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# Comparison of Political Systems between Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong

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## **Abstract**

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*As a former British colony, Hong Kong's political system differs significantly from the Chinese Mainland. After Hong Kong's (HK) return, the Chinese central government adopted the policy of "one country, two systems" to cope with the differences in the political systems of the two places, hoping to find common ground while reserving differences for future development. Nonetheless, this policy and excellent ideas have been severely impacted due to a series of wars. In Hong Kong, the one country, two systems policy has encountered numerous obstacles, and the political system of the Chinese Mainland has also been affected. This study will compare and analyze the Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong political systems from the standpoint of the fundamental law, policy documents, history, and the humanities. This study analyzes the historical, sociological, and geopolitical factors contributing to these frameworks and identifies their primary differences and similarities.*

## **1. Introduction**

The political system is the country's highest authority, highest power, and highest power. The primary topics include the organizational structure of state power, the structure of state institutions, the political party system, and the electoral system. Because various nations, or the same nation under different circumstances, have distinct political systems. Hong Kong's institutional practices play a unique role in developing the national government (Lu, 2016). It can be divided into the monarchy, republic, parliamentary system, and people's representative system based on its institutional structure. Implement "central level" and "local level" systems according to differing management authorities. It is not easy to distinguish the political system from a term or concept. How can the characteristics of Hong Kong's political system be comprehended? Since HK's return, this subject has been extremely controversial. Some people in HK believe that HK's political system is a "separation of powers" system; The Central Committee emphasized that "executive dominance is the most important feature of the political system of the HK Special Administrative Region." Following the principle of separation of powers, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government are subject to checks and balances and mutual supervision. The pro-democracy organizers of Hong Kong want the region to remain distinct from other Chinese cities. Relationships between Hong Kong and mainland China are, therefore, complicated. Despite their ongoing political disputes, mainland China and Hong Kong are economically complementary (Bajpai, 2022). Therefore, the original intention of the power structure's designers was to establish an approximately balanced relationship between the three power subjects. In terms of the essence of power, the executive power is the most proactive of the three, and its initiative is unique. The levy determines its response to society is more positive and effective than the legislative and judicial branches of public power. Hong Kong's mini-constitution, the Basic Law, governs the

majority of spheres of life, at least legally, except for international and defense affairs (Wang & Lyu, 2022). Even in nations where "parliamentary sovereignty" was the original goal of institutional design, the so-called "administrative dominance" emerged after a lengthy political practice. The ever-changing requirements of society determine administrative initiative. Modern society cannot be governed effectively without such positive and rapid response capacity. Since mutual mistrust and suspicion are at an all-time high, more Hong Kong residents consider themselves Hongkongers rather than Chinese (Carroll, 2022). Due to the active characteristics of the executive power, the legislative and judicial powers exhibit passive characteristics. Their reaction to society is tardy. Most people are oblivious to the complexity of Hong Kong's relationship with the Chinese Mainland. It comprises regulations, commerce, economics, political affairs, and, most importantly, individuals. China's Mainland and Hong Kong complement one another economically. However, their political disagreements are still quite vehement. Before reunification, Hong Kong and mainland China must resolve significant disagreements (ThePressFree, 2021). People's intuitive impression of the operation of the three public powers under the "separation of three powers" system is that the executive power is the strongest, the legislative power is the second-strongest, and the judicial power is the weakest. This is despite the institutional arrangement balancing their relationship through mutual power restriction. Consequently, some individuals explain that the characteristics of Hong Kong's administrative dominance are equivalent to the activity, initiative, and flexibility of the executive power in the structure of the separation of powers, conflating the characteristics of Hong Kong's "administrative dominance" with the phenomenon of "administrative dominance" in the structure of the separation of powers. In addressing issues pertinent to the Special Administrative Regions (SARs) of Hong Kong and Macao, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has adopted "One Country, Two Systems" as its central national policy (Tiexun, 2011). Nevertheless, "administrative dominance" under the three-pronged system is a relatively minor administrative power phenomenon. It is a phenomenon rather than the result of institutional arrangements that various power subjects rise and fall in succession during the operation of the entire power system without posing serious challenges to the decentralization principle. Consequently, any phenomenon of power expansion will not essentially weaken the other two powers. Even if this occurs, the institutional arrangement has a mechanism for recovery and correction. The transfer of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to China represented a significant step in the evolution of colonialism (Mathews, 1997). The characteristics of Hong Kong's political system cannot be reduced to the concept of "separation of powers." This article will begin with the constitutional principles of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's political system. In many traditional legal jurisdictions, courts have not consistently upheld the separation of powers, and the Hong Kong judiciary in its early days was no exception (Gittings, 2019). The Basic Law of Hong Kong guides the

institutional origin of Hong Kong's political system, thereby elucidating that the high degree of autonomy of the HK Special Administrative Region as a local administrative region in administrative, legislative, and judicial aspects is not a complete and independent system. It is subject to the restrictions and limitations imposed by the central authority. In addition to these three powers, the central government has judicial power over local governments. Therefore, it is neither appropriate nor evident to use the concept of "three powers" to describe the characteristics of the political system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, which is heavily influenced by the political system of mainland China.

Mainland China and Hong Kong's political structure reflects two distinct paradigms within the larger Chinese context. Both regions are located in China, but their political systems, legal systems, and forms of government are notably distinct. Even though they share a similar cultural history and are politically linked, the political structures of mainland China and Hong Kong are entirely distinct. The difficulty lies in determining the scope, fundamental causes, and potential repercussions of these variations on distinct populations' governance, rights, and liberties. This study comprehensively compares the political systems of Hong Kong and mainland China by identifying significant parallels and differences and analyzing their effects on governance, civil liberties, and public participation. This study compares Hong Kong and mainland China's political systems in depth. The present research aims to contribute to a greater understanding of the complexities of political systems within the larger Chinese context and to provide insights that can inform policy discussions and potential changes by highlighting differences, similarities, and possible areas of convergence between the two structures. The objectives and research questions are to compare and contrast the political landscapes of Mainland China and Hong Kong regarding governance structures, legal structures, and decision-making processes.

The research queries derived from these objectives are listed below:

RQ1: What is the difference between the political systems of Mainland China and Hong Kong

RQ2: How do the political systems of Mainland China and Hong Kong differ regarding governance structures, legal frameworks, and decision-making processes?

This research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the similarities and differences between the political systems of mainland China and Hong Kong by addressing these research questions. This study has significant academic value because it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on political structures by thoroughly comparing Mainland China and Hong Kong. By analyzing the political structures of Mainland China and Hong Kong, this research will provide valuable insights into the benefits, faults, and opportunities for altering the way governments operate.

## 2. Background of the difference between two political systems

When China took control of the former British colony of Hong Kong more than a decade ago, it vowed to preserve many of the city's distinctive characteristics. The Chinese Communist Party has no control over Hong Kong, just as they have no control over the cities and provinces on the Chinese Mainland. Nonetheless, Beijing continues to wield considerable influence through its adherents, who dominate the political landscape in the region ([Maizland, 2022](#)). The British colonial history of Hong Kong is the primary cause for the vast differences between the political systems of the two places. Due to its extensive colonial history, Hong Kong's political system leans toward the West. After the establishment of the Chinese Mainland in 1949, the CPC has continued to head the administrative leading political system. Due to the unique relationship between the two locations, their political systems have also been influencing one another. Especially after Hong Kong's return, China's central government influenced its political system and other aspects. Despite having similar Confucian ideals, these two cultures' approaches to modernization and the evolution of their social institutions have diverged substantially over the past century ([Yeh, Yi, Tsao, & Wan, 2013](#)). Since the territory's handover, most Hong Kong residents believe their true salaries have decreased ([Cheng, 2014](#)). Some influences contributed to Hong Kong's growth, while others were opposed by opposition or foreign forces, resulting in controversy and even conflict. The negative or positive impact of colonial history on Hong Kong is challenging to define, but its impact on political system differences is undeniable.

Due to the country's extensive dependence, China was experiencing significant economic and social instability. Early in 1840, the British administration dispatched an expeditionary army to China; it arrived in Hong Kong in June ([Pletcher, 2023](#)). Britain invaded China in 1839 to suppress opposition to its interference in the country's political and economic affairs. The capture of Hong Kong, a sparsely populated island off the coast of southern China, was one of Britain's initial actions in the conflict ([History, 2023](#)). In 1841, the British defeated the Qing Dynasty and acquired Hong Kong Island. Since 1898, the entirety of Hong Kong has been a British colony, and since 1997, this status has been maintained. China and the United Kingdom participated jointly in the handover and raising of the national flag at the HK Convention and Exhibition Centre in the early hours of July 1, 1997. HK returned to China after one hundred years of British colonial authority.

Due to commercial disputes, the Opium War broke out between Britain and China in 1839. When the Qing Dynasty was defeated by the British in 1841, British naval officer Charles Yilu and Qing official Qishan signed the "Treaty of Nose-Piercing Grass," which ceded HK Island to the British after days of negotiations. According to the agreement, Lu 1 landed near Shui Hang Hau Street in Sheung Wan on January 26, 1841, and occupied HK Island. Following this, the scope of the Opium War grew, and the British captured Xiamen, Ningbo, Shanghai, Zhenjiang, and Xiaguan in Nanjing. The Qing

Dynasty was compelled to sign the Treaty of Nanking with Britain in August 1842, ceding HK Island to the British.

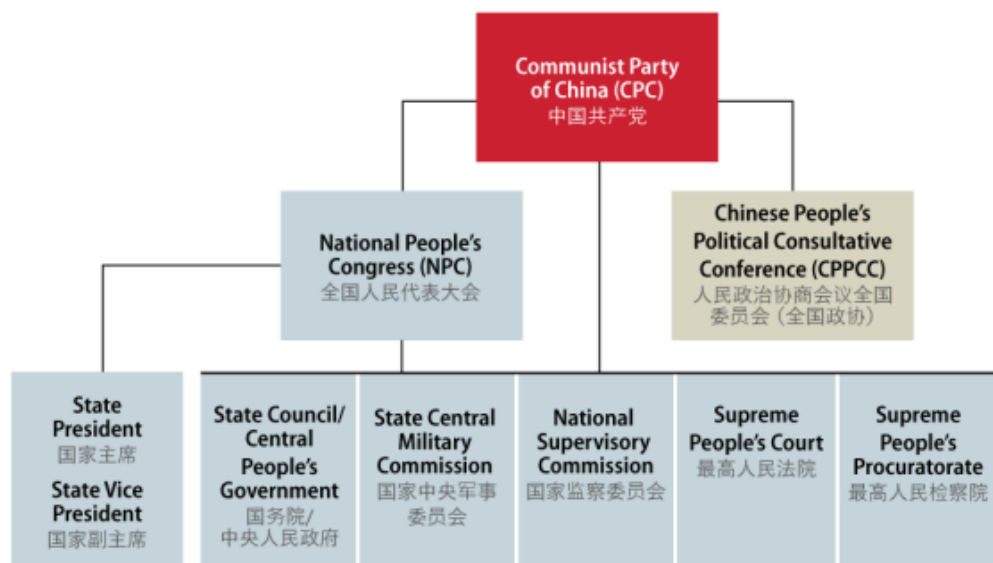
In 1860, the colony expanded when the Qing surrendered Kowloon, a region of highlands adjacent to Hong Kong Island, to the British ([Business Standard, 2022](#)). Then, in 1860, China and Britain signed the Treaty of Beijing, and the Qing Dynasty ceded the southern portion of the Kowloon Peninsula to Britain. Under British pressure, the Qing Dynasty signed the Special Regulations for the Expansion of Hong Kong Territory in 1898, which designated more than 200 islets north of the Kowloon Peninsula and south of the Shenzhen River as "New Territories" to be leased to the British for 99 years. Under a one-country, two-systems structure that permits the territory's political and economic structure for fifty years, Britain agreed in 1997 to hand Hong Kong over to China ([Business Standard, 2022](#)). On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong was safely transferred to China by numerous Chinese and British officials ([History, 2023](#)).

Since 1898, therefore, Hong Kong has been wholly occupied by the British. China and the United Kingdom participated jointly in the handover and raising of the national flag at the HK Convention and Exhibition Centre in the early hours of July 1, 1997. After a century of British colonial rule, Hong Kong ultimately returned to China; on the same day, China established the HK Special Administrative Region. After the HK independence ceremony, the HK Special Administrative Region was officially constituted, marking the return of HK to its own country and the end of a century of British colonization in HK. This period of history is also known as the "British colonial era" or "British colonial era in HK" From 1841 to 1997, the British occupied Hong Kong for 156 years. During the colonial period, the British administration was referred to as the HK Administration to differentiate it from the administration of the HK Special Administrative Region after the repatriation of Hong Kong to China. The press referred to the colonial authorities as the British authorities in Hong Kong. From late 1941 to 1945, Hong Kong was under the control of the Japanese Army, which invaded and briefly occupied the territory.

Although Hong Kong is considerably more well-known outside of China than within it, the notion that this former British colony is its distinct location is relatively new ([Carroll, 2022](#)). In 1982, the Chinese government and the United Kingdom negotiated a 99-year lease of Hong Kong under the Special Provisions for the Expansion of Hong Kong Territory. 1985 saw the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was formally constituted on July 1, 1997, signaling the end of British rule in Hong Kong. During the period of British colonial rule, HK participated in international competitions such as the Olympics under the name "HK" and not "British HK" In 2003, the largest demonstration since the transition of power occurred in opposition to proposed security-related laws that could have criminalized subversion against the Chinese government ([Business Standard, 2022](#)). Hong Kong has developed into a significant economic and cultural center in contrast to Communist China, which was cut off from the Mainland for many years ([Wong, 2022](#)).

### 3. The Basic Political System of Chinese Mainland

(Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Zimbabwe, 2021) The political party framework in a country is a crucial aspect of its political framework and is essential to democracy. The fundamental political structures of the Chinese Mainland are the Communist Party of China-directed framework of multi-party collaboration and political dialogue, the concept of regional ethnic autonomy, and the concept of popular self-governance. In addition, the structure of congresses is the fundamental form of government. The political structure of the People's Republic of China defies straightforward categorization. Comparing government agencies to their Western counterparts reveals significant differences (Lawrence & Lee, 2021).



**Figure 1.** The Political System of China at the State Level

Source: (Lawrence & Lee, 2021)

### 4. The system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation led by the CPC

The CPC-led multi-party collaboration and political dialogue framework is a brilliant political invention representing a new party system from Chinese soil (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). The preamble to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China states, "We must unite workers, peasants, and intellectuals and concentrate all possible forces for socialist construction." It should include all democratic groups and public organizations, including communist employees, socialist struggle supporters, and nationalistic socialist components. The Chinese Communist Party will govern; If patriots who maintain national unity participate in a large-scale war to maintain national unity, the united front will be further developed and consolidated. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) played a significant historical role as an organization with diverse representation and a unified front. It will play a larger role in political life, social life, diplomatic exchanges, socialist

modernization movement, and the UNITY and UNITY of all ethnic groups in our nation. "Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, multi-party cooperation and political consultation will be long-lasting, stable, and continually developed." The CPC's struggle against imperialism, hegemony, and institutional capitalism created a broad, unifying front by examining China's social and economic realities in depth ([Theory China, 2021](#)).

## 5. Regional ethnic autonomy

China is a multi-ethnic, unified nation. The framework of regional ethnic autonomy, which serves as the basis for the nation's political structure, reconstructs the essential components of interpersonal relationships and the governance structure of a singular multi-ethnic nation ([Chen, 2020](#)). Regional ethnic autonomy signifies that all ethnic groups, under the unified leadership of the State, are composed of themselves and exist together and that the local area in which they reside is set up with jurisdiction for them to exercise their authority. China must establish a comprehensive set of regional ethnic autonomy with Chinese characteristics in light of the new historical context.

## 6. Hong Kong's political system

Deng Xiaoping ([1992](#)) emphasized that the Basic Law should not be excessively detailed and that Hong Kong's system should not be wholly Westernized or a carbon copy of the Western system. For instance, the separation of three powers, the structure of the British and American parliamentary systems, and their use to determine whether or not democracy is appropriate; please consider this issue carefully. Multi-party elections and separation of powers characterize Western democracy; it should be noted that Deng Xiaoping not only requested the Mainland not to separate the three powers but also suggested that Hong Kong is not suitable for the separation of the three powers. Deng's first action in reestablishing political stability after 1979 was to reform the law. Deng viewed achieving long-term stability as his primary objective to guarantee overall social development ([C. W. Lo, 1992](#)).

In 1986, the Political System Task Force of the Drafting Committee of the Basic Law of the HK Special Administrative Region submitted to the Drafting Committee a report detailing the principles for designing the political system of the HK Special Administrative Region. The report summarizes the consensus reached by the Task Force since its inception and the issues that require further research. The second and ninth sections comprise the material directly related to this subject. The first issue concerns the fundamental structure of the HKSAR government. It is proposed that the three power structures of the HKSAR polity are, in principle, governed by one country and two systems.

However, some members have advocated for three structures of authority. Some members of Congress, for instance, support the separation of powers and legislative predominance. However, during the discussions, there was no disagreement regarding the independence of the judiciary and the mutual restraint and cooperation between the executive and legislative

branches. The Home Affairs Bureau is in charge of 18 regional councils that function as the local administration center in Hong Kong. Their primary function is advisory, but they also have some budgetary control over spending on social, cultural, and environmental initiatives ([Economist Intelligence Unit, 2022](#)). On this basis, the paper examines the issue of the "separation of three powers." It proposes a "separation of three powers" so that "three powers" can constrain, check, and cooperate.

Additionally, they concur that the chief executive can establish regulations. Theorists who advocate the separation of powers frequently use the above phrases to summarize the political system of Hong Kong. Having multiple branches of authority ensures that no one branch of the federal government feels more powerful ([Cornell Law School, n.d.](#)). From an objective perspective on the text's overall content, however, it is clear that the consensus of the drafters still contains several positions that were advanced as opposing positions by subsequent disputants. While affirming the separation of powers, the drafters also advanced the concept of administrative dominance and that the executive and legislative branches should serve as checks and balances. However, regardless, it objectively and faithfully reflects the drafter's understanding of pertinent issues at the drafting stage.

In the past, Hong Kong has been significantly involved in political unrest and protests. These disagreements over the constitutional terminology of the HK Basic Law have lent a distinct political dimension to discussions and conflicts in Hong Kong ([J. Chan, 2014](#)). Ji Pengfei drafted Notes on the Basic Law of the HK Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Draft) and other relevant materials at the third session of the Seventh National People's Congress in 1990. This is the most authoritative document interpreting the legislative intent of the Basic Law. According to this document's discussion of the relationship between the executive and the legislature, the relationship between the two should include checks and balances and coordination. However, to ensure the stability and administrative efficiency of Hong Kong, it is emphasized that "the Chief Executive must possess real power." Under the premise of conforming to democratic political principles, this is a method for emphasizing the authority status of the Chief Executive. [Ip \(2015\)](#) cites the Hong Kong Basic Law Committee as the finest example of political governance in practice.

## 7. The "one country, two systems" policy

"One country, two systems" refers to implementing the socialist system in mainland China and the capitalist system in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The Communist Party of China is studying this fundamental state policy to resolve the peaceful reunification of Taiwan with the Chinese Mainland and to reassert national sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macau. Mainland China is predominantly socialist, while Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau are predominantly capitalist within the People's Republic of China. Due to the "one country, two systems" policy, Hong Kong has a great deal of independence. Hong Kong's political structure is dominated by the executive branch, which the Chief Executive commands ([The China Current,](#)

2023). The executive branch is responsible for establishing public policy, establishing legislative priorities, and managing the governing body.

Regarding mainland China, most researchers and academics consider this a relatively optimal coexistence of the two modes. The special "China Decade" press conference was held on September 20, 2022, at the Ministry of Publicity of China. After the 18th CPC National Congress, Huang Liuquan and Wang Linggui, deputy directors of the Office of Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Bureau, introduced and answered pertinent questions regarding implementing the "one country, two systems" principle in Hong Kong and Macao. The National Security Law (Silver, 2020) was passed due to the widely acknowledged political instability in Hong Kong in 2019, caused by the government's proposal of a law allowing suspects to be deported to mainland China to face prosecution or serve a prison sentence.

The Office of Defence Affairs of The State Council was mandated by law in Hong Kong. A Defense Affairs Commission was established for Hong Kong, and a defense technical expert was appointed for Macao. These significant measures affirm the "one country, two systems" principle and the rule of law in Hong Kong and Macau.

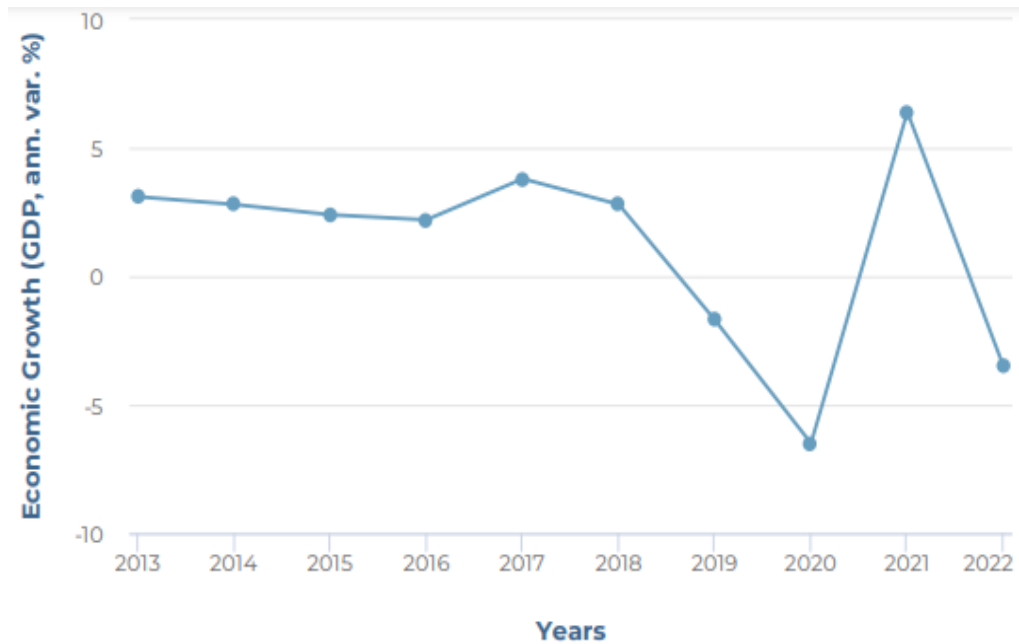
The interpretation of the Sino-British treaty by the Hong Kong population is reflected in the Basic Law. Throughout the transitional period, it will not matter much what the Hong Kong populace desires because the Hong Kong government will continue to bend the law to adhere to the Basic Law (Scott, 2020). Hong Kong's status as an international financial, shipping, trade center, and international aviation base has been further strengthened and consolidated. It has been ranked as the world's most free economy for more than 20 years; its long-term ranking is at the top of the world competitiveness ranking, and it has led the global IPO fundraising list multiple times in the past decade. The 1970s were an important era for HK. It was a period of rising prosperity, heightened political consciousness, and political campaigns (Mok, 2019).

The International Science and Technology Innovation Center, the Asia-Pacific Legal and Dispute Settlement Service Center, the Regional Intellectual Property Trade Center, and China's cultural and artistic exchanges with the rest of the world have all made new strides. With the enactment of the National Security Law, the performance of the National Security Law in Hong Kong has elevated Hong Kong to the position of third-place international financial center. China's implementation of the NSL in Hong Kong has attracted increased global attention and generated numerous news articles (Hou & Peng, 2023). The total assets and wealth management services of Hong Kong reached HK \$35.55 trillion by the end of 2021, a 20 percent increase from the end of 2019. Hong Kong's bank deposits surpassed HK\$15 trillion in July, an increase of 8.5% from before the implementation of the National Security Law. In Hong Kong, the total number of overseas and Mainland enterprises with headquarters in 2021 is a record-breaking 9,449. In 2002, 5,587 new businesses were established in Hong Kong, and the rate of new business formation is increasing. All of these indicate that the Hong Kong

National Security Law is a solid guarantee for Hong Kong to maintain its prosperity, stability, and competitive edge. HK, Macao, and the Mainland rely on one another's strengths and share in prosperous development.

In the past ten years, the exchanges and cooperation between Hong Kong, Macau, and the Mainland have flourished due to the combined efforts of Hong Kong and Macau and the economic and social development of the country. With the opening of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the HK-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, and several terminals, as well as the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the exchanges and cooperation with the Mainland have also advanced significantly. The NSL was rushed through the legislative process without consulting Hong Kong citizens. It has profoundly altered Hong Kong's legal, social, and political landscape since its passage ([J. M. M. Chan, 2022](#)). It has promoted the international free flow of production factors and enhanced various policies and measures favorable to the development of the Mainland and the populations of Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and Macao. Hong Kong has become the largest source and recipient of foreign investment in mainland China and the largest transshipment center for international commerce. Macao has become an important gateway for China's economic, commercial, and cultural exchanges with the rest of the world, particularly Portuguese-speaking nations. Hong Kong and Macau, with their high degree of freedom and openness and close integration with international norms, have significantly contributed to developing a new pattern in China that is broader, deeper, and more open over the past decade. Hong Kong and Macao have significantly contributed to the Chinese people's great rejuvenation and will continue to play a significant role. Next, the relevant ministries and commissions of the State will, as always, encourage Hong Kong and Macao to leverage their respective characteristics and continue to introduce more measures to promote the construction of the "Greater Bay Area" as a "global innovation center," promote the integration of the Greater Bay Area market, and establish a significant cooperation platform between Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao. The recently enacted Law of the People's Republic of China on Protecting the National Interest in the HK Special Administrative Region is exceptional in international legal systems because it was created and adopted in a region with an entirely different legal order ([Pascoe, 2022](#)).

(March 2009) Hong Kong is the third most popular financial center in the globe. The Hong Kong economy has grown at an average annual rate of 2.7% over the past quarter-century. 1997 saw an increase from \$1.37 trillion to \$280 trillion. The per capita income in Hong Kong increased from HK \$192000 in 1992 to HK \$387,100 in 1998. Hong Kong's foreign exchange reserves increased to HK \$957.2 billion in the 2021-2022 fiscal year from HK \$457.5 billion in the 1997-1998 fiscal year. Since 1997, the number of companies listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange has increased from 619 to over 2,500. The data indicates that on June 17, 2000, the total capital of the Hong Kong Rapid securities market increased to \$3,760 trillion from the end of 2000.



**Figure 2.** Economic Growth of Hong Kong

Source: ([Focus Economics, 2023](#))

In the past two decades, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange turnover has increased by nine. In 2004, Hong Kong's net foreign investment inflows increased ninefold to \$117.45 billion US dollars, becoming the world's third-largest source of foreign investment. Simultaneously, the welfare of the citizens is continuously rising. Even though fiscal space remains adequate, with fiscal resources at 27.4% of GDP as of the fourth quarter of 2022, there is still a substantial amount of slack in the market despite the market's continuous robust development. The real GDP 2022 will remain six percent below its 2018 level ([International Monetary Fund, 2023](#)). To enable more people to enjoy economic development benefits, the HK Special Administrative Region government is also working diligently to create a caring society by providing the disadvantaged with more and better services. The current expenditure on social welfare in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has increased from 65,3 billion yuan in 2017-2018 to 105.7 billion yuan in 2021-2022, representing the largest expenditure on policy. There are increasingly more facilities for culture, recreation, and athletics. The West Kowloon Cultural and Arts District is an international exhibition of art and culture of the highest caliber, and construction began in 2013. Several completed and operational initiatives include the Opera House and M+ International Museum of Contemporary Visual Art. In July, the Palace Museum in Hong Kong will also officially open. From 1997 to 2004, the number of fixed and mobile cultural, recreational, and sports facilities in Hong Kong rose from 64 to 82, the number of natatoriums rose from 32 to 44, the number of sports grounds rose from 74 to 74, and the number of sports grounds rose from 74 to 74. The quantity of football fields has grown from 241 to 317. Simultaneously formulating China's fourteenth five-year plan, Hong Kong introduced a historic development opportunity.

China's gross domestic product (GDP) has now surpassed RMB 100 trillion, as its economy has generally performed consistently and its framework has been continuously improved. They emphasize the aging of the population, sustainable development, the integration of urban and rural areas with increased cultural diversity, and an economy driven by innovation ([The People's Government of Fujian Province, 2021](#)). The fourteenth five-year plan stipulates new requirements for Hong Kong's development. The Greater Bay Area of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao has provided Hong Kong with a vast space for development. The "Cross-border Financial Connect," the "Qianhai Shenzhen-HK Modern Service Co-operation Zone," and the "Shenzhen-HK Loop Technological Innovation" have provided Hong Kong with growth opportunities in the financial, service, and creative industries, respectively. Early in 2019, the Outline for the Development of the Guangdong-HK-Macao Greater Bay Area was announced, including the construction of "Runway 3" at the Hong Kong Airport. In September 2021, the Runway 3 paving ceremony will take place.

## 8. Queries on One Country, Two Systems

The first draft of the HK version of the National Security Law provides a new framework for China's central government to establish a national security agency in HK tasked with addressing "very few" and "exceptional circumstances." "There are numerous ambiguities regarding "specific circumstances" and "jurisdiction." Lawyers and legislators in Hong Kong are concerned about cross-border law enforcement and legal implications. The "One Country, Two Systems" strategy established the institutional framework for unity in the 1980s in response to the first negotiation crisis. Throughout the subsequent crises of the subsequent three decades, this policy has been hotly debated and modified ([So, 2011](#)). Chan Man-man (2021), a lecturer in public law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Hong Kong, opines that it is debatable whether the central jurisdiction encompasses issues such as investigation, obstruction, arrest, trial, and sentencing. If these powers are also included in the jurisdiction, does that not mean that when the case is regarded as a "specific situation," the individual in question "immediately becomes a member of the Chinese judicial system? I do not know what rights they enjoy"? He concluded that the NSL highlights the Mainland's "One Country, Two Systems" policy, the goal of which is to keep Hong Kong's economy under the control of citizens who would not query the power of the executive government, which is supported by submissive legislators and a legal system ([J. M. M. Chan, 2022](#)). Democratic Party lawmaker Tu Kin-shen (2019) stated that if the central government handles national security issues, it will "tear a hole" in the "one country, two systems" principle and cause Hong Kong to lose its autonomy. He stated that the central authority places a premium on national security. Even if the regulations regulate "very few" specific cases, the central government is ultimately responsible for interpreting them. [Chen \(2020\)](#) of HK University believes that the measure should clearly define "specific circumstances" and have a limited scope. "If criminal suspects are conveyed to the Mainland, the procedural safeguards must be

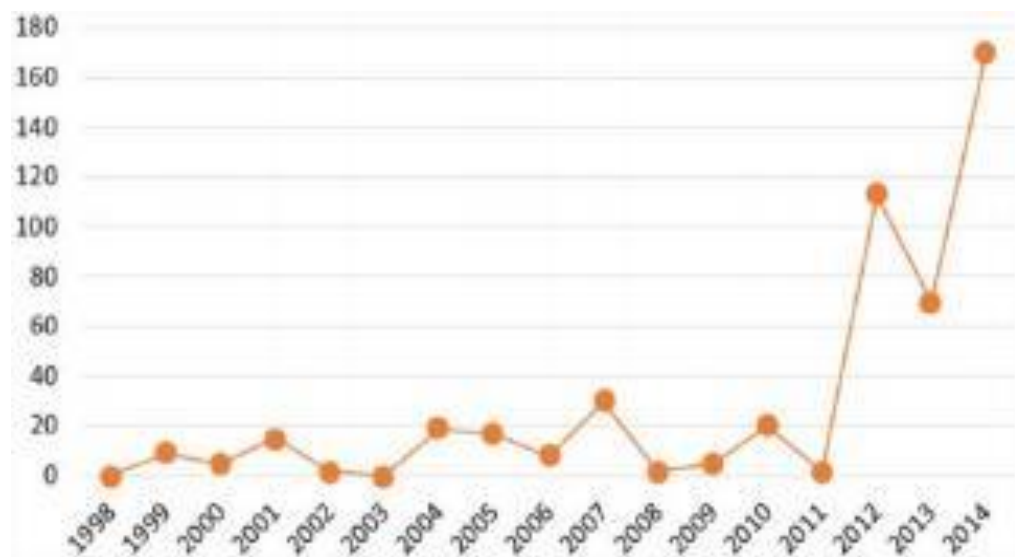
adequate. Hong Kong media queried Tan Yaozong (2020), a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China member if the suspect would be tried on the Mainland. He stated that a handful of cases would be extradited to the Mainland for trial if the situation spiraled out of control; depending on how indicated, this was a possibility for the central government. He believed, however, that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region handled the overwhelming majority of national security cases. Approximately two million Hong Kong's seven million residents took to the streets to protest a measure that would have permitted its citizens to be deported to China and subjected to its legal system (Dreyer, 2022). Alan Leung (2020), former Deputy Director of the Basic Law Committee and former Secretary for Justice in Hong Kong, believes it is unclear what a "specific situation" is. Nonetheless, if the case involves the Chief Executive or other high-ranking Hong Kong officials or international events involving "Xinjiang independence," "Tibetan independence," "unfamiliar to Hong Kong," etc., the case will be handled by the central government. The United States Department of State expressed concern that "Hong Kong's widespread special status in global politics is threatened by the ongoing deterioration of the 'One Country, Two Systems' structure" (Grossman, 2019).

According to China's National People's Congress on the HK version of the National Security Law, the draft clearly defines four types of crimes endangering national security and their punishments: the crime of nation-splitting, the crime of subverting power, and the crime of terrorism; the crime of conspiracy with a foreign or foreign power. However, the proposal does not detail the penalties for rule violations. Tam Yiu-Chung (2020) believes that the sentences for these individuals range from 3 to 10 years. In an interview with US media, Michael Davis, a retired American jurist and law professor at the University of HK (2021), stated that the crimes defined in the draft were ambiguous and that it would be nearly impossible for the courts to overturn it. He believed that the Criminal Code's "aiding the enemy or foreign forces" provisions could be used to arrest and prosecute British nationals operating abroad. Beijing must carefully balance its assessment of national security interests in Hong Kong with sustaining a positive reputation for upholding the rule of law in Hong Kong and worldwide (S. S.-H. Lo, Hung, & Loo, 2021). The common law does not define the term "collusion." When previously asked to define the term "collusion," Zheng Ruohua (2021), the Secretary for Justice of Hong Kong, stated that it would be essential to await the introduction of legal provisions before responding. Professor of law at the New York University School of Law and expert in Chinese law Jerome Cohen (2021) also stated that the Hong Kong National Security Act has brought about a "dramatic change" in the Hong Kong judicial system, allowing the central government to manipulate Hong Kong in a "never-before-imagined way." During an interview with the Guardian in the United Kingdom, he noted that the draft did not address several critical issues, including whether the accused will be sent to mainland China for trial, the definition of "national security crimes," and the criteria by which the Chief Executive will appoint judges.

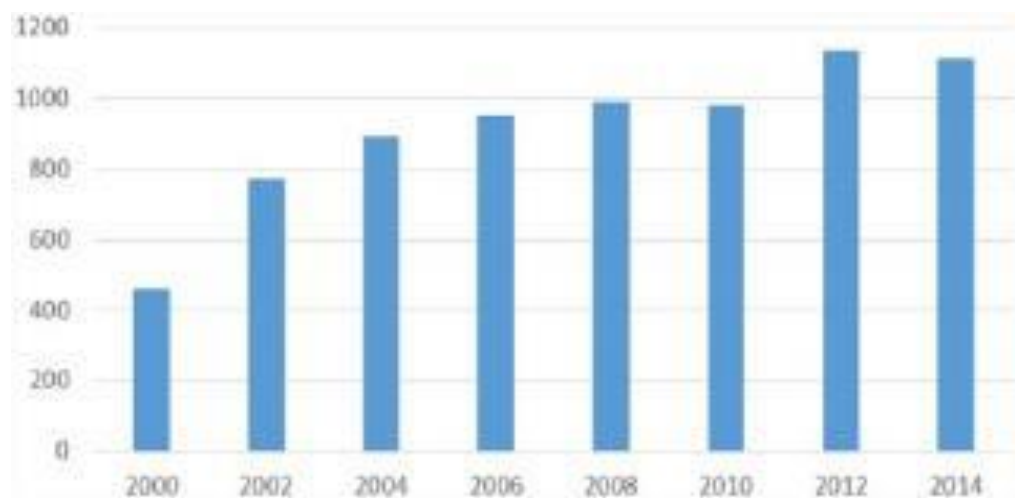
This, he believes, indicates that there are still ambiguities and differences of opinion among the leadership in Beijing regarding this delicate and complex issue. The Trump administration's conclusion that Hong Kong's autonomy has virtually ended and has significant implications for the city's commercial rights under US law is correct ([Financial Times, 2020](#)).

## 9. Chinese Mainland's Influence on HK's political system

The preceding analysis of the Basic Law demonstrates that in Hong Kong. Before reunification, Hong Kong's political system resembled the Western system of separation of powers. However, after reunification, China's central power significantly influenced Hong Kong and has played a significant role in numerous disciplines. Hong Kong's entire system of government is administration-centric. This phenomenon can be observed in the Office's mandate and the number of public activities conducted by the Office.



**Figure 3.** Frequency of articles on "central power" in the left-wing press" (ZhongyangQuanli).



**Figure 4.** The number of public meetings attended by the Central International Liaison Office staff, 2000–2014.

The increasing influence of Hong Kong's political system causes numerous social conflicts in Hong Kong. The first 500,000 people marched against the national security legislation, followed by the 14-year occupation of Central, the Umbrella Revolution, and an incident involving more than 2 million people protesting the anti-extradition regulations. The scope of the conflict and oppositional voices are growing. The one-nation, two systems system has been significantly affected.

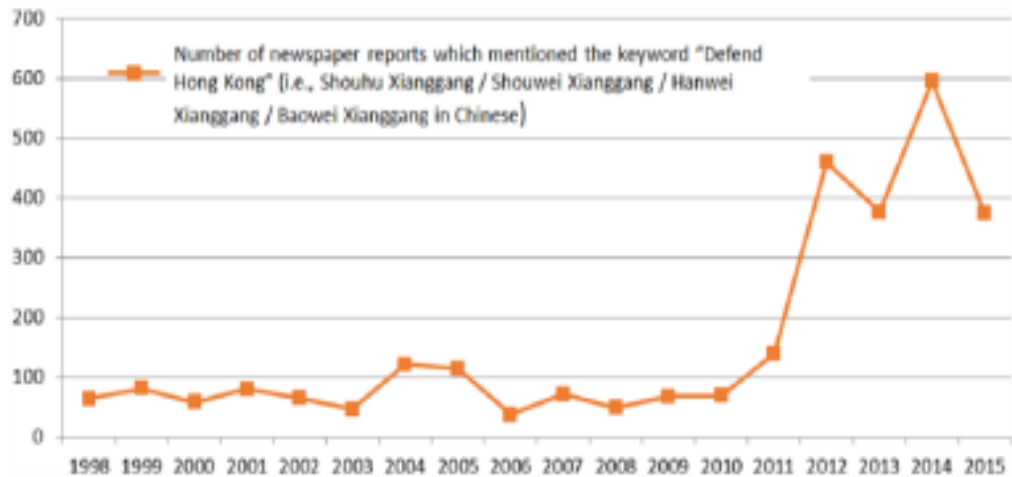


Figure 5. Development of public discourse of "defending HK" 1998-2015.

## 10. The Regulations and Influence of the Basic Law on the Political Systems of the Two Regions

The British developed and maintained the supremacy of law during their nearly two-hundred-year colonial rule, which is the foundation of Hong Kong's fundamental principles. Hong Kong's rule of law, which is based on the British common law judicial system and has an impartial judiciary, has not always been flawless and ideal (M. K. Chan, 2018). Before the British government implemented representative reform, the political system of colonial Hong Kong was characterized by administrative dominance. Because both administration and legislation are natural outgrowths of the governance actions of the Governor of Hong Kong, the legislative body cannot exert significant checks and balances over the administrative body. The administration has absolute control over the legislative process. This political system is continued and improved by the Basic Law, which maintains the predominance of administrative chiefs and agencies while emphasizing the need for administrative and legislative coordination and checks and balances. This system design not only respects history but also embraces the future; It not only maintains efficiency but also embraces democracy; It not only helps to achieve the Chief Executive's responsibility to the government as outlined in the Basic Law, taking into account "one country," but also responds to the growing demand for political democratization among Hong Kong citizens, taking into account "two systems." Neither the parliamentary system nor the system of separation of powers can accomplish this. The foundations of Hong Kong's legal system, such as "one country, two systems," a high degree of autonomy, and a balance between civil rights and national security, have all undergone

significant change ([Hosseini, 2022](#)). Due to the significant influence of external conditions and the Chief Executive's lack of management experience, the gap between the constitutional vision of "administrative domination" and the political reality of "administrative domination" is often widened in the reality of Hong Kong's return to the motherland. The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is a legal document that outlines the fundamental principles of the Hong Kong administration ([Basic Law, 2021](#)). Since the Chief Executive has sufficient conditions and reasons to demonstrate their strong position, it is perplexing why the Legislative Council can effectively restrict the Chief Executive and the SAR government's operations. There are multiple causes.

First, compared to the political system of the colonial era, the Basic Law not only grants broad powers to the Chief Executive and the government under their leadership but also provides the Legislative Council with significant checks and balances over the Chief Executive and the government, thereby raising the bar for implementing "absolute administrative dominance." Specific claims regarding the context of the Federal Government's contribution to Hong Kong's administration and the authority order within relevant legislative officials, such as international treaties and constitutional documents, serve as the philosophical foundation for the NSL ([Mitchell, 2021](#)). Secondly, factors such as the central government, special zone courts, functional groups, and political party organizations impact the balanced positioning of administration and legislation, directly or indirectly. The fully fermented civic will has become the essential foundation for the Legislative Council to constrain the Chief Executive and the SAR government, especially under the banner of democracy. In the Sino-British Collaborative Declaration, the Chinese administration elaborates on the People's Republic of China's fundamental positions regarding Hong Kong ([Fung, 1988](#)). To promote the harmonious and coordinated development of the relationship between administration and legislation in the current context, it is necessary to return to the framework of administrative leadership established by the Constitution and to clarify the dominant position of the administration in legislation; it is necessary to strike a balance between democracy and efficiency. We cannot emphasize the value of checks and balances unilaterally for the sake of democracy, argue for the value of rationality, or lose the foundation of legitimacy by emphasizing dominance unilaterally for the sake of efficiency. Rather, we must use diverse means, such as politics, economy, and law, to solve problems of various types and promote the timely resolution of various contradictions.

## 11. Conclusion

In this study, the political systems of Hong Kong and mainland China are compared in depth, with a focus on the governance arrangements, legal structures, and decision-making processes. The findings reveal distinct distinctions between the political systems of Hong Kong and mainland

China. Historical, socioeconomic, and geopolitical variables have influenced the political systems of both regions. The political system encompasses numerous facets. Generally speaking, the political system of the Chinese Mainland is a centralized system governed by the CPC. Influenced by colonial history, Hong Kong's political system favors the separation of three powers. However, because of the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong's separation of three powers differs from that of the West, which has many contradictions with the political system of the Chinese Mainland. Although implementing one country or two systems is a very good concept, the contradictions between the two places are becoming more serious due to the vast differences in the political systems and the absence of appropriate regulators. In the future, it will be imperative for the Chinese central government to strike a balance between the interests and conflicts of the two regions.

By providing insightful information about the political systems of Hong Kong and mainland China, this study has contributed to academic understanding, informed policy discussions, and enhanced the understanding of citizen liberties and democratic procedures. The findings highlight the importance of considering historical, sociological, and geopolitical factors when analyzing political dynamics and have broader implications for comparative analyses of political systems and governance paradigms.

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