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Preview Response

HONG KONG'S DEMOCRACY CRISIS CREATES A JUSTICE CRISIS

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The idea of justice underlies the study of law. As the preview identifies two fundamental forms of justice, first-order and second-order, there are also two essential notions of justice, procedural and substantial. My research on lawyers' professional identity reveals lawyers' general tendency to emphasize the former; their understanding of the latter appears to vary, depending on factors such as their primary motivation for studying law, university majors, employment experiences, and age and class.

While legal authorities are mostly concerned and deal with issues arising from second-order justice, for example, of attributing legal liabilities and dispensing punishment, ordinary people may be more concerned about whether they are treated "justly", not only by the legal system, but also the social and political systems, the ramifications of which affect almost all aspects of their lives, be it education, employment, and the exercise of various social and political rights. This is an increasingly fraught issue in Hong Kong where a growing number of people are increasingly dissatisfied with the way they are treated by the city's undemocratic government in a highly polarized political environment.

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