

Can You Hear the People Sing: Identifying the Political Root Causes of the  
Tahrir Square, Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Central Protests

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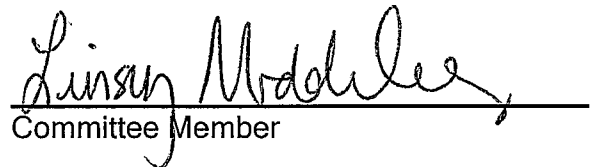
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## **Can You Hear the People Sing: Identifying the Political Root Causes of the Tahrir Square, Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Central Protests**

Hong Kong is Angry. Braving the July afternoon heat and the occasional thunderstorm, protestors marched from Victoria Park to the Legislative Council building. Raising banners demanding the right to vote and to democratically choose their Chief Executive. Having spent the last ten days participating in what has been characterized as an illegal vote by both the Hong Kong and Mainland governments, the people are eager to remind their leadership that without fundamental change in the city they will never truly be placated. Through a complex network of grassroots organizations prodemocracy activists had assembled a citywide vote demanding expanded voting rights from a stoic and disapproving Beijing. Their voices echoing off the towering glass and steel structures the future of this pro-democracy movement is unclear. The protesters carried a myriad of banners through the streets all the while singing various chants including themes from the musical Les Miserables. One thing is certain in the months since the protests began: China can hear the people sing.

I had missed Occupy Wall Street, and Tahrir Square, all I could do was watch from afar and wonder about the events unfolding on my television screen, and on the page of the newspapers. I flew to Hong Kong to be on the ground, to witness for myself the protests scheduled to begin in July 2014. After a 22-hour flight I found myself standing amongst the protesters in Hong Kong, the anger of the crowd was obvious, what was not so obvious were the links between the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and Occupy Central. Were there any links?

Was there an underlying cause from one region to another that inspired these groups to protest?

In the spring of 2011, protests broke out all across the Middle East. All across the region working populations rose up to protest the limited access to political and economic opportunity in the region. By the end of 2011 and into the spring of 2012, the protests spread to the United States in the form of Occupy Wall Street. By late 2012, activists in the special economic region of Hong Kong began planning their own protests in response to the economic and political environment in Hong Kong.

The Arab Spring and later the Occupy protests mark the first global democracy movement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>1</sup>. Social media and modern telecommunications to rapidly spread the tenets of the occupy movements from continent to continent. News media has as well widely reported on the activists; however most have failed to recognize the reasons why large-scale protests have continued to circle the globe for the better part of four years.

The Arab Spring and Occupy movements represent a liberal protest movement that is responding to economic and political alienation both locally and globally. The global economy has created an environment in which economic protests can directly disrupt government's ability to govern. This intermingling of economic and governmental interests illustrates a fundamental failure of government to adequately respond to the needs and demands of the electorate,

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Huntington in 1991 described the expansion of democracies in Europe, South America and Asia. His concept of Third Wave Democracy focused on nations transitioning towards a democratic form of government. Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring seems to be less concerned with the implementation of democracy, and the enforcement of social justice and political equality.

and instead choosing to respond to economic interests. Simply put, the Occupy protests are widespread anti-corruption protests. Academics on the front lines of the Occupy protests found themselves at “the nexus of a global movement against economic injustice” (Welty p. 2).

In order to study these movements it is imperative to understand the economic and political environments in which each protest began. Thus a brief history of each location is required in order to understand the motivations of the movement within a proper context. In order to do this, an examination of each geopolitical area must first be conducted in order to highlight the common threads that run through each protest. An historical and political analysis of each protest will provide insight into the trajectory of Occupy protests throughout the world. In doing so the common links between the Tahrir Square, Occupy Wall Street, and Occupy Central protests will be identified.

#### Egypt: Occupy Tahrir Square

In the spring of 2011, the Middle East erupted in protests that have had lasting impacts on the social, economic, and political structures throughout the region, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and most recently Yemen. The four years have since the beginning of the Arab Spring have seen either a partial or total collapse of nearly every country originally embroiled in the Arab Spring uprisings. The ultimate resolution of these protests and their political fallout will be debated for years to come. Egypt is being used as a case study, because the public protests were arguably the most successful in the region. While not without

bloodshed, the protests in Egypt have been able to overthrow the government twice without descending into a civil war.

Egypt's foundation is built on the ruins of an ancient civilization. From antiquity until now numerous groups have laid claim to the Nile River Valley, one of the most important geopolitical locations in the Middle East<sup>2</sup>. Journalist and expert in Egyptian society Tarek Osman suggests that "throughout the country's long history its inhabitants have been reduced to the status of second-class citizens in their own country- and, at times, outright slaves to foreign rulers" (Osman p.15). The dawn of the modern Egyptian political paradigm came about as a result of Muhamed Ali, Egyptian Monarch from 1805 to 1849 (Osman p.15). Ali, an ethnic<sup>3</sup> Albanian from the Ottoman Empire, wrested control from ethnic warlords who had been fending off the beleaguered nation from the French (Osman p. 15-16). Ali's takeover resulted in two important events that heavily shaped Egypt, the establishment of a strong military, and the seizure of all privately held land.

The seizure of privately held property in Egypt laid the groundwork for Ali's eventual economic revolution. Ali's consolidation of private lands under government control allowed widespread investment into the nation's irrigation

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<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Egypt represented the pinnacle of liberalism in Northern Africa and the Middle East. Cairo had become the center of education, art, and culture. Egyptian society was described as open and welcoming, hosting immigrants from the European nations of Greece, Italy, and thousands of European Jews. Egypt also boasted one of the most advanced militaries in the region. The cultural and military might afford Egypt a great amount of political clout in the region. By the 21<sup>st</sup> century the cultural strength of Egypt had faded; however its military potency remains. (Osman p.3)

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Ali marks the final Egyptian ruler that has no familial ties to the tribal peoples of Egypt. Ali set up the basic political paradigm that is present today, he still represented the long and sometimes brutal rule of foreign powers.

systems during the industrial revolution (Osman pg. 17). The growth of the Egyptian economy became inextricably tied to the government, and thus tied to the politics of Egypt.

Over the course of the next one hundred and fifty years various groups rose up to oppose the monarchy's vast control over much of the Egyptian economy. During the 1920's and 1930's, an Islamist liberal movement sprang out of the Universities, aided by intellectuals like Taha Hussein and others who helped to revolutionize how Islamic history and literature was taught in Egypt (Osman pg. 34). Hussein and his movement focused on blending European culture and society into Egyptian society (Osman pg. 35). The government's acceptance of Islamic liberalism represented the high water mark for the Egyptian monarchy, as its influence on politics and culture in Egypt was utterly destroyed with its collapse shortly after the end of the second World War (Osman pg. 35). External and internal pressures just prior to and during World War II set the stage for the rise of the military in Egyptian politics.

In direct response to the rise of Islamic liberalism in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood formed (Osman pg. 35). The Muslim Brotherhood rejected liberalism in Egypt, viewing the influx of western culture as an attack on the Muslim Brotherhood and thus a direct attack on the religion that the Brotherhood embodied (Osman pg. 35-36).

After a century and a half of monarchical rule, the tables were set for an uprising with the support of the people<sup>4</sup>. In the late 1940's, three percent of the

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<sup>4</sup> Economically Egypt remained unchanged with the establishment of the Ali dynasty. A small group close to the political leadership held the vast majority of property and wealth.

Egyptian population controlled eighty percent of the farmland in Egypt (Osman pg. 37). The poor in Egypt made up an astounding 80 percent of the population (Osman pg. 37). The Islamist Liberal movement, which enjoyed a great deal of political and social influence, was unable to equalize the social inequality in Egypt (Osman pg. 37). The disproportionate distribution of wealth in Egypt made a popular uprising more likely.

In 1952, the social pressures caused by the economic disparity found a leader in Gamal Abdel Nasser. Both Tarek Osman and Stephen A. Cook, a Douglas Dillon Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, recognize the importance of the nationalist narrative in the rise of Nasser. Osman opens his discussion of Nasser with a description of Nasser in Egyptian popular culture. “[Nasser] avenged the crimes inflicted on the exploited, broken masses (Osman pg. 41). Nasser’s rise to power and his place in the nationalist narrative marked a departure from Egyptian political history. For the first time in thousands of years, since Alexander the Great, Egypt found itself ruled by a native Egyptian (Osman pg. 43). Nasser’s leadership was cemented in 1956 when the Egyptian military repelled an Israeli, French, and British coalition force trying to invade Egypt (Cook pg. 28).

The failures of the Monarchy and the Islamic Liberals to codify a coherent social and economic improvement program was one of the key reasons why Nasser was able to so effectively and bloodlessly seize control from the government (Osman). Nasser recognized the damage to the Egyptian economy

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The Muslim Brotherhood arose as a pushback to the collection of wealth amongst the elite and the perceived invasion of western ideas and values through European tourists and academics.

that had occurred stemming from the seizures of property under the rule of Ali in the early nineteenth century that had continued throughout his dynasty. Nasser responded, “to the acclaim of the millions of poor, oppressed Egyptians” by introducing a “programme of ‘social justice’, ‘progress and development’ and ‘dignity’: a nation-centered developmental vision” (Osman pg. 43).

Nasser was not the only person advantaged by the 1952 overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy. Under Nasser’s leadership, the Egyptian military was able to “[restore] Egypt’s collective honor” and secured its borders from its perceived enemies, the Israelis<sup>5</sup> (Cook pg. 28). After nearly a century of failed, lackluster, and nonexistent social and economic programs, the Egyptian military, and the discipline they embodied, enjoyed a period of good faith from the people in hopes of reform. Almost overnight those charged with maintaining the political status quo became the policy setters:

The country’s liberal political experiment from the 1920’s to 1940’s (which had been led by Europe-inspired and oriented landowners and capitalists, as well as writers, teachers, and lawyers) was terminated, to be replaced by a strongly socialist and populist doctrine (Osman pg. 45).

Land reform was one of the earliest items considered by the Nasser regime. In 1952 little had changed in the distribution of land, and thus wealth in Egypt. During his rule, Nasser, implemented land reforms that had an immediate effect on the moral of the Egyptian people as well as a positive influence on the economy.

Land reform was enacted through enforcing a 100-acre ceiling on the size of any single family’s holding; ending absentee ownership; capping rent on

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<sup>5</sup> The First Arab Israeli War in 1947-1948 saw the first conflict between Israel and Egypt. The conflict saw fighting both in Israel and the Sinai Peninsula.

leased lands; strengthening the legal rights of peasants; and, crucially, confiscating hundreds of thousands of fertile acres from major landowners and distributing them to the millions of landless peasants. (Osman pg. 46)

The redistribution of fertile farming land under Nasser certainly worked to strengthen his base of populist support; however, it is important to note that land reform under Nasser did not reform manufacturing in Egypt. As a result, Nasser and his cadre of military leaders moved to incorporate much of Egypt's industrial sector under public control (Osman).

After restoring vast amounts of agricultural land to the peasants of Egypt Nasser moved to nationalize Egypt's industry. It is through the public sector that Nasser was able to define Egypt's place in the Middle East and give the masses a sense of purpose, something that Egypt had lacked since just after the rule of King Ali 150 years before (Osman).

Nasser's two-prong focus on the Egyptian economy allowed him to "build his power base on a philosophical imperative: the need to win a sweeping mandate from the people" (Osman pg. 47). The mandate that Nasser won from the people allowed him to resist the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood and their strong Islamic agenda (Osman pg. 54-55). Instead of allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to implement their policies derived from Islamic teachings and sharia law, Nasser was able to implement a national program of secular political and economic reforms. Nasser's Egypt represented the kind of change that the Arab world had been looking for, and as a result Nasser was praised a "the guardian of freedom and Arab dignity" (Osman pg. 56-57).

Nasser set about changing Egypt. He had his own vision for both a new nation and the Arab World. Politically, he transformed Egypt into a

republic, introducing centralised parliamentary rule, but he is better known for his domestic social programmes.

Nasser's aim was to improve the conditions of the peasant majority - establishing land reforms, free educational programmes for boys and girls and developing the country's medical infrastructure. (Arab Unity: Nasser's Revolution)

Nasser's triumphant coup over the Egyptian monarchy rocked the region, sparking waves of Arab nationalism across the entire region. In Egyptian popular culture the figure of Nasser has transcended history and he is now enshrined as a "larger than life figure comparable to Otto von Bismark, Nehru, or Charles de Gaulle" (Osman pg. 165). Anwar Sadat, Nasser's successor, struggled both with the larger than life perception of Nasser and many of the challenges that Egypt still faced following the political and economic changes Nasser implemented. In the years following Nasser's coup, Egypt had established close links to the Soviet Union, at the height of the Cold War. With Nasser's political ties to the U.S.S.R., Egypt found itself diametrically opposed to the United States and its ally Israel.<sup>6</sup> By 1970 Nasser was dead, from a heart attack, and Anwar Sadat was poised to change Egypt's course in world events.

Following a war with Israel in 1973 Sadat broke ties with Russia in order to establish ties with the United States (Osman pg. 165). Egypt's close ties with the United States helped to establish tense but peaceful diplomatic ties between the Arab Egypt and the Jewish state of Israel. The 1977 peace process between the United States and Egypt in Jerusalem also helped to again transform the economic structure of Egypt. During his rule, Nasser began transforming the

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<sup>6</sup> In the late 1960's and early 1970's Nasser's ties with the USSR translated into nearly 300 million dollars in military materiel. Soviet weapons replenished weapons and equipment lost during fighting with Israel. (Laird)

distribution of wealth, primarily transferring agricultural land from the wealthy to the landless peasants, that can be likened to a “socialist-style central planning” structure. As Sadat came to power and ties with the United States were created, Egypt began shifting its economy towards free market capitalism (Osman pg. 165). This shift in economic planning removed some of the economic protections Nasser had implemented.

Sadat, who had taken power in 1970, was assassinated in 1981, ending a short-lived regime in Egypt. Unlike Nasser, who still enjoys a popular larger than life public image, Sadat is viewed as an honored, pious, and modest village chief or *oumda* in Egyptian (Osman pg. 165). Replacing the village chief was another senior military official, Hosni Mubarak. Tarek Osman suggests that Mubarak’s installment as president was intended to provide the country a sense of security:

[A]fter the tumultuous changes of the previous three decades- from Arab nationalism to Islamism, Nasser’s political mobilizations to Sadat’s frenetic upheavals, from frequent conflicts to relentless social and economic changes- the country needed a period of calm (Osman pg. 166).

While Egypt may have been in need of a period of calm, Mubarak delivered three decades of stagnation that eventually led to his downfall.

Sadat and Nasser led Egypt through tumultuous years of conflict with Israel, all while transforming the social and economic structures numerous times. Both leaders were willing to experiment, understanding that a mistake on their part could ultimately result in the type of coup that had brought Nasser to power and cleared the way for Sadat’s administration. Hosni Mubarak represented the antithesis of the leaders that came before him. The defining feature of Mubarak’s

regime is perhaps the absence of any economic or social reforms. Instead of combating economic instability as Nasser did, or continuing Sadat's Arab Nationalism, Mubarak's regime defined its national program as one of security (Osman pg. 169). For nearly thirty years, Egypt essentially remained unchanged. Laws and public policy were crafted to ensure continued regime stability but little else (Osman pg. 167).

Tarek Osman argues that, "A large part of the problem was that President Mubarak was unable or unwilling to connect with his people in a more 'personal' way. Even today... Egyptians know very little about Hosni Mubarak as an individual" (Osman pg. 168). The unfamiliarity Egyptians had with Mubarak in the end served to weaken the hold Mubarak was able to exert over Egypt. The regime's focus on security reaffirmed the banishment of the Muslim Brotherhood that had begun under Nasser and was only slightly weakened by Sadat.

In an effort to keep the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood at bay, Mubarak greatly expanded the national police force; its equivalent in the United States is the FBI. The expanded military and police forces combined with laws put in place by Mubarak had the intended effect of keeping the Muslim Brotherhood politically isolated<sup>7</sup>; the conditions inside Egypt had the additional effect of denying political participation of other groups within Egypt (Korany pg. 24).

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<sup>7</sup> In 2006 a series of legislation was passed designed to silence the media and political opposition. The legislation gave Egyptian security forces wide latitude to arrest journalists, screen candidates for elections, and even control university student body elections, all in the interest of national security (Korany pg. 24-25).

Egypt's political structure limited access to political participation to member of the military and the economically well off (Cook 125). Participation in political parties was severely curtailed, Egyptian authorities carefully monitored membership in every political party, including groups organized at colleges and universities (Korany pg. 24). Without access to their national leadership it was becoming clear that the seeds of rebellion, worker and student strikes throughout Cairo, were beginning to sprout amongst the masses.

The Tahrir Square protests can be broken into two distinct political moments. The first began with the start of widespread protests on or around 25 January 2011. The second moment began when the military forces took power and in effect co-opted the political momentum of the people. If the second moment was dominated by the military, what was the makeup of the group who originally began the chain of events that led to the demise of the Mubarak regime? Dina Bishara suggests that at its most fundamental level workers represented the protests that precipitated the fall of Mubarak (Korany p.92). The first phase of the protests exhibits structures present in other protests examined later.

In the beginning of the Tahrir Square protests labor activists made up the body of the protestors. Individual workers and organized labor groups provided the "boots on the ground" that began the initial occupation. Individual workers are reported as participating in the early protests, without prompting from labor activists (Korany p.93). Early participation of individual workers suggests that the Tahrir protest was to some extent a truly spontaneous protest that tapped into an

underlying frustration directed toward what many viewed as the unfair organization of both the economy and the government (Korany p. 90). Government control over politics created a situation in which the government was not reactive to the demands the citizenry. Control of the government depended on the military and the government was beholden to the whims of the military.

### U.S.A.: Occupy Wall Street

So what does the toppling of a dictator in the Middle East have to do with the eruption of democracy protests in the United States and Hong Kong? Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Central are focused on rooting out corruption in the economic and political structures of both regions. At their very foundation the protests are demanding equal access to decide the economic and



political structures of their countries. Like Egypt, Occupiers in New York were protesting corruption within the economic and political system. To date Occupy

Wall Street (OWS)<sup>8</sup> has never made a demand on the economic or political system in the United States. OWS has been haphazardly defined as “A liberal tea party,” “a flash mob of slackers,” and the “Populist Movement reborn” (Welty p.25). However, in order to understand the trajectory that OWS followed it is necessary to properly put the movement in context.

Like the Tea Party<sup>9</sup>, members of the media calling for action sparked OWS. Kalle Lasn and Micah White, writers for Adbusters, an anti-consumerism publication, originally called for protests starting in Mid-September of 2011 (Schwartz). Based out of Canada, Adbusters is a leftist online magazine critical of consumerism and unchecked capitalism. The Tahrir Square protests earlier in the year provided Adbusters with its inspiration. In July 2011 Adbusters brazenly and boldly acknowledged their desire to spark a moment much like Tahrir square. The early foundation of OWS recognized that Tahrir succeeded in large part because the people of Egypt made a straightforward ultimatum – that Mubarak must go – over and over again until they won (“#OCCUPYWALLSTREET”). From July 2011 through the encampment period OWS struggled to find its one demand. In the months leading up the eventual OWS protest and encampment in September 2011 it was unclear what types of groups would choose to participate in a movement that had yet to define itself.

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<sup>8</sup> OWS protests began on September 2011 in New York City. By October 2011 protests and occupations had spread across the country. On November 15, 2011 the Main encampment in Zucotti Park had been evicted. The last of the encampments had been dispersed by mid December 2011 (Occupy Wall Street).

<sup>9</sup> The Tea Party's origins have been traced by an on air rant by Rick Santelli on the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Started in response to the economic downturn of 2008, the Tea Party has popularly been known as “Taxed Enough Already”. In recent years the Koch brothers affiliated Americans for Prosperity and Tea Party leadership have become increasingly entangled.

Socialists, Anarchists, Liberals, and moderates all expressed interest in reforms espoused by Adbusters; however the depth of involvement of these groups was not clear until the first protest broke out in New York.

Early documents related to OWS show that the burgeoning group recognized its potential impact on political discourse both in the United States and across the world (“#OCCUPYWALLSTREET”). OWS organizers viewed their movement as an opportunity to redefine the relationship between citizens and the government. From its inception OWS was envisioned as a disruptive movement designed to interrupt the influence corporations were exerting on local, state, and federal officials. At its core OWS was a direct reaction to the economic inequality that had been increasing since at least the economic collapse of 2008. OWS protests coincided with the lowest Public Trust polling numbers since the early 1990’s (Pew)<sup>10</sup>. Distrust of the government and the public’s alienation of their political system drove some to organize across the country from New York to Oakland and many cities in between. Todd Gitlin, accurately sums up the feelings that led to the protests:

On September 16, 2011, the unemployed already had sick feelings about being unemployed, or seeing close family members unemployed, and many of them could give an account of how this had happened to so many, though they might disagree about how much blame to allocate among the investment banks and mortgage brokers, collusive government agencies, super-profitable cash-hoarding corporations and their self-dealing CEOs, paid-for elected officials, and the rest of a far-flung,

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<sup>10</sup> Pew polls measuring trust in the government show a steady decline from a post September 11, 2001 high of 54% to a all time low of 18% in October 2011, one month following the occupation of Zucotti Park. Distrust in October 2011 was down across all major parties: Democrats 27%, Republicans 11%, and Independents 10%. Unemployment during the opening months of the occupation, August through December, hovered at just under 9%.

intertangled system of Wall Street and Washington back-scratching that was properly called crony capitalism (Gitlin p.55).

OWS was originally envisioned as a protest targeting the perceived corruption among Wall Street bankers. By September 2011, OWS's aims became as varied as the population that made up the crowd. OWS attracted various groups from all corners of the socio-political spectrum. In September 2011, membership in OWS was loosely defined as being part of the 99%, with 99% being those who do not belong to the top 1% in wealth earners. "We are the 99%" became both a unifying call and a badge of membership for those involved in Zucotti Park, New York and elsewhere (Welty p.35). OWS was both helped and harmed by the use of "We are the 99%" chant. The average income for the statistical 99% of American wage earners in 2011 was over \$500,000 a year without considering savings and property holdings; however organizers and participants focused on economic injustices such as having to decide between food and medicine as struggles that the 99% had to endure (Welty p.34-35). In reality the bottom 50% were those most likely to face the problems that the protestors fixated on (Welty p.35). How did one become a member of the 99%? To this date there is no clear answer to that question. It is not clear that participation in the protests was a requirement to be a member of the 99% (Welty p.36). A typical OWS protester emerged as an individual that feels that their economic and political voice has been drowned-out by corporate and economic interests. OWS protesters reacted to government reforms in the banking system that failed to adequately respond to the financial collapse of 2008. The protesters

showed that a person's perceived relationship with their government can have deep and far reaching effects on society.

The difficulty in understanding OWS as an anti-corruption movement stems from its organic structure, lack of defined demands, and its lack of defined leadership.

In the media OWS encampments were portrayed as chaotic, dirty<sup>11</sup>, dangerous congregations of people aimlessly protesting, and banging on drums. OWS was the opposite; it was a sophisticated structure of committees and assemblies that allowed people to freely move from one group to another. The main body was the General Assembly (NYCGA), an experiment in direct democracy in which every person was entitled to speak and to be heard (Gitlin p.92). The General Assembly and all of the other subsidiary groups utilized a "progressive stack" to determine speaking orders at meetings (Welty p. 31). The progressive stack set speaking order by giving historically ignored and marginalized groups' preferential speaking order (Gitlin p.93). On the surface this method would ensure equal space at the table for all groups, but in reality it created an environment that could swiftly devolve into acrimonious and bitter debates (Welty p. 31). The progressive stack also had the unintentional consequence of pushing historically powerful groups to the margins instead of effectively harnessing the resources that all parties were able to bring to bear.

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<sup>11</sup> Ann Coulter of Fox News described the OWS protestors as "demonic" after protestors latched onto the motto of the cyber political group Anonymous: " We Are Anonymous, We are Legion". Her descriptions expanded to describe the group as "demonic loons", "teenage runaways" and "Brainless"(Ann Coulter).

The organic growth of committees also posed a number of challenges that made the overall OWS movement less effective than it could have been. While the general body was the central decision making body in any given OWS encampment, with the NYCGA responsible for protests in New York, a number of support committees sprouted up without any central planning (Welty p.31). In reaction the General Assembly created the Spokes Council, meant to reign in continued growth of committees, some of which were attempting to oversee identical or at least very similar projects within the larger system (Welty p.36).

Along with the confusing and often chaotic General Assemblies, the lack of centralized leadership cast doubt that OWS would be capable of extracting any meaningful demands, or even opening up meaningful dialogue with the government. OWS, as an experiment in direct democracy as well as an anti-corruption protest, ensured that the emergence of strong leadership representing the demands and ideals of the movement might be impossible. The mortal blow to OWS was dealt when the General Assembly and all following decision making bodies decided that its experiment into direct democracy would require a consensus to make any decision:

Consensus was reached if no blocks were presented (blocks represent serious ethical or moral or safety concerns that might cause the blocker to leave the movement). If a block could not be resolved by amending the proposal, the proposal could still be passed if the group reached a "modified consensus" of at least 90 percent of the gathering (Welty p.29).

It was not impossible for a charismatic leadership could not have emerged from the masses in OWS, it was just highly unlikely that in an environment in which "there [were] lots of angry people... blocking serious proposals... a

meeting of forty representatives [paralyzed] by as few as three insistent time-hogs” (Gitlin p.96).

Structural weaknesses aside, OWS lacked a central demand of the type that led to the success of the Tahrir square protests and that are currently driving the Occupy Central protests in Hong Kong. The original inspiration for OWS, Adbusters, was searching for a demand that could mobilize people and inspire them to brainstorm additional demands for OWS to present to the government. Proposed demands ranged from cuts to defense spending to increased spending in public works programs to a constitutional amendment declaring the end of corporate personhood (Gitlin p. 107). Todd Gitlin accurately and correctly points out that while a wide range of demands were proposed, OWS was never able to piece together either a single demand or a package of demands that was both succinct and robust enough to survive passage through the chaotic General Assembly or any of its subsidiary committees (Gitlin pg. 109).

The incoherent demands inherent to the OWS movement are a trait unique to OWS, and not found anywhere else in the movements discussed here. The lack of demands, coupled with the popularity of OWS as an occupational force within numerous cities suggests that extracting concessions from the government may not have been seen as the primary goal of OWS. Both Susan Kang and Todd Gitlin argue that OWS as a whole represented a demand, and that OWS failed to latch on to it as a central rallying point. OWS made no formal demands because the system that they were protesting against was seen as too broken to fix. OWS was devised to represent a new way forward that required a

complete and immediate abandonment of economic and political structures that were in place in favor of the direct democracy experiment that was taking place in city centers around the country. OWS failed to effect any meaningful immediate changes, because their goals were too lofty and their inherent distrust in the political system made them reticent, and at times openly hostile, to working with the government.

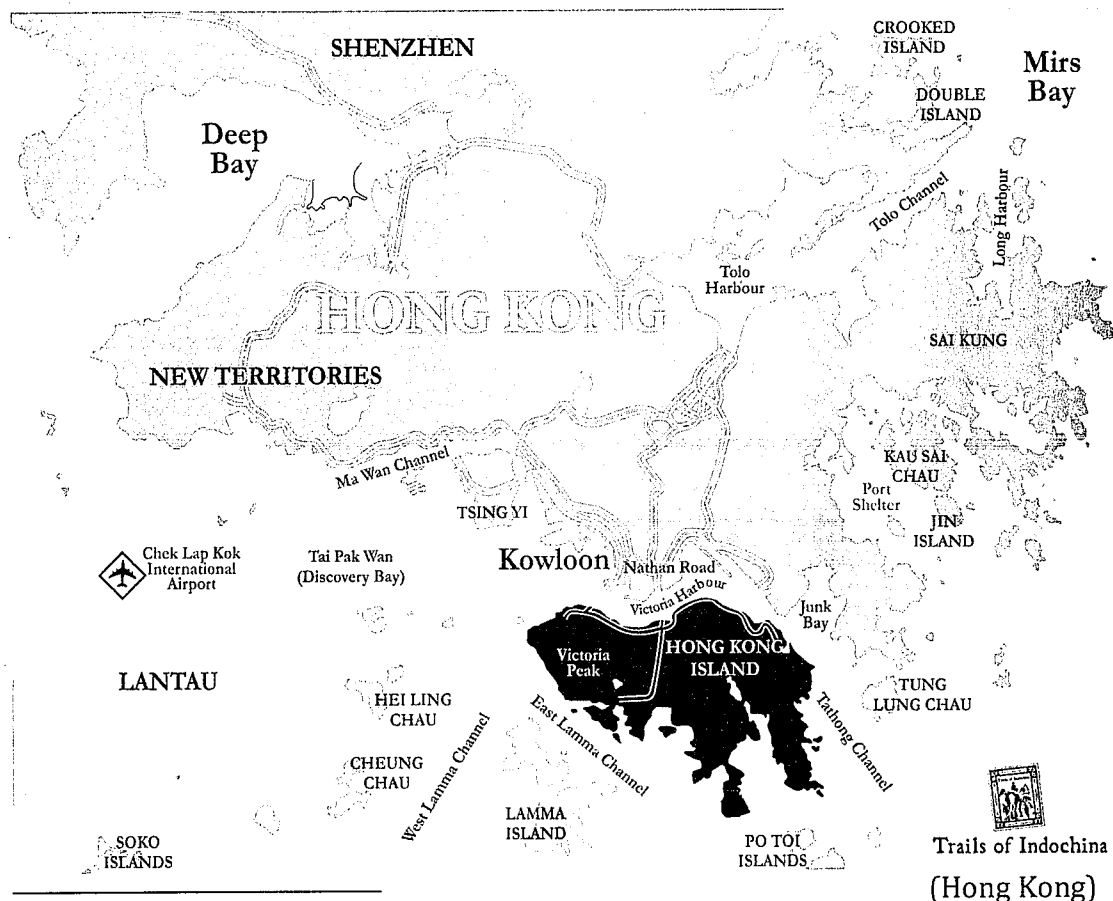
#### Occupy Central: Hong Kong SAR

Though OWS has lost much of its momentum in the United States, other protests have sought to recapture the energy of OWS. Occupy Central in Hong Kong is the latest protest to attempt to enact political change through the occupation of public space. Occupy Central has publicly demanded that the goal of their occupation is to force Beijing to allow open elections for all elected officials in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's political and economic systems are closely tied, ensuring that economic and political interests are mutually dependent.

Historically, Hong Kong has represented an entry point for Western interests into China. Great Britain dominated Hong Kong politics and economics until 1997, when Hong Kong was relinquished to Mainland China. Hong Kong's century and a half entanglement with Great Britain began with the first of three Opium Wars (Chalkley). The British sparked the first opium war by flooding China with the deadly drug. The Chinese tried to halt the flow of the drug in 1839 by impounding and destroying the drug, the British responded with its naval force. China had no real navy, and was no match for the overwhelming force that the British were able to marshal (Beatty pg. 12). Great Britain was able to swiftly

force the Chinese to the table and as a result of the first opium war and the Treaty of Nanking in 1843 was able to secure Hong Kong Island as a permanent trading post.

Fourteen years later Hong Kong Island had become a bustling center for British trade into Mainland China. Trading disputes and tensions continued to build from the first opium war. Hostilities<sup>12</sup> again broke out between the two nations in 1856, and again the British naval forces were able to force the Chinese to cede additional land to the British. This time Kowloon Peninsula, a small



<sup>12</sup> In 1860, at the conclusion of the Second Opium War, British troops led by Lord Elgin looted and destroyed the Chinese summer palaces. The destruction of the summer palace in Beijing has left a bitter hole in Chinese hearts and minds felt to this day. The British have previously defended their actions as a response to the torture and murder of members of their diplomatic corps at the hands of Chinese forces (Bowlby).

corner of Mainland China across the bay from Hong Kong, was lost (Chalkley). Through the treaty of Nanking and the Convention of Peking the British were able to secure the Island of Hong Kong and Kowloon Peninsula as permanent trading posts in China. At the time of the British takeover there was no intention to ever return either parcels to China.

Modern Hong Kong and the New Territories<sup>13</sup> were not fully realized until the close of the nineteenth century. The Sino-Japanese War and China's subsequent defeat in 1895 allowed Great Britain to exact additional concessions from a weakened China. In 1898 Great Britain signed a 99-year lease that secured a massive swath of land, expanding British led territory from a mere 110 sq. Km to 1000 sq. Km (Chalkley, Beatty).

The final British land<sup>14</sup> grab that resulted in the consolidation of the New Territories into Hong Kong established the colony as a center of trade that eventually spawned offshoot industries such as shipbuilding and ship repair. These industries remained dominant until the 1920's when Hong Kong shifted towards a manufacturing based economy (Chalkley). The British trading post was an economic beacon for Chinese manufacturers who relocated there in times of social and political upheaval in Mainland China (Chalkley).

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<sup>13</sup> The New Territories are a roughly 370 square mile collection of islands and the peninsula north of Hong Kong Island. Taken by Great Britain in a 99-year lease in 1898, the New Territories is the largest region of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

<sup>14</sup> Macau, located nearly 40 miles from Hong Kong, shares a similar history to Hong Kong. Taken by the Portuguese during the First Opium War and made a Portuguese colony in 1887, Macau was transferred back to China in 1999, two years after Hong Kong was returned. China implemented the same "one country, two systems" policy in Macau.

That Hong Kong's economy was resistant to the effects of political upheaval in Mainland China was due to the nonexistent political atmosphere in the colony. The first Governor in Hong Kong was sent with very specific instructions from London that the newly acquired territory was to be a departure from earlier colonial efforts:

The Hong Kong Governor's first duty was to maintaining good relations with the court of Peking, his second to look after the trading interests of British subjects in the Treaty ports, and only in third place was he to try to set up a constitutional structure within which the new colony and its swarms of immigrants could be governed and kept in order. (Beatty pg. 12)

The extremely limited political environment within Hong Kong at the beginning of the twentieth century mirrored Mainland China at the close of the twentieth century. Alienation from the ruling class paired with the periodic revolutions from Mainland China eventually culminated in protests in the 1960's (Beatty). The Cultural Revolution<sup>15</sup> paralyzed the local economy with fear that China would retake Hong Kong by overwhelming the British government with a flood of refugees seeking food and shelter (Chalkley). In 1966 protests demanding the colonial government be opened to the native Chinese led to nearly a week of protests. In 1967 the anger of the people flared up again, this time resulting in widespread strikes that eventually cost 51 people their lives (Beatty). The violence of '66 and '67<sup>16</sup> prompted social reforms that opened very

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<sup>15</sup> The Cultural Revolution, from 1966-1976, was a social political movement whose goal was to establish Maoism as the dominant political and social paradigm in China. The Cultural Revolution accomplished its goals through violence at groups traditionally characterized as the bourgeois.

<sup>16</sup> In April of 1966 the Star Ferry created a two-tiered class structure on the Star Ferry. The Star Ferry was the main mode of transportation between Hong Kong Island and

limited sectors of government up to local leaders to provide some input on advisory boards. The advisory boards while popular, did not prompt further political reform.

It was not until Great Britain began negotiating terms for the end of the 99-year New Territory lease that political reform was even considered by the British. In the 1980's China signaled that it had interest in regaining control of Hong Kong when it invested \$100 million in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone located on the border of the Hong Kong colony (Chalkley). Formal discussions between Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of Great Britain, and Deng Xiaoping, the Premier of China, opened on December 19, 1984 (Beatty). These discussions resulted in Great Britain ceding the entire Hong Kong territory back to China with the understanding that the economic system of Hong Kong would be maintained for a minimum of 50 years following the hand-over (Chalkley). Deng Xiaoping publicly acknowledged the unique nature of Hong Kong. In statements to foreign officials Chinese leadership expressed their hope that Hong Kong would serve as a social and economic model for the rest of the country and that by the end of 50 years China would resemble Hong Kong socially and economically, and thus avoiding the need to make any structural changes to the systems in Hong Kong<sup>17</sup>. While the Chinese often expressed a desire for the Hong People to rule Hong Kong, little attention was paid to the selection of its leadership. The Joint

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Kowloon. The resulting riots highlighted the tension Hong Kongers faced torn between China and Great Britain (1966 Star Ferry)

<sup>17</sup> One Country, Two Systems was a policy conceptualized by Deng Xiaoping to bring Hong Kong under Chinese rule while protecting Hong Kong's economy. The policy was designed to remain in place for 50 years. Deng Xiaoping told Margaret Thatcher that he chose 50 years because "China hoped to approach the economic level of advanced countries by the end of that time" (Beatty pg. 15).

declaration that spelled out the Hong Kong handover dictated that the Legislative council would be selected via elections, and the Chief Executive could be chosen either by election or consultation with Beijing (Beatty pg 15).

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be selected by election or through consultations held locally and be appointed by the Central People's Government.

The method for selecting the Chief Executive shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures.

The specific method for selecting the Chief Executive is prescribed in Annex I: "Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" (Basic Law)

The Joint Declaration, signed in December 1984, signaled a final realization that China would in the end regain control over Hong Kong. The Hong Kong that China would in the end receive was very different than the one it had negotiated for. The first elections in Hong Kong in 1985 featured geographical constituencies indirectly elected, similar to the United States' use of the Electoral College, and functional constituencies, determined by voters from occupational groups (Beatty).

The Tiananmen Square Massacre occurred on June 4, 1989. The massacre followed six weeks of protests by students calling for democracy; anti-corruption measures, freedom of the press, and potentially votes in China. The brutal crackdown ordered by Deng Xiaoping sent shockwaves through the developing democracy in Hong Kong. A year before the Massacre, Beijing had announced the *Basic Law for Hong Kong*, a document that guaranteed protections for free speech, travel, and religious tolerance among other rights.

The Chinese National Constitution provides these same protections to the mainland population. Following Tiananmen Square, Beijing and the *Basic Law* lost much of its credibility (Chalkley).

The 1997 handover provided Great Britain with an opportunity to introduce the possibility of democratic rule in the city. Media reports exaggerated the tradition of democracy in Hong Kong as well as the threat Beijing represented. Democracy was introduced by Great Britain only when it became clear that China was not interested in renewing Great Britain's 99-year lease over the New Territories. "Near the end of the negotiations the Chinese agreed that the Hong Kong legislature would be 'constituted by elections' and the chief executive of Hong Kong would be chosen by 'elections or consultations'" (Beatty pg. 15). When it became apparent that the New Territories were going to revert to Chinese control, the British made a calculated decision to cede Kowloon and Hong Kong back to the Chinese, the smaller territory was deemed "not viable on its own" (Chalkley). The British response to the loss of the New Territories provides some evidence that at least until the Joint Declaration democracy was not a major concern to leadership in Hong Kong or London.

The Joint Declaration was originally conceived of as an economic treaty designed to maintain Hong Kong as an open port. The British disappointed in Beijing's decision not to renew the lease began to view the Joint Declaration as an opportunity to frustrate Chinese leadership. Deng Xiaoping initially described the process of uniting the economic systems of Mainland China and Hong Kong as "One Country, Two Systems" (Beatty pg 15). Under one country, two systems,

Deng Xiaoping promised that China would not interfere in Hong Kong's way of life for at least fifty years. It was not until 1980 that the stage was set for the introduction of democracy to Hong Kong and the New Territories.

The first elections in Hong Kong took place in 1985 when for the first time part of the Legislative Council (LEGCO) was elected (Beatty pg 17). Prior to the elections the Governor appointed LEGCO. In 1985 24 of the 57 seats were up for election, the Governor appointed the remaining seats. The Hong Kong Legislative Council is divided into two broad constituencies, geographical and functional constituencies. A functional constituency in Hong Kong elects members to the LEGCO from an electorate from professional organizations such as lawyers or garment workers. Geographic constituencies derive their electorate from districts of the city based on location. Voters in geographical constituencies elected half of the seats much like in the United States. Functional constituencies, voters selected from various business and professional sectors. In 1985 only 70,000 of the 6,000,000 people in Hong Kong, or just over 1% of the population, were eligible to vote (Beatty). Though much of the population was barred from voting it did mark the first time elections were held in Hong Kong, and began a transformation of Hong Kong politics.

The 1985 elections were structured to limit the emergence of political parties. There were no direct elections in the 1985 election and functional constituencies selected half of the field. The 1991 election featured the first direct elections in eighteen seats in the LEGCO (Beatty). Pro-democracy parties won a landslide victory in the election, taking 16 of the 18 seats up for popular vote

(Beatty). By the handover in 1997 political parties were firmly established in the Hong Kong political field. The smooth political transition from British rule to Chinese control served to alleviate many of the fears that prompted the birth of many of these political parties (Siu-Kai).

Elections<sup>18</sup> and universal suffrage have for the most part become the norm in Hong Kong politics, save for the election of the Chief Executive. The Hong Kong Basic Law provided for the election of Legislative Council members. The Basic Law provides a number of routes that the Chief Executive can be selected. The most used method is direct appointment by the Chinese Central Government. The Joint Declaration allowed for the democratic election of members of the LEGCO, but when it came to the selection of the CE British negotiators left China with the option of selecting that position independently of any elections.

The election of the Chief Executive is the point of conflict that has inspired the Occupy Central (OC), the next selection of the Chief Executive will occur in 2017. Like the other protests previously discussed, the central governments ties to business interests appear to be one of the driving factors of the ongoing protests. OC's demand that Beijing allow open elections is an important defining feature; it does not define OC as a movement.

The current protests began gaining steam in early July, 2014 when liberal groups, including the Pan-Democrats, the Alliance for True Democracy, People Power, and Scholarism held a city wide referendum to select from an array of

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<sup>18</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Legislative Council, serving a term from 2012-2016, is made up of 70 members split evenly between geographical and functional constituencies. (Hong Kong Legislative)

proposals to allow for the popular nomination and election of the Chief Executive (Lam South China Morning Post). Beijing responded to the protesters by issuing a policy white paper that was received as a threat by the residents of Hong Kong that “the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by Hong Kong is subject to the central government’s authorization” (Beijing). Over the course of ten days nearly 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the population of Hong Kong citizens cast their vote in what had been characterized by the central government as an illegal vote.

The day after the vote 200,000 people marched from Victoria Park to the LEGCO building. Speaking with the protesters it immediately became clear that OC and the accompanying protest groups were not primarily focused on democracy. Protestors supported popular election of the CE; however they were open to expressing their distrust of Beijing and to a lesser extent the functional constituencies in LEGCO. One protester I interviewed in Hong Kong, who wished to remain anonymous expressed frustration that Beijing “was not interested in listening to us. That is why we have to take to the streets to make our voices heard”.

Emily Lau, Pan-Democrat member of LEGCO, weighed in on the fundamental goals and concerns of OC. Ms. Lau noted that “few people have any illusions, but people still want to urge Beijing to be reasonable”. Her statements mirror polling within Hong Kong that trust in the central government, the HKSAR government, and the One country, two systems overall were at the lowest level

since 2003 (But)<sup>19</sup>. Pan-Democrats expressed interest in working with Beijing only if Beijing decided to respect the will of the people.

Starting in September 2014, OC and associated groups began occupying various locations from Mong Kok to the Admiralty, separate districts in Hong Kong. These locations were chosen for their economic importance to the city. In the two-month's since the start of the occupation, the goals of the protests have gone through an evolution placing a greater emphasis on economic disparity and less focus on a more open democratic process. Students have largely been able to displace the professors and ministers that laid the groundwork for OC. The wealth gap in Hong Kong has fueled the younger protestors campaign for democracy (Wall Street journal).

Hong Kong's economic disparity relies on two factors, expensive real estate markets, and the influence corporations can bring to bear on and in LEGCO. With one of the most expensive real estate markets in the world, paired with a nearly non-existent minimum wage, it ensures that some 20% of Hong Kongers live under the poverty line (Friedman). Economic reforms are slow to make their way through LEGCO mostly due to the functional constituencies, a throwback to British rule. Functional constituencies disrupt the democratic process and until they are removed groups such as the Pan-Democrats are doubtful that economic or political reform will occur (Lau).

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<sup>19</sup> In June of 2013, as planning for Occupy Central was getting underway, trust in the central government had fallen to 32%. The previous low was in 1997 when trust was below 30%. Trust in the Hong Kong government was at 48%, with its previous low being in 2003 at 30%. Surprisingly, confidence in the one country, two systems principle had collapsed to 45% in June 2013.

## Conclusion

The Arab Spring, PWS, and OC represent an intersection of political and economic entanglement that is driving local conflicts around the world. Protests around the world have been driven by economic disparity, corporate influences, and social injustice. At the heart of all of these protests is the idea that the governments are either unable or unwilling to respond to the demands of the people. Trust in governments does seem to play a role in encouraging protestors to take to the streets. In the United States and Hong Kong polling data shows that shortly before OWS and OC trust indexes declined and tended to bottom out at the height of the protest.

OWS and OC and Tahrir Square are important protests in modern times. Tahrir Square showed that with popular support governments could lose enough support to make them susceptible to a later violent overthrow. OWS exposed the close ties government and the banking industry had. Unfortunately OWS was unable to piece itself into a cohesive organization capable of prioritizing its demands. OC is one of the most substantial threats to China's Central Government since Tiananmen Square protests. OC leadership recognizes that they are in a tenuous position, capable of extracting limited demands but always on the precipice of utter annihilation.

Though disparate in their inception and demands all three protest organizations, Tahrir Square, Occupy Wall Street, and Occupy Central, have common themes that undergird their positions. Each group finds commonality in that they are reacting to a perceived neglect from their corresponding

governments. Whether it is the lack of government planning in Egypt, lax government oversight in the financial in sector on Wall Street, or unequal representation in Honk Kong each group is responding to the lack of adequate representation in the eyes of the masses.

These protests suggest that a shift in global politics is at a crossroads. International trade, communications, and finance are forcing people to reconsider structures that have long been accepted. Citizens are beginning to reject ideas that governments and corporations must maintain close ties. Citizens are demanding that governments instead act as an agent of the population to protect them from perceived predatory practices of multi-national corporations. Social justice is the rallying call of the people (Lau). Rawls concept of justice as fairness is being widely accepted by people around the world. As such government policy of economically supporting certain sub-groups while neglecting others serves to build up angst and frustration that make widespread protests more likely. Recently In St. Louis and New York protests have broken out in response to grand jury decisions not to indict police officers accused of killing unarmed citizens. While racial tensions are important feature of these protests, the idea that special privileges exist in society that allow one group to prey on another are incensing the crowds. Government policies in the future will have to work to build trust with the citizens. Until trust can be re-established it is likely that additional protests will continue to break out<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> I would like to thank my loving wife for all of her support and patience throughout my travels and research, my parents who have always pushed me to achieve more, Dr. Bob Beatty whose guidance and inspiration have helped to broaden my horizons, and the

## Appendix A

Interview with Emily Lau (Lau Wai-hing)

Interviewed by Charles M. Kerls in Hong Kong, July 1, 2014 (In LEGCO offices)

Otherwise you can attend the press conference, it's about our response to what happened yesterday

(Press said vote illegal) No, I think they retracted that already

I think something that is illegal and something that has no legal foundation are two different things, I think they mixed it up and they retracted it

Well of course the people are very eager for democratic elections and that's why they did it in such an orderly and dignified way.

This is some introduction about my colleagues. We have six members in the counsel and I am the chair of the party. And if you turn over to the flip side that's our manifesto, so anyway that's some background information for you

(affect next campaign) Well it all depends on Beijing, the ball is in their court. So if they are wise enough to respond positively and to show that they understand the wishes of the people, then of course things will be easier. But if they are determined to show that

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wonderful people of Hong Kong, thank you for letting me stand with you and for teaching me what your vision of democracy is.

they don't care what the people want then of course it could be very problematic and I guess few people have any illusions, but people still want to urge Beijing to be reasonable and (unintelligible) that is not something that is possible

(Democracy like pregnancy) Yeah of course, you can't have a little bit of democracy. So I think what some people are urging us to do now is to go on and just have universal suffrage in a sense of one person one vote, not one man one vote, one person one vote, but we will, we will refine, we will improve the system as we go along and what they mean is that let us have one person one vote, but the candidates may all just be picked by Beijing and they will disallow certain people and allow certain people to stand, but nevertheless, its a vote, so why don't you do it. Take it. But if you look at yesterday's result, because one question that was put to the people was whether they think that if a package does not comply with international standards whether \_\_\_\_ should accept or reject it and the resounding answer is no, you shouldn't accept it. And what are international standards in a nutshell, it means that the electoral system should not contain any unreasonable restrictions and should allow the voters a genuine choice. So if you have candidates all from the same camp and all the other camps are excluded then the voters will not have a genuine choice. So that is it, so I don't think we will accept an election package which will provide for one person one vote but will exclude certain people. We're not saying, "Oh, you must give a seat to the pan democrat, so we'll be satisfied", no we're not arguing that. We're saying the system should be open and fair, so that people with different political persuasions will be given a chance.

(apathy since handover) I think that...yes. If you look at the uh, if you look at what happened in 2003, that was the year of a march relating to article 23 of the basic law

national security and also that was the year of SARS when almost 300 people died, so the economy was bad. And that years a huge turnout, it was about 3/4 of a million and in that occasion people dress in black, can you imagine in this weather, people dress in black. so tomorrow they are calling on the people to dress in white, so I think you ought to dress in white tomorrow, otherwise you be so hot. You'll still be so hot. So anyway, so uh, that was very big. And so uh it's not true to say that after '97, people did not care. initially for the first few years maybe, but in '03 because people were afraid about legislation on national security, which they fear would incriminate free speech, so they all turn out to march whether they are very rich or very poor, very old or very young. This time around I think many more will turn out too.

('83, 50 year promise) Well the white paper, I don't have the english version here, this is the chinese version, I should have it somewhere, and you can buy it in the book store, this white paper on one country, two systems, which was released on the 10th of June and that made people very worried because they think it has uh, although some people would argue that it has nothing new, it's just restating the whole policy. But what people see is the emphasis in the past, they emphasize high degree of autonomy. Now they emphasize overall complete jurisdiction meaning that there may be no more room for autonomy. And they also say that the judges are part of the government, the administration which make people very frightened because they always think that the judges are independent and free to hand down verdicts they like. But now it seems like they want to push the judges to become a hand of the leadership of the executive authorities, so these are things that make people worried. And that's why so many people turn out to march or to vote yesterday and I think many more will turn out to march tomorrow

(Business interests in hong kong - functional constituencies) which is something I've given you, let me see the page shows these are the functional constituencies - name, number; geographical, number

(Business interest influence) You see, we are even institutionalized as you can see, four chambers of commerce actually are given seats where in fact there are of course maybe a hundred chambers of commerce, but these four were handpicked to be formed as a constituency where they can elect their own representatives. And many of the members of these chambers are companies, so you have company vote, which is very very undemocratic, very archaic, and you know unacceptable.

(influence geographical with money like in America) Well they still, they give money to the political parties and all that. I don't have that page with the political parties, but you know our political parties in Hong Kong. Of course they influence that. Pro- Beijing parties get support from the companies on the orders of Beijing so its all very locked together.

(polling station - young people) Yeah, that's the thing. It has really captured the imagination of young people so it is something that the administration should be worried about if they want to do things which alienate the young people and it is fatal

(Travel Shanghai) was invited but I didn't go, but two members of my party want. (Not even going to attempt to spell those names)

(Discussions productive) Not really. I mean it was a show, I mean you only have one or two hours (???so many people staying a few minutes???) So it shows you that Beijing does not have the faintest clue. If you really want to talk to people you sit down like you and me, you sit down and have a genuine discussion. Not to have a big show, you know many people sit down one by one, it's crazy. They just don't have a clue

(white paper inspired ppl to vote) Yeah, those people are angry. I think its quite natural, normally, especially, its only a civil referendum. It's not a real referendum. Many people would not bother. But if you have things that really get them worked up then they will go out and vote. You use that to show that they are angry and Beijing does not even understand that. (A) They didn't know that this would upset people that much, which shows a lack of appreciation and then not just this but also the finance committee meeting last friday, which saw the chairman putting something to the vote very quickly when all the members had gone outside to surround him, and people were very upset, and then he just ignore and said okay let vote. So okay then it was passed, but there were thousands of people outside they were screaming, they were very unhappy. And again many young people. So what they have done is to alienate the young, so it is very very stupid

(Beijing push through CE as punishment for Occ Cen?) well if they try to push through something that is undemocratic, I think there will be enough votes in the counsel to stop that because according to the basic law if they want that to pass they need 2/3s. We don't have 2/3s, but they don't have 2/3s. So it's really a game of frustration. You can stop them, but you cannot let something go positively. So if they have a really bad proposal then I don't think we will let it pass. And what we want is a package that will

allow for competition and would allow the voters to have genuine choice

(If allowed gen choice, who?) Well, it is very regrettable that people in my party are not really focusing on that now, they are just focusing on the whole thing about fighting for universal suffrage. But in the past the democratic party have actually, they have taken part in small circle elections which are not by universal suffrage. So they have taken part and no doubt they will take part, but this time is different if it is really a bad election. Now we will not allow a force universal suffrage to go through so if we cannot get that through if it does not go through, we will stick to the original, which is election by 1200 people, a committee, which chose the current chief executive. But this time round maybe even the democratic party will not field any candidate, because I always feel that if you field a candidate, you lend legitimacy to the process, so I have always been against taking part in these you know small circle elections whereby most people have no votes. But somehow the democratic party has always chosen to take part. My group, the frontier, will merge with the democratic party in the end of 2008, before that my group never supposed these small circle, we always boycotted them. But the democratic party always wanted to take part. They say to use the process to highlight the problems, which is a way of looking at it. But also, you give legitimacy because you take part. But this time round, I think, after all this, if everything failed, and we continued to have small circle elections, I don't think we should take part.

(Occupy Central got it start) Beginning of last year

(Other so long lived) long lived in what sense

(occupy central different from other protests) Oh yeah, this is very different because this is civil disobedience. So of course it is something that upset the administration quite a bit. And in the past we always just have you know demonstrations, marches, all very orderly and so on. Of course, I was arrested in 1996 during a small circle election of the CE, and on that occasion, I was arrested because we were demonstrating outside a convention center. But apart from that normally all the demonstration are all peaceful and orderly

(tents) Not connected. Just demonstrators, who have all kinds of demonstrations all the time. Really terrible

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