

# Follow up questions for Michael Davis and Victoria Hui from the webinar presentation, “Explaining the ‘Umbrella Revolution’ for Political Rights in Hong Kong”

Delivered for the ICNC Academic Webinar Series on October 7, 2014

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## Question 1

It seems that the "one nation two systems" doctrine allows for Beijing to give the HK protesters what they want, while not fearing a rise in protests in the mainland. Isn't the doctrine useful enough for Beijing to keep the mainland as is while granting Hong Kong what the people want?

## Answer 1

From: Michael Davis

This is definitely correct. Hong Kong has its own history and had its own achievements before the handover. So the idea was to preserve these achievements to Hong Kong and China's advantage. Chinese society has long accepted this special treatment of Hong Kong. Accordingly, Hong Kong influence on Chinese popular expectations should not be substantially higher than that of other open societies outside China. This is a view generally shared by analysts, though Chinese officials, judging by their pattern of interference, may harbor concerns that Hong Kong lively more affluent society may inspire challenges to their rule at home. Most analysts agree that China's stage of economic development may inspire such challenges independent of Hong Kong.

## Question 2

How much of this current situation can be attributed to a poor agreement designed by the former colonial power, Great Britain, back in 1984?

The original agreement had no provisions outlining consequences if China ever revised the agreement to create conditions, which Hong Kong could be subjected which were not initially intended. Was this potential of unwanted change a subject of discussion during the original formation of the 1984 agreement?

Finally, what is Great Britain's position in all this? Do the protesters express any sentiment that holds Great Britain responsible for any of the current conflict?

### **Answer 2**

From: Michael Davis

It is generally believed that Britain's bargaining position was relatively weak and therefore it was in no position to insist on including a dispute resolving mechanism in the treaty. China had reportedly threatened to take Hong Kong back without agreement. Both sides wanted the agreement to better secure Hong Kong but it is doubtful, given its attitude toward sovereignty, that China would have agreed to such mechanism. Britain has been relatively quiet on the seeming diminution of the importance of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in the White Paper. There was a major Sino-British trade deal at the time the White Paper was issued. Calls for Britain to offer a more robust response have been met with silence, though there has been some investigation in Parliament.

### **Question 3**

What other types of protests (from those just listed) might help the movement succeed?

### **Answer 3**

From: Victoria Hui

As mentioned in the webinar, HK has largely followed methods of concentration -- protests, demonstrations, marches. Occupation is the latest and unprecedented method of concentration. There have not really tried methods of dispersion such as targeted boycotts despite calls for boycotts. When students staged class boycott, they still gathered at public places to show people power.

### **Question 4**

How are the leaders of different groups communicating and working together? Are they able to form one united, cohesive movement, or is there a concern about their interests diverging in the future?

### **Answer 4**

From: Victoria Hui

Many international news highlight that the movement is leaderless and yet orderly. It has actually been led the Occupy Central (3 professors plus one pastor), the HK Federation of Students formed of college students, and Scholarism formed of high school students. They have worked together. But there could be more coordination between the leadership and ordinary protestors. Protestors in Mongkok have been leaderless, but

they are remarkably self-organized. Now that the government is talking to the Federation of Students, there should be channels to consult ordinary protestors. It is worth noting that the talks are supposed to be broadcast live. Note also that there have been different leaders at different chapters of HK's 3-decade-old democracy movement.

### **Question 5**

I am a Tibetan working as the International Coordinator for International Tibet Network. As scholars, how far do you think this resonates with Tibet & Xinjiang or are there any parallels that can be drawn?

### **Answer 5**

From: Victoria Hui

I think we answered this question during the webinar. HK people have strategically stayed out of what happens elsewhere in China. The one country two systems model means that HK has freedom that Tibet and Xinjiang could only dream of. Sorry....

### **Question 6**

I'm a law student from the University of Hong Kong. I would like to ask the panel's opinion on the prospect of the protest, and whether there would be active intervention of Chinese government. I heard some worries from people that even though it has got a lot of attention from the international society, the protest might fade away and end without successfully achieving its goals.

### **Answer 6**

From: Victoria Hui

See my answer here:

<http://victoriatbhui.wordpress.com/2014/10/11/the-umbrella-movement-failedis-failing/>

### **Question 7**

Hi, is it possible to get official Facebook link of Occupy Central/student union etc.?

### **Answer 7**

From: Victoria Hui

-Occupy Central with Love and Peace (<https://www.facebook.com/OCLPHK?>)

-Hong Kong Federation of Students (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hong-Kong-Federation-of-Students/134831859884416>)

-Scholarism (<https://www.facebook.com/Scholarism>)

**Question 8**

I will be making 2 visits to Hong Kong in November, and was wondering what I might do to show support for the movement?

**Answer 8**

From: Victoria Hui

It is too hard to predict how events will unfold weeks ahead. Keep your watchful eyes!

**Question 9**

Do you think Beijing will even consider a concession to the students' demand? Say if the protest goes for another week? If no, what are the factors that would make a difference?

**Answer 9**

From: Victoria Hui

Students really believe in the power of hope. The best is to make the nomination committee broadly representative.

**Question 10**

I would like to ask about the relation between the umbrella revolution and religion. Does religion have any role in the protest?

**Answer 10**

From: Victoria Hui

Not directly as such. But international reporters have noticed that many leaders are Christian. One of the Occupy leaders is a pastor. Churches have provided rest spots for protestors. But Protestant Churches are anti-occupy. And religious doctrines are not important.

**Question 11**

Hi and thanks so much: I am really interested in hearing more about training-- in light of maintaining nonviolence discipline and now in light of democratizing the movement itself-- people could benefit from some training/education/exposure to democratic process and structures that work... Can you comment on this? Is anything happening in this vein? Thanks!

**Answer 11**

From: Victoria Hui

Occupy Central spent over a year training thousands of activists. But what is striking is that the 300,000 or so people on the street all understood the importance of maintaining nonviolent discipline. You can't train that many people. But HK people have always maintained discipline at every demonstration over the years.

**Question 12**

Would you say being 'leaderless' could be a weakness at a later stage of the revolution?

**Answer 12**

From: Victoria Hui

Many international news outlets highlight that the movement is leaderless and yet orderly. It has actually been led: Occupy Central by 3 professors plus one pastor, the HK Federation of Students formed of college students, and Scholarism formed of high school students. They have worked together. But there could be more coordination between the leadership and ordinary protestors. Protestors in Mongkok have been leaderless, but they are remarkably self-organized. Now that the government is talking to the Federation of Students, there should be channels to consult ordinary protestors. It is worth noting that the talks are supposed to be broadcast live. Note also that there have been different leaders at different chapters of HK's 3-decade-old democracy movement.