

# Study of Influence of Post-colonial Thought and Identity Dilemma on Hong Kong

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**Abstract.** This article discusses how The British continued to exert political and cultural influence on Hong Kong after the end of colonial rule, proving the existence of Post-colonialism. Under the principle of "one country, two systems", what measures the Hong Kong government and the central government should take to resist this post-colonial influence and prevent more divisions and conflicts is of great significance to the future of Hong Kong.

**Keywords:** Post-colonial; Identity Dilemma.

## 1. Introduction

Hong Kong returned to the motherland on July 1, 1997 after being colonized by the British for 155 years. During the 156 years of colonial rule by the British government in Hong Kong, Hong Kong was troubled by the western post-colonial culture in terms of national identity. After the return of Hong Kong, many people predicted that with the gradually closer connection between Hong Kong and the mainland and more and more influenced by the mainland, the change trend of Hong Kong would be more toward the mainland than the UK on the other side of the ocean. On the contrary, political events in recent years have shown that many people in Hong Kong have developed an anti-Chinese mentality and prefer to move closer to the west. Hence it can be seen that although Hong Kong has got rid of colonial rule in form, it is still very difficult for it to regain its sense of subject and deepen its sense of national identity.

## 2. Colonialism and Post-colonialism

Colonialism is the aggressive policy of powerful countries to turn backward countries into their colonies, semi-colonies or vassal states by various means of aggression. In different periods of capitalist development, colonialism has different forms of expression. Post-colonialism is primarily a theoretical study of cultural differences, describing the complex relationship between the former colonial powers and the colonies and the third world, which differs from colonialism.

Colonialism and Post-colonialism also have different emphasis. Colonialism emphasizes that colonial countries are under the control of imperialist masters in all aspects of politics, economy, society and culture. Post-colonialism emphasizes cultural issues. Western powers still have a colonial tendency and carry out cultural hegemony in a similar way, which has seriously affected the cultural pattern of the former colonial areas and the third world countries that have become independent [1].

The policy of "one country, two systems" ensured Hong Kong's political and economic stability upon the handover. However, another drawback was that Britain did not do what it should have done in decolonization, which led to the transition from colonial rule to post-colonial rule in Hong Kong, and continued to exert far more influence on Hong Kong in economy, culture, judicial system and other aspects than that of mainland China.

## 3. Hong Kong's "Post-colonial Capitalism Model"

The analysis of the current situation of Hong Kong establishes three characteristics of the post-colonial era. One is that it was colonized. Second, the anti-colonialist forces have not gained absolute dominance. Third, although the aggressors were driven out but only nominally returned to the

motherland. From these three points of view, it is obvious that Macao has stepped out of the post-colonial era and entered the normal development path (because the anti-colonial forces in Macao have gained absolute dominance). Hong Kong and Taiwan are still in the post-colonial era [2].

Economically, before the return of Hong Kong, the British government of Hong Kong had completed the institutional arrangement of "colonial capitalism". After the return of Hong Kong, the central government of China did not make efforts to promote the "decolonization" of economic and social system reform. Instead, the principle of "one country, two systems" gives Hong Kong a high degree of freedom. The central government has no control over Hong Kong's currency issue and fiscal taxation. China's national sovereignty is not embodied in the monetary and fiscal spheres. Basic currency issuance, exchange rate pricing and asset pricing as the top economic power is not in the hands of the central government; Hong Kong's capital markets and financial institutions are dominated by offshore US dollar capital; International funds can flow unimpeded through foreign financial institutions in Hong Kong.

In the judicial sphere, Britain's influence on Hong Kong is particularly deep. In the period of British colonial rule, the judicial power of final adjudication in Hong Kong was in the British mainland. After the return of Hong Kong, the judicial final adjudication power of Hong Kong was retained in Hong Kong but still in the hands of the British. Hong Kong continues the common law system (case law) rather than the civil law system (statutory law), so the status and role of Hong Kong courts is much higher than that of Hong Kong's legislative Yuan. There are three types of modern society: military power dominant society, regime dominant society (or "executive power dominant society") and legal power dominant society. Hong Kong is a "law-based society". As long as the British and their agents continued to control the High Court and the Court of Final Appeal in Hong Kong, the British had de facto control over Hong Kong society [3]. Seen from this perspective, the colonial nature of Hong Kong society has not changed. The British control over the power of final adjudication in Hong Kong has become the biggest obstacle for the central government and Hong Kong SAR government to play their due role.

Culturally, Hong Kong did not complete the transformation of decolonization in the field of education and culture after its return, and the national identity of "one country" has not been implemented in youth education. The lack of China identity education has led some people to regard Hong Kong citizens as a kind of national citizenship consciousness separated from the existence of China, believing that Chinese citizens are Chinese citizens and Hong Kong citizens are Hong Kong citizens. At the same time, except for a few two or three media, most of the news media are controlled by the capital oligarchy in Hong Kong, dominating the direction of public opinion in Hong Kong. The voices of the central government and the SAR government have been marginalized. With the help of cultural media, the West has infiltrated the knowledge system and value standard of Post-colonialism into the Eastern society quietly, influencing people's understanding of the Eastern and Western perspectives [4]. Such "two systems" without the cultural constraints of "one country" tends to produce the cultural illusion of "two countries" and the ideological trend of "Hong Kong independence".

## **4. The Dilemma of National Identity under the Influence of Post-colonialism**

### **4.1 Multiple Local Discourse Systems in Hong Kong Deepen the Difficulty of National Identity**

In fact, some Hong Kong people, have three identities in their cognition: they are not only the "inferior" identity despised by the British colonists, but also the "common Chinese" identity that they can unite to assert their rights and interests, and they are also the "superior" identity relative to the mainland Chinese. Since the return of Hong Kong, these people have changed from "Hong Kong Chinese" in the concept of regionalism to "Hong Kong people" in the concept of identity identification. This is not only the formation and development of an independent identity construction before and after Hong Kong's return, but also the beginning of the divergence between Hong Kong residents' cultural identity and identity [5].

Because of this lack of identity, Hong Kong people are not close enough to the mainland. From the fear at the beginning of the return to China, to the ambition to reform mainland politics, and to the sense of loss caused by the gradual loss of comparative advantage, Hong Kong's sense of nativism, which was deeply eroded by the colonial culture, provided the soil for the anti-China forces.

#### **4.2 The Worship Psychology of Colonialism and West Culture Caused Identity Dilemma**

In post-colonial criticism, getting rid of the ghost of colonialism is not only a superficial independent liberation by the colonists, but also a thorough elimination of the psychological symptoms left by the pre-colonial state.

Huang Sheng analyzed the attachment of Hong Kong pan-democracy to the "supremacial state" of Britain from the perspective of social psychology, and provided us with useful enlightenment [6]. He argues that the attachment of today's "pan-people" in Hong Kong to the former British empire stems from a psychological coping mechanism known as Stockholm Syndrome. With the rise of the mainland, the only sense of regional superiority available to Hong Kongers who resist integration with the state has been reduced to a low point. In this unbalanced mindset, they wrongly attribute the main responsibility for Hong Kong's sluggish economic development, difficult constitutional reform and widening gap between the rich and the poor to the mainland China [7]. Hence they formed the wrong idea that only by "de-Chinese" and re-entering the embrace of the "former metropolitan country" can Hong Kong continue to maintain prosperity and stability.

### **5. Conclusion**

The real cause of the spiritual frustration of some Hong Kong people and the marginalization of Hong Kong lies in their own lack of comprehensive and accurate understanding and implementation of "one country, two systems". They hope to resist the overall situation of integrating into the development of "one country" with the high degree of autonomy and flexibility of "two systems", which is often overshadowed by the British post-colonial cultural logic. Thus, it can be seen that the falsehood, concealment and circularity of western post-colonial cultural logic lies not only in its own theory's ability to reverse the colonized's judgment, but also in its practicality. It has created a large number of opposition figures in Hong Kong who voluntarily refuse to decolonization and resist integration into mainland China. This is the ideological and cultural root of the dilemma of national identity in Hong Kong.

Elsie Tu, a famous social activist and politician in Hong Kong, once said that she did not believe that the formal "one person, one vote" universal suffrage could guarantee "democracy". "Campaigns" with big spending, kitsch demagogues and corporate "political donations", she argues, only deceive voters and reinforce the love affair between power and money. In her view, democracy is a system in which the people truly decide. Democracy is about selecting people who can truly "serve the people", going deep into the people and their lives, investigating and studying the deepest grievances of the people, so as to come up with specific reform legislation and plans.

The root of Hong Kong's current problems is identity. This recognition is not a one-off event. It is the result of a hundred years of Hong Kong's history. To solve the Hong Kong problem, we need to return to identity itself. Only by fully recognizing the obstacles to Hong Kong's identity, relieving the historical burden and building a new foundation for Hong Kong's identity, can this historical problem be gradually resolved. A practical and feasible measure is to give full play to the power of the NPC Standing Committee to legislate and interpret laws based on the characteristics of Hong Kong as a "law-based society". From the Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security to the new Electoral Law, we have established a law enforcement system through legislation and interpretation. The government makes use of the legal system and judicial means to rid Hong Kong of the colonial forces in the political, economic and cultural fields and safeguard the sovereignty and security of the country. Eliminating the forces of colonialism and curbing social unrest are the basis for Hong Kong's stability and prosperity.

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