行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 成果報告

華人社會之基督教與民主：台灣、香港、新加坡(第 2 年)
研究成果報告(完整版)

計 畫 類 別 ：個別型
計 畫 編 號 ：NSC 96-2414-H-004-031-MY2
執 行 期 間 ：97 年 08 月 01 日至 98 年 10 月 31 日
執 行 單 位 ：國立政治大學政治學系

計 畫 主 持 人 ：郭承天

報 告 附 件 ：國外研究心得報告

處 理 方 式 ：本計畫可公開查詢

中　華　民　國　99 年 01 月 28 日

Institutional Choices of Church-State Relations in Chinese Societies

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Paper to be presented at the Association for Asian Studies, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, March 25-28, 2010. This research is funded by the National Science Council in Taiwan, NSC 96-2414-H-004-013-MY2. I thank the friendly and productive institutional supports of the Singapore Trinity Theological College, the Singapore Bible College, and the Theology Division of the Chung Chi College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The author bears the sole responsibility of this paper.

Abstract

Chinese Christians in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan might belong to the same faith, but grew up with different political faces. Singaporean Christians have largely maintained a supporting priestly role toward the authoritarian regime. Hong Kong Christians have slowly transformed themselves from the role of social welfare contractors to that of political critics in a liberal but non-democratic environment, while Taiwanese Christians continue to play a significant role in the country's democratic consolidation. The common factor of Confucian culture (or "Asian values) among these three societies cannot fully account for their differences in church-state relations. Instead, the respective ideologies and institutions of church and state have carved out different political faces of Christians among these societies. The current Chinese church-state relations seem to be moving from the Singaporean model to the Hong Kong model, but carefully circumventing the Taiwanese model.

Key words: Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Christianity, church-state relations.

I. Introduction

It would not take too long for a visiting scholar to notice the differences in church-state relations among Chinese diaspora societies of Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. In Singapore, applications for field research and public speech (including seminar talks) could usually be approved in two weeks, or rejected if deemed politically-sensitive by the government. A field research could be successful completed in a week or so, thanks to the extremely efficient librarians in various research institutions, the quick responses from interviewees, and, most important of all, the shortage of church-state confrontation cases in the past thirty years.[1]

In Hong Kong, a scholar might choose to observe the annual July 1 March for Democracy organized by various opposition parties, civic groups, and Christian organizations. Only about thirty-thousand people would participate in this somewhat quiet, monotonous and self-controlled demonstration. Hong Kong Christian scholars published a lot of high-quality materials on church-state relations. Interviews with them could be very productive. However, the big brother of the Beijing government always made these scholars worry about Hong Kong's democratic future.

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[1] Due to their sensitive environment, Singaporean interviewees are kept anonymous. Hong Kong and Taiwanese interviewees use their real names.

In Taiwan, Christian responses to church-state relations varied distinctively. There were activists holding press conferences and organizing lively demonstrations for the cause of Taiwan independence. Other Christian organizations voiced their concerns over laws of divorce, abortion, homosexuality, drugs, pornography, and gambling through internet, press conference, rallies, and lobbying activities, with impressive success rates. Still the majority of Christians submerged themselves to purely religious matters and dismissed those Christian activists as pseudo Christians.

Why are the Christians from these three societies different from one another and from their counterparts in other Christian countries in terms of church-state relations? What are the implications for Christian participation in democratization in these three societies? Are Christianity and democracy compatible as some scholars have argued?

A. Third-wave Dropouts

In the 1970s and 1980s Christianity (including Catholicism) played a prominent role in the "Third-wave" democratization in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia.[2] In Poland, the Catholic Church became the "bastion of nationalism" to

[2] Cheng Tunjen and Deborah A. Brown (eds.), *Religious Organizations and Democratization: Case Studies from Contemporary Asia* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2006); Paul Freston (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK:

challenge the communist regime supported by the Russians. Latin American "liberation theology" helped to mobilize priests and nuns to form alliances with the opposition movement. In the Philippines, Cardinal Sin's critical support of the "People's Power" led to the downfall of Marcos authoritarian regime in 1986. In South Korea, the Mingjung Theology inspired the Christians and Catholics to question the legitimacy of the authoritarian regime. The first President of the democratic government was a Presbyterian, and the second, a Catholic.

These Third-wave examples seem to lend support to the long-held thesis of the compatibility between Christianity and democracy. Alexis de Tocqueville, Max Weber, Samuel P. Huntington, and Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel have used case studies or quantitative methods to support the compatibility thesis. In a nutshell, they argue that Christianity and democracy are compatible because Christianity promotes equality through new doctrines such as "men are created equal" and "personal relations with God without other human mediation," as well as through new ecclesiastic structures such as the autonomy of local churches and the congregational decision-making. Christian believers learn about these democratic cultures and

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University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox, *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, the Few, and the Many* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); David H. Lumsdaine (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Terence O. Ranger (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

institutions in the church and apply these values and institutions to democratic governments. Democratic governments, in turn, promote social, economic and political equality which strengthen the democratic elements in Christianity.

However, the compatibility thesis does not explain well that fact that most Christians in Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan were less involved in democratic movements than their counterparts in these countries. In Singapore, the worst confrontation between the state and church was the "Marxist conspiracy" in 1987, which involved nothing more than a dozen Catholic believers sharing liberation theology materials and providing social welfare programs for the poor. Christians were able to exert conservative influence on government policies on pornography, divorce, abortion and homosexual marriage. They were also active in providing social services (primary schools, charity, and medical care). Other than that, Singaporean Christians rarely challenged the government on issues related to democracy and human rights.

Before the late 1970s, Hong Kong Christians were very similar to their Singaporean counterparts in their social roles. Rarely did they comment on political issues. However, with the emergence of the retrocession issue (the British colonial government would return Hong Kong to China in 1997) in the 1970s, Christians became actively involved in the retrocession process in the hope of establishing a

full-fledged democracy. Although the post-1997 government was far from a full-fledge democracy, Hong Kong Christians continued to contribute to democratization through publications, citizen education programs, and demonstrations like the annual July 1 march. However, their democratic efforts were limited and slow-paced. The overwhelming majority of the Christians remained conservative.

With the exception of the Presbyterians, Taiwanese Christians and Catholics were as loyal to their authoritarian rulers before 1987 as their counterparts in Singapore and Hong Kong. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) began to challenge the authoritarian regime in the 1970s on issues of democracy, religious freedom, and national independence. They actively supported the opposition movement in the restricted elections; some of their leaders were imprisoned as a result. After the lifting of martial law in 1987, they continued to support candidates of the Democratic Progressive Party with the ultimate aim to establish an independent country separated from China. The majority of Taiwanese Christians, however, took an extreme view of the separation of state and church during the authoritarian rule. Their adjustment to democratic values and processes proceeded gradually.

These Chinese Christian “dropouts” from the Third-wave democratization were not uncommon in other parts of the world. For instance, in Portugal and Spain, the Catholic Church had long served the interests of the monarchs and aristocrats, and

sided with the Fascist regimes against democratic and liberal revolutions before the early 1970s.[3] In Argentina, the Church not only maintained acquiescence to the repressive military regimes of the 1970s but also openly condemned left-wing movements.[4] In Africa, the Protestant churches were not in support of the independence movements in the post-war era, nor did "they emerge as the theoreticians and guarantors of democratic practice in the new African states."[5] Therefore, Christianity may or may not contribute to democratization, depending on certain conditions. What are these conditions? In the context of Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, two conditions are often discussed: Confucianism and small size.

B. Confucian culture and small size.

Confucianism is allegedly an authoritarian cultural system which emphasized obedience to the rulers and seniors, collective interests over individual rights, and

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[3] Christopher Paul Manuel, "Religion and politics in Iberia: clericalism, anti-clericalism, and democratization in Portugal and Spain," in Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox (eds.), *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, the Few, and the Many* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.71-98.

[4] Anthony James Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), ch6.

[5] Terence O. Ranger (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 11.

harmony over conflict.[6] The “Asian values” argument proposed by former prime minister of Singapore, Lee Guan Yew, epitomizes the Confucian explanation for the economic success of those authoritarian or il-liberal regimes in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and China.[7] Since the Chinese diasporas constitute the overwhelming majority of the local population, Confucianism seems to provide a plausible explanation for the lack of political interests among Chinese Christians.

Although the Confucian argument is able to explain the commonalities among Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, it is not able to explain the differences between these three societies and another Confucian society, South Korea, where Christians played an active political role before and after democratization. Neither can it explain the differences in political attitudes among the Christian denominations within these societies.

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[6] Lucian W. Pye, *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); Shi Tianjian, “Political culture: a prerequisite for democracy?” *American Asian Review*, No. 18 (2000), pp. 53-83; Richard H. Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971).

[7] Lee Kuanyew, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000* (Singapore: The Straits Times Press, 2000); Raj Vasil, *A Citizen's Guide to Government and Politics in Singapore* (Singapore: Talisman Publishing Pte Ltd, 2004), pp.169-170.

The small size explanation has two versions: the small size of the geography and the small size of the Christians in local population. Alberto Alesina and Enrico Spolaore argue that the optimal size of a country should consider the trade-off between the benefits of size and the costs of heterogeneity. Larger countries tend to have more difficulties delivering services and formulating policies. Applied to the relatively small territories of Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, the theory is able to explain why their governments have been able to effectively control the church. Singapore has a population of four millions (including one million foreign workers) living in an island of 705 squared kilometers. Hong Kong's population is about seven millions residing in a territory about 1,000 squared kilometers. Taiwan has twenty-three million people covering a territory about 3,6000 squared kilometers.[8]

Size does matter, as observers of Singaporean and Hong Kong politics often raise comments about the impact of "city-state" on their politics.[9] However, this paper will argue that size influences politics through institutions. Effective institutional building may reduce the negative impact of large size on politics, while insufficient institutional building may not realize the beneficial impacts of small size on

[8] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_outlying_territories_by_total_area. Accessed September 3, 2009. The original source comes from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2007/Table03.pdf.

[9] Hussin Mutalib, *Parties and Politics: A Study of Opposition Parties and the PAP in Singapore* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), pp. 272-77.

governance. After all, among the 233 countries/areas in the world, Singapore's size is ranked 187th; Hong Kong, 179th; and Taiwan, 136th.[10] There are 46 countries/areas that are smaller than Singapore but have less efficient governments, while there are 97 countries/areas larger than Taiwan but many of them (especially, western democracies) have governments more efficient than Taiwan's.

The other "size" problem is related to the small percentage of Christians in local populations. Mancur Olson argues that a social movement begins to exert a significant impact on society only after a minimal but critical number of people join the movement. Christians contributed to the Third-wave democracies in Latin America, Eastern Europe, South Korea, and the Philippines because their Christian populations were large enough. In South Korea, Christians (including Catholics) constitute about 35% of the population, while in the Philippines, about 90% of the population are Catholics. By contrast, Singaporean Christians constitute about 16% of the population; Hong Kong, 9.6%; and Taiwan, only 4%.[11]

However, some Christian-dominant countries in Eastern Europe and Latin America once sided with authoritarian regimes. Large size of Christians is not a sufficient condition for democratization. Furthermore, if there is a positive

[10] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_outlying_territories_by_total_area. Accessed September 3, 2009.

[11] World Values Survey 2005, Asian Barometer 2008.

relationship between Christianity and democracy, except for the above minimum threshold argument, the degrees of democratization among these three countries should have ranked Singapore first, Hong Kong second, and Taiwan, the third. This ranking, of course, is in exact the opposite direction of the facts.

This paper does not argue that Christianity is responsible for the establishment or non-establishment of democracies in these three Chinese societies. Rather, it tries to explain the differences among these three societies as well as among different Christian denominations within each society. Size, again, interacts with other institutional factors to impact on Christian participation in democratic movements.

C. State and Church Institutions

What kinds of institutions would have an impact on Christian participation in democratic movements? This paper focuses on two types of institutions: state institutions and church institutions. Following the neo-institutional school, these institutions contain formal and informal institutions as well as the dominant ideologies supporting these institutions.[12]

[12] Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Richard W. Scott (ed.), *Institutions and Organizations* 2nd (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001).

State institutions contain formal institutions (such as Constitution, laws, regulations, security forces), para-state institutions (such as political parties, government-controlled mass media, education system, and subsidy programs), and informal institutions (norms, social networks, etc.). State ideologies provide justification and legitimacy to these institutions. At one extreme, statism or socialism regards state intervention of and control over social organizations as necessary and desirable for the realization of national interests. At the other extreme, liberalism and laissez-faire ideology prefer a minimal government and a clear separation between the state and civil society. Most real-world governments may promulgate an ideology that lie between these two extremes in response to national or temporal variations.

Church institutions also contain formal institutions (church hierarchies), para-church institutions (charity organizations and lay-believer organizations), and informal institutions (norms, social networks, etc.). Church ideologies (i.e., theologies) provide justification and legitimacy to church-state relations.[13] A conservative theology emphasizes the church's supporting or obedient role (the role of priest) to the state and encourages believers to focus only on issues of personal salvation and evangelism. By contrast, liberal theology (or social gospel) emphasizes the church's

[13] Anthony James Gill, *Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

critical role (the role of prophet) to the state, and exhorts believers to promote social justice and participate in social/political movements.

II. Singapore

A. A brief history of church-state interaction

Ever since the establishment of the new nation in 1965, religion-state relations have always ranked among the top priorities of the Singaporean government. Singapore is surrounded by the two largest Muslim countries in Southeast Asia: Malaysia and Indonesia. It was once a part of the Malaysian federation from 1963 to 1965. Muslims constitute 15% of the three million Singaporean population, while the majority of the other one million foreign workers are from Malaysia. Therefore, the way the government handles religion-state relations would not only affect domestic stability but also foreign relations with these two large Muslim countries.

Singapore experienced disturbing events of religion-state relations in the early years of state building. In 1950 Muslims attacked Europeans, Eurasians and Christians and ended with 18 killed and 173 injured. In 1964 on Prophet Muhammad Birthday a riot broke out between the Muslim community and the Chinese community, leaving 23 dead and 400 injured.[14] In the early 1970s, the Student Christian

[14] Tan Edwin Choonboon, "Mapping the church in Singapore: moving from civic to civil society,"

Movement prepared industrial workers for a strike, but were pre-empted by the government. Their leaders were arrested or exiled abroad.[15] In 1979, the government promoted religious education for the sake of moral rejuvenation and inter-religious harmony. In 1984, religious education was made compulsory. However, the policy backfired. The revival of Christian evangelism converted some Muslims in schools and spread into the Muslim community, while the Muslim community introduced fundamentalist theology and organizations. Liberation Theology also found favor in the eyes of young Catholics. The government coped with the emerging religious war by cancelling the religious education program in 1989 and by promulgating religious harmony laws in subsequent years.[16]

The church's direct interactions with the state are few, except for public prayers for the nation and political leaders. Different denominations establish and manage their primary schools, medical institutions, nursing facilities, charity programs with their own resources and without much help from the government.[17] Occasionally,

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Church & Society in Asia Today, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2007), pp. 25-27.

[15] Thomas Harvey, "Engagement reconsidered: the fall and rise of a national church council in Singapore," *Trinity Theological Journal*, No. 14 (2006), pp. 57.

[16] Sng Bobby E.K. (ed.), *In His Good Time: the Story of the Church in Singapore* 3rd (Singapore: Bible Society of Singapore, 2003), pp. 293-300.

[17] Richard Magnus, "The christian role in a pluralistic society, with specific reference to Singapore," in Poon Michael Naichiu (ed.), *Pilgrims and Citizens: Christian Social Engagement in East Asia Today*. (Hindmarsh, Australia: Australasian Theological Forum Ltd, 2006), pp. 172-174; National Council of

they would voice their concerns over government policies that are in conflict with church morals such as divorce, abortion, homosexuals, stem cell research and gambling. On most of these issues, the church prefer low-profile negotiations with state officials instead of issuing public statements and never by demonstration. These private negotiation strategies work reasonably well and the government would usually revise or drop the bills according to the church's conservative positions. But on the issue of the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill introduced to the Parliament in 1990, the Christian community voiced their concerns over the vague definitions of religious crimes and recommended that the final authority of adjudication lie in the court instead of the President. Both Christian concerns were overruled. On the issue of casino construction project in 2004, the government again firmly overruled the Christian objection. The Christian community had no choice but stop complaining.[18]

In May 1987, the "Marxist conspiracy" broke out. It was the most, if not the only, serious confrontation between the Catholic Church and the state. The Internal Security

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Churches of Singapore, *Many Faces, One Faith* (Singapore: National Council of Churches of Singapore, 2004), pp. 74-83); *ibid.* Harvey, "Engagement reconsidered," pp. 59.

[18] *ibid.* Magnus, "The christian role in a pluralistic society," pp. 177; Tan Edwin Choonboon, "Mapping the church in Singapore: moving from civic to civil society," *Church & Society in Asia Today*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2007), pp. 34-38); Graduates' Christian Fellowship (ed.), *To Whom Much Is Given*: *The History of Graduates' Christian Fellowship in Singapore 1955-2005* 2nd (Singapore: Graduates' Christian Fellowship, 2005), pp. 61-64.

Department of the government detained twenty-two persons for their alleged involvement in a conspiracy to abolish the government and establish a Marxist state. Among the detainees, ten were Catholic Church volunteers who were accused of promoting Marxist ideas (i.e., Liberation Theology). They were detained without trial for between one month and three years. Afterwards, the liberal Christian Conference of Asia was expelled from Singapore.[19] Two years later, the Ministry of Education discontinued the compulsory religious education. By comparison to their neighboring countries where religious movements against the state often led to bloodshed, the Singaporean Marxist conspiracy was only a Christian nightmare.

In general, church-state relations in Singapore are not so much "harmonious" but rather "distant," keeping their interactions as few and small as possible. A number of institutional factors in both the state and church might explain these church-state relations in Singapore.

B. State institutions

[19] Lee Kuanyew, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000* (Singapore: The Straits Times Press, 2000), pp. 137; Sng Bobby E.K. (ed.), *In His Good Time: the Story of the Church in Singapore* 3rd (Singapore: Bible Society of Singapore, 2003), pp. 299.; Chee Soonjuan, *Your Future My Faith Our Freedom: A Democratic Blueprint for Singapore* (Singapore: Open Singapore Centre, 2001), pp. 34; *ibid.* Tan, "Mapping the church in Singapore," pp. 27-28; *Straits Times*, July 7, 2007, pp.S8, S9.

The major concern of the Singaporean government's religious policies is not the protection of religious freedom in the Western context but the maintenance of religious peace among domestic religions and between Singapore and her neighboring Muslim countries. Religious views are respected by the government as long as these views are consistent with the nation's political stability and economic prosperity. Otherwise, these views would be ignored, suppressed, or even punished.

How does the Singaporean government impose these ideological principles on the church? It has plenty of institutions to do so, including the legal system, the media, the residential committees, the salary system, and the electoral system.[20] The legal system consists of laws, regulations, and the judiciary system. Among the most controversial laws are the Internal Security Act, the Societies Act, the Defamation Law, the Religious Harmony Act, and the Public Entertainments Act. The Internal Security Act authorizes the police (the Internal Security Department) to arrest people without warrant and to detain suspects without trial. All of my interviewees seemed to be very aware of the personal impact of this Act, although publicized applications of this Act have been few. Diane K. Mauzy and R.S. Milne claim that "from 1989-96, no

[20] The ruling party, the People Action Party, was basically the executive arm of the government at time of election and was not heavily involved in the social control function. Those faculty members I interviewed at the Trinity Theological Seminary, the Singapore Bible College, and the Baptist Theological Seminary were not aware of any PAP activity on campus.

one was detained under the ISA, but in 1997-8 there were six arrests for two cases alleging espionage." Some of my Christian interviewees discounted this claim because these numbers did not include the frequent use of midnight house-calls in the name of the Act, usually on the same day a suspected Christian said or did something politically sensitive. No arrest was conducted or reported, but the intimidation was real and effective.

The Societies Act was amended in 1988 to forbid any social organization to make political statements. Violators would be de-registered or need to re-register as political organizations. The Act was amended because the Law Society (lawyers' association) had publicly criticized the government's attempt to restrict press freedom. After the Act was amended, any church or its charity organization was not allowed to publicly comment on government policies or politics.

In the past decade, the Defamation Law became a more popular and effective tool than the Internal Security Act for the government to intimate the opposition. Lee Kuan Yew led the charge and boasted his successful campaigns against opposition politicians in his memoir.[21] Many opposition politicians went bankrupt as a result. Chee Soon Juan, who was the secretary-general of the Singapore Democratic Party

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[21] *ibid.* Lee, *From Third World to Firs*t, pp. 151-55; *ibid.* Chee, *Your Future My Faith Our Freedom*, pp. 36-37.

and a psychology lecturer at the National University of Singapore, was sued for libel by his superiors in a controversy concerning Chee's misuse of travel subsidy. One of his litigants, whom I interviewed, made no excuse for the US$450,000 lawsuit, even though both were Christians but from different denominations.

The Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act of 1990 delegates full authority to the Minister of Home Affairs to restrain any clergy or believer of a religious group from causing religious or political problems, or exciting complaints against the President or the Government. The penalties for such transgressions include a fine up to US$14,600 and/or a jail term up to three years.[22] Although the government claims that this Act has never been executed, it was cited several times to stop religious leaders from mixing politics with religion and degrading other religions.[23] These constant reminders make this Act well-known among Singapore's religious communities.

What does the Public Entertainments Act have anything to do with church-state relations? I did not understand it either until my scheduled public speech at a

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[22] Raj Vasil, *A Citizen's Guide to Government and Politics in Singapore* (Singapore: Talisman Publishing Pte Ltd, 2004), pp. 176-177; Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act, 8(1), 16, http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/non_version/cgi-bin/cgi_retrieve.pl?&actno=Reved-167A&date=latest&method=part, accessed December 30, 2009.

[23] In June 2009, a local Christian couples were sentenced to eight weeks in jail for distributing anti-Muslim and anti-Catholic publications. The government decided not to invoke the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act but, instead, the more serious Sedition Act (*Straits Times*, June 5, 2009, p.A3; July 24, 2009, pp.A20, A21).

theological seminary in Singapore was cancelled in the last minute. My scheduled talk was about "Religion and Democracy in Taiwan." The Act required that any public speech apply to the government for prior approval. It could take days, weeks, or months if the topic is deemed politically or religiously sensitive. Without the permit to speak, the trespasser would be fined or jailed.

Adding insult to injury to these intimidating laws is the controversial judicial system "for allegedly being politically compliant and insufficiently independent of the executive."[24] It is interesting to take note of the fact that Singapore watchers need to use words of caveats and prudence, such as "allegedly" and "it is a perception," to protect themselves from a libel suit by the Singaporean government. In 1994, the government filed a lawsuit against Professor Christopher Lingle and the *International Herald Tribune* for making a comment about the "compliant judiciary" in a Southeast Asian country. The attorney general insisted that this comment insinuated Singapore. With no surprise, the court found Professor Lingle and the newspaper guilty. Freedom of religion in Singapore is only the castle standing on the loose sand of its judicial system.

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[24] Diane K. Mauzy and R. S. Milne, *Singapore Politics under the People's Action Party* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 132.

The media is often crowned as the fourth branch of a democratic government. The Singaporean government has made the media the fourth branch under the executive, after the legislature and the judicial system. In terms of ownership, major media (newspapers, television channels, radio stations, films, internets) are owned by companies that have close ties to the government. The Sedition Act, the Undesirable Publications Act, the Newspaper and Printing Presses Act, and the Broadcasting Authority Act provide real muscles against those media critical of the government. The most sensational cases include the Asian Wall Street Journal (1987), Far Eastern Economic Review (1987), Asiaweek (1988), and the Economist (1993), all of which suffered from a forced reduction of circulation for publishing politically undesirable news.[25] Without a free press, Singaporean Christians could not reveal their political concerns to the public.

Augmenting the government's direct controls over the society are the state-controlled residential institutions and the employment policies.[26] Many residential committees considered it a violation of residential contract if a tenant

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[25] *ibid.* Mauzy and Milne, *Singapore Politics under the People's Action Party*, pp.140; *ibid.* Lee, *From Third World to Firs*t, pp. 212-225; *ibid.* Chee, *Your Future My Faith Our Freedom*, pp. 168-190).

[26] These residential institutions included the Community Development Councils, the Residents' Committees, Community Self-help Groups, and Town Councils. See *ibid.* Lee, *From Third World to Firs*, pp. 144-146; Hussin Mutalib, *Parties and Politics: A Study of Opposition Parties and the PAP in Singapore* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), pp. 287-291.

provided his/her space for political gathering or for strangers staying overnight. The tenant would be fined or even evicted. Opposition politicians had a hard time finding an office space or were forced to relocate their offices from time to time, often due to such complaints from other concerned residents. In those neighborhoods where the opposition parties had an advantage, the ruling party would openly threaten the residents to vote differently or face suspension of neighborhood renovation programs.[27]

The Singaporean government expanded the compulsory saving scheme of the Central Provident Fund in 1968, which was intended to help the citizens to buy homes and to cover retirement expenses.[28] But this policy has also been employed for political purposes. The government could file libel suit against political critics. When they lose the lawsuit, and they usually did, their pension would be immediately confiscated to pay for the astronomical indemnity. These political critics lose their homes along with their retirement fund. When church elites contemplate playing the role of political prophet, they would certainly think twice the consequences to their personal welfare and to their church.

[27] *ibid.* Chee, Your Future My Faith Our Freedom, pp. 147-149.

[28] *ibid.* Lee, *From Third World to First*, pp. 117.

Finally, conservative Christians have benefitted from the undemocratic electoral system in Singapore.[29] As compared to average Singaporean, Christians had a disproportionate representation in the upper strata of the society, especially in the parliament and the cabinet.[30] These elite Christians tend to be conservatives and serve to justify government policies. In the case of Chee Soon Juan, a Christian junior faculty member of the National University of Singapore who went bankrupt after losing a libel suit, one of the chief architects and accusers of Chee's misfortune was a devoted Christian senior faculty member.[31] In the case of the casino development project, Christian conservatives (represented by the National Council of Churches of Singapore) could not override the strong will of the premier under the undemocratic system and made no open criticism of it afterwards.

Former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew justified all of the above tight controls over the society with his statist paternalism in his memoir *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story – 1965-2000*. In the name of national security and personal integrity, he made no excuses for brutally suppressing the communist, the left-wing labor

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[29] *ibid.* Mutalib, *Parties and Politics* explore the political institutions of "illiberal democracy" in Singapore.

[30] *ibid.* Sng, *In His Good Time,* pp.302-305; *ibid.* Tan, "Mapping the church in Singapore," pp. 33. estimated that about one-third of MPs, Cabinet ministers and PAP members were Christians.

[31] Interview with Professor CC, April 3, 2008.

moment, liberal scholars and students, the mass media, and opposition parties.[32] His stern attitude toward religious participation in politics was epitomized in his speech in the 1987 National Day Rally: "Churchmen, lay preachers, priests, monks, Muslim theologians… take off your clerical robes before you take on anything economic or political… if you use a church or a religion and your pulpit for these purposes, there will be serious repercussions."[33] Other scholars, including Christian theologians, justified the statist paternalism by a Singaporean-style communitarian ideology, suspending individual rights for the sake of collective goods of national security, good governance and economic growth.[34]

In sum, the Singaporean authoritarian system exercises air-tight totalitarian control over the Christian community through the legal system, the media, the residential committees, the salary system, and the electoral system. There is barely any room for the churches to become institutionalized opposition forces. Even if such

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[32] *ibid.* Lee, *From Third World to First*, pp. 136-38, 149, 151-55, 212-225.

[33] *Straits Times*, July 24, 2009, p.A20.

[34] Chua Benghuat, *Communitarian Ideology and Democracy in Singapore* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Richard Magnus, "The christian role in a pluralistic society, with specific reference to Singapore," in Poon Michael Naichiu (ed.), *Pilgrims and Citizens: Christian Social Engagement in East Asia Today*. (Hindmarsh, Australia: Australasian Theological Forum Ltd, 2006); Neo Boonsiong and Chen Geraldine, *Dynamic Governance: Embedding Culture, Capabilities and Change in Singapore* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2007), ch4; interview with professor CC (April 3, 2008).

a room exists, the small vacuum is filled up by the voluntary political apathy of church institutions.

C. Church institutions

In response to the omnipotent and omnipresent state, the voluntary political apathy of Singaporean churches is also a result of their theological orientation and church institutions.[35] The theological orientation favors personal salvation and success theology over liberal theology. Their church institutions discourage lay believers from participating in politics.[36]

Searching in the libraries of Singapore's two major theological seminaries (Trinity Theological College and the Bible Seminary), I found very few books dealing with liberal theology, liberation theology, social gospel, or church-state relations in

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[35] For instance, the first major publication by the Baptist Theological Seminary Singapore, *Baptist Pulse: Church Growth Baptist Community in Singapore* (Singapore: Baptist Theological Seminary Singapore, 2006) did not contain any topic related to politics or social justice. It was all about spirituality and church governance. My interviews with Singaporean Baptist leaders also confirmed this observation. A similar political apathy of the Singaporean Presbyterians was reflected in Scott W. Sunquist, *On Being Presbyterian in Singapore and Malaysia: Distinctives of the Reformed Faith* (Singapore: Trinity Theological College, 1992), although he did better by devoting two pages of his book on Reinhold Neibuhr and his social gospel.

[36] Graduates' Christian Fellowship (ed.), *To Whom Much Is Given*: *The History of Graduates' Christian Fellowship in Singapore 1955-2005* 2nd (Singapore: Graduates' Christian Fellowship, 2005), pp. 84-86.

general.[37] Theologians in the seminaries explained to me that their libraries were not interested in these kinds of materials. A self-censorship was imposed on the book orders.[38] Most of the theological books dealt with church history, liturgy, evangelism and systematic theology. Neither did these theological seminaries or the Baptist seminary offer any course on liberal theology, social gospel, or church-state relations. Ironically, the prestigious Trinity Theological College made a critical change in its faculty and curriculum from 1982 to 1999 to transform its specialization from liberal theology to conservative theology.[39] Among the very few publications on the social responsibility authored by religious scholars, political issues were carefully avoided. Most of them dealt with charity or ethical issues. Firewalls were set up in the seminary internet system to cut off connections to politically sensitive sites. For

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[37] The Baptist Theological Seminary did not have its own campus but rented a few rooms from a member church. Its "library" was not much bigger than a college professor's. One of the few exceptions was the journal *Church and Society* (published by the Trinity Theological College), which occasionally published articles on church-state relations in Singapore, e.g. Chia Roland, "Rendering to caesar: a theology of church-state relations," *Church and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2004), pp. 41-63; Tan Edwin Choonboon, "Mapping the church in Singapore: moving from civic to civil society," *Church & Society in Asia Today*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2007), pp. 15-55. However, even this last sanctuary of social gospel was invaded by the state after the journal was renamed *Church and Society in Asia Today* in 2005 in order to shift its uncomfortable focus from Singapore to Asia.

[38] Interviews with MP (April 5, 2008), MC (April 3, 2008).

[39] Sanyi shenxueyuan, Shizi lukou: Sanyi shenxueyuan lishi, 1948 zhi 2005 nian (Crossroad: History of Trinity Theological College: 1948-2005) (Xinjiapo: Sanyi shenxueyuan, 2006), pp. 129; interview with Rev. EL (April 3, 2008).

instance, the connection from the seminary to the official statement on (anti-)homosexuality by the Singaporean Christian Association was blocked because of the keyword "homosexuality." The connection from the seminary to the opposition Singapore Democratic Party website was automatically re-routed to a local dating service. This self-censorship in theological seminaries was probably not a result of their financial dependence on the state. The state provided little, if any, financial assistance to theological seminaries; most of them were financially self-sufficient due to the generous donations from their member churches.[40]

Indeed, self-censorship is also imposed on foreign religious scholars and missionaries who go to Singapore for short or long stays. Under the Public Entertainment Act and the Religious Harmony Act, foreign scholars and missionaries need permission to speak or evangelize in public. Conference speeches or seminar talks are included. Those foreign religious scholars and missionaries who are employed by local seminaries or religious organizations would be first screened by these organizations for their political correctness or abstinence. After they are employed, their work permits would be subject to annual reviews or revoked

[40] Interview with Professor DL (April 2, 2008).

anytime.[41] It is almost impossible for any liberal religious scholars or missionaries to leave sustained liberal influence on Singaporean minds.

Christian bookstores in Singapore carry books on personal salvation, family values, evangelism, and particularly on the "success theology" which encourage believers to excel in their professions as witnesses to God's grace. By implication, unemployment, demotion, and poverty are regarded as disgraces to God's providence. A pastor whose church was in a poor neighborhood complained about the success theology because his believers often asked him whether they would be saved due to the low status of their manual jobs. This success theology was in full concordance with Lee Kuan-yew's Social Darwinism to encourage Singaporeans to focus on personal success instead of social justice. The success theology is very popular among the larger and wealthier churches in Singapore, such as City Harvest Church, New Creation Church, and the Faith Community Baptist Church.

The National Council of Churches, Singapore (NCCS) is the largest Christian association in Singapore, composed of major denominations and independent churches in the territory but is not affiliated with any world Christian organization.[42]

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[41] Interview with professor TN (April 4, 2008).

[42] Wong James, "Vision and mission of the national council of churches," in Lim Isaac (ed.), *The Christian Church in 21st Century Singapore* (Singapore: National Council of Churches, 2000), pp. 19-27.

It is a "socially conservative and theologically evangelical" association, and maintains a friendly "consultative, informative and representative" relationship with the state.[43] Can it be an independent civil organization to exert political influence on the omnipotent state? Yes and no. Yes, it made successful representation to the state on issues of church land acquisition, homosexuality, biotechnology, and other social and moral issues. No, it was rarely influential on political and economic issues, such as the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act and the casino development projects. A rising competitor to the NCCS is the Evangelical Fellowship of Singapore (EFOS, established in 1980), which is composed mainly of independent churches. The major objectives of the EFOS, as its organizational title reveals, are evangelical, not political.

Singaporean churches cannot form a coherent political force because they are divided not only along denominational lines but also on language lines. The largest denominations (Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians), are occupied with the growing threat of independent mega churches to their church enrollment. The Protestants in general keep a safe distance from the Catholics under the shadow of the 1987 Marxist conspiracy.[44] In addition to denominational differences,

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[43] Thomas Harvey, "Engagement reconsidered: the fall and rise of a national church council in Singapore," *Trinity Theological Journal*, No. 14 (2006), pp. 61-65.

[44] *ibid.* Wong, "Vision and mission of the national council of churches," pp. 26-27; interviews with

English-speaking churches are attended by wealthier Christians, while Chinese-speaking churches, or the Chinese-speaking believers in language-mixed churches, are treated as second-class citizens in God's kingdom. They attend different worship sessions and maintain different social networks. The wealthier believers and churches have all the connections with political and business elites, and can care no less about social justice, while the poorer believers and churches suffer from social injustice but do not have church leaders to speak for them. Even the theological seminaries are built along language lines: the Trinity Theological Seminary offer mostly English courses, while the Singapore Bible College enroll poorer students for most of its Chinese-speaking classes.[45] Those pastors or church leaders who often comment on social justice issues are persuaded by the wealthier elders or deacons to leave the churches or the country. At time of election, the poorer Chinese-speaking believers tend to vote for the opposition candidates. [46]

III. Hong Kong

A. A brief history of church-state interaction

Professor MP (April 5, 2008), Professor CT (April 2, 2008), and Professor TL (April 2, 2008).

[45] Interviews with professor CT (April 2, 2008) and Baptist Rev. EL (April 3, 2008).

[46] Interviews with Rev. J. Wu, Rev. BS (April 3, 2008), Mr. Chin (April 9, 2008).

Church-state relations in Hong Kong go through two stages of development: "contractors" or "deputies" in social welfare programs before the 1980s and increasing confrontations after the 1980s.[47] The dividing episode is the preparation for the 1997 transfer of sovereignty from the Great Britain to China.

Before the 1980s, the churches not only maintained a harmonious relation with the colonial government but also actively cooperated with the government on social welfare programs, more so than their Singaporean counterparts. The violent strikes of the 1950s and 1960s did not involve the churches but the pro-China leftists and pro-Taiwan rightists.[48] If any, church leaders were on the side of the government to call for law and order immediately restored.

The colonial government and Hong Kong churches did not pay much attention on the principle of church-state separation on social welfare programs. On the contrary, the government generously provided funding to help churches to establish schools from kindergartens, primary schools up to universities; the prestigious Hong Kong Baptist University was exemplary. Church-run hospitals also received

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[47] As Leung Beatrice and Chan Shunhing, *Changing Church and State Relations in Hong Kong, 1950-2000* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), pp.147. correctly argued that churches were not partners but "contractors" or "deputies" of the government because they "had no say over the formulation of government policy on education and social services.".

[48] Liu Shuyong, *Jianming Xianggang shi (A Brief History of Hong Kong)* (Xianggang: Sanlian shudian, 2009), pp. 378-384.

significant financial support from the government, so did other religious charity organizations.

These cozy relationships between the colonial government and churches began to change during the preparation process toward the 1997 sovereignty transfer. The churches first worried that the colonial government would make them sacrificial lambs to the Chinese atheist regime. Therefore, they began to reconstruct church-state relationships in the post-1997 era. Cooperation with the state on social welfares would continue. But the churches took up new roles as political prophets to scrutinize and participate in the preparation process. The Christian community was by no means a coherent political community. At the beginning, some expressed strong support for the communist takeover, some opposed, while others remained indifferent to the issue. Finally, support or not, many Christians realized that they had no choice but to accept the takeover, while pushing for democratization in order to protect their religious rights and other basic freedoms. They formed new laymen organizations and cooperated with civil rights organizations and political parties in peaceful demonstrations, press conferences, and public education programs on civil and political rights.

The annual July 1 march since 1997 is the epitome of Christian participation in Hong Kong politics. The Hong Kong government celebrates July 1 as the day of

sovereignty transfer. But Hong Kong's democracy movements hold annual demonstration on July 1 to protest the lack of democratization. Before the march, Christian organizations, such as the Hong Kong Christian Institute and the Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, would conduct studies and conferences to decide on the major themes of the march. Then, they would hold prayer meetings or vigils before the march. They join and mix in the march consisted of opposition parties, pro-Taiwan groups, student organizations, migrant workers' associations, homosexual activists, Falungong supporters and other under-privileged classes. The march is always orderly and somewhat dull. Neither much joy nor anger is incited during the process. Only dozens of unarmed traffic police stand guard along the route. Christian participants rarely receive much attention from the mass media.

Several incidences characterize the post-1997 emerging confrontations between the state and church. In the aftermath of the crackdown on Falungon in China in 1999, the Christian community openly supported the religious freedom of Flungon in Hong Kong. In 2001, the Catholic Church challenged the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government (SAR) by asking Catholic schools to keep 187 abode-seeking children from mainland China. The SAR stood firm and forced return of these children after their temporary residency permits expired. In 2002 and 2003, the SAR tried to revise Article 23 of the Basic Law, which would severely encroach

upon civil liberties in the name of treason, secession, sedition, subversion, theft of state secrets, and the prevention of foreign political organizations to interfere with Chinese domestic affairs. The Christian community joined the opposition movement to protest the attempted revision; the SAR finally withdrew the proposal after half-million demonstrators showed up in the July 1 march in 2003. In 2004, the SAR enacted the school-based management system which required government-subsidized schools to elect 40% of their committee members from teachers, parents, alumni, and community members who might not be Christians. Even the principals of these schools would be elected by the committee. The Christian community protested in vain and will have to set up such committees by 2010.[49]

As compared to their Singaporean counterparts, Hong Kong Christians are much more outspoken against government policies they deem violations of civil and political rights. They consistently and actively argue for further democratization, which include the general elections of the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council, and the abolition of the appointed representatives.[50] But their expressions

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[49] Ma Ngok, Political Development in Hong Kong: State, Political Society, and Civil Society (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), pp. 196.

[50] Chen Shenqing, "Gongmin shehui yu zhengjiao guanxi de jianshi" ("Examining civil society and church-state relationship") in Chen Shenqing *et al.* (eds.), *Chongtu yu ronghe: hou jiuqi de Xianggang jiaohui yu shehui (Conflict and Harmony: Church and Society in Hong Kong after 1997)* (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 2008), pp. 4-8.

are civil, moderate, rational and legal. They keep friendly relations with government leaders, conservative Christian leaders, Chinese officials stationed in Hong Kong, and even the Beijing government. They are free to give lectures in China's theological seminaries, conferences, and gatherings of family churches. How do we explain these peculiar church-state relations in Hong Kong? State and church institutions matter.

B. State institutions

The basic civil rights of the freedom of speech, movement, information, and association were guaranteed by the British colonial government and an independent judiciary, and continue so by the post-1997 government.[51] The churches and individual Christians in Hong Kong enjoy as much basic freedoms as their counterparts in Western democracy, although this does not apply to political rights such as the elections of major political offices. This explains why the Hong Kong Christian community is quite active in expressing their political opinions but has only a weak influence on political outcomes.

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[51] Tai Benny Y.T., "The judiciary," in Lam Waiman, Lui Percy Luentim, Wong Wilson and Ian Holliday (eds.), *Contemporary Hong Kong Politics: Governance in the Post-1997 Era* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), pp. 59-74; John P. Burns, *Government Capacity and the Hong Kong Civil Service* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), ch5. argues that the post-1997 government has suffered from serious problems of accountability. But thanks to a growing civil society, the protection of basic rights remains strong.

The British colonial government had installed a competent administration to maintain its legitimacy. Ambrose Yeo-chi King dubbs it as the "administrative absorption of politics" in which the government "coopts the political forces, often represented by elite groups, into an administrative decision-making body, thus achieving some level of elite integration; as a consequence, the governing authority is made legitimate, a loosely integrated political community is established."[52] Among the elite groups, the Christian community was well-represented in the formal and informal functioning of the government. For instance, on the Protocol List, the Anglican bishop ranked the fifth after the Governor, Chief Justice, Chief Secretary and Commander-General.[53] On the more substantive policies of subsidies and land acquisitions for religious educational and charity organizations, the churches received full cooperation from the colonial government. Although the first post-1997 government of Chee-hwa Tung (Jian-hua Dong) failed to adapt the absorptive administration to the changing civil society and created legitimacy crisis for the authoritarian government, the churches remained the beneficiaries of government subsidies to their educational and charity organizations.

[52] Ambrose Yeo-chi King, "Administrative Absorption of Politics in Hong Kong: Emphasis on the Grass Roots Level," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No.5 (1975), p.424.

[53] *ibid.* Leung and Chan, *Changing Church and State Relations in Hong Kong, 1950-2000*, pp.20.

The second post-1997 government of Donald Yam-kuen Tsang (Yin-quan Zeng) saw emerging conflicts between the state and church. Allegedly a revenge on the Catholic Church's increasing challenges to the government, the SAR demanded a Catholic school to enlist non-Catholics to their board of directors in order to uphold the principle of church-state separation. The Catholic community regarded it as an infringement of their religious freedom and worried that the visible hand of the state entered the church's gate. On the Protocol List, church representatives were downgraded from the fifth to the ninth position. In governmental educational and social service committees, the number of Catholic representatives was reduced.[54]

Similar to the absence of the Singaporean government's use of the People's Action Party to control the society, the Hong Kong government did not do so either via a dominant political party. The Chinese Communist Party, through the Liaison Office in Hong Kong, kept a low profile in Hong Kong's political market before and after 1997. It did not openly recruit members, nor did it nominate candidates to run for elected positions. Instead, it relied on the pro-Beijing political parties, such as the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, the Liberal Party and the

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[54] *ibid.* Leung and Chan, *Changing Church and State Relations in Hong Kong, 1950-2000*, pp.149-150.

Hong Kong Progressive Alliance to promote Beijing interests in Hong Kong and to run elections in modern democratic manners.[55]

The pre-1997 and post-1997 governments provided ample press freedom to Hong Kong's mess media. Although there is some concern over the government's increasing indirect pressures to restrict press freedom, the concern is based more on hearsays rather than personal experiences.[56] Before 1997, there existed newspapers with wide varieties of political views, ranging from the ultra-rightist pro-Taiwan to the ultra-leftist pro-China.[57] After 1997, the government's increasing indirect pressures to restrict press freedom rely on the informal connections between owners of the mess media and political elites of the SAR and the Beijing government. In addition to their reliance on advertisements provided by the SAR and pro-government business groups, most of these media owners or major stockholders also have investments in other businesses in Hong Kong and/or China, which require good political connections for

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[55] Sing Ming, "Hong Kong's Democrats hold their own," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 20, No.1 (2009), pp. 103-109.

[56] Chan Joseph M. and Lee Francis L.F., "Mass media and public opinion," in Lam Waiman, Lui Percy Luentim, Wong Wilson and Ian Holliday (eds.), *Contemporary Hong Kong Politics: Governance in the Post-1997 Era* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), pp. 155-176; Heike Holbig, "Hong kong press freedom in transition," in Robert Ash, Peter Ferdinand, Brian Hook and Robin Porter (eds.), *Hong Kong in Transition: One Country, Two Systems* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003).

[57] Liu Shuyong, *Jianming Xianggang shi (A Brief History of Hong Kong)* (Xianggang: Sanlian shudian, 2009), pp. 119-122, 242-248, 404-407.

smooth operation. As a quid pro quo, Hong Kong mess media begin to exercise self-censorship or change to pro-government positions on controversial political issues.[58] But the mess media also realize that they cannot overdo it, otherwise they would lose their viewers. Under these calculated press freedom of the mess media, Christian scholars are often invited to express political comments in public as long as their comments are based on professional expertise and presented in a rational, tempered, and non-provocative way.

On other civil liberties, such as freedoms of association, demonstration, and due process of law, the colonial government did not provide enough legal and executive protection until the 1970s when it prepared Hong Kong for the 1997 transfer of sovereignty. In 1991, the enactment of the Bill of rights Ordinance led to a series of revisions of laws that impinged on civil liberties, such as the Societies Ordinance, the Crimes Ordinance, the Telecommunications Ordinance, the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, and the Policy Force Ordinance.[59] Although the SAR tried to revise these laws again to re-impose restrictions on civil liberties, civil rights organizations and opposition parties were able to deter such efforts or to cap policy violations of civil liberties to a level similar to western democracies. Under these legal protections of

[58] *ibid.* Ma, *Political Development in Hong Kong*, pp. 169-176.

[59] *ibid.* Ma, *Political Development in Hong Kong*, pp. 180-181.

civil liberties, liberal Christians formed various civil rights organizations such as the Christian Industrial Committee, the Joint Committee for the Promotion of Democratic Government.

There are complaints raised by Christian scholars about the invisible hands looming large in the seminaries and universities.[60] But most of these complaints are based on rumors and perceptions rather than hard evidence. Very few Christian scholars receive phone calls or visits from Chinese officials stationed in Hong Kong. Even in these rare situations, the communication is most friendly.[61]

Hong Kong has a weak and fragmented representation system that undermines not only the SAR's governance but also the Christian community influence in politics. Because neither the members of the advisory Legislative Council nor the powerful Chief Executive are directly elected by universal suffrage, the legitimacy and representative functions of the SAR are in constant deficiency.[62] While the Chinese Communist Party has exercised self-restraints in recruiting members from the Hong

[60] Lam Waiman, "Political context,"in Lam Waiman, Lui Percy Luentim, Wong Wilson and Ian Holliday (eds.), *Contemporary Hong Kong Politics: Governance in the Post-1997 Era* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), pp. 17-18; Jan Currie, Carole J. Petersen, and Ka Homok, *Academic Freedom in Hong Kong* (New York: Lexington Books, 2006).

[61] Interviews with xxx.

[62] *ibid.* Lam, "Political context," pp. 6-9.

Kong society,[63] opposition parties have had difficulty recruiting talented people to run for the very competitive seats of the Legislative Council whose legal powers are mostly advisory to the Executive. Nasty stories of intra-party struggles and inter-party competitions tarnish the reputation of opposition parties. Under these structural constraints, civil organizations often need to keep some safe distance from opposition parties and prefer to directly deal with government officials.[64]

The Christian community is of no exception. Even the liberal Christians keep a safe distance from opposition parties when they cooperate in press conferences and demonstrations. Few Christian elites join the opposition parties to run for public offices. Like other civil organizations in Hong Kong, the Christian community is "better able to defend itself from encroachment from the state, but less able to unite to push progressive reforms against the wishes of the state."[65]

C. Church institutions

The political liberalization of the Hong Kong colonial state and the SAR provides a comfortable room for the Christians to participate in politics. But it takes two to

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[63] Probably in fear of a backlash from Hong Kong conservative citizens, the Chinese Communist Party had instead relied on pro-China political parties and community organizations to consolidate the grass-root legitimacy of the SAR.

[64] *ibid.* Lam, "Political context," pp. 13; *ibid.* Ma, *Political Development in Hong Kong,* ch6.

[65] ibid. Ma, *Political Development in Hong Kong,* pp. 223.

tango: the Christian community has to develop a new political theology and new church institutions in order to encourage Christians to fill in the enlarging room of political participation. They do so mainly through the Theology Division of the Chung Chi College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.[66]

As early as in the mid-1970s, theologians and students of the Chung Chi College began to ponder the issues of justice, social protests, and China-Hong Kong relations.[67] But the Theology Division was filled with conservative theologians and missionaries who were not interested in political issues. It was not until 1980 when the first Chinese theologian Pan Ying-qiu assumed the chairman of the Division and led the all-Chinese faculty. They began to introduce Western liberal theology, contextual theology, and Latin American liberation theology. There was a heated debate among faculty members and donors about the new theological orientation. But

[66] The Theology Division was first established in 1963 as the Chung Chi Theological Seminary. In 1968 the Seminary was disbanded and taken over by the Theology Division of the Philosophy and Religion Department of the Chung Chi College. In 1978, the Philosophy Department became an independent department; the Division fell under the Religion Department. It became both a Division and a theological seminary. See Lu Longguang, "Chongji shenxue si shi nian: huigu, ganen, zhanwang" ("Fourty years of Chongji theology: review, appreciation, expectation"), in Jiang Dahui (ed.), *Chongji shenxue si shi nian: 1963-2003* (*Fourty years of Chongji Theology: 1963-2003*) (Xianggang: Xianggang zhongwen daxue Chongji xueyuan shenxue zu, 2003a), pp. 21-22.

[67] Lu Longguang, *Shidai langchao zhong de fansi (Reflection in the Changing Era)* (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 1997), pp. 8.

the new orientation soon won the battle and dominated the curricula and the recruitment of new faculty members. Successive chairmen of the Division consolidated the liberal theological orientation and the contextualization of theological analysis in the context of Hong Kong. In the mid-1980s, the Division reached out to China and promoted theological exchanges with Chinese theological seminaries as well as family churches. [68]

The Division's theological orientation consists of three characteristics: liberal, contextual, and Chinese. It is liberal in the sense that most theologians accept liberal theology in methodology. They follow the literature/historical critical school to challenge the conservative theology. They also differentiate themselves from other evangelical churches in the emphasis on the Christian commitment to social gospel. This liberal orientation naturally leads to the second characteristic of the new orientation: contextual. These theologians apply their social gospel to the analysis of Hong Kong politics, economy, and society. Not only do they publish numerous academic and non-academic materials on Hong Kong, they also help to organize civil rights organizations and regularly participate in democratic movements. Finally, the

[68] Chen Weiqiang, "Tulou mingzhu: Chongji shenxue zu si shi nian huigu" ("Shining pearl: review of forty years of Chongji Theological College") in Jiang dahui *et al.* (eds.), *Chongji shenxue si shi nian: 1963-2003 (Fourty Years of Chongji Theology: 1963-2003)* (Xianggang: Xianggang zhongwen daxue Chongji xueyuan shenxue zu, 2003), pp. 48-57.

theological orientation is Chinese in the sense that long before 1997 they accepted the destiny that Hong Kong would be a territory of China, and they have no choice but to support Chinese sovereignty and nationalism. But they also dream the bodacious dream of evangelizing and democratizing China by introducing their liberal, contextual theology to Chinese seminaries and family churches.[69] The ultimate welfare of Hong Kong Christians and citizens, they think, lie in the hands of transformed Christians in China. The democratization of Hong Kong politics would be possible only when the one-hundred-million Chinese Christians concur with them.

With these theological commitments, hundreds of the Division graduates occupy leadership and management positions of various denominations, Christian associations, and civil rights organizations. These are made possible because the Division receives regular donations and students from four major Christian denominations in Hong Kong: the Church of Christ in China (Zhonghua Jidu Jiaohui), the Tsung Tsin Mission (Chongzhenhui), the Methodist Church, and the Anglican

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[69] Du jianwei (ed.), *Xianggang Jidutu xuehui er shi zhounian jinian tekan: 1988-2008 (The Special Issue for 20 Years Anniversary of Hong Kong Christian Association: 1988-2008)* (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 2008). pp. 7, 10; Lu Longguang, "Banhao 'yi guo liang zhi' xia de shenxue jiaoyu" ("Ensuring good theology education under the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems' "), in Jiang Dahui (ed.), *Chongji shenxue si shi nian: 1963-2003 ("Fourty years of Chongji Theology: 1963-2003)* (Xianggang: Xianggang zhongwen daxue Chongji xueyuan shenxue zu, 2003c), pp. 127-129.

(Episcopal) Church (Shenggonghui).[70] The Division also welcomes students recommended by other denominations. By comparison, the Division probably provides the most comprehensive theological training among the thirteen theological seminaries in Hong Kong, most of which are denomination-based. Therefore, it also has the greatest influence across denominations. Furthermore, the Division is financially self-sufficient and administratively autonomous from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong government. Conservative political forces have little influence over the Division's theological orientation and personnel arrangement.

In addition, the Division establishes formal and informal linkages with various Christian associations and civil rights organizations, such as the Hong Kong Christian Council, Hong Kong Christian Institute, Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, Student Christian Movement of Hong Kong, Fellowship of Evangelical Christians, Church of Christ in China, Civil Human Rights Front, Hong Kong Christian Service, People's Alliance for Minimum Wages, Tiananmen Mothers, Christian Roundtable, Christian Industrial Committee, Joint Committee for the

[70] Lu Longguang, "Xianggang de shenxue jiaoyu: huigu lishi, jianshi xiankuang, miandui tiaozhan" ("The theology education in Hong Kong: reviewing history, examining the status quo, and facing challenges"), in Jiang Dahui (ed.), *Chongji shenxue si shi nian: 1963-2003 ("Fourty years of Chongji Theology: 1963-2003)* (Xianggang: Xianggang zhongwen daxue Chongji xueyuan shenxue zu, 2003b), pp. 33.

Promotion of Democratic Government, and Hong Kong Women Christian Council. The most important organization is the Hong Kong Christian Institute (HKCI). Many of its core members are graduates or faculty members of the Division. Many former or current members of the Legislative Council, regardless of their political standpoints, participate in HKCI activities.[71] The HKCI was established in 1988 in response to the preparation for the 1997 sovereignty transfer. Its major missions include the promotion of democratization and social justice.[72] Its founding members split from the Hong Kong Christian Council because the conservative members of the Council paralyze the pro-democracy operation within the Council.[73] Over the years, in addition to voluminous publications on social and political gospel,[74] the HKCI has

[71] *ibid.* Du jianwei, *The Special Issue for 20 Years Anniversary of Hong Kong Christian Association: 1988-2008,* pp. 1.

[72] *ibid.* Du jianwei, *The Special Issue for 20 Years Anniversary of Hong Kong Christian Association: 1988-2008,* pp. 6.

[73] Leung Beatrice and Chan Shunhing, *Changing Church and State Relations in Hong Kong, 1950-2000* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), pp. 151.

[74] Representative works include Guo Naihong, *Maixiang xinshiji de Xianggang jiaohui (Hong Kong Church Moving to a New Era)* (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 1998); Gong Liren, *Jiefang shenxue yu Xianggang kunjing. (Liberation Theology and Hong Kong' Plight)* (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 1999); Guo Hongbiao and Du Jianwei (eds.), *Xin shiji de shenxue yicheng xia ce* (*The Theological Agenda of New Era II*) (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 2003); Lu Longguang, *Shidai langchao zhong de fansi (Reflection in the Changing Era)* (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 1997).

played critical roles in organizing democratic movements such as the establishment of the United Fronts of Hong Kong Citizens Protecting Human Rights (1997), the Civil Human Rights Front (2002), and the half-million people march on July 1 in 2003.[75]

These liberal Christians could have been more influential politically had the conservative Christians got on the democratic boat. On the contrary, the pro-China conservatives (represented by the Society for Truth and Light, the Hong Kong Chinese Christian Churches Union and the Praise Assembly – a Pentecostal church) not only openly disagree with the liberal Christians on issues of homosexuality, abortion, gambling, pornography and theological methodology, but also adopt counter-actions against democratic movements.[76] For instance, in 1998 the Christian community was allocated seven representatives in the 800-member Electoral College to select new Legislative Council members. Most of the liberal Christian organizations opposed to participating in the election.[77] Nevertheless, five liberal

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[75] Committee on Social Policy and Ministry (CSPM), *Minzhu zhengzhi (Democratic Institutions)* (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 2008); ibid. Du jianwei, *The Special Issue for 20 Years Anniversary of Hong Kong Christian Association: 1988-2008,* pp. 8-9.

[76] Chan Shunhing, "Nominating protestant representatives for the election committee: church-state relations in Hong Kong after 1997," *Hong Kong Journal of Sociology*, No. 4 (2003), pp. 155-183; Ye Jinghua (ed.), "Zongjiao youpai: misi yi xianshi？" ("Religious right: myth or reality?"), *Jiaohui Zhinang (The Brain Truster of Church)*, Vol. 49, No. 5 (2009), pp. 1-12.

[77] Yu Yinsi, Zheng Yudian, and Wu Guoming (eds.), *Dui xuanju weiyuanhui shuo "Bu" ("Say 'No' to election committee")* (Xianggang: Jidutu tuanti guanzhu xuanju lianxi, 1999).

Christians participated in the 20-candidate competition but lost all to the conservatives.[78] A déjà vu was replayed in the March 2007 election of the Chief Executive Donald Tsang. The Catholic Church and the Hong Kong Christian Institute called for a boycott of the undemocratic election, while the Hong Kong Christian Council participated in the election.[79] The largest Protestant denomination, the Baptists, simply ignored the debate and maintained their devotion to personal religious and spiritual experiences.[80] In fact, the political weaknesses of the Christian community are a reflection of the political weaknesses of the Hong Kong civil society in general: "the lack of resources and manpower, internal divisions, the prevalence of a depoliticized culture, and the marginalization of its role in politics."[81]

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[78] Chen Shiqi, "Xianggang jidujiao youpai de yishixingtai" ("The Ideology of Religious Right in Hong Kong") in Chen Shenqing *et al.* (eds.), *Chongtu yu ronghe: hou jiuqi de Xianggang jiaohui yu shehui (Conflict and Harmony: Church and Society in Hong Kong after 1997)* (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 2008), pp. 31-40; Gong Liren, *Jiefang shenxue yu Xianggang kunjing. (Liberation Theology and Hong Kong' Plight)* (Xianggang: Xianggang jidutu xuehui, 1999), pp. 33-38.

[79] Wu Rose, "Director's report," in *Hong Kong Christian Institute Annual Report 2006-2007* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Christian Institute, 2008), pp. 9-10.

[80] Lau Vincent Chunpang, *From Periphery to Partnership: A Critical Analysis of the Relationship of Baptists in Hong Kong with the Colonial Government in the Post-World War II Era* (Dissertation thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2005).

[81] Lam Waiman and Tong Irene L.K., "Civil society and NGOs." in Lam Waiman, Lui Percy Luentim, Wong Wilson and Ian Holliday (eds.), *Contemporary Hong Kong Politics: Governance in the Post-1997 Era* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), pp. 146.

IV. Taiwan

A. Brief history of church-state interaction

Unlike Singapore and Hong Kong where a full democracy is not yet established, Taiwan has established a well-functioning democracy and is a consolidated democracy after two turn-overs of ruling parties. Accordingly, church-state relations also change dramatically before and after the lifting of martial law in 1987.

Before 1970, there were few confrontations between the state and church. Catholics and almost all Protestant denominations accepted the authoritarian rule of the KMT government. They concentrated their works on evangelism and refrained from talking about politics. In the 1970s, however, the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan initiated a series of challenges to the KMT authoritarianism: the Declarations and Suggestions on National Affairs (1971) proclaimed that the Taiwanese have the right of self-determination and urged democratization of the mainlander-dominated government, Our Appeals (1975) protested the government's violation of religious freedom, and the Declaration of Human Rights (1978) espoused the establishment of a "new and independent nation." The last one stepped on the last nerve of the KMT government, which then responded the challenges with oppressive measures, resulting in the sentence of the Secretary General of the PCT to four years in prison. The PCT

did not yield to the pressures and continued to actively support the opposition movement in demonstrations and elections. Catholics and other Christian denominations either sided with the government or kept silence on these confrontations.

After the lifting of martial law in 1987, many Catholics and Christian denominations increased their participation in the democratized politics, often on the side of the conservative parties, while the PCT continued to support the DPP candidates and criticized the KMT government. The DPP took over the government in 2000 and was re-elected in 2004. During these eight years of the DPP rule, the PCT eagerly pushed for Taiwan independence via publications, public education, election campaigns, and diplomatic efforts. The Catholics and other Christian denominations kept a low political profile by supporting conservative party candidates and by expanding evangelism in mainland China.

B. State institutions

Before 1987, the KMT Leninist party-state placed the civil society under tight controls, including most of the religious organizations. The Regulations on Temples and Shrines enabled the government to monitor the construction, activity, and personnel of Buddhist and Daoist organizations. In addition, through the government-

sponsored, corporatist Buddhist Association of the Republic of China and the National Daoist Association, the government had access to the information of major leaders in these religious organizations. Various instruments of the White Terror, including the Police Headquarters, the military intelligence, the Investigation Bureau, the Government Information Office, the KMT Social Works Department, and the National Security Bureau, worked closely with one another to locate within religions "trouble-makers," superstitious behaviors, and indecent activities violating tradition and culture. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, many Buddhist leaders were subjects of interrogation or detained without trial by the government.

However, these surveillance and intimidating measures were not applied to most Catholics and Christians. For one thing, most of the Catholics and Christians arrived in Taiwan with the mainlander government around 1949. Their leaders had prior personal contacts with the KMT government. Their believers tended to be Chinese immigrants as well. Secondly, both President Jiang Jieshi and his wife were devoted Methodists. They probably had more trust in institutionalized Catholicism and Christianity than other traditional, un-institutionalized religions. Thirdly, most importantly, most of these denominations maintained close relationships with their sponsoring denominations abroad, particularly, the United States. The US government provided critical military aid to the KMT government until 1964 and maintained

diplomatic relationships with Taiwan until 1979. Christian connections between Taiwan and the US helped cement these relations. The KMT did not want to undermine these religious lobby connections by interfering with the internal affairs of Taiwanese Christian organizations.

The only major Christian exception was the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan.[82] After they published their first political statement in 1971, PCT leaders and believers received frequent harassments by various state and party organizations, such as interrogations, stalking, false reports from other believers, verbal attacks from other Christian denominations, prohibitions on traveling abroad, and restrictions on peaceful marches. Presbyterian Churches around the world offered regular support for the PCT and helped prevent even worse treatments of PCT members by the government.

After 1987, the government and the KMT quickly withdrew their interference with or harassment of civil organizations, including the minimal interference with religious organizations. Believers/voters would no longer tolerate such interference. At the same time, however, the KMT government recognized the importance of

[82] There was another church-state conflict involving the Church of Zion, a Chinese indigenous church which claimed a piece of public land in southern Taiwan as the New Jerusalem. After a few bloody confrontations between the believers and the police, the government finally agreed to legalize their possession of the land.

religious votes. Therefore, the incumbents of elected officials would provide generous subsidies to religious organizations when they held religious ceremonies, parades, and charity activities. The one-million-member Yiguandao (the Unity Sect) became the first legalized new religion after 1987 for its long-term loyalty to the KMT at various local elections.

The DPP government (200-2008) promoted religious freedom even further than the KMT government. The birthday of Buddha became a national holiday. The government leased public land to religious organizations which had illegally built temples, cremation facilities, or hotels. It even subsidized folk religious groups to the United Nations headquarters in New York for a "Taiwan for UN" parade. The DPP itself, however, had little to do with religious organizations. It never had an organizational unit dealing with religious organizations. All of the religious connections were conducted by politicians on the individual basis.

Because of their strong support for Taiwan independence, PCT leaders received honorary and substantive encouragements for their pro-independence activities. The PCT initiated in 2001 the annual Breakfast Prayer Meetings for President Chen Shui-bian and his government officials, modeled after the United States'. The DPP government responded to the PCT's call to build the 228 Memorial Museum to commemorate the ethnic violence in 1947. Pastor Gao Jun-ming, who was sentenced

to four years in prison in 1979 for providing shelter to an opposition politician, was appointed Presidential Advisor and was a regular participant in national ceremonies. PCT members were even able to acquire competitive state-loans to influence the editorial policies of Christian mass media.

Other Christian denominations did not receive special treatments from the DPP government as the PCT did. Neither did they suffer from any maltreatment from the state. After all, Taiwan's democratization proceeded in fast pace. Political carrots were always welcome, but no sticks. Ma Ying-jeou took over the government in 2008. He has not revealed any clear preference for any religion or any Christian denomination. In fact, he seems to have alienated himself from the conservative pro-KMT Christian denominations by his endorsement of homosexuality and casino legalization.

C. Church institutions

Those Catholics and Christians who took refugee to Taiwan with the KMT government were conservative evangelicals. They endorsed the KMT's political agenda of anti-communism and authoritarian rule. They were against communism because of its atheism. They supported the authoritarian rule because they agreed with the KMT propaganda that democracy would allow the communists to create

instability in Taiwan as they did in pre-1949 China. Therefore, they concentrated their theological studies on conservative theologies and evangelism.

Their conservative political attitude was also indoctrinated by foreign missionaries who managed the theological seminaries and church properties. They showed no interest in political issues, liberal theology, or contextual theology. These liberal doctrines were discredited to the extent of heresies. Many of them stayed in Taiwan for short periods of time just to accumulate overseas resumes in order to qualify for better church positions at home in the long run. They did not even bother to learning mandarin, not to mention the Taiwanese dialect which most native Taiwanese spoke. Because of their restricted perspectives, they directed their evangelism to urban areas where living standards were higher and where mainlander immigrants and American soldiers concentrated.

By contrast, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan adopted different political theology and evangelical strategies since the mid-1950s, when a few talented pastors returned from overseas theological education and assumed teaching positions at theological seminaries, notably the Tainan Theological Seminary in southern Taiwan and the Taiwan Theological Seminary in northern Taiwan. They brought back liberal theology and social gospel and applied them to Taiwan's social and political issues.

The "doubling movement" from 1954 to 1964 put the seminary students in practice of the liberal contextual theology. Their contextualized social gospel was attractive to the lower classes of Taiwan's fast growing economy and almost doubled the number of believers from 59,000 in 1954 to 103,000 in 1964. They insisted on the use of local dialects for the sermons and for the Bible translations: the Holo for the Taiwanese, the Hakka for the Hakka ethnic group, and the aboriginal languages for the aborigine tribes. This use of local dialects contributed greatly to their spread of social gospels and the larger share of religious market, as in contrast to other denominations which used Mandarin in urban areas to serve mainlanders.

The PCT Headquarters effectively coordinated liberal theological education and political activities. It consisted of relatively equal numbers of pastors and lay leaders at every level of its church hierarchy, which provided critical links to the opposition movements and other social organizations. In addition, there were functional committees dealing with various issues of social justice, such as women, aboriginals, inter-religious relations, youth, workers, etc. PCT leaders frequently made use of these committees and ad hoc committees to issue statements on social and political issues, and passed on these statements to every member church as references for political actions. More often than not, PCT leaders would quickly issue political statements in response to current affairs without going through functional or ad hoc

committees. Local churches could follow or ignore these statements, but rarely openly rebutted them. The PCT also published church newspapers, monographs, books, and pamphlets to address social and political issues. Through these institutionalized channels, the PCT was able to mobilize church members for political actions and coordinate press conferences, academic discussions, and demonstrations with social movements and political parties.

V. Where Are the Chinese Church-State Relations Going?

Due to the scope of this paper, a detailed analysis of the Chinese church-state relations is not likely to do justice to this topic.[83] A brief summary of the Chinese church and state institutions would suffice to reveal that Chinese church-state relations are moving from the Singaporean model to the Hong Kong model, while carefully circumventing the Taiwanese model.

After the Chinese Communist Party established the People's Republic of China, the United Front Department of the Party, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), the police, and state-sponsored religious associations laid tight

[83] This subsection is based on Kuo Chengtian, "Religious views of politics in China and Taiwan since 2000," paper presented at the "NCCU-ACPS International Conference on Peaceful Development and Deepening Integration in the Greater China Region," Taipei, Taiwan, June 11-12, (2009), pp. 4-6.

controls over believers and religious activities in the hope to extinguish what Marx called it "the opium of the people."[84] The PRC Constitution upheld the same principles of religious freedom and the separation of state and religion as western democracies did. However, regardless of these abstract constitutional principles, the Chinese party-state developed a system of strict regulations and policies to keep religious groups under the canopy of "three selves," "three-fixes," "love the country, love the religion," "four cardinal principles" (socialism, democratic centralism, communist leadership, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought), and the unification of the mother land.[85]

In 1982, the CCP Central Committee issued the "Basic Viewpoint on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period" (Document No. 19), which, for the first time, systematically examined the theories and experiences of past treatment of state-religion relations, and provided new roles for the religion to play at the "preliminary stage of reform and opening of Chinese socialism." In 1991, the CCP Central Committee and the State Council proclaimed the "Circular on Some Problems

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[84] Zhao Tianen and Zhuang Wanfang, *Dangdai Zhongguo Jidujiao Fazhanshi 1949-1997 (History of Contemporary Chinese Christianity 1949-1997)* (Taipei: Zhongguo Fuyinhui Chubanbu, 1997); Chan Kimkwong and Eric R. Carlson, *Religious Freedom in China: Policy, Administration, and Regulation: A Research Handbook* (Santa Barbara, CA: Institute for the Study of American Religion, 2005).

[85] Wang James C. F., *Contemporary Chinese Politics: An Introduction* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), pp. 60-99.

Concerning Further Improving Work on Religion" (Document No. 6), which clarified some ambiguities concerning the implementation of Document No. 19 in the past nine years, and provided a blueprint to standardize religious regulations.[86]

Following these guidelines, the State Council promulgated a series of religious regulations to serve two goals: to protect religious freedom from the official's arbitrary intervention in "normal" religious activities, and to prevent the expansion of "evil cults" and foreign religious interference. Major religious regulations included: Procedures for Implementing the Management of Religious Organizations Registration (1991), Regulations on the Management of Places of Religious Activities (1994), Regulations on the Management of Religious Activities of Foreigners in China (1994; later replaced by the Religious Affairs Provisions in 2005), Procedures for the Annual Inspection of Venues of Religious Activity (1996), Specific rules for Implementing the Regulations on the Management of Religious Activities of Foreigners in China (2000), and the organic Religious Affairs Provisions (2004).[87]

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[86] Zhongyang Dangxiao Minzu Zongjiao Lilunshi (ed.), *Xinshiqi Minzu Zongjiao Gongzuo Xuanchuan Shouce* (*Propaganda Handbook of Ethnic and Religious Works in New Era*) (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 1998).

[87] Guojia Zongjiao Shiwuju Zhengce Faguisi (SARA) (ed.), *Quanguo Zongjiao Xingzheng Fagui Guizhang Huibian (Collection of National Administrative Regulations and Decrees oo Religion)* (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua chubanshe, 2000); Ye Xiaowen, "Luetan shier nianlai woguode zongjiao lilun he fazhi jianshe," (A brief discussion on China's religious theories and legislation in the last twelve years) in Lu Daji and Gong Xuezeng (eds.), *Makesi Zhuyi Zongjiaoguan Yu Dangdai Zhongguo*

Former chairman of the CCP Jiang Zeming concluded these theories, regulations, and policies of state-religion relations in China with "four sentences": 1. comprehensively and correctly implement the party's religious policies, 2. regulate religious affairs by law, 3. resolutely lead to the compatibility between religion and socialist society, and 4. insist on the principle of independence, autonomy, and self-management (of religious organizations).[88]

Beneath these principles and religious regulations, the CCP held different attitudes toward different religions. In the eyes of the CCP, Christianity (both Protestantism and Catholicism) has carried the "original sin" of "being the instrument of imperial invasion" ever since the late Qing dynasty. This original sin diluted over the years but never removed, and would often step on the CCP's nerves again whenever there is a tension between China and western countries. The CCP remembered the days of imperial invasion in China, during which western evangelists were involved in the opium trafficking, conspiring invasion, robbery, and drafting unequal treaties. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US human rights

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Zongjiaojuan (Marxist Approaches to Religion and Issues in Contemporary Chinese Religion) (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 2008), pp. 174-181. One needs to bear in mind that all these regulations are administrative regulations. So far, there is no congressional law or constitutional review on religion.

[88] In the National Working Conference of the United Front in 1993, Jiang proposed "three sentences." In the Sixteenth People's Congress, he added the fourth sentence. Hu Jing-tao seemed to follow Jiang's major policies, plus his slogan of the "promotion of a harmonious society."

diplomacy focused its attention on China's religious issues, and allegedly attempted to reproduce the "holy alliance" of the Polish experience in China in order to abolish the atheist CCP rule.[89]

The number of Chinese Christians grew rapidly after 1979. Those who belonged to the legal three-self churches numbered about sixteen millions in recent years. The number would exceed one hundred millions if members of family churches were included.[90] The rapid growth and the sheer number of Christians deepened the CCP's anxiety over that these Christians would become the instrument of "peaceful

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[89] Wang James C. F., *Contemporary Chinese Politics: An Introduction* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), pp. 10-11, 164-170; Chen Shenqing and Lin Ruiqi, "Dangdai zhongguo zhengjiao guanxide zhuanbian yu fazhan: tianzhujiao jiaohuide gean yanjiu," ("Change and development of church-state relationship in contemporary China: case study of Catholic Church"), *Xianggang Shehuixue Xuebao*, No. 1 (2000), pp.103-129. The CCP argued that the US and Vatican formed a "holy alliance" to help the Solidarity Union and the Polish Church to overthrow the communist regime.

[90] The counting of Christians is always subject to debate. Chinese officials (SARA http://www.sara.gov.cn/GB//zgzj/index.html, 2/4/2008) often underestimated their number, while those organizations sympathetic to family churches often overestimated. For instance, both the Boxun News (Duihua Yuanzhu Xiehui) and World Christian Database (Center for the Study of Global Christianity) claimed that the number exceeded 100 millions. The WVS 2005-2006 data reported 4.3% of the Chinese respondents to be self-identified Christians, which might not include family church members. Yao Xinzhong and Paul Badham, *Religious Experience in Contemporary China* (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2007: 31, 54) reported 2.8% of self-identified Christians. But on the question of "whether you experienced God (in Christian jargon), 9.7% answered yes, which might include family church members. If the latter figure was correct, then, the estimation about 100 million Christians in China is probably correct also.

transformation" by western imperialism. If the thesis of the compatibility between Christianity and democracy is valid, then, even without foreign intervention, Chinese Christians would challenge the legitimacy of the CCP rule from within.

VI. Conclusion

Based on the above comparisons among Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the Tocqueville-Weberian compatibility thesis of Christianity and democracy is not entirely applicable to these three Chinese diaspora societies. Instead, both state controls and the church's choices jointly chartert the development of respective church-state relations. Table 1 summarizes the findings of this paper.

[Table 1 about here]

These comparisons demonstrate that Christianity at the aggregate level cannot explain the variations of state-church relations among these three Chinese societies. Church leaders need to make a choice in political theologies and to develop corresponding institutions to support or to challenge the state. Those who choose the evangelical theology with exclusively focus on personal salvation and who guide their laymen organizations as such tend to remain as obedient citizens to the state. Those

who choose the liberal theology with a strong emphasis on social justice and who apply their theological beliefs to their church organizations become political prophets critical of the state.

Can the variations in state strength explain the variations of state-church relations in these societies? It cannot either. Among the three, the Singaporean state apparently is the strongest and is able to account for the total submission of all the Christian denominations and the Catholics to the state. Despite the choice of the liberation theology by a few Catholic leaders in the mid-1980s, the strong state pre-empted and annihilated the embryonic prophetic movement. However, state strength alone cannot explain the variations of state-church relations between Hong Kong and Taiwan as well as among Christian denominations within both societies. The pre-1087 Taiwanese state was as strong as the Singaporean state, but the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan made a phoenix rose to challenge the Leninist state, while other Christian denominations remained obedient to the state. The Hong Kong conservative churches are apathetic to political issues, while liberal churches seem to under-utilize their potentials to challenge the laissez-faire state, although one might argue that it is not the Hong Kong state that these liberal Christians are worry about, it is the Chinese Leviathan at Beijing that really looks scary.

What is the prospect of Christian democratization in these Chinese diaspora societies? Taiwan has passed the "two-turnover test" of a consolidated democracy. The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan continues to contribute to the consolidation of Taiwanese democracy, along with other Christian denominations which are learning about liberal theology and social gospel. In Singapore, there is no light at the other end of the democratic tunnel, if the tunnel exists at all. The strong state shows no sign of weakening, while the church is quite complacent about its self-censorship and devotion to personal salvation. Between the Singaporean and Taiwanese models, Hong Kong liberal Christians continue to walk on the thin ice of democratization under the shadow of a puffing dragon in the north. The democratic prospect looks promising but the pace is prudently slow.

As for the Chinese church-state relations, the rapid growth of the Christians and the growing costs of state control over the society forced the state to adjust its religious policies from the Singaporean model toward the Hong Kong model. Still distrustful of competitive party systems, the Chinese state has carefully circumvented the Taiwanese model.

Table 1. Institutions of Christian Democratization

	Singapore	Hong Kong	Taiwan
State Institutions			
Political Ideology	Statism	Laissez faire	Soft statism to Democratic state
State Institutions	Security laws, strong controls over the press, communities and individuals.	Independent judiciary, state subsidies to church, indirect influence over the press.	Independent judiciary, non-discriminatory state subsidies to church.
Church Institutions			
Theology	Personal salvation and evangelism	Liberal theology and social gospel	Liberal theology and social gospel
Church Institutions	Self-censorship seminaries and lay organizations.	Loose coalition among seminaries, lay organizations and opposition movements.	Strong coalition among seminaries, lay organizations and opposition movements.
Church-State Relations	State's total domination over church.	Cooperation and mild confrontation.	Checks and balances.

行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫 **V 成 果 報 告**
□期中進度報告

（計畫名稱）

華人社會之基督教與民主：台灣、香港、新加坡（第 2 年）

計畫類別：V 個別型計畫　　□ 整合型計畫
計畫編號：NSC 96-2414-H-004-031-MY2
執行期間：2008 年 8 月 1 日至 2009 年 7 月 31 日

計畫主持人：郭承天

成果報告類型(依經費核定清單規定繳交)：□精簡報告　V完整報告

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執行單位：政治大學政治系

中 華 民 國 98 年 10 月 31 日

This research plan is a continuation of my 2005 NSC project "Christianity and Democracy in Asian Pluralist Religious Markets: Taiwan and South Korea." It employs the same theories and research methodologies, but more datasets to compare the relationships between Christianity and Democracy in the three Chinese societies of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Case studies of the past decades on Hong Kong and Singapore have found that Christianity (including Catholicism) suddenly played a critical role in the political democratization of these two countries. These case studies might confirm Max Weber's Alex de Tocqueville's and Samuel P. Huntington's general arguments that Christianity and the post-Vatican II Catholicism indoctrinate democratic values to their believers and encourage their democratic participation. Persuasive as they are, no comparative statistical study has been conducted to validate these claims in these Chinese pluralistic religious markets. Are the average Chinese Christians committed to democratic values and behavior as are the exemplary cases cited by case studies? Are Christians in these countries similar to other religious believers due to the pervasive influence of Confucianism? Are Christians of these Chinese societies different from one another due to different historical, political, and religious environments?

The original project planned to examine these questions against the Asia Barometer (2001-2003) data and the forthcoming World Value Survey data (2005), complemented by field interview data. However, during the course of project execution, I found out that the Asia Barometer data has completed a new wave of survey in 2006, which includes Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Therefore, I have contacted a member of the Taiwan research team in order to get the authorization to use the comparative dataset. After fulfilling the procedural requirement of using the dataset, I plan to analyze it in the coming summer. I have acquired the World Value Survey Data (2005) which contains Taiwan and Hong Kong data. Unfortunately, it does not include Singapore in this wave of survey.

The independent variables are religion and religiosity. Dependent variables include democratic value variables and democratic behavior variables. The former include trust in institutions, democratic legitimacy and preference for democracy, efficacy and citizen empowerment, democratic vs. authoritarian values, and belief in procedural norms of democracy. Democratic behavior variables include social capital, political participation, party identification and voting behavior. Statistical control variables include gender, age, education, income, and ethnicity. Crosstabulations, binary logistic models, and OLS regression models are applied to these variables. Finally, longitudinal comparisons are conducted to observe and compare national development trends.

Because of the uncertainty of waiting for the Asian Barometer dataset, I modified my research plan by expanding the case study component and completed my field research in Hong Kong from June 28 to July 4, 2009. Using a formatted questionnaire (see attached), I interviewed ten respondents, including theologians, college professors, lay leaders, and Christian professional. I purchased eighteen books and more than forty articles/book chapters related to the research project from local sources. Based on these materials, along with the Singaporean materials, I

wrote a conference paper “Institutional Choices of Church-State Relations in Chinese Societies,” to be presented at the Association for Asian Studies, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, March 25-28, 2010..

The abstract of this paper is as follows. Chinese Christians in Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan might belong to the same faith, but grew up with different political faces. Singaporean Christians have largely maintained a supporting priestly role toward the authoritarian regime. Hong Kong Christians have slowly transformed themselves from the role of social welfare contractors to that of political critics in a liberal but non-democratic environment, while Taiwanese Christians continue to play a significant role in the country’s democratic consolidation. The common factor of Confucian culture (or “Asian values) among these three societies cannot fully account for their differences in church-state relations. Instead, the respective ideologies and institutions of church and state have carved out different political faces of Christians among these societies. The current Chinese church-state relations seem to be moving from the Singaporean model to the Hong Kong model, but carefully circumventing the Taiwanese model.

Hong Kong Questionnaire

Date: Respondent:

1. Polity of churches in Singapore. Pastors or deacons (elders) make the major decisions such as budget, evangelical missions, pastoral recruitment?

2. Relations among local churches, national association of churches, and missionaries.

3. Revenues of seminaries self-sufficient or receive support from government?

4. Participation in charity, social services (after-school education, adult education)?

5. In 2008, any church (denomination) declares support for the 泛民主派（民主黨、公民黨） or 親建制派（民建聯、自由黨）?

6. The debate over the 1996 HK Christian Council's participation in Selection Committee.

7. The church's role in 2008 LegCo elections (politician's speech? campaign flyers? pastor's sermon? rally? candidates 基督教界普選?)

8. Christians among the 2008 LegCo members?

9. Church view on direct election of governor and LegCo (2004 NPC's Standing Committee ruled no direct election.

10. Church reaction toward 7/1 rally and 10/1 national holiday (1996-1997)? China versus Hong Kong.

11. Church views toward homosexuality, abortion, divorce, death penalty?

12. 基督教時代論壇週報？

13. Sources of political theology?

14. View on Liberation Theology?