



China's New United Front Work in Hong Kong

Penetrative Politics
and Its Implications

Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo
Steven Chung-Fun Hung
Jeff Hai-Chi Loo

palgrave
macmillan

China's New United Front Work in Hong Kong

Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo
Steven Chung-Fun Hung
Jeff Hai-Chi Loo

China's New United Front Work in Hong Kong

Penetrative Politics and Its Implications

palgrave
macmillan

Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo
University of Hong Kong, SPACE
North Point, Hong Kong

Steven Chung-Fun Hung
Education University of Hong Kong
New Territories, Hong Kong

Jeff Hai-Chi Loo
Lingnan University
Tuen Mun, Hong Kong

ISBN 978-981-13-8482-0 ISBN 978-981-13-8483-7 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-8483-7>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer
Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2019

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.

The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Dedicated to the late Professor Ming Chan of Stanford University

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This book originated from a presentation at the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents Club on China's new united front work in Hong Kong in late June 2018. We have to thank James Pomfret and Gregory Torode for providing us with a golden opportunity to develop our important project and to share our preliminary observations. We are also grateful to one of our friends who does not want to be named, who listened attentively to our preliminary findings and who raised good questions to provoke our further thoughts.

The three authors of this book worked very hard to complete this book project by utilizing all the open sources. We hope that this book will benefit all those interested in the study of China in general and Hong Kong in particular.

We dedicate this book to the late Professor Ming Chan of Stanford University. We were saddened by his sudden departure in late 2018.

March 31, 2019

Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo
Steven Chung-Fun Hung
Jeff Hai-Chi Loo

CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 1 | A Comprehensive Framework of Understanding the Context and Content of China's New United Front Work on Hong Kong | 1 |
| 2 | The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong as Flagship of China's United Front Work | 43 |
| 3 | Political Participation of Fujianese Interest Groups | 77 |
| 4 | Inter-Union Rivalry Between Pro-Beijing Federation of Trade Unions and Pro-Democracy Confederation of Trade Unions | 107 |
| 5 | United Front and Women Interest Groups from Pro-British to Pro-Beijing | 149 |
| 6 | United Front Work on Six Religions | 189 |
| 7 | Penetrative Politics from Neighborhood Associations to District Federations: Electoral Mobilization and Competition | 221 |

| | | |
|-----------|--|------------|
| 8 | Youth Interest Groups from Pro-Beijing Front to Radical Resistance | 255 |
| 9 | Influencing Civil Society Through Mass Media, Education and Migration | 289 |
| 10 | Co-opting Individuals with External Implications: Business Elites, Democrats, Civil Servants, Educators and Taiwanese | 337 |
| 11 | Conclusion | 365 |
| | Bibliography | 381 |
| | Index | 401 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|---|
| AAF | Association for the Advancement of Feminism |
| ACFWHKDA | All-China Federation of Women Hong Kong Delegates Association |
| ACWF | All-China Women Federation |
| ACYF | All-China Youth Federation |
| ALP | Australia Labor Party |
| BPA | Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong |
| CAHKMS | Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao Studies |
| CCP | Chinese Communist Party |
| CIC | Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee |
| CIHK | Confucius Institute of Hong Kong |
| CLSGUF | Central Leading Small Group on United Front |
| CMCFA | The Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association |
| CPCA | Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association |
| CPPCC | Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference |
| CPPCCYA | Hong Kong CPPCC Youth Association |
| CRC | Cooperative Resources Center |
| CSGU | Hong Kong Civil Servants General Union |
| CTU | Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions |
| DAB | Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong |
| DPP | Democratic Progressive Party |
| EDAA | Eastern District All-Sectors Association |
| EEGU | Education Employees General Union |
| EGSP | Education Bureau, Government, Grant-in-Aid, Subsidized and Private Junior Schools Junior Staff Union. |
| EKDRC | East Kowloon District Residents' Committee |

| | |
|----------|--|
| ExCo | Executive Council |
| FCC | Fukien Chamber of Commerce |
| FCSU | Hong Kong Federation of Civil Service Unions |
| FLU | Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions |
| FNTY | Federation of New Territories Youth |
| FTU | Federation of Trade Unions |
| GESU | Government Educational Staff Union |
| HKACA | Hong Kong Army Cadets Association |
| HKASTA | Hong Kong Aided School Teachers' Association |
| HKBA | The Hong Kong Buddhist Association |
| HKCWC | Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club |
| HKFEW | Hong Kong Federation of Education Workers |
| HKFFA | Hong Kong Federation of Fujian Associations |
| HKFW | Hong Kong Federation of Women |
| HKGU | Hong Kong Graziers Union |
| HKIF | Hong Kong Island Federation |
| HKIWA | Hong Kong Island Women Associations |
| HKKFPWGU | Hong Kong and Kowloon Flowers and Plants Workers General Union |
| HKMAO | Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office |
| HKPA | Hong Kong Progressive Alliance |
| HKPTU | Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union |
| HK SAR | Hong Kong Special Administrative Region |
| HKSWRA | Hong Kong Students War Relief Association |
| HKTA | Hong Kong Teachers' Association |
| HKTFA | The Hong Kong Taoist Federation of Associations |
| HKUYA | The Hong Kong United Youth Association |
| HKWDA | Hong Kong Women Development Association |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| JPC | Justice and Peace Commission |
| KA | Kaifong Associations |
| KCRA | Kowloon City Residents Association |
| KFA | Kowloon Federation of Associations |
| KMB | Kowloon Motor Bus |
| KMT | Kuomintang |
| KTRA | Kwun Tong Residents Association |
| KWND | Kowloon West New Dynamic |
| KWOF | Kowloon Women's Organization Federation |
| LDFHK | Liberal Democratic Federation of Hong Kong |
| LegCo | Legislative Council |
| LO | Liaison Office |
| LP | Liberal Party |

| | |
|---------|--|
| LPA | Liberal Party of Australia |
| MAC | Mutual Aid Committees |
| MKA | Mongkok Kaifong Association |
| NCNA | New China News Agency |
| NPA | National Party of Australia |
| NPC | National People's Congress |
| NPP | New People's Party |
| NSC | National Security Commission |
| NTAS | New Territories Association of Societies |
| OC | Owners Corporations |
| OIWA | Hong Kong Outlying Islands Women Association |
| PLA | People's Liberation Army |
| PMWC | Provisional Minimum Wage Commission |
| POAS | Principal Officials Accountability System |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| PS | Positive Synergy |
| QFA | Quanzhou Federation of Associations |
| RC | Rural Committees |
| SARS | Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome |
| SCNPC | Standing Committee of the National People's Congress |
| SDAA | Southern District All-Sectors Association |
| SRA | Shumshuipo Residents Association |
| TCSC | Taoist Cultural Study Center |
| TMFW | Tuen Mun Federation of Women |
| TSA | Territory-wide System Assessment |
| TSWWA | Tin Shui Wai Women Association |
| TUC | Hong Kong and Kowloon Trades Union Council |
| TWKTDWA | Tsuen Wan Kwai Tsing District Women Association |
| UDHK | United Democrats of Hong Kong |
| WDAA | Wanchai District All-Sectors Association |
| YEA | The Y Elites Association |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|----------|---|----|
| Fig. 1.1 | A comprehensive framework of understanding China's new united front work on Hong Kong | 41 |
| Fig. 2.1 | The DAB organization chart. Source: "Organization Structure," in the website of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, available in http://www.dab.org.hk/AboutUs.php?nid=234 , access date: April 4, 2018 | 47 |
| Fig. 2.2 | Number of DAB district branches, 1992–2018. Sources: See the website of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong in http://www.dab.org.hk/branch.php , access date: April 4, 2018 | 48 |
| Fig. 2.3 | Comparison of the votes gained by DAB and pro-Beijing forces in Legislative Council elections, 1998–2016. Sources: Votes gained were calculated from the official statistics in the website of the Electoral Affairs Commission | 52 |
| Fig. 2.4 | Comparison of the voters gained by DAB and pro-Beijing forces in District Council elections, 1994–2015. Sources: Votes gained were calculated from the official statistics in the website of the Electoral Affairs Commission | 55 |
| Fig. 2.5 | Numbers of DAB legislators, district councilors and members, 1992–2018. Sources: Same as Table 2.6 | 57 |
| Fig. 2.6 | The political structure of China's united front work in Hong Kong | 64 |
| Fig. 2.7 | Formation of united front groups against Occupy Central Movement. Sources: The data are collected and calculated from a website that showed a signature campaign mobilizing 1411 organizations to join the petition in 2014, available in: https:// | |

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| | www.sign4peacedemocracy.hk/index.php?r=index/support , access date: April 4, 2018 | 66 |
| Fig. 2.8 | Votes gained by the pro-Beijing and pro-democracy camps in Legislative Council elections in Hong Kong Islands, 1998–2018 | 73 |
| Fig. 2.9 | Votes gained by the pro-Beijing and pro-democracy camp in Legislative Council elections in Kowloon West, 1998–2018. Sources: Votes gained were calculated from the official statistics in the website of the Electoral Affairs Commission | 74 |
| Fig. 2.10 | Votes gained by the pro-Beijing and pro-Democracy camp in Legislative Council elections in New Territories East, 1998–2018. Sources: Votes gained were calculated from the official statistics in the website of the Electoral Affairs Commission | 75 |
| Fig. 3.1 | Types of HKFFA affiliated groups. Source: Hong Kong Federation of Fujian Associations, <i>Special Issues</i> , vol. 10 (Hong Kong: Meijia Publishing Limited, October 2015) | 86 |
| Fig. 4.1 | Patterns of activities of the Federation of Trade Unions, 1945–2008. Source: Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions (2008), <i>Passing the Torch with Glorious Years: Collective Memories of Hong Kong Labourers and the historical photos of the Federation of Trade Unions, 1948–2008</i> . Hong Kong: Xinhua Book Store | 122 |
| Fig. 4.2 | The organization structure of the FTU. Sources: http://www.ftu.org.hk/en/about?id=13 . *There are five mainland consultation services centers, location in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Dongguan, Huizhou and Zhongshan, see the FTU website, in http://www.ftu.org.hk/en/participate?id=110 , access date: April 28, 2018 | 123 |
| Fig. 4.3 | Workforce participation in trade unions, 1990–2016. Sources: Registry of Trade Unions, <i>Annual Statistical Report of Trade Unions in Hong Kong</i> , from 1991 to 2016 (Hong Kong: Registry of Trade Unions, Labour Department), and Hong Kong Government, <i>Hong Kong Annual Report</i> , from 1990 to 2016, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government | 126 |
| Fig. 4.4 | Memberships of different trade unions, 1984–2016. Sources: Registry of Trade Unions, <i>Annual Statistical Report of Trade Unions in Hong Kong</i> , from 1984 to 2016 (Hong Kong: Registry of Trade Unions, Labour Department of the HKSAR Government, from 1984 to 2016) | 127 |
| Fig. 5.1 | Core and peripheral pro-Beijing women groups | 161 |
| Fig. 7.1 | The organization chart of the Kowloon Federation of Associations. Source: See https://klfnas.hk/tc/ , access date: February 8, 2018 | 241 |
| Fig. 7.2 | Penetrative politics at the district level | 253 |
| Fig. 8.1 | Core and peripheral pro-Beijing youth groups | 256 |
| Fig. 8.2 | The Values and Attitudes of Hong Kong Youths: Accepting or Resisting United Front Work | 257 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|------------|--|----|
| Table 2.1 | The background of founding members of DAB and HKPA | 45 |
| Table 2.2 | DAB chairpersons, 1992–2018 | 46 |
| Table 2.3 | Major political representation of DAB members in Hong Kong and China | 50 |
| Table 2.4 | The direct election results of the Legislative Council, 1998–2016 | 51 |
| Table 2.5 | The results of the District Council elections, 1999–2015 | 53 |
| Table 2.6 | Numbers of DAB legislators, district councilors and members, 1992–2018 | 56 |
| Table 2.7 | Success rate of the DAB candidates elected at various districts | 58 |
| Table 2.8 | The success rate of DAB candidates in District Council elections, 1994–2015 | 59 |
| Table 2.9 | The DAB training programs | 60 |
| Table 2.10 | DAB’s direction camp | 62 |
| Table 2.11 | The DAB forums and conferences | 63 |
| Table 2.12 | Number and percentage of votes for DAB in the 2016 legislative election and various by-elections | 65 |
| Table 2.13 | The DAB’s political stance and political realities | 67 |
| Table 2.14 | The DAB’s new policy suggestions and initiatives, 2017–2018 | 69 |
| Table 2.15 | Activities showing the alliance between the Liaison Office and the DAB in 2017 | 71 |
| Table 3.1 | The main Fujianese interest groups in Hong Kong | 82 |
| Table 3.2 | Types of HKFFA affiliated groups | 87 |
| Table 3.3 | Fujianese candidates and District Council election results in North Point District, 2007–2015 | 89 |
| Table 3.4 | Fujianese legislators, 1997–2018 | 92 |
| Table 3.5 | Key Fujianese representatives in political parties as of 2018 | 93 |

| | | |
|------------|--|-----|
| Table 3.6 | The Fujianese participation in the leadership of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong | 94 |
| Table 3.7 | Fujianese advisors in the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong | 95 |
| Table 3.8 | Fujianese participation in pro-Beijing district-based groups, 2018 | 96 |
| Table 3.9 | Participation of HKFFA members in the 2017 Chief Executive Election Committee | 97 |
| Table 3.10 | The elected Fujianese in the PRC National People's Congress Election, 2017 | 98 |
| Table 3.11 | Fujianese community leaders appointed as members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in 2018 | 99 |
| Table 3.12 | Fujianese as Basic Law Committee members as of 2018 | 100 |
| Table 3.13 | Chinese official attending the HKFFA's activities | 101 |
| Table 3.14 | Mobilization activities of HKFFA | 104 |
| Table 3.15 | Fujianese participation and anti-occupy interest groups | 105 |
| Table 4.1 | Labor Unions affiliated with the Federation of Trade Unions | 114 |
| Table 4.2 | Summary of FTU's membership and number of labor unions, 1948–2016 | 115 |
| Table 4.3 | Unions and Membership of Hong Kong with the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions and the Hong Kong and Kowloon Trade Unions Council Affiliated Membership, 1967–1983 | 116 |
| Table 4.4 | Trade unions in Hong Kong, 1984–2016 | 119 |
| Table 4.5 | The largest four trade unions in Hong Kong: platform and ideology | 121 |
| Table 4.6 | FTU, CTU and public-sector unions with more than 3000 members | 124 |
| Table 4.7 | Civil servants' union membership | 124 |
| Table 4.8 | The Hong Kong-based service centers under the Federation of Trade Unions | 125 |
| Table 4.9 | Election results of the Legislative Council's labor functional constituency, 1985–2016 | 128 |
| Table 4.10 | The FTU's participation results in Legislative Council Direct Elections, 1998–2016 | 129 |
| Table 4.11 | Election Results of the pro-Beijing Candidates in District Council Functional Constituency under Legislative Council elections, 2012 and 2016 | 130 |
| Table 4.12 | FTU District Councils members, 1999–2015 | 131 |
| Table 4.13 | Election results of the Labour Advisory Board in November 2016 | 132 |
| Table 4.14 | FTU Participation in the Chief Executive Election Committee's subsector elections, 2016 | 133 |

| | | |
|------------|---|-----|
| Table 4.15 | Higher-level political representations of the Federation Trade Unions members | 134 |
| Table 4.16 | FTU members in China's National People's Congress | 135 |
| Table 4.17 | The political position of trade unions in controversial cases | 137 |
| Table 4.18 | Trade unions in the aviation industry | 145 |
| Table 5.1 | The educational and social activities of the Hong Kong Chinese Women Club | 151 |
| Table 5.2 | The main leaders of the Hong Kong Federation of Women | 158 |
| Table 5.3 | The gender distribution of Executive Councilors | 163 |
| Table 5.4 | The gender distribution of Legislative Councilors, 1966–1984 | 164 |
| Table 5.5 | The gender distribution of Urban Councilors | 165 |
| Table 5.6 | Women political participation in Urban Council and Regional Council | 166 |
| Table 5.7 | Women participation in Legislative Council elections | 167 |
| Table 5.8 | Differences in women and men participation in District Council elections | 168 |
| Table 5.9 | The success rate and seats occupation rate of women candidates in District Council elections | 168 |
| Table 5.10 | Political mobilization of pro-Beijing women interest groups in denouncing the oath-taking behavior of pro-democracy legislators-elect | 170 |
| Table 5.11 | Political representation of Hong Kong Women in China's and Hong Kong's political institutions, 2018 | 171 |
| Table 5.12 | Political background of female Hong Kong members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, 2018 | 172 |
| Table 5.13 | Women participation in the District Council elections in outlying islands | 176 |
| Table 5.14 | United front women groups in opposition to the 2014 Occupy Central Movement | 180 |
| Table 5.15 | Co-optation of leaders of the Kowloon Women's Organizations Federation into China's Political Institutions, 2011 | 181 |
| Table 5.16 | Ten affiliated groups shared by the Hong Kong Island Women's Association and the Hong Kong Federation of Women | 183 |
| Table 5.17 | Financial situation of the Pro-Democracy Association for the advancement of feminism | 186 |
| Table 6.1 | Religious leaders who were politically co-opted before July 1, 1997 | 216 |
| Table 6.2 | Hong Kong members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference | 216 |
| Table 7.1 | Participation of <i>kaifong</i> associations and rural committees in opposition to the 2014 Occupy Central Movement | 226 |

| | | |
|------------|--|-----|
| Table 7.2 | The evolution of Kwun Tong <i>kaifong</i> associations | 227 |
| Table 7.3 | Leadership and organization of three main district-based federations, 2018 | 231 |
| Table 7.4 | Key overlapping membership between the DAB and three district federations | 232 |
| Table 7.5 | Membership OF Agriculture-based Hong Kong Graziers Union and Hong Kong and Kowloon Flowers and Plants Workers General Union, 1973–2016 | 234 |
| Table 7.6 | Women interest groups absorbed by the NTAS in 1990 | 236 |
| Table 7.7 | The district distribution of interest groups affiliated with the NTAS | 236 |
| Table 7.8 | Interest groups and individual membership of the NTAS | 237 |
| Table 7.9 | Interest groups under the district committees of the Kowloon Federation of Associations | 241 |
| Table 7.10 | The linkages between Kowloon Federation of Associations, Kowloon West New Dynamic, East Kowloon District Residents’ Committee and Positive Synergy | 243 |
| Table 7.11 | District-based interest groups under the Kowloon Federation of Associations | 244 |
| Table 7.12 | A comparison of two by-elections held for Legislative Council in March and November 2018 | 248 |
| Table 7.13 | Some declared donors in Rebecca Chan’s election campaign | 249 |
| Table 7.14 | Rental expenditure of Rebecca Chan’s election campaign | 250 |
| Table 8.1 | Chairmen of Hong Kong United Youth Association, 1992–2018 | 259 |
| Table 8.2 | Education background of General Committee members of the Hong Kong United Youth Association, 2012–2015 | 261 |
| Table 8.3 | Participation of HKUYA members in the 12th All-China Youth Federation | 261 |
| Table 8.4 | Participation of HKUYA members in the 12th Chinese Youth Federations at the provincial and municipal levels | 262 |
| Table 8.5 | Participation of HKUYA members as Legislators, 1997–2018 | 264 |
| Table 8.6 | Chinese officials who attended the activities of the Y Elites Association | 268 |
| Table 8.7 | Chinese officials attended the major events of the uniformed cadet groups | 275 |
| Table 8.8 | Critical Marxist groups and their political platform | 281 |
| Table 8.9 | Radical localist groups and their political platform | 284 |
| Table 9.1 | Newspapers ownership and the political background of media proprietors, 2019 | 294 |
| Table 9.2 | The editorial position of media organizations on the 2014 Occupy Central Movement | 296 |

| | | |
|------------|--|-----|
| Table 9.3 | The editorial position of the mass media on the PRC formal support of the Hong Kong Government's action of banning the Hong Kong National Party | 297 |
| Table 9.4 | The classification and number of media in Hong Kong, 2018 | 299 |
| Table 9.5 | Participation of Hong Kong and Taiwan actors in the mainland's three political films. 2009–2017 | 300 |
| Table 9.6 | Prominent Hong Kong and Taiwan actors and actresses “blacklisted” by the PRC authorities | 302 |
| Table 9.7 | The evolution of the Sino United Publishing | 303 |
| Table 9.8 | Internet media and popularity of their Facebook | 307 |
| Table 9.9 | The transformation of the pro-Beijing schools in Hong Kong after 1997 | 313 |
| Table 9.10 | Electoral results of the education functional constituency in Legislative Council elections, 1985–2016 | 315 |
| Table 9.11 | Political background of candidates who competed with candidates from the Professional Teachers' Union | 316 |
| Table 9.12 | Major teachers' trade unions in Hong Kong, 2017 | 318 |
| Table 9.13 | Educational interest groups that are not registered as Teachers' Unions | 319 |
| Table 9.14 | Membership of Education Unions, 1955–2017 | 321 |
| Table 9.15 | Different trade unions at Hong Kong's tertiary institutions in 2017 | 323 |
| Table 9.16 | The elected representatives from educational interest groups in the education subsector elections of Chief Executive Election Committee in 2006, 2011 and 2016 | 325 |
| Table 9.17 | Hong Kong academics as the founding members of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macao studies | 326 |
| Table 9.18 | Demographic and social characteristics of one-way permit holders, 1998–2017 | 332 |
| Table 10.1 | Comparison between the Liberal Party and the Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong, 2019 | 341 |
| Table 10.2 | The contributions of Hong Kong Business Elites to China's modernization | 347 |
| Table 10.3 | Co-opting pro-democracy elites | 348 |
| Table 10.4 | Co-opting Hong Kong civil servants | 351 |
| Table 10.5 | Chronology of a joint statement of the principals of ten universities | 355 |
| Table 10.6 | Major Taiwan political figures who met mainland Chinese officials | 358 |
| Table 10.7 | The chronology of the Lu Li-an incident | 360 |
| Table 10.8 | Huang Xiangmo's donation to Australian political parties | 363 |
| Table 11.1 | Four types of elites | 375 |



A Comprehensive Framework of Understanding the Context and Content of China's New United Front Work on Hong Kong

Historically, united front work in the People's Republic of China (PRC) could be traced back to an alliance between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang (KMT or Nationalist Party) first in 1922 under the influence of the Communist International and later in 1937 shortly after the 1936 Xian incident.¹ In 1939, Mao Zedong regarded united front work as an indispensable element, together with armed struggle and party-building, in the CCP's revolutionary victory over the KMT.² During the anti-Japanese war, the CCP's united front work targeted at the “workers, peasants, small and medium capitalist classes, capitalists from ethnic nationalities, large landlords and the big capitalist class.”³ In August 1940, the CCP adopted a so-called three-three system in governing its controlled areas, where one-third of the administrators came from the CCP, one-third from the “progressive elements” of non-CCP parties and the rest from non-party individuals.⁴

¹ Lyman P. Van Slyke, “The United Front in China,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1970), pp. 119–135. Also see James C. F. Wang, *Contemporary Chinese Politics: An Introduction* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2002), pp. 15–19.

² Liu Rumei, “Discussion on the Origins and development of the United Front Work,” *Journal of the Academy of Guizhou Socialism* (in Chinese), vol. 4 (2014), pp. 26–30.

³ Zhang Suyun and Xu Jian, “The Anti-Japanese Ethnic Nationalities’ United Front and War Victory,” *Journal of Liaoning University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* (in Chinese), vol. 33, no. 5 (2005), pp. 1–6.

⁴ Wang Mingqian, “‘Three-Three System’ and ‘Two Factions’: Regime-Building and United Front in Anti-Japanese Bases in Central China,” *Journal of Zhejiang Normal University* (in Chinese), vol. 40, no. 6 (2015), pp. 34–42.

After the PRC was established on October 1, 1949, the CCP has been utilizing the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) as a tool for conducting united front work on non-Communist and "democratic" political parties.⁵ In the recent years, the CPPCC has become a platform for "democratic" parties not only to "reflect public opinion" but also to "maintain their loyalty" to the CCP and patriotism.⁶ With the implementation of the open-door policy in China under the leadership of the late Deng Xiaoping, united front work has, since the mid-1970s, been expanding to the intellectuals, the business people, non-CCP individuals and religious and charity groups.⁷ In short, the PRC's united front work has been implementing the concept of the "mass line," consolidating the CCP on the one hand and unifying the ordinary people on the other.⁸

In the case of Hong Kong, the CCP decided to "fully utilize Hong Kong's position" after the founding of the PRC so that China could develop external relations and trade.⁹ Liao Chengzhi, the former director of the PRC's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, which was set up in August 1978, had told the Hong Kong members of the CPPCC in March 1978 that the PRC government would like to unite those people who "support Hong Kong's sovereignty return to China" and who "maintain

⁵ Shih Wen, "Political Parties in Communist China," *Asian Survey*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1963), pp. 157–164.

⁶ Xu Zhongtao, "The Basic Viewpoints of the Democratic Parties in Publicizing Public Opinion and Maintaining Principles," *Journal of the Academy of Guizhou Socialism* (in Chinese), vol. 4 (2013), pp. 26–28.

⁷ Zhang Jiaoxia, "Examining the Characteristics of Intellectuals in Private Tertiary Schools Outside the Party and United Front Work," *Science and Technology Innovation Herald* (in Chinese), no. 11 (2013), pp. 217–218. Sun Lizhen, "China's Private-Sector Business Groups and the Features of United Front," *Journal of Zhejiang Shuren University* (in Chinese), vol. 17, no. 1 (2017), pp. 105–108. Wang Xiaojin, "The Evolution of the United Front Theory and Practices of the Chinese Communist Party," *Research on the Chinese Communist Party's History and Building* (in Chinese), vol. 219, no. 2 (2013), pp. 99–103. Ming Shifa and Li Lin, "The United Front Path and Improvement in Developing the Religious Sector and Charity Organizations," *Journal of Yunnan Nationalities University (Social Science)* (in Chinese), vol. 29, no. 5 (2012), pp. 66–72.

⁸ Luo Hai, "Discussion of the Party-Building and United Front Work Under the New Circumstances," *Journal of the Academy of Guizhou Socialism* (in Chinese), Vol. 4 (2013), pp. 40–43.

⁹ Wu Bin, "Liao Chengzhi and New China's United Front on Hong Kong and Macao," *Journal of Fujian Institute of Socialism* (in Chinese), Vol. 89, No. 2 (2012), pp. 9–12.

Hong Kong's prosperity."¹⁰ Liao repeated these remarks in his meeting with the business people from Hong Kong in November 1982, when the Sino-British negotiations over Hong Kong's future began. His remarks were in conformity with Deng Xiaoping's idea that the "one country, two systems" in which Hong Kong would maintain its existing lifestyle for 50 years after 1997 would have the ultimate objective of "reunifying the Taiwan comrades."¹¹ With the emergence of the pro-Taiwan independence movement in the 1990s and 2000s, the former PRC President Jiang Zemin asserted that united front work was the main instrument through which the CCP would reunify Taiwan in the long run.¹² The united front work in Hong Kong and Macao has focused on the attraction of "comrades" in the two territories to invest their capital in the mainland, to assist the PRC's economic modernization and to interact with mainland Chinese for the sake of "developing a centrifugal force among the Chinese and overseas Chinese toward their motherland."¹³

Shortly before the United Front Regulation was revised in September 2015, a leading small group on united front work was formed by the CCP and its head was a Politburo member, Sun Chunlan.¹⁴ The leading small group's first meeting was chaired by the CCP Secretary-General Xi Jinping, emphasizing the need for the Party to consolidate the unity among ethnic minorities in mainland China and to implement the principles and policy of united front work. In view of the fact that many young students, intellectuals and democrats in Hong Kong severely opposed the national education policy of the local government in the summer of 2012, PRC authorities responsible for Hong Kong matters began deeply concerned about the lack of political and social unity in the HKSAR.¹⁵ The anti-national education movement in the HKSAR was a "precursor" to

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Zhang Hongyan and Zhang Xiaomin, "The Content, Impact and Implications of Deng Xiaoping's United front Theory," *Journal of Huzhou Teachers College*, Vol. 27, No. 5 (2005), pp. 51–55.

¹² Wen Qiaoshi, *Tongzhan Gongzuo (United Front Work)* (Beijing: Chinese Communist Party History Publisher, 2008), pp. 15–16.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 180–182.

¹⁴ *Jinghua Shibao*, July 31, 2015. Also see Gerry Groot, "The Expansion of the United Front Under Xi Jinping," in Gloria Davies, Jeremy Goldkorn, and Luigi Tomba, eds., *China Story Yearbook 2015* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2016), pp. 166–177.

¹⁵ Paul Morris and Edward Vickers, "Schooling, Politics and the Construction of Identity in Hong Kong: The 2012 'Moral and National Education' Crisis in Historical Context," *Comparative Education*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (2015), pp. 305–326.

the Occupy Central Movement from September to December 2014, when more young people of Hong Kong were determined to clamor for a faster pace and broader scope of democratization in the HKSAR.¹⁶ The Occupy Central Movement, however, failed to exert pressure on the PRC to yield to the demands of the protestors. In the summer of 2015, a political reform plan prepared by the HKSAR government and supported by Beijing failed to get the support of most members of the Legislative Council. In early 2016, some young people in the HKSAR felt politically frustrated and alienated by not only the lack of democratic progress but also the disappearance of several local publishers who published books critical of the mainland, culminating in a riot in Mongkok where localist protestors confronted the police violently.¹⁷

The PRC leaders were shocked by the occurrence of the anti-national education campaign, the Occupy Central Movement and the Mongkok riot, believing that united front work would have to be strengthened in the HKSAR. After the 19th Party Congress was held in Beijing in October 2017, the CCP was determined to expand the “patriotic forces” in Hong Kong and Macao by adopting a new united front strategy.¹⁸ First, “a stronger sense of national consciousness” will have to be developed through “an increase in the Hong Kong and Macao people’s collective memory of their national and emotional bonds,” “the refutation of remarks and actions that violate the Basic Law” and “an enhancement of their historical and interactional linkages with the mainlanders.”¹⁹ Second, “national education will have to be promoted” through “an identity education of using the Chinese constitution and the Basic Law as the core systems,” “an emphasis on history and national education” and “an integration of the psychological acceptability of Hong Kong and Macao youth.”²⁰ The “refutation of remarks and actions that violate the Basic Law” of Hong Kong

¹⁶Klavier Jie Ying Wang, “Mobilizing Resources to the Square: Hong Kong’s Anti-Moral and National Education Movement as Precursor to the Umbrella Movement,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2017), pp. 127–145.

¹⁷Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo, *The Politics of Policing in Greater China* (London: Palgrave, 2016).

¹⁸No author, *Thirteen Lectures on the Spirit of the 19th Party Congress* (in Chinese) (Guangzhou: New Democracy Publisher, 2017), p. 172. The publisher is under the administration of the Hong Kong Commercial Press Bookstore and the mainland’s published book is obviously a work that espouses pro-CCP or CCP views.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

has become apparent since the Occupy Central Movement in late 2014, leading to a series of actions, including the November 2014 interpretation of the Basic Law by the Standing Committee of the PRC National People's Congress over the provocative actions of two legislators-elect in their oath-taking ceremony. The pro-Beijing media launched attacks and political campaigns against political activists, such as Benny Tai, who was one of the leaders of the Occupy Central Movement, and Andy Chan Ho-tin, who was deemed to be one of the advocates of the so-called Hong Kong independence.²¹ The pro-Beijing media, such as *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po*, have sent reporters to dig out all the details of the PRC's political enemies, namely, the radical democrats and even some moderate democrats who have been regarded as cultivating relations with the pro-Taiwan independence activists. Therefore, another hallmark of China's united front work in the HKSAR is to isolate its political enemies and level severe verbal criticisms against them.

THE CONTENT OF CHINA'S UNITED FRONT: OBJECTIVES, EVOLUTION, AGENTS AND PENETRATIVE POLITICS

The PRC's united front work in Hong Kong under the British rule was mostly carried out by the New China News Agency (NCNA), which started its work in the colony in 1944 when the PRC Premier Zhou Enlai extended the CCP work from Guangdong to Hong Kong.²² In the late 1940s, the NCNA's united front work aimed at wooing the political and social support of the local industrial and commercial elites, followed later by a focus on both business people and intellectuals.²³ During the PRC's Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, Beijing neglected the role of the NCNA in Hong Kong, allowing the Guangdong Military Committee to issue directives to the agency.²⁴ The radical Maoists took command of the NCNA, stimulating local left-wing supporters to confront the Hong Kong British government violently through the actions of planting bombs and

²¹ Gary Cheung, Tony Cheung and Joyce Ng, "China's top body lays down law on Hong Kong's oath-taking," *South China Morning Post*, November 8, 2016 in <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/2043768/chinas-top-body-lays-down-law-hong-kong-oath-taking>, access date: April 3, 2018.

²² Cindy Chu Yik-yi, *Chinese Communists and Hong Kong Capitalists* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 42–43.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

conducting suicidal attacks at some anti-CCP local people. There was virtually no need for any united front work on the people of Hong Kong, losing the political and social support of those Hongkongers who cherished socio-political stability. After the Cultural Revolution in mainland China, Beijing's pragmatic and moderate officials took command of Hong Kong affairs, including the late former director of the Hong Kong Macao Affairs Office Liao Chengzhi from 1978 to 1983 and the late former director of the NCNA Xu Jiatun from 1983 to 1990. From the 1970s to the 1980s, when the open-door policy of the late PRC leader Deng Xiaoping was implemented, Beijing adopted a more outreaching united front work on Hong Kong, expanding official interactions with the members of the capitalist class, middle class and working class. Nevertheless, Beijing's united front work in Hong Kong was dealt a severe blow in June 1989, when the Tiananmen incident erupted. Xu Jiatun sided with the late and deposed Premier Zhao Ziyang and he eventually escaped to the United States. Moreover, Xu was at loggerheads with Lu Ping, the former late director of the Hong Kong Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO).²⁵ Xu's successor Zhou Nan (1990–1997) failed to create an image of being a popular CCP official, partly because he confronted the popular late Governor Christopher Patten over the British-initiated political reform plan and partly because of Zhou's apparently hard-line and politically arrogant style.²⁶ In light of the criticism that Xu Jiatun had paid too much attention on the local business elites in his united front work, Zhou Nan reoriented his united front target at the working class.

The objectives of the PRC's united front work in the HKSAR are multiple. They include the need for the PRC (1) to win the hearts and minds of more Hong Kong people than ever before, (2) to secure most Hong Kong people's support of the central government's various policies toward the HKSAR, (3) to enhance the patriotism and Chinese national and polit-

²⁵ Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo, "The Chinese Communist Party Elite's Conflicts over Hong Kong, 1983–1990," *China Information*, vol. 8, no. 4 (Spring 1994), pp. 1–14.

²⁶ In June 2017, Zhou said the people of Hong Kong were "brainwashed" by the colonial British for so long that anyone who opposed the policy of national education was to "force the youth to return to the brainwashing-style of the colonial education." He added that, after the emergence of the 2014 Occupy Central Movement and the rise of the local independence movement, the enactment of Article 23 of the Basic Law to ban subversion, treason, sedition and secession should be implemented as soon as possible. See "Interview with Zhou Nan," June 19, 2017, in <https://www.thestandnews.com/politics/>, access date: February 5, 2019.

ico-cultural identity of the Hong Kong people, (4) to achieve Beijing's dominant control or "comprehensive jurisdiction" over Hong Kong, (5) to isolate and defeat political enemies and opposition, including the moderate democrats and radical ones, (6) to strengthen a coalition of "patriotic" elites governing Hong Kong and (7) to protect Beijing's interest of maintaining the supremacy of "one country," specifically its national security interest. All these objectives have become very prominent in the PRC policy toward the HKSAR since the onset of the Xi Jinping era in November 2012, when he was selected as the CCP Secretary-General. In March 2013, Xi became the President of the PRC, receiving 2952 votes, one vote against him, and three abstentions in the meeting of National People's Congress (NPC).²⁷ Since then, national security interest has become more prominent in the PRC's policy toward Hong Kong, especially after the establishment of the National Security Commission in November 2013.

Historically, from July 1, 1997, to June 2003, China's united front work in the HKSAR had no breakthrough. As with the 1990s when the NCNA focused on its united front work on the capitalist, middle and working classes, Beijing's officials responsible for Hong Kong affairs continued with this approach and reached out to every sector of the local society. Yet, the crux of the problem of China's united front work from 1997 to mid-2003 was its tendency to report to Beijing the positive aspects of the HKSAR rather than engaging in an objective assessment of public sentiments. In late 1999, the NCNA was renamed the Liaison Office. Gao Siren, the Liaison Office director from 2002 to 2009, was relatively inactive in the HKSAR, leaving the task of united front work to his subordinates, especially the deputy directors. Nevertheless, there was a tendency on the part of his subordinates to consolidate relationships with the already co-opted pro-Beijing Hong Kong elites. Some deputy directors made public remarks that were regarded as relatively hard-line.²⁸ For

²⁷ "Xi elected Chinese president, chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission," March 14, 2013, in http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/news/Appointments/2013-03/14/content_1783118.htm, access date: February 4, 2019. Also see Max Fisher, "Xi Jinping's election as president of China, as told in crazy statistics," *The Washington Post*, March 14, 2013, in https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2013/03/14/xi-jin-pings-election-as-president-of-china-as-told-in-crazy-statistics/?utm_term=.5c9bbcac3928, access date: February 4, 2019.

²⁸ Sonny Lo, Eilo Yu, Bruce Kwong and Benson Wong, "The 2004 Legislative Council Elections in Hong Kong: The Triumph of China's United Front Work After the 2003 and 2004 Protests," *Chinese Law and Government*, vol. 38, no. 1 (January/February 2005), pp. 3–29.

example, Wang Fengchao's criticisms of the Hong Kong Cable TV program that interviewed a pro-Taiwan independence leader Annette Lu in March 2000 raised the eyebrows of some Hong Kong critics. Another Liaison Office official, He Zhiping, even claimed that the Hong Kong business people should not have transactions with Taiwanese counterparts. The public image of the Liaison Office in the 2000s was that it did not hesitate to intervene in Hong Kong matters.

Political correctness and positive reporting were the two main characteristics of the Liaison Office from 1997 to mid-2003, thus leading to the gross miscalculation of the outbreak of the half a million people's protest on the streets of Hong Kong on July 1, 2003.²⁹ Excluding those critics of the PRC from consultation and dialogue, officials of the Liaison Office naturally developed a favorable and biased view of the HKSAR development. The huge public protest was a great embarrassment to the PRC's united front work, which appeared to fail to inform Beijing of what was happening in the HKSAR. Hence, after the July 1, 2003, protest, the Liaison Office and the HKMAO started to develop greater political sensitivity to Hong Kong's public opinion.³⁰ However, this did not mean that Beijing's intervention in Hong Kong affairs would be diluted. Intervention, from the PRC perspective, can be positive and conducive to the HKSAR's development. A turning point came in January 2008, when a researcher named Cao Erbao from the Liaison Office wrote a report, stressing the need for two governing forces in the HKSAR, namely, the HKSAR administrators and the mainland cadres and officials being sent to Hong Kong.³¹ Cao wrote:

Because our country took back Hong Kong according to the 'one country, two systems' policy under which 'Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong' with a high degree of autonomy is implemented, the governing power also changed from a single governing team, namely, the British Hong

²⁹ For the July 1, 2003 protest, see Sonny Lo, "Hong Kong, 1 July 2003: Half a Million Protestors," *Behind the Headlines*, vol. 60, no. 4 (2004), pp. 1–14.

³⁰ One of the authors of this book was contacted by mainland academics and observers who went down to the HKSAR to understand the "real sentiment" of the Hong Kong people after July 1, 2003. One of these mainlanders later became a research professor at a Hong Kong university.

³¹ Cao Erbao, "Governing Hong Kong under the conditions of 'one country, two systems,'" in *Study Times*, No. 422, January 29, 2008, translated into English, in https://www.civiparty.hk/cp/media/pdf/090506_cao_eng.pdf, access date: January 26, 2019.

Kong Government ('British Hong Kong authorities') before Reunification to two governing teams under the conditions of 'one country, two systems' after Reunification. One is the 'Hong Kong SAR establishment team', which includes the Chief Executive, Principal Officials, members of the Executive Council and the civil service, the Judiciary and other personnel of the administration of justice system. This team exercises high degree of autonomy according to the Basic Law, by delegated authority delegated by the Central Authorities. The other team is 'the team of cadres of Central and Mainland Authorities carrying out Hong Kong work' which includes departments of the Central Government and their external organs with responsibilities in Hong Kong affairs or specializing on Hong Kong work: departments of the Central Government responsible for other national affairs and relevant policies; and cadres in the Government and CCP Committees of provinces, cities and districts closely related to the Hong Kong SAR, who handle matters involving Hong Kong. This team exercises constitutional powers to govern the SAR (including dealing with the relationship between the Central and Mainland authorities, and the HKSAR) in accordance with our Constitution and the Basic Law of the HKSAR, and [it] does not interfere with the affairs within the autonomy of the SAR.³²

His report aroused the concern of some democrats and critics, who believed that the Liaison Office wanted to have a greater say and influence on Hong Kong matters. Cao's arguments were, strictly speaking, nothing new, for the Liaison Office had long intervened in the local elections by mobilizing its staff members to assist pro-Beijing political forces and candidates in various ways, such as election campaigning, strategic planning in elections and the provision of manpower and logistical support for pro-Beijing political parties and candidates. What was new was his attempt at openly legitimizing the participatory role of the Liaison Office in the Hong Kong affairs.

China's new united front work in the HKSAR witnessed a turning point in November 2013 when the National Security Commission (NSC) was established. The NSC formation was clearly a response to the growing domestic terrorist activities.³³ Little reports have been published on how the NSC has viewed the HKSAR. But the preparatory activities of the three pro-democracy leaders for the Occupy Central Movement, namely, legal expert Benny Tao, academic Chan Kin-man and religious priest Chu

³² Ibid.

³³ See Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo, *The Politics of Controlling Organized Crime in Greater China* (London: Routledge, 2013).

Yiu-ming, in January 2003, did alarm the PRC national security apparatus.³⁴ As such, the NSC establishment in November 2013 could be seen as a move coping with not only terrorist activities in the mainland but also the potential socio-political turbulence in the HKSAR. China's deep concern over Hong Kong was revealed in June 2014, when the White Paper on the practice of "one country, two systems" policy in the HKSAR was published by the PRC's State Council. It reiterated:

As a unitary state, China's central government has comprehensive jurisdiction over all local administrative regions, including the HKSAR. The high degree of autonomy of HKSAR is not an inherent power, but one that comes solely from the authorization by the central leadership. The high degree of autonomy of the HKSAR is not full autonomy, nor a decentralized power. It is the power to run local affairs as authorized by the central leadership. The high degree of autonomy of HKSAR is subject to the level of the central leadership's authorization. There is no such thing called "residual power." With China's Constitution stipulating in clear-cut terms that the country follows a fundamental system of socialism, the basic system, core leadership and guiding thought of the "one country" have been explicitly provided for. The most important thing to do in upholding the "one country" principle is to maintain China's sovereignty, security and development interests, and respect the country's fundamental system and other systems and principles.³⁵

The White Paper was politically significant in emphasizing Beijing's "comprehensive jurisdiction" over the HKSAR, applying its brake over the scope and pace of democratic reform in Hong Kong and specifying its political veto power over the territory's affairs. It constituted a severe warning to the local pro-democracy activists, who however reacted to the White Paper negatively and saw it as a deeper intervention of Beijing in Hong Kong affairs.

In July 2015, Beijing set up the Central Leading Small Group on United Front (CLSGUF). The group's main objectives are to implement the central government's policy directives on united front, to study the progress of its policy implementation and to direct government depart-

³⁴For the Occupy Central Movement leaders' declaration in January 2013, see <http://oclp.hk/index.php?route=occupy/book>, access date: January 26, 2029.

³⁵"The Practice of the 'One Country, Two Systems' Policy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region," June 10, 2014, in <http://www.fmccprc.gov.hk/eng/xwdt/gsxw/t1164057.htm>, access date: January 26, 2019.

ments and party units and cells on how to ensure the smooth implementation of such directives.³⁶ In fact, once Xi became the CCP Secretary-General, he emphasized the importance of consolidating united front work in the mainland from December 2012 to December 2014, when Sun Chunlan was appointed as the minister of the United Front Department. In September 2014, Xi delivered “an important speech” on united front in the 65th anniversary of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), saying that “great unity and solidarity are the nature of united front work,” that “united front work was the key treasure for not only the CCP’s revolutionary success and reform enterprises but also the Chinese national renaissance” and that we would have to deepen the process of “democratic deliberation” at “all levels of institutional development.”³⁷ In April 2015, the director of the National Minorities Department, Wang Zhengwai, was appointed as the deputy director of the United Front Department, showing the PRC’s move of combining united front work with the affairs of ethnic minorities. Given the apex of domestic terrorist attack in Urumqi in May 2014 when 43 people died, and given that many “terrorist” activities coincidentally involved members of some ethnic groups, Wang’s co-appointment was clearly aimed at enhancing united front work targeted at ethnic groups.

On April 30, 2015, the CCP Politburo approved a work regulation on the CCP’s united front work. According to Article 1 of the CCP United Front Work Regulation, united front work will have to be “consolidated and developed.”³⁸ Article 2 emphasizes the need for a “patriotic coalition” composed of those people who love the Chinese nation and support its unification. Article 3 stresses the need to stick to President Xi’s idea of having the Chinese national renaissance and to “maintain Hong Kong and Macao’s long-term prosperity and stability, and to realize the unification service of the nation.” By implication, the PRC’s united front work on Hong Kong and Macao is a means to an end, namely, reunifying Taiwan in the long run. Article 4 clearly delineates the scope of united front work, including “(1) members of democratic parties, (2) non-party members, (3) intellectuals outside the CCP, (4) ethnic minorities, (5)

³⁶ See *The People’s Daily*, July 31, 2015, in <http://cpc.people.com.cn/xuexi/n/2015/0731/c385474-27391395.html>, access date: January 26, 2019.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “The Chinese Communist Party’s United Front Regulation,” September 23, 2015 in <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2015/0923/c64107-27622040.html>, access date: January 26, 2019.

members of the religious sector, (6) those people not working in the state-owned economic sector, (7) members of new social strata, (8) those people who study overseas and who return to the mainland, (9) Hong Kong and Macao comrades, (10) Taiwan comrades and their relatives in the mainland, (11) overseas Chinese and their returnees and relatives in the mainland, and (12) those people who need to be contacted and united.”³⁹ The last category—“those people who need to be contacted and united”—is very broad, showing that the PRC government aims at winning the hearts and minds of all the Chinese people, ethnic minorities and overseas Chinese in the world—a very ambitious task in the era of President Xi Jinping. Article 5 of the Regulation outlines all the leading actors of united front work, including the united front departments at and above the county level, designated persons at the township and street levels, and party secretaries at the levels of central government, provinces, higher educational institutes, scientific research agencies and state-owned enterprises. Moreover, “people’s organizations” should have designated persons responsible for united front work, meaning that various interest groups are expected to operate as the CCP’s effective “transmission belts” that can bridge the gap between the ruling party and the masses. Article 7 emphasizes the role of party secretaries in united front work, including the operation in Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and overseas, where “the related parties, groups and individuals are the targets of united front work and investigation.” Article 8 stresses that united front departments have to coordinate with the CPPCC to consolidate the work on ethnic minorities, religious believers, the people of Hong Kong and Macao, the Taiwan people and overseas Chinese. Article 12 places much emphasis on the role of the CPPCC to engage members of “democratic parties” and those outside the CCP to engage in deliberative discussions for the sake of “democratically supervising” the ruling regime. Article 14 claims that the CCP and the non-parties and democratic parties play the role of mutual supervision through giving their opinions, criticisms and constructive suggestions. Article 16 focuses on the united front work targeted at intellectuals outside the CCP. Article 18 mentions the need for united front work on the students who study in Europe and America and other places by setting up overseas Chinese students associations at the levels of provinces, cities, universities and research institutes.

³⁹ Ibid.