

The Rise of “Anti-China” Sentiments in Hong Kong and the 2012 Legislative Council Elections

Ngok Ma

Abstract

For decades, Hong Kong has been struggling to deal with the China factor. The One Country Two Systems formula sought to insert mechanisms of separation between mainland and Hong Kong after 1997. Increased mainland-Hong Kong economic and social integration in recent years made this separation difficult, bringing resistance and hostility against the Chinese government and mainlanders. Political and social movements led to a new Hong Kong identity and new narratives about Hong Kong's political role in China. Deteriorating human rights records and tightened political control from Beijing since 2008 aggravated the “anti-China” sentiments in Hong Kong, which reached a peak during the 2012 Legislative Council election. The strong showing of candidates that adopted strong “anti-China” positions in the 2012 election implied more polarization and confrontation. With the Hong Kong people becoming more skeptical of increased integration, and the political gap between China and Hong Kong widening around the struggle for democracy, China-Hong Kong relations would enter an unprecedented difficult period.

Ngok MA is currently Associate Professor at the Department of Government and Public Administration, Chinese University of Hong Kong. His research areas include party politics and elections in Hong Kong, state-society relations in Hong Kong, comparative politics, and democratization. He is author of *Political Development in Hong Kong: State, Political Society and Civil Society* (University of Hong Kong Press, 2007).