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## On A Slow Boat To Democracy: The Democratization Of Hong Kong And The Factors Hindering It

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ON A SLOW BOAT TO DEMOCRACY: THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF HONG  
KONG AND THE FACTORS HINDERING IT

By

James Clapper

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
Mississippi State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
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in Political Science  
in the Department of Political Science & Public Administration

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2008

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This study analyzes political, cultural, and social factors that influence democratization using Hong Kong as a case study. Hong Kong is a transitional society which provides a unique set of political and social characteristics for which to study democratic transition. Additionally, reports of political repression from the 2004 Legislative Council election have possibly created a crisis for the democratization process.

Drawing from existing literature in theories of democratization, political repression and Hong Kong politics several hypotheses were developed. It was hypothesized that unchecked hegemonic deterrence, antidemocratic elites, and a weak political culture have contributed to a lack of democratization. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that political repression has also contributed to Hong Kong's lack of democratization. The relationships between unchecked hegemonic deterrence, anti-democratic elites, and weak political repression in limiting democratization were upheld.

However, the link between political repression and lack of democratization was not supported due to insufficient evidence.

## DEDICATION

For the one who provided that initial spark, this is for Theresa Patton.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Democratization has been a difficult issue for the citizens of Hong Kong and the Chinese government. While the British government made a half-hearted attempt to democratize Hong Kong before 1997, their efforts were marginalized once Hong Kong reverted to Chinese rule. The Basic Law, the mini-constitution upon which Hong Kong is governed, calls for full universal suffrage, but does not set a timetable as to when this is to be accomplished. Thus, democratization may be held at bay indefinitely under this agreement.

When analyzing political movements, such as democratization, it is important to identify factors that support or hinder the democratization process. In a situation like Hong Kong's in which democratic reform has been hindered, it is through the understanding of cultural and political factors that democratic reform can be furthered. This study attempts to follow such a path.

For a political process as important as democratization it is imperative to identify any practices associated with the campaign for or against the movement. By identifying those practices, problematic transitions can be diagnosed and addressed. As the pressure for universal suffrage grows within Hong Kong, the attempts by Beijing to suppress democratization have increased, especially since the 2003 summer protests. This pressure

has led Beijing to employ various tactics of political repression to stifle the democratization movement.

Hong Kong's democratization movement is rapidly approaching a crisis. While the reforms that were enacted to elect half of Legislative Council (LegCo) representatives by geographical constituencies was a step in the right direction, Hong Kong has continued to sit on the verge of democratization. Existing literature shows that Hong Kong has all of the necessary factors for a successful democratization, however that change has not happened yet. It is likely that those who drive the democratization movement, the middle class, will become disillusioned with the lack of progress. Furthermore, if a large percentage of voters are being coerced into voting for pro-Beijing candidates, then the existing semi-democratic system is at risk and the democratization process is in jeopardy. A Hong Kong with less economic, political, and social freedoms could damage its economic performance and that of the global economy as well.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect that international politics, societal elites, political culture, and political repression have on democratization using Hong Kong as a case study. This study is an extension of the existing research and will begin by briefly covering the existing body of knowledge concerning democratization, the importance of free and fair elections, and Hong Kong's political environment. Additionally, this study will offer multiple hypotheses to theorize about the lack of democratization in Hong Kong and bring together the evidence supporting those hypotheses.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Democracy is a political system in which its most influential policy makers are chosen through direct and equal elections, in which the vast majority of the population has the opportunity to participate (Huntington, 1991). Several different paths to democratization exist, according to Huntington. The *single cause* path of democratization is caused by an external event, such as the rise of a new superpower or an event like WWII. *Parallel development* is characterized by democratization when different countries reach a certain economic threshold; for example a certain gross national product (GNP) or level of educational attainment. *Snowballing* democratization is evident when one nation becomes a democracy and others around it do so as well, also known as the domino effect. Finally, *prevailing nostrum* is the term to define the path when democratization is used as a cure all for what ails a nation, whether it is an unfavorable economy or an international crisis (Huntington, 1991).

With the democratization wave that began in the late 1970s, Huntington outlines five characteristics that were evident. First, the nations in democratic transition experienced a loss of legitimacy coupled with economic growth, support from the Catholic Church for individual liberties grew, surrounding hegemonic powers came to promote democratic rights, and the snowballing effect was evident. Most importantly for

this study Huntington examines the relationship between economic development and democratization. He notes several studies in which the positive relationship between wealth and democracy was upheld (Lipset, 1959; Bollen and Jackman, 1985).

Furthermore, nations that are in the middle level of economic development are the most likely to democratize while the rich nations already have (Huntington, 1991).

Democratization movements are not driven by societal elites or the lower classes, but by those in the middle class (Huntington, 1991). In Asian nations like the Philippines and Korea, middle class led and benefited from democratization while in nations such as China and Burma, where little or no middle class existed, democracy failed to take root. In many of these cases the middle class originally supported the authoritarian government that produced the stability and economy needed for democratization. However, as their financial disposition rose, the middle class changed its support in favor of democracy (Huntington, 1991). This change can be attributed to the link between economic progress and increases in educational attainment, as has been first elaborated by Lipset (1959). Furthermore, it is widely accepted that more attention is directed towards post-materialistic ideals like democracy in an economically developed society (Huntington, 1991). The direction of Huntington's theories and observations support the idea that a strong economy and stable political environment precedes democratization.

Seymour Martin Lipset's (1959) theory that economic development is the most important factor in democratization is a popular school of thought in the debate of the determinants of democratization. This theory of economic development has also become known as the modernization theory. Wealthy nations typically possess characteristics such as high levels of education, high levels of industry, and a higher degree of political

participation; characteristics that are an integral part of democratization (Lipset, 1959). Robert Dahl's theory that decentralized economies are more likely to produce democracies is notable because Hong Kong's economy has constantly been rated as the most free in the world. However, support for this theory often comes from marginally significant findings, the disregarding of deviant cases and the lack of knowledge over the true direction of the relationship (Zarate, 1994).

Although the above literature describing the relationship between economic development and democratization provides a basic theoretical framework, Edward Muller (1997) provides a more in depth assessment of the role economics plays in democratization. In modernization theory, as a nation's economy moves into an intermediate zone of development it passes a threshold in which democratic trends are more likely to be sustained. However, this was not the case in some parts the world, most commonly Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. The main reason he found was the fact that increasing economic development was also positively associated with an increasing income inequality. His study found that the lowest level of income inequality, which had a positive effect on the development of democracy, was at the intermediate level of economic development. Thus, income inequality as a result of economic progress hinders democracy at a certain point (Muller, 1997).

In an examination of 140 countries, over a forty year period, focusing on when economical and political liberalization occurred, it was found that it is difficult to establish the direction of the causal relationship between political liberalization and economic liberalization. However, it was also found that in countries where economic liberalization had preceded political liberalization, the resulting democracies faired better

in the long run than those that democratized before implementing economic liberalization (Giavazzi and Tabellini, 2004). It is possible then that nations that had experienced economic liberalization first, consequently experienced economic growth providing the subsequent democratization movement a more favorable environment in which to take root. This more favorable environment could be the result of post-materialistic values that have developed as a result of economic success.

Michael Coppedge (1997) is quick to point out however that modernization theory is lacking in that it is hard to determine what factors of modernization have caused democratization and which ones have caused by-products that are present but not significant for democratization. Vanhanen (2003) concluded that it is not singularly economic or political development that causes democracy, yet it is a singular path, one that combines that the vast majority of countries follow to achieve a stable democracy (Vanhanen, 2003).

Political culture, a society's attitude and feelings towards the country's political system and its leaders and how they view their role in that system, has presented itself as one of the more important areas in the study of democratization (Diamond, 1997). In the study of political culture, three levels of orientations exist. Cognitive orientation entails possessing knowledge of the political system; affective orientation denotes possession of feelings towards said political system, while evaluational orientation indicates commitment to a specific set of political principles. However, these varying attitudes and variances of a political culture are subject to change in response to political and cultural stimuli. The successful democratization in once authoritarian countries such as Germany, Japan, Italy, and some of the former Soviet Republic attest to this fact (Diamond, 1999).

Cultural factors such as religion, amount of political trust in a society, citizens' beliefs in the rule of law, teaching of civic ideas, and overall satisfaction with life often influence democratization as well. Furthermore, Protestant nations are more likely to adopt democracy while Confucian and Islamic nations are not (Huntington, 1984). Traditional Confucian societies like China did not believe in civil liberties as such that the Western democratized world regards as normal. Furthermore, the maintenance of the status quo social order and hierarchy was respected over ideological clashes. In addition, Confucianism did not advocate the separation of powers in government as it believed that its rulers were divine and incapable of corruption. Traditional Islam also lacks this idea of the separation of powers, an idea which many Western democracies hold in high regards. This argument within cultural theory is however spoiled by the relative success of democracy in Japan, South Korea, and Turkey (Huntington, 1991).

However, more attention needs to be given specifically to the relationship between political culture and democratization. Inglehart (1988) concluded that economic development fosters democracy only because it first changes political culture and the structure of society. While economic development helps foster democratic reform; its influence is closely associated with the presence of cultural development. Cultural development subsumes the rise of a middle class, development of social institutions, and an increasingly more educated society (Inglehart, 1998).

Economic development without cultural development is dangerous and can produce authoritarian substitutes for liberal democracy (Inglehart, 1988). This assertion has important implications for Hong Kong as well as China and other authoritarian governments with successful economies, such as the Middle Eastern oil producing

economies. These regimes continue to operate in an authoritarian manner but have been able to keep domestic opposition at bay because of their stable economy, which gives them *de facto* legitimacy.

Economic legitimacy in China began with the creation of a special economic zone (SEZ) directly across the border from Hong Kong in the early 1980s. This SEZ, the city of Shenzhen, created a free market economy and capitalism was thus allowed to strengthen. From a small fishing village when it was created, to today, a bustling center of economic power which is inhabited by over 12 million people, Shenzhen has experienced massive economic development. In 2004, it posted a record GDP of nearly US\$4.9 billion and a per capita GDP of over US\$7,000. Additionally, its exports accounted for 1/7 of China's total exports. These figures rank among the highest or at the top of China's mainland economic figures (Shenzhen Government Online, 2008). Shenzhen then served as a model for the rest of China for the incorporation of economic growth and capitalism. Even though China has experienced high rates of economic development, its people have not experienced development in political culture, and the authoritarian government's rule remains unchallenged.

As part of this change in political culture, as interpersonal trust rises, so does personal happiness and life satisfaction. Consequently, a civic culture that promotes democracy is negatively associated with desire for revolutionary change (Inglehart, 1988). Another positive consequence of the development of political culture is the increased participation in civic organizations. Greater involvement in civil society is associated with greater democratic legitimacy and voting participation (Booth and Richard, 1998).

One component of political culture is political efficacy, the value that citizens place on participating in politics and their capacity to influence that process (Lee, 2005). Measuring political efficacy in a society can often give a good representation of how democratic ideals are faring. However, as was the case in the Soviet Union, those with a high degree of political efficacy derived from high educational attainment and interest in politics, are not likely to participate in undemocratic elections (Lee, 2005). This occurrence of poll absentee protest has also been seen in Mainland China during local elections in which only one party's candidates are allowed to run (Lee, 2005).

An important measure of political efficacy is the way in which a society participates in the political process. There are two types of political efficacy. First, individual efficacy is an individual's belief in their own ability to fully participate in political affairs and achieve desired outcomes. Second, collective efficacy is an individual's belief in their community or society to act together as a single unit to successfully participate in the government. Collective efficacy and its support for democracy are derived from the individuals' belief in the group rather than in their own abilities (Lee, 2005). In this study, both individual and collective efficacies are observed, however collective efficacy was found to be more influential in Hong Kong.

For a society that cannot depend upon the ballot box for participation, protest participation is an important avenue for demonstrating political efficacy. Mancur Olson (1965) argued that a dilemma exists in protest participation because, while there are fixed non-negligible costs to participating in a protest, the outcome of the protest is hardly affected by an individual's participation. However, if an individual personally believes in their ability to influence the outcome, they will participate. In short, the fix to the

dilemma of participation is not to look at it from a cost- benefit standpoint, but from that of an individual and their perceived attitude towards participation. What drives individuals to participate generally includes displeasure with the current economic or political environment, feelings of injustice, societal disposition towards political participation, and sense of communal belonging. If individuals that participate in protests or other political activities are able to link their political activities with the reality of their personal lives, they will be more likely to find their political experience meaningful and participate further (Lee and Chan, 2008).

Another factor that influences democratization is the presence and intervention of a foreign hegemon, or neighboring nation. Hegemonic powers may either promote or stifle democracy through international institutions, economic means, or use of military force. In fact, hegemons have intervened and overridden internal democratization factors in a nation ready for democracy in favor of its own foreign policy, as was the case of American intervention in Guatemala during the late 1950s (Zarate, 1994). This active denial of democracy can be termed hegemonic deterrence. It has been most present in Cold War Eastern Europe during the 1960s and 1970s.

The most recent example of hegemonic deterrence is the backlash against democracy and the re-entrenchment of authoritarianism in Russia and Central Asia. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States and West European states seized the opportunity to spread their influence over formerly authoritarian nations and take advantage of the hegemonic void created by the Soviet Union's economical and political implosion. Within the last several years Russia has recovered economically and politically and now possesses a successful authoritarian capitalist economy, similarly to

China. Further evidence of this resurgence has been the recent invasion of neighboring Georgia.

By regaining the position of a regional hegemon, Russia under Vladimir Putin began to roll back some of the democratic success witnessed in the 1990s. The election of anti-Russian leaders to the executive offices in Ukraine and Georgia caused Putin to take measures to ensure that Russia and its former satellites did not meet the same fate (Basora, 2007). This fear of a domino effect is in part what pushed NATO and the Soviet Union into partitioning Europe during the Cold War. It is possible that Beijing fears the democratic success in Hong Kong as a trigger for Taiwan to declare formal independence, or Tibet to break away from the Peoples Republic, if given broad autonomy. While hegemonic states may move to block democratization, international organizations (IOs) also have an effect on a country's democratization.

Democratizing states that have the support of regional international organizations (RIOs) are more likely to have a successful democratization process. Arceneaux and Pion-Berlin (2007) contend that hegemons do not promote democracy as a random act of kindness but as a projection of their influence and desire to achieve policy goals. The Organization of American States (OAS) has supported democratic transitions in Latin America when democratic transition in one nation will benefit the vital interests of the member states. However, when the OAS does not give that support, the resulting democratic regimes are democratically deficient, resulting in inefficient governing, civil unrest, and a preference for autocratic methods of solving problems of which democracy was supposed to alleviate (Arceneaux and Pion-Berlin, 2007). In an era of increasing globalization it is difficult and foolish for nations to remain outside of RIOs and IOs.

China and Hong Kong have both joined such organizations and to a certain degree their domestic policies are a result of those organizations.

Political repression, more specifically voter intimidation in this case, is meant to silence or limit government opposition. It has also been used to maintain the status quo of demands on the government. Above all, it insulates the government from the wishes of the masses (Booth and Bayer, 1996). While political repression can take many forms and arise in many different situations, it is in elections that it is most apparent. Elections, the cornerstone of democracy, have to be free and fair in theory and in practice in order for democracy to function correctly. Dahl categorizes free and fair elections among other things as exhibiting little or no intimidation (Dahl, 1998). Not only does Election Day need to be free and fair but the time leading up to and after the election needs to be void of coercion as well. Possible criteria for judging an election as free and fair is whether or not it instills confidence in the democratic system and makes people want to continue participating in it (Elklit and Svensson, 1997).

Furthermore, fairness or equality among the electorate is one of the cornerstones of democracy according to Dahl. Democracy only works to its full potential when there is a degree of fairness and everyone is given an equal voice (Dahl, 1998). Voter intimidation is a direct threat to democratic freedom and fairness. By being unfairly pressured to vote a certain way, a voter's voice is silenced, thus voiding their opinion and their chance at equal representation in government. If a significant number of voters are victims of voter intimidation, the entire election and resulting government's legitimacy is called into question.

Regimes in which an election's freedom and fairness are called into question can often be described as semi-authoritarian (Carothers, 2000). These regimes are somewhere in the democratic transition zone in between a consolidated democracy and an absolute dictatorship. Semi-authoritarian governments employ means of democracy to legitimize their rule, yet do not fully implement democracy for the fear that they will lose control of the government. The problems posed by semi-authoritarian regimes towards democratization movements include but are not limited to the stifling of efforts by pro-democratization groups, impeding efficient formulation and implementation of public policy, and most importantly for this study, the rise of the question of whether or not consolidated democracy will ever exist (Carothers, 2000).

There seems to be a difference however between perceived repression and actual state sponsored repression and its effect on political participation. Booth and Richard (1996) found that while open and state sponsored political repression negatively effects support of and participation in democracy, perceived repression has little negative effect. Furthermore, they found that in regions where political unrest exists, citizens tended to curtail their participation in elections and political parties in favor of interest group participation and talking to elected officials directly (Booth and Richard, 1996).

## CHAPTER III

### CASE STUDY

Hong Kong's system of government has not been altered significantly since the handover in 1997. In accordance with the tenets agreed upon at the handover, Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. As a SAR, Hong Kong has a high degree of autonomy over everything except international relations and defense matters. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Government (HKSAR) retained much of the civil servant infrastructure as well as the make up of their governing bodies. More importantly Hong Kong held onto many of its guaranteed freedoms such as freedom of the press, speech, and assembly, rights that are not recognized on the mainland. The Chief Executive is selected by an 800 member committee appointed by the Central People's Government and is elected to a maximum of two five year terms. The Legislative Council (LegCo) is comprised of 60 members, of which half are directly elected by the people from geographical constituencies and half are elected by representatives from various economic sectors known, as functional constituencies. The LegCo does not have the power to make and pass legislation. However the Chief Executive's bills must gain majority support in the LegCo in order to be made into law (Wai-man et al, 2007).

Table 1: Comparison of 2007 Asian Economic and Education Figures by GDP/ capita

Country	GDP/ capita	GDP -purchasing power parity	Population	GDP/ GDP/ capita ratio	Literacy
Singapore	\$49,700	\$228,100, 000	4,608,167	$2.17 \times 10^{-3}$	92.5%
Hong Kong	\$42,000	\$292,800,000	7,018,636	$1.43 \times 10^{-4}$	93.5%
Japan	\$33,600	\$ 4,290,000,000,000	127,288,419	$7.83 \times 10^{-9}$	99.0%
Taiwan	\$30,100	\$695,400,000	22,920,946	$4.33 \times 10^{-5}$	96.1%
S. Korea	\$24,800	\$1,201,000,000	49,232,844	$2.06 \times 10^{-5}$	97.9%

Source: CIA World Factbook

Table 1, illustrates that Hong Kong has one of the region's most successful economies for size. As of 2007, the SAR had a GDP of nearly \$300 billion and a GDP per capita of \$42,000. This per capita GDP, as compared to democratized nations in the region is considerably higher (\$24,800 in South Korea, \$33,600 in Japan, and \$30,100 in Taiwan.) The only country in the region with a higher per capita GDP is Singapore, a parliamentary republic, at \$49,700 (CIA World Factbook). The GDP to GDP per capita ratio is a measure of a country's individual contributions to the GDP. The smaller the resulting number, the greater the individual contribution is. Singapore has the lowest ratio closely followed by Hong Kong. Ironically, the largest economy, Japan, has the highest ratio. It is reasonable to infer that a greater individual contribution signifies a higher average level of educational obtainment and economic productivity. When looking at more established indicators such as GDP per hour worked as a percent of the United States, Hong Kong's per person output (66%) greater than its regional counterparts (54% for Singapore, 47% for Taiwan, and 37% for South Korea) except for Japan (72%) (Ark and McGuckin, 1999). While these figures slightly contradict those in Table 1, Hong Kong's labor output ranks at the top of the list in both instances. Furthermore, the Ark

and McGuckin figures are eight years old while the figures in Table 1 are much more recent.

With respect to educational attainment and literacy rates, all of the countries listed have a high degree of literacy and educational attainment. Hong Kong is like many of its Asian neighbors in that it has a high degree of literacy, a highly productive population, and strong economic output, yet it does not have the political development that is present in its counterparts as can be seen in Figure 1.

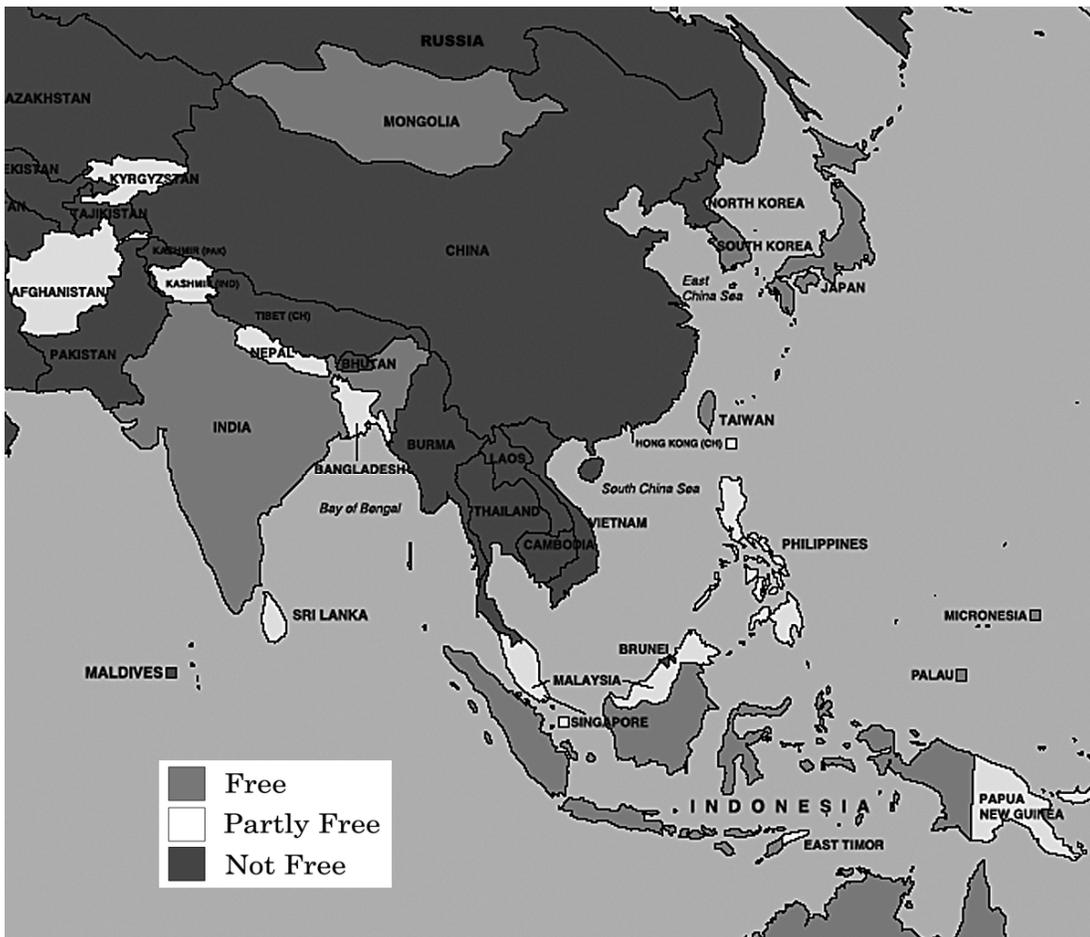


Figure 1: Map of Asian Freedom

Source: Freedom House, 2008

Every year, Freedom House publishes a report on freedom around the world. The report looks at a country's political rights and respect for civil liberties and assigns a numerical value for the degree of freedom found in that country. It is not a measure of democracy but a measure of the freedoms on which democracy depends (Freedom House, 2008). Therefore, the existence of political freedom and respect for civil liberties is a good indicator of political development.

Three of the five countries represented in Table 1 have a higher degree of political development than Hong Kong. Only one other, Singapore, has the same degree of development. It is interesting to note that the countries with the higher GDP per capita are only partly free. This gives credit to Muller's theory that high levels of economic development start to hinder political development at a certain point.

Since 1997, Hong Kong has witnessed several pro-democracy protests, the biggest being in 2003 at the height of the discontent towards the SAR government and its first Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa. The 2003 protest, which by some estimates was attended by 500,000 people, was precipitated by a national security bill that was perceived by many in Hong Kong as Beijing's attempt to take away some of their political freedoms. Since then, every year on July 1, the anniversary of the handover, pro democracy advocates have staged large protests urging the SAR and central governments to fully democratize the territory. The annual protest and other pro-democracy protests while attended by large numbers have not again reached the levels of 2003.

The Green Paper on Constitutional Development, a type of report that states the government's position on a matter but does not legally bind it to any action, was published in July 2007 and is the HKSAR's official stance on the democratization of the

SAR. It supports the maintenance of the status quo and does not signify any change in the government's position since 2004. Although the HKSAR and the Central Authority claim to support universal suffrage in Hong Kong, they do not provide a functioning time line nor do they lay out any new measures that would introduce it into the voting system. The document gives 2012 as the year for possibly instituting universal suffrage, but does not provide a time table for enacting it. Although the Green Paper does not provide information about voter intimidation and specifics of popular support for democratization, it does give the HKSAR's official stance on suffrage.

Presently, the National People's Congress (NPC) stated in late 2007 that universal suffrage will be delayed until 2017 for the chief executive and 2020 for the LegCo. This is the same governing body that has interpreted the Basic Law and this is their first legally binding commitment to democratic consolidation in Hong Kong. The NPC defends its position by acknowledging that democracy is necessary for Hong Kong to sustain development and that it is further in line with the vision of the Chinese reform leader Deng Xiaoping. However, universal suffrage must be delayed in order for political and social institutions to catch up and prepare for the coming shift in power. Chinese law professor and member of NPC governing body for Hong Kong, Wang Zhemin, contends that, as the new political system transfers power from societal and financial elites to the mass public, the current system must be reformed (Zhemin, 2008). Beijing's reluctance to allow universal suffrage is a reflection of their wish to slowly implement democracy and to ensure that Hong Kong is socially and politically ready.

Shortly before the protests in the summer of 2003, a survey conducted by Ming Sing of the City University of Hong Kong found that 74 percent of respondents were

dissatisfied with the government to some degree (Sing, 2005). During that same time period 70 percent to 80 percent of respondents wanted universal suffrage by 2008. Data from the same survey has also shown that the support for democracy has been driven by political matters more so than economic matters. This survey also examines Hong Kong's support for democracy by age group. The findings show that there is no relationship between support for democracy and age, which contradicts the long held belief among Hong Kong scholars that the elderly are more supportive of democracy (Sing, 2005).

However, this support for democracy and demonstration of political efficacy has not always been the case in Hong Kong. The territory's population has traditionally been influenced by Chinese history, a British colonial legacy, and flight immigration (Lee and Chan, 2008). The latter influence was the result of a large influx of mainland Chinese during Mao's revolution. This essentially refugee population, marred by the political, social, and economical upheaval that the revolution brought, sought to maintain political stability before anything else. This political conservatism also led Hong Kongers to distrust government officials and created a sense of political hopelessness. Political hopelessness led to a lack of public interest in territorial politics, along with a lack of desire for political reform (Lee and Chan, 2008). Hong Kongers have also developed a view of skepticism towards politicians, the political process and a general disposition that views politics as dirty (Lee, 2005).

Hong Kong's fear of disrupting the status quo and its lack of political efficacy led to several consequences that have not necessarily been anti-democratic; rather, non-supportive of democratic growth. In 1985, 62 percent of those surveyed felt that they had no control over the direction of Hong Kong's political future (Fok, 1997). This

perception and desire to avoid conflict was a reflection of the sentiment that made it unlikely that political parties would ever form. It was not until the late 1980s and the early 1990s, when it was apparent that Hong Kong would revert to Chinese rule and political reforms were necessary, that the political parties began to emerge. This political powerlessness runs contrary to the standard experience of other societies who, like Hong Kong, are wealthy, educated, and globalized, that involve themselves with politics and push for political reform (Fok, 1997).

When examining Hong Kong's middle class, this deficient political culture is even more apparent and has even deeper contributing factors. In fact, the current political behavior demonstrated by the middle class can be traced to events before Mao's revolution. The development of a middle class is contingent upon being able to develop and consolidate political and societal forces within the class. Yet, the perpetual introduction of immigrants into Hong Kong disrupted this consolidation and the middle class had to start over in its development each time a new wave of immigrants was introduced. This first wave occurred during WWII and then was closely followed by Mao's revolution in 1949. Immigrant influxes created downward social mobility for those in the middle class as the economy responded to an increase in the labor force by downgrading occupations and thereby the social standing of the middle class (Lui, 2003).

This gloomy outlook towards social mobility manifested itself in the Mitchell Hong Kong Families Survey in 1967 in which a disproportionate number of Hong Kong citizens, as compared to other societies in the region, believed they did not have the chance for career advancement (Lui, 2003). The perception of hopelessness not only affected the middle class' social standing but its political standing as well. It was not until

the 1970s and later, when Hong Kong moved from a light industry oriented economy into a service oriented economy that the status of the middle class stabilized and became more noticeable. With this newfound advancement, those in the middle class were more concerned about economic stability and growth rather, than political development that might return the middle class to the instability that it experienced during the mid twentieth century. (Lui, 2003).

Due to the mindset of maintaining political and social stability above all else, civic education in schools was never a priority in Hong Kong. Up until the 1980s, teachers were prohibited from discussing, let alone teaching, domestic politics and students were banned from starting political organizations (Fok, 1997).

It was only after 1984 and the signing of the Joint Declaration that Hong Kong began to emphasize civic education in its schools. Even then the scope and nature of civic education was poorly defined. This vagueness can be attributed to the overriding sensitivity to political matters, and as a result implementation of civic education in the late 1980s and early 1990s was less than effective as hoped. Political education is important in that it can give citizens the tools and understanding needed to participate fully in a liberal democracy (Fok, 1997).

Before the handover in 1997 civic education to the Chinese meant Hong Kong's students identifying themselves as Chinese first and Hong Kongers second (Fok, 1997). The exact direction that Hong Kong civil education textbooks take in teaching civic matters today is not quite known due to the unavailability of material. However it is easily acceptable to predict China's disposition to fostering nationalism in Hong Kong. Chinese nationalism is aimed at uniting children with the motherland and the practices of

the PRC government, a goal that runs counter to that of advocates of civic education in Hong Kong. While this assertion is disturbing for democracy, according to the previously mentioned survey by Sing (2005), the younger segments of population, who have been reared under both British and Chinese rule have developed an affinity for democracy and show support for democracy in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's citizens exhibit a strong amount of collective efficacy for both democratization and political participation, but a low amount of individual efficacy in support of democracy. This runs counter to the argument that collective efficacy is rooted in individual efficacy. In established democracies, political efficacy is instilled early on during childhood. However, as Hong Kong is a transitional society, it has come from somewhere else. In a transitional society, political efficacy is more likely to come from the events that an individual witnesses during said transition process (Lee, 2005). This is a great example of political socialization, the adoption of political ideas and participation in the political process. It is likely that the development of Hong Kong's political efficacy has been due to the combination of their attempt at civic education and the transitional events that have occurred since the mid 1980s.

Beijing has used an array of tactics to stifle the independence and democratization movements in Taiwan and Hong Kong respectively. First is the use of identity politics to discredit individuals and ideas which run counter to Beijing's. Such measures have the purpose to discredit traditional Chinese history, publicly remind those in Hong Kong and Taiwan that they are ethnically Han Chinese, and label those who do not support the Beijing school of thought as traitors and unpatriotic. Secondly, the P.R.C. has used the politics of sovereignty to de-legitimize the Taiwanese government and the

democratization movement in Hong Kong (Guoguang, 2007). By domestically and internationally asserting that Taiwan and Hong Kong belong to China, it causes these offshore democracies to lose support at home and legitimacy abroad.

Most importantly for this study is the third method Beijing has employed and it is that of economic penetration (Guoguang, 2007). Taiwan and Hong Kong have both become increasingly dependent on the Chinese economy and this has allowed Beijing to increasingly use economic means to influence the offshore governments, although this has not been extensively studied, according to Guoguang. This represents the greatest challenge to the two offshore democracy grassroots movements and exhibits Beijing's greatest degree of interference in its autonomous regions. Reports from voters themselves have surfaced of voter intimidation in Hong Kong and Taiwan on the grounds of economic intimidation (Guoguang, 2007). Pro-Beijing elements have targeted businessmen who are dependent on their cross-border economic ties. This intervention has had negative effects on the pro-democracy camps in both Taiwan and Hong Kong (Guoguang, 2007). While Guoguang's findings and postulates provided the impetus for my study, he was not able to provide empirical evidence of voter intimidation, most likely because it has not yet been documented on an academic and comprehensive level and has remained largely anecdotal evidence.

Another economic stumbling block to democracy in Hong Kong has been the relationship between Beijing and the business elite in Hong Kong; otherwise known as the *unholy alliance* (So, 2000). Prior to the handover, big business and the colonial government had a close relationship. That began to change however after the Joint

Declaration was signed and the business elites realized the coming change in power (So, 2000).

In describing external factors of democratization, Pevehouse (2002) references Leigh Payne's (1994) assertion that business elites do not necessarily favor authoritarianism over democracy, but favor what is in their company's best interest. For many presidents, owners, and CEOs, democracy represents a breakdown in order, increased competition from open markets, and radically liberal changes. Success in confronting these fears of the business elites have been met in Europe by assuring rights and protection to the interests of the upper business class (Pevehouse, 2002).

The relationship between economic performance and the quality of government in Hong Kong has followed a deteriorating path since 1997 (Groenewold and Tang, 2007). The HKSAR's approval rating began to decline significantly in the early 2000s, as the Chief Executive and his administration fumbled several policy issues. The study found a positive relation between democratic accountability and constraint of executive power as it relates to economic performance. As democratic accountability and government openness rose, so did economic performance. It also contends that there has been a decrease in democratic accountability since 1997. Furthermore the robust economy of the last few years has not caused a change in accountability. Simply put, the relationship between accountability and the economy is only one way (Groenewold and Tang, 2007).

More evidence and accounts of voter intimidation are presented in Lam's (2004) article concerning the role of the central government in the SAR. Beijing's intervention has not been limited to private citizens as it also targeted Hong Kong elites, such as Allen Lee who hosted a pro-democracy radio talk show "Storm in a Teacup" but left the show

after being intimidated, much like his predecessors on the show (Lam, 2004). Lee's testimony is presented in a report by Human Rights Watch. Lee testifies that even his daughters were threatened if he did not behave politically (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Anecdotal accounts of voters having to use their cell phone cameras to record their ballots are also presented. The level of interest that Beijing is taking in Hong Kong politics is not surprising as Beijing had never been this nervous over political developments in Hong Kong (Lam, 2004).

The report compiled by Human Rights Watch just days after the 2004 LegCo elections provides the most complete and reliable account of voter intimidation thus far. Data comes from interviews of over twenty journalists, political figures, and HKSAR officials as well as reports from media outlets. The main tactic Beijing used in influencing the 2004 LegCo election was labeling those who supported pro-democracy parties or candidates as unpatriotic and supporting only those who were "patriotic" or supportive of the motherland in their political careers. Beijing officials even threatened increased intervention if the pro-democracy candidates won a majority of seats. Although this tactic was used frequently and publicly, it did not produce the desired effect and was abandoned (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Voter intimidation was experienced as far out from the election as six months. The report also includes detailed threats to a voter in which a senior staff member of the voter's employer pressured the voter to vote pro-Beijing. This report provides the most up to date assessment of voter intimidation (Human Rights Watch, 2004). However, it fails to move beyond the several accounts of voter intimidation to look at a broader scope of intimidation, such as its effect on the middle class or business class as a whole.

## CHAPTER IV

### THEORY

For this study, four separate hypotheses were developed from the democratization and political repression literature. To test the validity of these hypotheses they will be applied to the case study, Hong Kong. While the definitions for democracy have already been addressed in this study, the qualifications used in analyzing the hypotheses will be simplified to make the process easier. In this study, democratization is operationalized as the practice or introduction of the one person one vote practice for electing both the legislative and executive branches of government. With respect to political culture, a weak political culture is defined as one that lacks the necessary norms and institutions to promote a successful democracy. Figure 1 depicts the model that illustrates the causal relationships developed in this section.

**Hypothesis 1** The greater the presence of unchecked hegemonic deterrence, the less likely democratization is to occur.

**Hypothesis 2** The stronger the influence of anti-democratic elites is, the less likely democratization is to occur.

**Hypothesis 3** The weaker a society's political culture, the less likely democratization is to occur.

**Hypothesis 4** The greater the influence of political repression, the less likely democratization is to occur

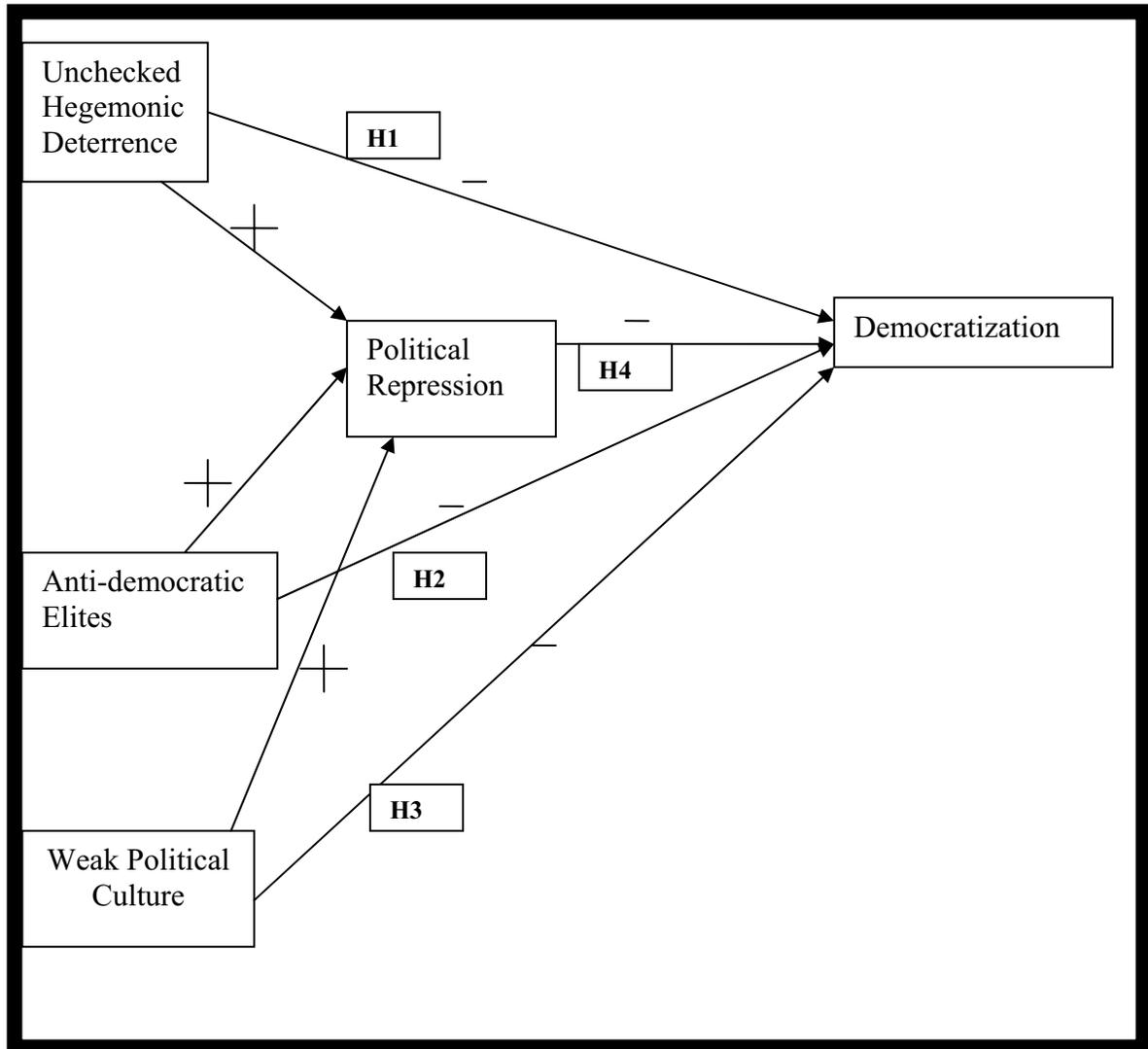


Figure 2: Theoretical Model

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The democratization literature suggests that Hong Kong should have already transitioned into a democracy. However, the literature on Hong Kong offers a different view. The explanation of why Hong Kong has not yet democratized includes several factors that are unique to the former British colony. First, Hong Kong is not an independent nation but a highly autonomous territory of a communist nation. Second, it is a complex and fast paced society with many social and economic facets where many of the factors needed for democratization have developed on their own. Finally, Hong Kong straddles the fault line of the Eastern and Western world, therefore it has more competing influences than a nation or region would normally have. An additional component of this international fault line is Hong Kong's experience as a Western colony and the influence that its history continues to play.

The theoretical model shown in Figure 1 portrays the following hypotheses and the relationships that they have to democratization. The three independent variables, unchecked hegemonic deterrence, anti-democratic business elites, and weak political culture all contribute directly to a lack of democratization in the case of Hong Kong. Additionally, they help create the intervening variable that is political repression. Political repression then in turn adversely affects democratization.

### *Hypothesis 1*

It is Beijing's hegemonic deterrence that can best be attributed to Hong Kong's lack of meaningful democratic progress. While all of the conditions for a successful democratization are in place, because the NPC disagrees with this assertion, full democracy has been withheld. Evidence of this is demonstrated in Beijing's decision to delay popular LegCo elections until 2017 (Zhemin, 2008). As with many other nations in the region that have successfully democratized and consolidated in the last forty years, Hong Kong has a large middle class that is characterized by stable economic success, a high degree of educational attainment, and an established well functioning civil society that respects the rule of law. However, just as important as China's deterrence is the lack of positive encouragement from both regional neighbors and multinational regional organizations.

Support for democracy from abroad is nearly as important as it is at home. Foreign support can legitimize a democratic regime as well as lend advice and support in the transition. Hegemonic influence was vital in the democratization efforts of South America and especially in Eastern Europe. While the United States sometimes hindered democracy in South America, as seen in Chile in the 1980s, it has a track record of aiding democratic transitions. In Eastern Europe, after the fall of the Iron Curtain and dissolution of the Soviet Union, the European Union's democratic requirements for admission into the trade union can be credited for democratic success in the region.

In the case of Hong Kong, neither a single state hegemon nor a multinational organizational hegemon that strongly advocates universal suffrage in Hong Kong exists. Hong Kong is surrounded by less or only partially politically free nations like China,

Vietnam, Laos, and the Philippines. These neighbors would not support democratic reform in Hong Kong, as they do not in their own countries. While the United States might pass Congressional resolutions that support Hong Kong's democratization and bring it up in diplomatic meetings, the U.S. will not sacrifice trade relations over Hong Kong's political matters. With respect to a regional multinational hegemon, ASEAN does not share its European counterpart's high affinity for democracy (ASEAN Principles, 2008).

While the European Union was initially a trade organization, it has taken an increasingly more political role as it has evolved into the economic and political entity that it is today. The EU did not actively promote democratic forms of government in the beginning because before the 1990s all of the members followed liberal democratic principles to some degree. However, with the inclusion of the formerly communist nations of Central and Eastern Europe it became necessary to safeguard the political integrity of the union. This was accomplished by requiring potential members to demonstrate their ability to function as a democracy, protect personal freedoms, operate under the rule of law, and defend human rights and minority groups (Michalski, 2006).

This regard for democracy has caused many of the EU's members and potential members to strive for more open government and democratic consolidation. A prime example is how Slovakia and Turkey have transitioned their governments towards a more consolidated democracy in hope of gaining EU membership. Both governments have worked to resolve border issues and improve the openness of their democratic process in addition to improving respect for civil liberties. These actions not only increase their chances for EU membership but also increase the quality of democracy. This is important

because healthy and consolidated democracies will not produce the semi-authoritarianism seen in low-quality democracies.

In contrast, ASEAN lacks the democratic condition both for membership and for continued membership in the trade union. As stated by the ASEAN Declaration, the goal of the trade organization is to foster economic, social, and cultural growth while promoting stability, without the mention of democratic governance. In fact, ASEAN's stance on a member country's domestic affairs runs directly perpendicular to the EU's. Under the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), ASEAN will not interfere in domestic issues and neither will its member nations interfere with each others (ASEAN Overview, 2008). While China is only a peripheral member, ASEAN's lack of democratic affinity demonstrates the dearth of democratic support from regional hegemons. In line with Arceneaux and Pion-Berlin's (2007) theoretical contention, it is not in ASEAN's member nations' best interest to actively push for democracy in Hong Kong.

With respect to IOs as a whole, perhaps it is the strength of the organization's economic influence and its ability to enforce regulations that determines whether or not it will be able to promote democracy. The European Union, despite its failed attempts to pass a constitution (as of summer 2008), has engineered itself as an international economic powerhouse, and its international economic power holds its members, and those that wish to adhere, to the policies that its elites set forth. It is also with this power that the EU has been able to protect the capital's interests. ASEAN evidently lacks this power, much in part because the economic powers of the region, Japan and China, are only associate members. The other IOs that China belongs to, the WTO and the UN to

name a few, lack the economic power to promote policy goals and ensure capital's protection in China and subsequently Hong Kong when it comes to political liberalization.

However, ASEAN has the possibility of growing into a more coordinated and integrated union such as the EU. Through ASEAN and the East Asian Summit, greater integration and movement towards the creation of the Asian Economic Community is possible. Although, whether an integrated Asia will promote democracy like the EU is yet to be seen, however given ASEAN's record, it is not likely.

Political repression has benefited from unchecked hegemonic deterrence in that it has pushed government officials in the mainland to pressure Hong Kong citizens to vote against pro-democracy parties, and discouraged pro-democracy supporters from participation by labeling them as unpatriotic. Furthermore, since Beijing's hegemonic deterrence is unchecked in the region, there are not any external actors that will condemn any repression that takes place.

The 2004 LegCo election witnessed for the first time widespread accounts of voter intimidation at the polls. This upswing in political repression is most likely a result of the increased demands for democracy as seen in the summer 2003 protests. Voter intimidation in this case came from mainland officials and was directed at not just those in the middle class but at societal elites as well. The tactics ranged from threats directed at family, as was the case with Allen Lee, to photographing ballots in order to prove support for pro-Beijing parties and candidates. Mainland officials would not have engaged in this behavior had the suppression of democratic ideas not been a part of Beijing's HKSAR policy.

The identification of democracy supporters as unpatriotic has allowed Beijing to tap into the nationalistic fervor that permeates Chinese society. This domestic projection of hegemonic deterrence, although not as successful as Beijing had hoped, still placed an unfair burden on those wishing to support and vote for pro-democracy interests. While this is a much milder form of political repression than threatening life and property, it is nonetheless an attempt by Beijing to sway domestic politics in their favor. Hegemonic deterrence has created an atmosphere where it is acceptable to apply the label of unpatriotic to those who, regardless of their social standing, support and vote for pro-democracy interests.

Finally, when hegemonic deterrence is unchecked it allows political repression to continue without condemnation and action from those in the region. This characteristic of hegemonic deterrence has two features: Hong Kong's lack of political aid from regional international organizations and the dearth of politically free nations/ societies in the Asian region. Hong Kong, China, and their neighbors belong to several regional trade organizations. However, unlike other trade organizations like the EU, Asian trade organizations do not prioritize democratic reform and will not oppose any incidents of political repression, thereby creating an environment in which it is in de facto acceptance.

Additionally, as can be seen in Figure 1, the map of Asian political freedom, in many of Hong Kong's neighboring countries political freedom is limited or non-existent, thus they are highly unlikely to speak out against abuses of political rights. Neighbors like Vietnam, Laos, the Philippines, and Cambodia will not speak out against voter intimidation, as they practice these abuses themselves. Political repression would not be tolerated within other RIOs like the European Union. This inability of Asian RIOs to

stand up against Beijing's disregard for fair democratic rules has allowed political repression in Hong Kong to exist. The above discussion pertaining to the relationship between unchecked hegemonic deterrence and political repression has been upheld by the democratization and political repression literature in conjunction with the case study literature.

Hypothesis 1 argues that unchecked hegemonic deterrence hinders the democratization of a country or region, such as that of Hong Kong. Evidence of hegemonic deterrence is evident in Beijing's refusal to currently allow universal suffrage. While Beijing has allowed some political reforms, such as geographical representation in the LegCo, and has set a timetable for democratization, the degree to which the reforms have been enacted has not been in the spirit or the scope of the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law agreed upon by London and Beijing. Increasing participation and interference in Hong Kong's domestic matters also denotes hegemonic deterrence. These actions have plagued Hong Kong's democratization and adversely affected it. Evidence from the case of Hong Kong supports Hypothesis 1.

### ***Hypothesis 2***

Although Hong Kong's situation is unique, its political development should be following the parallel development path. For example, while many factors were associated with the successful democratization of Taiwan and South Korea, both nations experienced steady economic growth and achieved comparable per capita GDP's before democratization. What is surprising and worth noting is that Hong Kong's per capita GDP surpassed South Korea's and Taiwan's per capita GDP at their times of

democratization. In South Korea, full direct elections were held in 1987. At that time, South Korea's GDP was \$22.1 billion with a GDP per capita of \$5,361. Hong Kong's GDP at that time was \$101.3 billion and it had a GDP per capita of \$16,797. At the time of Taiwan's full democratization in 1996, its GDP was \$256.8 billion accompanied by a GDP per capita of \$12,018. In Hong Kong, in 1996 right before the handover, its GDP was \$145.3 billion and its per capita GDP of \$22,740 (Shane, 2007).

Even though Hong Kong has many of the characteristics of a modernized developed society such as a market economy, high levels of literacy and education, and low levels of civic violence, universal suffrage and democratic consolidation is absent. It is for this reason that the modernization theory does not apply to Hong Kong's case (Muller, 1997). In fact, this theory using inequality as a mechanism that explains a convex shaped relationship between economic development and democratization fits Hong Kong's case and might explain part of its failure to democratize.

Muller (1997) argued that democratization is more likely to occur at a median point of economic development. After this optimal point, economic development begins to create a pronounced income gap that has been associated with authoritarian entrenchment. This entrenchment is supported by the societal elites who benefit from not having to contend with free market forces. Evidence of this is found in the previously mentioned literature concerning the unholy alliance between Hong Kong business elites and Beijing.

The split between business elites and democratization in Hong Kong stemmed from events that occurred before the handover. As Britain was getting ready to hand the colony over, the British colonial Governor Chris Patten's last minute democratic welfare

reforms pushed the business elites to favor the undemocratic Beijing government and its policies. This fragmentation led to the formation of pro-Beijing political parties that have made up the pro-Beijing united front that the democrats have found so hard to overcome. Additionally, Patten's reforms that did make it through the LegCo prompted Beijing to dissolve the legislative body after the handover, as it claimed that the reforms violated the Basic Law (So, 2000).

Additionally, the Chinese excuse of delaying democracy in order for Hong Kong business elites to adjust to a more free market system is more evidence of the undemocratic leaning of Hong Kong's business elites. In reiterating Pevehouse's (2002) assertion that business elites are not necessarily anti-democratic but adhere to whatever environment will be most advantageous to their profit margin, a parallel can be drawn to Hong Kong. Under colonial rule Hong Kong business was closely allied with the British colonial government and took steps to maintain that relationship. Once it was apparent that China would take back Hong Kong, business elites switched their alliance to Beijing and took steps to foster a healthy relationship with their new government. This new relationship required tempering their support for democracy, thereby silencing any support for democracy from the business and, to a large part, societal elites. While the limited democratic success occurred partly because of the middle class, support from the business and societal elites is necessary in order to fully democratize. It is this segment of society that controls economic investment and can have greater success in petitioning the government for reform. Thus Hong Kong's democratization movement is handicapped by the lack of support from elites.

In the case of Hong Kong, with a few exceptions, the elites have not been supportive of democracy. This lack of support has even manifested itself in incidents of political repression directed at those in the middle class and contributed to an environment inclined to political repression. The elite's desire to stifle democracy through political repression is rooted in Hong Kong's experience with conflict refugee immigration and the privileges that elites are currently afforded in a less than open business/ government relationship.

Hong Kong has had a history of immigration due to political upheaval on the mainland. Consequently, Hong Kongers have strayed away from political reform and focused more on social and economic advancement. Existing research on this notion of maintaining the political status quo hardly ever differentiates between the classes. Furthermore, a great number of those who immigrated to Hong Kong in the 1950s and 1960s and contributed to today's booming economy were wealthy business owners from cities such as Shanghai that were fleeing political persecution under Mao. This might not have made them anti-democratic, but it made those in the upper class weary of political change.

What has turned Hong Kong's business elites against democracy has been the close relationship they enjoy with the PRC government and those in the HKSAR government that are installed by Beijing. The previously mentioned *unholy alliance* has allowed Hong Kong businesses to operate without facing real competition. Of course Hong Kong was ranked as the freest economy in the world. However, those ranking are from an economic standpoint and fail to look at the political/ economic relationship that influences the direction of economic/ labour specific legislation and awarding of

contracts. In a fully democratic Hong Kong, business leaders would have to compete for the legislation and contracts they depend on.

Furthermore, it is feared that if universal suffrage is granted, pro-labor legislation will be passed, thereby hurting the elite's profit. More support for Hypothesis 2 comes from evidence where The People's Congress is withholding democracy for the next ten years. Beijing cites the reluctance of societal and business elites to transfer power to the mass public. This reluctance can only lead some in the upper class to attempt to limit the expansion of democracy.

In the 2004 LegCo election, political repression of societal elites and middle class citizens occurred at the hands of anti-democratic elites. Reports of employees photographing their ballots and sending it to their supervisors are a manifestation of the anti-democratic elites' attempts to limit democracy. While more research into the extent of employer/ business elite sponsored repression is necessary, what has been established is that the feelings and actions of those in the upper class have led to political repression.

Hypothesis 2 asserts that the stronger the anti-democratic business elites, the lesser the likelihood of democratization of Hong Kong. As Hong Kong has developed economically, the inequality gap between the upper class and those under has rapidly increased. Due to this inequality gap and the conservative nature of Hong Kong business elites that promotes economic profit and stability over political reform, democratization has been rebuked by those elites. Further evidence of this was demonstrated by Beijing's citation of Hong Kong business elites' need for gradual change in delaying universal suffrage until 2017. A democracy movement needs the support of societal and business

elites, however Hong Kong has not had the support and as a consequence democratic reform has been hindered. Thus, evidence from Hong Kong supports Hypothesis 2.

### ***Hypothesis 3***

While hegemonic deterrence and the relationship between Hong Kong business elites and Beijing can partly explain Hong Kong's lack of democratic reform, they fail to explain how support for democratization among the middle class is not strong despite the multitude of existing factors that would signal the contrary. Hong Kong suffers from a weak political culture that hinders its political development. This weak political culture is characterized by limited political efficacy, political hopelessness, a lack of civic education, and a politically weak middle class. Existing literature has documented the importance of political culture and has detailed the causes and effects of Hong Kong's errant political culture.

With concern to political efficacy, Hong Kong's political culture has shaped its political efficacy in a way that discourages participation by placing lesser importance on political participation when compared to social stability or economic development. This degradation of political participation has manifested itself in the political hopelessness that has been exhibited as recently as the 1990s. This aspect of Hong Kong's political culture is detrimental to the democratization process as it gives individuals little reason to participate in the political process. The most visible act of participation since the handover has been the pro-democracy protests starting in 2003. However the type of efficacy demonstrated in those protests was collective. While this is a step in the right

direction, collective efficacy does not provoke individual participation, the type of participation needed at the ballot box.

As a dependent colony of Britain, political rights and institutions were withheld from the native Chinese citizens who grew to make up the middle class. Without the necessary political institutions like civic education in schools and electoral representation, democratic ideas that were introduced in the late 1980's had trouble taking root and subsequently have had trouble energizing the population since China regained control in 1997.

Further contributing to Hong Kong's deficient political culture has been the constant influx of immigrants from areas and periods of conflict. Constant immigration during the 1940s through 1960s caused the middle class to redevelop itself continuously and thus was not able to gain political and economical capital. As these factors influenced Hong Kong's political culture as a whole, its development and subsequent support for democracy in today's environment has been hindered. Additionally, since much of today's middle class citizens immigrated to Hong Kong under times of conflict and political upheaval, as was the case during Mao's revolution, they have placed more importance on social and economic progress, essentially maintaining the political status quo while developing their own economic position and advancing socially. Democratic reform is the antithesis of maintaining the status quo and as a result has produced a political culture which strays away from it.

Hong Kong's weak political culture is rooted primarily in the SAR's lack of civic education that would enforce democratic norms and the desire to not upset the political status quo. While the Hong Kong education system has worked to introduce civic

education in the past two decades, it has had to contend with Beijing's view of civic education which promotes nationalism over the function of government, much less democratic governance. With political education comes the ability to participate in the democratic process, political empowerment, and what the norms of that process are. Without that knowledge of what should constitute a normal election, Hong Kong citizens could not know that political repression, in any form and to any degree, is not acceptable. Furthermore, without civic education individuals would lack the political empowerment that it provides. This empowerment would be necessary to stand up to political repression. An inability to stand up to repression makes Hong Kong society more vulnerable to such repression.

Secondly, Hong Kong's desire to maintain the political status quo has acted as a deterrent to voicing discontent about political repression experiences. Actively voicing such experiences would lead individuals to ostracization for upsetting that status quo and would lead to social or economic penalties from either mainland officials or the Beijing aligned business elites. The only substantial evidence found of political repression against ordinary citizens in the 2004 LegCo elections came from anonymous callers into radio shows, even though some reports surfaced, they were not in a direct manner. This is indicative of belief in collective political efficacy, the individual belief in the political abilities of the group rather than their own, as the individual experiencing repression expresses it in a public manner and not in a direct manner towards election officials. It is possible that this behaviour is more a reflection of actual repression and not Hong Kong's political culture. Further research is necessary to determine the cause of this behaviour.

Regardless, the failure of Hong Kong citizens to individually stand against political repression has allowed political repression.

Even though civic education has worked to instill some democratic principles, political culture in Hong Kong is not yet strong enough to stand against political repression. Furthermore, in the striving to maintain the political status quo, political culture in Hong Kong has been degraded to the point where actively opposing political repression is not accepted. However, this intervening relationship has more forces at work and further research on the link between weak political culture and the existence of political repression in the case of Hong Kong is necessary.

Hypothesis 3 asserts that a weak political culture contributes to a lack of democratization. The findings suggest that the individual factors that make up Hong Kong's political culture have had adverse effects that they have had on Hong Kong citizens' support for democracy. On the whole, the political culture of non-participation, maintenance of the status quo, and lack of democratically focused civic education has hindered the development of a fully elected democratic government. Thus, evidence found during this study supports Hypothesis 3.

#### ***Hypothesis 4***

There is no doubt that voters in the 2004 LegCo election experienced political repression and intimidation. What is more important, however, is the effect that political repression has had on pro-democracy efforts to win seats in the LegCo and the democratization process as a whole. Political repression activities witnessed in 2004 are most likely a result of the massive pro-democracy protests in 2003. Had the Hong Kong

public been able to vote for the Chief Executive in 2003, these activities would have likely been present. Furthermore, the Chief Executive and his government at the time were so unpopular that the pro-Beijing government would have lost. For the first time in 2004, Beijing was concerned about the domestic political fate of Hong Kong and acted to shape it in the way that its leaders saw fit.

Through these actions public figures advocating democracy such as Allen Lee were silenced and individual voters were forced to vote for pro-Beijing candidates. However, the extent to which repression occurred and its overall effect on the democratization process remains unclear despite the supporting evidence that this study has found. Leaders in the PRC government along with Hong Kong business leaders have the motive to influence the outcome of LegCo elections. Public displeasure with the government at times does point to a crisis of legitimacy which can be caused by political repression. With each public figure that is silenced and each voter that must change their vote, the democratization process loses ground to the semi-authoritarian system in place.

However, without knowing the extent to which repression is occurring, the effect on the process cannot be determined. While political repression has been shown through the literature to contribute to the lack of democratization, sufficient evidence of it contributing to Hong Kong's lack of democratization was not found. To further test this hypothesis primary data pertaining to Hong Kong voters' experiences with voter intimidation is necessary. The source of the repression, i.e. employers, mainland officials, etc., would need to be identified and then the impact that the incidence of repression had on their participation in the election would need to be studied. Unfortunately, the disenfranchised and most often politically repressed are a victimized population and

obtaining data from that population presents obstacles. These people fear identification and will be reluctant to discuss the topic. In the end, this study did not have the resources to fully test Hypothesis 4 and it remains unsupported.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the results show that unchecked hegemonic deterrence, anti-democratic elites, and a weak political culture have contributed to Hong Kong's lack of democratization. Without sufficient evidence to support Hypothesis 4 in the case of Hong Kong, this hypothesis could not be supported by this study. Furthermore, unchecked hegemonic deterrence and anti-democratic elites have contributed to an atmosphere which encourages political repression. However, there was not enough evidence to support the relationship between weak political culture and political repression.

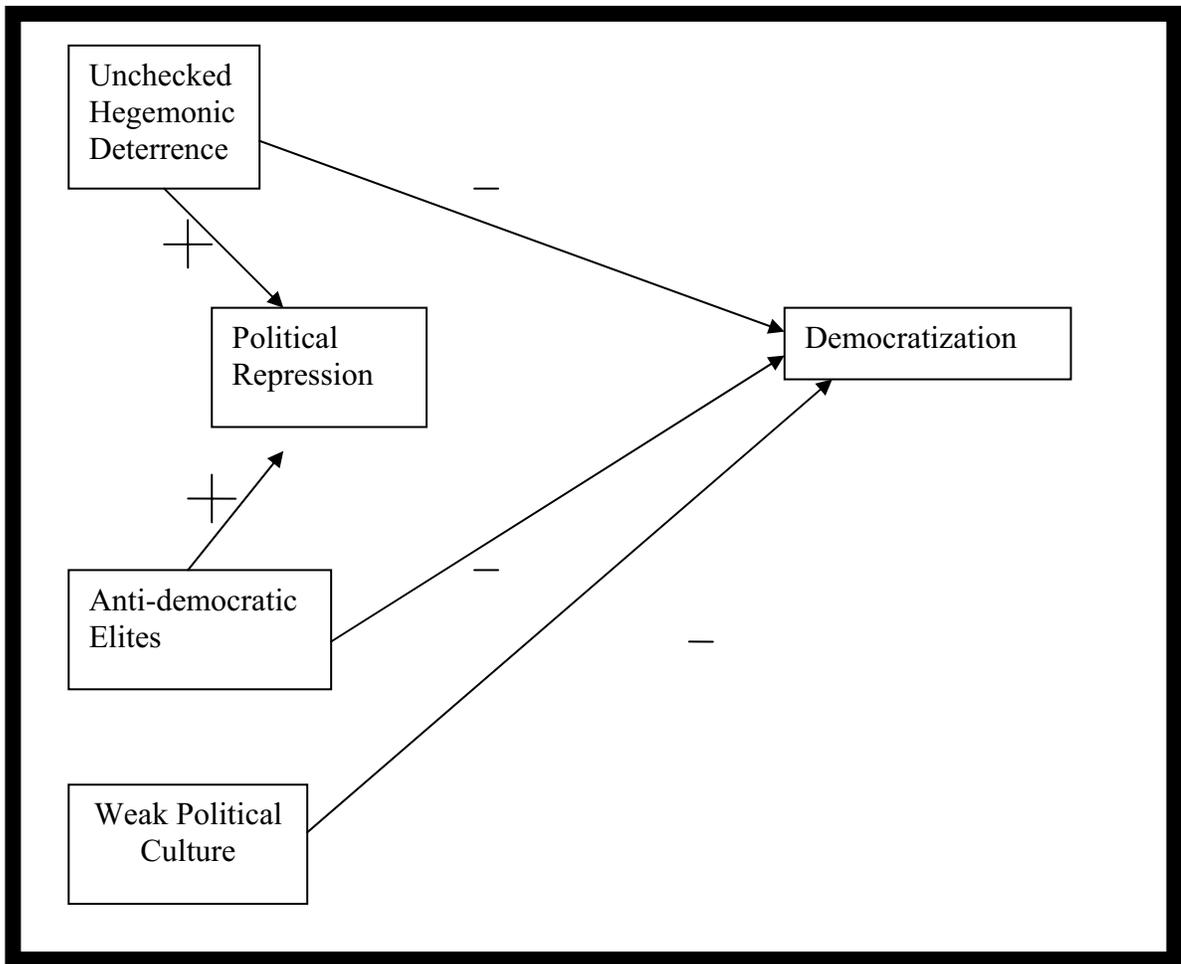


Figure 3: Revised Theoretical Model

Even if sufficient evidence had been found, there are probably more significant factors contributing to Hong Kong's lack of democratic progress. The likely factors, identified during the course of this research, but not part of the theoretical model include lack of organization of the pro-democracy party and the institutional arrangements that the pro-Beijing parties exploit. Pro-democracy parties have generally had a tough time working together and have not been able to stand against the much better organized pro-Beijing parties. Furthermore, since the representatives in geographical constituent

elections are chosen by proportional representation, the pro-democratic parties put forth only one candidate compared to the several candidates from the pro-democracy parties (Cheng, 2005). In doing this, the pro-Beijing parties gain an edge as the pro-democracy supporters split their vote.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the factors that have contributed to Hong Kong's sluggish democratization. Using Hong Kong as a case study, it was hypothesized that unchecked hegemonic deterrence, anti-democratic elites, and a weak political culture contribute to a lack of democratization. It was further hypothesized that political repression that was influenced by the independent variables contributed to the problem as well. Support for the independent variables was found, however there was not enough evidence to support the relationship between political repression and its effect on the overall democratization movement in Hong Kong.

Further primary research is necessary to address the growing body of literature and accounts of political repression in Hong Kong. As Robert Dahl said in 1998, free and fair elections are a cornerstone of a successful democracy. Thus the loss of or inability to hold free and fair elections can undermine Hong Kong's democratization movement. Continued repression in Hong Kong will lead to a de-legitimization of the government, disillusionment of democratic government, and will overall hurt Hong Kong's economy. Although open government and society produces a more productive economy, Hong Kong business elites have been slow to adopt this notion.

With a time table for universal suffrage set for the Chief Executive election in 2017, it can only be hoped that Beijing will keep its word and that Hong Kong will be economically and socially ready. However, Hong Kong, and those watching its political development, will not have to wait until 2017 to obtain a status report on the status of democracy there. This September, the LegCo elections are sure to produce data that will serve as a benchmark for the progress of the democratization process. If the election of pro-democracy Anson Chan over pro-Beijing candidate Regina Ip last winter is any indication of things to come, then the pro-democracy parties might find some success this fall. However, as this study has shown the factors working against democracy in Hong Kong are powerful and are not likely to diminish in the near future.

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