July 1997

Occasional Paper No. 64

Political Attitudes in a Changing Context

The Case of Hong Kong

香港亞太研究所

Kuan Hsin-chi
Lau Siu-kai

Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Shatin, New Territories
Hong Kong

Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies

The Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies was established in September 1990 to promote multidisciplinary social science research on social, political and economic development. Research emphasis is placed on the role of Hong Kong in the Asia-Pacific region and the reciprocal effects of the development of Hong Kong and the Asia-Pacific region.

Director : Yeung Yue-man, PhD(*Chic.*), Professor of Geography
Associate Director : Lau Siu-kai, PhD(*Minn.*), Professor of Sociology

HK$15.00
ISBN 962-441-064-X

Political Attitudes in a Changing Context

The Case of Hong Kong

Kuan Hsin-chi

and

Lau Siu-kai

Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Shatin, New Territories
Hong Kong

About the authors

Dr Kuan Hsin-chi is Professor of Government and Public Administration at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Director of its Universities Service Centre.

Dr Lau Siu-kai is Professor of Sociology at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and Associate Director of its Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

ISBN 962-441-064-X

Political Attitudes in a Changing Context
The Case of Hong Kong

Introduction

Hong Kong is a fast changing society. Yet, the most fundamental change for more than a century is the scheduled transfer of sovereignty from Britain to China in 1997, as enshrined in the Sino-British Agreement on the Future of Hong Kong in 1984.

The eruption of the question of Hong Kong's future in the early 1980s came as a shock to its inhabitants. The prospect of one's fate being handed over to a socialist China from which one had fled or disapproved of could not but provoke great anxieties and fear. Although the Basic Law for the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, promulgated in 1990, guaranteed that the Region would be given a high degree of autonomy under the principle of "one country, two systems," restoration of confidence in the future is still far away.

For social scientists, the issue of 1997 offers a quasi-experimental opportunity to observe the interactions among development, culture and institutions. This paper attempts to give a systematic interpretation of the political attitudes of the Hong Kong people and their implications. The specific foci pertain to the changing perception toward the role of government, the institutions of democracy, and the political self. Data are drawn from a number of surveys conducted by the authors in the past decade. Although findings from these surveys are not strictly comparable because of differences in sampling or wording,[1] they are still useful to inform an eclectic understanding of some broad, short-term trends.

The Context

It is important to take into account the context in which attitudes are formed. We have argued elsewhere that the political ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese as it existed in the early 1980s consisted of a complex syndrome of attitudes with disparate origins: Chinese tradition, Western modernizing influences and local developmental experiences.[2] Since then, the local developmental experiences have taken on greater importance due to the dominance of the 1997 issue.

Two major features distinguish the new political context from the past. The first is the scheduled transfer of sovereignty, and the second is the introduction of democratic reforms.

The scheduled transfer of sovereignty has gradually changed the political landscape in Hong Kong. For many reasons,[3] the benign, paternalistic, colonial regime of Hong Kong has enjoyed political stability for more than a century, despite considerable socio-economic changes in the past decades. Instead, the political transition since the mid-1980s toward the termination of the British rule in 1997 has ushered a great deal of uncertainties. New political conflicts arising out of the transition have appeared amid the spawning of new social and economic problems and the intrusion of new actors into the political arena. The authority and legitimacy of the colonial regime has been gradually eroded primarily because of the intervention of the British and the Chinese governments.[4]

The second feature of the new political context has to do with the haphazard process of democratic reforms introduced since the mid-1980s. Unlike the third-wave democratizations elsewhere, the process in Hong Kong is unique in terms of a complex entanglement of three governments (the Chinese, the British and the Hong Kong governments) and a conspicuous lack of local political leaders. The Hong Kong brand of executive-led democratization is characterized by a preference for stability rather than innovation and for adaptation to the old system of cooptation and consultation rather than the expansion of popular elections. All reform measures are leading toward an executive-led regime in which the chief executive will be nominally selected by a committee of Beijing-appointed advisers and the legislature returned by three different channels of political recruitment.[5] In other words, political transition in the past decade has resulted in the emergence of three distinct bases of political influence: patronage by the government of the day, local hegemony of economic elites, and support of the electorate. The attempt by governor Christopher Patten to modify the balance in favour of the populist element[6] has met stiff resistance from the Chinese government. The current legislature which was formed in 1995 according to Christopher Patten's reform will be dissolved to make room for a provisional legislature to be constituted by a Beijing-appointed Preparatory Committee for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

It is against this context of scheduled transfer of sovereignty and the stop-and-go process of democratization that we will presently examine the patterns of political attitudes.

Conception of State-Society Relationships

Values in traditional China revolve around the themes of hierarchical ordering of political roles, paternalist function of government to maintain social order and solve social problems, and an inactive and inefficacious self in the political system. Living in a rapidly changing society, the Hong Kong Chinese have found themselves in a dilemma between the maintenance of social and economic freedoms and the expansion of the role of the state.

As revealed in Table 1, while there is a strong consensus[7] for the idea of paternalist government, people still assign separate responsibilities to society and polity. Thus, a continuity is evident in terms of a predisposition to explain social problems in individual or social terms. In other words, the government is relieved of responsibility for them. The people in Hong Kong still do not like the intrusion of the government into their private life, insist on

Table 1 Ideas of Government (%)

Year of survey	Statement	Agree very much	Agree	Average	Disagree	Disagree very much	DK/NA
1985	Government should treat the people like a father treats his children.	8.2	72.9	—	13.0	0.8	5.1
1992	ditto	10.6	71.0	7.7	7.9	0.8	2.0
1985	Officials should set examples and teach the people correct morals and behaviour.	9.4	83.6	—	3.1	0.3	3.7
1992	A good government will teach the people how to behave.	8.4	73.3	7.3	7.3	0.2	3.5
1985	The profusion of social problems is the fault of the government.	0.8	28.6	—	56.3	1.0	13.3
1993	The deterioration of social morality is the fault of the government.	0.6	23.3	—	63.8	2.1	10.2
1985	Government should use legal means to deter divorce.	0.7	22.3	—	62.8	4.6	9.6
1993	Good or bad, someone's conduct is one's private business, not that of the government.	2.4	40.0	—	46.2	2.6	8.8

Table 1 Ideas of Government (%) (Continued)

Year of survey	Statement	Agree very much	Agree	Average	Disagree	Disagree very much	DK/NA
1985	Government should force the rich to become more charitable.	3.1	35.3	—	53.2	2.6	5.7
1992	A good government will not let the rich become too rich or the poor become too poor.	10.1	55.8	11.1	16.4	1.5	5.2
1992	A good government should refrain as much as possible from intervening in social affairs.	0.9	13.9	5.5	64.9	8.9	5.9
1988	Do you agree with the government's policy of economic *laissez-faire*.	3.5	54.0	—	22.0	1.8	18.7
1992	A good government should refrain as much as possible from intervening in economic affairs.	0.9	15.4	7.9	61.5	7.4	6.8

Note: DK/NA = Don't know / No answer.

certain personal autonomy in matters pertaining to social morality.

On the other hand, we observe a change in favour of a greater role for the government. People have become receptive to active social policies, such as redressing the gap between the rich and the poor. The government's policy of economic *laissez-faire* has also experienced a decline of popular support.

The changing perception toward a more interventionist role of the government is not difficult to understand. The shift to the nuclear family, the decline in its resourcefulness, and the expansion of government services have contributed to the growth of dependence and expectation of the people on the government.

The new orientation toward economic and social intervention however does not imply that the people of Hong Kong are prepared for the return of the omnipotent and omnipresent state of communist China to Hong Kong after 1997. It is because there has been an increase in popular support for democratic reforms.

The Proto-Democratic Values

As a universal idea, democracy has certainly captured the minds of the people in Hong Kong. The introduction of direct elections in 1991 may also have an impact on social learning. Thus, a clear majority (59.8 per cent) of respondents in our 1992 survey preferred "further democratization" of the political system to the *status quo*, as compared with just 38.5 per cent in the 1990 survey.[8]

Another positive development in favour of democracy pertains to the changing attitudes toward political parties. Until recently, political parties had been reminiscent of chicanery struggles in Chinese politics of the past. They had also been made superfluous in the absence of elections.[9]

The change of attitudes can be documented by the comparison of findings across surveys. When asked whether they agreed with the establishment of political parties, the proportion of the

respondents in opposition dwindled from 50.5 per cent in the 1988 survey, through 25.3 per cent in 1990, to 29.3 per cent in 1992.[10] In the 1990 survey, a larger plurality of respondents (43.5 versus 38.0 per cent) believed that political parties would endanger stability. The position was reversed two years later, when 40.1 per cent of the interviewees thought that political parties would not endanger stability, against 31.9 per cent who believed otherwise. In addition, over half of the interviewees in the 1992 survey (57.7 per cent) agreed with the statement that "democracy needs political parties," as compared with 17.7 per cent who disagreed.

We can therefore sum up that there are rising aspiration for democracy and support for political parties as its institutions. But, what kind of democracy do the people in Hong Kong have in mind? Our findings demonstrate they do not understand democracy in the same way as citizens in the West do. In a number of surveys, we asked our respondents "what counts as a democratic government?" and gave them five different meanings to choose from, together with an open-ended alternative of "others" to be specified by them. The proportions of respondents perceiving "a government that is willing to consult public opinion" as a democratic government were 43.9 per cent, 44.2 per cent, 39.5 per cent, and 40.9 per cent in 1985, 1988, 1990, and 1992, respectively. Those who regarded "a popularly elected government" as democratic made up 23.2 per cent, 14.9 per cent, 27.9 per cent, and 22.7 per cent, respectively.[11]

This persistence of a wrong understanding of democracy can be explained easily. The people of Hong Kong are first of all pragmatic. To them, it is the output of government that matters, not the form of government. This view accords with the traditional *minben* (people-as-the-basis) idea of government,[12] which urges an authoritarian ruler to take the well-being of one's subjects seriously. Since the Hong Kong government does deliver, it is a government for the people, therefore a *minben* (democratic) government. Besides, the Hong Kong government has often characterized itself as a government by consultation, which may have contributed to the conceptual leap from a consultative to a demo-

cratic government. Finally, the Hong Kong Chinese have had little experience with elections.[13] It follows that the idea of elections as the *sine qua non* of democracy is alien to them.

However, it does not mean that the people have not learned anything about elections. As Sidney Verba (1965:553) has argued, "much of what an individual believes about the political process is learned from observations of that process." People in Hong Kong do not recognize the significance of elections, because they do not affect the formation of government. The replacement of the cooptive channel by the electoral channel to the Legislative Council has however transformed the said Council from an advisory adjunct of the government into a supervisory body. It is obvious that its improved performance has not gone unnoticed by the general public. In the 1992 survey, 50.6 per cent of respondents believed that the performance of the Legislative Council had improved since the introduction of elections, and 37.8 per cent thought that the efficiency of the government had also improved, against 7.5 per cent and 9.8 per cent, respectively. Respondents were similarly asked in the 1995 survey whether they agreed with the statement that "Hong Kong has been governed better since the introduction of the various kinds of elections." Almost half of them (45.1 per cent) agreed, and 20.1 per cent disagreed.

Despite this positive experience with elections, it is unlikely that the people of Hong Kong would "fight for" any expansion of popular elections. There are two major reasons. One has to do with priority of values and the other with China. To many Hong Kong Chinese, democracy is but one value among many and not necessarily the highest one. In our 1988 survey, more than half (58.6 per cent) of the interviewees gave greater priority to prosperity and stability than to democracy, compared with 17.2 per cent who valued democracy more and 21.0 per cent who stressed their equal importance. In the 1992 survey, our respondents were given government efficiency and democracy to choose from. It turned out that more respondents (38.0 per cent) preferred "an efficient but insufficiently democratic government" to "a democratic but inefficient one." Only 22.1 per cent preferred democracy over

government efficiency. In a similar vein, 44.0 per cent of the respondents in the 1993 survey agreed with the statement that "a government cannot perform very well if it is often kept in check by the legislature," while 39.1 per cent disagreed. These surveys presented the respondents with a dyad of values to choose from. In our 1995 survey, respondents were asked to choose the most important value from among personal freedom, public order, judicial justice, social equality, political democracy, prosperity and stability, and "others" as specified by the respondents. Political democracy received only 3.4 per cent of the total responses, trailing far behind prosperity and stability (44.1 per cent), personal freedom (21.1 per cent), and judicial justice (12.3 per cent).

In the struggle for democratization in Hong Kong, the China factor is significant. On the one hand, the Chinese government does not want a faster democratization for the ostensible reason of preserving Hong Kong's prosperity and stability and probably because it does not want to see Hong Kong's legislature controlled by the democratic forces which have supported and vowed to continue to support the democratic movement in mainland China. On the other hand, democracy is seen by some of the local elites as a bulwark against Chinese intervention in Hong Kong affairs after 1997. The position of the Hong Kong Chinese is mixed. On the one hand, those who distrust the Chinese government tend also to support the call for further democratization.[14] The Hong Kong Chinese are however realistic, as only 29.7 per cent in the 1992 survey believed that, as a consequence of democratization in Hong Kong, the Chinese government would intervene less in local affairs, while 44.8 per cent did not. The corresponding figures for the 1995 survey were 25.5 per cent and 45.8 per cent. Our findings can also confirm the people's sense of futility and hence unwillingness to confront China on the issue of democratic reforms. In the 1990 survey, 75.1 per cent of our respondents disagreed with the statement that Hong Kong should confront the Chinese government, while 11.2 agreed. In the 1993 survey, there were three times more respondents who regarded advocates for a confrontation with China as more dangerous than advocates for an immedi-

ate return of Hong Kong to China (46.2 versus 16.7 per cent). In the 1995 survey, only 10.3 per cent of the respondents believed that the Chinese government would meet the wishes of the people of Hong Kong when they organized themselves to confront China, while 64.2 per cent thought otherwise. In light of the above, we may interpret that the people of Hong Kong are prepared to live with the Chinese government, with or without additional democratic reforms. The trouble is how the Hong Kong Chinese see themselves integrated within the "one country, two systems" formula.

The Identity of the Hong Kong Chinese

Political integration is effectively defined by a subjective sense of identity, rather than by geographical or constitutional boundaries only. What bind a people together? What set them apart from other peoples? In this paper, we are interested in the question of whether there exists any distinctive identity in the minds of the Hong Kong Chinese, because a strong attachment to the territory may present problems for integration with mainland China after 1997.

Since 1985, we have asked our respondents in several surveys whether they identify themselves as "Hongkongese" or "Chinese." We have always found the factor of identity a good predictor of other political values. The general pattern across all surveys is that those who claimed the Hong Kong identity were modern in their political attitudes, while those who identified with China were more traditional. For instance, the "Hongkongese" were more interested in politics, discussed politics with others more often. They were also more likely to recognize the impact of government on their daily life, have a less instrumental conception of government and a less interventionist view of governmental functions.

To illustrate further, Table 2 presents some correlates of political identity with a number of fundamental political values from the 1993 survey. First, on the important issue of belief in national-

ism, there is a 10 per cent gap between the "Hongkongese" and the "Chinese." Whereas the "Chinese" share a consensus (i.e., over 75 per cent) on nationalism, fewer "Hongkongese" are nationalistic (i.e., about 68 per cent). Statement 4 in Table 2 is illuminating, as only 20.8 per cent of the "Hongkongese" trust the Chinese government, while half of the "Chinese" do.

Findings from Statements 7 through 13 in Table 2 attest to our claim that people with the Hong Kong identity are more modern in their political outlook than those with the Chinese identity. There are more "Hongkongese" than "Chinese" who are suspicious of government policies (Statement 7) and want to keep social morality from its jurisdiction (Statement 8). The "Hongkongese" are more likely than the "Chinese" to harbour beliefs conducive to the transition toward democracy. The idea of the rule by men, albeit with integrity, finds lower support among the "Hongkongese" than the "Chinese" (Statement 9). In fact, more "Hongkongese" than "Chinese" value judicial procedures to protect civil liberties (Statement 10). Furthermore, the "Hongkongese" are more likely to appreciate the virtue of social pluralism than the "Chinese" (Statement 11). When it comes to freedom of expression, there exists a 16 per cent difference between the "Hongkongese" and the "Chinese," with the latter more likely to tolerate government intervention (Statement 12). Equally significant is their difference in terms of attitude toward further democratization. There is a substantial proportion of "Chinese," i.e., almost 41 per cent, who buy the prevalent argument that further democratization endangers political stability, as compared with only 26 per cent among the "Hongkongese."

Having established that a sense of identity divides the people in Hong Kong into two camps, the "Hongkonese" and the "Chinese," it is interesting to know whether one group has ascended at the expense of another as 1997 draws near. Two patterns are depicted in Table 3. First, more than half of our respondents identified themselves with Hong Kong and a minority with China, across the years. Secondly, there seemed to be a declining trend of the Hong Kong identity.

Table 2 Correlates of Hong Kong/China Identity, 1993

Statement		Identity (%)*				
		Hong Kong	China	χ^2	d.f.	p
1.	Don't ask what the country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country.	68.6	79.5	13.8	3	.01
2.	The recovery of lost Chinese territories is the sacred mission of every Chinese.	68.0	82.2	23.0	3	.000
3.	Society is a large family. Even ethnic minorities should not secede.	76.8	82.3	10.7	3	.01
4.	Trust the Chinese government.	20.8	50.2	63.6	3	.000
5.	Worried about 1997.	17.7	11.7	51.1	4	.000
6.	Has foreign right of abode or foreign passport.	19.7	11.3	9.7	2	.01
7.	Policies made by the government are always right.	15.4	25.6	15.2	3	.01
8.	Decay in social morality is the fault of the government.	21.8	33.3	12.1	3	.01

Table 2 Correlates of Hong Kong/China Identity, 1993 (Continued)

Statement		Identity (%)*				
		Hong Kong	China	χ^2	d.f.	p
9.	Provided there are political leaders with integrity, we can entrust them with tackling all public affairs and need give no opinion.	26.5	36.5	8.0	3	.05
10.	Suspects of violent crime should be punished immediately, without having to go through the complicated procedure of court trials.	18.7	26.9	19.8	3	.000
11.	The stability and harmony of society will be compromised if there exists a great variety of groups.	42.8	53.0	10.1	3	.05
12.	It is up to the government to decide whether a certain view may be disseminated in society.	23.6	39.6	19.9	3	.000
13.	Further democratization will endanger the stability in Hong Kong.	26.0	40.7	17.2	3	.001

Note: * Percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement.

Table 3 Identity of the Hong Kong Chinese (%)

Identity	1985	1988	1990	1993	1995
"Hongkongese"	59.5	63.6	57.2	53.3	50.2
"Chinese"	36.2	28.8	26.4	32.7	30.9
Both	—	—	12.1	10.1	15.4
Neither	—	2.0	1.0	1.6	1.2
Don't know/No answer	4.3	5.6	3.4	2.4	2.2

What has transpired from the above discussions is a bleak implication for the future development of democracy in Hong Kong: people with the Hong Kong identity are more likely to hold democratic values, but there are in the course of time increasingly fewer people who identify with Hong Kong than with China. This implication is compounded by a growing sense of political malaise among the Hong Kong Chinese which is in turn a consequence of the decline in the political autonomy of Hong Kong.

By Way of a Conclusion

Based on survey data spanning almost a decade, we have observed several changes in the patterns of political attitudes among the Hong Kong Chinese. In terms of state-society relationship, there is increasing support for a more interventionist state. While the people thus expect more from the government, they have also become more critical of it. Not only is there an increase in general support for democracy, there has also been positive learning of the consequences of democratic reforms. It is then natural people prefer an expansion of democracy to the *status quo*. Yet, circumstances suggest a difficult path for democratization since the departing colonial ruler is hesitant and the future sovereign master is resisting. In view of the limited space for self-rule and increasing uncertainty about one's identity, the people of Hong Kong can not but become alienated from the political system.

As demonstrated in Table 4, the Hong Kong Chinese are increasingly dissatisfied with the existing political system. The political system has indeed been undergoing reforms since 1985, so that the "existing" political system in each survey is not the same. It is therefore disheartening if the findings suggest that the more the political system is reformed, the less satisfactory it becomes. On the other hand, the increasing dissatisfaction may have nothing to do with the results of reforms, but with the pace of political reforms lagging behind the rising popular aspiration for more democracy. The latter interpretation seems to be supported by our findings since, in our 1993 survey, those who were dissatisfied with the existing political system were also more likely to regard the pace of political reform as too slow ($\chi^2 = 13.6$, d.f.$= 6$, $p < 0.05$) and to disagree with the statement that further democratization endangers stability ($\chi^2 = 54.9$, d.f.$= 9$, $p < 0.000$).

In addition, the controversy between the British/Hong Kong government and the Chinese counterpart over the issue of democratic reforms has served to discredit both governments in the eyes of the Hong Kong people. Being weary of political bickering among the contestants, more and more Hong Kong Chinese have become distrustful of the three governments, as indicated in Table 5.

If the three governments cannot be trusted, can the Hong Kong Chinese trust local political leaders as a political alternative to the colonial or the Chinese government? The answer is discouraging. The proportion of respondents who reported that there were political leaders in Hong Kong they could trust has varied from 24.5 per cent in 1985, to 9.5 per cent in 1990, 19.8 per cent in 1992, and 14.0 per cent 1995. The proportion of respondents who claimed otherwise has gone from 47.8 per cent in 1985, through 69.0 per cent in 1990, 68.5 per cent in 1992, and 64.5 per cent 1995. In other words, ten years of political reforms have failed to produce trustworthy local leaders to take up the helm of government after 1997.

Table 4 Satisfaction with the Existing Political System (%)

	1985	1988	1990	1993
Highly dissatisfied	0.0	0.5	2.3	0.9
Dissatisfied	16.6	21.2	23.6	22.9
Satisfied	71.7	67.7	56.4	60.8
Highly satisfied	2.6	2.8	2.6	1.3
Don't know/No answer	9.1	7.8	15.1	14.2

Note: The statement asked was: "Though imperfect, the existing political system is already the best under the circumstances."

Table 5 Trust in Governments (%)

	1985	1988	1990	1992	1993
British government	53.4	33.1	18.0	20.0	27.0
Hong Kong government	72.1	52.2	42.9	45.0	63.7
Chinese government	31.5	21.0	10.0	18.4	26.2

Notes: Percentage of respondents who answered "trust" or "very much trust." The questions for the 1985 and 1993 surveys used a 4-point scale running from "very much trust," "trust," "distrust," to "very much distrust"; those for the 1988, 1990 and 1992 surveys used a 5-point scale, adding a midpoint to the former scale: "average."

In a similar vein, political reforms in the past decade have not enhanced the political efficacy of the Hong Kong people. When asked whether politics and government were difficult to understand, 73.0 per cent of the respondents in the 1993 survey agreed or strongly agreed, a mere 2 per cent improvement over the results of the 1985 survey. In 1993, an overwhelming 90.1 per cent of the interviewees did not think they were able to participate in politics, as compared with 98.8 per cent of respondents in the 1985 survey

who felt they had very little or not much influence on the government's policy. Furthermore, in 1993, 29.1 per cent of the interviewees disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that government officials do not care about what people like me think, while 62.0 per cent agreed or strongly agreed.[15] Finally, the introduction of elections has not empowered the people of Hong Kong in the psychological sense. When asked whether they felt that their ability to exert political influence had increased since the introduction of elections, only 11.5 per cent of the respondents in our 1995 survey said "yes," whereas 52.9 per cent said "no."

Dissatisfaction with the current political system, distrust in the governments and local leaders, and agony with ones' enduring powerlessness cannot but lead to political despair. It is then no wonder that despite a decade of democratic reforms, the people do not see much prospect ahead. In fact, the proportion of people who envisage a good chance for democratic reforms to succeed has dwindled from 54.7 per cent in 1985 through 33.1 per cent in 1990 to 17.2 per cent in 1995, while those who foresee not much chance has gone up from 16.0 per cent in 1985 through 43.6 per cent in 1990 to 49.3 per cent in 1995.

Given the dim prospect for democratization, it is futile to be interested in politics. Thus, when asked in our 1995 survey whether our respondents had much interest in discussing the problem of Hong Kong's political system, 13.0 per cent of them replied "interested" and "much interested," 43.4 per cent reported "not interested" and "not interested at all" (with 32.8 choosing "average" and 10.8 per cent "don't know" or "no answer").

All in all, we may submit that the people of Hong Kong have lost both hope and interest.

Notes

1. This paper relies primarily on findings from surveys conducted in 1985, 1992, and 1993, supplemented by data from surveys conducted in 1988, 1990, and 1995.

   The 1985 survey was conducted in Kwun Tong, a district most representative of Hong Kong. The sampling frame was based on a 2 per cent sample of the household list of the 1981 census provided by the Census and Statistics Department. The size of the systematic sample for 1985 was 1,687, out of which 792 interviews were successfully completed. In the field, persons 18 years old or over were interviewed. They were the heads of the household or their spouse when the former could not be reached. On the whole, the socio-demographic profile of the respondents did not depart too much from that of the population of Hong Kong as a whole.

   The 1988 survey was part of a larger Social Indicators Survey. Using the replicated systematic sampling method, an overall sample of 3,488 was drawn from the Sub-Frame of Living Quarters maintained by the Census and Statistics Department. This Sub-Frame is a systematic replicated sample from the Living Quarters Frame and contains 365,400 permanent living quarter records, i.e., about 26 per cent of the main Frame. A total of 2,894 addresses were systematically selected for use in the Social Indicators Survey. This was further systematically divided into four sub-samples. The sub-sample for political topics had a size of 723. After exclusion of invalid addresses, the actual sample size for fieldwork was reduced to 649. Households were selected according to a random number table and the individual respondents were selected by using the Kish Grid. There were 396 successful cases, representing a 61.0 per cent response rate.

   The 1990 political survey was part of a larger Social Indicators Survey with an overall sample size of 3,305 randomly drawn from the Sub-Frame of Living Quarters maintained by the Census and Statistics Department. The original sub-sample size for the political topics was 800 which was reduced to a valid size of 559 after eliminating invalid addresses. Of these, 390 successful interviews were completed, representing a response rate of 69.8 per cent.

   The sample for the 1992 survey was drawn by means of a multi-stage design. A systematic random sample of 13,843 addresses was selected from the Sub-Frame of Living Quarters maintained by the Census and Statistics Department. Alternative addresses were then divided into two sub-samples, one of which became the sample of this study. The final sample size was 1,568 and a total of 868 successful interviews were conducted, yielding a response rate of 55.4 per cent. Households and eligible respondents aged 18 or over were selected by the interviewers according to a random number table and a modified Kish Grid, respectively.

   The sample design for the 1993 survey and the 1995 survey followed that for the 1992 survey. The size of the samples was 1,633 for 1993 and 663 for 1995. The number of successful interviews were 892 and 408, respectively, yielding a response rate of 54.6 per cent for 1993 and 61.5 per cent for 1995.

   From all surveys from 1988 to 1995, we have compared the respective final sample and the closest census data in terms of age, education, occupation and household income and found no systematic biases in the respective final sample used.

2. See Lau and Kuan (1988).

3. The causes given include (1) the ability of the Hong Kong government to coopt in a timely and efficient manner socio-economic elites into the bureaucratic policy-making, as argued by Ambrose King (1981), and (2) the absence of integration between a resourceful society which relies on utilitarian familism and a secluded bureaucratic polity which practises economic *laissez faire* and social non-interventionism, as suggested by Siu-kai Lau (1982).

4. See Lau (1992).

5. One of the channels, indirect elections on the basis of functional constituencies, was introduced in 1988 as an adaptation to the old channel of cooptation with the view of preserving the influence of established elites. The second channel, popular elections on the basis of geographical constituencies, was introduced in 1991, which supplied one third of the members of the legislature and will supply no more than one half at least until 2007. Lastly and for the first two terms, the above-said committee for the recruitment of the chief executive will select ten and six members, respectively, to the legislature.
6. The reform measures included the introduction of a single-seat single-vote system for the popular elections of the Legislative Council, the creation of nine new functional constituencies for that Council in which individuals rather than groups (as in the old system) would be eligible to vote, the lowering of the voting age to 18 for elections of all levels of assemblies, and the abolition of the appointed membership in the municipal councils.
7. In this paper, a consensus denotes a level of 75 per cent agreement among the respondents, as suggested by Herbert McClosky (1964:363).
8. In 1992, 30.5 per cent supported the *status quo*, as compared with 43.1 per cent who did so in 1990.
9. Political parties did not emerge until the early 1990s when the Tiananmen crackdown on the democratic movement in Beijing in 1989 and the introduction of direct elections to the Legislative Council in 1991 provided good causes for political organization. While all parties in Hong Kong remain of the cadre type without mass following, are weakly organized and are office-oriented rather than ideologically inclined, their activities have contributed to open competition among elites and attitude change in the populace.
10. As compared with those in approval from 25.0 per cent, to 51.5 per cent, to 41.2 per cent in 1988, 1990, and 1992, respectively.

11. The other structured answers are "a government that gives the people whatever they want," "a government that can lead the people," and "a government that treats the people like a father to his children."
12. See Nathan (1985).
13. When elections were introduced to the 56-member Legislative Council for the first time in 1985, they were both partial and indirect, returning only 12 unofficial members by an electoral college of local councillors and another 12 by nine functional constituencies. It took another six years before direct elections were introduced to fill just 18 seats of the 60-member Legislative Council.
14. Thus, in the 1992 survey, trust in the Chinese government is negatively and significantly associated with preference for further democratization ($\chi^2 = 19.8$, d.f.$= 2$, $p < 0.000$). Similarly, in the 1993 survey, trust in the Chinese government is positively and significantly associated with the belief about the negative impact of further democratization on stability ($\chi^2 = 24.0$, d.f.$= 9$, $p < 0.005$).
15. When asked in 1985 how they thought government officials would treat their views, 17.7 per cent of our interviewees thought they would be ignored, 53.5 per cent thought their views would be taken half-heartedly, and only 9.0 per cent thought government officials would take their views seriously.

References

King, Ambrose (1981). "Administrative Absorption of Politics in Hong Kong: Emphasis on the Grassroots Level," in Ambrose King and Rance P.L. Lee (eds), *Social Life and Development in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press), pp. 127-46.

Lau, Siu-kai (1982). *Society and Politics in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press).

Lau, Siu-kai (1992). "Decline of Governmental Authority, Political Cynicism and Political Inefficacy in Hong Kong," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, 11:3-20.

Lau, Siu-kai and Kuan Hsin-chi (1988). *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press).

McClosky, Herbert (1964). "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 58:361-363.

Nathan, Andrew J. (1985). *Chinese Democracy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).

Verba, Sidney (1965). "Comparative Political Culture," in Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba (eds), *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Political Attitudes in a Changing Context

The Case of Hong Kong

Abstract

Political attitudes are changing in Hong Kong, against the context of the scheduled transfer of sovereignty and the development of limited democracy. The paper analyses the patterns of political attitudes of the Hong Kong people in terms of the state-society relationship, the proto-democratic values, and the sense of identity. It concludes that there is a trend toward political alienation which does not bode well for the political future of Hong Kong.

變局下的政治態度

香港個案研究

關信基　劉兆佳

摘要

在政權轉變和有限民主化的環境下，香港人的政治態度正在變化。本文就政治態度的三個主要方面提出分析：國家社會關係、準民主價值觀，和認同感，發現有政治疏離的趨勢，對香港政治前途來說，這是一個壞兆頭。