democratic process can only enhance the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the public and undermine trends toward social unrest.

The government must reform its dysfunctional political structure. Legco, due to the constraints of the Basic Law, remains relatively helpless; its only strategy for exerting political influence is filibustering, itself a destabilizing and unproductive method. With the legislature playing such a passive role, political parties, the mainstay of modern political systems through which social forces pursue their interests in an orderly fashion, are emasculated. Moreover, the DP, the foremost representative of liberal forces in the territory, is losing its electoral struggle with the pro-mainland DAB. The day may not be far off when Hong Kong will have stronger democratic institutions but lack a strong prodemocracy political party.

Moreover, a huge gap exists between the executive and the bureaucrats who implement policy.[93] Members of the Executive Council, who are directly involved in many key decisions, do not directly supervise the bureaucracy, as they would in a cabinet-led government. Hong Kong needs an Executive Council composed of cabinet secretaries who sit atop each functional hierarchy. Otherwise Hong Kong's government will face continued difficulties implementing its policy agenda. Fortunately, Tung Chee-hwa will introduce a new ministerial system on July 1, 2002, under which eleven ministers will join his Executive Committee, strengthening his control over the civil service. But while Tung says that

he will hold these ministers accountable for the success of their departments, as long as they and the chief executive are not directly elected there will be no popular mechanism to *make* them accountable. Moreover, this system could significantly increase the power of the chief executive, who is not a popularly elected official.[94]

U.S. organizations have invested in moving China's village democracy forward; they should continue to do so. Introducing democratic practices consolidates democratic values in the countryside.[95] Such practices also stabilize rural society. But China's government should move electoral politics out of the villages and into the townships. While villages lie within the realm of civil society—and therefore elections there are perceived by Beijing as strengthening societal autonomy—the township is the lowest level of the state administration and a major source of corruption, unfair taxes, and rural instability. Admittedly, rapid democratization may be destabilizing. But if China is to make a slow but stable democratic transition, it must allow citizens to elect government representatives directly. Rural Chinese recognize their interests and, given the structural opportunities, can act upon those interests in ways that will enhance the democratic nature of the entire society.

There is nothing inherently undemocratic about Chinese culture. People in all three Chinese societies are keen to engage in formal political processes. Given representative structures, they will do so and spread democracy within one of the world's great cultures.

Tables

Table 1. Frequency of Discussions of Economic and Political Issues in Three Chinese Societies

	Taiwan, 1991–97[a]	Hong Kong, 1996–98[b]	Rural China, Summer 1999
Often	14.3	11.7[c]	15.5
Sometimes	29.7	62.4	37.2
Not often or very little	35.8		27.6
Never	19.4	26.0	14.5

Note: The figures in the table are percentages.

a. I have data for the seven years 1991–97, so I took the average score for those years.

b. The Hong Kong survey used a three-point (rather than four-point) scale.

c. There was a very significant upward trend in people choosing "often," with 8.6 percent choosing this response in 1996, 10.6 percent in 1997, and 15.8 percent in 1998. I report here only the average for the three years.

Sources: For Taiwan, see *Taiwan diqu, zhengshi manyidu minyi diaocha fenxi baogao* (Taiwan district, report on analysis of survey research on the level of political satisfaction) (Taipei: *Ershiyi shiji jijinhui,* 1991 through 1997). For Hong Kong, see Hong Kong Transition Project, various years' reports. Rural China data are based on my own survey conducted in the summer of 1999.

Table 2. Democratic Values in Taiwan, 1984–96

	1984	1987	1990	1993	1996	Total Value Change 1984–96	Change in 1984–87 as a Percentage of Total Value Change
Freedom							
1. If people don't think the same, society will become divided and chaotic.	24	37	43	38	44	+20	65
2. The government should decide which type of opinions should be allowed to spread within society.	44	62	62	74	77	+33	55
Pluralism							
3. If different groups *(tuanti)* are allowed to exist within the same locality or community, chaos could emerge and influence social order and harmony.	26	40	45	59	50	+24	58
4. Too many political parties lead to political chaos.	25	36	40	58	61	+36	31
Separation of powers							
5. If the central government is constantly constrained by the legislative, it can't do its job properly.	40	56	48	48	54	+14	114
6. When courts decide on cases with great impact on social order, they should accept the opinions of administrative organs.	54	67	67	76	71	+17	76

Note: Values in the table reflect the percent of respondents who *disagreed* with the stated political positions.

Sources: Xu Huoyan, "Taiwan de xuanju yu shehui fenzhi jigou" (Taiwan's elections and the structure of social division), in Chu Yun-han et al., eds., *Liang'an jiceng xuanju yu zhengzhi shehui bianqian* (Local elections on the two sides of the Taiwan Straits and political and social change) (Taipei: Yuedan chuban gufen youxian gongsi, 1998), 146.

Table 3. Self-Identity of Taiwanese Citizens, 1995 and 2000

Self-Identity	1995		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1. I am Taiwanese	634	30.3	1,036	52.9
2. I am Chinese	395	18.9	163	8.3
3. I am Taiwanese as well as Chinese	583	27.9	470	24.0
4. I am Chinese as well as Taiwanese	360	17.2	214	10.9
5. Others	102	4.9	61	3.1
6. I don't know	8	.4	10	.5
7. I don't understand the question	2	.1	2	.1
8. I don't want to answer	9	.4	4	.2
Total	2,093	100.0	1,960	100.0

Note: The question was "Which of the following ways of address is most suitable for you?"

Source: Zhang Yinghua and Fu Yangzhi, eds., *Taiwan shehui biangian jiben diaocha jihua* (Taiwan Social Change Survey)(Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of Sociology, December 2000), 128.

Table 4. Attention to Public Media in Hong Kong, 1998–2000

A. Hours spent listening to or watching news and current affairs programs on radio or TV							
	April 1998	July 1998	Oct. 1998	April 1999	July 1999	Nov. 1999	April 2000
Never	4	2	4	2	5	4	1
<1 hour per week	5	7	7	6	9	11	8
1–3 hours per week	23	21	24	28	25	25	29
4–6 hours per week	20	24	24	24	21	20	23
7–10 hours per week	17	18	17	17	17	18	18
>10 hours per week	31	29	24	23	23	22	20
B. Frequency of reading newspaper							
Daily			64	68	61	64	65
Several times a week			24	25	24	28	28
Never			11	5	12	8	7
Don't know			1	2	2	4	1

Note: The figures in the table are percentages.

Source: Hong Kong Transition Project, *Tomorrowland: Visions, Dreams, and Disneyfication in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Baptist University, 1999), 36–37 and 44, respectively.

Table 5. Attitudes toward Democratic Procedures in Hong Kong, 1998–2000

Question: *Do you consider the following types of political disputes acceptable or not?*

A. Prodemocratic values	June 1998		November 1999		April 2000	
	Acceptable	Not	Acceptable	Not	Acceptable	Not
Multiparty competition in elections	85	8	76	11	78	11
Party debates in Legco	83	9	78	10	77	11
Disagreements between Exco and Legco	76	13	74	10	75	11
Arguments between party leaders on TV/radio	73	20	70	19	72	17
Street demonstrations and protests	72	18	68	23	67	23
B. Nondemocratic values						
Exco veto of Legco proposals*	50	28	48	24	51	22
Lawmakers' use of harsh words in debate	50	40	48	40	52	36
Business group veto of grassroots proposals	34	45	36	39*	39	36

Note: The figures in the table are percentages.

The number of people who selected "don't know" in this case was very high: 22 percent in 1998, ans 28 percent in 1999 and 2000.

Sources: For 1998 and 1999, see Hong Kong Transition Project, *Tomorrowland: Visions, Dreams, and Disneyfication in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Baptist University, 1999), 36–37. For 2000, see Hong Kong Transition Project, *Reform: Hong Kong's Version of One Country, Two Systems and China's Path to Unification* (Hong Kong: Baptist University, May 2000), 44.

Table 6. Public Meetings and Processions in Hong Kong, 1990–2000

Year	Public Meetings*	Public Processions
1990	365	272
1991	977	257
1992	827	309
1993	1,026	290
1994	1,383	394
1995	1,131	416
1996	482	526
1997	576	542
1998	1,462	785
1999	1,419	907
2000	1,203	861

* Figures for 1990–97 include only those meetings and processions that had been reported to the police in advance. Figures for 1998–2000 include all cases that were known to the police, regardless of whether they were reported to the police in advance—hence the jump in the number of public meetings in 1998.

Source: Licensing Office, Hong Kong Police Force.

Table 7. Growth of Civic Associations in Hong Kong, 1980–98

Year	Number of Registered Societies
1998	9,720
1997	8,695
1996	7,597
1995	6,579
1994	6,154
1993	6,127
1992*	—
1991	5,541
1990	5,410
1989	4,505
1988	4,399
1987	4,193
1986	3,998
1985	3,779
1984	3,586
1983	3,364
1982	3,273
1981	3,191
1980	3,050

* In 1992, there was a change in the law and organizations had to reregister.

Source: Annual police reports, Hong Kong.

Table 8. Concerns about Social Unrest in Hong Kong, 1998–2001

Question: *Are you worried/not worried about social unrest in Hong Kong?*

Date of survey	Not worried	Slightly worried	Fairly worried	Very worried	Don't Know
Oct. 1998	21	27	30	19	3
April 1999	29	32	23	13	2
July 1999	35	29	22	10	3
Nov. 1999	25	31	29	12	3
April 2000	41	29	19	11	1
Aug. 2000	31	31	21	15	1
Nov. 2000	41	28	17	14	1
April 2001	35	29	19	13	3
July 2001	39	25	20	13	2
Nov. 2001	31	23	25	19	1

Note: The figures in the table are percentages.

Source: Hong Kong Transition Project, *Winter of Despair: Confidence and Legitimacy in Crisis in the Hong Kong SAR* (Hong Kong: Baptist University, December 2001) http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~hktp.

Figure 1. The Distribution of Democratic Values in Rural China, 1999
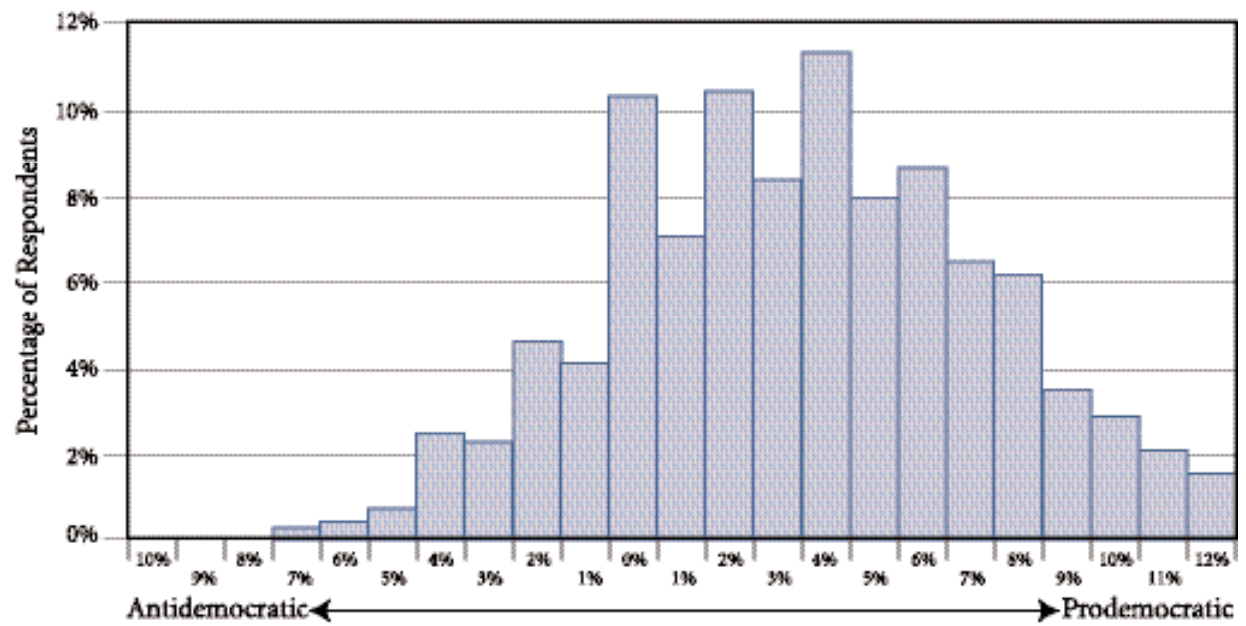
Source: Author's survey in rural China, summer 1999.

Table 9. Responses to Six Questions about Democracy and Electoral Politics in Rural China, 1999

9. Responses to Six Questions about Democracy and Electoral Politics in Rural China, 1999

A. Nondemocratic values	Strongly agree	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Don't agree very much	Strongly disagree
Only people with specialized knowledge and ability have the right to speak during periods of decision making.	12.1	30.1	12.9	27.6	17.3
People who are economically better off should have more say in public affairs than people who are less well off.	7.3	17.6	10.7	35.2	29.2
As long as village economic development is stable, there is no need to increase the level of democracy.	6.6	14.4	13.6	32.3	33.1
If the existing cadres are capable and trusted, there is no need for democratic elections.	12.4	23.9	8.7	32.7	22
B. Democratic values					
If villagers disagree with local policies, they have the right to send accusatory petitions to higher levels.	41.1	40.3	9.8	6.4	2.4
I know what goes on in my village; therefore, I have the right to participate in village affairs.	24.4	39.3	15.8	14.4	6.1

Note: The figures in the table are percentages. N=2,637.

Source: Author's survey in rural China, summer 1999.

Table 10. Individual Attention to Public Affairs in Four Counties in Rural China, 1999

A. Interest in state affairs

Very interested	21.4
Relatively interested	51.5
Not so interested	21.3
Not interested	3.3
Don't know	1.8
No answer	0.7

B. In the last month, did you discuss economic and political issues?

Often	15.5
Sometimes	39.2
Not often	27.6
Not at all	14.5
Don't know	1.8
No answer	1.4

C. In the last month, did you listen to or read the news?

	Radio	Newspaper
Yes	36.6	19.80
No	58.2	75.40
Don't know	0.0	0.0
No answer	5.2	4.90

Note: The figures in the table are percentages. $N = 2,637$.

Source: Author's survey in rural China, summer 1999.

Table 11. Participation in Election-Related Activities in Rural China, 1999

	Number of Villages Participating	Percentage of Villagers Participating
Participate in propaganda to encourage people to vote	542	20.6
Nominate candidates	346	13.1
Vote for village committee members	2,092	79.3
Participate in village assembly or party members assembly	259	9.8
Never participated in anything	263	10.0
Don't know	65	2.5
No answer	20	0.8

Note: Villagers were allowed to select more than one response. $N = 2,637$.

Source: Author's survey in rural China, summer 1999.

Table 12. Rates of Reelection in Villages in Anhui Province, 1999

	Number	Percentage
Former director ran for office and was reelected	22	37
Former director ran for office and was not reelected	27	45
Former director did not run for office	11	18
Total	60	100

Note: We conducted interviews in sixty villages in Anhui province. We did not present data from Heilongjiang province, where we also studied sixty villages, since elections in the latter province all preceded the introduction of direct-nomination systems.

Source: Author's survey in rural China, summer 1999.

Table 13. Hypothetical Responses to News That Cadres Will Carry Out Unfair Policies, Four Counties in Rural China, 1999

	Number	Percentage
Work with others to solve it	401	13.0
Do something or your own	58	1.8
No use to do anything	326	10.6
Don't want to participate	664	21.6
Express your views to the cadres	819	26.6
Contact the village assembly	504	16.4
Speak to party secretary or village leader	40	1.3
Other	14	0.5
Don't know	182	5.9
No answer	70	2.3
Total	3,078	100.0

Note: Villagers could choose more than one response.

Source: Author's survey in rural China, summer 1999.

Table 14. Strategies Employed by Villagers to Solve Problems in Four Counties in Rural China, 1999

Strategy	Number of Times Employed	Percentage
Report to mass media	41	5.5
Contact the village party secretary	107	14.5
Contact members of the village party committee	95	12.9
Contact the local economic management committee	14	1.9
Report to higher-level officials	153	20.7
Go to the government ministry and make an accusation	42	5.9
Join in a public assembly	6	0.8
Participate in a public protest	6	0.8
Find an influential person to take the case to higher-level officials	34	4.6
Contact members of village committee	79	10.7
Contact the leaders of the village committee	73	9.9
Take the case to court	8	1.1
Talk about the problem with others but not do anything	56	7.6
Others	25	3.4
Total	739	100.0

Note: Villagers could select more than one activity or strategy.

Source: Author's survey in rural China, summer 1999.

Notes

1.   Joel Rocamora, "Formal Democracy and Its Alternatives in the Philippines: Parties, Elections, and Social Movements" (paper presented at the conference "Democracy and Civil Society in Asia: The Emerging Opportunities and Challenges," Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, August 19–21, 2000).

2.   Fareed Zakariah, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 6 (November-December 1997): 22–43.

3.   J. Roland Pennock, *Democratic Political Theory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 244.

4.   Lucian W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 42.

5.   Ibid. 87.

6.   Rocamora, "Formal Democracy and Its Alternatives in the Philippines."

7.   For an excellent presentation of this argument, see Irene Eng and Yi-min Lin, "Religious Festivities, Communal Rivalry, and Restructuring of Authority Relations in Rural Chaozhou, Southeast China," *Journal of Asian Studies* (2002). Between 1989 and 1994, the number of religious organizations in Taiwan increased sixfold, responding to the political liberalization under way on the island. See Chyuan-jeng Shiao, "Civil Society and Democratization," in Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1999), 101–115.

8.   Thomas P. Bernstein and Xiaobo Lu, "Taxation without Representation: Peasants, the Centre, and the Local State in Reform China," *China Quarterly,* no. 163 (September 2000): 742–763; and Thomas P. Bernstein and Xiaobo Lu, *Taxation without Representation in Rural China: State Capacity, Peasant Resistance, and Democratization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

9. Fu Hu, "The Electoral Mechanism and Political Change in Taiwan," in Steve Tsang, ed., *In the Shadow of China: Political Development in Taiwan since 1949* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1993), 134–168. See also Shelley Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

10. Hu, citing McClosky, suggests that a 75 percent threshold is necessary to confirm that a certain level of culture has become the national consensus.

11. Hu, "The Electoral Mechanism and Political Change in Taiwan," 143.

12. Ibid., 144.

13. William L. Parish and Charles Chi-hsiang Chang, "Political Values in Taiwan: Sources of Change and Constancy," in Hung-mao Tien, ed., *Taiwan's Electoral Politics and Democratic Transition: Riding the Third Wave* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 27–41. Parish and Chang used data from the 1985 and 1990 Social Change Survey conducted by the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, and the 1990 and 1991 Public Opinion Surveys conducted by the Social Science Institute, Academia Sinica.

14. Ibid., 30. Most of these changes were statistically significant at the .05 level.

15. Ibid., 35.

16. Xu Huoyan, "Taiwan de xuanju yu shehui fenzhi jigou" (Taiwan's elections and the structure of social division), in Chu Yun-han et al., eds., *Liang'an jiceng xuanju yu zhengzhi shehui bianqian* (Local elections on the two sides of the Taiwan Straits and political and social change) (Taipei: Yuedan chuban gufen youxian gongsi, 1998), 146.

17. One problem with this table is that before 1986 people may have already held less authoritarian political attitudes but were willing to express them only after the lifting of martial law. If true, structural changes did not alter their values, only the constraints on their expression of such values.

18. Using the same data set, Tianjian Shi came to the same conclusion. See Tianjian Shi, "Political Culture: A Prerequisite for Democracy?" *American Asian Review* 18, no. 2 (summer 2000): 53–83.

19. See Zhang Yinghua and Chuan Yinzhi, eds., "Taiwan shehui bianqian jiben diaocha jihua, di si qi, di yi ci diaocha jihua zhixing baogao" (The basic investigations program on Taiwanese social change, volume four, first implementing report of the research program) (Taipei: Sociology Institute, Central Research Academy, December 2000), 128.

20. By this concept, the authors meant identity as a separate ethnic group—relative to mainlanders in Taiwan or on the mainland—which in reality means identity as a Taiwanese.

21. Ly-Yun Chang, Yu-Hsia Lu, and Fu-Chang Wang, eds., *Jiu ling niandai de Taiwan shehui, Shehui bianqian jien diaocha yanjiu xilieer, zhuanshu di yi hao* (Taiwanese society in 1990s: Taiwan Social Change Survey Symposium series II, part 2) (Taipei: Preparations Division, Sociology Institute, Central Research Academy, Monograph Series No. 1), 276. However, they were statistically significant at the .001 level.

22. "Factional Strife in Taiwan: Changing the Electoral System Could Help Democracy Mature," *Asian Wall Street Journal,* November 30–December 2, 2001, 6.

23. Yun-han Chu, "Social Protests and Political Democratization in Taiwan," in Murray A. Rubinstein, ed., *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the Present* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 100.

24. Chyuan-jeng Shiao, "Civil Society and Democratization," in Steve Tsang and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Democratization in Taiwan: Implications for China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1999), 101–115.

25. Shui-Yan Tang and Ching-Ping Tang, "Democratization and Environmental Politics in Taiwan," *Asian Survey* 37, no. 3 (March 1997): 284–285.

26. Chu, "Social Protests and Political Democratization in Taiwan," 106.

27. Shelley Rigger, personal communication with the author, July 22, 2000.

28. Figures from the National Police Administration, Ministry of Interior, cited in *Shehui zhibiao tongji* (Social indicators) (Taipei, 1998), 181.

29. Ibid.

30. Michael Ying-mao Kau, "The Power Structure in Taiwan's Political Economy," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 3 (March 1996): 301.

31. Ibid.," 302.

32. Shelly Rigger, "Taiwan's Legislative Yuan Elections: An Initial Assessment," in National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, *Taiwan's Elections: Economic Background and Political Results,* December 3, 2001.

33. For the concept of "restricted democracy," see Alvin Y. So, *Hong Kong's Embattled Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 254. For the idea of "partial democracy," see Siu-kai Lau, "Hong Kong's Partial Democracy under Stress" (paper presented at the Tenth Anniversary Conference on Into the Twenty-First Century: Challenges for Hong Kong and the Asia-Pacific Region, Chinese University of Hong Kong, April 13–15, 2000).

34. Lau, "Hong Kong's Partial Democracy under Stress."

35. Lo Shiu Hing, "Political Parties, Elite-Mass Gap and Political Instability in Hong Kong," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 20, no. 1 (April 1998): 67–87.

36. On the significant drop in the popularity of Hong Kong's top four government officials, see Hong Kong Transition Project, *Winter of Despair: Confidence and Legitimacy in Crisis in the Hong Kong SAR,* (Hong Kong: Boston University, December 2001).

37. Lo, "Political Parties, Elite–Mass Gap and Political Instability in Hong Kong."

38. Michael E. Degolyer and Janet Lee Scott, "The Myth of Political Apathy in Hong Kong," in Max J. Skidmore, ed., *Hong Kong and China: Pursuing a New Destiny* (Singapore: Toppan Company, 1997), 68–78.

39. See Hong Kong Transition Project, *Tomorrowland: Visions, Dreams, and Disneyfication in Hong Kong, 1999* (Hong Kong: Baptist University, 1996), 36–37; and Hong Kong Transition Project, *Reform: Hong Kong's Version of One Country, Two Systems and China's Path to Unification* (Hong Kong: Baptist University, May 2000), 44. Of this missing 10 percent, two-thirds had cut their viewing to one to three hours per week, while one-third were still viewing television four to six hours a week.

40. The change in values for these two different periods was statistically significant at the .05 level.

41. Lau, "Hong Kong's Partial Democracy under Stress."

42. Lau Siu-kai and Kuan Hsin-chi, "Partial Democratization, 'Foundation Moment,' and Political Parties in Hong Kong," *China Quarterly,* no. 163 (September 2000): 705–720.

43. Ibid.

44. Hong Kong Transition Project, *"Poll-arization: Election Politics and the Politicizing of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Baptist University, September 2000), 48.

45. Ma Ngok, "The Decline of the Democratic Party in Hong Kong: The Second Legislative Election in the HKSAR," *Asian Survey* 41, no. 4 (July-August 2001): 564–583.

46. It is likely that the DAB would have become the largest party in Legco in the September 2000 elections if not for a political scandal involving Gary Cheung, one of the DAB's top leaders.

47. Lau, "Hong Kong's Partial Democracy under Stress." Unlike the passage of a government bill, which requires a simple majority of the legislators present, passage of a private member's bill entails the division of the legislature into two sections: legislators returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies, with majority support required in both sections. The chief executive can also veto private members bills, and a veto can be overturned only with a two-thirds majority.

48. In the run-up to the September 2000 elections for Legco, the largest Hong Kong conglomerates created dozens of new companies for the purpose of increasing their ballot rights in the functional constituency elections. See Gren Manuel, "Hong Kong Firms Gather Up Votes," *Asian Wall Street Journal,* May 29, 2000, 1.

49. Lau and Kuan, "Partial Democratization."

50. Ibid.

51. In both cases, these declines are statistically significant at the .01 level.

52. Lau, "Hong Kong's Partial Democracy under Stress," 26 n. 32.

53. Hong Kong Transition Project, *Reform,* 28.

54. Clay Chandler, "From 'City of Light' to 'City of Protest" *International Herald Tribune,* June 29, 2000, 7.

55. Lau Siu-kai believes that there has been a significant increase in public protests and social instability over the past few years: e-mail message to the author.

56. Mark Mitchell, "The Party's Over," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* June 8, 2000, 26, 28.

57. Lo, "Political Parties, Elite-Mass Gap and Political Instability in Hong Kong," 77–79.

58. Ibid.

59. In early 2000, a series of articles in the local press, penned by members of the political oligarchy, particularly Peter Woo, asserted that Hong Kongers were not ready for full democracy. They argued that only taxpayers should have the right to vote, and since two-thirds of Hong Kongers did not pay taxes, functional constituencies should be maintained. Chris Yeung, "Full Democracy 'Will Damage the Economy,' " *South China Morning Post,* February 22, 2000, 4. An editorial in the *Economist,* "Imperatives for Democracy," republished in the *South China Morning Post,* April 22, 2000, 11, criticized this viewpoint. More recently, in arguing against direct elections for the chief executive, a Hong Kong member of China's National People's Congress complained that mass politics in Hong Kong were "shallow and immature," arguing that people "are unable to elect the CE on their own, only through elites.: Angela Li and Chris Yeung, "Tung Supporters in Election Drive," *South China Morning Post,* December 12, 2001, 1.

60. Lianjiang Li and Kevin O'Brien, "The Struggle over Village Elections," in Merle Goldman and Roderick MacFarquhar, eds., *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

61. We interviewed 2,637 villagers and 360 cadres from 120 villages in four counties, two each in Anhui and Heilongjiang provinces in the summer of 1999.

62. Selecting "don't know" is an extremely common practice in surveys in the PRC. In many cases it may really express a particular attitude. For a discussion of this point, see Kent Jennings, "Missing Data and Survey Research in China: Problems, Solutions, and Applications" (paper presented at the conference "Surveying China," George Washington University, Washington, D.C., June 9–10, 2000).

63. To get a score of 7 or higher, one had to get +2 on at least one question.

64. Many villagers simply did not know how their candidates had been selected.

65. Some observers believe that public speeches may not be necessary in rural China since the villagers know the candidates so well: Robert A. Pastor and Qingshan Tan, "The Meaning of China's Village Elections," *China Quarterly,* no. 162 (June 2000): 490–512.

66. The elections in Heilongjiang province had occurred in 1996 and 1997, before direct nomination's were introduced. However, in Anhui province, which ran its last elections in 1999, about half of the sixty villages had introduced direct nominations. We can therefore see whether the introduction of more democratic political structures affected villager political behavior and attitudes toward democracy, the government, and political participation. For a fuller analysis of this issue, see David Zweig and Chung Siu Fung, "Strengthening Democracy: Direct Nominations and Electoral Legitimacy in Rural China" (paper presented at the conference "Legal and Political Reform in the People's Republic of China", Lund University, Lund, Sweden, June 3–4, 2002).

67. This finding was statistically significant at the .01 level. When we correlate direct nominations with electoral fairness, we get a correlation coefficient of .22. But when we ran a multiple-regression model, controlling for a host of systemic factors, including age, wealth, education, locality, and gender, whether there was direct nomination obtained only a partial correlation of .116. This finding suggests that the presence or absence of DN cannot explain very much about how people evaluated the level of fairness of the elections.

68. All the findings reported here are statistically significant, which means that the relationships I found could not have occurred simply by chance.

69. We included systemic variables such as perceived level of wealth, having a cadre or party member in one's household, gender, whether the respondent voted in the most recent election, job type, whether the respondent was an entrepreneur, year of birth, and level of education.

70. These findings do not show causality, so we cannot say that creating more democratic or fairer political structures necessarily increases support for the government. These correlations are likely due to the fact that a person holding one of these values also holds the other value, and the one may not cause the other.

71. In 1998, there were only three elections in the villages we sampled, and in two of them the director of the village committee was elected for the first time.

72. In his nationwide sample survey, Li Lianjiang also found that only 2 percent of villagers across China reported participating in social protest activity. Personal communication with the author.

73. We were not able to get information on numbers of protests, collective resistance, or other forms of public action, since only the police have this type of data. Therefore, it has not been easy to demonstrate a direct relationship between democracy and the level of political unrest.

74. See Gao Yucai and Zhou Yanchun, "Cunmin can zheng yi shi, ganbu ban shi minzhu" (When villagers participate in political affairs, cadres do their job in a more democratic way), *Nongmin ribao* (Peasant daily), December 17, 1997.

75. Lianjiang Li, "Elections and Popular Resistance in Rural China," *China Information* 15, no. 2 (2001).

76. In each village we interviewed twenty people, selected randomly, allowing us to determine the general view in each village, which we used to create village-level measures. The model, employing fourteen independent variables, explained 71 percent of the variation in the outcome variable (R^2 = .711): villager perceptions of increased stability.

77. The standardized coefficient for these two variables, which reflect the strength of the relationship, were .471 and .442, respectively, and both were significant at the .000 level.

78. See David Zweig, "The 'Externalities of Development': Can New Political Institutions Manage Rural Conflict?" in Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden, eds., *Contemporary Chinese Society: Social Conflict and Popular Protest* (London: Routledge, 2000), 120–142.

79. Thomas P. Bernstein, "Instability in Rural China?" in David Shambaugh, ed., *Is China Unstable? Assessing the Factors* (Washington, D.C.: Sigur Center for Asian Studies, July 1998), 93–110.

80. See Human Rights in China, "Bound and Gagged: Freedom of Association in China Further Curtailed under New Regulations," November 13, 1998; and Sophia Woodman, "Less Dressed Up as More? Promoting Nonprofit Organizations by Regulating Away Freedom of Association," *China Perspectives,* no. 22 (1999): 17–27.

81. For an argument that NGOs are becoming more widespread, see Anthony Saich, "Negotiating the State: The Development of Social Organizations in China," *China Quarterly,* no. 161 (March 2000): 124–141.

82. See Linda Jakobsen, *Blazing New Trails: Villagers' Committee Elections in P.R. China,* UPI Working Papers no. 19 (Helsinki UPI, 1999), 13–16.

83. Ibid., 15.

84. Daniel Kelliher, "The Chinese Debate over Village Self-Government," *China Journal* (January 1997): 37.

85. Chu, "Social Protests and Political Democratization in Taiwan," 103.

86. Shiao, "Civil Society and Democratization," 113.

87. Vivien Pik-Kwan Chan, "Beijing Issues Township-Poll Warning," *South China Morning Post,* November 22, 2001, 11.

88. Shi, "Political Culture: A Prerequisite for Democracy?"

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