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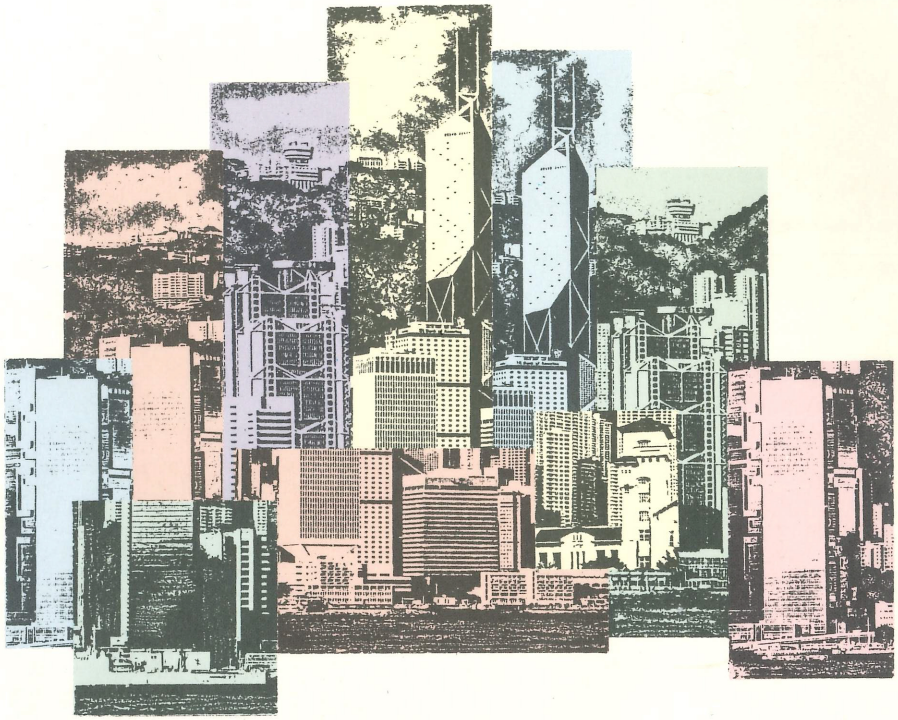
HONG KONG 1990



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Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies
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Indicators of Social Development: Hong Kong 1990

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Preface

This book presents the findings of the second territory-wide social indicators survey conducted in 1990. The survey is part of a long-term collaborative project undertaken by researchers from The Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic, and the University of Hong Kong. The focus of the survey is on subjective social indicators, which include the perception, aspiration, and degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong residents in different walks of life. The target population is all adults aged 18 or above who are living in Hong Kong. A random sample of 3,305 valid addresses was drawn and 1,957 respondents have been successfully interviewed.

The questionnaire used in this survey is divided into two parts. The first part is a core section to be answered by all respondents on quality of life and degree of satisfaction with different life domains. This core section is a permanent feature of the biennial survey so that social trends can be gauged. The second part consists of a number of modules on special topics, and each module is answered by a sub-sample of the respondents. In this survey, there are five special modules: (A) housing and social welfare; (B) mental health, family and social life; (C) social mobility and occupational prestige ranking; (D) legal and political attitudes; and (E) mass communication and work.

The social indicators project has its origin in a pilot survey on the inhabitants of Kwun Tong undertaken in 1986 by Lau Siu-kai and Wan Po-san at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Subsequently, an inter-institutional research team was formed to conduct a regular biennial territory-wide survey on social attitudes and trends. The first social indicators survey was carried out in 1988 and the report has already been published. There were four special modules in the first survey: (A) family life, social network

and social welfare; (B) housing, leisure, work, medical and health; (C) social stratification, social mobility and religion; and (D) political and legal issues. In 1990, the second survey was launched and the report is presented here. As this volume is in print, we are actively preparing for the third survey which will be carried out in the winter of 1992.

As this project evolves, external linkages with researchers outside of Hong Kong are being formed. After the completion of our first survey, we organized a conference on the development of social indicators research in Chinese societies which was held in 1990 at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Researchers from Beijing, Shanghai, and Taiwan were invited to participate in order to exchange ideas and findings, and to discuss areas for future cooperation. The proceedings of that conference was subsequently published.

In the context of Hong Kong, the study of social indicators serves at least five functions. First, it is a response to a heightened demand for improving the quality of life in the community which has become increasingly affluent. Second, it can alert us to aspects of social life which merit in-depth investigation, such as popular attitudes and beliefs concerning law and justice, and the vitality of traditional Chinese cultural values. Third, it can furnish empirical information and theoretical analysis for the formulation and implementation of social policies, for instance, in the areas of educational aspiration, desire for home ownership, and subjective feelings of mental well-being. Fourth, by keeping a close tap on the discrepancies between the objective conditions and subjective perceptions of the inhabitants, it may help us to anticipate potential crises, the overcoming of which is indispensible if social stability is to be achieved during the transitional period. Finally, the findings from such surveys provide a chronicle of the hopes and anxieties of our society during a key junction in our history. They can contribute to the accumulation of a historical record of our unique case of social change under the framework of "one country two systems."

In the completion of this study, we have enjoyed the assistance and support from many quarters. In particular, we would like to thank the following units and person for financial support: the Administrative, Business and Social Studies Panel and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese University, the Committee on Research and Conference Grants and the Centre of Asian Studies of the University of Hong Kong, the Research Sub-committee and the Department of Applied Social Studies of the Hong Kong Polytechnic, and Mr. T.N. Ling (for the legal culture part). We also want to thank the Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong for its help in sampling; Ms. Shirley Yue, Mr. Stanley Chan, Ms. Lena Lai, Ms. Kitty Fok, and Mr. H.L. Lo for their research assistance; Mr. Mok Kam-wah and Ms. Iris Mok for clerical assistance; and Ms. Diana Martin for her editorial work.

Lau Siu-kai
Lee Ming-kwan
Wan Po-san
Wong Siu-lun
September 1992

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Family and Gender Issues

Lee Ming-kwan

> Awareness of major changes in... family life has been drilled home over the past few years by newspaper and newsmagazine features, television specials, award-winning movies and, for many, firsthand experience. The drop in marriage rates and the jump in divorce rates are only the tip of the iceberg. Fertility levels have declined, illegitimacy ratios have climbed, women have joined the paid labor force in increasing numbers, and men and women have sought solitary living arrangements to an unprecedented extent. Many conclude that something has gone seriously awry. (Masnick and Bane, 1980:1)

Hong Kong readers need not be alarmed: the passage just quoted is about family life in another country, the United States. Yet the message sounds relevant: what it says about American family life seems to apply also to family life in Hong Kong. Indeed family change in Hong Kong in the past two to three decades has exhibited a number of features resembling those observed in the United States. These include:

a. a trend towards more bachelorhood and spinsterhood: The proportions of the never married for both males and

females in the prime marriageable ages have increased substantially.

b. a drastic fall in fertility rates: Fertility rates decreased by over 60 per cent in the two decades between 1961 and 1981, and from 5,170 per 1,000 women in 1961 to 1,289 per 1,000 women in 1987.
c. many more women of prime working age have joined the labour force: The overall female labour force participation rates increased from 43.6 in 1976 to 51.2 in 1986; among women of prime working age, the increase was even more remarkable.
d. an obvious trend towards smaller households: The average size of domestic households was 3.4 persons in 1991, compared with 3.9 in 1981.
e. marital dissolution on the increase: The number of divorce cases handled by the court rose from over 1,700 in 1977 to 5,753 in 1987. The number of divorced men and women in the population more than doubled in ten years, increasing from 24,261 in 1981 to 53,485 in 1991.

Thus there are signs that households are shrinking in size, as more and more households consist of unextended nuclear family and as couples have fewer children; that two-worker families are becoming the fashion, if not yet the norm; that as they engage in paid labour many more women are gaining financial independence and probably also a bigger say over their domestic roles; that traditional marriage norms – that one has to get married and have a family, that marital fidelity is absolute – seem to be losing their once unshakeable certainty; and that as single parents increase, more families experience the hardships of reduced incomes and weakened support from social networks.

Do these add up to major change in the Hong Kong family? Do they signal any important shifts? Has anything gone awry and need one be concerned, if not alarmed? Before drawing any conclusions, let us share with you what we have found from the survey. The discussion which follows will address three themes,

namely: marriage norms in transition, gender issues, and social support rendered to the family.

Marriage Norms in Transition

Is marriage still highly valued and does its future look secure? Responses to questions in our survey about alternatives to the institution do appear to justify some concern (Table 1.1). Asked whether they would accept "men remaining single," over a quarter (26.8 per cent) of the respondents replied in the affirmative. Slightly more than one-third (35.3 per cent) of them would definitely not accept it and another quarter (28.0 per cent) were ambivalent. Asked whether they would accept "women remaining single," the respondents returned almost identical answers. That fewer than half of the answers were negative about celibacy was somewhat surprising. It was to be expected that, given the traditional value accorded to marriage, disaffection with celibacy would be more widely shared. From Table 1.2, one learns that the attitudes to men and women staying single do vary significantly with age. Young respondents (under 30) were more ready to accept bachelorhood and spinsterhood, whereas the older respondents, particularly those aged fifty and above, were more inclined to hold the opposite view.

Another indication of the declining support given to the institution of marriage is reflected in the responses to the question: "Would you or would you not accept cohabitation as an alternative to marriage?" Less than half (42.1 per cent) of the respondents said they would not; the others were either ambivalent (24.6 per cent) or were more tolerant (28.4 per cent). As with attitudes towards bachelorhood and spinsterhood, young respondents tended to be more, and their older counterparts less, willing to accept the "wayward" practice.

Attitudes to another time-honoured norm that to get married means to have a family were also, on the whole, less than reassuring. Only just over one-third (36.2 per cent) of the responses were

Table 1.1 Attitudes to Marriage Norms (%)

	Very much against accepting	Against accepting	It depends	Accepting	Very much accepting	Don't know /No opinion /No answer	Total	(N)
Men remaining single	2.8	32.5	28.0	25.6	1.2	10.0	100.0	(422)
Women remaining single	2.8	33.9	28.9	24.4	0.7	9.3	100.0	(422)
Cohabitation	6.6	35.5	24.6	26.5	1.9	4.7	100.0	(422)
Childless marriage	2.8	33.4	29.4	27.7	1.9	4.7	100.0	(422)
Divorce*	7.4	39.7	30.9	21.3	0.7	—	100.0	(418)
Men having extra-marital affairs*	20.8	64.3	7.8	7.1	0.0	—	100.0	(423)
Women having extra-marital affairs*	25.7	64.6	5.9	3.8	0.0	—	100.0	(424)

* Based on 1988 survey. Total numbers have not included don't know, no opinion and no answer response.

Table 1.2 Attitudes to Marriage Norms by Age (%)

	Very much against accepting	Against accepting	It depends	Accepting	Very much accepting	Don't know/No opinion/No answer	Total	(N)
Men remaining single								
Below 30	5.7	17.7	31.9	35.5	2.1	7.1	100.0	(141)
30 - 49	2.2	35.5	30.1	19.1	1.1	12.0	100.0	(183)
50 & above	—	47.9	18.8	22.9	—	10.4	100.0	(96)
Women remaining single								
Below 30	5.7	19.9	30.5	34.8	1.4	7.8	100.0	(141)
30 - 49	1.1	41.0	30.1	17.5	0.5	9.8	100.0	(183)
50 & above	2.1	40.6	25.0	21.9	—	10.4	100.0	(96)
Cohabitation								
Below 30	6.4	20.6	29.8	35.5	4.3	3.5	100.0	(141)
30 - 49	6.0	38.8	23.5	26.2	0.5	4.9	100.0	(183)
50 & above	8.3	52.1	18.8	13.5	1.0	6.2	100.0	(96)
Childless marriage								
Below 30	2.8	19.1	31.9	36.9	3.5	5.7	100.0	(141)
30 - 49	2.2	35.5	29.5	26.8	1.1	4.9	100.0	(183)
50 & above	4.2	51.0	25.0	15.6	1.0	3.1	100.0	(96)

definitely against a childless marriage. The rest were less certain. As expected, the views of the various sub-groups varied widely: the younger respondents were much less, and their older counterparts much more, doubtful. The respondents' overall attitude to a childless marriage was consistent with the responses they gave to another question: "Would you or would you not agree with the view that more offsprings means more fortune?" Only a small minority (13.3 per cent) returned affirmative answers. Close to two-thirds (63.5 per cent) said they did not agree. Hence, many of the respondents not only questioned the traditional value of having many children, but even doubted the necessity of having any children at all.

Declining support for the institution of marriage is further reflected in feelings about divorce. Only about half (47.1 per cent) of the respondents to our 1988 survey (Lau *et al.*, 1991:55) did not accept divorce. The rest either said they accepted it (22.0 per cent), or were not so sure (30.9 per cent). What about infidelity? If divorce has become less an anathema, was there also a more open attitude to extra-marital relations? Respondents to our 1988 survey were unequivocal about what they felt about this: the overwhelming majority of them (85.1 per cent) disapproved of men's, and an even greater number (90.3 per cent), disapproved of women's extra-marital affairs.

Hence while on one hand one sees some signs of declining support for the institution, on the other hand one is presented with evidence that the moral sentiments upholding the value of marital fidelity are still strong and widely shared.

What about attitudes to rules of residence? Are there signs that the traditional insistence on virilocality, or the rule that the newly-married couple live with the husband's parents' family, is giving way to more pragmatic and flexible arrangements? The answer, while obvious, is not entirely anticipated (Table 1.3). Consistent with the trend to preferring nuclear families over other types of household arrangement, the majority (52.4 per cent) of our respondents indicated that "newly-wed couples setting up their own households, away from their parents" was acceptable to

Table 1.3 Attitudes to Rules of Residence (%)

	Very much against accepting	Against accepting	It depends	Accepting	Very much accepting	Don't know/No opinion/No answer	Total	(N)
Newly-wed couple living away from their parents	0.9	7.8	37.0	47.2	5.2	1.9	100.0	(422)
Men living with wives' parents' families	3.3	28.2	45.3	16.4	0.7	6.1	100.0	(422)
Women living with husbands' parents' families	2.4	20.4	44.8	26.1	1.9	4.5	100.0	(422)

them. Few (8.7 per cent) expressed disapproval. What is in a way unexpected is that a considerable number (37.0 per cent) did not have any firm views on this. As one would expect, virilocality, the traditional arrangement, and uxorilocality, the arrangement whereby the couple live with the wife's parents' family, were both far less popular among our respondents. There was also somewhat stronger disapproval of the latter than the former. But, as with neolocality, one finds in both cases an impressive amount of "It depends" responses: nearly half of the respondents were unable to say whether they liked or disliked these arrangements. One can perhaps infer from this that although the preferences are very clear – people are much more in favour of an arrangement compatible with the nuclear family than other kinds of arrangements – their attitudes are far from rigid.

Gender Issues

The increase in the number of women in employment, and in the number of working mothers in particular, raises many questions about the women's roles both inside and outside the family. How do women see these roles? How do men see these roles? Is women's position in the family enhanced by the income they take home? Are husbands more willing to help out? Do women have difficulties managing the demands of both their work and homemaker roles? Have women become more conscious of their rights and interests?

Feminists, in particular, would very much like to know the answers to these questions. From their point of view, the family, historically and everywhere, has not treated men and women equally. It gives husbands power over wives; it places women in a disadvantaged position in an unequal and inequitable division of household labour; it gives men many privileges which are denied to women; it places husbands' interests before those of their wives; and through all these experiences it has curtailed women's life chances and limited their abilities and potential. From this

perspective, there is no women's liberation unless this "oppressive structure" is transformed.

Feminists, but not just feminists, would hence be very interested in knowing whether social change in recent years has enabled Hong Kong families to give more equality to the Chinese women.

In what follows, we will first identify the features of what one could call the "patriarchal model" – the considerably exaggerated case of a male-dominated unequal family – and then proceed to discuss in the light of these inequalities what we have found from the survey.

In broad terms, the "patriarchal model" sees the patriarch – the husband and father – as the ruler and leader of the household. He makes all important decisions and dictates his wishes. He enjoys the highest status in the family; the wife is not supposed to "threaten" this status by her own achievements. He is spared child rearing and housework duties; domestic burdens fall on the wife. Whether or not she is also in paid labour is largely irrelevant. If she is, it rests on her to sort out solutions. As the interest of the family is supposed to come before that of her own career, it has to be in the light of this value that she negotiates some compromises. If family is all important, and career only secondary, then social participation is logically out of the question.

Findings from the survey have not convinced us that the "patriarchal model" is entirely consistent with reality.

Asked whether they would agree with the statement, "Husbands are masters over the household and wives should submit to their authority," more respondents disagreed (38.1 per cent) than agreed (30.8 per cent) (Table 1.4). Sub-group variations are also revealing: female, young, and relatively well-educated respondents were more ready than their respective counterparts to disapprove of the statement. To gauge the extent to which our respondents have turned against patriarchalism and towards some kind of matriarchalism, we asked them whether they would instead accept "wives making all important decisions in the family." Their responses (Table 1.5) were not altogether surprising,

Table 1.4 "Husbands are masters of the household and wives should submit to their authority." (%)

	Very much disagree	Disagree	It depends	Agree	Very much agree	Don't know/No answer	Total	(N)
All respondents	5.2	32.9	28.4	28.9	1.9	2.6	100.0	(422)
Sex								
Male	4.1	29.3	29.3	32.4	2.3	2.7	100.0	(222)
Female	6.5	37.0	27.5	25.0	1.5	2.5	100.0	(200)
Age								
Below 30	7.1	35.5	27.7	26.2	0.7	2.8	100.0	(141)
30 - 49	5.5	31.7	32.8	25.7	2.7	1.6	100.0	(183)
50 & above	2.1	32.3	20.8	38.5	2.1	4.2	100.0	(96)
Educational level								
Up to primary	2.7	29.5	28.9	31.5	3.4	4.0	100.0	(149)
Secondary	2.2	36.5	27.5	30.9	0.6	2.2	100.0	(178)
Tertiary	15.9	29.3	31.7	19.5	2.4	1.2	100.0	(82)

Table 1.5 "Wives making all important decisions in the family." (%)

	Very much against accepting	Against accepting	It depends	Accepting	Very much accepting	Don't know/No opinion/No answer	Total	(N)
All respondents	3.6	39.6	32.7	16.8	0.9	6.4	100.0	(422)
Sex								
Male	4.5	45.0	30.6	14.0	0.0	5.9	100.0	(222)
Female	2.5	33.5	35.0	20.0	2.0	7.0	100.0	(200)
Age								
Below 30	3.5	38.3	36.2	14.2	2.1	5.7	100.0	(141)
30 - 49	2.7	38.3	33.9	18.6	—	6.5	100.0	(183)
50 & above	5.2	43.8	25.0	17.7	1.0	7.3	100.0	(96)
Educational level								
Up to primary	4.0	37.6	31.5	17.4	0.7	8.7	100.0	(149)
Secondary	2.8	38.2	33.1	19.7	1.1	5.1	100.0	(178)
Tertiary	4.9	43.9	34.1	11.0	1.2	4.9	100.0	(82)

with many more respondents rejecting (43.2 per cent) than accepting (17.7 per cent) a matriarchal alternative. While more male than female, and more old than young respondents showed disapproval, it is somewhat surprising, however, to find that there was more showing of disapproval among the relatively better educated than among those who had lower levels of educational attainment. (Question: How is it they were less tolerant than their less-educated counterparts of an arrangement which would give women more say in the family?) A plausible way to explain this is to say that one mode of domestic authority (matriarchal) is just as inegalitarian as the other mode (patriarchal). In disapproving of one, one does not necessarily endorse the other. One's choice could very well rest with a third and more egalitarian alternative.

Table 1.6, summarising responses to our 1988 survey on two sets of questions about the actual and the preferred, or the "ideal," persons responsible for four types of household tasks, helps to throw some light on this paradox. It is clear from Table 1.6 that wives were indeed more heavily involved than husbands in all household duties, especially the chores, except for the making of important decisions. Husbands, on the other hand, were more likely than wives to have the final word in important decisions. There is therefore some basis for saying that there was unequal division of household labour. However, what is also striking is that both in the making of important decisions and in the supervision of children it was not unusual for duties to be shared between the husband and wife or among all in the family. Indeed nearly half of the respondents reported that they had involved both husband and wife or the whole family in these duties. Hence while in some areas wives were more likely to be more heavily burdened, in other areas it was not uncommon for them to get others in the family to help. Not all household tasks were unequally distributed and some were more equally distributed than others. When asked to choose the "ideal" persons to perform in the four duty areas, not surprisingly the respondents indicated their preference for a more egalitarian arrangement: they expressed a wish for wives to be less heavily loaded and for there to

Table 1.6 Actual and Ideal Persons Responsible for Four Types of Family Tasks (%)

	Wife	Husband	Tasks shared*	Others	Total	(N)
Household chores						
Actual	72.1	3.6	13.6	10.8	100.0	(390)
Ideal	58.2	3.1	29.0	9.7	100.0	(414)
The making of important decisions						
Actual	13.7	32.3	47.0	6.9	100.0	(387)
Ideal	8.9	32.5	54.6	4.1	100.0	(416)
Supervision of children						
Actual	38.3	6.4	49.7	5.5	100.0	(326)
Ideal	25.8	8.6	62.8	2.8	100.0	(395)
Budgeting daily expenses						
Actual	50.5	15.3	26.7	7.6	100.0	(386)
Ideal	41.3	15.2	39.6	3.8	100.0	(414)

* between husband and wife or among all members of the family

be greater co-operative involvement of the couple as well as a contribution from everyone in the family.

Working wives are also caught between the competing demands of, on one hand, their work roles, and, on the other hand, the insatiable call on their energy, time and commitment made by the "greedy institution" (Coser, 1974) of the family. How do working women in Hong Kong cope with these competing demands? Table 1.7 gives some idea of the respondents' views on these and related questions.

Although many would take issue with the traditional view that "men go to work; the home is the rightful place for women" (Lau *et al.*, 1991:45), their attitudes on the extent to which women should commit their time, energy and loyalty to work were not unambivalent. More than one-third (37.7 per cent) of the respondents were not sure whether they could accept "women working long hours for their careers;" and there were more with negative (31.1 per cent) than positive (27.5 per cent) attitudes. Not surprisingly, there were more disapproving responses from the male (33.4 per cent) than from the female (28.5 per cent) respondents. In sharp contrast, few respondents, male and female alike, would disagree with "men working long hours for their careers."

However, when asked to react to the statement that "women should put family before every thing else and even give up work if there is the need," few (16.5 per cent) agreed and the majority (54.0 per cent) disagreed. As expected, more female (58.0 per cent) than male (50.4 per cent) respondents expressed disapproval. It seems then that while many would for obvious reasons have reservations about women giving too much of their time to work, few would go to the extreme of asking them to abandon work altogether. They were pragmatic enough to see the advantage of having a second pay-cheque and at the same time retaining the service of a devoted afterwork home-maker.

The same pragmatic approach comes through in their reactions to the situation, "wives earning more than husbands," that was put to them. Extrapolating what the "patriarchal model" says about status stratification within the family, one would have

Table 1.7 Attitudes to Gender Roles (%)

	Very much against accepting	Against accepting	It depends	Accepting	Very much accepting	Don't know/No opinion/No answer	Total	(N)
Women working long hours for their careers	2.4	28.7	37.7	25.6	1.9	3.8	100.0	(422)
Male	3.2	30.2	41.0	22.1	1.4	2.3	100.0	(222)
Female	1.5	27.0	34.0	29.5	2.5	5.5	100.0	(200)
Men working long hours for their careers	0.5	10.9	33.9	46.4	5.5	2.8	100.0	(422)
Male	0.5	9.0	35.6	47.3	5.0	2.8	100.0	(222)
Female	0.5	13.0	32.0	45.5	6.0	3.0	100.0	(200)
Women participating in voluntary associations, besides working	0.7	15.6	29.4	44.3	1.7	8.3	100.0	(422)
Male	0.5	21.6	34.7	37.8	0.9	4.5	100.0	(222)
Female	1.0	9.0	23.5	51.5	2.5	12.5	100.0	(200)
Men participating in voluntary associations, besides working	0.2	6.4	33.6	49.3	2.4	8.1	100.0	(422)
Male	0.0	8.1	39.6	45.9	3.2	3.2	100.0	(222)
Female	0.5	4.5	27.0	53.0	1.5	13.5	100.0	(200)
Wives earning more than husbands	1.9	12.3	23.9	51.4	3.1	7.4	100.0	(422)
Male	1.8	15.3	26.1	48.6	2.3	6.0	100.0	(222)
Female	2.0	9.0	21.5	54.5	4.0	9.0	100.0	(200)
Wives making all important decisions in the family	3.6	39.6	32.7	16.8	0.9	6.4	100.0	(422)
Male	4.5	45.0	30.6	14.0	0.0	5.9	100.0	(222)
Female	2.5	33.5	35.0	20.0	2.0	7.0	100.0	(200)

thought that this would be a situation difficult for many people to accept, for the simple reason that it upsets the status of the "patriarch." The responses, therefore, were somewhat surprising. More than half (54.5 per cent) of the respondents did not see any problem with wives out-achieving their husbands; only a small minority (14.2 per cent) could not accept it. The less surprising side was that more male (17.1 per cent) than female (11.0 per cent) respondents regarded this with reservation, and there were more female (58.5 per cent) than male (50.9 per cent) approvals. One would surmise from these responses that, given the pragmatic approach, the "status inconsistency" (between husband and wife) arising from the latter out-earning the former would be rather well taken, if it does occur.

Another surprising finding is that, quite inconsistent with what one would assume from the "patriarchal model," not many (less than 20 per cent) respondents disapproved of "women participating in voluntary associations, apart from working." In fact, close to half (46.0 per cent) of the respondents reacted positively to the idea. The issue of "men participating in voluntary associations, apart from working," not surprisingly, enjoyed more (51.7 per cent) support. It is interesting to note also that, while on one hand, as expected, male respondents were more likely to have reservations about women's extra-familial involvement, on the other hand, female respondents were even more accepting than the male respondents themselves of the latter's involvement in social activities. This has led us then to the belief that though in general people tolerate women having roles beyond home and work, the attitudes of men and women alike still reflect certain gender-biased norms and values.

Social Support: The Family's Safety-Net

Few sociologists still believe in a "structurally isolated" nuclear family, which is seldom in contact with relatives and seldom receives help from or renders help to them. Although they main-

tain independent households, nuclear families everywhere are in contact with their kin. The networks which bring them together enable the sharing of leisure, the rendering of mutual support and assistance, or even the completion of tasks. No doubt the nature and form of these contacts vary considerably; the size and complexity of networks differ widely; some networks are more integrated than others; some nuclear families have few, and others have many contacts in their networks. So the question is not really whether nuclear families are isolated (for of course they are not) but whether their bonds with these networks are strong or are weakening.

There is more than purely academic interest in asking this question. As the population grows older and as more people live longer after retiring, planners of social services need to know whether they can continue to count on the family and its networks to take care of the elderly. Single-parent families, rising in number as divorce increases, face many problems: reduced income, the difficulties of child-rearing and home-making, emotional crises and so on. To what extent can these families resort to their battered social networks, diminished in size and perhaps also in integration, for assistance and support? Life in a fast-paced and highly competitive city, made the more stressful by a pervasive anxiety over Hong Kong's future, has made primary groups the more important as sources of security, emotional gratification, and psychological support. Are they, in fact, ready to help? The concept of "community care" – of involving primary groups and social networks in caring for vulnerable groups in the community – presupposes a willing and able community. But is it?

Findings from the survey have neither disappointed us nor allowed us to feel entirely sanguine.

Respondents were asked two sets of questions on how they related to their networks. The first was whether in the past six months they had rendered to or received from their networks help and support in six areas: any form of help, help during illness, financial aid, care of children, advice over important matters, and the giving of valuable gifts. The answers show whether certain

helping relations occurred and how common these were among the respondents. However, they stop short of indicating how important these relations were to the respondents and how frequently the respondents had used these relations to solve their problems. Hence the second set of questions attempts to find out the respondents' help-seeking patterns. It asked them to identify the persons in their networks to whose help they would most frequently resort when there were needs in the following eight areas: when there was sickness in the family, when there were financial problems, when baby-sitting was needed, when difficulties occurred in work or career, when there were marital or family problems, when there were expensive goods to be bought or an important investment to be made, when one was upset and needed someone to talk to, and when advice or information on certain matters was needed. Answers to these two sets of questions are presented in Table 1.8 and Table 1.9 respectively.

Table 1.8 shows the undeniable existence of helping relations between the family and its networks. Close kin, relatives, neighbours, workmates and friends had all been "active" in some way in the recent past. The majority of the respondents reported having involved their parents, siblings, friends and workmates in "any form of help" in the previous six months. Close to half of them reported also the occurrence of some kind of assistance among neighbours and relatives.

Among the close kin, parents stood out as the key donors and recipients of help. The majority of the respondents (76.1 per cent) reported having given some form of help to parents in the previous six months: caring for them when they were ill (74.6 per cent), giving advice over important matters (69.5 per cent), and assisting them financially (64.4 per cent). Giving expensive gifts was not common in the networks. But giving gifts to parents was, relatively speaking, most common; more than one-third (37.0 per cent) of our respondents reported having given some expensive gifts to their parents in the previous six months. Of all the categories of help rendered to parents, the care of children was least common of all.

Table 1.8 Respondents Reporting Assistance among Kin, Relatives, Neighbours, Workmates and Friends in the Previous Six Months

		Social Relations Rendering and Receiving Assistance							
		Rendering assistance to parents	Rendering assistance to siblings	Receiving assistance from parents	Receiving assistance from siblings	Assistance among relatives	Assistance among neighbours	Assistance among workmates	Assistance among friends
Any form of help	%	76.1	72.8	66.5	63.2	49.2	48.7	73.0	79.0
	N	348	372	349	370	396	413	307	414
Help during illness	%	74.6	56.9	64.6	48.0	30.6	23.4	31.6	38.4
	N	327	343	322	348	382	398	297	398
Financial aid	%	64.4	50.0	47.6	39.0	23.0	6.7	29.4	40.3
	N	340	358	340	359	387	401	299	402
Care of children	%	20.2	30.8	39.6	22.1	17.7	17.4	5.7	11.3
	N	223	273	235	267	327	345	244	320
Advice over important matters	%	69.5	69.4	65.7	63.5	36.2	23.0	60.1	67.7
	N	347	373	344	370	395	409	306	412
Expensive gifts	%	37.0	23.9	27.3	21.0	12.6	4.9	14.7	17.8
	N	343	368	341	371	398	411	307	409

Table 1.9 Persons from Whom One Sought Help (%)

	Oneself	Spouse	Children	Parents	Spouse's kin	Siblings	Other relatives	Work-mates	Neigh-bours	Friends	Buying services	Social services	Others	Don't know/No answer/Not applicable	Total	(N)
When there was someone sick in the family	45.3	20.4	5.5	13.0	2.6	5.5	0.7	0.0	0.7	0.4	0.5	1.4	0.7	4.7	100.0	(422)
When the family was troubled by financial problems	27.0	20.6	7.6	17.1	0.9	5.7	1.9	0.7	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	8.1	100.0	(422)
When baby-sitting was needed	24.2	16.7	1.8	23.8	7.9	4.8	4.0	0.0	4.0	1.8	0.4	0.9	0.4	9.3	100.0	(227)
When difficulties occured in work or career	46.2	9.5	0.9	3.7	0.0	2.8	0.3	8.9	0.0	17.9	0.3	0.6	0.6	8.3	100.0	(325)
When there were marital or family problems	43.4	14.1	2.0	7.8	1.2	4.3	0.9	0.9	0.0	12.1	0.0	1.1	0.3	12.1	100.0	(348)
When one was considering buying expensive goods or making important investment	29.8	24.5	4.0	10.0	0.3	4.7	1.3	0.8	0.0	9.3	2.1	0.0	0.5	12.7	100.0	(379)
When one was upset and needed someone to talk to	20.4	27.3	2.4	1.9	0.2	1.9	0.7	1.4	0.7	33.2	0.0	0.2	1.2	8.6	100.0	(422)
When one needed advice or information on certain matters	13.0	10.2	4.3	2.4	0.4	4.0	1.4	5.2	0.9	39.4	1.7	1.2	1.7	14.7	100.0	(422)

Parents were, in return, the most commonly cited source of help during illness, financial aid, care of children, and expensive gifts. They were also frequently the persons from whom one sought advice over important matters. In the next table (Table 1.9) on help-seeking patterns, it can be seen that parents were indeed the persons outside the nuclear family from whom one most readily sought help when there was sickness or financial problems, and when baby-sitting was needed. It is very clear from these findings that assistance flows in both directions between parents and married children.

The general readiness of married children to help their parents was consistent with the majority response to the question, "Would you agree that children must support their parents?" (Table 1.10) Only a small minority (12.1 per cent) expressed disagreement; the majority (56.1 per cent) were positive.

Parents were key actors not only in the mutual aid networks. Apart from friends, they were also ones' closest leisure associates (Table 1.11). Indeed around two-fifths (39.9 per cent; 37.9 per cent) of the respondents reported that they very frequently involved their parents and parents-in-law in leisure activities.

All these findings suggest that Hong Kong Chinese families maintain active and functional intergenerational ties.

What about sibling ties? The respondents' very positive responses (76.7 per cent agreed or strongly agreed) to the question, "Would you agree that siblings should continue to help one another even after they have their own families?" have left us without much doubt that these ties were also very positively recognized. Indeed the majority (72.8 per cent, 63.2 per cent) of the respondents reported having either rendered to or received from their siblings some kind of help in the previous six months. Apart from parents, siblings were the ones most commonly involved in help during illness, care of children, and the giving of expensive gifts. They were also, along with parents and friends, most likely to have been involved in help over financial aid and advice over important matters. They were also, apart from parents and parents-in-law, the kin most frequently met for leisure (Table

Table 1.10 Attitudes to Values and Norms Regarding Social Relations (%)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	It depends	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/No answer	Total	(N)
Children must support their parents	0.7	11.4	29.9	45.7	10.4	1.8	100.0	(422)
Siblings should continue to help one another even after they have their own families	0.2	5.5	15.9	67.5	9.2	1.6	100.0	(422)
Neighbours should see and help each other more often	0.5	3.6	20.1	68.5	5.2	2.1	100.0	(422)
One does not have to involve workmates in one's after-work leisure	2.6	33.2	28.0	22.3	0.5	13.5	100.0	(422)
One should do whatever is possible to give help to friends in trouble	0.5	7.8	56.9	30.6	1.9	2.4	100.0	(422)

Table 1.11 Frequencies of Meeting Leisure Associates (%)

	Very seldom	Occasionally	Very frequently	Don't know/ No answer	Total	(N)
Relatives						
Parents	15.3	41.9	39.9	2.9	100.0	(308)
Parents-in-law	21.1	33.9	37.9	7.0	100.0	(227)
Siblings	18.0	51.0	27.0	3.9	100.0	(355)
Spouse's siblings	35.5	40.5	17.0	6.9	100.0	(259)
Uncles/Aunts	54.2	33.0	7.2	5.5	100.0	(345)
Spouse's uncles/Aunts	61.3	22.6	7.0	9.1	100.0	(243)
Other relatives	52.5	38.4	4.4	4.7	100.0	(406)
Workmates	20.5	48.7	25.5	5.3	100.0	(297)
Neighbours	60.1	25.9	8.6	5.4	100.0	(406)
Friends	12.3	46.0	40.2	1.4	100.0	(413)

1.11).

Compared to parents and siblings, relatives were much more peripheral: they were far less commonly involved in all forms of help and were much less frequently met for leisure. Yet close to half (49.2 per cent) of the respondents reported having given them or obtained from them some kind of help in the previous six months. The most common forms of help were advice over important matters and during illness. Around one-third of the respondents reported having conferred with their relatives over important matters and having given to them or received from them some expensive gifts during the period. The relatives are, though peripheral, not expendable.

Friends turned out to be, after close kin, the most active contacts in the respondents' networks. A high proportion (79.0 per cent) of the respondents admitted having been involved with friends in some kind of mutual assistance in the previous six months. Exchanging advice over important matters with friends was fairly common (reported by two-thirds of the respondents). In addition, if non-kin were to be involved in financial aid, help during illness, and in the giving or receiving of expensive gifts, these would most probably be friends, rather than workmates or neighbours. Table 1.9 shows also that the respondents most frequently approached their friends for information or advice. When there were problems related to work or career, most respondents would be likely to keep the problems to themselves. But if they did seek help, it would be from friends. When upset, the respondents would most probably talk to their spouses or their friends. Should the respondents decide to seek help from people outside the kinship circle in the event of financial problems, or work or career problems, and in decisions about buying expensive goods or making an important investment, they very likely also turned to their friends.

Friends were also the respondents' closest leisure associates. They saw friends and enjoyed themselves together almost as frequently as they did with parents and parents-in-law (Table 1.11).

There was, however, one major difference in the relationship

between friends and close kin. While most respondents did not doubt that they had obligations to their kin, particularly to parents and siblings, they were far less sure about their commitments to friends. Asked whether they would agree that "one should do whatever is possible to give help to friends in trouble," few (8.3 per cent) disagreed, but many (56.9 per cent) were ambivalent. Friends are helpful and one sees them often, but there is no binding commitment to them. The reason is obvious: friendships are based on choice (hence the making and un-making of them), which leads to impermanence and instability. Loyalty and unlimited commitment are not consistent with impermanence and instability.

Workmates were not as active as friends in the respondents' social networks, but they were far from inactive. Close to three quarters (73.0 per cent) of the respondents reported having involved workmates in some kind of help in the previous six months. Many (60.1 per cent) had exchanged with workmates advice over important matters and nearly a third (31.6 per cent, 29.4 per cent) had either given to or received from them help during illness or financial aid. After one's friends and one's spouse, workmates were the next most frequently approached persons to discuss problems with. They were, however, the least likely source of help in the care of children.

Workmates were not as actively involved in the respondents' leisure activities as their friends, parents, and parents-in-law, but their presence was almost as frequent as that of siblings and more frequent, in fact, than most relatives (Table 1.11). But not every respondent felt that this was either desirable or necessary. Asked to react to the statement that "one does not have to involve workmates after work," around one-third (35.8 per cent) of them expressed disagreement while around a quarter (22.8 per cent) agreed. Among those who disagreed, there were twice as many young as old respondents (Table 1.12). This finding indicates perhaps that whereas the older respondents were more inclined to separate family from work, and the expressive from the instrumental domain, the younger respondents were less mindful

Table 1.12 "One does not have to involve workmates in one's after-work leisure" by Age (%)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	It depends	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/ No answer	Total	(N)
Below 30	5.0	50.4	29.1	11.3	0.7	2.5	100.0	(141)
30 - 49	1.6	26.2	31.7	23.5	0.0	16.9	100.0	(183)
50 & above	1.0	20.8	18.8	36.5	1.0	21.9	100.0	(96)

about the boundary between the two and more prepared to turn instrumental relations into expressive ones.

Neighbours were peripheral participants in the respondents' social networks. There were comparatively few reports of involving neighbours in helping activities of nearly any kind. Also, they were seldom met for leisure activities. However, it would grossly under-represent their significance to ignore them. Nearly half (48.7 per cent) of the respondents reported that they had involved the neighbours in some kind of helping activities in the previous six months. Nearly one quarter (23.4 per cent, 23.0 per cent) had also given to or received from neighbours help during illness and advice over important matters. Besides close kin and relatives, neighbours were also the most likely persons to be involved in the care of children. To these respondents, the characterization of neighbours as "urban strangers" – anonymous people next door – must be quite incompatible with their own experiences.

When asked their opinion of the statement that "neighbours should see and help each other more often," the response was overwhelmingly (73.7 per cent) positive with very few respondents (4.1 per cent) giving a negative answer. The good will and desire to improve relations with neighbours was evidently there.

The relationship between spouses can finally be looked at. Spouses are, without doubt, ones' closest allies (Table 1.9). They were the people whom our respondents most frequently turned to for most kinds of help: "when one was upset and needed someone to talk to," "when one was considering buying some expensive goods or making some important investment," "when there was someone sick in the family," "when the family was troubled by financial problems," and "when there were some problems with one's marriage or family." In two areas, however, the respondents were more likely to by-pass their spouses: "when one needed information or advice on certain matters," and "when there were some problems with one's work or career."

From the findings in Table 1.9 however, it is very striking how frequently the respondents just kept the problems to themselves, particularly when these were related to work and family. The next

most common response was that about half of the time the respondents and their spouses tackled together most of the problems they encountered. When they did seek "outside" help, there emerge, in terms of their targeted sources of help, three major help-seeking patterns. The first, kin-based, is for the respondents to seek help from close kin (children, parents, parents-in-law, siblings) and relatives. Kin-based help was usually sought in cases of sickness, someone was needed to take care of the children, and when there were financial problems. The second, non-kin-based pattern, is for the respondents to approach friends, workmates and neighbours for help. Non-kin-based help applied to the following areas: work- or career-related problems, when one was upset and needed someone to talk to, and when information or advice on certain matters was needed. The third was neither kin- nor non-kin-based. Both kin and non-kin could help, when, for example, one needed advice over important investment decisions or when one had problems relating to family or marriage.

The following general points on the help-seeking patterns of the respondents can be made:

a. They relied on themselves and resources within the husband-wife relationship most of the time.
b. They relied heavily on their social networks to tackle a range of problems when they looked for outside assistance. Depending on the kinds of problems involved, such help-seeking behaviour could either be kin-based, non-kin-based, or a combination.
c. They rarely reach out beyond their social networks either to purchase services from the market (e.g., paid domestic help, paid counselling service, paid baby-sitting) or to obtain help from social services (e.g., home-help, family services).

There emerge a number of issues and possible problems in the patterns identified. If the husband-wife relationship is so central to help-seeking, what happens if the relationship breaks down? If help-seeking depends so much on a family's social network, what

happens if, when the marital relationship breaks up, it also tears the social network apart? Stacey's (1990) study of domestic upheaval in late twentieth century America shows that it is entirely possible for separated couples and their social networks to continue to rally to each other for help and support. In her moving account of the "post-modern family" in the Silicon Valley, marital breakdown, the setting up of new families through remarriage, and the reconstitution of links between the parted couple and their new families can actually engender an expanded network that involves and takes care of both old and new relations. While not doubting the possibility, one sees this as more likely to be exceptional in Hong Kong's "modern" family scene, where the nuclear family is the norm and divorce not yet very common.

The fact that the entire weight of "help" appears to fall on the family and its social network also raises another issue: Are these structures in danger of role overload (Can they take on more?) and is there the case for the community to assume less and not more responsibilities?

Conclusion

We have covered three aspects of family life in this review. To recapture the main points:

a. We have seen some evidence of the marriage institution in decline. We have read signs of changing attitudes to staying single, cohabitation, divorce, and fertility. These are signals that new patterns of values and life-styles are emerging.
b. We have seen evidence of a strong departure from a male-centred gender-unequal family. Hong Kong families are far more gender-equal than commonly assumed. At the same time, we have also seen signs of continuing gender-based biases in values and conceptions regarding domestic gender roles.
c. We have found evidence of active social networks giving support of various kinds to the families. While heartened by this finding, we also issue the warning that we need to be concerned about their vulnerability and the possibility of overloading them with caring and helping responsibilities.

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2

Stress as a Social Phenomenon in Hong Kong

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Introduction

This chapter is written within the spirit and under the basic tenets of community psychology and public health. It is concerned with the stressful impact of social and environmental conditions in Hong Kong and the response pattern of the local people.

The typical life style in Hong Kong has been pictured as follows. Most people live in a concrete city of cramped self-owned flats or crowded public housing estates. Everybody, driven to achieve, makes excessive efforts to make an extravagant living in a demanding and competitive society. In this society, an obsession with material wealth and a compulsion to succeed are indeed very strong. The pressure for social and economic updrifting is so high that people usually leave little time for personal enjoyment.

In this context, it is presumed that the ability of people to adapt to and cope with stress is a reflection of their psychological well-being and an indicator of quality of life. The importance of the relationship between stress and health, both physical and

mental, cannot be overstated. In our approach to the understanding of health and treatment of disease, the medical model has been viewed as far from adequate. As the community awareness of the social aspects of health and disease is one of the cardinal indicators of social development, it is envisaged that the understanding of stress as a social phenomenon in Hong Kong will eventually contribute to local mental health promotion and prevention programmes.

Sources of Stress

It is of both theoretical interest and practical importance to ferret out the social conditions that may give rise to stress feelings and so negatively affect the mental health of people in Hong Kong.

In the 1990 Social Indicators Survey, respondents were asked from a list whether daily irritations or social events do exert any degree of stressful impact on their psychological well-being. The sources of stress can be categorized into four main areas: from the family; from work situations; relating to the personal domain; and belonging to social conditions. A description of the different stressors is given in Table 2.1.

Before going into a detailed study of the effects of different stressors, it is germane to first define the concept of stress, then delineate the nature of stressors and finally discuss the possible causation of stressful experiences.

Table 2.1 Stressors in Hong Kong: Rank Order of Frequency of Positive Responses as Indication of Strain as a Result of Individual Stressors (%)

Pressure from coping with daily work demands	57.56
Pressure from discipline training for kids	53.09
Pressure from finance/ money matters	49.75
Pressure from worry about examination results	46.72
Pressure from making occupation/schooling decisions	44.36
Pressure from not being able to achieve personal goal	40.65
Pressure from the issue of 1997	40.56
Pressure from falling in love	39.63
Pressure from concern over family members' health	36.32
Pressure from the living environment	34.72
Pressure from transport problems	33.68
Pressure from concern over personal health	33.67
Pressure from parents' expectation	27.57
Pressure from marital life	20.15
Pressure from homemaking/domestic chores	19.67
Pressure from temptation of luxury goods	19.40
Pressure from living with parents/family	17.84

Note: Cut off score 4 at 7-point scale.

Defining Stress

The concept of stress, in spite of its ubiquitous nature, is somewhat elusive and not easily understood. As Cox (1987) remarks, "it is a concept which is familiar to both layman and professional alike; it is understood by all when used in a general context but by very few when a more precise account is required, and this seems to be a central problem."

The absence of a consensual definition of stress provides a fundamental empirical difficulty. At one level, there is some con-

fusion about whether stress refers to a "stressor" or to "perceived stress." Some investigators have assumed that stress means environmental circumstances which affect health directly or indirectly, whereas others have emphasized the individual's state of being stressed.

Firstly, the term "stressor" is used to refer to an event or to any environmental stimulus that causes a person to feel tense or aroused. In this sense, stress is something external to the person. Secondly, the importance of the concept of "perceived stress" is that it represents the subjective response to what is going on. In this sense, stress is the internal mental state of tension or arousal. It is the interpretative, emotive, defensive, and coping process occurring inside the person. Thirdly, stress can also be seen as the interaction between stimulus and response. Essentially it is considered as an intervening variable between the individual and his environment.

By the same token, Chalmers (1981) proposed that the experience of stress is the balance or imbalance resulting from the interaction of four elements: internal needs and values, external environmental demands and constraints, personal resources or capabilities, and external environmental supplies and supports.

However, it is increasingly recognized that in stress research the concepts of stress, coping and well-being are frequently confounded. This confounding is exemplified in life events research, where some "stressful" life events may also be construed as an inability to cope (e.g., divorce) or as a symptom of well-being (e.g., personal illness). Similarly, measures of role stress (e.g., ambiguity, conflict, overload) and responses to role stress (e.g., strain, distress) are often so similar that they may actually tap the same construct.

Measuring Stress

While self-report questionnaires, rating scales, or checklists are now often used by the subject to indicate behaviour that may not

be observable in the experimental setting, Brown and Harris (1978) have argued that taking self-reports of stress is leaving the job of measurement up to the subject and this has the advantage of having the individual-based measures of stress that have meaning to the individual.

In the 1990 Social Indicators Survey, an attempt is made to measure stress both in terms of the "stressor," i.e., environmental or social conditions which the respondent regards as exerting significant degree of unpleasant impact on him or her (Table 2.1) as well as of the internal state of mental tension (Tables 2.2 and 2.3).

Both measures are based on subjective appraisal and self-report indications. It is believed that this kind of summative response, as so often used in attitude surveys, has considerable validity, being the meaningful response given by the respondent.

It is also considered important to recognize the fundamental distinction between a state of tension and a state of stress. Thus stimuli that are appraised as benign, positive or irrelevant are excluded from the category of stressors. What makes them harmful or threatening is that they involve demands that tax or exceed the person's resources.

Stressors in Hong Kong

What people in Hong Kong regard as stressors is listed in Table 2.1. It is a significant finding that a considerable percentage of respondents rated various social conditions as exerting psychological strain at a level above the score of 4 on a 7-point scale.

Nearly one-fifth (17.8 per cent) of people reported that their relationship with parents, or family members had brought about a significant degree of stress and strain.

Almost six out of ten (57.6 per cent) respondents found that coping with the daily demands of work exerted a certain degree of stress and strain. Part of the stress was ascribed to transport

Table 2.2 Stress Responses Occuring in the Previous 4 Weeks

	Not at all n (%)	Rarely n (%)	Frequently n (%)	Regularly n (%)	Don't know n (%)	No answer n (%)
A. Emotionally depressed	135 (32.0)	100 (23.7)	161 (38.2)	21 (5.0)	3 (0.7)	2 (0.5)
B. Angry	141 (33.4)	124 (29.4)	127 (30.1)	23 (5.5)	4 (0.9)	3 (0.7)
C. Too many problems, quite beyond capacity to cope	173 (41.0)	117 (27.7)	105 (24.9)	20 (4.7)	4 (0.9)	3 (0.7)
D. No spare time for recreation	151 (35.8)	90 (21.3)	117 (27.7)	55 (13.0)	6 (1.4)	3 (0.7)
E. No desire to meet with friends	233 (55.2)	89 (21.1)	75 (17.8)	13 (3.1)	7 (1.7)	5 (1.2)
F. Ill-tempered	166 (39.3)	112 (26.5)	116 (27.5)	20 (4.7)	5 (1.2)	3 (0.7)
G. Not being understood by anyone	197 (46.7)	78 (18.5)	89 (21.1)	29 (6.9)	22 (5.2)	7 (1.7)
H. In many ways superior to others	194 (46.0)	92 (21.8)	88 (20.9)	18 (4.3)	22 (5.2)	8 (1.9)
I. In control of hazzles of daily life	69 (16.4)	79 (18.7)	148 (35.1)	84 (19.9)	33 (7.8)	9 (2.1)
J. Confident about own ability in dealing with personal problems	56 (13.3)	68 (16.1)	153 (36.3)	103 (24.4)	35 (8.3)	7 (1.7)

problems. While 40.6 per cent felt distressed for not achieving personal/work goal, 44.4 per cent felt stressed in making decisions in their occupation/study.

Table 2.3 Stress Response: Percentage of Positive Scores

No. of symptoms	Frequency	Per cent	Cum per cent	Reversed cum per cent
0	160	37.9	37.9	62.1
1	127	30.1	68.0	32.0
2	71	16.8	84.8	15.2
3	48	11.4	96.2	3.8
4	7	1.7	97.9	2.1
5	1	0.2	98.1	1.9
6	3	0.7	98.8	1.2
7	4	0.9	99.7	0.3
8	1	0.2	100.0	0.0
Total	422	100.0		

About forty per cent of respondents found that personal issues such as not being able to achieve personal goals, worries over examinations, health, or finance had often become sources of stress.

Generally, nearly one-third of respondents found that certain social conditions, such as their living environment, leisure activities, social relationships with peers, and the materialistic values of society including the professed admiration for famous brands were becoming stressors.

Work Stress

In the sample population 64.1 per cent of the respondents had a full-time job, another 9.4 per cent were working on a part-time basis, and a further 3.2 per cent held a moonlighting job in addi-

tion to a regular occupation.

In general, whereas 54.2 per cent of the sample considered themselves as a good superior, 68.6 per cent were satisfied that they were a good subordinate. Remarkably, 72.8 per cent of the sample regarded themselves as conscientious workers.

When the respondents were asked if they had unpleasant people working along with them, 45 per cent denoted that there were many such persons in their workplace.

A quarter (25 per cent) of the sample and 50 per cent of those serving as employees expressed intention to start his/her own business. When the goal is set too high, well beyond the individual's means of achieving and when the individual constantly lives in frustration of a reasonable chance of achievement of his/her goal, the physical and emotional impacts of anxiety and frustration cannot be ignored.

Recent studies on burnout and work stress indicate that the environment in which individuals live, that is the social, political, economic, intellectual and professional environment, have combined to increase stress and decrease alternatives.

Use of Information on Stressors

It is obvious that understanding and classifying the stressors in a community should provide useful information in the field of stress research.

In reviewing recent developments in sociological theory, Ritzer (1989) noted that the issue of micro-macro linkage of stress has emerged as the central key issue in stress research. The development of theories in social stress and the study on the sociology of emotions are especially relevant to the study of stress. These theories naturally have implications for our conceptualization of stressors, mediators and outcomes. Lennon (1989) proposed that the sociological analysis of "the stress response" should start from sociological theories, theories that are developed with the aim of understanding the links between individuals' daily lives and ex-

periences as they are embedded in social networks and in broader socio-cultural and historical contexts. This approach emphasizes the understanding of the impact of social and environmental stressors and the relations of actors or individuals as they react to and shape their social environments.

In Hong Kong there is an exigent demand to affirm the value of study on stress and stressors for more information. This is because an epidemiological perspective on life and social stresses may lend support to the increasingly realized need that the population should come to recognize the kinds of stress they face, to know the manifestation of the stress syndrome, and to learn stress management techniques. For this reason, public education on concepts such as stressful life events and models such as learned helplessness should be more widely disseminated. The implications of individual's choices on the physical and emotional impacts of stress, stress management and the prevention of health crises (physical and emotional) must receive appropriate emphasis in the themes on behavioural medicine and health psychology. Of course it is apt to note that stress in general is not uniformly negative. Some degree of stress is necessary to enhance job performance and to provide environmental stimulation against boredom. What determines whether a stressor becomes pathogenic is the person's ability to cope.

The Stress Response

The stress response is composed of the physiological and psychological reactions of the body that result from the interaction with a stressor. The response may be normal and is a necessary means of coping with the stressful demands.

In the present survey a specific attempt was made to examine the stress response pattern of the Hong Kong population. Respondents were asked whether in the previous four weeks, they had felt depressed, angered, etc. or, on the contrary, confident, in control, superior. Table 2.2 shows the pertinent results.

Items A, B and F represent expressions of emotion, whereas items G, H, I, and J denote the cognitive aspect of the response, and items C, D, and E attempt to detect the behavioural component of the stress response.

It was revealed in the survey that all three dimensions of the scale achieve great consistency, thus demonstrating a high level of internal consistency of the scale.

The results (Table 2.3) suggested that 30.1 per cent of the population had definitely experienced feelings of stress in the previous four weeks, while l6.8 per cent of the population claimed that they regularly had at least two symptoms of a stress response.

The present results lend support to our previous findings (using General Health Questionnaire as a screening instrument in the 1988 Social Indicators Study) that about one-quarter of the population manifest symptoms characteristic of a stress response.

Stress and Coping

Stress exists not only as an imbalance between objective demands and objective response capabilities, but also involves the subjective perception of these factors. This perception leads one to anticipate being unable to cope with the situation. Even if an imbalance is perceived, it will not be appraised as stressful unless the consequences of failure to cope are important to the individual. In this vein, stress is not merely the perceived failure to meet demands, but the expectation of adverse consequences stemming from such an occurrence (McGrath, 1970).

Coping, as a term applied to efforts, both action-orientated and intrapsychic, to manage (that is, master, tolerate, reduce, minimize) stress or troublesome demands, difficulties, challenges and conflicts, has grown in usage only in recent years. It is a problem-solving procedure, but also serves emotion-regulating functions. There may be optimal ways of coping for each combination of stressors and individuals suffering from these stressors. Defensive and coping processes often interweave in responding to stressful

situations.

Thus, in the field of stress research, an equally important focus is the concern with coping mechanisms. There is ample evidence that long-term conditions, however stressful they might appear to an outside observer, do not inevitably result in physical breakdown. The person's capacity to adapt and to cope is the crucial determinant whether there is a stress outcome.

Evidence is available, however, that there is not a simple link between stress and disease outcomes and that how individuals cope with stress is an important modifier of the stress-disease relationship. In fact, numerous factors besides coping can also modify the relationship between stress and illness. These include personal factors (e.g., personality, past history, genetic variables), process factors (e.g., cognitive appraisal), and environmental factors (e.g., social support, social climate, cultural factors).

At any rate an area of great import in the study of stress and stress management is how to strengthen the person's capacity to cope, and how to derive psychological meaning and develop a sense of coherence from the daily struggles faced by the individual. It is nowadays accepted that social support provides a good basis for boosting the individual's coping mechanisms. For example, in relation to health behaviour, that is, habits and actions beneficial or inimical to well-being, coping and support are viewed as potential mechanisms for altering the antecedent risk behaviour.

Social Support

Social support often refers to the mechanisms by which interpersonal relationships presumably buffer one against a stressful environment (Cohen and McKay, 1984). Someone who believes he or she belongs to a social network of communication and mutual obligation experiences social support. The presence of social support may facilitate coping with crisis and adaptation to change. The notion that fulfilling an intimate relationship with others

presumably protects people from the deleterious effects of stress has a long history (Cohen and McKay, 1984). Although the nature, meaning, and measurement of this term are still being intensely debated in the literature, social support is currently regarded as a central psychosocial issue in health (DiMatteo and Hays, 1981).

The link between social support and health has been well explored. Totman (1990) reported studies in California which demonstrated that with initial health status taken into account – that is, splitting the population into graded categories of initial health – people with fewer social contacts, notwithstanding how well or ill they were, were still at higher risk from illness and death than those with greater social involvement. A study of a random sample of the population of Sweden also provided additional evidence that there is an independent association between lack of social support and mortality. The literature fully affirms the finding that people who are well supported have a better chance of staying alive and healthy than those who lack support.

Welz, Veill and Hafner (1980) noted quantitatively smaller social networks among people who had attempted suicide. The difference was significant in terms of the number of friends, acquaintances, relatives and close family members with whom these people maintained regular contacts.

In the preservation of mental health, supportive social networks such as family, neighbours and friends enjoy increasing attention. It has been frequently demonstrated that having regular close contact with family or friends, an intense bonding and a sense of acceptance through sharing a common dilemma, or attachments and mutual collaboration are all positive qualities of social support.

From a different perspective, social support also contributes to the sense of coherence, the concept was first put forward by Antonovsky (1987) in his *Unravelling the Mystery of Health*. The sense of coherence is a permanent mental attitude and is defined as a global orientation determining the ability of the individual to exert control over the stressor. The crucial elements of the sense of coherence includes comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. These elements essentially represent a way of seeing the world as predictable. It also expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that life makes sense emotionally, that one's internal and external environments are predictable and that there is a high probability that things will work out as well as can be reasonably expected.

The Family as a Source of Stress

In line with observation in other studies that family relationships are among the most important source of stress for a significant number in the population (e.g., Ilfeld, 1982), the present survey also revealed that 17.8 per cent of the sample reported stressful experiences in family relationships.

While family domain is frequently the place where psychological support is rendered and the wounds that people incur outside are to be healed and it is commonly where people turn to find relief from pain, the family is also a major reservoir of problems and tribulations. Numerous facets of marital relations, parent-child encounters, and transitional points along the family life cycle have been viewed as fertile ground on which stress can grow. It is also likely to be an arena in which problems generated elsewhere are transplanted. As family members have multiple roles, stressors in an outside role can easily turn to be stressors in the family.

In reality, one's relationship in the family is unlikely to escape completely from the spin-offs from enduring conflicts in another family relationship. Individual actions in the family combine to form a system qualitatively different from the sum total of its individual constituents (Pearlin, 1983).

Moreover, one should not be swept away into thinking that the consequences of marriage are all positive. In the real world many couples divorce. Surely this is painful and unpleasant. Negotiations within the family often lead to frustration and anger. Although estimates of domestic violence vary, some form of

physical abuse between spouses is probably on the increase even in the Chinese communities.

Besides, it is not only the presence of a partner but also the quality of relationships that must be taken into consideration (see Gove, Hughes and Style, 1983). Perlman, Gerson and Spinner (1978) found that marital dissatisfaction was associated with loneliness. This is all the more relevant to present-day situation in Hong Kong, now that many couples are separated with thousands of miles in between merely for the sake of seeking migration of individual family members in the face of 1997 issue.

However, whether the family becomes a stressor or a source of social support depends on the nature of the relationship, patterns of interaction and the effectiveness of communication. Community social services which aim at strengthening the family and social network and which provide guidance and intervention for families in trouble have an important role to play in ensuring the healthy status of family relationships and quality of life of its members.

The Family as a Source of Social Support

The major perspective in the study of social support includes firstly practical aid and secondly psychological support accessible to an individual through social ties to other individuals, groups and the larger community. It represents the resources one is able to call upon in dealing with certain conditions, and the interpersonal transactions that involve the expressions of positive affect, the affirmation or endorsement of the person's beliefs or values and/or the provision of aid or assistance (Cohen and Mathews, 1987). The amount of social support one is able to obtain correlates with one's social network and the functions that they provide. It is also defined as the existence or availability of people on whom we can rely on, people who let us know that they care about, value, and love us (Sarason and Sarason, 1985). In particular, besides their physical well-being and longevity, married individuals appear to enjoy more positive mental health than other groups.

Andrews, Tennant, Hewson and Vaillant (1978), who conducted a field study in Melbourne, found that 80 per cent of the people who during stressful life events could rely on the help and support of their relatives, friends, and neighbours showed no signs, or only slight signs, of mental disorder, as compared with 70 per cent of those with no such support. A further comparison of the two extreme groups makes the difference still clearer: those with few stressful events and adequate personal and social support resources had a morbidity rate for neurotic disorders of 12.8 per cent whereas subjects exposed to a large number of stressors who had inadequate personal and social support resources suffered a higher rate, namely 43.3 per cent. Similar findings were reached by Henderson, Duncan-Jones, Byrne and Scott (1981) in Canberra. According to these investigators, the morbidity risk was highest for women with limited social integration and a heavy burden of stressful life events. In comparison, women with numerous stressful events, but whose social integration was good and whose interpersonal relationships were adequate, were only half so prone to mental illness.

In the circumstance of Hong Kong, the family is usually found to be a rich source providing practical aid, emotional support and various forms of advice and consultation. The present research also indicates that Hong Kong people do not always like to entirely fall on themselves in solving all problems. Rather, they would turn to different persons in their social network for assistance or support. While 45.3 per cent relied on self when somebody in the family fell ill, 20.4 per cent sought help from their marriage partners; 13.0 per cent turned to parents; 5.5 per cent went to less closely related persons. Similar patterns of help-seeking behaviour from family members and relatives are also seen in relation to such tasks as provisions of child care assistance, handling financial problems and finding a listener for ventilation of bad feelings.

On a specific question regarding social contacts with family members, close relatives, distant relations, neighbours and col-

leagues, the answers were in good keeping with the expected situation in Chinese communities. While 39.9 per cent of respondents regularly, and 41.9 per cent frequently maintained social contacts with their parents; 7.2 per cent of respondents regularly and 33.0 per cent frequently maintained contacts with their uncles and aunts. These findings indicated that Hong Kong people generally have an extensive network of social support rendering practical assistance and providing psychological support in coping with the hassles of daily life.

Mental Health Status of People in Hong Kong

The Social Indicators Survey in 1988 revealed that 26.3 per cent of the population should be regarded as "at-risk" on the basis of an assessment with the General Health Questionnaire. Even when a more stringent criterion was used, in order to avoid Type I error, the prevalence of psychological ill-health in the general population was estimated to be 18.3 per cent (Lau and Mak, 1992). These figures are comparable with recent observations on the prevalence of psychiatric morbidity in Chinese children (Wong and Lau, 1992), namely 16.3 per cent, and of depression in Chinese elderly (Yung, Lau and Lai, 1991), namely 40.6 per cent. Presumably all these carefully designed epidemiological studies are sensitively reflective of actual mental health status of the population in different sectors. It should therefore be able to serve as a major policy guideline in the provision of mental health services at various levels of prevention.

Relevance to Public Health

It is indisputable that epidemiology has made significant contributions to our knowledge of the aetiology of diseases and premature death. While the crucial role of environmental factors in disease has been rightly emphasized and many of the ways in which physical and biological factors affecting health have been

carefully teased out throughout the century, it is largely from epidemiological investigations that we begin to appreciate how well-being and longevity are affected by life style and social conditions, e.g., diet, smoking, standards of hygiene, physical activity, poverty and so forth.

Despite these advances in our knowledge of the development of disease at the population level, our ability to predict an individual's health status remains limited. This is in part due to failure to take the role of stress properly into account. A growing view is that many life styles and social stresses predispose towards ill-health and warrant more study than they have been accorded in the past. From a public health perspective, an appropriate level of concern is with the psychosocial environment.

In this connection, the World Health Organisation (WHO), in its concern with the kind of life styles that are conducive to health, recognized the importance of social support. Clause 37 of WHO targets that by 1990 each country will have developed measures to strengthen family and other social networks so as to enable people to want to choose and maintain healthy life styles. Ideally, by then, more than 90 per cent of individuals of all groups and communities will be well aware of the health implications of their life styles, be motivated to protect their health, and regard unhealthy behaviour as socially less acceptable.

By 1987, however, the aim was that all countries should have ensured effective community participation at all levels of policy-making concerned with developments relating to healthy life styles and their implementation.

It is hoped, in this context, that Hong Kong will soon be able to reach such a level by firstly reducing the sources and intensity of stress; secondly ensuring a cohesive and supportive family structure; thirdly providing social services for the development of community care and supportive network for those who are under stress; and fourthly educating the public on the implications of social aspects of health and disease, the importance of the development of healthy life styles, adequate coping strategies and the establishment of social supportive mechanisms as the crucial

ingredients of health maintainence.

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3

Housing and Social Welfare

James Lee

Housing

Since the 1988 Social Indicators Study, Hong Kong has seen tumultuous developments in both the public housing sector and the private housing market. While the government is still committed to a policy of providing adequate rental housing for low income groups, there is a clear reorientation of the housing policy favouring home ownership over public rental housing. This is to be achieved through, firstly, a very limited expansion of the existing Home Ownership Scheme of the Housing Authority and, secondly, the stimulation of the private housing market through the introduction of a government Loan Scheme for Home Purchase in the private market. The period has also seen the introduction of the sale of public housing originally built for renting. While the idea of selling public rental housing is one way to increase the housing stock for owner occupation, the project has failed to attract prospective buyers from sitting tenants and the response rate has been extremely poor. A government review was being conducted while this research was being written up. The period likewise has seen the development of one of the most speculative eras in the private housing market. With the end of the Gulf War

in March 1991 and the resolution of political deadlock over the proposal to construct the new Hong Kong airport, the property market experienced an across-the-board price increase in the range of 50-100 per cent. Middle and lower income families are now finding themselves in critical situation. On the one hand, they are not eligible for public rental housing because of income eligibility. On the other hand, they cannot afford to buy house from the private market because of exorbitant price increases. Urban house prices rose on the average from $2,000 to $3,000 per sq. ft. for the period under review and there is no sign that it will stabilize in the short run. While it is clearly stated in the Long Term Housing Strategy Policy paper in 1987 that the government would provide affordable housing for all by the year 2001, it is evident from recent events in the housing market that the promise will be very difficult to fulfil given the present acute shortage of affordable housings.

In the 1988 study, the main aims were to find out, first, people's general level of satisfaction with their current housing and, second, their aspirations for future housing. Although in 1990 we are still looking into the housing aspiration aspects, there will be less concern with the level of satisfaction with present housing. The main focus in 1990 is on, first, the motivation behind home ownership; and, second, the general attitude of the public towards public housing policy. The reasons behind the choice of such research questions are twofold. First, while the society accepts a rising level of home ownership, there is a scarcity of studies on the motivation for ownership. Most research studies on housing hitherto largely concentrated on the question of allocation efficiency and equity of state rental housing instead of owner-occupied housing. Secondly, in a society which is moving from an administrative/autocratic government towards a more democratic/representative form of government, it is important to know how people really feel about one of the most important areas of public policy – housing, one which invariably induces controversy and one which always has a great impact on people's livelihood.

The Social Division of Housing

While societies all over the world distinguish themselves through their different built environments, the basic element which governs the format of their housing scenarios is largely similar. Social division of housing resources within a certain society is invariably a question of the tension between the size of the population which live in the public housing and those who live in private housing. In other words, it is about the distribution of tenure between various types of housing (Logan and Molotch, 1987).

Hong Kong has always been hailed as having the second largest public housing programme in the world (second to Singapore) with 40.5 per cent (2.2m. in 1991) of the population living in public rental housing. However, in comparison with census data in 1981 (38.9 per cent), the rate of expansion of public rental housing has been stabilized at the 35-40 per cent level of the total housing stock. In other words, although there are actual increases in the housing stock with respect to other types of living quarters, the overall share of public rental housing has remained more or less the same for the past decade, despite continual pledges from the government in policy statements that the government is committed to providing more affordable public rental units for lower income groups. The major area of development, however, lies in the development of the Home Ownership Scheme, which currently houses 7.5 per cent (0.4m. in 1991) of the population. The Home Ownership Scheme increased from a mere 0.7 per cent of the housing stock in 1981 to 7.7 per cent in 1991. Each year the Housing Authority produces on the average 10,000 Home Ownership Scheme units for application by tenants in public rental housing as well as for other applicants who meet the income criteria. Oversubscription is always the case during each sale, demonstrating a continual high demand for this type of accommodation. While there were complaints from the public in 1990 and 1991 about price increases in Home Ownership flats as well as the principles behind price-setting (prices were set at a fraction of the current

market value of flats in the private sector), all flats quickly sold out in most cases. The rest of the population live in private and temporary housing (51 per cent), largely comprising owner-occupiers (42.6 per cent) and the rest are private tenants. Private rental accommodations (estimated to be about 14 per cent of all housing) range from squatter settlements in Shau Kei Wan, to mammoth middle class private developments in Taikooshing, to expansive condominiums in the Mid-levels (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2).

Table 3.1 Population by Type of Housing (%)

Type of housing	1981	1986	1991
Public rental housing	38.9	40.8	40.5
Home ownership estates	0.6	4.1	7.5
Private housing (ownership & rental)	51.2	47.4	47.4
Temporary housing	8.5	6.7	3.6
Institutions	0.8	1.0	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Census and Statistics Department, 1992.

Table 3.2 Domestic Households by Tenure (%)

Tenure	1981	1986	1991
Owner-occupier	27.9	35.1	42.6
Sole-tenant	44.0	45.4	45.6
Co-tenant	5.6	5.9	4.0
Main tenant	3.9	1.7	0.8
Sub-tenant	11.7	5.1	2.6
Rent free	2.5	2.2	1.1
Provided by employer	4.4	4.6	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Census and Statistics Department, 1992.

Level of Satisfaction with Current Housing Conditions

In the 1988 study, it was found that while respondents were basically satisfied with their current housing conditions, there were areas, such as the size of flat, the kitchen and toilet facilities, noise pollution and the general environmental qualities of the house, which needed improvement. More than half of the respondents indicated that they were largely satisfied or ready to put up with their current living environment, with positive expectations for future improvements.

As stated earlier, although it is not the purpose of this study to look into the detailed level of satisfaction, our general findings, as far as housing satisfaction was concerned, were similar to the 1988 study: our respondents were again largely satisfied with their current housing and living conditions. Some 45.3 per cent of the respondents suggested that they were satisfied with their current living conditions (e.g., lighting, construction quality, toilet and kitchen facilities, etc.); while only 20.3 per cent suggested that they were not satisfied. When asked whether they were generally satisfied with the housing situation (e.g., house price, supply, affordability, space per person, etc.) in Hong Kong, it seemed that slightly more respondents (31.1 per cent) were dissatisfied with the current housing situation in general; only 26.3 per cent being satisfied. Our findings illustrated most appropriately the sort of dilemma faced by our respondents, that on the one hand they were trying to make a meaningful and satisfying life out of their crowded living environment, on the other hand they were seeking in a positive manner to improve their own housing positions, reflecting the kind of vibrant survival spirit the city has banked on so far for its development (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Satisfaction with Housing Situation and Living Conditions (%)

	Housing situation	Living conditions
Very dissatisfied	2.8	2.5
Dissatisfied	28.3	17.8
Average	33.8	33.8
Satisfied	25.8	40.8
Very satisfied	0.5	4.5
Don't know	8.3	0.3
No answer	0.5	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0
(N)	(400)	(400)

Note: Housing situation = house price, supply, affordability, etc.
Housing conditions = lighting, construction quality, toilet/kitchen facilities, etc.

Housing Aspirations and the Motivation to Own

In most western cities, the development of the urban form is invariably a function of land supply, the housing market, and state intervention in the form of urban planning control and state social housing. Nonetheless, fundamental to the relationship between these variables lie the people's needs and aspirations as regards housing. Hence, in order to understand the dynamics of a certain housing scenario at a certain stage of economic development, it is important to know how people come to regard their current housing positions and what changes they desire. In the 1988 study, we discovered an across-the-board high motivation for home ownership (75.6 per cent for private housing and 13.6 per cent for government Home Ownership Scheme). The shortcoming of the 1988 findings was that we did not explore the reasons for such a high motivation for ownership.

In the current study, we again probed the aspirations for home ownership, but augmenting it by comparison with the distribution of tenure and the motivation to own. It was discovered that although the percentage of aspirations for ownership dropped slightly when compared with 1988 findings (see Lau *et al.*, 1991), it still ranked as the highest aspiration (see Table 3.6). The distribution of tenure of our respondents highly resembled the findings of the 1991 Census (see Tables 3.2 and 3.4), indicating to a certain extent, the reliability of our sampling method and further confirming the growing trend in owner-occupation (Table 3.2). The interesting finding is the motivation to own. Respondents who indicated a preference for home ownership were asked their reasons. Contrary to the common belief in Hong Kong that people in all walks of life would gamble their money in property, 42.5 per cent indicated that they bought their house because that was the only way to meet their housing needs. Only 12.6 per cent suggested that their prime motivation was for investment and financial security. Also few people indicated that ownership was one of their major aims (11.4 per cent). While one might expect that most people buy their houses under the influence of more than one factor, our study sought to identify the most important factor. Our findings in housing motivation prompted at least one policy point: that there is a possibility that high motivation for owner-occupation might be a result of limited housing alternatives rather than a genuine choice of housing as experienced in the growth of home ownership in some western societies (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.4 Tenure Distribution

Tenure	%	(1991 Census)
Owner-occupier	41.8	(42.6)
Sole tenant and Co-tenant	50.0	(49.6)
Room sub-letting	6.0	—
Bed sub-letting	0.0	—
Others	2.2	—
Total	100.0	
(N)	(400)	

Table 3.5 Motivation for Home Ownership (%)

Ownership as one of the major life goals	11.4
Ownership for investment and financial security	12.6
Ownership as the only way to meet housing needs	42.5
Indifference to ownership or tenancy because of similar monthly financial payments	16.2
Others	1.8
Don't know	7.2
No answer and not applicable	8.3
Total	100.0
(N)	(400)

Table 3.6 Housing Aspirations

If given chance and ability would desire to have	%
Owner occupation	65.9
Renting in private market	2.8
Public rental housing	8.3
Government Home Ownership Scheme	12.0
Government rental units for sale	2.8
Living quarters provided free by employers	0.3
Others	7.9
Total	100.0
(N)	(400)

Factors Affecting Housing Mobility/Choice

When someone decides to move house the first question is usually what tenure choice should be made? However, once this question is settled, there are still a host of factors to be considered before one actually decides to rent/buy a certain house. These include the location of the house, shopping facilities and schools around. In recent years, people in Hong Kong have been keen to live in large private housing developments, such as Taikooshing and Meifoo Estates, where huge modern shopping cum recreational facilities are within walking distance or within a large building complex. In our study a host of these factors were presented for respondents to select for relative importance. It turned out that most respondents considered (1) transport and location convenience; (2) quality of living environment; (3) house prices; (4) public security; and (5) size of flat as the most important factors when deciding to move. Contrary to common belief, respondents did not seem to attach too much importance to factors such as kindergarten facilities, closeness to relatives, *fung shui*, etc. (see

Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 Factors to be Considered when Moving House/Buying Property (%)

	No	Yes
Location and transport	37.0	63.0
Living environment	44.8	55.2
Distance from downtown	82.8	17.2
Shopping facilities	86.5	13.5
Proximity to schools	83.3	16.7
Proximity to relatives	92.8	7.2
Proximity to workplace	83.0	17.0
Proximity to child care or kindergarten facilities	96.8	3.2
View from the house	88.5	11.5
Fung shui/direction	94.5	5.5
House price	69.3	30.7
Size of house	70.8	29.2
Recreational facilities	89.5	10.5
Public order	66.8	33.2
Quietness of environment	75.5	24.5
Others	97.8	2.2
Don't know	97.7	2.3
No answer	97.2	2.8

Tenure, Social Stratification and Labour Market Position

The phenomenal growth of home ownership in post-war years in western industrial economies have prompted many social scientists to study the relationship between owners and non-owners of property in a society. The idea is that property ownership by households represents a divergence in access to financial resources and life chances as a result of appreciation of asset values. Good timing of the entrance into the property market make a good deal of difference in life chances for two households buying

property at different times; the difference in life chances is even more acute between owner and tenant (Saunders, 1990). In recent years, Hong Kong has experienced an extraordinary growth in house prices and asset values. While it is beyond the scope of the current survey to go into the actual impact of the income distribution on class and status, we did probe the relationship between self-perceived social class and tenure choice. It was found that a higher percentage of owner-occupiers existed in the middle and upper class (59.9 per cent and 80 per cent respectively), while only a relatively smaller percentage of respondents in the lower class were owner-occupiers (35.8 per cent). The relationship between tenure and self-perceived social stratum seems to be significant, with upper class and middle class more inclined to be home owners, and lower class more inclined to be tenants (see Table 3.8).[1]

Table 3.8 Tenure by Self-Perceived Social Class (%)

Self-perceived social class	Owned	Rented	Total	(N)
Lower class	35.8	64.2	100.0	(201)
Middle class	59.5	40.5	100.0	(126)
Upper class	80.0	20.0	100.0	(10)

The general image of a home owner is often a middle-aged professional or business manager belonging to the middle income group. Typical tenants are service and manual workers who are either in public rental housing or old urban tenements. The findings in the survey provided a more fragmented picture. While it is generally correct to say that the service and manual workers choose renting as the major tenure (75.4 per cent), we can see that for the professionals, their choice of tenure showed a certain degree of indifference (roughly the same percentage for both form of tenure). This partly confirmed our understanding that as a result

of more housing alternatives for the manager/administrator, tenure choice became more fluid and depended on other factors, such as housing allowances provided by the employers. Contrary to our general assumption that they were less able to own, clerical and related workers indicated a high degree of owner-occupation (73.8 per cent). Our findings, except for service workers, suggest that there is no clear link between labour market positions and the desire for home ownership (see Table 3.9).

Table 3.9 Tenure by Labour Market Positions (%)

	Owned	Rented	Total	(N)
Professionals	49.1	50.9	100.0	(55)
Managers/Administrators	63.3	36.7	100.0	(30)
Clerical and related workers	73.8	26.2	100.0	(42)
Sales workers	51.7	48.3	100.0	(58)
Service and manual workers	24.6	75.4	100.0	(69)

Attitudes towards Public Housing Management

Currently, about half of Hong Kong's population lives in publicly managed housing estates and the Home Ownership Scheme. While discussions are taking place as to whether public housing management should be privatized, most public housing estates are still managed and maintained by the Housing Authority, which is at present the largest estate management agency in Hong Kong (144 rental estates and 57 Home Ownership Estates). In our study we asked respondents how they felt about public housing management/maintenance in Hong Kong. Our question was generally addressed and therefore included residents of both public and non-public housing.

Our findings indicated that respondents were quite divided in their views over the management and maintenance of public housing with almost half of them giving a non-committal answer (46.8 per cent). Taking into account a considerable amount of "don't know" answers, we can only say that respondents did not hold a strong view for or against public housing management (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10 Satisfaction with Public Housing Management (%)

Very dissatisfied	2.3
Dissatisfied	18.0
Average	46.8
Satisfied	17.0
Very satisfied	1.3
Don't know	12.6
No answer	2.0
Total	100.0
(N)	(389)

When asked the reasons for dissatisfaction, a major percentage of our respondents (34.6 per cent, N=81) indicated that they were not satisfied with maintenance quality and the condition of environmental hygiene. For those who were satisfied with public housing management, their major reason was that the quality of management was considered good (69.9 per cent, N=73). Our findings suggested that to obtain a clearer picture we should examine more closely at the quality of management at a regional or district level. Segmentation on levels of satisfaction apparently occurs between various housing estates and between districts.

Proposal to Sell Public Rental Housing to Sitting Tenants

One of the most controversial developments in the field of public housing in the period under study was the proposal by the Hous-

ing Authority to sell some of the newer public rental housing units to sitting tenants. The purposes of the policy were, on the one hand, to satisfy the aspiring needs for owner-occupation; and on the other, to generate revenue for the now financially-independent Housing Authority. The initial proposal was to sell 7,000 housing units of less than six years old, distributed within seven rental housing estates in July 1991. The prices of these rental flats were initially set at 35 per cent of comparative market values of properties within the district where the flats were located. Many housing-related pressure groups strongly opposed this method of pricing, and suggested that a fair price would be one that was set against the actual construction costs. At the time of writing up this research, it was already known that the proposal was temporary stalled for policy review by the government because of the extremely poor response to the proposal by sitting tenants. Since the fieldwork for this research was done in the summer of 1990, we also asked several questions about this proposal in order to find out how our respondents generally felt about it.

We found that almost half of our respondents (42.8 per cent, N=400) indicated that they would not buy these rental flats for a variety of reasons. The most significant reasons were: (1) public housing flats are too small; (2) their facilities and construction standard are worse than private housing; and (3) the management and maintenance of public housings are poor. In the "other reasons," the most important one was affordability. Some tenants suggested that since some of their family members already owned private properties elsewhere, their interests in buying their rental flats were thus lessened (see Table 3.11).

For the minority who indicated an interest to buy (18.5 per cent, N=400), the major reasons were: (1) new public housing is now of much better quality; (2) one must buy a flat eventually, no matter whether it is public or private (see Table 3.12). The findings indicated that the reasons for not buying were quite fragmented, and price level was not the sole determining factor. The size and construction quality of public housing in general were also important factors affecting the decision to buy.

Table 3.11 Reasons for Not Buying Public Rental Units (%)

Public housing units too small	16.4
Construction not as good as private housing	19.3
Public housing should not be sold	5.3
Too many restrictions for resale	11.7
Public housing conveys a lower class feelings	7.6
Poor management and maintenance	13.5
Others	39.2
Don't know	5.8
No answer	3.5
(N)	(171)

Table 3.12 Reasons for Buying Public Rental Units (%)

New public housings are good quality	63.5
Private housings and public housings are really not much different	23.0
Reasonable standard of facilities	9.5
Rental units are similar to HOS in many ways	2.7
One can treat public housing as a long term investment	12.2
Reasonable standard of management and maintenance	2.7
Others	5.4
Don't know	4.1
(N)	(73)

Attitudes to Loan Scheme for Down-payment for Housing in Private Market

As one of the major policy recommendations in the 1987 Long Term Housing Strategy, the government proposed a loan scheme for sitting tenants to pay for down-payment if they wanted to buy their house in the private market. It was an interest-free loan with the initial loan amount set at $70,000 in 1988. The loan amount was later revised several times in accordance with changing house prices. The purpose of the policy was to provide a scheme to attract well-off public housing tenants to surrender their rental units for people on the waiting list. Likewise, the subsidies involved in a household loan were considered to be lower than the construction of an additional rental unit or Home Ownership Scheme unit. At the time of writing up this research, the Loan Scheme was already in its third year of operation. The scheme received, on the whole, a rather unenthusiastic response from sitting tenants.

We found, not too surprisingly, that a majority of respondents indicated that they were not interested in the scheme (43.3 per cent, N=400). A significant percentage gave a non-committal answer (23.5 per cent). Only a small percentage (15.8 per cent) indicated that they would apply for the scheme. For those who did not intend to join the scheme, their main reasons were: (1) there were too many restraints in the scheme; and (2) respondents did not want to borrow money from the government. Others felt that either they could not afford the monthly mortgage repayment, or that they were not eligible to apply (see Table 3.13).

Table 3.13 Reasons for Not Favouring Housing Loan Scheme (%)

Loan amount too low	5.8
Too many restrictons in application	20.8
Don't want to borrow money from government	21.4
Unaffordable	9.2
Unqualified	7.5
Already owning a house	5.2
Very satisfied with current status, no incentive to move	7.5
Others	9.8
Don't know	6.9
No answer	5.8
(N)	(173)

With the phenomenal upsurge in house prices in 1991 as well as the subsequent government intervention through stamp duty increase and the setting of a 70 per cent mortgage limit by the banks, the objective of the Loan Scheme was fast becoming untenable. It would seem, as far as our findings are concerned, that a comprehensive review, not only of this scheme in particular, but of the whole policy of public housing supply and demand, would merit further review by the government.

Concluding Remarks

Our survey indicated a housing scenario which only differed incrementally from what we knew in the 1988 Social Indicators Study. While generally satisfied with their current living conditions, respondents were always on the look-out for ways and means to improve their housing. A majority opted for home ownership, apparently not so much for investment or speculation, or that home ownership was one of their prime goals, but because respondents found very few housing alternatives in Hong Kong. As long as there is a long waiting list for public rental housing,

and limited access to the Home Ownership Scheme, the only way to resolve housing problem is to buy from the open market. Subsequent price appreciations only further fuelled the motivation to own, but should not be considered as the prime reason. The respondents' attitude to the proposal to sell public rental units was discouraging. The same applies to the Home Loan Scheme. Our findings suggest that a housing policy which tries to promote home ownership largely through the private market is questionable. There must be much clearer understanding on the relationship between the public housing sector and the private housing sector so as to achieve a better balance or mix of private and public housing.

Social Welfare

In the 1988 Social Indicators Study we sought to explore answers to three questions. These were: (1) What was the public's attitude to social welfare? (2) How satisfied was the public with the current welfare system? (3) How did people think welfare should be financed? (Lau *et al.*, 1991:76-77) Our findings depicted a welfare scenario which was characterized by a rising level of expectations in welfare provisions, a dissatisfaction with current welfare services, and a reluctance to see welfare increases coming from tax increases. While the current study looked for changes in answers to the above questions, the aim of this study was twofold. First, to see what were the basic values/attitudes of respondents on welfare. Second, to see what actually were people's welfare priorities? The theoretical base of the first question lies in the understanding that modern western welfare system had its genesis in voluntary charity and mutual aid. It was the exercise of individual altruistic care and concern for the worse-off in an institutional/organized form that led to the development of a welfare system. It is often argued that when mutual care and mutual aids are fully realized through a collectivity, when people regard care and concern from the state as a matter of right, and when welfare is no longer merely

considered as helping the poorest, that we are beginning to lay the foundation of a welfare state (Titmuss, 1974). While no one would regard Hong Kong as a welfare state and few would agree that we should be heading for one, we want to know what people's changing attitudes to welfare are at a time of rapid social and political change? How will these changes affect welfare policy and welfare allocations? What should be our priority? Thus far, social welfare decision-makings have been largely dominated by professionals and administrators. At a time when our political system is gradually changing from an administrative to a more representative type of government, it is important to know how people feel about the welfare system and what the future priorities should be?

Attitudes to Welfare

While the scope and finance of social welfare in Hong Kong has expanded considerably over the past two decades, one thing which remains unchanged is the residual nature of the social welfare service. Social welfare services are meant to help those who are least able to help themselves. No one should depend on the welfare system for more than is necessary. In the period under study, the government published the controversial White Paper: "Social Welfare into the 1990s and Beyond." For the first time in welfare policy, the government recognised that the needs and demand for social welfare services are now more sophisticated and complex, and that the welfare system must continue to be developed to cater for these needs. In our study we asked our respondents how they felt about social welfare in order to detect whether socio-economic changes had led also to changes in welfare values. We found that a substantial majority of respondents (44 per cent, N=400) thought that the welfare service should go to the most needy while a significant percentage indicated that welfare should be a citizen's basic right (34 per cent). Only a very small percentage thought that welfare should be charity (3.5 per cent). Our findings confirmed previous findings in 1988 that while

the prevailing climate for welfare was still very much residual, there is a growing number within the society who relates welfare to citizens' rights and state responsibility.

When translating attitudes to welfare into opinions, our findings further confirmed the above observations. A clear majority of respondents (64.1 per cent) disagreed that social welfare in Hong Kong was already excessive and too much of a burden. Likewise, a substantial majority (45.8 per cent) agreed that social welfare was too meagre and was beginning to affect the livelihood of the lower social class. Many (48.3 per cent) disagreed that social welfare would itself have a harmful effect on the economy and in fact a clear majority (58.8 per cent) indicated that social welfare would lead to better labour productivity. There was only a fairly small percentage of non-committal answers (average 15 per cent) (see Table 3.14).

Table 3.14 Attitudes to Social Welfare (%)

	A	B	C	D
Strongly disagree	3.8	0.0	1.5	0.0
Disagree	60.3	24.3	46.8	10.5
Depends	15.0	17.8	15.8	15.5
Agree	10.5	43.8	18.8	55.0
Strongly agree	0.0	2.0	0.3	3.8
Don't know	9.5	11.8	16.0	14.3
No answer	0.9	0.3	0.8	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(N)	(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)

A = "Too much welfare has already created a burden on the government as well as dependency among the people."
B = "Welfare is so meagre that it is creating undue hardship for the lower class."
C = "Too much welfare would be harmful to the running of the economy."
D = "A sound welfare system should promote labour productivity."

Having an opinion on welfare is one thing; applying for welfare for oneself or one's family is another matter. Chinese culture emphasizes mutual help within the family and they rarely call on the state for help. Social welfare professionals used to complain that many people do not ask for help because firstly, they do not know how to, and secondly, they are afraid of the possible social stigma that comes with receiving government help. In our study, we sought to find out whether respondents would seek help from the welfare system if they did have a problem. Our findings indicated that a significant percentage was ready to apply for social welfare, the highest percentage being in the area of social security. This finding is partly significant in the sense that social security already comprised 70 per cent of the total welfare budget. If that is really the welfare priority, should we continue to depend on the current system of social security, or should new forms of income maintenance be devised to meet people's rising needs (see Table 3.15)?

Table 3.15 Readiness to Apply for Welfare Services (%)

	Family service	Children's and youth service	Service for the elderly	Rehabilitation service	Community development service	Social security
1	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0
2	21.5	16.7	16.1	14.3	12.9	9.3
3	22.6	21.2	18.5	15.7	19.3	15.0
4	39.0	45.2	50.9	52.2	49.6	57.9
5	0.8	0.8	3.2	2.2	1.8	3.1
8	12.1	12.4	8.7	11.3	13.1	11.1
9	3.6	3.6	2.3	4.0	3.3	3.6
Total	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(N)	(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)

1 Extremely unwilling 2 Unwilling 3 Depends 4 Willing
5 Extremely willing 8 Don't know 9 No answer

Priority for Welfare

When we asked our respondents whether they considered our welfare services sufficient, a significant percentage indicated that it was insufficient (41.3 per cent). A large percentage of respondents gave a non-committal answer (32.8 per cent) while only a small percentage suggested that our welfare services were sufficient (14.8 per cent). The general picture confirmed our previous findings that many respondents felt that our current social welfare provisions were insufficient. But what exactly is insufficiency? Where welfare needs are concerned this is indeed a difficult question. While this research did not tackle this question, its answer might be partly reflected in another question: what is the priority area requiring urgent development (see Table 3.16)? Our respondents felt that the three services which needed urgent development were: (1) the service for the elderly; (2) children's and youth service; and (3) social security. Our findings largely reflected the general feelings of the community on the inadequacy of the captioned social welfare services, particularly the care of the elderly. The issue of income protection and care for the elderly has always been high on Hong Kong's welfare agenda and the same applies to the issue of the Central Provident Fund, which is still a controversial social policy issue within the legislature.

Table 3.16 Welfare Priority (%)

Family service	16.3
Children's and youth service	34.5
Service for the elderly	47.3
Rehabilitation service	16.8
Community development	19.8
Social security	29.0
Others	0.8
Don't know	6.0
No answer	1.5
(N)	(400)

Financing of Social Welfare

Social welfare financing in Hong Kong generally comes from two major sources: namely (1) government expenditure on social welfare which amounted to $4,946 million in 1990-91 (98 per cent of the total welfare resources); and (2) funding raised by the Community Chest which amounted to $88 million (2 per cent of the total welfare resources). A great proportion of the government budget (71 per cent) is spent in social security provisions while only a relatively small percentage is spent on actual social welfare services (29 per cent). From this rough distribution, we can see that if we were to increase the welfare cake, the only substantial increase should come from an increase in government revenues, either through a restructuring of government expenses or an increase in taxation. It would be quite unnatural to think that an increase in welfare resources should come from the Community Chest since contributions were entirely on a voluntary basis. For the purpose of our research, we tried to find out whether people were ready to pay more tax for more welfare.

It was interesting to note that a significant majority (48.8 per cent, N=400) disagreed with tax increases to generate more welfare resources, while a relatively smaller percentage (26.6 per cent) agreed to raise tax for welfare. This is different from the findings of the 1988 study where 32 per cent agreed while 36.6 per cent disagreed. Our findings pointed to a possible value dilemma in social welfare. Although aspiring for better and more welfare, respondents were reluctant to pay more tax for it. In this case, the remaining possibilities for increasing welfare resources would be either through a restructuring of government expenditures (more welfare, less non-welfare expenditure) or a revision of fiscal policy (which could mean a change of tax base from a flat rate to a progressive rate). From a social policy perspective, the latter method seems preferable since it carries an income redistribution effect. The current study did not look into this level of welfare financing choice, but again it would be interesting to explore further in welfare financing in the next level of social indicators

inquiry.

Attitudes to Social Workers

Concomitant with the development of the social welfare system in Hong Kong is the development of the social work profession. Formal social work training started as early as the 1950s at the University of Hong Kong and currently almost all recognised tertiary educational institutions provide social work training ranging from certificate to doctoral level studies. At present there are roughly 4,200 social workers, 82 per cent of whom have some formal social work training. It is, therefore, possible to say that a majority of social welfare services are being delivered by professionally-trained social workers. We tried to find out how respondents felt about the services of social workers in general (see Table 3.17). Do the public think that social workers can really help to solve their personal/family problems?

Table 3.17 "Can social workers help solve problems?" (%)

Impossible	1.3
Not very possible	12.0
Depending on the situation	45.0
Possible	30.0
Very possible	0.3
Don't know	10.8
No answer	0.8
Total	100.0
(N)	(400)

In the survey, we found that a significant percentage (30.3 per cent) felt that social workers could help people to resolve their problems while a relatively small percentage (13.3 per cent) were dissatisfied with the services of social workers. Compared with

the findings of the 1988 study, there was a reduction in the percentage for both ends (47 per cent for satisfied and 23.9 per cent for dissatisfied). The most significant changes lie in non-committal answers, where 45 per cent of respondents suggested that the level of satisfaction had to depend on the situation. The picture, therefore, was rather fragmented and unclear. What we can say is that: while a significant percentage of respondents was satisfied with the service of social workers, we were less certain about respondents' attitudes to social workers compared to the 1988 study. For the past few years, the profession has had a severe manpower shortage. As a result, it creates immense strains on the work-load and morale of social workers. This might somehow affect the quality of their work and therefore how service recipients found them.

Concluding Remarks

On the whole, the survey on social welfare again depicted a scenario where respondents were aspiring for more social welfare. Respondents' attitudes to social welfare were by and large positive and they were of the opinion that better welfare would mean better labour productivity. Nonetheless, when coming to welfare finance, respondents tended to disagree with tax increase as a policy instrument. Most respondents thought that care for the elderly, children's and youth service, and social security should receive the most priority for further development. In the run-up to the post-1997 era, the most important issue to be tackled is how to generate sufficient social welfare resources for an aspiring population and a more complex and sophisticated society.

Note

1. In our questionnaire interview, respondents are not guided as to the definitions of social class. They are requested to state their class positions according to a 3-tier system and subject to their common sense interpretation of what class they belong to.

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4

Mass Communication

Consumption and Evaluation

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Defining communication indicators as indexes of messages as well as the state of production, distribution and reception of messages, in an earlier work we pooled indicators from government-sponsored surveys, commercial research and academic studies in an effort to map communication in Hong Kong (Chan and Lee, 1992). The emphasis of our previous work is on what is usually referred to as the objective indicators which are more related to the production and distribution of messages. It pertains more to changes in the media environment and the media structure than with the audience's media exposure and preferences.

Although independent, this study can also be treated as a sequel or complement to our previous work. In this chapter we want to centre on the indicators related to the reception of messages. The major focus is on the audience's consumption and evaluation of mass media. We shall also cover media penetration which is closely related to the consumption of mass communica-

tion.

This chapter is based on data obtained from a survey of a representative sample of the Hong Kong population aged 18 and above in 1990-1991. For a description of the methodology involved, readers can consult Chapter 11.

Media Penetration

Radio, television and telephone are almost universally owned in Hong Kong. As shown in Table 4.1, a sizeable portion of Hong Kong's households possessed more than one radio, television and telephone equipment. This is particularly true for radio, more than one set being owned by over half (51.6 per cent) of the households. About one-fifth of the households (23.2 per cent) had more than one television set. The proportion of households owning more than one telephone was 20.1 per cent. It is expected that the trend towards possessing multiple sets of a medium in a household will continue in the years to come.

Table 4.1 Media Penetration per Household (%)

Media	0	1	2	Over 2	Total	Average per household
Television	1.5	75.3	20.1	3.1	100.0	1.26
Radio	3.4	45.0	27.1	24.5	100.0	1.93
VCR	26.6	67.1	5.8	0.4	99.9	0.81
Video camera	97.3	2.4	0.2	0.0	99.9	0.03
Telephone	2.7	77.2	16.5	3.6	100.0	1.24
Personal computer	77.7	21.1	0.7	0.6	100.1	0.24
Facsimile	96.6	3.4	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.03

(N = 413)

In 1990-1991 when this survey was done, the video cassette recorder (VCR) had already penetrated 73.3 per cent of the households. Some 6 per cent of the households even possessed more than one VCR. As less than 3 per cent of the households possessed a video camera, watching home-made movies had not yet become a common practice. The majority of the population use VCR mainly for watching rented video films and pre-recorded programmes (Chan and Lee, 1992).

The facsimile is not common in private households (3.4 per cent). Having registered a phenomenal growth to 83,500 in 1989, facsimiles appear to be used mainly as office equipment at present (HK Telecom International Ltd., 1990).

The personal computer (PC) is becoming a very influential medium all over the world. It is making its impact felt in Hong Kong as well. About a quarter of the respondents (22.4 per cent) had access to a PC at home in 1990-1991. The PC can be used for educational, entertaining, occupational and communication purposes. It remains to be studied what exactly the PC is used for in Hong Kong.

Cross-tabulation shows that media penetration is in general contingent upon the household income of the respondent. The more affluent families are more likely to own a video camera, PC, facsimile and to possess more than one television, radio and VCR.[1] For instance, 44.1 per cent of families with a monthly household income of above HK$25,000 possessed at least one PC whereas only 20.0 per cent of those with a household income between HK$10,000 and HK$14,999 had a computer. An even lower proportion of the worse-off families owned this information technology.

Consumption of Mass Communication

Our study finds that mass communication has an important place in Hong Kong people's leisure. Of the five most frequent leisure activities, three are related to mass media. Watching television is

the most frequent activity (27.2 per cent), cinema-going the second (8.6 per cent) and reading the fifth (5.4 per cent), as compared with shopping (8.1 per cent) and staying with family (5.9 per cent). Radio, newspapers and magazines appear to have much less entertainment value. Only 2.0 per cent of the people named radio and 3.4 per cent named newspapers and magazines as the most frequent leisure activities.[2] We shall examine the respondents' use of each medium in greater detail in the following sections.

Television

Television is by far the most popular medium. As indicated in Table 4.2, the respondents spent as much as 3.25 hours watching television on an average day. More than half the people (67.3 per cent) watched television for over two hours each day, and only a negligible fraction (2.2 per cent) watched no television at all. People watched about the same amount of television on weekdays and weekends. The use of television is not statistically related to people's sex, age, education and household income, indicating that television is a medium for virtually everyone.

Table 4.2 Average Time Spent Daily on Media (%)

Media	No time	.1-.5 hour	.6-1 hour	1.1-2 hours	2.1-3 hours	>3 hours	Total	Mean time per day
Television	2.2	2.4	6.3	21.8	20.6	46.7	100.0	3'16"
Newspapers	15.7	30.0	29.5	21.3	3.2	0.2	99.9	56"
Radio	35.4	12.1	12.3	15.0	6.8	18.4	100.0	1'55"
Magazines	47.5	45.3	4.8	2.2	0.2	0.0	100.0	12"
Books	46.5	30.5	11.6	8.2	2.4	0.7	99.9	22"
Rental Video	60.5	10.2	13.1	12.8	2.4	1.0	100.0	27"
(N = 413)								

When the respondents were asked how often they watched each of the four television channels in Hong Kong, *TVB Jade* emerged as the most-watched channel, with 81.8 per cent saying that they watched it frequently. As indicated in Table 4.3, the corresponding proportions for *ATV Home*, *TVB Pearl* and *ATV World* were 31.6 per cent, 14.3 per cent and 8.6 per cent respectively. While the ratings of an individual channel may fluctuate over time, a notable pattern is the overwhelming popularity of the Cantonese television channels over English ones. The exposure to Cantonese channels is generally not statistically related to the respondents' demographic variables like sex, age, education and household income. However, watching English channels is more often associated with the male, the younger, the more educated and the more affluent.[3] As with the exposure to *RTHK-TV*, it is found to vary positively with the respondents' age and negatively with their education and household income.[4]

Table 4.3 Proportions of Respondents Claiming Frequent Exposure to Various Media (%)

	Media	%	(N)
Television	*TVB Jade*	81.8	(412)
	ATV Home	31.6	(412)
	TVB Pearl	14.3	(411)
	ATV World	8.6	(409)
	RTHK-TV	42.0	(409)
Radio	*RTHK*	37.7	(401)
	Commercial Radio	22.4	(401)
Newspapers	*Oriental Daily*	23.5	(413)
	Sing Pao	15.5	(413)
	Ming Pao	12.6	(413)
	Tin Tin Daily	12.3	(413)
	Hong Kong Daily News	7.0	(413)
Movies	Local productions	30.6	(403)
	Western productions	20.3	(404)

Radio

As shown in Table 4.2, while the respondents spent a daily average of about two hours on radio, 35.4 per cent of them did not listen to radio at all. Like television, radio listening is found to be statistically independent of people's sex, age, education and household income. A cross-tabulation with people's occupation not shown here finds that production and sales workers are the most ardent listeners. This is perhaps because radios are allowed in some factories and shops.

RTHK has seven channels whereas Commercial Radio (CR) has only three channels. As indicated in Table 4.3, 37.7 per cent of the respondents said that they listened to RTHK frequently. The corresponding proportion for CR was 22.4 per cent. The exposure to either radio station as a whole does not appear to be systematically related to the respondents' sex, age, education and household income.

Newspapers

As Table 4.2 shows, the respondents spent an average of 56 minutes each day reading a newspaper. While 35.4 per cent of the respondents did not turn on the radio throughout the day, only 15.7 per cent said they did not read any newspaper. In other words, there were more newspaper readers than radio listeners. The latter, however, spent more time listening to the radio, an average of two hours per day, than reading a newspaper.

Newspaper reading is found to be associated more often with the male and the more educated.[5] A cross-tabulation between newspaper reading and age indicates that different age groups differ significantly from one another, with the group aged 35-49 being the most ardent readers, followed by the group aged 25-34.[6] Those older than 49 and those younger than 25 spent less time reading a newspaper. Newspaper reading is statistically unrelated to people's household income.

Hong Kong has more than ten serious daily newspapers, yet

only five stood out as the most-often read newspaper among the respondents. As listed in descending order in Table 4.3, they were: the *Oriental Daily* (23.5 per cent), *Sing Pao* (15.5 per cent), *Ming Pao* (12.6 per cent), *Tin Tin Daily* (12.3 per cent) and the *Hong Kong Daily News* (7.0 per cent). The *Hong Kong Economic Journal*, noted for its in-depth analyses and influence among the Hong Kong elites, was cited by 2.7 per cent of the respondents as their most-read newspaper. The most-read English newspaper was the influential *South China Morning Post* (3.1 per cent).

Table 4.4 shows how frequently Hong Kong people read certain types of newspaper contents. Local news is frequently read by three-quarters (75.8 per cent) of the respondents, and is the most popular. This is by no means a surprise as readers often find local news more relevant and sometimes more emotionally appealing. After all, local news always receives heavier coverage. While

Table 4.4 Exposure to Newspaper Contents (%)

Content	Very infrequent	Infrequent	Some-times	Frequent	Very frequent	Total	(N)
Local news	4.5	1.6	18.2	8.2	67.6	100.1	(380)
Foreign news	10.0	2.9	26.6	5.5	55.0	100.0	(380)
China news	11.9	5.6	31.0	6.1	45.4	100.0	(377)
Entertainment news	13.5	3.2	35.8	8.5	39.0	100.0	(377)
Financial news	24.2	10.1	27.7	5.1	33.0	100.1	(376)
Editorials	20.4	4.8	40.1	5.0	29.7	100.0	(377)
Special features	20.3	4.7	37.0	9.3	28.8	100.1	(365)
Sports news	25.5	6.6	34.8	5.1	27.9	99.9	(376)
Political commentaries	24.9	9.1	34.5	5.3	26.2	100.0	(374)
Essays	33.8	5.6	31.6	6.4	22.6	100.0	(376)
Horse-racing	54.7	5.1	18.6	3.5	18.1	100.0	(371)
Fiction	44.5	7.8	24.5	5.1	18.1	100.0	(371)
Letters to the editor	49.1	8.6	25.5	2.7	14.2	100.1	(373)

foreign news often ranks low in popularity all over the world, as many as 60.5 per cent of Hong Kong people read foreign news frequently. The need for foreign news is perhaps a result of Hong Kong's heavy dependency on world trade and of its position as a world financial and transportation centre. What happens in other parts of the world usually has repercussions in Hong Kong. By the same token, Hong Kong people read quite a lot of news about China, with more than half of the respondents doing so on a frequent basis (51.5 per cent).

Trailing closely behind China news in popularity is entertainment news which is gossip or information about the television, movie, radio and pop music circles. As many as 47.5 per cent admitted that they frequently read entertainment news.

As if living up to its image as a financial centre, a sizeable portion of the population frequently read financial news (38.1 per cent). However, it should be noted that an approximately equal percentage of people seldom read this relatively specialized information (35.3 per cent). This pattern of content consumption, with the frequent readers amounting to about one-third of the respondents and approximating the non-readers in number, applies to editorials, special features, sports news, political commentaries and essays.

Sex is found to relate statistically with the respondents' exposure to various newspaper contents. Men more often than women read local news, foreign news, China news, editorials, political commentaries, sports news, financial news and horse-racing tips.[7] While the respondents' exposure to essays, fiction and special features is not statistically related to their sex, entertainment news and letters to the editor are more popular among women.[8]

In general, age is not statistically associated with what the respondents read in newspapers. The respondents' education and household income tend to be positively associated with the exposure to foreign news, political commentaries and financial news.[9] The respondents' education and household income are not statistically related to their consumption of local news, entertainment news, essays, fiction and letters to the editor.

Books and Magazines

As shown in Table 4.2, books and magazines were much less popular among the respondents who read them for a daily average of only 22 minutes and 12 minutes respectively. About half of the respondents did not spend any time on either medium.

While magazine reading is not statistically related to gender, it is closely linked with other demographic variables. In general, the more enthusiastic magazine readers are the younger, the more educated and the more affluent.[10] The sensitivity of magazine reading to age, education and household income indicates that magazines are in fact geared to the needs of more specialized sub-populations, particularly the young, educated and affluent readers. Book reading resembles magazine reading in its pattern with the respondents' sex, age, education and income.[11]

Rental Videos

Table 4.2 shows that video-cassette rental tapes constituted a source of entertainment for about 40 per cent of the population. The average time spent on rental videos daily for all the respondents was about half an hour. Assuming that a feature film measures about one hour and thirty minutes, this means that the Hong Kong people watched about two rental films per week on VCR. As we shall see below for many people in Hong Kong, the VCR has replaced the cinema as the channel of movie exposure.

The exposure to rental video is independent of sex, but is more associated with the younger, especially those below the age of 25, the moderately educated (secondary school graduates and matriculators) and the more affluent.[12]

Films

With movie exposure, instead of asking for the time spent in the cinema, we asked how many films they had seen in the month

prior to the survey. Fifty-five percent of the respondents had seen no movie at all, 17.9 per cent had seen one movie, 14.0 per cent had seen two movies and 13.1 per cent had seen more than two movies. On average, the respondents watched a movie a month, with men going to the cinema more frequently than women. It is also found that movie-going correlates negatively with the respondents' age and positively with their education and household income.

As a whole, the respondents tended to prefer local films to foreign productions. As indicated in Table 4.3, about one-third (30.6 per cent) said they frequently watched local movies whereas only about one quarter (20.3 per cent) watched foreign films. Likewise, only about one-tenth of the respondents (12.9 per cent) said that they watched local movies infrequently. The corresponding figure for foreign movies was as high as 43.1 per cent. A comparison of the correlation statistics between the respondents' exposure to local and foreign movies with their demographic characteristics find that the educated and the more affluent particularly prefer watching foreign movies to local productions.[13]

Evaluation of Mass Communication

On the whole, Hong Kong people were satisfied with the mass media. As indicated in Table 4.5, none of the major mass media had more than 15 per cent of respondents indicating dissatisfaction, except in the case of local films with which about 18 per cent of respondents expressed dissatisfaction. Chinese television in general, regardless of whether the programmes were produced by the Television Broadcast Ltd. (TVB), Asia Television Ltd. (ATV), or Radio-Television Hong Kong (RTHK), commanded over half of the audience who felt satisfied. The gratification of the Hong Kong audience with the Chinese newspapers was even more impressive. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73.8 per cent) were satisfied with their content.

Table 4.5 Satisfaction with Mass Media Content (%)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	So-so	Dis-satisfied	Very dis-satisfied	Total	(N)
TVB Jade	4.0	52.7	31.9	10.6	0.7	99.9	(404)
ATV Home	1.9	35.5	48.2	13.3	1.1	100.0	(361)
RTHK-TV	11.0	61.2	26.2	0.8	0.8	100.0	(363)
RTHK-Radio	4.0	55.2	37.8	3.0	0.0	100.0	(299)
CR	1.8	41.0	51.6	5.1	0.4	99.9	(273)
Chinese newspapers	2.8	71.0	25.1	1.1	0.0	100.0	(359)
Chinese magazines	0.7	43.3	50.7	5.3	0.0	100.0	(282)
Local films	0.3	19.1	62.5	14.2	3.9	100.0	(309)
Western films	1.0	51.4	44.8	2.1	0.7	100.0	(288)

Television

Since watching television is such an important leisure activity, we are interested in knowing what functions it fulfils for the people. As shown in Table 4.6, an overwhelming majority of people (87.8 per cent) regarded entertainment as a major function of television. To help kill time (72.1 per cent) and to increase knowledge (61.8 per cent) were the second and third most important functions of television. Contrary to some people's expectations, only about one-third of the respondents (32.7 per cent) considered television as a means of escape from unpleasant experiences.

Table 4.6 Functions of Television (%)

	Strongly agree	Agree	So-so	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	(N)
Entertainment	4.6	83.2	7.2	4.6	0.2	99.9	(411)
Knowledge	2.5	59.3	30.9	6.4	1.0	100.1	(408)
Kill time	4.4	67.7	16.3	11.6	0.0	100.0	(405)
Chat topic	1.5	55.2	24.0	19.3	0.0	100.0	(404)
Family contact	1.8	45.4	24.6	26.3	2.0	100.1	(399)
Escape	1.0	31.7	15.8	47.0	4.5	100.0	(398)

As regards the favourite Chinese television programmes, Table 4.7 shows that news programmes ranked first (26.4 per cent), followed by comedy (25.6 per cent), drama serials (17.4 per cent) and public affairs programmes (14.9 per cent). Despite the media blitz in the beauty contests sponsored by the two television stations each year, only 0.2 per cent of respondents named them as their favourite. Few people considered dubbed movies (1.7 per cent) and dubbed foreign serials (0.5 per cent) as their favourite programmes. When asked whether the dubbed foreign television programmes were better than local Chinese programmes, the proportion agreeing (38.4 per cent) was close to that disagreeing (37.3 per cent).[14] These findings suggest that the Hong Kong audience do not consider foreign programmes as their particular favourite.

Table 4.7 The Most Favourite Chinese Television Programmes

Programme variety	%
News	26.4
Comedy	25.6
Drama serials	17.4
Public affairs	14.9
Sports news	4.2
Variety shows	3.7
Dubbed Movies	1.7
Women's programmes	1.5
Talk shows	0.5
Dubbed foreign series	0.5
Beauty contests	0.2
Children's shows	0.2
Quiz and game shows	0.2
Others	2.7
Total	100.0
(N)	(402)

The audience noted some trends in television content. As indicated in Table 4.8, in contrast to some criticism on the depreciation of women's role on television, 65.7 per cent of the respondents considered that women played a more and more important role in television entertainment programmes. On the other hand, they also observed that more obscene (54.2 per cent) and violent scenes (77.0 per cent) were shown. They also considered that the drama serials were becoming less interesting. It is interesting to note that over half of the respondents (54.0 per cent) agreed that television had a bad influence on children and less than one-third disagreed (23.7 per cent).[15]

Table 4.8 Trends of Television Content (%)

	Strongly agree	Agree	So-so	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	(N)
Female role more important	2.7	63.0	24.2	9.8	0.3	100.0	(368)
Obscene scenes shown more	3.9	50.3	18.8	25.5	1.6	100.1	(384)
Violent scenes shown more	7.4	69.6	12.0	10.5	0.5	100.0	(392)
Serials became uninteresting	7.8	49.7	28.1	14.1	0.3	100.0	(398)

Probably because of this assumed negative influence of television and the noted trend of showing more sex and violence on television, over half of the respondents (55.9 per cent) agreed that the government should exercise tighter control on the content of television in Hong Kong, while less than one-third (30.7 per cent) disagreed.[16]

We cross-tabulated the result of "television trend of having more violent scenes," "television trend in having more obscene scenes" and "television having a bad influence on children" with that of "government should control television content more." All these cross-tabulations show a statistical significance, implying that there is a relationship between the endorsement of government control and the concern of television violence, sex and its negative influence on children.[17]

But the cross-tabulations between "government control" and "satisfaction with *TVB Jade*," "satisfaction with *ATV Home*" and "satisfaction with *RTHK-TV*" were all insignificant. This implies that satisfaction with television content is independent of the attitude to government control of television. The concern about the negative impact of television seems to have more to do with one's attitude to government control.

Films

Although cinema-going ranks second in the list of favourite leisure activities of Hong Kong people, Table 4.5 shows that a vast majority (62.5 per cent) felt that the quality of local productions was just average; only 19.4 per cent of them were satisfied with locally produced films. In contrast, 52.4 per cent of the people were satisfied with foreign films, and only 2.8 per cent were not satisfied. These findings indicate why the local film industry is concerned about the recent decline of cinema audiences.

We controlled the variable of "age" and found that people over 25 were more likely than those below to be dissatisfied with local films. Similarly, we found that people with an educational level above secondary were more likely than those with one below to be dissatisfied. Both findings were statistically significant.[18] These findings indicate that at present local films can attract mainly younger people with a secondary educational level or below, although the majority still feel that the quality of local films is "so-so." Household income, however, is not statistically related to satisfaction with local films.

Newspapers and Magazines

Reading a newspaper is not a popular leisure activity in Hong Kong. But most people find its content satisfactory. As indicated in Table 4.5, less than 1.5 per cent of people were dissatisfied with the content of Chinese newspapers. Table 4.9 shows the different types of newspaper content the respondents liked. The top five items in descending order are local news (79.1 per cent), foreign news (63.7 per cent), news of China (55.5 per cent), entertainment news (55.5 per cent) and special features (54.7 per cent). Despite the popularity of horse-racing in Hong Kong and the emphasis that a large number of newspapers place on horse-racing tips, only 22.2 per cent of people said they liked it.

Magazines in Hong Kong do not play an important role in people's leisure, nor in the provision of news. Very few people

were dissatisfied with their contents (5.3 per cent). About half of the respondents expressed satisfaction (44.0 per cent).

Table 4.9 Favourite Newspaper Content (%)

	Like very much	Like	So-so	Dislike	Dislike very much	Total	(N)
Foreign news	8.2	55.5	29.4	5.8	1.1	100.0	(364)
Local news	8.4	70.7	19.0	1.9	0.0	100.0	(369)
China news	6.3	49.2	34.2	9.5	0.8	100.0	(368)
Editorials	5.1	35.1	43.8	14.0	2.0	100.0	(356)
Political commentaries	2.6	33.9	42.0	18.7	2.9	100.1	(348)
Entertainment news	6.5	48.5	33.2	9.4	2.2	99.8	(361)
Sports news	5.1	40.2	32.0	18.4	4.2	99.9	(353)
Financial news	6.1	36.9	33.8	19.8	3.4	100.0	(358)
Letters to editor	2.1	15.8	36.6	35.7	9.8	100.0	(336)
Horse-racing tips	6.5	15.7	19.9	35.3	22.6	100.0	(337)
Essays	5.2	31.1	36.6	21.2	5.8	99.9	(344)
Fiction	2.6	25.4	30.1	33.9	7.9	99.9	(342)
Special features	4.3	50.4	33.0	8.0	4.3	100.0	(349)

Radio

Listening to the radio is also a marginal activity in people's leisure, as only 2 per cent named it as the most frequent and 5.4 per cent as the next most frequent activity. But as with magazines, very few people were dissatisfied with the content of radio. Radio does not seem to serve as a news medium on a par with television or newspapers. Although 64.2 per cent of people named it as a source of news, only 4.7 per cent and 8.6 per cent regarded it as the "most detailed source" or "most objective source" respectively.

News Sources

While we have mentioned in passing the role of mass media as news sources in the above section, here we want to piece together the data to form a more comprehensive picture and to provide further analysis.

Our study finds that television is not only the most important entertainment medium of the Hong Kong people, it also serves as the most important news source. As shown in Table 4.10, 95.4 per cent of the people cited television as a news source, being closely followed by newspapers (85.5 per cent), with radio (64.2 per cent) and magazines (21.7 per cent) trailing far behind.

Table 4.10 News Source and the Most Reliable News Source

Media/ Channel	Cited as a news source*		The most reliable news source	The most detailed news source	The most objective news source
	%	(N)	%	%	%
Television	95.4	(409)	56.7	36.7	42.6
Newspapers	85.5	(406)	29.3	57.3	46.0
Radio	64.2	(394)	9.5	4.7	8.6
Magazines	21.7	(391)	0.3	1.2	2.8
Interpersonal relations	41.2	(386)	2.0	–	–
Others	–		2.2	–	–
Total			100.0	99.9	100.0
(N)			(358)	(403)	(359)

* Percentage adds up to over 100% as respondents are allowed to name more than one news sources.

The designation of television or radio as a news source is found to be statistically independent of people's age, sex, education and household income. In contrast, the use of newspapers as a news source correlated significantly with the respondents'

demographic variables. In general, the male, the young, the educated and the affluent tend to choose newspapers as a news source.[19] The same relations apply to the use of magazines as a news source except that it is insensitive to sex.[20]

It should be noted that interpersonal relationships, including family members, friends and relatives, were cited as news source by 41.2 per cent of the population. The reliance on interpersonal channels as a news source is statistically not related to the respondents' sex, age, education and household income.

While television was the most cited news source, newspapers were considered to be the most detailed (57.3 per cent) as well as the most objective source of news (46.0 per cent). Television ranked after it in these regards (36.7 per cent and 42.6 per cent respectively). In contrast, very few people regarded radio and magazines as the most detailed (4.7 per cent and 1.2 per cent respectively) or the most objective source of news (8.6 per cent and 2.8 per cent respectively).

The respondents were asked which news source they found most trustworthy in case of conflicting information. As shown in Table 4.10, television again fared the best, with 56.7 per cent of the respondents naming it as the most reliable source. Newspapers were in a distant second place, with 29.3 per cent. Radio, magazines and interpersonal relationships all paled when compared with television and newspapers in terms of trustworthiness.

Conclusion

We have observed that VCR has reached a household penetration of over 70 per cent and that a sizeable number of Hong Kong families possess more than one radio, television and other media hardware. Given the expanding economy and Hong Kong people's receptiveness to new technology, it is expected that this proliferation of media hardware will continue. This multiplication of media hardware within the household has important implications for the audience's media behaviour. There is now a greater chance for the audience to individualize their choice of programme and media. In the case of television, for instance, people do not have to watch the programme chosen by the household head or other decision makers. Combined with more specialized television services (e.g., satellite television and cable television) and the flexibility provided by the VCR and expanded living space, it becomes more feasible for individuals to engage in audio-visual self-programming. How people's media choice will be affected by the abundance of media hardware should be an interesting topic for future exploration.

Since the mid-1980s, there has been a continuing and substantial decline in weekday prime time television audience ratings (Chan, 1990). This lends support to the observation that television has been losing some of its past attraction to other forms of entertainment. However, it should be stressed that television remains the dominant medium in terms of audience reach and viewing time.

The people of Hong Kong were largely satisfied with the media content of the mass media in 1990-1991. The most impressive score was obtained by newspapers, but the most important medium in people's life was television. Television was important not only in providing entertainment during leisure, but also in serving as the most important source of news. Television outcompeted other channels of information in terms of perceived reliability as well. The outstanding role of television as an information source in Hong Kong parallels that in the United States where television has been consistently ranked by the audience as the most important and the most reliable source of news information since the early 1960s (Dominick, 1987:462-464).

Comparing the relative importance of the mass media and interpersonal relations as a source of information, we have found that the latter was overshadowed by the former. This leads us to conclude that Hong Kong is a media-rich city state where people derive their information mainly from the mass media, notably television and the newspapers. Interpersonal relationships appear

to serve as a supplementary channel of news information for only about 40 per cent of the population. Should the mass media fail as reliable news sources, it is only then interpersonal channels serve as a functional alternative. Having said this, it should not be thought that interpersonal communication is of little significance in Hong Kong. It still plays an important role in mediating the influence of the mass media and imparting meaning to social life.

Despite their general satisfaction with the content of television, Hong Kong people showed concern about the increasing portrayal of sex and violence in television. Most of them also felt that television had a negative impact on children and supported more government control on television content. If the television industry does not exercise greater care and self-discipline, the urge for more control on television sex and violence might grow and spread to fuel the demand for government control on other kinds of television content. This may also have an unintended consequence after 1997 when the Chinese communists resume the sovereignty of Hong Kong. It may become an excuse for the communist government to tighten its grip on the medium, resulting in the destruction of freedom of expression for the whole industry.

Cinema-going is a very popular leisure activity, second only to television-watching, but the people were less satisfied with the content of local films. This was particularly the case with older, better-educated people. Whether or not local productions can satisfy this section of the population may determine the industry's continued prosperity in the 1990s since the educational standard of the Hong Kong population is getting higher with the expansion of tertiary education, and the population of Hong Kong is also getting older. The success of birth control will continue to reduce the size of the young age group which the current local films still attract. Without innovation in themes and improvement in quality, the decline of the local film industry is the likely result.

Newspapers in Hong Kong serve mainly as a news medium. Among the five major media, newspapers commanded the greatest satisfaction from the audience. Quite contrary to what

some newspaper critics have claimed, nearly three-quarters of the respondents were satisfied with its content. And people liked the news content best, be it local, foreign, entertainment or sports. That people were largely satisfied with the newspaper content speaks to the newspapers' responsiveness to the changing needs of the Hong Kong population. We do not expect to see great changes in the newspaper content in the near future unless some unexpected economic or political changes occur in the industry.

As regards magazines and radio, neither seemed to occupy an important part of people's life. People were generally satisfied with the contents of magazines or radio. Although more people considered radio as a source of news, radio and magazines could not match newspapers or television as a news medium. As people were not particularly dissatisfied with the content of radio and magazines, we do not expect to see much change in these two industries either. The pressure for change now resides with the local film industry which has to improve the quality of its productions to meet the growing demands of the audience. The public's concern over the increasing portrayal of sex and violence on television may also result in greater demand for government control of television content.

Notes

1. The cross-tabulation results for household income by the possession of each of the said medium are too numerous to report here. Suffice it to mention that the statistical relations are all positive and significant.
2. The total number of respondents who named a most frequent leisure activity or answered "it depends" was 408.
3. For instance, the results of cross-tabulating the respondents' exposure to *TVB Pearl* by their demographic variables are:
   By sex: Cramer's V=.20, chi-square=15.55, df=2, p<.000, N=411;
   By age: Tauc=-.20, p<.000, N=411;
   By education: Tauc=.28, p<.000, N=406;

By household income: Tauc=.24, p<.000, N=376.

4. Exposure to *RTHK-TV* is not statistically related to the respondents' sex. Other results of cross-tabulating exposure to *RTHK-TV* are:
   By age: Tauc=.17, p<.000, N=409;
   By education: Tauc=-.17, p<.000, N=404;
   By household income: Tauc=-.17, p<.000, N=375.
5. The results for cross-tabulating newspaper reading are:
   By sex: Cramer's V=.22, chi-square=19.94, df=3, p<.000, N=413;
   By education: Tauc=.13, p<.001, N=408.
6. Cross-tabulating newspaper reading by age, we get: Chi-square=39.81, df=9, p<.000, N=413.
7. The cross-tabulation results are:
   Foreign news by sex: Cramer's V=.21, chi-square=16.11, df=2, p<.000, N=380;
   Local news by sex: Cramer's V=.15, chi-square=8.10, df=2, p<.05, N=380;
   China news by sex: Cramer's V=.15, chi-square=8.58, df=2, p<.01, N=377;
   Editorials by sex: Cramer's V=.20, chi-square=14.86, df=2, p<.001, N=377;
   Political commentaries by sex: Cramer's V=.30, chi-square=33.28, df=2, p<.000, N=374;
   Sports news by sex: Cramer's V=.30, chi-square=52.01, df=2, p<.005, N=376;
   Financial news by sex: Cramer's V=.21, chi-square=17.04, df=2, p<.000, N=376;
   Horse-racing tips by sex: Cramer's V=.26, chi-square=24.74, df=2, p<.000, N=371.
8. The cross-tabulation results are:
   Entertainment news by sex: Cramer's V=.18, chi-square=12.18, df=2, p<.005, N=377;
   Letters to the editor by sex: Cramer's V=.14, chi-square=7.62, df=2, p<.05, N=373.
9. The cross-tabulation results are:
   Foreign news by education: Tauc=.12, p<.005, N=376;
   Foreign news by household income: Tauc=.08, p<.05, N=351;
   Political commentaries by education: Tauc=.14, p<.005, N=370;
   Political commentaries by household income: Tauc=.08, p<.05, N=345;
   Financial news by education: Tauc=.16, p<.000, N=372;
   Financial news by household income: Tauc=.11, p<.01, N=347.
10. The results of cross-tabulating magazine reading are:
    By age: Tauc=-.22, p<.000, N=413;
    By education: Tauc=.29, p<.000, N=408;
    By household income: Tauc=.26, p<.000, N=378.
11. The results of cross-tabulating book reading are:
    By sex: Cramer's V=.21, chi-square=17.61, df=2, p<.000, N=413;
    By age: Tauc=-.45, p<.000, N=413;
    By education: Tauc=.43, p<.000, N=408;
    By household income: Tauc=.27, p<.000, N=378.
12. The results of cross-tabulating video exposure are:
    By age: Taub=-.12, p<.005, N=413;
    By education: Taub=.09, p<.02, N=408;
    By household income: Tauc=.13, p<.005, N=378.
13. Cross-tabulating exposure to local movies by education, we get: Tauc=.23, p<.000, N=398. When we cross-tabulate exposure to western movies by education, Tauc=.43, p<.000, N=399. It is noticed that the statistic (Tauc) is strengthened in the case of western movies. This observation applies when we cross-tabulate exposure to movies by the respondents' household income. The cross-tabulation results are: cross-tabulating exposure to local movies by household income, Tauc=.16, p<.000, N=370; cross-tabulating exposure to western movies by household income, Tauc=.37, p<.000, N=371. This statistical phenomenon attests to the positive correlation between the respondents' exposure to western movies and their education as well as their household income.
14. The total number of respondents with an opinion on the quality of dubbed foreign programmes was 370.
15. The total number of respondents who had an opinion on

television's influence on children was 389.

16. The total number of respondents who had an opinion on the control of television content was 385.

17. The cross-tabulation results are:
    Violent scenes by control: Cramer's V=.22, chi-square=35.62, df=4, p<.000, N=379;
    Obscene scenes by control: Cramer's V=.25, chi-square=45.41, df=4, p<.000, N=373;
    Bad television impact by control: Cramer's V=.29, chi-square=61.01, df=4, p<.000, N=372.

18. The results of cross-tabulations are:
    Age by local film satisfaction: Cramer's V=.15, chi-square=13.75, df=6, p<.05, N=309;
    Education by local film satisfaction: Cramer's V=.17, chi-square=16.77, df=6, p<.01, N=308.

19. The results of cross-tabulating the use of newspapers as a news source are:
    By sex: phi=.15, chi-square=8.76, df=1, p<.005, N=406;
    By age: Cramer's V=.23, chi-square=21.18, df=3, p<.001, N=406;
    By education: Cramer's V=.27, chi-square=28.88, df=3, p<.000, N=402;
    By household income: Cramer's V=.16, chi-square=10.08, df=4, p<.05, N=375.

20. The results of cross-tabulating the use of magazines as a news source are:
    By age: Cramer's V=.20, chi-square=15.66, df=3, p<.005, N=391;
    By education: Cramer's V=.25, chi-square=23.94, df=3, p<.000, N=389;
    By household income: Cramer's V=.19, chi-square=13.26, df=4, p<.01, N=361.

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5

Work and Work Values

Lui Tai-lok

Introduction

This chapter looks at attitudes towards work – one's own and work in general. Our discussion is, accordingly, divided into two main sections. First, we shall see how our respondents rate their jobs in terms of levels of satisfaction. On the whole, our respondents can be described as moderately happy with their jobs. There are few signs of discontent. However, beneath such complacency, our economically active respondents do have worries, especially those related to the long-term development of their careers. In fact, quite a significant portion of them view pessimistically the 1997 issue and its impact on their careers. Second, we shall examine how our respondents perceive work in general. It is our contention that working people in Hong Kong take work seriously but they do not work for the sake of searching any intrinsic rewards in the working activity itself. Work is mundane, practical; it is not perceived as a "calling" or as having any grand moral purpose. Our respondents see work as a means to attain economic status, and as part of their overall economic strategy for mobility and advancement.

General Profile

Before we come to the discussion of various issues relating to the question of attitudes towards work, it would be useful to review briefly some of the general characteristics of our respondents. Generally speaking, our sample population (N=413) is relatively young, with 50.8 per cent of the respondents under 35 years old. More than half (53.8 per cent) of them are men and almost six out of ten (59.3 per cent) are married. More than half (63.7 per cent) of our sample were born in Hong Kong. The majority of those born elsewhere came from China (89.9 per cent), mainly from Guangdong (62.6 per cent). Less than one-fifth (19.0 per cent) of these non-Hong Kong born respondents have been living in Hong Kong for no longer than ten years.

Over half or 62.7 per cent (N=259) of our respondents are economically active and the majority (92.6 per cent) of these are working full-time. In terms of employment status, our sample has a disproportionately large "self-employed" group (11.8 per cent). Also, our sample slightly over-represents the category of "employers" (6.7 per cent as compared with the 1991 census of 5.6 per cent) (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Distribution of Respondents by Employment Status (%)

Employment status	Social indicators	1991 census
Employers	6.7	5.6
Self-employed	11.8	5.4
Employees	81.1	87.8
Unpaid family workers	0.4	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Census and Statistics Department (1991).

In terms of the distribution of occupations, our sample has a larger proportion in the category of "professionals" (20.2 per cent) than that in the 1991 census statistics (see Table 5.2). Also, quite a significant percentage (28.5 per cent as compared with 17.3 per cent in the 1991 census) of our respondents falls in the relatively high monthly income bracket of "HK$10,000 or more" (see Table 5.3). Such an over-representation of the high income group in our sample is related to the fact that we have disproportionately large percentages of our respondents in the categories of "employers" and "professionals."

Table 5.2 Distribution of Respondents by Occupation (%)

Occupation	Social indicators	1991 census
Managers and administrators	16.3	9.2
Professionals	20.2	14.0*
Clerks	16.3	15.9
Service workers and sales workers	16.7	13.2
Production workers, etc.	26.8	28.8§
Elementary occupations	NA	18.6†
Others	3.7	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Notes: * For the 1991 census, the category "professionals" includes both "professionals" and "associate professionals."
§ For the 1991 census, this includes skilled agricultural and fishery workers.
† Elementary occupations include street vendors, domestic helpers and cleaners, messengers, private security guards, watchmen, freight handlers, lift operators, construction labourers, hand packers, and agricultural and fishery labourers.

Source: See Table 5.1.

Given the limited space, we shall not dwell further on the social background of our respondents. From the above brief survey of the general profile of our respondents, it should be clear that our sample does not warrant a claim to be a statistically representative sample of the general working population. Moreover, with a small sample size (only 259 out of our 413 respondents are economically active), there is no solid ground for us to argue for generalization. However, to state the limitations of our data set is not to deny the value and relevance of this small-scale research on work attitudes and values. From the very beginning, this study was designed as an exploratory attempt to probe the Hong Kong working people's perceptions of their work and work in general. Our objectives are to explore meaningful analytical questions and to generate hypotheses for further research in this area of study.

Table 5.3 Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income (%)

Monthly income (HK$)	Social indicators	1991 census
Under 1,000	0.4	3.4
1,000-1,999	3.2	3.4
2,000-3,999	11.2	20.8
4,000-5,999	21.7	29.6
6,000-7,999	21.7	17.2
8,000-9,999	13.3	8.3
10,000-14,999	18.9	9.1
15,000-19,999	4.0	3.1
20,000 and over	5.6	5.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: See Table 5.1.

Perceptions of Their Work

On the whole, our respondents are quite happy with their jobs. Slightly more than half of our respondents (50.8 per cent) consider their jobs "satisfactory or very satisfactory," while only 12.9 per cent give the negative answer "dissatisfied or very dissatisfied." Though few of them feel dissatisfied with their jobs, quite a significant portion of our respondents (36.3 per cent) gives the "average" rate. Indeed, when we look at the ratings of the various dimensions of their jobs, with the exception of the aspect of workmate relationship, on the average, one-third of our respondents give the "average" response (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Levels of Satisfaction with Various Dimensions of Job (%)

Job dimensions	Satisfied or very satisfied	Average	Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	(N)
Overall	50.8	36.3	12.9	(256)
Pay	38.3	33.2	28.5	(253)
Job content	58.9	30.6	10.6	(255)
Promotion	34.8	36.7	28.6	(210)
Workmate relationship	74.1	20.6	5.3	(247)
Relationship with superiors	58.6	32.8	8.6	(232)
Working environment	47.5	37.9	14.6	(253)
Job security	39.6	36.2	24.3	(235)
Welfare	32.3	42.6	25.1	(235)

Those aspects of their jobs with which our respondents are most happy with are "workmate relationship" (74.1 per cent), "job content" (58.9 per cent), and "relationship with superiors" (58.6 per cent) respectively. As regards poorly rated job aspects, "promotion" (28.6 per cent) and "pay" (28.5 per cent) stand out as the issues which our respondents find most unsatisfactory.[1]

A similar picture emerges with regard to the respondents' perception of their work career. When asked how satisfied they are with their careers so far, nearly half of the respondents (45.3 per cent) say that they are "satisfied or very satisfied" and more than one-third (36.6 per cent) rate "average." Only 18.1 per cent of the respondents suggest that they are "dissatisfied or very dissatisfied" with their career development. So, again, we see quite a significant number of our informants have an "average" rating of their work career.

That our respondents have not shown a high level of satisfaction of their career development should not mislead us to assume that they tend to view their career history in negative terms. In fact, when they are asked to evaluate their achievement in their working history as a whole, the majority (70.6 per cent) give positive answers, i.e., they feel that their careers have "somewhat improved or improved a great deal." Only one-tenth (10.3 per cent) suggest that their careers are "marked by some decline."

The respondents have also been asked for their opinion on the possible impact of the 1997 issue on their careers. Slightly more than half (56.1 per cent) express the view that changes brought about by the 1997 issue would affect their career development, and of those the overwhelming majority are pessimists, with 91.6 per cent believing that the changes would be to the detriment of their careers.

It is, perhaps, interesting to note that neither employment status nor occupation make any difference to the perception of the impact of the 1997 issue on career development. Though we find respondents of the employment status of "employer" (56.3 per cent) and "self-employed" (69.2 per cent), and those of occupational categories of "professionals and managers" (64.0 per cent) are more likely to perceive the uncertain political future as a factor interrupting their career development, the associations between socio-economic background variables and their perception of the impact of the 1997 issue are not significant.

Perceptions of Work in General

So far we have discussed our respondents' perceptions of their own work and careers. Here we would like to shift the focus of our discussion to the perceptions of work in general. In the following sub-sections, our concern lies in the broader question of work values and our discussion will proceed under four headings.[2]

Work Centrality

Two questions are used to tap the respondents' perception of the importance of work in their lives. To the first question: "How important and significant is work in your total life?", 83.8 per cent of the informants replied "important or most important." Our data in Table 5.5 are sufficient to show that in general there exists a consensus in recognizing the importance of work in their lives. But the recognition alone is far from sufficient to answer the question of work centrality. The notion of work centrality also carries the implication that work activity is to be perceived as the most important domain of one's life. Therefore, we also ask the respondents to rate which area in their lives they feel is most important. Table 5.6 shows that it is family that really constitutes their central concern (58.8 per cent) with work (29.1 per cent) only managing to secure second place.[3] Standing on its own, work receives unanimous support for its significance, but when placed in the broader context of various domains of life, its importance is subsumed under that of the family.

Table 5.5 Importance of Work in Life (%)

	All respondents	Economically active respondents
One of the least important things	0.0	0.0
Unimportant	2.2	2.4
Average	13.9	11.5
Important	67.2	69.9
Most important	16.6	16.2
Total	99.9	100.0
(N)	(409)	(253)

Table 5.6 The Most Important Area in Life (%)

	All respondents	Economically active respondents
Family	58.8	58.6
Work	29.1	29.1
Leisure	7.2	6.7
Religion	4.0	4.0
Community and group participation	1.0	1.6
Total	100.1	100.0
(N)	(405)	(196)

Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 also show that there is no significant difference between the economically active and inactive respondents in their rating of the importance of work and the ranking of the importance of various areas in life. When we look further into the relation between these two questions on work centrality, the findings show, not unexpectedly, a significant association (Table 5.7). In other words, for those who rank work as the most important area in their lives, they are also more likely to see working as "important" or "most important." And for those who place more emphases on family and other areas in life (leisure, religion, and community and group participation), they are more likely to see working as "average" or "unimportant." What really interests us is not the association between these two dimensions of work centrality, but the fact that among those who rank family as their most important area in life, quite a significant percentage (83.0 per cent) also give high ratings to the significance of work. Given their limitations, our data do not warrant us to discern the complicated relations between family and work. Yet, it seems safe to say that our findings suggest there is no necessary conflict between the emphasis on family as the most important area in life and the perception of work as important. Other research on the economic behaviour of the Hong Kong Chinese also support such an argument (Topley, 1969: 208 and 219). Indeed, some may even go further and contend that the Hong Kong Chinese tend to perceive their work in the light of their family interests (cf. Wong, 1988).

Table 5.7 Association between the Ranking of Importance of Various Areas in Life and the Rating of Importance of Work (%)

Most important area in life	Importance of work			Total	(N)
	Unimportant or totally unimportant	Average	Important or very important		
Work	0.0	4.2	95.8	100.0	(118)
	0.0	**9.1**	**33.4**		
Family	3.0	14.0	83.0	100.0	(235)
	77.8	**60.0**	**57.7**		
Others	4.1	34.7	61.2	100.0	(49)
	22.2	**30.9**	**8.9**		
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**		
(N)	**(9)**	**(55)**	**(338)**		

$\chi^2 = 32.213$, df = 4, $p<0.001$

Norms towards Work

This is to probe whether our respondents are more likely to see work as a right or as a duty. Differently put, our question concerns whether our respondents are inclined towards a so-called more traditional concept of work, as a duty and moral obligation, or towards the normative orientation of placing work rights over work duties.

On the whole, our respondents show balanced levels of agreement with the norms of entitlement and obligation and are balanced at a rather high level of agreement with them. However, upon closer scrutiny, our respondents are slightly more inclined towards the norms of entitlement than those of obligation. This is especially evident in their answers to the questions concerning the notion of work as a citizen's duty and the value of work irrespective of its content.[4] Their responses indicate that they do not assume unqualified commitment to work as such or to work as an abstract spirit of citizenship. There are few signs of "calling" or moral purpose in our respondents' normative orientation towards work. Yet, it is also fair to describe our respondents as conscientious, as 89.7 per cent of them agree that "employees should be expected to think up better ways to do their jobs." Apparently, the lack of a moral conception of work does not deter the respondents from conscientious performance of their duties in their daily work.

Table 5.8 Norms towards Work (%)

	SD	D	I	A	SA	(N)
Our government should provide every individual who desires to work with an opportunity for employment	–	4.1	7.2	79.8	8.9	(405)
Employers should be responsible for providing their employees with retraining opportunities	–	0.2	6.7	79.3	13.7	(401)
It is the duty of every citizen to contribute to society by working	–	5.0	13.4	75.7	5.9	(404)
Employees should be expected to think up better ways to do their jobs	–	2.5	7.7	80.5	9.2	(401)
A worker should value the work he or she does even if it is boring and/or simplistic	0.5	20.6	14.8	60.6	3.5	(398)

Notes SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; I = Indifferent; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree.

As regards the entitlement orientation of our respondents' norms towards work, the high level of agreement should be interpreted in the light of a balance with the norms of obligation. Indeed, in the case of Hong Kong, the norms of entitlement and obligation do not constitute two polarized and oppositional orientations. While our respondents emphasize their rights of securing employment and continuous retraining, there are few indications that they are passive in coping with flux and uncertainty in the world of work or rely on the government and their employers to help out in hard times.

Functions of Work

This section is an attempt to investigate the meaning our respondents attach to their work activities. More precisely, we ask our respondents what kinds of outcome do they expect from working. What functions does work perform for the respondents?

Table 5.9 Functions of Work (%)

	SD	D	I	A	SA	(N)
Working provides you with an income for living	0.2	6.9	9.6	71.1	12.3	(408)
Working gives you opportunities for meeting other people	0.5	8.5	9.5	74.1	7.5	(402)
Working is a way to serve society	0.5	9.7	16.5	69.3	4.0	(401)
Working itself is interesting	3.0	25.2	16.0	54.5	1.2	(400)
Working keeps you occupied	1.7	44.1	18.2	33.7	2.2	(406)

Notes SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; I = Indifferent; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree.

It is quite clear that most of our respondents tend to see work in economic/instrumental terms (83.4 per cent of the respondents reply "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement on the income-producing function of work). The second most highly rated function of work is the interpersonal contact function (81.6 per cent say "agree" or "strongly agree"). Both the income-producing and the interpersonal contact functions of work are outcomes which are not related to the intrinsic qualities of work. Indeed, when we look at our respondents' responses to the statement "working itself is interesting," quite a significant percentage (28.2 per cent) gives negative answers. Apparently, extrinsic meanings of work are more appealing to our informants than intrinsic ones. Similarly, to a lesser degree, the societal-service function statement is likely to receive answers with reservations.[5] Compared with those responses to statements on income-producing and interpersonal contact functions, our respondents are less affirmative to the statement "working is a way to serve our society." Again, as we have found in earlier discussions, the Hong Kong Chinese tend to perceive work in pragmatic terms; notions of work with strong moral tones are unlikely to strike the right chord.

Instrumentalism and Work Commitment

An anticipated criticism of the suggestion that the Hong Kong Chinese are instrumentalist in their orientation to work is that such a description does not tell us much about working people's perceptions of work under capitalism. That working people are separated from the means of production and their working activities are constituted in contractual terms are good reasons for them to perceive work mainly in the terms of economic considerations. The notion of instrumentalism, at best, only re-presents the structural conditions of the working population at the ideological level.

It is not our intention to give yet another review of the debate evolving around the concepts of orientation to work and instrumentalism. Our argument is this: while we cannot take instrumentalism out of the economic context wherein working people's actions and beliefs are embedded, structural conditions *per se* are not adequate to explain the constitution of work attitudes. Our concern here is not whether the Hong Kong Chinese are instrumentalist or otherwise. Nor are we concerned with the level of instrumentalism espoused by the working population. Rather, we are interested in the meaning of instrumentalism when we describe the Hong Kong Chinese as instrumentalists?

To follow our earlier questions on the functions of work, we ask our respondents to indicate their most important considerations when choosing a job. Table 5.10 shows that about half (50.3 per cent) of our respondents rank salary as the most significant aspect of a job in making their choice.

Table 5.10 The Most Important Consideration in Choosing a Job

Aspects of a job	Per cent
Salary	50.3
Job content	12.9
Promotion opportunity	12.4
Working environment	8.4
Job security	3.3
Sense of belonging	2.8
Workplace location	2.5
Working hours	2.5
Welfare provisions/benefits	1.5
Workmate relationship	1.5
Relationship with superiors	1.0
Others	0.9
Total	100.0
(N)	(394)

The high ranking of salary given by our respondents is not at all surprising as other research on local working people has produced similar findings (for example, Ting-Chau and Ng, 1983; but also see England, 1989:47-48 for a different interpretation of the survey findings of Turner *et al.*). However, while our data suggest that our respondents emphasize material rewards in selecting a job, the findings tell us very little about how they relate economic concerns to their overall perception of work. In order to discern the instrumental reasoning our respondents attached to their work activities, we need to probe further into their feelings about work.

Our data suggest that despite the fact that there is a tendency among our respondents to emphasize the income and to value salary highly in the process of job selection, only slightly more

than one quarter (28.7 per cent) take a strictly financial and calculative attitude towards work. When we look at feelings about work, the option of total commitment, not unexpectedly, does not fare well either (24.1 per cent). The popular choice is the qualified option that work is important but it does not constitute a "calling" or moral commitment; financial considerations are pertinent but money is not the only thing that counts.

Table 5.11 also gives a comparison of our findings with those reported in *British Social Attitudes: The 1986 Report* (Mann, 1986:24 and 34). The comparison shows that working people in Hong Kong are far less morally committed to work than those in Britain. Thus the Hong Kong Chinese are more likely to adopt the qualified option and to be calculative than their counterparts in Britain. It would appear that these findings do not quite fit with the common observation that the Chinese are hard working and motivated. However, if we place the Hong Kong notion of instrumentalism in its context, what seems to be inconsistent with everyday observation will soon be interpretable. To anticipate our argument in the following paragraphs, we need a Hong Kong Chinese perspective to discern the meaning of instrumentalism.

Table 5.11 Feelings about Work (%)

	Social indicators	British social attitudes
The more I do the more I get paid; the less I do the less I get paid	28.7	7.0
I do the best work I can, regardless of pay	24.1	61.0
I want to work hard, but not so that it interferes with my private life	47.2	30.0
None of these	NA	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0
(N)	(400)	(857)

So far, the picture developing from our data suggests that our respondents can be categorized as instrumentalists in their orientation to work in the sense that they emphasize material rewards and underplay the intrinsic qualities of work. However, our findings also show that they are conscientious workers, for they give highly affirmative answers to the statement that "employees should be expected to think up better ways to do their jobs" (see Table 5.7). Indeed, when we look at their attitudes towards other aspects of life relating to work, it is quite clear that their instrumentalism does not mean that they do not take work seriously. For instance, a significant portion of the respondents is pursuing further studies after work (30.8 per cent report that they are attending classes, have just finished their courses, or will start their classes soon) (see Table 5.12).[6] Among those who are attending classes, more than half suggest that the main reasons for doing so are for the "improvement of qualifications" or "promotion." Moreover, 10.5 per cent suggest that their courses are helpful in their daily work (see Table 5.13).

Table 5.12 Further Studies after Working Hours (%)

Yes	26.6
Just finished a course/Would start later	4.2
No	69.1
Total	99.9
(N)	(259)

Table 5.13 Reasons for Pursuing Further Studies (%)

Credential enhancement	38.2
To acquire new knowledge	26.3
To help promotion in future	15.8
Helpful in daily work	10.5
Interest	5.3
To meet friends	1.3
To get occupied	1.3
Others	1.3
Total	100.0
(N)	(76)

It is, in fact, even more interesting to observe that given a hypothetical situation where there is no financial need to work, just over 80 per cent are interested in engaging in economic activities. Not surprisingly, quite a number would prefer to work, but in a different job or in a different status. What is clear is that they would not stay away from work and that retirement is not an attractive option. Rather, a significant proportion (40.4 per cent) express the desire to start their own business, should they be financially capable of making this choice.[7] In another question where we probe the desire for entrepreneurship more directly, we find the same tendency to place a high value on running one's own business (see Table 5.14).[8]

Table 5.14 Attitude towards Starting One's Own Business

Ever thought of starting one's own business	Per cent
Yes	43.5
No	56.5
Total	100.0
(N)	(242)

The general picture emerging from the above discussions of the respondents' responses suggests that they have a strong commitment to economic activities, motivation for further studies, and a desire for entrepreneurial ventures. What is interesting is that the above descriptions of our respondents do not quite match the typical sketches of instrumentalist workers. Of course, it should be pointed out early that in the original formulation of the concept of orientation to work by Goldthorpe *et al.*, there is no attempt to spell out the connections between instrumentalism and attachments to work. However, upon closer scrutiny, some assumptions concerning such connections are implied, especially in the descriptions of the instrumentalist workers and in the contrasts among instrumental, bureaucratic and solidaristic orientations (see Goldthorpe *et al.*, 1968:38-41 and 160). So, according to the *Affluent Worker* study (*ibid.*:25),

> the general impression produced by our data is that with the majority of the semi-skilled men, at least, their work was largely experienced and regarded as an expenditure of effort made with the aim and expectation of extrinsic rather than intrinsic returns: in other words, the meaning which was given to work was essentially that of *labour*. (original emphasis)

The tie binding the workers to their employers is that of a "cash nexus." Economic rewards constitute the basis of the affluent workers' attachment to their jobs. They opt for economic return and devalue the intrinsic aspects of work.

Without going further into the original formulation of the concept of orientation to work, it is quite clear that instrumentalism carries the implication that workers' involvement in the employing organization is essentially calculative and the ego-involvement of workers in their jobs is weak – "[t]heir jobs do not form part of their central life interests; work is not for them a source of emotionally significant experiences or social relationships; it is not a source of self-realization" (*ibid.*:39). The problem

of such a formulation of work orientation is that work is placed in a polarity between intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. Those orientations emphasizing extrinsic returns are almost automatically associated with detachment from work activity as such. Attachment only goes along with intrinsic qualities of work.[9] Moreover, in the above categorization of work orientations, no distinction has been made between jobs and work. The conflation of jobs and work is problematic since a low intensity in involvement in jobs does not necessarily mean that workers will also stay aloof from work activities as such.

Without intending to overstate our findings, what we have seen from our respondents' perceptions of work in general casts doubts on a simplistic treatment of instrumentalism. Generally speaking, our respondents have shown that their instrumental orientation to job selection does not deter them from taking their work seriously and performing their job duties conscientiously. Interestingly, the key to resolve this paradox lies exactly in this separation of jobs and work. Our respondents are able to stay aloof from their jobs and, at the same time, are conscientious in work performance because they see their engagement in different kinds of work as parts of their long-term careers. In a sense, they work for themselves (and, one can argue, for their families). Their strong desire for entrepreneurship and the motivation to pursue further studies after work are not articulated in moral tones, but are perceived as mundane, practical and related to family and self-interest. In short, the Hong Kong brand of instrumentalism goes hand-in-hand with a strong economic drive.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter we have discussed attitudes towards work, and have reviewed how our respondents perceive their own work and work in general. As pointed out initially the limitations of our data mean that our study can only be seen as an exploratory look at the work values of the Hong Kong Chinese.

In this connection, a caveat should be made here. Since our data are collected from a survey focusing primarily on the attitudinal dimension of social life, the discussion may have a flavour of culturalism. But to analyse work values one-sidedly in normative terms is not the intention. Elsewhere, the author and his colleague have worked on the social structural basis of entrepreneurship (Lui and Wong, 1992). It is our contention that the strong drives towards entrepreneurship among the Hong Kong Chinese are connected with social stratification and social mobility strategies. Work values are constituted in a specific socio-economic context – the formation of the economy, the structuring of economic opportunities, inequalities in life chances and family strategies are active forces in shaping the value of work. Indeed, to abstract work values from the social structure in which they are embedded, and to fail to recognize successes and failures, hopes and frustrations in the real world of competition for social advancement, will miss the point of a social action approach to the study of work orientations.

Notes

1. As mentioned earlier, given the limitations of our data, we limit ourselves to rather simple statistical analyses. For all the questions asked in the questionnaire, we take "occupation," "sex," "age," "employment status" and "education" as our interested variables and carry out Chi-square tests between each of these variables and those on attitudes accordingly. Unless otherwise reported in the notes, it can be assumed that the associations are not significant (at the level of $p<0.005$).
   As regards the section on job satisfaction, employment status is found to be associated with the level of satisfaction concerning job security ($\chi^2=23.11257$, df=8, $p<0.005$) and that concerning work in general ($\chi^2=29.21109$, df=8, $p<0.001$). Those who are self-employed tend to be more unhappy with the security of their jobs and employees are likely to be dissatisfied with their work in general. Also, there is association between occupation and level of satisfaction concerning working environment ($\chi^2=22.31560$, df=8, $p<0.005$). Production workers are more likely to be unhappy with their working environment.
2. In many ways, we follow the questions formulated by the MOW International Team (1987) for probing the meaning of work. However, we coded our answers differently. Also, the concern of this paper is more related to the sociological study of work orientations and work values (cf. Rose, 1988) than that of the MOW project.
3. The identification of the most important area in life is associated with age, sex and education level of the respondents. Those in the age group "30-54" are more likely to place emphasis on family while work is for the age group "29 or under" the most important area in life. Not unexpectedly, those with post-secondary education tend to choose work as their central area in life and those with primary and secondary education are more likely to choose family. Also, reflecting the ideology of sexual divisions of labour, women respondents place emphasis on family whereas men choose work as their most important area in life.
4. The notion of citizenship is found to be associated with the age and level of education of the respondents. Those who are in the age group "30-54" are more likely to agree that it is the duty of every citizen to contribute to society by working, while the older as well as the younger generations are more likely to say "no." Also, those with primary and secondary education are more likely to give affirmative answers whereas the better-educated respondents do not agree that it is their duty as citizens to contribute to society by working.
   Those who are in the age group "30-54" tend to agree that a worker should value the work he/she does even if it is boring and/or simplistic. In short, respondents in this age group, in general, are more likely to conceive their work activities in the light of moral values.
5. Similar to the findings in note 4, those who have primary and secondary education and are in the age group "30-54" are more affirmative of the statement on the societal-service function of work.
6. The pursuit of further studies is associated with the age and education level of the respondents. Those who are in the age

group "29 or under" and have secondary and post-secondary education are more likely to attend evening courses.

7. The responses to this hypothetical question are associated with the age and education level of the respondents. Those who choose the retirement option are likely to be found in the age group "55 or above" and the group with primary education. Those who would wish to become bosses are more likely to be young (in the age group "29 or under") and with secondary education.
8. Men respondents are more affirmative of the question on starting one's own business (χ^2=9.26376, df=1, p<0.005).
9. The most powerful critique of the concept of work orientations is found in a footnote in the text by Goldthorpe *et al.* (1968:162, note 2) where the authors note that attachment to present employment, involvement with workmates, and organizational participation do not correlate.

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6

Political Attitudes

Lau Siu-kai

Since the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which sealed Hong Kong's political future, the pace of political change in the territory has quickened. The last decade has witnessed a series of momentous political changes in Hong Kong, some being the products of external political factors, which have irreversibly transformed the face of politics in the territory. At the very least, these changes would include: the introduction of political reforms by the departing colonial regime, the emergence of political groups with different political orientations, the rise of a democratic movement of modest scale, the increasing incidence of protest politics, the drafting of the Basic Law with its concomitant conflicts and controversies, the indirect elections of a portion of the membership of the Legislative Council, the widening dissensus among the political elites, the declining authority of the Hong Kong government, the growing politicization of society, the mass demonstrations against the Chinese government in 1989 at the time of the events of June 4 and thereafter, and the ineluctable erosion of consensus politics.

The increasing salience of the British and Chinese governments, especially the latter, in the local political scene adds a brand new dimension to Hong Kong politics. The lack of mutual

trust between the Chinese government on the one hand and the Hong Kong and British governments on the other has triggered off occasional conflicts between them, which leave Hong Kong people both perplexed and worried. The immediate impact of the entry of the two superior governments in public decision-making is the loss of autonomy of the Hong Kong government. A seemingly tripartite governmental authority is also bound to complicate local politics, not least because it could have divisive effects on society and may also be conducive to political fragmentation.

All these political changes are bound to affect Hong Kong people's political attitudes, which have in fact undergone secular transformation. In the 1990 study, the primary focus is on the way the public approaches the political system and political leadership, which should provide the means to measure the magnitude of change in the political attitudes of the people of Hong Kong.

Perception of the Political Situation

It has been commonplace to describe Hong Kong people as being preoccupied with political stability and the maintenance of strong governmental authority. Even though the thrust of political changes in the past decade represents the opening-up of the political system and increasing opportunities for public participation in politics, people can find the ensuing political confusion unsettling. Indeed, in comparison with the social and economic conditions in Hong Kong, the political conditions were the least satisfactory in the eyes of the respondents. Only 17.4 per cent (N=390) were satisfied or very satisfied with the political situation in Hong Kong, 28.2 per cent rated it as average, while 28.5 per cent considered it unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory.[1] Since 1988 (when 26.3 per cent of respondents were satisfied with it), the level of satisfaction with the political situation has in fact decreased. It is also noteworthy that except for the fact that older people were less dissatisfied with the political situation than their younger counterparts, different social categories did not differ in

their less than favorable evaluation of the political situation (which was not the case in 1988). This might testify to a widespread sense of political malaise among the Hong Kong public.

Closely related to the public's attitude to the current political situation is people's confidence in Hong Kong's future. When questioned about whether they had confidence in the future of the territory, less than one-third of the respondents (29.7 per cent) reported a lack of confidence. Those who had confidence or a lot of confidence amounted to only 32.6 per cent and 29.2 per cent had an average amount of confidence.[2] Even though the answers to the same question in the 1988 survey are not strictly comparable to those found in this one,[3] still the impression is that the public's confidence in the future of Hong Kong has declined somewhat in the last two years, probably as a result of the June 4 event in China and the tightening up of China's policy towards Hong Kong. Again, in comparison with 1988, the differences between social categories with respect to confidence in the future of Hong Kong were further narrowed. Except for the fact that male respondents were somewhat more confident than female ones, there were no statistically significant differences between social categories in this respect.[4]

The promulgation of the Basic Law by the Chinese government in 1990 purported to clarify the political future of Hong Kong and to boost public confidence in the aftermath of June 4. However, it is also quite evident that since that momentous event China's policy towards Hong Kong has tightened and its mistrust of the intentions of the Hong Kong people has intensified. In such an inhospitable atmosphere between China and Hong Kong, it would not be surprising to find that the promulgation of the Basic Law has only mild effects on public confidence in Hong Kong's future. Most of the respondents (69.2 per cent) had not paid close attention to news about the Basic Law, and those who had done so constituted a meagre 22.9 per cent. Despite the fact that the Basic Law seems to have offered the Hong Kong people most of what they want, still less than half of the respondents (41.5 per cent)

agreed with the view that by virtue of the Basic Law the future of Hong Kong is more secure. And only 31.8 per cent disagreed with this view. What is most noteworthy is that 22.3 per cent of respondents answered "don't know" to the question. What all this amounts to seems to be either that the Hong Kong people have no confidence in the sincerity of the Chinese government in faithfully implementing the Basic Law or that they are not certain about it.

Conception of Political System

The appearance of the democratic movement, the introduction of political reforms by the Hong Kong government, and the drafting of the Basic Law all have, to a certain extent, aroused public interest in and debates on the existing political system and what should be the appropriate future political system for Hong Kong. Even though both the pros and cons of the existing political system have been presented to the Hong Kong people by different political elements in the territory, the sheer fact is that, throughout Hong Kong's history, it is only in the last decade that Hong Kong's political system has been seriously questioned, particularly by those who demanded more democracy and those who saw popular elections as a counterforce to Chinese interference in local affairs both in the transitional period and after 1997.

Nevertheless, the onslaughts on the existing system, which is basically a colonial and authoritarian set-up, seem to have effected only mild changes in people's attitude to it. In this study, still a majority of respondents (59 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "even though Hong Kong's political system is not perfect, it is already the best under existing circumstances." The corresponding figures for the same question in my 1985 and 1988 studies were 74.3 per cent and 75 per cent respectively (Lau and Kuan, 1988:74; Lau, 1990:197). Even though the figures in the three studies are not strictly comparable, the trend would appear to be a declining acceptance of the existing political system. It is also found that, among the respondents, males and the

more educated (see Table 6.1) were less likely to say that the existing political system was the best under the existing circumstances.

Table 6.1 Support of Political System by Education (%)

Education	Low Support	High Support	(N)
Low	20.6	79.4	(102)
Middle	32.8	67.2	(180)
High	45.7	54.3	(46)

Note: Low = No schooling/Primary;
Middle = Secondary/Matriculation/Technical institute/School of commerce/Polytechnic (Cert. or Dip.);
High = Tertiary (non-degree or degree)/Graduate school.

Naturally, concomitant with the declining acceptance of the existing political system is a rise in demand for political reforms in a more democratic direction. When asked whether Hong Kong's political system should be reformed or should remain intact, 43.1 per cent of respondents opted for the maintenance of the political *status quo* whilst 38.5 per cent called for political reform. Different socio-demographic groups, however, evinced different attitudes to political reform. In general, respondents who were younger, male, more educated (Table 6.2), who claimed to belong to a higher social stratum and who had a higher monthly household income (Table 6.3) were more inclined to support political reforms. Even though past findings are not readily comparable to the present ones, it appears that public demand for political reform has slightly increased.

Table 6.2 Support for Political Reform by Education(%)

Education	No Reform	Reform	(N)
Low	73.1	26.9	(93)
Middle	47.5	52.5	(177)
High	31.8	68.2	(44)

Table 6.3 Support for Political Reform by Monthly Household Income (%)

Income	No Reform	Reform	(N)
$4,999 and below	85.2	14.8	(27)
$5,000-9,999	55.9	44.1	(111)
$10,000-14,999	48.4	51.6	(64)
$15,000 and above	43.6	56.4	(94)

The moderate demand for democratic reform, however, belies an idiosyncratic understanding of democracy. Implicit in the unique conception of democracy of the Hong Kong people is a dichotomous view of society and government. Democracy is understood as a political system wherein those in power would consult public opinion before making decisions. The principle of popular sovereignty and the right of democratic participation by the people are less emphasized. As such, democratic government is more frequently defined as consultative government by the Hong Kong people. This definition of democracy was selected by 43.9 per cent and 44.2 per cent of respondents in my 1985 and 1988 studies respectively (Lau, 1990:204-205). In the current study, as seen in Table 6.4, 39.5 per cent of respondents still understood democratic government as a government that consulted public opinion. The more "proper" definition of democracy as an elective government comes second (23.3 per cent) in the 1985 study, third (14.9 per cent)(after "a government that can lead the people") in

the 1988 study, and again occupies the second place (27.9 per cent) in this study.

Table 6.4 Conceptions of Democratic Government (%)

Government that consults public opinion	39.5
Government that is elected by the people	27.9
Government that can lead the people	15.4
Government that treats the people like a father	5.9
Government that gives people whatever they want	1.3
Others	2.8
Don't know/No opinion	5.9
No answer	1.3
(N)	(390)

Ironically, as shown in Table 6.5, respondents with a higher monthly household income were more disposed to define democratic government as consultative government instead of elective government. This attests again to the ambivalence of people in higher social strata towards democracy as documented elsewhere (Lau and Kuan, 1988:162).

Table 6.5 Conceptions of Democratic Government by Monthly Household Income (%)

Income	Consultative Government	Government that Leads	Elective Government	(N)
$4,999 and below	23.3	20.0	46.7	(30)
$5,000-9,999	44.2	10.9	32.6	(129)
$10,000-14,999	45.7	17.1	27.1	(70)
$15,000 and above	40.4	22.1	27.9	(104)

Whilst there is a moderate demand for democracy among the Hong Kong people, they have no intention of rushing into it. This can obviously be accounted for by the facts that the people still support the existing non-democratic political system and that there is an absence of serious political grievances against the government of Hong Kong. Accordingly, 74.4 per cent of respondents considered as appropriate a gradualist pace of democratization. Those who would like to see a rapid pace or a slow pace of democratization represent only negligible proportions of respondents, being 6.2 per cent and 5.4 per cent respectively.

Despite such a "conservative" view of democracy and an incremental approach to democratization, the people of Hong Kong are nevertheless still pessimistic about its realization in their society. Nearly half, or 43.6 per cent of the respondents thought that the probability of successful democratization in Hong Kong was low. Only 33.1 per cent considered the chance good, and a substantial minority of respondents answered "don't know." In comparison with 1985, when 54.7 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "the chance of success for democratic reform in Hong Kong will be good," (Lau and Kuan, 1988:74) people in 1990 were less sanguine.

It is obvious that political parties are integral parts of modern representative democracy. However, the term "political party" carries negative connotations in the minds of Hong Kong people, who still tend to blame political parties for the abuse of political power and for the political turmoil in modern Chinese history. Hence, people naturally adopt an ambivalent stance towards the formation of political parties in Hong Kong. Thus, while we found in 1985 that 34.8 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the view that the emergence of political parties would make the political system of Hong Kong better (Lau and Kuan, 1988:74), it was nevertheless also found in 1988 that 50.5 per cent of respondents opposed the formation of political parties in Hong Kong (Lau, 1990:205).

In the present study, slightly more than half of the respondents (52 per cent) were in favor of party formation in Hong Kong,

while only 25.3 per cent were against it. However, it was still the case that a relatively substantial proportion of respondents (19 per cent) were not sure about it. Compared with 1988, when 25 per cent of respondents were in favour of party formation in Hong Kong and 55.5 per cent against it, the idea of the formation of political parties had evidently been disseminated in society. Notwithstanding public support for party formation, the ambivalence of the people towards political parties lingers on. A plurality of respondents (39 per cent) declared that they would not participate in or support the activities of political parties. Only 20 per cent of them said they would do so and 28.5 per cent stated that they would do so only under certain circumstances. Moreover, as much as 43.6 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the view that if political parties appeared in Hong Kong, the struggle for power among them would bring about instability in society. A lower proportion (38.8 per cent) of them disagreed or strongly disagreed. What is most interesting is that the Hong Kong people still have difficulty in recognizing the fact that political parties are by nature representatives of "partisan" or sectional interests, as an overwhelming majority of the respondents (74.9 per cent) were of the opinion that political parties in Hong Kong should represent the interests of all the people. Only 13.1 per cent of them would allow the political parties to represent the interests of particular social strata. In all, the people of Hong Kong have yet to agree on the importance of political parties in their society and the role they should play in a political system undergoing partial democratization.

While the age, sex and income of the respondents made no difference to their attitudes to political parties, education proved to be a significant differentiating factor. Not surprisingly, the more educated were more supportive of party formation in Hong Kong, more willing to participate in or support the activities of political parties, less likely to say that political parties would cause social instability, and less likely to say that political parties should represent collective interests rather than sectional interests. With time, it appears that the people of Hong Kong will be more posi-

tive about the role of political parties in their society.

Trust in Governments

Public trust in the Hong Kong, British and Chinese governments has been on a downward trend in the last decade. Hong Kong people's mistrust of China is legendary, and was exacerbated by the June 4 event in 1989. The declining authority of the Hong Kong government, the deterioration of its administrative performance and the proliferation of social, economic and political problems in Hong Kong have resulted in an eclipse in public trust. There is persisting public suspicion of British intentions, particularly in the aftermath of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which has been perceived by many people as the British betrayal of Hong Kong's interests for self-serving purposes.

Table 6.6 Trust in Hong Kong, Chinese and British Governments (%)

	Hong Kong Government	Chinese Government	British Government
Distrust very much	0.5	15.1	3.1
Distrust	14.6	47.4	35.1
Average	35.9	18.5	33.6
Trust	40.3	9.7	17.7
Trust very much	2.6	0.3	0.3
Don't know/No opinion	5.6	7.9	10.0
No answer	0.5	1.0	0.3
(N)	(390)	(390)	(390)

Table 6.6 shows public trust in the three governments. It can be seen that apart from the Hong Kong government, which still managed to enjoy a decent level of public trust, people's trust in the British and Chinese governments was dismally low, particularly in the case of the latter. Even the Hong Kong government

suffered from a diminution of public trust, as the proportions of respondents who trusted or trusted very much the Hong Kong government in 1988 were 47.7 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively, which are higher than the figures in the table.[5]

The statistical relationships between sex and income on the one hand and trust in the three governments on the other are insignificant. Nevertheless, age and education are very good predictors of public trust in governments. Being more deferential to political authority, older respondents were more likely than the younger ones to trust the three governments. In the case of the Hong Kong government, the per centages of young (below 29), middle-aged (30-54) and older (55 and above) respondents who were trustful or very trustful of it were 34.8, 45.2 and 73.2 respectively. The corresponding figures for the Chinese government were 2.3, 9.4 and 37.7 respectively, whilst those for the British government were 11.9, 19.9 and 45.5 respectively. What is notable here is the significant differences in terms of trust in the governments between the young and the older respondents, testifying thus to the much less deferential attitude of the former to political authorities.

Not unexpectedly, the gap in the amount of trust conferred upon the governments by respondents with different educational attainments is equally striking, as can be discerned in Table 6.7. Undoubtedly education is a purveyor of democratic, or at least anti-authoritarian, values, and its impact on public trust in socialist as well as alien governments is vividly displayed here.

Closely related to public trust in the Hong Kong government is the people's evaluation of its performance. Some 15.1 per cent of the respondents rated its performance as poor or very poor, 52.6 per cent considered it as just about average, whilst only 22.8 per cent of respondents thought it was good or very good.[6] These figures compare unfavourably with the figures obtained in the 1988 survey, which were 6.6 per cent, 46.5 per cent and 42 per cent respectively.

Table 6.7 Trust in Hong Kong, Chinese and British Governments by Education (%)

Education	Level of Trust Low	Medium	High	(N)
1. Hong Kong Government				
Low	10.4	29.6	60.0	(115)
Middle	18.9	40.3	40.8	(196)
High	19.2	50.0	30.8	(52)
2. Chinese Government				
Low	53.2	25.7	21.1	(109)
Middle	74.3	18.8	6.8	(191)
High	80.4	15.7	3.9	(51)
3. British Government				
Low	28.4	40.2	31.4	(102)
Middle	47.7	34.7	17.6	(193)
High	51.9	42.3	5.8	(52)

Public mistrust of the Chinese government is undoubtedly an expression of people's abhorrence of communism and sense of alienation from the Chinese government. Moreover, it is a reflection of a prevalent perception of interest conflict between Hong Kong and China. In this study, just under half of the respondents (49.7 per cent) affirmed the existence of interest conflict between the two places, while only 29.7 per cent of them denied it. The substantial proportion of respondents answering "don't know" indicates that many Hong Kong people are still unsure about the nature of the relationship between Hong Kong and China, which in fact is a mixture of common and conflicting interests. Not surprisingly, the more educated respondents who had a more anti-communist outlook were more likely to see an interest conflict between Hong Kong and China. Nonetheless, when compared with the findings in 1988, it seems that the feelings of

animus towards China had abated, for in that year as much as 56.7 per cent of respondents saw a conflict of interests between Hong Kong and China, even though those who did not do so still amounted to 27.8 per cent. It can thus be inferred that as 1997 approaches, people will increasingly define the relationship between Hong Kong and China in less conflictual terms.

Notwithstanding public revulsion of the Chinese government, Hong Kong people are realistic enough not to sanction a confrontational posture towards China. In our study, 75.1 per cent of the respondents did not countenance confrontation with China, and only 11.3 per cent were in favour of it. In addition, the non-confrontational stance towards China was shared by all categories of respondents.

Orientation towards Political Leadership

Despite the proliferation of self-proclaimed political leaders who claim to represent the popular will, Hong Kong people still have difficulty locating those whom they can trust. In my survey, when respondents were queried about whether they believed they had trustworthy leaders, 69 per cent replied in the negative, with only 9.5 per cent believing there were trustworthy leaders.[7] In comparison with the findings obtained in a similar survey done in 1988 (the figures were 69.9 per cent and 16.2 per cent respectively), it seems that today the people of Hong Kong trust their leaders even less.

When the 37 respondents who replied "positively" were asked about the names of the leaders they had in mind, 5 of them were unable to answer. Among those who were able to provide names, the list given (and the number of respondents concerned) is as follows: Martin C.M. Lee, indirectly elected member of the Legislative Council (Legco) and leader of the democratic movement (12); the governor of Hong Kong, Sir David Wilson (7); Lady Lydia Dunn, appointed member of the Executive Council (Exco) (5); Szeto Wah, indirectly elected member of the Legco and leader

of the democratic movement (3); Lord Murray MacLehose, former governor of Hong Kong (1); Allen Lee, appointed member of the Legco and Exco (1); Sir Edward Youde, late governor of Hong Kong (1); Lee Wing-tat, directly elected Regional Councillor and leader of the democratic movement (1); and Xu Simin, an outspoken member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (1). The overall picture is the Hong Kong Chinese do not trust their political leaders. Most importantly, names given by the respondents does not show that politicians from any particular sector on the political spectrum have an edge over others in terms of commanding trust.[8]

The situation is the same with respect to local leaders. When asked whether they had trustworthy leaders in the areas where they lived, 60 per cent of respondents answered "no," 7.9 per cent said "yes," while 32.1 per cent were not able to give a definite answers. Again, public trust in local leaders has deteriorated since 1988.

Respondents were also asked whether they had trustworthy political groups in mind in 1990 (but not in 1988). As expected, the findings do not differ from those in respect of "national" and local leaders as 62.1 per cent of respondents answered in the negative, and only 7.2 per cent did have trustworthy political groups in mind. Nevertheless, only 17 respondents were able to name the groups they trusted. They were (and the number of respondents concerned): The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, a loose alliance of groups which was formed in 1989 to support the democratic movement in China (11); the United Democrats of Hong Kong, the largest group of democratic activists in Hong Kong (2); the Hong Kong Affairs Society, a civic group in support of democratic reform (1); the Hong Kong branch of the New China News Agency, China's official representative agency in Hong Kong (1); the New Hong Kong Alliance, a pro-China and conservative political group (1); and the Hong Kong Foundation, a conservative think-tank (1). Thus, while in general political groups in Hong Kong failed to garner public trust, a modicum of trust was mostly showered upon those which were antipathetic to the Chinese government and promoted democratization in Hong Kong.

Despite the lack of trustworthy political leaders, most of the institutions and groups in Hong Kong which, in varying degrees, exercise functions of political leadership have however received a fair amount of trust from the people. These institutions and groups include those closely associated with the government which constitute integral parts of the political system (the governor, civil servants, Legislative Council, appointed Legco members, Legco members elected by electoral colleges, Legco members elected by functional constituencies, District Board members, the advisory committees appointed by the government), those that represent extra-governmental forces (pressure groups, democratic movement leaders, business leaders, labour union leaders, scholars and professionals), the two bodies organized by China to draft the Basic Law for Hong Kong after 1997 (the Basic Law Drafting Committee and the Basic Law Consultative Committee), the representative of the Chinese government (the Hong Kong branch of the New China News Agency (NCNA)) and the pro-China leftist organizations. The degrees of trust invested in these institutions and groups by the Hong Kong Chinese are shown in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Trust in Institutions of Political Leadership (%)

	Mistrust	Trust	DK+NO	NA
1. Governor	11.8	72.8	13.8	1.5
2. Civil Servants	24.9	51.8	20.3	3.1
3. Legislative Council	15.4	58.4	23.1	3.1
4. Legco Members: Appointed	22.8	45.4	28.7	3.1
5. Legco Members: Electoral College	16.7	47.7	33.3	2.3
6. Legco Members: Functional Constituencies	14.9	48.5	34.4	2.3
7. District Board Members	21.5	53.0	22.6	2.8
8. Appointed Advisory Committees	20.0	42.4	34.9	2.8
9. Basic Law Drafting Committee	32.3	33.1	32.3	2.3
10. Basic Law Consultative Committee	30.2	33.5	33.7	2.6
11. Democratic Movement Leaders	29.4	37.4	29.2	3.8
12. Pressure Groups	30.3	34.8	32.8	2.1
13. Leftist Organizations	53.3	12.6	32.1	2.1
14. New China News Agency, HK Branch	53.8	17.4	26.4	2.3
15. Business Leaders	32.3	33.8	31.3	2.6
16. Scholars	11.1	61.6	25.6	1.8
17. Professionals	12.9	62.3	22.8	2.1
18. Labour Union Leaders	27.4	37.2	32.8	2.6
(N = 390)				

Note: DK = Don't know; NO = No opinion; NA = No answer.

Several findings from Table 6.8 are particularly noteworthy. In the first place, institutions and groups directly associated with the government, especially the governor, enjoy the highest degree of trust from the people. Secondly, in terms of public trust, institutions and groups which are elected do not differ significantly from the non-elected ones. This testifies to the non-paramountcy of election as a source of political legitimacy in Hong Kong. Thirdly,

except for scholars and professionals, institutions and groups outside the government are only partially trusted by the people. The large proportion of respondents who gave "don't know," "no opinion," or "no answer" as answers shows that they were not certain about the amount of trust they had in these institutions and groups. Fourthly, both the NCNA and the leftist organizations were mistrusted by the public, attesting to the people's aversion to the Chinese government. Nevertheless, the reason that the two Basic Law-related committees managed to enjoy a reasonable level of public trust, despite their Chinese sponsorship, might be that the Basic Law eventually promulgated by China is on the whole acceptable to the people. Lastly, there is more trust invested in the "establishment" than in those groups which can be loosely characterized as the "opposition" (the pressure groups and the democratic movement leaders). Evidently the governing apparatus in Hong Kong is still under no serious threat from its challengers.

Turning to the issue of public attitudes to political leaders and political groups, it appears that Hong Kong Chinese are inclined to attribute an other-regarding motive to the politicians and the political groups. Only 16.9 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that those who participated in political activities did so to advance their private interests. An impressive 68 per cent thought that politicians were either out to serve society or were pursuing public and private interests simultaneously. Such a positive orientation towards politicians is amply reflected in the fact that, in spite of their lack of trusted political leaders, 22.8 per cent of respondents were still optimistic about the appearance of trustworthy leaders on the eve of 1997 (30.8 per cent were pessimistic and 43.1 per cent answered "don't know").

Table 6.9 shows the degree of public agreement with the views of a heterogeneous set of leaders who are selected to cover a wide variety of political tendencies. Lady Lydia Dunn, Allen Lee, Maria Tam (appointed Legco and Exco member), Vincent Lo (politically active businessman), Sir Sze-yuen Chung (former appointed Legco and Exco member) and Sir David Akers-Jones

(retired senior civil servant and once acting governor of Hong Kong) are establishment political figures *par excellence*. Martin Lee and Szeto Wah are typical "anti-establishment" democratic activists, both of whom have incurred the ire of both the Hong Kong and Chinese governments. Lo Tak-shing represents a former staunch establishment figure whose disillusion with Britain has transformed him into a prominent pro-China politician. Liu Yiu-chu, by contrast, is an anti-colonial pro-China patriot. Elsie Tu differs from all the others in her populist stance as the champion of the rights of the small man. Lau Chin-shek distinguishes himself by being a militant trade unionist. Lastly, Ho Sai-chu was at the time of interview largely perceived as a moderate pro-China businessman.

Table 6.9 Agreement with Views of Political Leaders (%)

	Disagree (D)	Agree (A)	NR	DKV	NA	A/D
1. Lydia Dunn	4.6	63.1	5.4	15.4	11.5	13.7
2. Allen Lee	12.3	51.5	6.4	16.4	13.3	4.2
3. Maria Tam	23.3	45.9	5.6	14.4	10.8	2.0
4. Martin Lee	13.9	58.0	5.9	10.3	12.1	4.2
5. Lo Tak-shing	15.4	12.8	45.4	18.2	8.2	0.8
6. Liu Yiu-chu	31.1	18.0	29.0	14.9	7.2	0.6
7. Vincent Lo	16.9	20.2	37.9	16.7	8.2	1.2
8. Szeto Wah	25.2	46.2	7.2	11.3	10.3	1.8
9. Chung Sze-yuen	13.6	45.6	13.6	18.2	9.2	3.4
10. Elsie Tu	3.8	56.4	13.1	17.7	9.0	14.8
11. David Akers-Jones	6.7	46.6	13.8	21.3	11.5	7.0
12. Lau Chin-shek	15.4	34.3	16.4	20.3	13.6	2.2
13. Ho Sai-chu	18.0	30.8	17.2	20.5	13.6	1.7
(N = 390)						

Note: NR = Non-recognition of name of political leader;
DKV = Do not know the views of the political leader;
NA = No answer.

As seen in Table 6.9, except for Lo Tak-shing and Liu Yiu-chu (whose strong pro-China images might have alienated them from the public), all the other leaders' views are generally acceptable to the public. Again, when the ratios of the percentages of those who agreed with the views of the leaders and of those who disagreed are examined, it is quite obvious that the establishment leaders were more supported by the respondents than others. There is an anomaly however in Elsie Tu, whose longstanding solicitude for the well-being of the underdog has earned her great popularity among the Hong Kong Chinese.

In the survey the respondents were also queried about the relative importance of support of the Chinese government, Hong Kong government and the people of Hong Kong for a political leader if he was to become an effective leader. Some 17.7 per cent of the respondents rated the support of the Chinese government most important, 5.6 per cent the Hong Kong government, 35.6 per cent the people of Hong Kong, and 29.7 per cent all three parties. When asked whether they would support as future political leaders of Hong Kong those persons who were disliked by the Chinese government, the responses from the respondents were telling. Those who said they would not support these people amounted to 33.1 per cent, whereas 30.8 per cent averred that they would. Interestingly, 28.2 per cent answered "don't know." These findings indicate that whilst the Hong Kong people expect their political leaders to serve primarily the interests of Hong Kong, they are also fully cognizant of the importance of the support of the Chinese government if local political leaders are to be effective. However, as they also hold the Chinese government in contempt, they accordingly have qualms about leaders receiving support from it.

Table 6.10 Agreement with Views of Political Groups (%)

	Disagree (D)	Agree (A)	NR	DKV	NA	A/D
1. New Hong Kong Alliance	5.6	14.1	48.7	21.0	10.5	2.5
2. Joint Committee on the Promotion of Democratic Government	7.2	26.7	30.8	22.6	12.8	3.7
3. HK Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China	19.4	43.1	11.3	12.6	13.6	2.2
4. Reform Club	8.0	11.3	50.0	20.8	10.0	1.4
5. Civic Association	3.1	15.1	51.0	20.3	10.5	4.9
6. Progressive HK Society	4.3	9.2	52.3	23.3	10.8	2.1
7. Meeting Point	5.9	14.8	48.7	19.2	11.3	2.5
8. HK Affairs Society	6.1	16.1	43.3	23.6	10.8	2.6
9. Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood	5.1	27.7	31.3	23.1	12.8	5.4
10. Hong Kong Foundation	4.6	12.3	50.0	21.8	11.3	2.7
11. United Democrats of HK	5.4	23.6	35.1	24.1	11.8	4.4
12. Association for a Better HK	4.6	6.4	60.3	19.0	9.7	1.4
13. April-fifth Movement	25.1	19.5	25.1	17.7	12.6	0.8
14. HK Democratic Foundation	5.4	30.6	32.6	19.0	12.6	5.7
15. Liberal Democratic Federation	4.1	18.2	46.9	19.0	11.8	4.4
(N = 390)						

Note: NR = Non-recognition of name of political group;
DKV = Do not know the views of the political group;
NA = No answer.

Table 6.10 shows the degree of public agreement with the views of a select group of political groups. A majority of these groups appeared after the advent of the 1997 issue and represented spin-offs from this momentous historical event. Many of them have taken advantage of the opening up of political space effected by the partial democratization of Hong Kong. They also

establish themselves by mobilizing public antipathy against the Chinese government and channelling public disapproval of the Hong Kong and British governments for mishandling Hong Kong's political future. Naturally, most of them have taken on an "anti-establishment" hue, only that here the establishment represents an odd combination of the Chinese, British and Hong Kong governments. Among the groups listed in Table 6.10, the Joint Committee on the Promotion of Democratic Government, the Meeting Point, the Hong Kong Affairs Society, the Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood, the United Democrats of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China and the April-fifth Movement are of the "anti-establishment" genre, with the last two the most militant against China. The Reform Club, the Civic Association, the Hong Kong Democratic Foundation, the Association for a Better Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Foundation can broadly be described as elitist and moderate civic groups who advocate moderate political reforms. The New Hong Kong Alliance, the Progressive Hong Kong Society and the Liberal Democratic Federation are comparatively speaking more conservative politically and more sympathetic to the Chinese government.

Several points can be made about the findings in Table 6.10. Firstly, except for the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, which was involved in organizing mass demonstrations against China during and since the June 4 event in 1989, all the political groups were poorly recognized by the respondents, with the rate of non-recognition ranging from 25.1 per cent to as high as 52.3 per cent. Thus, unlike political institutions and politicians, political groups in Hong Kong are still a novel and unfamiliar phenomenon to the public. Consequently, their capacity to mobilize popular support and their status as political leaders are still quite low. Secondly, though a larger proportion of respondents would agree with the views of the pro-democratic groups and groups adopting a confrontational stance against the Chinese government, the moderate and conservative groups also received more public agreement than disagree-

ment with their views. Thus, even though in an objective sense these political groups can be differentiated in accordance with their attitudes to the Chinese government and democratic reform in Hong Kong, the differences between them appear to be of minimal importance to the Hong Kong Chinese. On the whole, the Hong Kong Chinese seem to accept them in an undifferentiated and diffuse manner. Lastly, among all the groups listed in Table 6.10, only the April-fifth Movement obtained more disagreement than agreement from the respondents. As this group is the most predisposed to adopt "radical" rhetoric and actions against the Chinese government, its non-acceptance by the Hong Kong Chinese is indicative of the pragmatic and moderate proclivities of the latter.

In general, Hong Kong people have, by and large, a favourable impression of politicians and political groups, except for those who are considered too closely connected with the Chinese government and those who are seen to be politically too radical or dangerous. In comparison with the governing institutions and establishment, public support for politicians and political groups is still low, particularly in the case of the latter. In fact, while Hong Kong people are mildly favourably disposed towards politicians and political groups, they are still a long way from trusting them.

Closely related to the phenomenon of undifferentiated public support for the components of the political leadership structure of Hong Kong is the fact that, on the whole, the political institutions, leaders and groups do not have distinctive bases of social support. It might even be said that they all claim to represent the interests of Hong Kong as a whole without identifying themselves with particular social categories.

The absence of distinctive social bases of support for the different leadership components can be illustrated in a variety of ways. In the first place, there is in general no significant statistical correlation between sex and attitudes to political institutions, leaders and groups. Secondly, even though older respondents were slightly more favourably disposed towards a few leadership

components than younger ones, still the relationship between age and attitudes to political leadership is still weak.

Thirdly, there is no relationship between income (monthly individual income) and attitudes to the leadership components. Fourthly, the relationship between self-identified social stratum and attitudes to the leadership components is in essence non-existent.

Of all the socio-demographic variables, education shows a relatively stronger relationship with attitudes to the leadership components. For instance, the more educated respondents were less trusting of the Hong Kong government, less supportive of the existing political system, less trusting of the Governor, the Legco members returned by electoral colleges, the appointed advisory committees, the two Basic Law committees and the NCNA. On the other hand, they were more trusting of the pressure groups. With regard to the political leaders, the more educated were more likely to share the views of Lydia Dunn, but less likely to agree with the views of Lo Tak-shing, Liu Yiu-chu and Lau Chin-shek. What is most surprising is that the more educated were less favourably inclined towards the political groups, particularly those which advocated democratic and social reforms. Thus, they were less willing to share the views of the Joint Committee on the Promotion of Democratic Government, the Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood, the Hong Kong Foundation, the United Democrats of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Democratic Foundation and the Liberal Democratic Association.

All in all, the components of political leadership in Hong Kong differ from each other only marginally in terms of their social bases of support. This phenomenon thus forms the mirror image of the fact that the public does not clearly differentiate between these components as far as its attitudes to them are concerned.

Identity

While the preponderant majority of Hong Kong people are Chinese by ethnic origin, the fact that Hong Kong differs from China politically, socially, economically and culturally has inculcated in the Hong Kong Chinese a distinctive sense of identity. The content of that identity which, is still in the process of transformation in view of the rapid changes in Hong Kong and the imminent restoration of Chinese sovereignty over the territory, is still not quite clear.

In general, the people of Hong Kong are more inclined to identify themselves as Hongkongese than as Chinese. This has been amply demonstrated in previous studies, and is further verified in this study. In the 1985 survey, it was found that 59.5 per cent of the respondents identified themselves as Hongkongese, and 36.2 per cent as Chinese. In the 1988 survey, the figures were 63.6 per cent and 28.8 per cent respectively. In this study, 57.2 per cent of the respondents called themselves Hongkongese, whilst 26.4 per cent said they were Chinese. The current study differs from the two previous ones in that respondents were offered the choice of answering "both Hongkongese and Chinese," and 12.2 per cent of them opted for it.[9] In line with past findings, respondents who were younger, more educated and who had a higher monthly household income were more likely to identify themselves as Hongkongese, whereas the Chinese identity was more likely to be claimed by the older, less educated and less affluent respondents.

Since more than half of the respondents claimed to be Hongkongese, it is also natural that 49.5 per cent of them said that they had a sense of belonging to Hong Kong, and as many as 13.8 per cent even reported a strong sense of it. The proportions of respondents who had very little, little and an average sense of belonging to Hong Kong were 0.8 per cent, 5.4 per cent and 27.2 per cent respectively.[10]

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (95.6 per cent) had no right of abode in a foreign country, and only a tiny 3.6 per cent had it. Among those who did not have it, 75.9 per cent declared no intention of emigrating, whereas 20.4 per cent were planning to. Nevertheless, a slightly lower proportion (71 per cent) of those without the right of abode in a foreign country thought that they would not emigrate before 1997, only 10.2 per cent saying that they would. Thus, most of the respondents were prepared to stay in Hong Kong.[11]

The 1997 issue has spawned an outflow of Hong Kong people to other countries, and the emigrants have come predominantly from the higher social strata from where political leadership for the future is most likely to be drawn. In a situation of political uncertainty, where people are worried about their future and yearning for assurance from trusted political leaders, it is possible that the public might not embrace leaders who have foreign passports or the right of abode elsewhere. In this study, 60.5 per cent of the respondents stated that they would not trust leaders who were foreign nationals or who had acquired the right of abode in a foreign country, and only 17.7 per cent held the opposite view. On the other hand, the respondents were split almost evenly between those who would morally condemn their fellow Hongkongese for leaving Hong Kong because of the 1997 problem and those who were indifferent. Thus, 43.6 per cent of them agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that persons who left Hong Kong on account of the 1997 problem had shirked their responsibility to their society, whereas those who disagreed or strongly disagreed amounted to 45.6 per cent. Naturally, those who felt a stronger sense of belonging to Hong Kong were also more inclined to castigate the emigrants as irresponsible (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11 Perception of Irresponsibility of Emigrants by Sense of Belonging to Hong Kong (%)

Sense of Belonging	Emigrants were: Not irresponsible	Irresponsible	(N)
Low	68.2	31.8	(22)
Medium	53.2	46.8	(94)
High	48.9	51.1	(225)

To see whether there had been changes in people's attitudes to those who had emigrated, we can compare the present findings with those of two years ago. In 1988, 68.2 per cent of the respondents asserted that they would not trust leaders with foreign passports or the right of abode elsewhere, and 21.2 per cent were of the opinion that persons who left Hong Kong as a result of the 1997 issue were wrong. It would thus appear that while there were only minor changes towards leaders with a foreign nationality or right of abode, the public reception of those who emigrated had become less favourable.

Ideological Tendencies

In today's Hong Kong, as a result of the controversies and contests over its future political system, the labels "conservatives," "moderates," and "democrats" have been widely popularized. Though these terms have no precise meanings and are overly charged with moral judgments, they can still be used roughly to classify people according to their attitudes to the Chinese government, to political reform, and to a lesser extent to public welfare. In my survey, slightly more than half of the respondents identified with these ideological tendencies. Some 2.8 per cent considered themselves conservatives, 17.4 per cent moderates, and 23.3 per cent democrats. A plurality of them (38.5 per cent), however, did

not subscribe to any of these ideological tendencies. As expected, the younger were more inclined to identify themselves as democrats while the older were more likely to consider themselves moderates.[12] Surprisingly, and probably because of the ambivalence of the middle class towards democratization, the more educated respondents were more likely to identify themselves as moderates instead of as democrats (Table 6.12).

Table 6.12 Identification with Political Tendencies by Education (%)

Education	Moderates	Democrats	Neither	(N)
Low	10.5	31.6	52.6	(95)
Middle	23.2	29.3	44.2	(181)
High	31.7	19.5	48.8	(41)

When they were then asked about the type of politicians they would support, 1 per cent replied that they would support the conservatives, 22.3 per cent the moderates and 34.1 per cent the democrats (17.2 per cent would support none of them). Thus, both in terms of self-identification and support for politicians, the liberal tendency receives a greater amount of public support. Again, it is interesting to note that whilst the younger respondents were more supportive of the democrats, the more educated were more ready to support the moderates (Table 6.13).

Table 6.13 Support of Politicians of Particular Political Tendencies by Education (%)

Education	Moderates	Democrats	Neither	(N)
Low	24.4	43.9	30.5	(82)
Middle	28.1	50.3	19.8	(167)
High	43.6	33.3	23.1	(39)

Notes

1. When the cases in the five sub-samples in the Social Indicators Survey are brought together to form a sample of 1,957 cases, the figures for the satisfied or very satisfied, about average, and unsatisfied or very unsatisfied are 13.4 per cent, 29.5 per cent, and 29 per cent respectively.
2. If N=1,957, 27.7 per cent of respondents had no confidence, 28.7 per cent had an average amount of confidence, and 33.4 per cent had confidence or a lot of confidence.
3. In the 1988 survey, 55.5 per cent of respondents expressed confidence in Hong Kong's future, whereas 26.1 per cent took the opposite view.
4. Statistical significance means a chi-square value significant at least at the 0.05 level.
5. If N=1,957, the proportions who trusted or trusted very much the Hong Kong government, the Chinese government, and the British government are 39.8 per cent, 9 per cent, and 15 per cent respectively.
6. The corresponding figures when N=1,957 are 16.1 per cent, 51.9 per cent, and 22.4 per cent respectively.
7. If N=1,957, only 9.4 per cent of respondents reported that they had trustworthy leaders in mind.
8. When N=1,957, the list given (and the number of respondents concerned) is as follows: Martin C.M. Lee (60); Lord Murray MacLehose (1); Lady Lydia Dunn (18); Szeto Wah (22); Allen Lee (10); Xu Simin (1); Sir David Wilson (23); Elsie Tu, indirectly elected member of the Legco (2); Deng Xiaoping, paramount leader of China (1); Maria Tam, appointed member of the Legco and Exco (2); Martin Lee and Szeto Wah (6); Martin Lee and Sir Sze-yuen Chung, former appointed member of the Legco and Exco (1); Sir Edward Youde (1); Lee Wing-tat (1); Xu Jiatun, former Director of the Hong Kong branch of the New China News Agency (1); Rita Fan, appointed member of the Legco and Exco (1); Sir Y.K. Pao, the shipping magnate, and Henry Fok, pro-China business magnate (1); Rosanna Tam, appointed member of the Legco and Exco, and Rita Fan (1); and Martin Lee and Leong Che-hung, indirectly elected member of the Legco (1).
9. When N=1,957, 56.6 per cent of respondents identified themselves as Hongkongese, 25.4 per cent as Chinese, and 13.8 per cent as both.
10. When N=1,957, the percentages of respondents who had very little, little, average, strong, and very strong sense of belonging to Hong Kong are 1.9, 6, 30.6, 45.6, and 13.6 respectively.
11. When N=1,957, 94.7 per cent of respondents had no right of abode abroad, and only 4.4 per cent had it. Among those who did not have it, 69.4 per cent had no intention of emigrating, whereas 23.1 per cent had such a plan. And among those without the right of abode in a foreign country, 68.4 per cent said they would not emigrate before 1997, only 11.1 per cent stated that they would do so.
12. As only a few respondents identified themselves as conservatives or supported conservative politicians, they were excluded from statistical analysis.

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7

Legal Culture

The Challenge of Modernization

Kuan Hsin-chi

Introduction

This chapter argues that a process of modernization has been taking place with regard to public attitudes and beliefs about law in Hong Kong. This process inevitably raises public expectations about a legal system which seems less competent than before in meeting the public's demand.

The said process of modernization can be measured by responses to two fundamental issues of law: the rule of law and the role of law.

The Rule of Law

The rule of law is a Western concept. It differs from the traditional Chinese conception of law in that law is said to have its own autonomy independent of the will of the rulers of the day. The underlying presumption of the rule of law is the dictum that

power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The rule of law is therefore based on the default condition that government and rulers should be distrusted and restrained. As one of the devices to prevent corruption of power, law in the sense of general rules is accorded a supreme status, which overrides the arbitrary will and orders of the current governor.[1]

The rule of law involves at least five different, yet interrelated aspects. First, all governing acts must be based on law. This aspect is often referred to as rule by law. It can be regarded as the very first step in legal development when explicit rules begin to replace political convenience in the conduct of government. Secondly, the rulers themselves must abide by the law. This is the cardinal aspect of the doctrine of the rule of law, the main purpose of which is to restrain the rulers. Otherwise, rule by law alone is insufficient to prevent arbitrary government, as long as the rulers or the lawmakers themselves are above the law. This aspect is related to the fourth aspect to be discussed below, i.e., law as general rules must be universally applicable, including the rulers or lawmakers themselves. Thirdly, *nullum crimen nulla poena sine lege* (no act is illegal unless explicitly prohibited by law). This is sometimes referred to as the principle of legality, according to which a person is free to do anything, unless the law forbids it. The realm of freedom is much larger under this conception than the alternative where a person is free to do only such things as the law allows. Fourthly, everyone is equal before the law. This is a very general principle to ensure fairness and justice in all judicial processes. Fifthly, the administration of justice, especially adjudication must be left to people trained for that purpose. The rule of law requires a high degree of professionalization of all law workers, especially judges. Otherwise, they will not be able to protect the autonomy of law against any social and political encroachment.

The rule of law is unknown in China's legal tradition. Although *fa* were positive and public rules governing behaviour, they were not meant to be autonomous. As Unger has argued, in the Chinese system:

> No clear lines were drawn between administrative commands and rules of law; no identifiable legal profession became separate from the rulers' staff; no peculiar modes of legal discourse stood out from other kinds of moral or policy argument. (1976:102)

In our 1990 survey, we asked our respondents about their views on the above aspects of the rule of law.

As revealed in Table 7.1, the people of Hong Kong supported the rule of law in all its five tenets. Indeed, the high degree of support is surprising. Except for the principle of legality (*nullum crimen nulla poena sine lege*) which received support from only 41.0

Table 7.1 Support for the Rule of Law (%)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/No answer
All conduct of government must be based on law	–	4.6	77.7	9.0	9.1
Even rulers must abide by the laws they make	0.5	5.4	63.8	22.8	7.4
No act is illegal, unless explicitly prohibited by law	0.8	39.7	40.5	0.5	18.5
Everyone is equal before the law	0.3	3.1	66.4	26.2	4.1
In case of severe brain drain, judges could be replaced by social celebrities without any legal training	13.1	63.6	12.3	1.3	9.7
(N = 390)					

per cent of our respondents, all other aspects enjoyed support by an overwhelming majority, ranging from 76.7 to 92.6 per cent. The five survey items are not of the same degree of difficulty to understand. The principle of legality is most difficult to comprehend, therefore 15.5 per cent and 1.5 per cent respectively of our respondents answered "don't know" or gave no answer. The right to equality before the law sounds easy and proved most popular among our respondents, with 92.6 per cent of them indicating they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Since the five aspects of the rule of law constitute a coherent body of jurisprudential doctrines, it is expected that the five corresponding survey items should be highly and significantly correlated with each other. The expectation is largely confirmed by our findings. This is especially true with regard to the relationship between the right to equality before the law and the doctrine that no ruler should be above the law. There is a major exception. It pertains to the relationship between the principle of legality and rule by law on the one hand and the right to equality before the law on the other. No significant correlations have been established among these aspects. The absence of such correlation is particularly disturbing, as the two principles share the same logic: both adjudication and administration must be based on rules. The "error" that occurred may be due to respondents not understanding the doctrine as stated in the survey item and yet feeling compelled to answer.

The Role of Law

There are many conceptions about the role of law. In traditional Chinese thinking, law was the instrument of the ruler and was therefore primarily public law consisting of penal rules. The ruler used law as commands (or orders) backed by sanction (or threat of sanctions) to control and regulate the behaviour of his subjects while he himself was above the law. Legal philosophers in traditional China seemed never to have entertained the thought that

the ruler might abuse his power and therefore needed to be restrained by the law.

As said, modern legal philosophy in the West has settled on a distrustful course towards political authority. Therefore, the fundamental purpose of law is to protect the rights of citizens against the arbitrary power of the government.

In our survey, we asked our respondents to choose between purposes of law specified as (1) to facilitate the rule of the government, (2) to protect citizens' rights, or (3) both. It is no wonder that most of the interviewees, i.e., 70.0 per cent, opted for both purposes. On the other hand, it is surprising that few people, i.e., a meager 1.0 per cent chose "facilitating the rule of the government," as compared with much broader support, i.e., 22.8 per cent, for "the protection of citizens' rights" as the objective of law. These findings do not square with the widely-held image of a public that is obsessed with social order and concerned about the declining authority of the present government. The relationship among law, order, rights and power is admittedly complex; it is hardly susceptible to survey studies. In addition, it is also reasonable to expect that respondents are not consistent with regard to their attitudes to these issues. Therefore, the findings about the purposes of law must be interpreted with caution and together with other related items. One such item was posed as the desirability of limiting the power of the government. It turned out that 46.2 per cent of our respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "Don't limit the power of the government, lest administrative efficiency be impaired," as compared with 38.4 per cent who agreed or strongly agreed. It means that, so long as the issue of citizens' rights does not come into the picture, a much more substantial proportion of people treasured the value of administrative efficiency and were prepared to give more power to the government. Another related item may shed further light on this discussion. When asked about the most important factor for ensuring social order, 54.4 per cent of our interviewees opted for the legal system, with "the political system" (24.9 per cent), *"Li Yi Lian Chi,"* i.e., the Confucian moral precepts (9.0 per

cent), and "a strong leader" (0.5 per cent) lagging far behind. The decline of traditional thinking about the fabric of social order is very obvious; the legal system has replaced Confucian morality as the main pillar of social order. Still, the gap between support for the legal and the political system was narrower than the one between "facilitating the rule of the government" and "protection of citizens' rights." This means that when citizens' rights are juxtaposed with the need for administrative convenience in simple terms, the people of Hong Kong would definitely go for the former. It is only when adversary implications of "protecting citizens' rights" in terms of public order become obvious, that the people of Hong Kong have second thoughts.

If the purpose of law is held to be the protection of citizens' rights, how serious then are the people of Hong Kong about rights? Traditional Chinese legal and political philosophy does not focus on rights. The idea of human rights is particularly foreign and puzzling to traditional Chinese people. Instead of believing that man is born with certain inalienable rights, Chinese have found it more acceptable that rights are made by humans and serve as a means of socio-political control. We thus gave our interviewees the following statement: "The rights an individual possesses are not inborn, but something given by society to reward him for his good deeds." We realized from the very beginning that it is difficult to operationalize the idea of inborn and inalienable rights. We had tried many formulations and settled for the present version which is still unsatisfactory. Yet it is surprising that only 9.2 per cent reported "don't know" and only 1.8 per cent gave no answer. Anyway, 53.6 per cent and 3.3 per cent of our respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Those who expressed belief in the modern idea of human rights were in the minority, with 28.7 per cent disagreeing and 0.3 per cent strongly disagreeing. It is, however, a substantial minority. This finding is then important, provided that the respondents understood the statement as an expression of the idea of inborn and inalienable rights.

Two more items of attitudes are related, albeit indirectly, with

the issue of the role of law. One is concerned with judicial mistakes and the other with the treatment of criminals. In every legal system, there are bound to be judicial mistakes, since policemen, prosecutors, lawyers and judges are humans capable of erring. Allowing for the risk of oversimplification, there are two major types of judicial mistakes: convicting an innocent person or acquitting a guilty person. For those who see the protection of citizens' rights as the main purpose of law, the former mistake is more serious. For people who are more concerned about social order and hence regard its maintenance or promotion as the major function of law, the latter judicial mistake is more serious. In the light of the expected uncertainty in the run-up to 1997, people in Hong Kong must be more concerned about public order than about citizens' rights. Thus, it is interesting to note that the majority of our respondents, i.e., 58.2 per cent, regarded "the conviction of an innocent" as the more serious judicial mistake, while only 27.4 per cent could not condone "the acquittal of a guilty person."

Legal philosophy in traditional China placed a strong emphasis on the penal aspects of law. This emphasis resulted in a belief in the efficacy of severe penalties to prevent crime or in the appropriateness of harsh punishment as retribution. The idea of the rehabilitation of criminals as a new form of sentencing was introduced only in recent times. It is reasonable to hypothesize that those who are more concerned about social order would like to believe in the deterrent effects of harsh punishment, while those who are more concerned about human dignity would like to believe in the value of rehabilitation. The issue is certainly more complex than a simple survey study can handle, because the degree of crime, types of criminals and many other factors will influence people's ordering of preferences. Nevertheless, our purpose is simply to acquire a general sense of the attitude of Hong Kong people in this regard, which turns out to be still quite conservative. No less than 57.4 per cent of our respondents regarded severe punishment as more appropriate treatment of the convicted with only 28.5 per cent preferring rehabilitation.

We have not studied the relationship between the role of law on the one hand and the views about judicial mistakes and treatment of criminals on the other. But such a study would have been meaningless, as only 1.0 per cent of our respondents preferred "facilitating the rule of government."

At any rate, the general issue raised by the above discussion concerns the probable conflict of values. So far we have only reported findings on conflict between pairs of values. What if we asked our respondents to state priorities among a set of general values? When so asked, we were presented with some surprises. The general values posed to the interviewees were individual freedom, public order, social equality, political equality and legal justice. We reasoned that these general values could be ranked in that order. Individual freedom would be most popular since it is the most salient aspect that distinguishes the way of life in Hong Kong from that in mainland China. The next most cherished value we expected would be public order as a possible impact of the Confucian heritage. Social equality would occupy the next rank because it represents the strength of Chinese socialism which the majority of Hong Kong people had experienced before they emigrated to Hong Kong. Next would come the value of political equality as a consequence of the recent movement for democracy. Legal justice was expected to take the last position because we hypothesized that law was not perceived by our respondents as significant in their daily lives.

The most popular value turned out to be individual freedom (39.7 per cent), followed by legal justice (22.1 per cent), social equality (17.4 per cent), public order (8.2 per cent) and political equality (4.4 per cent). The surprise lies first of all in the narrow support given to the value of political equality, the foundation of democracy. In view of the public outcry for democracy in recent times, support for political equality should have been larger than our result. The puzzle may have to do with the public misunderstanding of what democracy truly means, as we have reported elsewhere (Lau and Kuan, 1988:75-80). The next surprise about the hierarchy of values is the relative popularity of judicial

justice as compared with social equality, public order and political equality. And this leads to the biggest surprise that only 8.2 per cent of our respondents named public order as the most important value. This again runs counter to the image of the Hong Kong people as obsessed with public order. If the obsession with order represents the central concern of Confucian political thought, as Cheung Tak-sing (1989) has claimed, then the people of Hong Kong have indeed abandoned an important political tradition. In its place, individual freedom (or rights) together with legal justice (or law) have become the most important fabric of the new social order.

The Trend

In the above, we have observed that the absolute majority of people we surveyed believed in the idea of the rule of law, in the legal system as the most important factor for social stability and in the conviction of the innocent as a more serious judicial mistake than acquitting a guilty person. We have also noted that a large number of people found it desirable to limit the powers of the government even at the expense of administrative efficiency, and that a substantial minority subscribed to the protection of citizens' rights as the main function of law and to the idea of rehabilitation of the convicted. In sum, quite a large number of people in Hong Kong already harbour some modern views about law and the legal system.

This section will further demonstrate that there has been a trend towards modernization in the legal culture in Hong Kong. The trend can be discovered by comparing some findings from the 1990 survey with those of previous ones. However, no comparison can be made about the issue of the rule of law, as it was not studied in previous surveys. We will therefore concentrate on the following four issues: (1) the significance of the legal system as a factor for social stability, (2) tolerance of various kinds of judicial mistakes, (3) treatment of the convicted and (4) the assumption of

inborn and inalienable rights. The discussion of these issues should suffice for our present purpose, as attitudes to them used to be divided along the dimension of tradition and modernity.

We will take the factors for social stability first. In our 1985 studies, only 37.5 per cent of the respondents chose the legal system as the most important factor. For the respondents in 1990, the proportion has increased by 16.9 per cent to 54.4 per cent at the expense of all other factors. The preference for strong leaders has now sunk into oblivion (from 7.3 per cent in 1985 to 0.5 per cent in 1990) and the expected utility of *Li Yi Lian Chi* waned to insignificance (from 14.5 per cent in 1985 to 9.0 per cent in 1990). What remained was the belief in "systems." More significantly, the legal system was deemed more important than the political one which was supported by merely 24.9 per cent of our respondents in 1990.

The progress on the issue of judicial mistakes is steady and equally remarkable. In five years, the proportion of people who believed that convicting an innocent person is a more serious mistake than acquitting a guilty person has increased by 16.6 per cent from 41.6 per cent in 1985 to 58.2 per cent (see Table 7.2 for details).

Table 7.2 Judicial Mistakes (%)
"Which of the following is the most serious mistake?"

	1985	1988	1990
The conviction of an innocent person	41.6	49.2	58.2
The acquittal of a guilty person	43.9	39.4	27.4
Don't know/No answer	14.5	11.3	14.4
Total	100.0	99.9	100.0
(N)	(767)	(396)	(390)

The same rate of progress is registered on the issue of the treatment of the convicted, although at first glance it looks less impressive than the first two items. We are dealing here with a

really very conservative starting point, where an overwhelming majority of Hong Kong people (79.8 per cent in 1985) preferred harsh treatment to rehabilitation, such that a dramatic reduction in the support for the traditional view (22.4 per cent less in 1990) cannot produce a sufficient change in absolute terms (see Table 7.3 for details).

Table 7.3 Treatment of Criminals (%)
"Which treatment of the following is more correct?"

	1985	1988	1990
Be lenient, try rehabilitation	11.3	24.0	28.5
Be harsh, use severe punishment	79.8	62.6	57.4
Don't know/No answer	8.9	13.4	14.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(N)	(767)	(396)	(390)

If certain modernization forces have been at work to change people's attitudes on the role of law, judicial mistakes and treatment of the convicted, the same forces should have worked with regard to the idea of inborn and inalienable rights. This prediction turns out to be true, but the change has not been remarkable. In 1985, a tiny minority (20.5 per cent) held the modern view of inborn and inalienable rights, as compared with the majority who thought otherwise (69.3 per cent). Five years later, only 11.5 per cent more people (a total of 32.0 per cent) believed in this idea, while the majority (56.9 per cent) still regarded rights as rewards granted by society for good deeds. The rate of change in this regard compared poorly with that concerning the other aspects (see Table 7.4 for comparison). The rate is all the more disappointing in the light of the media publicity given to the debates on human rights and the bill of rights. A comparison of media exposure for the four issues is beyond the scope of this paper, but the issue of human rights seems to have most of the headlines.

Table 7.4 Changes in Legal Attitudes from 1985 to 1990 (% more people favouring the modern view)

Legal system as the most important factor for social stability	16.9
Convicting an innocent as a more serious judicial mistake	16.6
Rehabilitation as the more appropriate treatment of the convicted	17.2
Rights are inborn and inalienable	11.5

All in all, however, the modernizing trend is obvious. We will next explore the sources of this trend.

Dynamics of Changes

In general, age and education are the two important sources of changes in attitudes to the law. This is especially true with regard to attitudes on issues of rights, such as the right to equality before the law, the idea of inborn and inalienable rights, and the protection of citizens' rights as the main purpose of law. The younger and the more educated tend to be supportive of the above ideas. In other words, the younger generation and the better educated in Hong Kong are more rights-conscious. Furthermore, education is a better and more significant predictor than age. On other attitude items, the influence of age and education is inconsistent and generally weak. Age and education still account for some differences in attitudes to (1) the principle of legality (*nullum crimen nulla poena sine lege*), (2) the legal system as the most important factor for social stability and (3) the desirability of limiting the powers of government. Variations in attitudes on the requirement of the professionalization of judges can be explained by age but not education, while the idea that no ruler should be above the law can be explained by education but not age. There is no relationship between age or education on the one hand and the following attitudes on the other: the idea that the conduct of government must be based on law, judicial mistakes and the treatment of the convicted.

Implications

We have seen that modern ideas about law and related issues are about to take hold in Hong Kong, especially among the young and the educated. The modernizing trend seems to be here to stay. We may therefore hypothesize that the public may develop higher expectation of and set higher standards for our legal system. Is the legal system prepared for the challenge? How much faith does the public have in the legal system?

There are no clear-cut answers to the above questions. In fact, although the courts are the most trusted institution, the legal system as a whole seems to have deteriorated in the eyes of the public. Let me elaborate.

An overwhelming majority of our respondents (70.8 per cent) in 1990 trusted the courts, as compared with the Legislative Council (58.4 per cent), various advisory committees appointed by the Hong Kong government (42.4 per cent), various pressure groups (34.8 per cent), the Basic Law Drafting Committee (33.1 per cent), the Basic Law Consultative Committee (33.6 per cent), the Hong Kong Branch of the New China News Agency (17.4 per cent) and "leftist organizations" (17.4 per cent).

Such widespread trust enjoyed by the courts may however be offset by the declining image of the legal system as a whole. We have posed this same question in the past three surveys: "Overall, do you regard the legal system of Hong Kong as fair?" The positive answer in 1985 was an overwhelming 75.4 per cent, despite opinions about the court being biased against the poor and about the existence of unjust laws. The proportion dwindled to 65.6 per cent in 1988, and further to 53.0 per cent in 1990. In the same year, a new question was added as to whether the legal system of Hong Kong is biased against the poor. A total of 70.0 per cent of the interviewees agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This

view should be read in the context of an increase in the proportion of respondents over the past five years, who thought social inequality existed[2] (38.2 per cent in 1985, and 56.4 per cent in 1990). The perceived bias of the legal system against the poor cannot be explained by a perceived unaffordability of law suits as 77.2 per cent of the respondents knew about the "legal aid scheme" and 60.8 per cent of those knew that the scheme is designed to help the poor in law suits. If it is not the problem of affordability and it is not the court (which was trusted), then what has (have) led to the worsening image of the legal system by the public? We have no answer yet.

Notes

1. For the development of the rule of law in practice, consult Berman, 1983, especially Chapter 8.
2. In fact, the questions were framed differently. In 1985, we asked: "It is said that Hong Kong society is very unfair. For instance, the rich should not be so rich, while the poor should not be so poor. In your opinion, is Hong Kong society fair?" The question posed in 1990 is more direct: "Do you believe that the distribution of wealth in Hong Kong society is fair?"

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8

Subjective Quality of Life

Wan Po-san

The measure of the individual's quality of life has always occupied an important role in the development of social indicators studies. As stated in one of the pioneer studies: "Social indicators were conceived of as qualitative measures to evaluate benefits and disbenefits in major areas of social concern. They ought to indicate, directly and in non-monetary terms, changes in the individual's quality of life" (Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1969). However, after decades of development of social indicators studies, there is not yet a commonly accepted measure of the individual's quality of life. Generally speaking, there are two major approaches to the conceptualization and measurement of "quality of life," i.e. condition of life and experience of life. As a result, two groups of indicators have been developed: objective indicators (based on observable conditions of social life) and subjective indicators (based on the individual's subjective perceptions and evaluations of their lives and experiences). Despite a growing consensus on the complementary relation between these two types of indicators, the way they can be matched and combined is still a problem.

Furthermore, despite critiques of the Maslowian theory which makes economic security (basic human needs) a precondition for

the satisfaction of higher-order needs, the focus of life quality studies is related to the socio-economic conditions of the concerned country. In developing countries, the general concern about quality of life is concentrated on its physical and quantitative aspects. Individual and societal well-being are measured primarily by a variety of objective indicators of social conditions (such as gross domestic product and its composition, household income, life expectancy, per capita supply of calories and protein, crime rate, etc.). Personal quality of life becomes a function of the conditions of the society in which one lives. The focus of life quality studies in modern and affluent societies, where basic human needs are satisfactorily met, has shifted from the objective aspect of "being well-off" to attitudinal measures of "a sense of well-being" (such as personal perceptions, satisfactions and aspirations in different aspects of daily life). Material well-being is no longer regarded as the principal determinant of personal happiness.

After three decades of miraculous development, Hong Kong has become one of the world's high-income economies. The majority of Hong Kong people have profited significantly from the territory's impressive progress. Objective indicators of the territory's development and improvement of the people's standard of living are legion. The focus of this chapter is thus placed on the attitudinal measures of the individual's quality of life. An individual's perceptual well-being depends not only on his inner resources but also on the socio-economic and political environment in which personal well-being is nurtured. Therefore, the individual's central life concern, life satisfaction and expectation, as well as his or her evaluation of the living environment will be examined. Intergroup variations will also be analysed to gauge the distribution of the subjective quality of life.

On Quantifying the Subjective Quality of Life

Notwithstanding the increasing studies on the subjective quality

of life, we still lack a commonly accepted definition and conceptual framework for its analysis. There are many terms, such as subjective or psychological or internal well-being, life satisfaction, happiness, adjustment, morale, positive and negative affect, etc., used by scholars from various disciplines to measure the subjective and experiential aspects of the quality of life. The present study basically follows the works of Andrews and Withey (1974) and Campbell *et al.* (1976), where the experience of the quality of life is conceived as the gap between personal aspirations and actual conditions. It is measured by means of an additive or composite model of personal life satisfaction. "Satisfaction" is defined as positive orientation of an individual towards his or her life-as-a-whole and towards specific role-related situations. We assume that one's overall ("global") life satisfaction is dependent upon satisfaction in various specific aspects ("domains") of life. Domain satisfaction is determined by the relationships of the perceived attributes of the domain and the individual's aspiration for the specific domain. The higher the level of life satisfaction, the better the quality of life.

In our survey, the subjective quality of life is basically measured by three sets of questions on a 5-point scale, ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied:"

(1) Global life satisfaction:

Respondents were asked: "All in all, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?"

(2) Life domain satisfaction:

Respondents were asked to evaluate their degree of satisfaction with nine different life domains. These selected domains, frequently used in previous literature, are used to represent major aspects of people's daily lives.

(3) Satisfaction with the living environment:

Respondents were asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with eleven different social conditions.

In addition, other related aspects, such as people's central life concerns, their worries, priorities in life improvement and at-

titudes towards the future, will also be included.

Central Life Concerns

Human concerns, which embody the individual's aspirations and societal goals, are extremely broad and dynamic. On the one hand, they may vary across culture, over time, and among people. On the other hand, the individual's life is influenced by a variety of concerns, and the relations of these concerns with one's global life satisfaction may also vary as a result of changing circumstances. Nevertheless, an individual's central life concern has been found to play an important role in shaping his or her aspirations and perceptions of life experiences and thus it affects the strength of the relationship between specific domain and global life satisfaction.

In order to gauge the central life concerns of the Hong Kong Chinese, respondents were asked to identify the most important ingredient for a happy life. As shown in Table 8.1, subtle value changes have taken place amidst a lingering broad consensus on the meaning of happiness.[1]

Table 8.1 The Most Important Ingredient for a Happy Life (%)

	1986	1988	1990
Health	57.4	39.9	35.3
Money	8.9	12.5	17.4
Peace of mind	–	6.3	10.9
Filial Piety	7.0	6.4	8.6
Freedom	–	10.5	8.0
Love/Marriage/Family	13.2	9.4	6.6
Career	6.0	3.9	6.4
Material enjoyment	0.0	0.6	1.4
Serving the society	0.4	0.6	0.7
Others	7.1	9.8	4.7
(N)	(517)	(1,598)	(1,840)

Public conception of personal happiness is a very individualized matter. In line with previous findings, good health was still regarded by the largest, albeit decreasing, proportion of respondents (35.3 per cent) as the most important ingredient for a happy life. Money came second again (17.4 per cent) and the gap between it and health has narrowed. In other words, there is a growing proportion of people who define personal happiness in terms of money at the expense of other values. However, the cultural meaning of "money" (e.g., to make ends meet, to acquire a more luxurious life, to gain a higher social status, for oneself or for one's family, etc.) and the major reasons for such shift of values have yet to be examined.

Despite the importance of work in people's lives, only 6.4 per cent of respondents considered a career as the most important ingredient for personal happiness.

Continuity and change in value orientation always co-exist in any culture. In Hong Kong, a special blend of historical heritage and cultural interaction give people a particular mentality with respect to traditional Chinese values. For example, certain Confucian values, such as peace of mind and filial piety, are still upheld by a number of respondents (10.9 and 8.6 per cent respectively) as the most important ingredient for personal happiness. However, despite the centrality of the family in traditional Chinese culture and in people's lives, the perceptual importance of family, marriage and love in a happy life has almost dropped to an insignificant level (with only 6.6 per cent of respondents highlighting it).[2] The declining significance of family and marriage and the growing concern with oneself are apparently in line with recent findings in post-industrial societies (van de Kaa, 1987). As a result of secularization and individualization, people are moving away from long-standing behavioural patterns (such as marriage and parenthood) and are more concerned with "self-fulfillment." Furthermore, people have little regard for collective interests. In our study, while personal freedom was cherished by 8 per cent of respondents as the most important ingredient, a collectivistic conception of well-being (such as serving the society) was definitely

not regarded as an important criterion.

Survey data seem to indicate a subtle change in the definition of personal happiness, viz., to conceive one's happiness more in tangible and material terms and at the expense of intangible values. This outlook on life might have grown out of the political and economic uncertainties currently plaguing Hong Kong. It may pose a greater threat to one's subjective quality of life in times of economic difficulties because personal "failure" will thus be more visible and one will have a narrower range of life satisfaction to fall back on.

Life Satisfaction Profile

Global and Personal Life Domains Satisfaction

A summary of the respondents' personal life satisfactions is listed in Table 8.2. Respondents reported a fairly high level of satisfaction with their personal life. At the global level, over half of the respondents (55.4 per cent) selected the positive end of the 5-point scale with a mean of 3.5. Only one out of ten respondents expressed that they were not satisfied with their life-as-a-whole.

At the domain level, respondents seemed to be satisfied with the majority of life domains. Nearly all domain satisfaction mean scores, ranging from 2.9 to 3.7, were above average. Four of them (family life, relations with friends and relatives, and state of health) were higher than the overall life satisfaction mean score. However, positive satisfaction scores (4 and 5) over 50 per cent were found in only four out of nine measures. Personal educational attainment remained the only domain which received more public dissatisfaction than satisfaction.

In line with previous findings, the highest average satisfaction level is found in the domain of family life. Following it are other personal social ties – relationships with friends and relatives. Only 2.5 to 6 per cent of respondents reported dissatisfaction with their intimate social network.

This profile of life satisfaction – satisfied more with one's personal social network than with one's educational and economic status – is similar to that found in many other countries. If we disregard measurement biases in these studies (for example, people are less likely to admit that their marriage is in trouble than that they have a difficult boss), the most plausible reasons are two. Firstly, a human relationship is by nature more intimate, all-encompassing, less competitive and thus more intrinsically rewarding. Secondly, perceptual quality of life is a relative concept rather than an absolute one. People evaluate their well-being against certain related reference criteria: the lives of their significant others as well as their own life history and expectations. While there are always external and objective criteria for people to evaluate their social standing (e.g., housing, educational attainment and economic status), there is no ready-made or commonly accepted standard whereby people can assess the quality of their intimate life.

Notwithstanding this positive evaluation of personal life, it is interesting to note that the reported degrees of life satisfaction, at both global and domain levels, are considerably lower than those found in other societies (e.g., Oppong *et al.*, 1988, Campbell, 1981, Kennedy *et al.*, 1978). For example, "family life" is found to be the most satisfactory life domain in both Hong Kong and Shanghai (Lu, 1990:85). Yet, the mean score for satisfaction with family life in Hong Kong is still lower than that in Shanghai (3.7 vs. 4.1). The major reasons for these disparities have yet to be found.

Life in modern societies is multidimensional and segmented. Different life domains carry varying degrees of influence on people's global life satisfaction. As indicated in Table 8.2, an individual's global life satisfaction correlates significantly with all personal life domain satisfaction measures. However, the degree of correlation, ranging from 0.1549 to 0.4271, varies significantly. Satisfaction with family life has the strongest correlation with overall life satisfaction (r=0.4271). Following it are the domains of the financial situation (r=0.4130), job (r=0.4014),[3] and dwelling (r=0.3063). These four major variables can explain 18.2, 17.1, 16.1,

Table 8.2 Global and Domain Life Satisfactions

	Degree of satisfaction (%)					Mean	Pearson's R*	(N)
	1	2	3	4	5			
Global	0.7	9.4	34.5	51.3	4.1	3.487		(1,930)
Domain								
Family life	0.5	4.9	25.6	63.1	5.8	3.689	0.4271	(1,917)
Friends	0.3	2.2	31.3	60.6	5.5	3.689	0.1549	(1,895)
Relatives	0.6	5.4	38.1	52.1	3.9	3.533	0.1705	(1,861)
State of health	0.9	10.8	27.8	56.0	4.5	3.524	0.2040	(1,940)
Leisure	0.2	9.5	46.7	41.0	2.6	3.364	0.2329	(1,820)
Job#	0.8	12.0	38.1	47.2	1.8	3.373	0.4014	(1,245)
Dwelling	2.3	17.4	32.9	43.6	3.8	3.292	0.3063	(1,941)
Financial situation	2.0	15.5	45.9	35.1	1.5	3.185	0.4130	(1,930)
Educational attainment	3.8	36.9	30.6	26.8	1.9	2.860	0.2005	(1,861)

Notes: 1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Average, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied.
* Entries in this column are correlation coefficients between specific domain satisfaction and global life satisfaction. All of them are significant at 0.0000 level.
# Asked only of those with paid employment.

and 9.4 per cent respectively of the variance in one's global life satisfaction. Together they are the most important life domains for explaining and predicting people's overall life satisfaction. In other words, the more people are satisfied with their family life, their financial situation, their job, and their dwelling, the more likely they are to feel that they have a satisfying life.

Other life domain satisfactions are of lesser importance in determining people's life satisfaction in general. While the majority of respondents are satisfied with their relationships with friends and relatives and dissatisfied with their educational attainment, the degree of satisfaction with these domains is not strongly associated with people's global life satisfaction (r=0.1549, 0.1705, and 0.2005 respectively). They can explain only 2.4, 2.9, and 4 per cent respectively of the variance in overall life satisfaction.

When we compare people's life satisfaction with their central life concern, it is interesting to note that what people identify as the most important ingredients for personal happiness, probably excepting money, are not generally found to be the most influential variables in explaining global life satisfaction. For example, while health was highlighted by the largest proportion of respondents as the most important source of a happy life, the correlation between satisfaction with their state of health and overall life satisfaction is not particularly strong (r=0.2040). The degree of satisfaction with one's health can explain only 4.2 per cent of the variance in one's overall life satisfaction. On the other hand, although a mere 6.6 per cent of respondents regarded marriage and family as the most important source of happiness, the degree of satisfaction with one's family life can explain up to 18.2 per cent of one's global life satisfaction.

Satisfaction with the Living Environment

Individual and societal well-being are naturally interrelated. Notwithstanding their satisfaction with personal life, most of the respondents were quite dissatisfied with various aspects of the

Table 8.3 Degree of Satisfaction with Different Societal Conditions (N = 1,957)

	Degree of satisfaction (%)						Mean	Pearson's R*
	1	2	3	4	5	DK/NA		
Political situation	3.8	25.2	29.5	13.1	0.3	28.1	2.735	0.0651
Public order	4.3	36.5	35.6	20.6	0.6	2.6	2.760	0.1004
Social welfare	3.4	25.1	35.1	20.1	1.0	15.4	2.884	0.1264
Transport	6.2	31.0	29.5	29.7	1.4	2.3	2.889	0.0545
Housing	2.7	28.7	33.7	26.7	1.0	7.3	2.942	0.1940
Medical services	2.7	25.3	37.2	28.0	0.9	5.9	2.991	0.0986
Government performance#	1.6	14.5	51.9	21.5	0.9	9.7	3.062	0.1647
Education	1.9	19.5	30.3	38.9	1.7	7.7	3.208	0.1255
Economic situation	0.7	16.0	30.9	39.6	1.8	11.0	3.291	0.1479
Employment	0.8	11.7	35.9	39.0	2.1	10.4	3.334	0.1721
Recreation	0.7	9.8	32.4	43.4	2.5	11.2	3.417	0.0991

Notes: 1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Average, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied, DK/NA = Don't know/No answer.
* Entries in this column are correlation coefficients between satisfaction with social condition and global life satisfaction. All of them are significant at 0.0000 level, except for "political situation" and "transport" which are significant at 0.0075 and 0.0089 levels respectively.
# Evaluation of government performance ranged from 1 = very bad to 5 = very good.

territory's social conditions. As shown in Table 8.3, none of the eleven social conditions asked in the 1990 survey was regarded as satisfactory by half of the respondents. Mean scores of satisfaction ranged from 2.735 (political situation) to 3.417 (recreation). Five out of eleven conditions received more public dissatisfaction than satisfaction.

The political situation was seen by the respondents as the least satisfactory and most uncertain social condition. Among those who held definite views on the current political situation, only 18.7 per cent were satisfied, whilst 40.4 per cent thought otherwise. Following it are the conditions of public order, social welfare, transport, housing, and medical services. None of the mean score of satisfaction for these conditions was above average. Excluding those who gave non-committal answers, the percentage of respondents who were satisfied with these social domains were 21.7, 24.9, 31.8, 29.8, and 30.8 respectively.

The fast-fading traditional norms of self-help and the avoidance of governmental contact are well documented (Lau and Kuan, 1988). Satisfactory government performance has been regarded as one of the major bases of public acceptance of the colonial political system. However, coupled with the erosion of government authority, people are becoming less trusting of the government and less appreciative of its performance. The percentage of respondents who rated government performance as good or very good had declined considerably from 37.3 in 1986 and 42 in 1988 to 22.4 in 1990. Those who evaluated negatively, even though still in the minority, rose from 9.5 per cent in 1986 and 6.6 per cent in 1988 to 16.1 per cent in 1990.

Public satisfaction with education was slightly above average. However, despite all the government efforts to improve educational opportunities and qualities, only four out of ten respondents were satisfied.

It is interesting to note that in spite of growing public anxieties about the territory's economic prospects and the high inflation which was threatening and imposing huge claims against our standard of living, people were still more satisfied

with the state of the territory's economy than with other socio-political situations.

The Structure of Domain Satisfaction Measures

A comparison of satisfaction with personal life domains and societal conditions reveals the following major differences:

Firstly, people generally held a more definite opinion on the quality of their personal life than on the quality of society. While most of the respondents could give definite answers to personal life satisfaction, the proportion of respondents who gave non-committal answers to satisfaction with different societal conditions was generally higher. They range widely from 2.3 to 28.1 per cent, with half of them over 10 per cent. On the whole, the closer the condition is related to one's daily livelihood and immediate personal interests, the more likely one is to have a definite opinion on its performance. For example, while there were only 2.3 and 2.6 per cent of respondents who did not give definite answers to their satisfaction with transport and public order, the corresponding percentages with regard to social welfare and the political situation were as large as 15.4 and 28.1 per cent respectively.

Secondly, people were obviously less satisfied with societal conditions than with their own personal life domains. However, the variations in satisfaction among different public spheres were slightly smaller than those among personal life domains. The major reasons for this disparity – whether people were actually more satisfied with their private life or they were more inclined to approach public affairs critically – have yet to be identified.

Thirdly, all the correlations between an individual's global life satisfaction and satisfaction with different societal conditions are also statistically significant. However, the strengths of relationship are considerably weaker than those with respect to personal life domains. For example, the four strongest variables, that is, satisfaction with housing (r=0.1940), employment (r=0.1721), government performance (r=0.1647), and economic situation (r=0.1479), explain only 3.8, 3.0, 2.7, and 2.2 per cent respectively

of the variance in an individual's global life satisfaction.

On the whole, nearly all domain satisfaction measures are positively correlated. In other words, respondents who are satisfied with one life domain are likely to be satisfied with other aspects of life as well. As expected, domain satisfaction measures are not correlated in a uniform manner:

Firstly, the strength of correlation between different pairs of domain satisfaction measures varies. For example, while satisfaction with personal financial situation is strongly correlated with one's job satisfaction, its correlation with satisfaction with relatives relationship is considerably weaker.

Secondly, the strength of correlation between pairs of private life domain satisfaction measures are stronger than that between pairs of private life domain and public life domain, and vice versa. For example, while one's degree of satisfaction with family life is strongly correlated with satisfaction with one's personal financial situation, it is only weakly correlated with one's satisfaction with public services and facilities.

Thirdly, domains that occupy a more central role in one's life experience (such as family life, financial situation, job) tend to correlate more strongly with other personal life domain satisfaction measures than domains that are peripheral (such as relationships with relatives).

Factor analysis of domain satisfaction measures elaborates its underlying structure. Our findings indicate that, for those who held paid employment, over half (52.6 per cent) of the total variance is attributable to five factors (with eigenvalues above 1.0).[4] These factors were then rotated to provide orthogonality via the varimax method. Factoring was terminated at 15 iterations. The lack of cross-loadings suggests that these factors are substantially homogeneous. The first principal component is made up of one's most immediate life experience, personal resources and gains – satisfaction with one's personal financial situation, dwelling, family life, educational attainment, job, and health. The second component comprises satisfaction with specific public services and facilities – social welfare, housing, medical services, and

education. The third factor is related to primary public concerns of urban life – public order, the political situation and transport. The fourth factor is concerned mainly with public economic affairs – satisfaction with the territory's employment, economic situation and recreation. The last component has to do with one's social network – relationships with relatives and friends (see Appendix 1).

Findings on those who did not hold paid employment indicate a slightly different structure of domain satisfaction. Over sixty per cent (60.6) of the total sample variance is explained by six factors (with eigenvalues above 1.0).[5] After a varimax rotation, which was terminated at 11 iterations, the item contents of these factors are: (1) satisfaction with the territory's recreation, education, government performance, medical services and social welfare; (2) satisfaction with relationships with friends and relatives, dwelling and leisure; (3) evaluation of the territory's economic situation, public order and political situation; (4) personal financial situation, family life and health condition; (5) satisfaction with transport, housing and social welfare; and (6) satisfaction with leisure and educational attainment (see Appendix 2).

Worries and Life Improvement Priority

Long-lasting worries, anxiety, and negative mental experiences are common indicators of people's lack of well-being. While only 10.1 per cent of the respondents were dissatisfied with life, many of them were troubled by worries. When asked whether they had any worries in the previous six months, 44.4 per cent of respondents replied that they had occasional worries and 12.8 per cent had frequent worries. Although well-being can co-exist with symptoms of its lack, frequency of worries is negatively related to one's life satisfaction. People who reported a higher degree of life satisfaction usually had fewer worries.

Table 8.4 Frequency and Sources of Worries in the Previous Six Months (%)

	1986	1988	1990
Frequency of worries			
None/Rare	38.0	48.2	41.8
Sometimes	50.8	37.5	44.4
Often	11.0	14.0	12.8
Don't know/No answer	0.2	0.4	1.0
(N)	(539)	(1,662)	(1,957)
Sources of worries			
Financial	18.0	23.3	21.1
Job/Study	21.6	27.7	19.4
Children/Family/Marriage	29.7	27.0	21.0
Personal future	9.6	3.9	10.1
Health	8.7	8.0	8.4
Interpersonal relation	9.0	3.6	3.7
Hong Kong's future	–	–	8.2
Others	3.3	6.5	8.1
(N)	(333)	(840)	(1,048)

A comparison with previous findings indicates little fluctuation among frequencies of people's worries in the past few years (see Table 8.4). While the percentage of respondents who had frequent worries remains relatively stable, those who had none or few worries rose considerably in 1988 but dropped again in 1990. Along with socio-economic development, there are substantial changes in the sources of people's worries. In the sixties, financial problems were the prime scourge. These were identified by nearly half of the respondents (46.5 per cent) as the major cause of worries ("Family Life in Urban Hong Kong Codebook," 1967). In the eighties, the sources of people's worries had become diversified. To date, people are generally troubled by problems concerning

their financial situation, job and study, and family matters. Notwithstanding the general dissatisfaction with their personal financial situation and the strong desire to improve this aspect of personal life, only two out of ten respondents who had occasional or frequent worries were troubled by money matters. Nevertheless, the percentage of respondents who regarded their income as insufficient to cope with daily expenses has increased from 7.6 in 1986 to 13.1 in 1988, and 15.5 in 1990.

With respect to changes in the past few years, one of the major shifts is the increasing number of respondents, albeit a drop in 1988, who were troubled by problems concerning their personal and the territory's future.

When respondents were asked which aspects of their personal lives they wished to improve, their priorities were basically similar to those in 1988. Betterment of dwelling came first, followed by improvement in financial situation. Advancement in other life domains such as family relationships and children's education continued to receive a low priority. However, as indicated in Table 8.5, while the proportion of respondents who wanted improvements in their family relationships and children's education remained more or less the same, those who hoped for a financial improvement rose by 8.5 per cent in the two-year period. Furthermore, the proportion of respondents who seemed to be contented with their life (including those who did not give a definite answer and who replied "none") declined slightly from 21.5 per cent in 1988 to 18.5 per cent in 1990.

On the whole, people's life improvement priorities were basically in congruence with their life satisfaction profile – the more dissatisfied aspects received a higher improvement priority – except for one significant inconsistency. One's educational attainment, being the domain of most dissatisfaction, was only given a very low improvement priority. It seems that people were quite realistic in assessing their life improvement priorities. Being aware of the practical difficulties involved in upgrading one's formal educational qualifications, people were more willing to put up with this aspect of personal discontent.

Table 8.5 Most Desired Improvement in Life (%)

	1988	1990
Dwelling	37.2	33.4
Financial condition	19.5	28.0
Family relationship	9.0	7.3
Children's education	8.6	8.1
Others	4.3	4.8
None	8.3	0.9
Don't know/No answer	13.2	17.6
(N)	(1,662)	(1,957)

Attitudes towards the Future

One's attitudes towards the future – hopeful or despairing – play an important role in shaping one's perceptual quality of life and expectations. As Hong Kong was beset with an array of socio-political problems and uncertainties (such as economic stagflation, the impending transfer of sovereignty to the Chinese government, and the increasing involvement of China in local affairs, etc.), it is not at all surprising to find that people did not have much confidence in the territory's future. When asked about their confidence in the territory's future, nine out of ten respondents held definite opinions. Among them, 37.3 per cent were optimistic, 32 per cent had average confidence, and 30.8 per cent were pessimistic.

Declining public confidence in the territory's future can also be gauged by the increasing outflow of Hong Kong people. Despite the collective efforts staged by the government and the private sector to help arrest the worsening brain drain and to boost public confidence, people's emigration propensity is still on the rise. In our survey, only 4.4 per cent of respondents had residential rights in a foreign country. However, the percentage of

respondents who declared that they were not planning to emigrate has dropped from 78.5 per cent in 1988 to 69.4 per cent in 1990. Those who said that they did not think they would emigrate before 1997 had also decreased from 74.3 per cent in 1988 to 68.4 per cent in 1990. Similar to previous findings, respondents with the highest emigration propensity were more likely to be younger, more educated, and those with a higher income and occupational status.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that people seemed to hold a peculiar dissociation between societal and personal well-being. Even if people perceived the society to be in trouble, they remained nevertheless quite optimistic about their own and even their children's future.

As shown in Table 8.6, people held a more definite and positive view of their personal prospect in the next three years. The percentage of respondents who could not give a definite answer decreased from 26.2 in 1986 to 23.2 in 1988 and 18.1 in 1990. Apart from those who gave non-committal answers, most of the respondents (62.9 per cent) expected a higher standard of living in the near future. A tiny 6.7 per cent thought otherwise and about one-third (30.5 per cent) thought their living standard would remain unchanged. Furthermore, nearly nine in ten (88.5 per cent) of those who had children believed that their children would have a better life than themselves. Only 1.6 per cent held the opposite view.

Table 8.6 Expected Changes of Living Standard in the Next Three Years (%)

	1986	1988	1990
Worse	7.2	5.7	5.5
About the same	25.2	22.6	24.9
Better	41.4	48.4	51.5
Don't know/No answer	26.2	23.2	18.1
(N)	(539)	(1,662)	(1,957)

Intergroup Variations

Social advantages tend to be cumulative. As a result, the major socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, educational attainment, income and occupational status are usually found to be closely interrelated. The elderly and female are more likely to be less educated, economically inactive or holding less prestigious jobs, and to have lower income.

It is a common expectation that people in better living conditions are or should be more satisfied. However, previous studies carried out in western countries reveal that the relationships between socio-demographic variable and a sense of well-being are rather weak. Nonetheless, it is also found that while subjective well-being seldom varies across groups based on highly stable characteristics (such as gender), it varies modestly between groups based on less permanent characteristics (such as income). Variations across gender, age, educational attainment and income of our respondents basically confirm the "paradox of minimum intergroup variation," as it is named by Inglehart and Rabier (1986).

Gender

Notwithstanding the substantial improvement of women's status and life opportunities in recent years, acute gender inequality persists in nearly all life domains. Women still face a variety of objective disadvantages in comparison with men. They generally have lower incomes, less prestigious jobs, assume more household chores, etc. However, gender is an extremely stable individual characteristic. Gender role socialization continues to play an important role in shaping women's subjective expectations and evaluative criteria. As a result, perceptual well-being is always found to have slight variation between the two sexes.

As expected, there are marked gender differences in central life concerns and desired life improvement priority. The proportion of men who identified money and career development as the

most important ingredients for personal happiness was twice that of women. In a similar vein, men were more desirous of financial improvement while women's concern with filial piety and health was significantly greater than that of men.

Both sexes had similar outlook on their personal future, that of their children and the territory. They reported a similar frequency of worries in the previous six months. However, men were more inclined to worry about financial matters, job and study, and personal future whereas women were more likely to worry about their children's matters.

Owing to a recent substantial advancement in life opportunities and social status, women (except the elderly and the highly educated) were generally more satisfied with their life-as-a-whole than their male counterparts. For example, while 60.2 per cent of women were satisfied or very satisfied with their lives, only 51.2 per cent of the men had the same attitudes. Gender differences in domain satisfaction measures are generally insignificant. Both sexes, regardless of age, expressed similar satisfaction levels in the majority of private and public spheres. However, the less-educated women tended to be more satisfied with their relationships with relatives, their dwelling and leisure than the others. Besides, men and women were consistently found to express different levels of personal health satisfaction: women over thirty and without a high level of educational attainment were more inclined to report a lower degree of satisfaction with their health condition than their respective male respondents.

As mentioned above, different life domains have different degrees of influence on people's overall life satisfaction. Men and women displayed different structures of life satisfaction. On the one hand, apart from the domain of family life and relationships with relatives, the correlations between global and domain satisfaction measures are considerably weaker in women than in men. On the other hand, the order of importance of domain satisfaction in explaining overall life satisfaction is slightly different. For example, while financial satisfaction was the most influential factor in predicting men's overall life satisfaction, satisfaction with family life remained the most important factor for women. The most obvious discrepancies are found in the domains of satisfaction with educational attainment and leisure. Both domains tended to contribute more to men's lives than to women's (see Appendix 3).

Age

Although elderly people are usually one of the most deprived groups in modern societies, subjective well-being is commonly found to have a positive correlation with age (Campbell *et al.*, 1976, Herzog and Rodgers, 1986). The most common explanations relate this pattern to (1) the birth cohort effect and (2) the life cycle effect (people tend to attain a progressively better fit between their aspirations and their situation as they grow old).

As expected, people at different stages of life have distinct patterns of central life concern. Young people (below thirty) emphasize more the importance of money, career development, peace of mind and personal freedom. They are more eager to improve their personal financial situation and dwelling. The elderly (fifty-five or above) are more concerned with health and filial piety. The middle-aged fall somewhere in between and are more anxious to see improvements in their children's education.

In the survey, older respondents tend to have a lower level of educational attainment, less income and a lower occupational status. Nearly one out of three elderly respondents (30.7 per cent) regarded themselves as belonging to the lowest social stratum, compared with 10.1 per cent of the youngest and 21.6 per cent of the middle-aged respondents. Yet, there is no significant correlation between global life satisfaction and age.

At the domain level, satisfaction with family life, personal financial situation, job, leisure, the territory's economic situation and recreation do not vary significantly across age groups. As expected, older respondents are less satisfied with their educational attainment (r=-0.1522), health (r=-0.1190) and relationships with friends (r=-0.0635). However, they generally expressed a higher degree of satisfaction with their relationships with relatives

(r=0.1446), dwelling (r=0.0915) and the majority of socio-political situations (e.g., transport: r=0.2010, social welfare: r=0.1868, government performance: r=0.1666, medical services: r=0.1533). Over half of the elderly (56.0 per cent) reported that they had had none or few worries in the previous six months, as compared to 36.3 per cent of the youngest and 41.8 per cent of the middle-aged group. For the elderly, their health and family matters were the primary sources of worries. Middle-aged people worried more about financial and children's problems while the youngest were affected by problems relating to their jobs, studies and their future.

The most significant variation among age groups lies in their evaluation of personal prospects in the near future. The younger respondents were more likely to expect an improvement in their standard of living in the next three years, and the reverse was true for the older ones. For example, while 77.4 per cent of the young respondents were optimistic about their personal prospects, the respective percentages for the middle-aged and elderly groups were 61.3 and 35.7.

It is noteworthy that older people with different educational attainments varied widely in their perceptual life satisfaction. The educated elderly, who were in the minority, generally reported a higher degree of satisfaction with life. For example, they did not express a higher degree of dissatisfaction with their health; they were more satisfied with their financial situation and relationships with relatives than were their younger counterparts.

Different age groups differed in their patterns of relationship between global life satisfaction and domain satisfaction measures (see Appendix 3). For the young people, satisfaction with their financial situation, family life, job, and dwelling were the most important factors in explaining and predicting their sense of overall life satisfaction while relationships with relatives and friends were the least influential domains. For the middle-aged, satisfaction with family life came first and the rest were similar to those of the younger respondents. In the lives of the elderly, job satisfaction turned out to be the most influential factor. Satisfactory

relationships with friends and relatives were relatively more important while satisfaction with personal educational attainment was the most peripheral.

Education

In modern societies, educational attainment is one of the most important factors in shaping people's lives. The more educated are more likely to have a better job, earn more money, and thus enjoy a more comfortable life.

As expected, respondents with different educational attainments had distinct patterns of central life concern and desired life improvement priorities. Comparatively speaking, the more educated (diploma or degree holders) were more concerned with their careers and peace of mind, and more eager to have an improved financial situation. The less educated (primary education or below) were more traditionally oriented. They were more likely to regard filial piety and health as the most important ingredients for personal happiness and were more anxious to see improvements in their children's education. Those with a middle level of educational attainment (secondary education and technical training) were more pragmatic. They were more likely to consider money as the most important source of happiness and prefer improvements in their dwellings.

There is no significant correlation between global life satisfaction and educational attainment.

Similar to the variation pattern across different age groups, specific domain satisfactions vary somewhat with educational attainment in two opposite directions: the less educated were less satisfied with some of the private life domains but were more satisfied with the majority of socio-political situations than their more privileged counterparts.

With regard to private life domains, variations among different educational groups are more obvious in those with more objective measurements (such as educational attainment: r=0.3557 and health: r=0.1390) and less significant in domains with less

objective measurements (such as family life: r=0.0578, personal financial situation: r=0.0391, job: r=0.0512 and relationships with friends: r=0.0821 and relatives: r=-0.1051). However, respondents with different educational attainment did not differ significantly in their degree of satisfaction with dwelling and leisure.

It is commonly found that the less educated, possibly as a result of their constricted horizons and lower expectations, generally expressed a higher degree of unquestioning satisfaction with or acceptance of the status quo. As a result, they were more likely to express a higher satisfaction with the majority of public domains (e.g., political situation: r=-0.1661, social welfare: r= -0.1931, and medical services: r=-0.1615) than the more educated.

Respondents with different educational attainments differed in the patterns of relationship between global life satisfaction and domain satisfaction measures (see Appendix 3). On the whole, apart from the domains of financial situation, job and health, the strengths of correlation between global life satisfaction and various domain satisfaction measures are positively related to one's educational attainment. For those with a middle level of educational achievement, the most influential variable is the degree of satisfaction with family life. Satisfaction with one's financial situation, job and health tend to be less important than that in other educational groups.

Despite the similarity of overall life satisfaction, the more educated were significantly more confident about their own personal prospect than the less educated. For instance, while 73.6 per cent of the highly educated respondents anticipated a rise of living standard in the next three years, only 49.5 per cent of the less educated were of the same opinion.

The influence of educational attainment on life satisfactions differed between the two sexes. For example, while the correlations between educational level and global life satisfaction, satisfaction with personal educational achievement, relationships with friends, and leisure are stronger for men than for women, it is the reverse for the domains of health, financial situation, and relationships with relatives.

Income

Income is closely related to educational attainment. However, it is not only a relatively less permanent characteristic, but also a more valid indicator of differences in material comfort. As a result, we can expect a higher variation across different income groups than among people with different levels of educational attainment.[6]

Self-reported central life concern varied across different income groups. The lower income groups (monthly income less than HK$6,000) were more concerned with health and filial piety. The middle income groups (monthly income HK$6,000–14,999) were more likely to identify money and career development as the most important ingredients for personal happiness than other income groups. The higher income groups (monthly income over HK$15,000) tended to put more emphasis on peace of mind.

Income and self-declared social stratum are closely related. The more one earns, the higher the social stratum one identified with (r=0.3916). As expected, income is positively related to overall life satisfaction (r=0.1463) and with certain specific domain satisfactions. It is positively related to the degree of satisfaction with family life (r=0.1562), educational attainment (r=0.1549), health (r=0.1277), and financial situation (r=0.1795). It correlates slightly with satisfaction with job (r=0.07689), relationship with friends (r=0.0638), dwelling (r=0.0602), and leisure (r=0.0792). Relationship with relatives is the only private domain that is not associated with income.

However, with the exception of the territory's economic situation, public order and housing, the lower income groups were more likely to report a higher level of satisfaction with the majority of socio-political situations than their more privileged counterparts.

With respect of expectations of personal prospects, the middle income groups turned out to be the most optimistic. For instance, while 73.4 per cent of the middle income respondents expected a rise of living standard in the next three years, only 61.2 per cent of the lower income groups and 62.5 per cent of the higher income

groups had the same anticipation.

All in all, one of the reasons for the low intergroup variation in global life satisfaction might result from the averaging out across private and public domain satisfaction measures. The younger were more likely to be more educated, have a higher income, better jobs and better health. While they possessed a higher degree of satisfaction with their private life domains, they were also more dissatisfied with the socio-political situations than their counterparts, and vice versa. By and large, advantages seem to be cumulative, but with a division between private and public spheres.

Conclusion

Public conception of personal happiness is very individualistic. Good health is still regarded by the largest proportion of respondents as the most important ingredient for a happy life. However, possibly as a result of growing political and economic anxieties, more and more people tended to reorient their central life concerns back to money and material matters.

People had a dissociate attitude towards personal and societal well-being and prospects. On the one hand, they were generally satisfied with their lives, at both the global and domain level. They were expecting a continued improvement of living standard in the near future and believed that their children would have a better life than themselves. On the other hand, they distrusted the government and were less appreciative of its performance. They were increasingly dissatisfied with the majority of socio-political situations and had a gloomy picture of the territory's future. However, personal and societal well-being are closely linked and interdependent. Discontent with the latter might eventually make one's own life less satisfactory and is thus detrimental to the individual's well-being and social stability.

Owing to the variations in subjective expectations and evaluative criteria, different socio-demographic groups vary slightly in

their sense of well-being. While the more privileged groups (such as the younger, the more educated and the higher income groups) were more satisfied with their own lives, they were more critical of the majority of the territory's socio-political situations. By contrast, while the elderly, the less educated and the lower income respondents were less satisfied with their own lives, they were more content with the living environment.

Intergroup variations are more significant in domains with more objective comparative standards (such as educational attainment) and are negligible in domains without external evaluative criteria (such as family life).

Notes

1. Unless otherwise specified, the 1986 data were collected in a Social Indicators Pilot Study conducted by Lau Siu-kai and Wan Po-san in Kwun Tong district and the 1988 data were collected in a territory-wide survey coordinated by Lau Siu-kai, Lee Ming-kwan, Wan Po-san and Wong Siu-lun. Technical details of the surveys are presented in the respective research reports.
2. Previous study in Taiwan revealed a completely different value orientation between Hong Kong and Taiwan Chinese. In Taiwan (Executive Yuan, 1985:47-49) "Harmonious family life" ranked top of the list with 69.7 per cent of respondents identifying it as the most important ingredient for a happy life. Following it were "Good health" (15.6 per cent) and "Sufficient income" (3.9 per cent).
3. It should be borne in mind that this part of the analysis has left out those respondents, particularly women, who do not hold paid employment.
4. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.8534, Barlett Test of Sphericity is significant at 0.0000 level.
5. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.7773, Barlett Test of Sphericity is significant at 0.0000 level.
6. The analysis on satisfaction across income groups has also inevitably excluded those who do not hold paid employment.

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Appendix 1 Sorted Factor Loadings of Domain Satisfaction Measures: I (N = 750)

Domain	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Financial	0.7304				
Dwelling	0.6387				
Family	0.6261				
Edu. attainment	0.6052				
Job	0.5868				
Health	0.5245				
Welfare		0.7463			
Housing		0.7046			
Medical		0.6597			
HK education		0.5406			
Public order			0.7411		
Political			0.6536		
Transport			0.6354		
Employment				0.6853	
Economic				0.5705	
Recreation				0.5601	
Relatives					0.8247
Friends					0.7192

Notes: Factor loadings less than 0.5 are omitted.
For respondents with paid employment and the measure on job satisfaction is included.

Appendix 2 Sorted Factor Loadings of Domain Satisfaction Measures: II (N = 268)

Domain	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
Recreation	0.7696					
HK educaiton	0.7266					
Government	0.6199					
Medical	0.6165					
Friends		0.8099				
Relatives		0.6821				
Dwelling		0.6050				
Leisure		0.5567				0.5455
Public order			0.7683			
Economic			0.7040			
Political			0.6515			
Financial				0.7444		
Family				0.7286		
Health				0.5729		
Transport					0.7462	
Housing					0.5541	
Welfare	0.5115				0.5428	
Edu. attainment						0.7738

Notes: Factor loadings less than 0.5 are omitted.
For respondents without paid employment and the measure on job satisfaction is excluded.

Appendix 3 Correlation between Overall Life Satisfaction and Personal Life Domain Satisfactions (Pearson's R)

	All	Sex		Age			Educational attainment			Monthly income				
		Men	Women	Young	Middle	Old	Low	Middle	High	1	2	3	4	5
Family life	0.4271	0.4250	0.4297	0.3970	0.4504	0.4257	0.4216	0.4288	0.4399	0.4236	0.3936	0.4391	0.4063	0.5523
Financial situation	0.4130	0.4303	0.3807	0.4098	0.4121	0.4174	0.4326	0.3801	0.4812	0.4403	0.3527	0.4406	0.4815	0.4434
Job	0.4014	0.4163	0.3627	0.3948	0.3866	0.5358	0.4042	0.3885	0.4594	0.3990	0.3738	0.4538	0.5605	0.2451
Dwelling	0.3063	0.3204	0.2739	0.3557	0.3048	0.2064	0.2242	0.3207	0.4449	0.2470	0.3394	0.3518	0.4155	0.2137
Leisure	0.2329	0.3058	0.1412	0.2459	0.2394	0.1896	0.1776	0.2276	0.3432	0.2907	0.2775	0.1574	0.4518	0.0117
Health	0.2040	0.2669	0.1630	0.2807	0.1371	0.2610	0.2172	0.1420	0.3509	0.2057	0.1894	0.1096	0.4651	0.3443
Education	0.2005	0.2942	0.0947	0.2584	0.2054	0.1333	0.1059	0.2263	0.3098	0.2590	0.2520	0.2732	0.3635	0.2233
Relatives	0.1705	0.1512	0.1823	0.1817	0.1423	0.2175	0.0904	0.1991	0.2362	0.1597	0.1020	0.1577	0.4011	0.1553
Friends	0.1549	0.1606	0.1422	0.1499	0.1431	0.2132	0.1240	0.1512	0.2055	0.1727	0.1389	0.0874	0.4811	0.1511

Notes: Age: Young = Aged below 30; Middle = Aged 30-54; Old = 55 or above.
Educational attainment: Low = No schooling/Primary; Middle = Secondary/Matriculation/Technical Institute; High = Tertiary (non-degree or degree)/Graduate School.
Monthly income: 1 = Under HK$5,000; 2 = HK$5,000-9,999; 3 = HK$10,000-14,999; 4 = HK$15,000-19,999; 5 = HK$20,000 or above.

9

Personal Experience and Social Ideology

Thematization and Theorization in Social Indicators Studies

Thomas W. P. Wong

Prolegomenon

If there is an emergent consensus among the contributions to the study of social indicators since the benchmark study in 1988 (or 1986-87, if one includes the Kwun Tong study), it is the recognition that measures of the sense of well-being of Hong Kong citizens in various spheres of life, as well as the more specific attempts to identify and chart their normative territory, have to be further thematized, quantified and refined. Without these further efforts, it will be difficult to fulfil the original aims of laying down a comprehensive and systematic benchmark of the aspirations and strains, of the orientations and demands, of Hong Kong people, against which changes in the 1990s could be revealed and analysed. It will also be very difficult to meet the goal of identifying major issues which affect the society, and which create tension

and division within it, unless we start to make sense of the indicators findings by thematizing them, and ask how they might help to explain the nature of the society as we understand it. For unless we ask big questions – how the society is integrated, and what belief or value systems undergird the social order – of our data, how can we distinguish the major fissures from the ordinary divisions, the destabilizing forces from the integrative mechanisms, and so on?

In S. L. Wong's "anxiety—prosperity" thesis (Wong, 1988, 1992), we could discern an attempt to group and thematize various subjective aspects of the 1988 indicators findings, and place them into some causal relationships. The thesis, namely, that anxiety generates and reinforces the refugee mentality, and the latter is the source of the economic dynamism which in turn underlies Hong Kong's prosperity and stability, is as much a description of the ethos, beliefs and values of Hong Kong people as a discourse on the nature of the society and its reasons for success. It is an exercise in what we called in the above "asking big questions of data." Although we have reservations about the choice of indicators for the key concepts in the thesis (namely, anxiety, refugee mentality and economic dynamism), and about the "compatibility" of the measures constituting the individual causal concepts, such endeavours exemplify the recognized need to conceptualize and theorize the social indicators findings, and, in our view, take the study of social indicators in the right direction.[1] However, in boldly and admirably seizing on a few explanatory variables, Wong tends to place together what in our view are conceptually disparate indicators, and does not critically distinguish between "quality of life" indicators (worries and sense of well-being in various domains of life) and "value/belief systems" (e.g., the value placed on education, personal freedom, etc.). In fact, most of the measures of his three explanatory variables are indicators of "quality of life," rather than of "value/belief systems." We will return to this distinction later in the chapter.

A similar attempt to thematize and refine the problematic of the indicators study is programmatically and briefly discussed by

T. L. Lui (1992). In his review of works addressing the work orientation in Hong Kong society (the debate surrounding "instrumentalism"), Lui argued that the debate, in so far as it focused on work attitudes (in particular, those affecting the propensity to join labour unions and thus the possibility of more militant industrial action), has reached an impasse. On the one hand, the concept of "instrumentalism" has been made to bear too much explanatory weight: one particular (subjective) aspect of work is made to explain labour participation and its implications for industrial relations – and by extension, the stability – of the society. On the other hand, the concept itself is very "underdeveloped" in terms of its analytical sophistication and conceptual boundaries. Different researchers use or emphasize different components or measures of the concept, and come to different conclusions. What is to be done, Lui argued, is to place "instrumental" attitudes and orientations into the broader context of the values and meaning of work; it is in the importance and moralities the worker attaches to his work (and his right to work) that one could better ascertain the normative and attitudinal characteristics of the Hong Kong worker. Here, we again find a recognition of the need to conceptualize discrete indicators of attitudes and views as components of larger value or belief systems pertaining to work and one's work life.[2]

Similar arguments could be found in the indicators study of inequalities, aspirations and assessments of mobility chances and personal success (T. Wong, 1991, 1992). Ultimately, the arguments go, notions such as "optimism" or "pessimism" (not to mention the more complex ones of "collective pessimism" and "individual pessimism") have both a core belief/value basis and a more contextual or circumstantial side. The emergent consensus therefore is that there is a need to conceptualize and thematize further the meaning and significance of our findings on the orientations and beliefs of Hong Kong people. In particular, indicators of normative orientations and widely-held social ethos must be theorized as aspects of social moralities or social imageries. Findings on the structure of our respondents' "model of society" (is money the

most important divider of people, and how does such a "pecuniary" model differ sociologically from a "power" or "prestige" model?);[3] the views and values placed on wealth and the process of "making it" (what ethical or moral values are attached to riches; do people envy or resent the rich, and does this affect their views of the broader relations between the haves and the haves-not?),[4] and on other normative areas,[5] have to be seen as contributing to the formation of some overall belief system characteristic of Hong Kong people.

The following represents one such preliminary attempt to construct that normative/belief system, in connection with the findings on social inequalities and social mobility. Before we proceed further, we must note that in trying to thematize and refine social indicators data, some further quantification is also necessary (at least from our own perspective). For what is to be thematized and abstracted are ultimately figures. In our approach, we have tried to construct composite indicators (scores) from batteries of questions/statements in the interview schedule for tapping the different components of the belief systems. This involves arbitrarily assigning scores to the answers, as well as arbitrarily combining the scores to form a composite scale. Without denying the arbitrariness and its problematic features, what is more important in our view is a consistent and meaningful way of designing and grouping the questions, with a view to index- or scale-construction.[6] In Kuan and Lau's study of the legal culture of Hong Kong people, the lack of conceptually thought-out and consistently applied questions made it impossible for the authors to come to any unequivocal characterization of Hong Kong people's "moral" (law as transcendental or not, etc.) view of law and the legal procedure (Kuan and Lau, 1992:154f). This is particularly unfortunate, for obviously the authors are trying to address an extremely important aspect of Hong Kong people's belief/value systems (another example to show groping thematization and theorization): namely, how morally binding do they perceive the law to be? and what are the implications of such beliefs for the ethos of trust or interpersonal obligations?[7] One way out of this

predicament (the tools failing the theory, so to say) could be to design individual batteries of questions for specific areas or themes, and, on that basis, to construct scales or indices (see, for instance, McClosky and Zaller's (1984) Opinions and Values of Americans (OVS) study). In this way, future research could revise or add questions with a clear notion of what is being fathomed, and longitudinal and comparative analyses would also be facilitated. Our present attempt is to take the first experimental step in this direction, and perforce run the gauntlet of inadequate data and inchoate theorization. We, however, hope the findings will justify such an exercise, and that they will stimulate collective efforts in the study of moral values of Hong Kong society in the run-up to 1997.[8]

The Paradox of Optimism and Pessimism

It has been established that though still basically a refugee society, with its population just reaching normalcy, there is a remarkably pervasive and homogeneous social ideology among Hong Kong people. Earlier findings have pointed to the similarity of outlook between the locally born and the immigrants (see findings under various headings in the 1988 Social Indicators Study). Both groups perceive the society as basically open, feel that there is room for improvement and that individual endeavours are important. Indeed, this social ideology, with an emphasis on individualistic mobility strategy, is subscribed by both the young and the old, men and women, rich and poor (T. Wong, 1991). In the 1990 Social Indicators survey, we find a general vindication of these observations.

Our sample population (N=332) is evenly distributed among males and females, and is relatively young; nearly half of it is under 35 years old. Like the 1988 sample, just over half of the respondents were born in Hong Kong, the rest being immigrants mostly from Guangdong province. Among the latter group, there are very few new immigrants. Over 70 per cent of our respondents

are married, forming predominantly small households (more than 80 per cent having 5 or fewer members). About a quarter of them completed upper secondary education, although more than one-third had primary or no education at all. Over half could be regarded as having non-manual occupations, with a slight concentration in the administrative and professional occupations. Compared to the 1988 sample, our respondents fare better in material terms: nearly 30 per cent have a monthly household income of HK$15,000 and above, while the proportion of the lower income group (from HK$2,000 to HK$5,999) has shrunk from 30 per cent in 1988 to 12 per cent. Other than this quite dramatic change, the general profile of our present sample is similar to that in the 1988 study.

In terms of general outlook on life, there are several noteworthy areas of continuity, again using the 1988 study as our benchmark. Most of our respondents reported few worries in their daily life, and they are generally satisfied with their health, familial and economic conditions. This is further reflected in their high hopes for the future life-station of their children, such as educational level, general livelihood, and so forth. But with regard to the current political situation, and, to a lesser extent, law and order and welfare problems, the respondents displayed greater dissatisfaction. The pattern in the political area is almost a duplicate of that in 1988: while most showed average and negative satisfaction, one-third answered "don't know/no comment." Another area of continuity relates to the more general perception of the most important ingredients for "good living." The three most important ones remain "good health," "money" and "freedom," with "good health" ranked at the top. We think it would be fair to say that the pursuit of money presupposes or necessitates the other two ingredients of good health and personal freedom, and that an important aspect of our respondents' perceived quality of life is this sense of pecuniary well-being.

That Hong Kong people generally perceive the society as basically open and allowing social advancement has been attested by the 1988 findings. However, in that study, we also counter-

posed to this optimistic perception of Hong Kong opportunity structure a more realistic and, in some respects, pessimistic appraisal of personal advancement and the divisions in the society. The 1990 data affirm the existence of both optimism and pessimism. But (and we have argued in a similar vein in the benchmark study), there are two important caveats. First, when the respondents are probed more specifically about opportunities (the chance of an employee in Hong Kong struggling to become an employer), the degree (indeed, the pattern) to which the social ideology of "openness" and the evinced optimism are subscribed, vary according to educational level, occupation and income. The better educated, and higher salaried, professionals and administrators espoused to a greater extent the openness belief. With the disadvantaged groups much less optimistic (in some cases, it would be fair to say that their relations with the social ideology of openness are quite tenuous), it will be difficult for one to uphold any cross-the-board optimism characterization. Indeed, the more we try to reveal and describe the differences among the subgroups, the more we find such general characterizations inadequate.

Secondly, with regard to the views on the divisions in society, the disparity between rich and poor, the responses also reveal differences along educational and occupational lines, with, for instance, more of the better educated and the "service class"[9] disagreeing with the statement that rich and poor inevitably have conflicts of interests. Although an unambiguous pattern separating the advantaged and the disadvantaged group could not, given our data and sample size, be established, the pertinent point here is that emergent or nascent beliefs or social imageries arising from structural differentials are important, and that without revealing and describing such differences, we would be reading too much into the generalized characterizations and losing an important foothold for charting changes in ethos.

When we come to the personal experience of the respondents, and ask them for their assessment of their chance of finding a better job and developing their career, the same pattern of pes-

simism found in 1988 recurs. More than three-quarters perceived the chance as very little or none (and we would return to this in a later section). There is little difference among the occupational groups. One could then, *contra* S. L. Wong, say that there is collective – subject to the caveat mentioned above – optimism (with regard to the opportunity structure of the society) and individual pessimism (with reference to the opportunity structure relevant to oneself). But we hold that such general characterizations are inadequate for capturing the essence of the problem, which, in our view, is about the relations between social ideology on the one hand, and personal experience on the other.

The problem of the need to evaluate and interpret openness beliefs in the context of structural and objective differentials, and of making the distinction between the perception of social openness and the personal assessment of opportunities was first raised in the benchmark study, in connection with the understanding of social imageries or "models of society." There we pointed to the apparent paradox of optimistic, even idealistic, beliefs about the openness of the society and of the importance or efficacy of individual endeavours existing alongside a realistic, even pessimistic, assessment both of the society's inequalities and the chances for personal advancement. In retrospect, and with our views vindicated by the present findings, we can state more confidently that the paradox of optimism—pessimism conceals rather than reveals the beliefs or values of Hong Kong people, and their relation to issues of subjective appraisals of well-being and the quality of life. The paradox, rather, refers to a distinction, and the disjunction, between social ideology on the one hand, and personal experience on the other. (The findings from the present survey tend to vindicate the importance of structural differentials and the distinction between the abstract and the concrete.) The larger issue here is, of course, one of adjudging notions of optimism and its converse, pessimism or anxiety. In a way, these general characterizations are misnomers, for they gloss over the nuanced components of the social ideology. They make no allowance for the fact that much is embedded in the subjective appraisals of the opportunity structure of the society: there are multiple bases of evaluation in the assessment, often mixing aspiration, ideal and social cognition. "Optimism" and "pessimism" (or for that matter, "anxiety" and its kindred terms) are supposed to be characterizations, or slants, arising from a concern with the multi-faceted and multi-level sense of well-being of Hong Kong citizens, while what is being gauged are dimensions of social ideology and personal experience. In our view, the problem is not just to do with "collective outlook" or "mood," but also with the relation between social ideology and personal experience, and its implications for personal and collective strain, and for the larger question of social integration. In the following, we first try to conceptualize the dimensions of the social ideology; we are inclined to regard the views and assessments culled from our respondents' answers to our questions on opportunities, inequalities and fairness as parts of a belief or value system (a social ideology), and not just as discrete indicators or components of some "social" sense of well-being. As already stated in a previous section, we believe that this is a necessary and rewarding direction for future indicators studies.

The Dimensions of Belief System

Before we proceed to the three dimensions of the belief system, we need to consider more positively the *raison d'être* and implications of our position. There are three considerations. First, in order to have a more balanced understanding of "optimism," "pessimism" and similar characterizations of the "collective mood," we need to delve deeper into the dimensions and distinctions in the belief systems, and at the same time pay close attention to the differences emerging from the belief systems as they seem to arise from structural and objective differentials or inequalities. With regard to our topic, we have delineated three major dimensions or subsystems of the belief system.

Secondly, we hold that these three dimensions roughly per-

tain to the social, economic and the political domain of life. By "domain of life," we, following Hochschild (1981), mean "the categories of activity and thought that make up a person's daily experience."[10] The idea of three domains of life enables us to see how the different dimensions of the belief system are embedded in specific contexts of daily activities and thoughts, and accordingly, how they interact with the specific issues, conditions and resources of each context. It is obvious that the social, economic and political domains of life have a different mix of such issues, conditions and resources, and that they would have a different relation or affinity with the operating norms found in each domain.

Thirdly, the distinction (and as we shall argue in the following, the disjunction) between personal experience on the one hand, and social ideology, on the other, is not new. It has been empirically discovered and fruitfully used to argue significant theoretical issues (Scholzman and Verba, 1979). In our context, the distinction forces us to ask this question: the whence and whither of the belief system. If personal experience (e.g., pessimistic assessment of personal mobility chances, or a conflictual model of society) is not a reliable guidepost to the nature of the social ideology or the belief system (society as open, with room for improvement, etc.), then how are we to account for the chasm? More importantly, to what extent could personal experience withstand further strain – whether caused by uncertainty over the future, by worsening economic conditions, or by one's changing evaluations of one's chances – without eventually undermining or changing the social ideology. A careful charting of this two-pronged phenomenon – personal grievances (the nature of which, we might add is not necessarily exhausted by findings on degrees of satisfaction) on the one hand, and social ideology on the other – as it is subjected to the socio-economic and political strain and uncertainties of the 1990s will make it possible for us to monitor the "collective mood" as well as identifying the events and causes which might destabilize the social order itself.

In the formulation of the dimensions of the social ideology,

we have grouped together some questions by subsuming them under broad themes. The following represents the dimensions and their component questions:

Openness dimension:

(1) It is said that in Hong Kong, if one has abilities and works hard, one can improve one's social and economic position. Do you agree with this view?
(2) How easy do you believe it is to change one's social status in Hong Kong, say, changing from an employee to the boss?

Inequality dimension:

(Do you agree with the following views?)
(1) If the boss has to make money, he has to exploit the worker.
(2) In Hong Kong society, the earnings gap between the rich and the poor is very great.
(3) The interests of the rich and the poor are inevitably in conflict.

Fairness dimension:

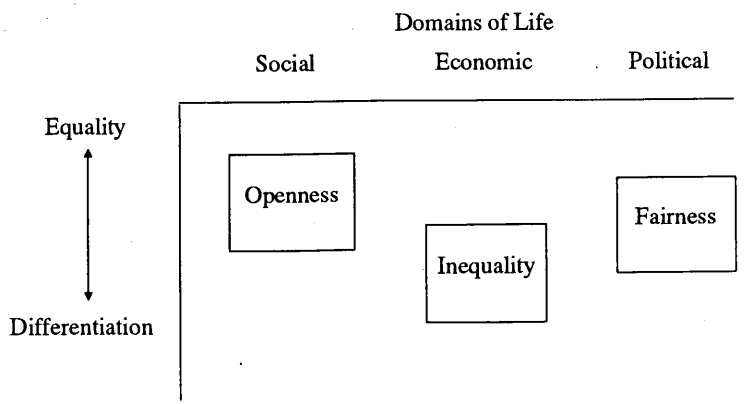
(For the first two questions: Do you agree with the following views?)
(1) The rich can solve almost any problem with money.
(2) The poor are never able to influence social policies.
(3) In general, how just do you think the legal system in Hong Kong is?

We believe that the component questions for each dimension are tapping basically the same set of "categories of thoughts and activity," although some may pertain to the more abstract or general level, and the others more to the specific and concrete. We have conceptualized the dimensions as, respectively, "openness," "inequality" and "fairness." Each captures an aspect of the belief system relevant to the cognition and evaluation of the oppor-

tunity structure and the divisions of the society. Their substantive meaning perhaps needs to be spelt out. By "openness," we refer to the perception of the general availability and equality of opportunities in Hong Kong society; the second component question, by asking more specifically about social advancement of great magnitude, provides a more balanced indicator of the "openness" beliefs. The "inequality" dimension refers to the degree to which disparities in riches are perceived in conflictual as well as exploitative terms. Those disagreeing with the statements tend towards a conservative frame of mind, seeing society as a more harmonious order of arrangements. Lastly, the "fairness" dimension is conceptualized to capture the views and beliefs of our respondents with regard to the power differentials in the society. In particular, the two statements on the differences between the rich and the poor refer not so much to economic power, as to the differential abilities to "get things done." The third question addresses directly the fairness or justice of the legal/judiciary system. To characterize these three dimensions, we can say that the "openness" dimension is about opportunities and mobility chances; "inequality" about economic resources and conflicts; and "fairness" about political power and justice. Broadly, we see them as pertaining respectively to the social, economic and political domains of life.

In constructing the scales of the three dimensions, we assigned scores to the responses. On all except two questions, whenever the respondent disagreed strongly with the view expressed in the question, he or she was given 5 points; for a less strong response, 4 points, and so on, with the strongest agreement being given 1 point.[11] As we noted earlier, such a scale construction is purely arbitrary, and is a preliminary, statistically insecure, attempt. Future attempts could design more rigorous scales by working on a more comprehensive set of measures, and by assigning different "weights" to the value as opposed to the perception element. At any rate, for each dimension, depending on his or her score, a respondent is placed in one of three categories: those with optimistic and "conservative" beliefs, those feeling ambivalent,

and those viewing the society in pessimistic and "radical" terms. The exact meaning of these terms of course is somewhat dependent on the dimension itself. Thus, for instance, it is more appropriate to use the term "radical" in the economic domain, with regard to the inequality dimension, than in either the social (openness dimension) or the political (fairness dimension) domain. For want of a more precise terminology, we call the three types of values or beliefs "conservative," "ambivalent" and "radical." If we regard the conservative end as tending towards the principle of equality on all three fronts, and the radical end as towards one of differentiation, we can represent the relations between the "domain of life" and the dimension of belief in the following schematic manner:[12]



The distribution of respondents endorsing different types of values in the three domains is shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Percentage of Respondents Endorsing the Three Types of Values

	Openness	Inequality	Fairness
Conservative	40	5	11
Ambivalent	54	52	66
Radical	6	43	23
(N)	(181)*	(300)	(262)

* The drop in sample size is due to the fact that one of the component questions asked working (economically active) respondents only.

Although the ambivalents constitute the majority in all three dimensions, it is noteworthy that, in the openness dimension (and what we call the belief system pertinent to the social domain of life), 40 per cent of the respondents have no doubt about the availability and equality of opportunities, with only 6 per cent evincing radical discontent or pessimism. In contrast, when it comes to the perception of divisions in the society and the degree to which economic and political power are unequally distributed, (for instance, the inequality and fairness dimensions) the respondents showed a more "radical" orientation. With regard to the inequality dimension, the pattern is a nearly perfect reversal of that of the openness dimension. Different sets of beliefs or values are at work in the social and economic domains of life. It seems that while the majority of Hong Kong citizens are espousing some "Hong Kong dream," placing premium on opportunities, efficacy and the pay-off of effort, they also believe that the society is inevitably divided between the rich and the poor, and that their respective interests are irreconcilable. Lastly, nearly one-quarter of the respondents displayed a radical orientation in the fairness dimension, thus supporting our view that for an important section of our respondents, economic power "matters," and that this negatively affects their perception of fairness in the society.

Responses of the two sexes on all three dimensions were similar, as were the responses of the locally born and those born elsewhere. Both in the 1988 and the present study, the same pattern of similarity of outlook can be found when it is answers to the individual questions and not aggregated assigned scores that are cross-tabulated, perhaps indicating that the three scales of values described here are useful measures of the general patterns and that we would be justified in grouping them under common themes. The following Tables 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4 show the distribution of age groups, taken here as a proxy for cohorts, and class positions (see T. Wong (1991) for schemes of collapsing occupational categories), across the three value dimensions.

Table 9.2 Openness Values by Class and Age (%)

	Service class I	Service class II	Working class
Under 30			
Conservative	47	46	30
Ambivalent	47	42	70
Radical	6	12	0
(N)	(17)	(24)	(10)
30 - 54			
Conservative	44	47	28
Ambivalent	56	47	62
Radical	0	6	10
(N)	(32)	(34)	(40)
55 - 64			
Conservative	100	33	0
Ambivalent	0	67	100
Radical	0	0	0
(N)	(1)	(6)	(3)

Table 9.3 Inequality Values by Class and Age (%)

	Service class I	Service class II	Working class
Under 30			
Conservative	0	9	0
Ambivalent	72	55	78
Radical	28	36	22
(N)	(18)	(22)	(9)
30 - 54			
Conservative	8	0	0
Ambivalent	56	62	32
Radical	36	38	68
(N)	(36)	(39)	(44)
55 - 64			
Conservative	0	0	0
Ambivalent	100	44	60
Radical	0	56	40
(N)	(1)	(9)	(5)

Table 9.4 Fairness Values by Class and Age (%)

	Service class I	Service class II	Working class
Under 30			
Conservative	6	17	0
Ambivalent	78	70	88
Radical	16	13	12
(N)	(18)	(23)	(8)
30 - 54			
Conservative	3	16	8
Ambivalent	82	58	55
Radical	15	26	37
(N)	(34)	(31)	(40)
55 - 64			
Conservative	0	0	33
Ambivalent	0	57	67
Radical	0	43	0
(N)	(0)	(7)	(3)

It seems that, looking at all three areas of beliefs, age differences are slight (especially if we discount somewhat the oldest cohort, due to its small number of respondents). Older respondents believed in the opportunity structure of the society as much as their younger counterparts, and the latter shared the hard-headed and realistic views about inequality and fairness more characteristic of the older and the more experienced. Class differences, however, are quite noteworthy, especially with regard to the openness and the inequality areas. There are relatively more ambivalents among the working class respondents, but it should be noted that in the inequality dimension, there are more "radicals" than ambivalents.

Belief System and Quality of Life

How do these patterns of belief systems affect the sense of well-being in various areas of social life? We argued earlier that there is a need to distinguish between indicators of "quality of life" and indicators of "belief systems." Even if there is overall satisfaction among our respondents (as attested by findings in both the 1988 and the present study), it would be interesting to see if certain belief systems are more conducive to a greater sense of well-being. We have chosen four quality of life questions, ranging from the degree of satisfaction with personal, familial relationships, to the sense of satisfaction with economic and political conditions in the society. Scores were then given, similar to the method used for the belief dimensions, and a scale with three categories then constructed. The following represents the distribution of our respondents along the scale in Table 9.5.

Table 9.5 Satisfaction with Life (%)

	%
High	54
Moderate	43
Low	3
(N)	(302)

Table 9.6 Quality of Life Score by Age, Educational Level, Individual Monthly Income and Class (%)

	High	Moderate	Low	(N)
Age cohort				
Under 30	70	28	2	(80)
30-54	50	47	3	(174)
55 and above	44	52	4	(48)
Educational level				
Up to primary	38	60	2	(100)
Up to matriculation/technical school	58	38	4	(154)
Tertiary and graduate school	78	20	2	(46)
Monthly income				
Under $6,000	50	48	2	(82)
$6,000 – $14,999	61	37	2	(97)
$15,000 and above	71	29	0	(17)
Class				
Service class I	66	30	4	(56)
Service class II	65	32	3	(71)
Working class	37	62	1	(60)

Again, sex and birth place differences were slight. The distribution by age, educational level, monthly income from main occupation, and class, is shown in Table 9.6.

The difference in the degree of satisfaction thus seems to be related to differences in objective conditions. What is interesting is that after controlling for social ideology or the beliefs as regards opportunities and inequalities, the class differences in life satisfaction remain. Table 9.7 shows the results for the openness dimension, using class as indicating objective differentials.

Table 9.7 Quality of Life by Objective Conditions, when Matched on the Openness Belief System (%)

	Life-satisfaction			
	High	Moderate	Low	(N)
Conservative (All)	74	26	0	(63)
Service class I	81	19	0	(21)
Service class II	82	18	0	(28)
Working class	50	50	0	(14)
Ambivalent (All)	49	46	5	(83)
Service class I	54	39	7	(26)
Service class II	57	39	4	(28)
Working class	31	66	3	(29)
Radical (All)	27	64	10	(10)
Service class I	0	100	0	(1)
Service class II	20	60	20	(5)
Working class	25	75	0	(4)

In this case, the espousal of common values (e.g., the subscription to the openness social ideology, see the "conservative" group

here in the table above) does not vitiate or neutralize the objective differences and the differences in degree of life satisfaction probably entailed by it. In order to further explore (which given our small sample size and other constraints is the best we could do) the relation between values, class and sense of well-being, average life-satisfaction scores were calculated.[13] Table 9.8 presents the results for the "openness" belief dimension.

Table 9.8 Average Life-satisfaction Scores in Each Class by Beliefs in the Openness Dimension

Beliefs held	Service class I	Service class II	Working class	All
Conservative (optimistic)	14.71	14.46	13.50	14.22
Ambivalent	13.70	13.54	12.60	13.27
Radical (pessimistic)	12.00	12.20	12.60	12.23
All	13.47	13.40	12.86	13.24

Note: The theoretical maximum life-satisfaction score is 20.

One could note that in terms of life-satisfaction scores, there are class differences, especially between the upper middle class and the working class, even when they all hold an optimistic view about the opportunity structure of the society. Apparently, optimism and the "Hong Kong dream" do not make the average working class individual as satisfied as his upper class counterparts. A qualification, however, is necessary: the optimistic working class individual is about as happy as the average service or middle class member. Also, we must bear in mind the earlier observation that very few people expressed a low degree of life-satisfaction. So it would be fair to say that the more one believes in the openness social ideology, the more likely one is to be happy

with one's life, with such satisfaction *to some degree* independent of class differences. Secondly, we could also note that within both service classes, a pessimistic ("radical") belief in openness brings about quite a drop in the life-satisfaction score, when compared with those more optimistic. Indeed, the drop is greater than the case of the working class members. Perhaps, the co-existence of higher hopes and goals, and pessimistic appraisals of opportunities, within the service classes make them more dissatisfied with their life. Again, we have to add a note of caution: in general, there are relatively few people (regardless of class) espousing the radical standpoint with regard to the openness dimension; moreover, the relations between values and class are more complex, with age differences, educational experience, or work life stages, etc., probably having important effects. The above represents an attempt to ask big questions of usually inadequate data, where the manipulation of the data leaves much to be desired, and where the various lines of argument represent not so much reports of victory from waged battles as the charting of the terrain, albeit an unusually important one.

Personal Strain and Social Ideology

We referred earlier to the disjunction between social ideology and personal experience, using the distinction to capture the apparent paradox of optimistic evaluation of social openness and pessimistic assessment of opportunities relevant to oneself. The three dimensions of the belief system (or better, of the Hong Kong social ideology), and their relations with life-satisfaction or quality of life, have been discussed in the above. In the following, we intend to tackle the personal experience side. We would like to see if and how personal experience, in particular, personal strain, affects one's life-satisfaction and one's beliefs or values.

It is obvious that "personal strain" can be conceptualized in many ways, with perhaps the psychological element, usually measured by refined scales, being indispensable. However, broad

subjective assessments of happiness, loneliness and control over one's life are also important indicators, and in the other modules of the present project, they have indeed been taken up and addressed. Moreover, "personal strain" could also be conceptualized as anxiety, arising from contexts as varied as the family and the workplace, immediate prospects of one's career and the future of the society. Classic measures of "personal strain" in sociological studies include "unemployment" or "poverty." Studies have been devoted to the effects of such strain on class consciousness and class action. In our case, where the concern is more with subjective assessments of personal endeavours and their congruence with the outcomes or pay-off, we have chosen three measures to gauge such "personal strain." In our view, these measures cover both the more immediate anxieties and the longer-term forebodings. They are: "chance of changing to a better job," "confidence in the future of Hong Kong," and "whether it is meaningful to make long-term plans." Tables 9.9, 9.10 and 9.11 show the distribution of our respondents on these three measures.

Table 9.9 Chances of Finding a Better Job (%)*

Little or none	76
Much	24
(N)	(177)

* Question: "Given your present qualifications and work experience, how likely are you to find a better job than the one you have now?"

Table 9.10 Confidence in Hong Kong's Future (%)*

Little or none	35
Average	24
Much or very much	41
(N)	(283)

* Question: "Do you have confidence in Hong Kong's future?"

Table 9.11 Meaningless to Make Long-term Plans (%)*

Disagree or strongly disagree	53
Average	14
Agree or strongly agree	33
(N)	(292)

* Question: "Some people say it is meaningless for Hong Kong people in this day and age to make long-term plans. Do you agree?"

Judging from the above tables, it is fair to say that in both an immediate and a longer-term sense, there is a significant element of personal strain in our respondents. The strain arising from the more immediate context – a pessimistic evaluation of the chances of moving to better jobs – is described earlier; what one should note here is that with regard to the other two questions (their view of the future, and by implication, their control over it), one-third of our respondents displayed uncertainties and lack of confidence. How these perceptions affect psychological dispositions and well-being will not be our concern; what we intend to do is to see if such personal strain characteristics influence the quality of life (life-satisfaction) and their relations with the belief systems.

First, notwithstanding the inadequacy of our three measures, let us examine the relationship between personal strain and perceptions of class divisions in the society. Our purpose is to see, in a preliminary fashion, if personal strain is more likely to produce a more radical social or class awareness/consciousness. On the whole, we did not find any significant relationship, as Table 9.12 illustrates.

Table 9.12 Perceptions of Class Divisions by Personal Strain (%)

	Inevitable conflict between rich and poor			
	Strongly disagree or disagree	Average	Strongly agree or agree	(N)
Chances of a better job				
Little or none	25	8	67	(128)
Much	24	12	64	(41)
Confidence in Hong Kong's future				
Little or none	22	11	67	(95)
Average	30	18	52	(63)
Much or very much	25	8	67	(112)
Meaningless to plan				
Strongly disagree/disagree	25	8	67	(147)
Average	23	33	44	(39)
Strongly agree/agree	26	5	69	(94)

These findings suggest that greater strain, whether it is related to the prospects of personal betterment or the future of the society, is not more likely to lead to a more radical view on the divisions and conflicts in the society. However, we believe this is still a largely unexplored area, and we hope that future studies will employ more refined measures of personal strain and address the relations between strain and radical consciousness.[14]

Is it the case that greater personal strain would result in a lessening of well-being? The findings in Table 9.13 show that, to some extent, this is indeed what happens.

Table 9.13 Sense of Well-being by Personal Strain (%)

	Life–satisfaction			
	High	Moderate	Low	(N)
Chances of a better job				
Little or none	50	47	3	(125)
Much	71	27	2	(41)
Confidence in Hong Kong's future				
Little or none	53	42	5	(92)
Average	47	52	1	(64)
Much or very much	65	32	3	(107)
Meaningless to plan				
Strongly disagree/disagree	54	45	1	(146)
Average	71	26	2	(38)
Strongly agree/agree	50	46	4	(90)

We can see from the above that more of the optimistic and the confident were satisfied with their life than those who felt a greater strain. It is surprising that the differences are not greater. (Chi-square tests are not significant at the 0.05 level.) Could it be that there is some buffer at work, alleviating or displacing the discontent and strain? We could not possibly formulate a conceptual framework for this question, let alone propose to answer it. We could, however, begin to elaborate on the question or hypothesis, delineating and inter-relating the areas which are pertinent to the problematic.

The hypothesis we propose here is this: the relationship between personal strain and life-satisfaction is indirect and is mediated by one's belief systems. It is the latter which exerts a greater and more direct effect on one's sense of well-being. In an earlier section, we have already seen that the more optimistic and generally "conservative" one's beliefs are as regards room for

improvement and social divisions, the more satisfied – and to some degree, this is independent of class position – one is with life. Moreover, with the exception of the inequality dimension, strain does not predispose one to the ambivalent and radical side of the belief dimensions.[15] Table 9.14 shows the relations between personal strain and the openness and fairness dimension of the belief system (social ideology):

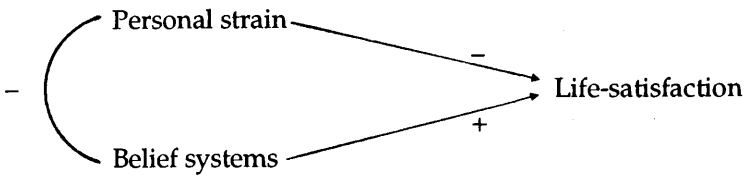
Table 9.14 Openness and Fairness Beliefs by Personal Strain (%)

	Openness belief				Fairness belief			
	Cons.	Amb.	Rad.	(N)	Cons.	Amb.	Rad.	(N)
Chances of a better job								
Little or none	39	54	7	(113)	9	67	24	(107)
Much	53	47	0	(39)	15	72	13	(40)
Confidence in Hong Kong's future								
Little or none	34	55	11	(54)	12	64	24	(85)
Average	33	62	5	(45)	7	75	18	(58)
Much or very much	50	46	4	(65)	12	65	23	(92)
Meaningless to plan								
Strongly disagree/disagree	46	48	6	(91)	12	70	18	(130)
Average	42	54	4	(24)	12	68	20	(34)
Strongly agree/agree	35	56	9	(55)	6	57	37	(76)

* Cons. = Conservative; Amb. = Ambivalent; Rad. = Radical (for the meaning, see earlier tables and discussion).

We could argue in two ways from these findings. First, even if the figures do not show unequivocally that the greater the strain, the less likely one is to hold optimistic or conservative beliefs as

regards social openness and social justice, it is still possible that with a larger sample and with more and better indicators of personal strain, one could find a negative relationship between strain and belief/social ideology. In this case, the lack of effect of strain on life-satisfaction could be more apparent than real: for it could be a case of suppressed or countervailing effects. Our argument could be represented by the following path model:



The negative effect of personal strain on life-satisfaction is suppressed by the mediating factor of belief systems.

A simpler argument, with which we are, at this stage, more inclined to agree, is to say that there is a chasm between personal strain and belief systems. Our respondents may not have believed in the *complete* equality of chances, openness and fairness of their society (and our earlier arguments and construction of belief dimensions have indeed tried to draw a more balanced picture in this respect), but they believe it to be the case *to such a degree* that they will strive hard to better themselves and their families. As a consequence, they have borne what Sennett called the "injuries to class": blaming themselves for their inadequacy, lack of acumen, their failures, rather than doubting the social ideology or beliefs. The result of this is that discontent derived from their experience and from their personal strain is never allowed to impugn the general belief systems, and the latter's implications for a sense of life-satisfaction.

This is a bold hypothesis, and to substantiate it will require more than merely surveys with a larger sample size, or more systematic and rigorous batteries of questions, measures and

scales for all the relevant variables. It will also require in-depth studies of how people and families enter the social advancement process, how they relate to the various dimensions of the social ideology, what kinds of sacrifices they make and what kinds of compromises are accepted with what cost to personal experience; in short, how the forces of personal strain, belief systems and quality of life are played out in their lives. This is as much an issue of the future direction of social indicators studies, as it is an immanent question of the nature of integration and change in Hong Kong society.

Personal Experience, Social Ideology and Social Stability

In a way, we have come full circle. In the beginning of the chapter, we argued for the need for thematization and theorization in indicators studies. We started with Wong's "anxiety and prosperity" thesis, which fills the bill nicely: the thesis employs thematized indicators to argue for a theory of prosperity and stability of Hong Kong society. At one level, our paper is to affirm the value of such undertakings. At another level, we have also tried to chart another path of analysis, by the use of a more rigorous conceptual framework, and by proffering another approach to the question of prosperity and stability through the examination of the inter-relationships between personal strain, belief systems and life-satisfaction. Our approach, and our initial answer, to this larger issue could be summarized in this way: what underlies the economic dynamism – prosperity and stability – of Hong Kong society, we argue, is due not so much to anxiety and a refugee mentality as to the bifurcation of personal strain or experience and social ideology, and to the latter's positive effect on the sense of well-being. The relentless efforts to make good, the drive to educate oneself and one's offspring, and the strong belief in the eventual pay-off of one's own efforts – all these are the positive, economically dynamic effects of Hong Kong's social

ideology. This social ideology, however, is not just a scripture for some mindless, happy-go-lucky Horatio Alger; it also contains enough elements of "radicalism" or "ambivalence" (especially with regard to the economic domain of life) to make a Fabian critic happy. In spite of this, the general effect of the social ideology and of the chasm between it and personal strain is that the society could be driven to higher levels of economic dynamism and prosperity while still being spared the danger of personal strain and discontent spilling over and undermining the ideology itself, or more specifically, developing and reinforcing more divisive and conflictual imageries of the social order. So long as the openness and fairness dimensions of the social ideology remain intact, any mass mobilization based on "class consciousness" and/or inequality (economic) appeals is unlikely to succeed. The social order is indeed, as Wong put it, one of a "supple form," weathering and surviving unorganized and short-term outbursts of discontent and mass panic.

But how supple is "supple?" From our perspective, it is not difficult to envisage personal strain being easily and greatly exacerbated by a confidence crisis or fatalistic cynicism, or more simply, by a prolonged economic crisis. In such circumstances, the relation between personal strain and the sense of life-satisfaction may take on a new lease of life. Moreover, the belief systems are not monolithic structures of ideas. The great majority of our respondents believed in an individualistic and achievement-oriented mobility strategy: educational/professional qualifications, followed closely by hard work, are regarded as the most important criteria of success. This no doubt underlies and undergirds their espousal of the openness element of the social ideology. However, when asked about whether the situation will change, and what individual criteria or characteristics will become most important after 1997, most now see family background as the most important attribute. It is possible for us to speculate on the likely effects such perceptions will have on the espousal of the openness and fairness norms in the years to come. Our immediate point here is that if people expect a vastly (at least for the areas of

life we are addressing here) different environment after 1997 where the personal and the societal factors for social advancement will change, it is reasonable to see the openness and fairness norms as subject to change, if not erosion, in the future. So, that "supple" form of social order may only be supple to a certain limit, and to a certain time. With personal strain exacerbated and belief systems in flux, it is possible that the present order, based on (or resting on the fulcrum of) a modicum degree of belief support and sense of well-being, will be faced with a challenge quite unprecedented and of a quite different order.

Notes

1. Lee (1992) held a slightly different view. While affirming the value of social indicators studies, he also emphasized their limitations and the need for alternative types of studies for understanding the needs, expectations and feelings of the populace. Our view is that the need for a theoretically coherent and empirically-grounded understanding of the nature of the society and its possible directions of change is equally important and urgent, and that such knowledge is as important for the policy-makers as the discrete, still-shot-like, and context-free information gathered by indicators studies (whose limitations Lee has so admirably summarized).
2. One could say that most of the studies Lui reviewed share with job satisfaction studies this weakness: "[job satisfaction studies] can be regarded as providing a notable example of the limited horizons and standards of comparisons of those in objectively deprived situations, of the tendency for aspirations to become tailored to experience so that what appears to the respondent as inescapable (in this case, say, a dead-end job) may be helped in fact to become so." (Brown, 1984:166)
3. See T. Wong (1992) for a more detailed, and in some respects, comparative analysis.
4. It is strange, given the high degree of commercialization and the emphasis on money-making, that there are so few studies of the economic ethics of Hong Kong people.

5. For instance, in Wong and Lui (1992; forthcoming), class differences in normative (in particular, the political) orientations, as well as the effects of social mobility experience on such orientations, are discussed.
6. In this respect, we are still very much at a learning stage. Studies abound in the West; to list a few, in Europe (Inglehart, 1977, 1990; Abrams, 1985;), the US (Rourke and Free, 1976; Scholzman and Verba, 1979; McClosky and Zaller, 1984).
7. The whole question of trust is extremely important. On the one hand, it relates to the historico-anthropological understanding of the basis of interpersonal relationships in Chinese society (e.g., what kind of trust is involved in a society apparently emphasizing man's relatedness to other men (*guanzi*), and emphasizing reciprocity rather than individualism). On the other hand, more specifically, "trust" is also an important aspect in the studies of the economic behaviour of the Chinese: as Hamashita in a recent lecture at Harvard suggested, the concept of "share" (*gu*) in Chinese society is very different from its conventional economistic meaning in the West; the underlying element of trust of the Chinese "share" no doubt has important implications for our understanding of Chinese economic behaviour and economic ethos.
8. In this respect, future studies join hands with studies of popular culture.
9. See T. Wong (1991), pp.150-51 for meaning of "service class" and its composition.
10. In Wong and Lui (1992), the concept of "domains of action" can be seen as deriving from this generic notion of "domain of life."
11. For the two questions on the openness dimension, as the format of given options is different, we have adopted a slightly different scoring system. For the first question ("It is said that..."), 5 points were given to the "Agree" response, and 1 point to the "Don't agree." For the second question ("How easy do you think..."), 4 points were given to "Very easy," 3 to "Easy," 2 to "Not easy," and 1 to "Extremely not easy."
12. This is an adaptation of Hochschild's insightful thinking on the pattern of distributive justice. See Hochschild (1981), p.49.

13. The score for each class is the average of the points for that class with a particular value position.
14. See Marshall *et al.* (n.d.), Scholzman and Verba (1979) for rigorous treatments of this issue.
15. It is because for the inequality dimension, the "radical" and "ambivalent" responses are the majority.

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10

Discourses and Dilemmas

25 Years of Subjective Indicators Studies*

Thomas W. P. Wong

Introduction

Our concern in this chapter is twofold: to laud and to chasten. A review of the major surveys on the values and orientations of the Hong Kong people in the past 25 years, we submit, reveals an impressive record of the society and of its scholarship. It was a process where advances in empirical scope and analytical rigour were made. We feel obliged to pay tribute to this litany of studies and researchers. Such a review, however, also brings into light what we regard as blind spots and misdirected efforts. We feel equally obliged to point to these inadequacies, and to offer our preliminary views on the way to go ahead. If in what follows our role as a proud disciple or follower is occasionally eclipsed by that of a cold critic, or if the two roles are ultimately incompatible, this should in no way impugn, or detract the reader from, the underlying purpose of the paper, which is to review and to honour the tradition of Hong Kong studies.

In our review, we are guided by this main, and broad, ques-

tion: what could the past survey studies in Hong Kong tell us, through their findings on the hopes and frustrations, fears and preferences of the Hong Kong people, about the changes in the society? Do they, and if so, how, help to establish the case of a Hong Kong identity, consciousness, or its way of life, in addition to their relevance for one's explanation of the stability and prosperity of the society? We have tried to limit our review to a few chosen areas or themes. Our review is further guided by three sub-questions. First, notwithstanding the benchmark intention and the format of cooperation of the Social Indicators project (details of which can be found in the preface of Lau *et al.*, 1991, Lau *et al.*, 1992), it is obvious that this project could claim a longer lineage. Some of our questions raised in the Social Indicators research were also asked in the surveys of Mitchell, Podmore and Chaney, or Hoadley in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This being the case, we feel it is important to ask whether and how we have progressed.[1] Secondly, the various subjective indicators studies were conducted in different periods of the post-war development of Hong Kong, and they, in our view, represent quite different sets of context and concerns. It will be important, either for knowing why some areas or questions were chosen, or for understanding why the findings were interpreted in the way they were, for us to relate the discursive frameworks to the findings, and see how intellectual and/or socio-political interests underlied the different studies. Our third sub-question is even more ambitious. Although the various studies only captured part of the reality of the respective periods, we have little doubt that some of the dilemmas of the then society were revealed and characterized. We aim to make sense of the relations between the discourses and the dilemmas: without prejudging the direction of the relation, we wish to know in what ways did the problematic of the 1960s affect the identification of the dilemmas, and how a different discourse in the 1980s effected a different perception of the main problems confronting the society.

In the following, we will first delineate the areas and themes along which our review and comparison of findings will proceed.

We intend to demonstrate that, to the extent that the findings are indeed comparable and are significantly truthful about the reality, there have been important positive changes in the subjective well-being of the Hong Kong people. At the same time, there is also evidence of the persistence and continuity of strain and frustrations. The identification of the source and social basis of such hopes and strains obviously will go some way towards providing a more comprehensive picture of the subjective terrain of the Hong Kong people. Then, in a more detailed comparison of the studies, we retrace the progeny, and note the advancements and the backtracking, and the way they are related to the respective discursive frameworks. Lastly, we offer our thoughts on the relation between discourse and dilemmas, in connection with some of the immediate practical and political issues facing the society.

From Dilemmas of Growth to Dilemmas of Survival

If there is an impending sense of crisis in recent commentaries on the future of Hong Kong, it could not have been more systematically formulated and pursued than in the works of I. Scott and S.L. Wong. However, as we shall see, the two formulations differ in their tenor and their conclusion. In his attempt to uncover the origins and implications of the loss of autonomy, brought in train by the signing of the Joint Declaration, and then the promulgation of the Basic Law, Scott basically sees the current crisis as one of legitimacy. The legitimacy of the colonial government has been much eroded, and things have certainly not been helped by its general "resort to subterfuge," when it comes to matters like the speeding up of democratization of the polity (1992).[2] In our view, such an argument, leaving aside the diatribes against the attempts from the colonial and the Chinese government to curb or frustrate constitutional reforms, and, thereby, causing frustration, very much hinges on the interpretation of the political wishes and sentiments of the populace. But obviously the matter does not

stop here. For the keystone of Scott's case lies in the loss of the moral basis of the colonial authority. To us, such a basis can only be empirically understood, and that means a systematic and longitudinal picture of the socio-political ethos is imperative. Scott interpreted traditional apathy among the Hong Kong people as a sign of confidence or consent, while the current apathy is one of disillusionment (Scott, 1989). Has there been such a change? Is it the case that such disillusionment is particularly felt among the young and the educated, the middle classes? Elsewhere, we have raised our objections to these commentaries (for ultimately, that is what they are) on the grounds that they are empirically unsubstantiated (Wong and Lui, 1992a). For our purpose here, the lacunae in Scott points to the need to explore various dimensions of the normative system that may underlie the fundamental political orientations, and that may help to explain the emergent, more context-bound, political wishes and sentiments of the Hong Kong people. We believe that a survey of the past subjective indicators findings on relevant themes may contribute to that purpose.

In comparison with Scott, S.L. Wong (1992a, 1992b) sees the current crisis in a very different light. Wong begins with the social issue of emigration. Contrary to the more conventional view, he does not join the chorus of the alarming call brought on by the emigration waves of recent years. Instead, he argues that the present pattern of emigration is in fact "part and parcel of the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong" (1992b:4). On the one hand, the alleged negative effects of emigration, such as brain drain and the more intangible phenomenon of anomie and moral hazards, are, in his view, either unfounded or exaggerated. On the other hand, the emigration evinces a "traditional" refugee mentality as well as an activation of social networks, albeit now on a global level, both of which have served to build up the successful Hong Kong experience, and which will do so in the future. We feel that Wong probably has a case in his evaluation of the negative effects of emigration. What we want to take him to task for concerns the concept of "refugee mentality." For it is obvious that here Wong is embarking on a discussion of the nature of the Hong

Kong identity, its formation, and its relation to the Hong Kong experience and the Hong Kong way of life. Politically, the prevalence of refugee mentality means that there is some *a priori* acceptance, or better, tolerance, of the colonial authority; the older generation escaped from one political regime not to endorse and trust another (alien) one, but to make a living for themselves and their offspring. As Hong Kong develops, the new generation may develop a sense of Hong Kong identity, which, in Wong's judgment, identifies more with Hong Kong as a way of life than with Hong Kong as a place of residence. When this is coupled with a prevalent and long-existing sense of political powerlessness, and a belief in self-help and personal liberty, refugee mentality reduces the problem of legitimacy, *pace* Scott (and we agree), "into an academic issue" (*ibid.*:14). The mentality immunizes the Hong Kong people from ideological exhortations and political passions.

Economically, the refugee mentality "creates a spirit of enterprise and engenders economic dynamism." In Wong's judgment, this is the positive, and more important, effect the mentality has on the stability and prosperity of the society. The essential precariousness of the refugee proves to be a driving force for greater diligence, better education, and worldly/cosmopolitan orientations. If Hong Kong is in crisis, emigration does not add to it; quite the reverse, the implication of Wong's argument is that it reveals an ethos and forces which undergird and strengthen the social order. Our question is: can "refugee mentality" capture all the nuances and dimensions, and, as it were, the life and times, of the Hong Kong identity? It is obvious that Wong has emphasized the economistic, and economically dynamic, side of such identity. What other strands and components would a fuller conception of this identity consist of? Again, we believe that a review of past subjective indicators studies will go some way to constructing that fuller conception.

What follows is then a selective, relatively schematic and thus somewhat arbitrary purview of the past studies in relation to a few chosen themes. The studies include the following:

- R.E. Mitchell 1967, The Urban Family Life Survey, urban Hong Kong, N = 3,966, aged 18 and above (hereafter Mitchell 67);
- J.S. Hoadley 1967, Survey of Chinese University students, N = 254 (hereafter Hoadley 67);
- D.C. Chaney and D. Podmore 1969, Young adults study with a sub-sample drawn from Hopkins's housing survey; urban Hong Kong, N = 1,123, aged 15-29 (hereafter C&P 69);
- A. King 1971, Life quality study, as part of S. Shively's Kwun Tong Industrial Community Research Programme, N = 1,065, aged 18 and above (hereafter King 71);
- S. Millar 1974, The Biosocial Study, urban Hong Kong, N = 3,983, aged between 20 and 59 (hereafter Millar 74);
- S.K. Lau 1977, urban Hong Kong, sub-sample drawn from Millar's biosocial survey, N = 550, aged between 20 and 59 (hereafter Lau 77);
- S.K. Lau and K.F. Ho 1978, Young workers study, N = 373, (hereafter Lau and Ho 78);
- S.K. Lau and H.C. Kuan 1985, Ethos of Hong Kong people study, Kwun Tong area, N = 792, aged 18 and above (hereafter Lau and Kuan 85);
- S.K. Lau 1986, Pilot study of Social Indicators Project, Kwun Tong, N = 539, aged 18 and above (hereafter Lau 86);
- S.K. Lau *et al.* 1988, the first Social Indicators study, Hong Kong-wide survey, N = 1,662, aged 18 and above (hereafter SI 88);
- T.W.P. Wong and T.L. Lui 1989, A Benchmark Study of Social Mobility, Hong Kong-wide, N = 1,000 (male household heads), aged 20 to 64 (hereafter SM 89);
- S.K. Lau *et al.* 1990, the second Social Indicators study, Hong Kong-wide, N = 1,957, aged 18 and above (hereafter SI 90).

It is clear from the above list that both sampled populations and their parameters vary according to the researchers' problematic

and other practical concerns. Also, and it will be noted appropriately, other than the two Social Indicators studies (SI 1988 and SI 1990), questions grouped under a common theme, as well as the options given to the respondent, may not always be strictly comparable. Our assumption, however, is that informed speculation is better than sheer intuitions or dogmatic assertions. With this caveat, we can turn to the findings.[3]

In the following review, we have distinguished themes for which the findings have revealed striking changes from the ones where there has been an equally impressive degree of continuity and persistence. We can see that, in respect to the areas of life satisfaction (or generally quality of life), perceptions of openness and opportunities in the society, and sense of improvement and confidence, there have been significant and positive changes.

Table 10.1 Life Satisfaction (%)

	Mitchell 67	Millar 74	Lau 86	SI 88	SI 90
Per cent dissatisfied with life	40	10	15		3*
Per cent who worried most about money	27		18		
Per cent who worried most about work	20		31†		
Per cent unhappy with current social status	33§			15	

* This is based on the sample (N=332) for module C of the SI 90 project, and the percentage refers to the proportion of the respondents having low life satisfaction scores. (Details in Ch.9 of this volume)

† The category in fact includes "job, education, and prospects." It would be reasonable to expect a much lower percentage for work if there is disaggregation of the category. (Also see discussion in text)

§ Mitchell's option is "quite or very unhappy," while the category in SI 88 is "dissatisfied/very dissatisfied."

It is quite evident that there has been an important change in the degree of subjective well-being. In Mitchell's study, the Hong Kong people were unhappy with their social status and life in general; 32 per cent of the respondents felt economically deprived, and 57 per cent worried many times or sometimes about money (1969:284). Thirty per cent said nothing in life gives satisfaction. On all these counts, the Hong Kong Chinese in the 1960s represented the worst (pessimistic, precarious) case among the other ethnic groups and societies in the study. However, recent findings show a much greater degree of satisfaction. In SI 88, 75 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with family life, 59 per cent satisfied with their work.

While we have little doubt that the improvement in such subjective well-being arose from the successful development of the society, which we, in another context, called the "Hong Kong experience" (Lui and Wong, 1992), a more specific indicator of the optimism and confidence is the perception of openness and opportunities as the Hong Kong people took advantage of the structural changes in the society. Again, we find quite remarkable changes.

Table 10.2 Openness and Opportunities in Society (%)

	Mitchell 67	C&P 69	Lau 77	Lau 1982
Per cent who saw much chance of upward mobility	50*	63†		60§
Per cent who opted to stay in HK despite opportunities elsewhere	23		53	

* Chances for a working class boy to become a medical doctor are good or excellent.

† Agree that Hong Kong is a land of opportunity. Like Lau 1982, the response is from young people.

§ Most of the respondents are under 35 years old.

We think it is particularly noteworthy that there is an increasing identification with Hong Kong as a land of opportunity and for career development. More than half of the respondents in 1977, in contrast to 23 per cent in 1967, opted to stay in Hong Kong, despite opportunities elsewhere. Although we do not have more recent findings on this count, the returning of emigrants to Hong Kong in the past few years, other than reflecting personal strategies and conditions in the global economy, seems to give some credence to the existence of a normative belief of openness and opportunities.[4] And when this belief is coupled with positive evaluations of mobility experience, the result is greater confidence and a degree of personal efficacy.

Table 10.3 Evaluation of Mobility Experience and Personal Efficacy (%)

	Mitchell 67	Lau 85	Lau 86	SI 88
Per cent who see themselves as having higher status than parents	31		37	44
Per cent who see themselves as having lower status than parents	36		11	12
Per cent who feel they can not control their life	53	54*		

* This is in response to the question: "Do you agree that in face of future uncertainties, we can only adjust as best we can?". This figure represents the proportion who agreed or strongly agreed. On the surface, it seems there is a similar fatalistic strand in the response, as in Mitchell's finding. But one should note that 80 per cent of Lau's respondents also strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that "whether one will be successful or not is determined by fate, it is useless to make the effort" (Lau and Kuan, 1988:53).

On the whole, we could then say that to the extent that the earlier studies captured important facets and facts of the, as it were, formative years of the Hong Kong experience, the changes since

then have been towards a more satisfied, optimistic and self-assured direction. The relatively high degree of structural and exchange mobility in the society, as uncovered in a recent study, no doubt constitutes the societal reasons – the success and the satisfaction – for such changes in the normative orientations and belief systems (Wong and Lui, 1992b; Lui and Wong, 1992). But a more detailed examination of the past survey studies also discloses important areas where continuities and persistence exist making for less complacency and optimism. We specifically refer to the areas of personal pessimism in relation to career development or prospects, strain and frustration arising from a realistic or stoic appraisal of society, and the perception of the future and meaning of life and work.

We have pointed elsewhere to the discrepancy between the optimistic belief in social openness and the pessimistic appraisal of one's work situation and career prospects (Wong, 1991, 1992). We can also find a similar pessimistic orientation in the 1960s.

Table 10.4 Pessimism in Relation to Work (%)

	Mitchell 67	Lau 86	SI 88	SI 90
Per cent who see the chance for career development as great	16		7	12
Per cent who are satisfied with work	25	25*		37

* When probed in details about specific aspects of work, Lau's respondents had much more satisfaction from say the work nature, but were much less so when it came to promotion prospects, welfare, etc. (Lau and Wan, 1987:63).

The pessimistic assessment of chance for career development is also evident in other studies. A study of clerical workers showed that nearly 40 per cent of the respondents saw little or no promotion prospects in their job (Lui and Chan, 1987). And 76 per cent of the respondents in the SI 90 survey could see little or no chance of finding a better job than the one they were holding, a finding not significantly affected by background characteristics. As for the liking for job, Mitchell titled the relevant chapter "No Joy in Work;" only one quarter of his respondents expressed that they liked their job very much (Mitchell, 1969:375). So it may be that the relatively low level of job satisfaction and the pessimism in career development are related, but what concerns us is the continuity of such evaluations. Apparently upward social mobility or improved "quality of life" has not ameliorated or eliminated such anxieties and whatever precariousness that may be entailed by them. Could it be that there are other structural and normative strains underlying the formation of the Hong Kong identity or way of life?

In relation to the strain arising from perceptions of social divisions and political situation, again, we find a persistent trend.

Table 10.5 Strain Arising from Perceptions of Society (%)

	Mitchell 67	C&P 69	King 72	Lau 77	SM 89
Per cent who felt could do nothing about unjust govt. or society			82	91	
Per cent who felt employees were being taken advantage of	25*	61†			31§

* Mitchell's question was: "Do you think that people having your qualifications and work experience should be paid more, less, or about the same, as you are receiving now?"

† Chaney and Podmore's question was: "Do you think that working people are fairly and equally treated by their employers, or that employers sometimes take advantage of them?"

§ The question in the social mobility survey was this: "Do you agree to the view that if bosses are to make profits, they have to exploit workers?"

It is obvious that these three questions tap quite differently the respondents' sense of distributive justice. We provide these figures to serve as general indicative signposts.

The sense of political powerlessness is clear and is the subject of much discussion (Lau, 1982; Lau and Kuan, 1988). We, however, feel it necessary to relate such sense of powerlessness to the way the Hong Kong people perceive the society and the polity; in other words to the meanings, definitions, images – and the struggles over them – embedded in social behaviour and normative orientations. The values and beliefs involved in issues like distributive justice or moral economy are as pertinent to our understanding of political apathy (*à la* Lau) or political awareness (*à la* Scott) as a single piece of information on political efficacy. Thus, on the one hand, we could gauge the nature and amount of strain and frustration from Hoadley's study in which he saw significance in the fact that half of the Chinese residents he interviewed in the turbulent year of 1967 expressed negative orientations towards the police, the government, etc. (Hoadley, 1970:212). Similarly, it is a noteworthy indicator of powerlessness or fatalism that 71 per cent of Mitchell's Form 5 students saw the Hong Kong government as understanding not very well/not at all the people's needs (Mitchell, 1969:344). But, on the other hand, we should also note the implications when 66 per cent of the young workers interviewed by Lau and Ho in 1978 wanted to see their fellow workers have colour television sets before they themselves did, rather than to see unknown people earning millions (Lau and Ho, 1980:101). What kind of distributive standard and meaning is involved here? And why is it that there is this apparently deep-rooted and longstanding sense of inequality and injustice?

Our last area concerns the perceptions of the future and the meaning of work. The findings over the past two decades again reveal continuities rather than change.

Table 10.6 The Meaning of Work and Planning (%)

	Mitchell 67	Lau 85	Lau 86	SI 90
Per cent who gave centrality to work	21*		19†	
Per cent who felt it was pointless to plan ahead		45§		33‡

* The "centrality of work" in Mitchell's study is an index composed of scores given to three questions on work.

† Lau's question was whether one would give up one's present job if a fortune befell; the figure is the percentage of respondents who would stick with present job.

§ This refers to the proportion of people who felt they did not have the capability to plan and prepare for the future.

‡ This refers to the proportion of people who felt it was pointless to plan ahead.

The issue of meaning of work is different from the one of job satisfaction. Even if there is some indication that the latter is on the rise (see earlier table), the Hong Kong people seem to have kept an invidious view of work. We hypothesize that this is due to a basic pragmatic strand in the work ethos of the Hong Kong people, which, more often than not, is clouded by the debate on instrumentalism in the local literature. While, for instance, Turner *et al.* (1980) highlighted the collectivistic and non-money-driven aspects in the Hong Kong worker's approach to work (also concerned with welfare, work relations, and help from workmates or supervisor in case of difficulties), in an attempt to criticize England and Rear (1975), both parties, in our view, read too much positive and substantive significance into the idea of instrumentalism (or specifically, money-mindedness). Chiang perhaps was closer to the mark when she remarked (Chiang, 1984:19):

> Instrumentalism could be rooted in the very nature of job degradation in factories so that money becomes the *only* desirable feature of work. Instrumentalism could *also* be an expression of the need of workers to help

> themselves and their families to survive in a highly competitive and rapidly changing society. (emphasis added)

Thus, not only is there a fluid meaning to instrumentalism (dependent on its "embeddedness" in various domains of life or social references), instrumentalism in a specific, narrow context probably signifies more a resigned, somewhat fatalistic, attitude towards work. Mitchell's Hong Kong respondents may have, in comparison with other Chinese and ethnic societies, most likely chosen the money aspect of their work (Mitchell, 1969:384-5), yet a sizable number of them did not agree that in their work they were just "putting in time" (*ibid.*:380-1). In response to the debate on instrumentalism in the industrial relations studies, one could say that money and meaning are compatible, just as instrumentalism is compatible with collectivism. Much hinges on the different contextual concerns and the different levels of relevance and primacy the ascertained orientations and values are located.

Thus the meaning of work and its bearing on industrial and work attitudes remain to be explored.[5] But to go back to our concerns, if we could agree that the relatively low level of centrality given to work is indicative of both a specific (and thus temporal) dislike of one's present job and a more diffused (and perhaps more deep-rooted), cynical or invidious reaction to work in general,[6] then the findings seem to suggest continuity rather than positive changes.

There is no gainsaying that, in the above exercise, much is still found wanting. The incomparability (not to mention the problem of interpretability of the findings itself) of some of the questions in the surveys is troubling, to say the least. Yet, we remain confident enough to try out various ideas on the changes the Hong Kong society has undergone, as they are reflected at the plane of the normative and belief territory of the people. Such scouting of the terrain, as it were, seems to have produced the following paradoxes. On the one hand, there is a strong belief in the openness and opportunities in the society, and in individual effort. On

the other hand, there is also a sense of low personal efficacy, of pessimism, especially in relation to one's work, career development and politics. Similarly, while there is an unmistakable increase in satisfaction derived from life in general, with less worries about money and employment, there is also a sense of precariousness, of strain and frustration, and of injustice and inequalities in the society. We tend to see such "contradictions" as more apparent than real. A social history of the hopes and frustrations of the Hong Kong people remains to be written (perhaps in the footsteps of the inimitable Zeldin?), yet we believe there are structural reasons for the paradoxes. As a first step, the social mobility study in 1989 demonstrated that while there was truth to the Hong Kong dream, viz. upward mobility made possible by occupational structural changes and the pay-offs to efforts, the reality was that there was also persistent and emergent inequalities in chances of mobility, with the class structure exhibiting important trends towards rigidity and closure (Wong and Lui, 1992b). Once we take the coexistence of the dream and the reality seriously, the "contradictions" are then intelligible. Indeed, we see them as providing a useful vantage point to understand the nature and formation of the Hong Kong experience, and a pivotal area where order and unrest in the future could be examined.

We hope that it is now plain to the reader that if we are to have a dialogue with Scott and Wong, this is probably the way we would respond. There is little evidence for Scott's case. If anything, there is more support – sense of political powerlessness, long persistence of general political unconcern, etc. – for the *quid pro quo* mentality as being more truthful to the reality than the legitimacy argument. Through our review, we have better ideas about the various dimensions involved in the normative system that may underlie the fundamental political orientations. A further thematization of the findings in terms of "distributive justice," "moral economy" and some such areas will reveal that there are sources for both pragmatic acceptance of life-fate and moral/political outrage. With regard to Wong, the import of our survey is that the Hong Kong identity cannot possibly be captured

by the "refugee mentality" concept alone. Both analytically and substantively, the contents break the seams of the concept, and demand to speak in multiple "languages": pragmatism, fatalism, cynicism..., depending on the context, the domain of life, the degree of primacy of livelihood, the level of generality, and so on. Perhaps not until the full nature of this "polyglot" creature is understood could one deliberate, proclaim or pontificate on the subjective territory of the Hong Kong people and its implications for unrest and crisis, for growth and survival, or the fissure and the tenacity of the society.

Discourse and Dilemmas: A Tentative Sketch

The above, we hope, has served to answer, however partially and unsatisfactorily, our main question: what could the survey studies in the last 25 years tell us about changes in the society? If we stop at this point, we perhaps could at least interest the reader enough so that he or she will be motivated to use and criticize the literature, and by doing so, join us in paying tribute to the tradition of the social sciences in Hong Kong. We, however, attempt to go a little further, our point of departure being that some stocktaking of the field of Hong Kong studies (in particular, the survey studies) is long overdue.[7] What follows represents our current thinking on the advancements and the inadequacies of our recent subjective indicators studies. We hold the view that concomitant with the indigenization of Hong Kong studies, there evolves a discursive framework quite different from that of the 1960s. The progress as well as some of the blind spots and misdirected efforts could not be intelligible unless one pays due attention to such a development.

First of all, one can note important areas of linkages between the studies in the 1960s-early 1970s and those in the late-1970s and 1980s. Mitchell's 1967 study of emotional strain in Southeast Asian societies is, among other things, about the human implications of high-density living and urbanization. The problem was picked up

by the Biosocial Survey of Millar and Y.K. Chan in the early 1970s, and later commented on and expanded by Lee *et al.* (1978). The numerous surveys carried out in the early 1970s at the Social Research Centre of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, under the direction of Shively, or Lee, produced a number of data sets on Kwun Tong (all subsumed under the Kwun Tong Industrial Community Research Programme). The "Life Quality Survey," "Health System Survey," "Factories Survey" (in King and Chan, 1972), and "Religious Organizations Survey" (Delaney and Chan, 1973) produced a line of studies centring on life and community satisfaction (King and Chan, 1972), housing (Choi and Chan, 1978), political culture (King 1972), and other "urban" topics, which, on the one hand, continued some of the research concerns of the 1960s, and which, on the other, also branched into more specific and detailed community studies, bearing on a far greater number of research areas. Anthropological observations and impressionistic commentaries offered in the 1960s (mostly by expatriate scholars) were taken up and pursued with conceptual and analytical refinements and rigour. Thus, while Agassi and Jarvie commented on the fact "though Chinese social organization is crumbling in the urban areas... there do exist traces of all these items and minimal adherence to them is seen as an assertion of Chineseness" (1969:133), Shively and Shively in 1972 set out to construct a traditionalism scale on which three cultural types ("traditionalists," "middle" and "deviates") could be empirically identified and the relation between values and attitudes/behaviour explored (Shively and Shively, 1972). Then Lau and Kuan's study (1988, based on Lau 1985 survey) coined the concept "situational morality" to capture the relation between the traditional and the modern strands in the ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese. With such advancements in empirical studies, and the accumulation of data sets, we have gone a long way from the "selective fieldwork" espoused by Agassi and Jarvie (albeit conducted in accordance with Popperian precepts, see 129-30).

Similarly, the pioneer study by King of the Chinese political culture in urban Hong Kong (King, 1972), where an attempt is

made to make sense of the Hong Kong problematic in terms of Almond and Verba's typology, proved to be the beginning of a series of works by Lau, in which fundamental political orientations were analyzed in relation to perceptions of political leaders, community services delivery, pressure groups, etc., and where there was a greater sensitivity to the nuances of the political culture as it was affected by social, economic and moral issues, and the distinction between the private and the public (Lau 85, 86 surveys; Lau and Kuan 1988:ch.3). These works are obviously responses to the political development of the society, circumscribed by administrative and political reforms on the one hand, and the general problem of change of sovereignty, on the other. But equally they represent, in terms of both empirical and theoretical scope, a continuity and advancement of past subjective indicators studies. Similar examples could be found in the area of life satisfaction studies (Mitchell, 1971; Chan, 1978; Lee *et al.*, 1978; Wong and Yue, 1991), or aspects of the problem of young people (Hoadley, 1970; Lu, 1970; Chaney and Podmore, 1973; Lau and Ho, 1980).

The above studies, with all their linkages and refinements, formed an important part of the scholarship of Hong Kong studies, just as they remained an indispensable source for capturing slices of the Hong Kong reality at different points in time. The corpus of works from the Social Research Centre, and later, from 1982, the Centre for Hong Kong Studies, at The Chinese University of Hong Kong probably represented the bulk of such literature. However, on closer examination, such scholarship and its development posed several interesting questions. When Mitchell studied emotional strain arising from high-density living, one of the conclusions he arrived at was that high neighbourhood or per capita living density did not seem to have generated a higher level of emotional strain among the Hong Kong people. This was then taken up in later studies (Lee *et al.* 1978; Chan, 1978). But he also pointed to the strain-generating and indeed alarming phenomenon of very low evaluation of one's job and social status, of high dissatisfaction among the better educated (and there were to be more of these people as education expanded) with their present job, and so on (Mitchell, 1969:378-9, 389f.). Why was it that such questions, clearly pointing to the need for future studies, were not taken up and pursued?

To take another example from Mitchell, about 50 per cent of his respondents saw the chance for a working class boy to become a medical doctor as good/excellent (Mitchell, 1969:175), the lowest among the cities he studied (see Table 10.2). In connection, 31 per cent perceived their having a better social status than their parents, but 36 per cent saw themselves as moving downward (see Table 10.3). Lau interpreted the first finding (openness and opportunity) as indicating hope and optimism for social advancement, and was surprised to find that so few of Mitchell's respondents perceived intergenerational betterment (the second finding). Lau proceeded to explain the "contradiction" in the following way:

> While they (the respondents) consider that *other* people who are able and fortunate can exploit these opportunities to their own advantage, they do not necessarily consider that they *themselves* can follow suit.... In the long run, even though an individual's objective class position compared with that of his father remains unchanged, the fact that he enjoys a life-style which is materially more comfortable than his father's may instill in him a sense of psychological mobility, and thus lessen the high sense of frustration which might otherwise torment him. (original emphasis) (1982:185)

Leaving aside the interpretation problem, what is striking is that Lau's shift of argument is towards the last part of the quotation: " lessen the high sense of frustration." One could not help but wonder: in his 1977 survey (the findings of which furnished the empirical basis of the monograph), a full ten years since Mitchell's survey, why wasn't the question of subjective perceptions of intergenerational changes raised? More importantly, why was it that the distinction (and perhaps disjunction) between a general belief in openness and a more specific appraisal of personal (viz. work

and career) development not systematically addressed in the survey? Indeed, what was the nature of that "high sense of frustration," lessened or not, in the late 1970s?

There are other conundrums. When Chaney and Podmore concluded their study of young adults with the observation that:

> [T]he full implication of modern attitudes in a society such as Hong Kong does not lie in their intrinsic rightness or wrongness, the extent to which they are likely to produce a better or worse society, but the way in which they form part of a life-style which encapsulates a number of social references... (1973:177)

they then went on to outline several scenarios of the life-styles to be charted out by young people differing in their education (English or Chinese school), their future occupation (government servant or small business or factory work), and of course, their cultural leanings. The study of young people was at the same time about the legitimation and diffusion of new life-styles in a society undergoing rapid changes, and about the processes of people "acquiring and maintaining social status in an unstable situation." Why was it, then, that since those suggestive words there were so few studies of the whence and whither of those life-styles? Why was it that life-style was sometimes seen discretely as leisure patterns (Ng, 1984), or consumption patterns? Or, to turn to a slightly different case, after Rosen concluded his study of Mei Foo's middle class families by commenting on the relation between their upward mobility experience and the general Hong Kong experience itself, one would have expected a series of studies on the middle class ethos, on the inter-relations between class, home-ownership and family life, and other similar areas. But little of that happened. Why the shifts in concerns? Why the dearth of attempts to update, test or simply take up some of the interesting leads from those earlier studies?

We cannot offer any satisfactory answer to these riddles. A solution requires a great deal more research on the practice and partisanship of the researchers, a great deal more information on

the academic community and its evolution.[8] It will require no less a sociology of the discipline in Hong Kong. What we intend to do here is to offer a tentative sketch, with the hope that such a sociology will eventuate in the near future.

It seems to us that the distinctive discursive framework shared by the expatriate scholars in the 1960s had several characteristics. There was a strong intellectual interest generated by the "armchair" anthropologist's concern with the "rural China" in Hong Kong. Also, there was a general concern with the interaction of western values and traditional Chinese beliefs and behaviour. But above all, the discourse was characterized by a general quest for the key to integration in a society symptomatically read as "in transition," in the process of becoming an "industrial society." Jarvie and Agassi characterized the society in these terms: "socially and ideologically, the society is at sea." It was a society without bearings, a society with a peculiar class system and was always to be something of a cultural wasteland. The key to such harsh judgments could be found in the system (industrial injustice, instrumental worker short-changed by equally instrumental employers; such lack of institutionalized buffer for shock being also characteristic of the political system), in the people (traditionalistic orientations, with family norms being a hybrid of the new and the old; Hong Kong could be a Chinese city, but it was not a normal one), or in the development (urbanization and high-density living; new towns as a badly planned function of metropolitan Hong Kong, and not as integrated community; emotional strain might have added verve to the hardworking ethic but also had adverse effect on identity and community consciousness).

But however the problem was broached, there were some common orientations or concerns. First, there was an emphasis on Hong Kong as a Chinese society. For instance, comparison was made, say to Malaya and Singapore, to vindicate the point that there was an absence of racial inferiority complex among the Hong Kong population, or that its community/ethnic status was not one of melting-pot. To Chaney and Podmore, Hong Kong

remained "obdurately Chinese" (1973:2-3). Secondly, there was a thinly disguised but often trenchant criticism of the society: the bureaucracy, economic policies, the conniving profit-taking exploitation of the foreign tycoons and the indigenous capitalists. The Fabian socio-political interests were unmistakable in Rear, Chaney and Podmore, as the latter asked the question: "development for whom?", and pointed to the fact of "tremendous profits coexisting with unnecessary squalor in the slums." Thirdly, the researchers were fascinated by the emergent and diverse lifestyles or attitudes/demands as associated with different social status groupings. And relatedly, they were troubled by the "critical doubts and latent possibilities held by the young people which cannot be accommodated within the economic rationality of the ruling elite" (Chaney and Podmore, 1973:187).

Probably it was this reality, as well as the perception, if not indignation, of a society in great flux, with gross inequalities and intriguing scenarios, that predisposed the researchers to their areas of concerns. Westernization in the cultural sense was to be difficult (as the Hong Kong people were stubbornly Chinese beneath); there was to be cultural stress; modernization was as much the process of the Hong Kong young people growing up between the school and the family, between two languages, as a set of western values and ideas (Jarvie and Agassi, 1969; Mitchell, 1971:90f). And studies of urbanization and high-density living began with the problem attendant on a society caught in rapid and momentous change. The success in Hong Kong's development was not assured, and its uniqueness was only meaningful when measured with a theoretical (Hong Kong as a type of Chinese society, or as a case of modernization) and comparative yardstick. The then social conditions, as well as the underlying intellectual and socio-political interests of the researchers, contributed to this specific relation between discourse and dilemmas.

With the indigenization of Hong Kong studies in the 1970s, we could note two phenomena. First, with the opening up of China to researchers, the intellectual challenge of "rural China in Hong Kong" seemed to have lost some of its attraction. Increasingly, local sociologists took Hong Kong more as a case of successful modernization than as a type of Chinese society, normal or not. The application of the "modernization" problematic produced studies which, as we noted earlier, represented some continuity with the earlier surveys. However, most of such studies took on an anonymous character. It was as if the findings could have been on any modernizing society, give or take a few modifications. While Mitchell tried to relate life-satisfaction to a whole array of problems (migration history, housing, inter- and intra-generational mobility experience, positive or negative evaluations on various sphere of life...), thus giving us a sense of the specificity of Hong Kong, later studies were often narrowly concerned with empirical and empiricist considerations. The wider context, the greater anchorage, from which one could gauge and understand the hopes and frustrations ("what was it like to be growing up in those times?") of the Hong Kong people seemed to have been poorly attended to. Partly a result of specialization, a general grasp of the society and the direction it was going was lost. Indigenization of studies and perspectives did not seem to have been accompanied by a keener awareness of the specificity of the society.

There was also the tendency, beginning from the late 1970s, for local researchers to work towards a sociological model of Hong Kong's development. The underlying meaning of this could only be some subconscious response to the charge that socially and ideologically, Hong Kong was at sea. The success (the prosperity and the stability) of the society was impressive, just as the reasons were unique. The society had, as it were, come of age; it had progressed beyond its perhaps less than auspicious beginning, developed its distinctive way of life, and generated its own problems quite independently of its other status as a Chinese society or as a colonial society. For the secret to its success lay in a particular set-up of the relation between its Chinese society and the colonial government. The common thesis of comparative modernization was turned on its head: it was precisely the small gap between social mobilization and economic development that

accounted for the political stability, and enabling concomitant prosperity, in Hong Kong (Lau, 1982:183). Such a discursive slant disposed one to the reasons for success, rather than the imperfections, the punctures and stalling of the system. The successful development of the society, and the attainment of affluence, seemed to have found its counterpart in a discursive framework stressing success instead of problems.

Such an emphasis, we submit, influenced the direction of the studies of the subjective aspects of the Hong Kong people, as well as the way previous findings were interpreted. Thus, in a study of managerial ideology, Lau concluded as follows:

> ...in general, the Hong Kong employers are able to adopt a fairly modern orientation in their managerial attitudes towards employees.... Though there are still traditionalistic elements of various sorts embedded in the managerial attitudes, they can, in many cases, be justified on rational and pragmatic grounds in view of the economic and labour conditions in Hong Kong. For those traditionalistic elements which do not directly impact on the operation of economic organizations, the continual adherence to them... can be explained away either as cultural legacy or as the result of the process of insulation.... The more or less mutually insulated co-existence of both modern and traditionalistic elements in the managerial attitudes... has resulted in a relatively inconsistent managerial ideology, which, nonetheless, is highly practical for the Hong Kong situation. (1977:22-3)

Was there room for cultural strain, contradictions, or more generally, non-practical and non-expedient implications?

Instead of picking up where the studies in the 1960s had left off (among other things, the strain and frustration of people competing in an unstable and unequal society), the focus of such a discursive framework was on the success of the people in procuring jobs and riches, in meeting their needs through centripetal family or family-centric networks, here assisted by the adaptation

of traditional familism to the urban milieu, there facilitated by the essentially non-interferring policies of the government. It was as if the *quid pro quo* spirit was written deep into the philosophy and ethos of both the governed and the governing. But ultimately this spirit, this relation, was an artifact of the researcher; what one had to decide was whether the findings did support a case of success, confidence and stability. Lau's "utilitarian familism" was, in this respect, an impressive attempt to clinch such a case. But we will not go into a detailed discussion here (see Wong and Lui, 1992a).

The above sketch has tried to show some areas of change in the discursive framework in Hong Kong studies since the 1960s, and its implications for the identification and analysis of dilemmas in the society. It should be clear to the reader that our view is that some of the major issues raised by the researchers in the 1960s still need to be confronted. It is not just a matter of updating the findings; it is also one of having a fuller understanding of the society and its changes, thus enabling us to better envision the major issues of our own times.

Conclusion

This chapter has two parts, with the first part charting schematically the changes in some selected subjective areas as they were revealed by the surveys, and the second part dealing loosely with the purpose and slants behind those studies. There is no mechanical linkage between the two, although our format may suggest so. Hopes and frustrations in the society, and in our study of it – it has been our aim to give them a sense of resounding immediacy. If the findings (as discussed in the first part) point to the need to conceptualize the Hong Kong identity as a multi-faceted, multiple-domain and perhaps even "contradictory" entity, then the discursive change does not seem to have facilitated its inception. Conversely, a study of the discursive frameworks and their respective intellectual and social milieu will no doubt help to identify the crucial areas where future findings are mandatory.

We began with Scott and Wong, and their different interpretations of the current crisis. Crisis or not, the way ahead requires a retracing of steps.

* *I would like to thank Tai-lok Lui, Grant Evans, S.L. Wong and Benjamin Leung for their comments on an earlier draft of the chapter. We share a sense of camaraderie; whatever mistakes, however, must remain mine.*

Notes

1. It is thus partly for this reason that earlier studies, notwithstanding their original and different concerns and methodological reasoning, are regarded by us as "subjective indicators" studies. It goes without saying that a fuller review of Hong Kong studies, in all their themes and implications, is most important and will go some way to correcting this apparent bias in the present exercise.
2. It would be interesting to know whether recent events would have drastically changed Scott's view on the matter.
3. In the comparison of findings, we have not tempered with (such as recoding) the raw data sets which are available to us. The data sets of the 1960s and 1970s are not available, and we can only rely on the published monographs or papers. In some cases, this has made the comparison very difficult. For instance, Mitchell's monograph (1972) on the 1967 study does not provide the frequency distribution of *all* the response categories. This means one is just given what Mitchell interprets as the most important trend or pattern. Readers should be aware of this problem. In the schematic comparison, we have not given the details of the citation in order to keep the format simple and uncluttered. Readers could refer to the bibliography for assistance.
4. There is the view that for the "one country, two systems" framework to work, the economic prosperity (and together with it, the availability of opportunities) must be sustained. This is basically an ideological position which sees continuing economic prosperity as the only "bargaining chip" or "attraction for China" (depending on one's political orientations) of Hong Kong. It will be interesting to explore the relation between this ideology and the normative beliefs in openness and opportunities.
5. It is quite telling, in this respect, to find that in response to the same type of finding, Lee (1991) interprets it as reflecting extent of "job satisfaction," while Lau and Wan (1987) regard it as a matter of "work ethic."
6. Seventy-six per cent of the respondents in SM 1989 see the meaning of work as just a means of earning a living.
7. Some two years ago, a mimeographed paper entitled "Prognosis and Programmatics: a Review of some Hong Kong Studies" was being prepared by the present author.
8. When could we have a sociological or autobiographical account of the expatriate academic community in the 1960s and 1970s, something perhaps akin to Enright's Academic Year, or his Memoirs of a Mendicant Professor?

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11

Methodological Issues

S. M. Shen

Sample Design

This survey is the second of a series of surveys planned to be conducted at regular time intervals. The first one was conducted in the summer months of 1988 and a detailed report has been published. This second survey was conducted in 1990, two years after the first one. As with the first round, the target population of the study is all adults aged 18 or over living in Hong Kong but the scale of this second survey was enlarged due to some additional special topics being included in the study. The goal was to obtain about 2,000 successful interviews by taking a random sample of size 4,000 from the target population.

According to the Hong Kong 1991 Population Census there are about 4 million such adults in Hong Kong but a listing of them does not exist. Instead of a listing of adults living in Hong Kong, a frame of living quarters (LQF) is maintained by the Census and Statistics Department. The LQF consists of two parts:

(1) permanent living quarters in built-up areas and

(2) segments of temporary structures in non-built-up areas.

Only records of the first part are available for public use. These records provide a useful sampling frame for our purpose. Our

sample, selected from the LQF, will therefore, consist only of permanent living quarters in built-up areas while partially residential and temporary structures in non-built-up areas are excluded.

A simple random sample of residential addresses from a subframe of the LQF was selected for the 1988 survey. The sample was not very satisfactory practically because the addresses were scattered over the whole territory and conducting the interviews was time consuming and costly. Since this was one of the major reasons for the interviewers leaving their jobs in 1988, cluster sampling has been employed in this survey for the sake of convenience and for the sake of keeping the interviewers.

In this survey a cluster is a *street block*. Roughly speaking, building blocks bounded by two pairs of parallel streets perpendicular to each other are defined as street blocks. Within each selected street block a number of households was selected and from those selected households individuals were selected. There were, therefore, four different stages of selection, two for addresses and two for individuals. The selection of addresses was completed before the conducting of the fieldwork and the selection of individuals was carried out by the interviewers on the spot when they visited the addresses. The interviewers were required to carry out the selection strictly according to a randomization procedure attached to each questionnaire.

Stage 1. Selection of Street Blocks

Maps with tertiary planning units (TPU) and street block numbers are prepared and kept by the Census and Statistics Department. Making use of these maps and the LQF, a simple random sample (with replacement) of 500 street blocks was selected, from a total of 3,264, with probability proportional to the sizes (that is, number of addresses) of the street blocks. The street blocks vary greatly in size, larger ones can consist of 100 times as many households as smaller ones. As a result some of the large street blocks can be selected more than once.

Stage 2. Selection of Addresses

From each selected street block, a systematic sample of eight addresses were selected within the street block. When a street block had been selected for $k (k > 1)$ times, a systematic sample of 8 times k households was selected. There were, therefore, all together 4,000 addresses selected.

Stage 3. Selection of Households

Interviewers were required to call at each selected address and list all households who used the same address. A household would then be selected according to a random selection table pre-attached to each address.

Stage 4. Selection of Individuals

For each selected household, the interviewer was required to list all those eligible for inclusion in the sample, that is, all persons currently aged 18 or over and residing at the selected household. A respondent would then be selected according to a random selection grid (a modified Kish grid).

Survey Design

The very large number of questions makes the questionnaire extremely long and not suitable for ordinary face-to-face interviews. A method similar to the 1988 survey was adopted. The very large number of questions were divided into parts: one core and several special topics. The whole survey was designed to be composed of several questionnaires each consisting of the core and two or three special topics. Each selected respondent would respond to one of the questionnaires only.

The core consisted of all the general questions on the respondents' attitude to different aspects of various social domains. From experience in the 1988 survey, some questions in the core were found to be redundant and some required amend-

ment. The other questions in the core were, however, kept unchanged wherever possible so that a trend, if any, in the Hong Kong residents' attitude could be more easily detected.

In addition to the core, each questionnaire consisted of two or three special topics where more in-depth questions on some special issues were included. In the first survey, there were four different questionnaires. This time more special topics were included and as a result there were five different questionnaires each consisting of a core and one of the following modules:

A. Housing and Social Welfare
B. Mental Health, Family and Social Life
C. Social Mobility and Occupational Prestige Ranking
D. Legal and Political Attitudes
E. Mass Communication and Work

The 500 selected street blocks were then divided into five sub-samples each being assigned to respond to one of the five questionnaires. The sub-samples were obtained by using a systematic allocation of street blocks so that each sub-sample by itself could be regarded as a cluster sample of street blocks of a fifth of the original size. All individuals selected from a sub-sample were asked to respond to the same questionnaire. A detailed breakdown of the sample sizes is given in Table 11.1. Excluding the invalid addresses, a few non-residential addresses and some unused addresses, the valid sample sizes varied from 559 to 750 giving a total of 3,305 valid addresses.

Table 11.1 Sample Sizes (Number of Addresses) of the Five Questionnaires

	Questionnaire					
	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Original sample size	800	800	800	800	800	4,000
Invalid addresses*	35	41	59	34	25	194
Non-residential addresses	5	3	13	20	19	60
Unused addresses#	28	6	40	187	180	441
Valid sample size	732	750	688	559	576	3,305

* Invalid addresses include demolished, vacant and unidentifiable addresses.
\# Unused addresses include the addresses not visited by the interviewers.

For the core questions which were common to all five questionnaires, therefore, a reasonable sample size of 3,305 was retained. At the same time all five questionnaires were kept at manageable lengths at the expense of having relatively smaller sample sizes for the special topics.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork was administered by three teams of researchers. The Department of Applied Social Studies of the Hong Kong Polytechnic was responsible for Questionnaires A and B, the Social Sciences Research Centre of the University of Hong Kong was responsible for Questionnaire C and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong was responsible for Questionnaires D and E.

Face-to-face interviews were carried out largely during July, August and September of 1990. Questionnaires A and B, however, were not finished before December mainly due to the problem of

manpower. The interviewers were mostly students from local tertiary educational institutes. Recruitment was difficult because there was a wide choice of summer jobs. More importantly, they were extremely difficult to keep because of the frustration they experienced in the visits and during the interviews and because of the relatively low pay offered.

Prior to the start of the fieldwork stage, all interviewers recruited were given a one-day briefing session in July, 1990. New interviewers were also recruited from time to time during the fieldwork period to make up for the loss of interviewers. Those who joined late were given briefing sessions individually by the research assistants of the respective research teams.

Excluding the invalid addresses the response rate achieved, on the whole, was about 60 per cent. This means that a total of 1,957 adults had been successfully interviewed. The detailed figures are given in Table 11.2. For the five questionnaires, the response rate varied between 48 per cent and 72 per cent, the number of successful cases varied between 332 and 422.

Table 11.2 Response Rates for the Five Questionnaires

	Questionnaire					
	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Valid sample size	732 (100.0)	750 (100.0)	688 (100.0)	559 (100.0)	576 (100.0)	3,305 (100.0)
Successful cases	400 (54.6)	422 (56.3)	332 (48.3)	390 (69.8)	413 (71.7)	1,957 (59.2)
Unsuccessful cases	332 (45.4)	328 (43.7)	356 (51.7)	169 (30.2)	163 (28.3)	1,348 (40.8)
Refusal	199 (27.2)	203 (27.1)	317 (46.1)	99 (17.7)	117 (20.3)	935 (28.3)
Non-contact*	97 (13.3)	79 (10.5)	39 (5.7)	64 (11.4)	42 (7.3)	321 (9.7)
Others#	14 (1.9)	46 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.1)	4 (0.7)	70 (2.1)
Incomplete questionnaires	22 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	22 (0.7)

Figures in parentheses are column percentages. Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* Non-contact includes households with no eligible target respondents, with nobody at home, and those in buildings which the interviewers were not able to enter.

\# Others include those mentally ill and those with language difficulties.

Sampling Errors

Estimations based on a sample which is only part of the population are inevitably subject to sampling as well as non-sampling errors. As far as sampling errors are concerned, if the data were weighted according to the number of eligible adults residing in the corresponding selected address, the formula for calculating

the sampling error of any estimated percentage, p is

$$s.e.(p) = \sum (p_i - \sum p_i / m) / \{m(m-1)\}$$

where m is the number of street blocks selected and p_i is the corresponding percentage estimate based on the data observed in the ith street block. With the sampling error obtained, confidence intervals can be easily calculated. A 95 per cent confidence interval, for example, is

$$p \pm 1.96 \times s.e.(p)$$

Clearly, if the data are not weighted such formulae give only rough estimates. In this survey, the number of eligible adults was recorded only for those addresses with only one household. Fortunately, addresses with more than one household amount to less than 1 per cent of the sample.

Comparison between Sub-samples and Comparison of the Sample and Population Data

Since the entire sample has been divided into five sub-samples, it will be interesting to know whether each gives a representative sample and whether these sub-samples are homogeneous. One way to assess these is to compare some general characteristics of the respondents of the sub-samples and also compare them with that of the population. We shall compare the major demographic characteristics of our samples with that of the population as reported in the Hong Kong 1991 Population Census.

Detailed information of the Population Census is not available yet. By December 1991 only a first batch of data had been released and more detailed comparison has to await for a further release of data. Take the age groups as an example. Our survey aimed at adults of 18 and above. The Census Department, however, has adopted the quinquennial age groups such as 0-4, 5-9,

10-14, etc. in their first batch of data released. Thus for our respondents aged 20 and above we can classify them according to the Census Department's quinquennial age groups such as 20-24 and 25-29, but for those who were aged 18 and 19 there will not be any comparable age group given in the released Census data.

As our survey was conducted in 1990, there is a time lag of about one year in the comparison. Furthermore, some characteristics are not directly comparable due to the different criteria of classification. An example is the economics characteristics. As the legal age for employment is 15 and above, the Census data released always used the sub-population consisting of those aged 15 and above as the base for the calculation of the percentages of different activity status, different income groups, etc. This population is certainly different from our target population which is adults of 18 and above. Minor discrepancies like these appear in all comparisons that are presented.

Table 11.3 shows the comparison of the age distribution of the samples with the adult population in Hong Kong as revealed by the 1991 Census data. Note that for the Census data quoted in this table the population actually includes all residents aged 15 and above, slightly different from our target population. It can be seen that the five sub-samples do not differ significantly from each other except for sub-sample C which has a much smaller percentage in the youngest age group. There is also no great discrepancy between the samples and the population except that the younger age groups in the samples, in general, have slightly higher percentages than that in the population. Hence, in the oldest age group, namely 65 and over, the percentages in the sub-samples are significantly lower than that in the population. This coincides with the general understanding that the younger people who are better educated can accept the concept of sample surveys more readily than older people and tend, therefore, to be more willing to respond to surveys.

Table 11.3 Comparison of Age Distribution (%)

	Sample						1991 Census
Age group	A	B	C	D	E	Total	Population
18-24	20.2	21.3	12.9	22.9	24.0	20.5	19.2*
25-34	26.2	27.7	31.3	27.2	26.9	27.8	27.0
35-44	24.7	23.2	23.8	22.3	21.5	23.1	20.4
45-54	13.2	10.4	13.8	10.5	12.3	12.0	11.2
55-64	10.4	11.7	9.3	10.8	9.0	10.3	11.2
65 and over	5.0	5.2	8.7	6.4	6.3	6.2	11.0
No answer	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	
(N)	(400)	(422)	(332)	(390)	(413)	(1,957)	(4,370,365)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* Population aged 15-24.

The situation, however, seems to have improved recently as more and more surveys have been carried out in the territory. This improvement is also revealed in our surveys. In the 1988 survey, in addition to the oldest age group the middle age group, namely the 45-64 age group also had smaller percentages in the samples than that in the population.

Table 11.4 compares the sex distribution. It can be seen that except for sub-sample C, males are slightly over-represented in the samples. This phenomenon was not observed in the 1988 survey. The discrepancy is, however, not serious.

Table 11.4 Comparison of Sex Distribution (%)

	Sample						1991 Census
Sex	A	B	C	D	E	Total	Population*
Male	57.0	52.6	48.2	55.1	53.8	53.5	50.6
Female	43.0	47.4	51.8	44.9	46.2	46.5	49.4
(N)	(400)	(422)	(332)	(390)	(413)	(1,957)	(4,370,365)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* All population aged 15 and over.

Table 11.5 compares marital status. The percentage distribution of the samples combined together are quite close to that of the population with the percentage of "never married" slightly below and the percentage of "married" slightly above that of the population. This deviation is most significant in sample C where the "married" respondents dominates the sample. This situation is commonly observed in surveys because unmarried people are less likely to stay at home than those who are married and are therefore less easily contacted.

Table 11.5 Comparison of Marital Status (%)

	Sample						1991 Census
Marital status	A	B	C	D	E	Total	Population*
Never married	29.0	31.8	23.8	36.2	36.8	31.8	32.8
Married	66.5	63.5	72.3	58.2	59.3	63.7	60.0
Widowed/Deserted	4.0	3.8	3.3	4.6	3.1	3.7	5.9
Divorced/Separated	0.5	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.7	0.8	1.2
(N)	(400)	(422)	(332)	(390)	(413)	(1,957)	(4,370,365)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* All population aged 15 and over.

Table 11.6 compares the distribution by place of birth. The questionnaires only distinguish whether the respondents were born in Hong Kong. Sub-sample C again gives the percentages which are farthest away from the population ones. This could be an effect of the cluster sampling method that we had adopted. The distribution of the other sub-samples are very similar to that of the population. Note that the distribution of the population is referring to all population in Hong Kong.

Table 11.6 Comparison of Place of Birth (%)

	Sample						1991 Census
Place of birth	A	B	C	D	E	Total	Population*
Hong Kong	60.2	63.5	52.1	59.5	63.7	60.1	59.8
Elsewhere	39.7	36.5	47.9	40.5	36.3	39.9	40.2
(N)	(400)	(422)	(332)	(390)	(413)	(1,957)	(5,522,281)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* All population.

Table 11.7 compares the duration of residence in Hong Kong. The comparison is between sub-samples but not between the samples and the population because the census data cover all the residents in Hong Kong including children aged below 18 which is not comparable to our samples. Furthermore, in our survey, only respondents who were not born in Hong Kong were asked to answer this question. As a result, the duration of residence of a larger part (those born in Hong Kong) of each of the sub-samples is unknown to us. The table shows that about 80 per cent of those respondents not born in Hong Kong had resided in Hong Kong for more than 10 years.

Table 11.7 Comparison of Duration of Residence in Hong Kong among those who were not Born in Hong Kong (%)

Duration of residence (year)	Sample					
	A	B	C	D	E	Total
0-3	3.1	0.6	1.3	4.4	4.0	2.7
4-6	2.5	5.2	4.4	2.5	2.7	3.5
7-9	5.0	1.3	3.1	7.6	4.7	4.4
10 and over	79.2	80.5	85.5	82.9	80.0	81.7
No answer	10.1	12.3	5.7	2.5	8.7	7.8
(N)	(159)	(154)	(159)	(158)	(150)	(780)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 11.8 compares educational attainment. It can be seen that the samples do not deviate very much from the population except that respondents seem to have slightly higher educational attainment than the population. This is reflected in the fact that the samples have slightly higher percentages in the higher levels. This phenomenon is similar to our first survey and we conjectured that people who have received higher education know more about sample surveys and tend to be more willing to take part in surveys. The conjecture could still be true.

Table 11.8 Comparison of Educational Attainment (%)

Educational attainment	Sample A	B	C	D	E	Total	1991 Census Population*
No school/ Kindergarten	10.7	12.6	9.6	9.2	6.5	9.8	12.8
Primary	20.7	22.7	25.9	23.8	19.1	22.3	25.2
Secondary	47.7	40.3	43.7	47.0	47.9	45.3	45.8
Matriculation	5.7	5.0	5.1	5.6	7.0	5.7	4.9
Tertiary							
Non-degree course	4.2	5.9	6.9	4.4	7.0	5.7	5.4
Degree course	8.2	10.5	8.1	9.3	11.6	9.6	5.9
No answer	2.5	3.1	0.6	0.8	0.7	1.6	–
(N)	(400)	(422)	(332)	(390)	(413)	(1,957)	(4,370,365)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* All population aged 15 and over.

The labour force participation rate among all population aged 15 and over is 64.3 per cent according to the 1991 Population Census. The following are the respective rates of the five sub-samples.

Sample	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Participation rate (%)	70.0	66.3	66.3	71.3	63.2	67.4

On the whole the labour force participation rates in the samples are higher than that of the population. This could be due to three factors (1) the survey did not include residents aged below 18 where the rate is typically low because of the large proportion of students, (2) the sex ratios displayed in Table 11.4 show that there were more males in the samples, and (3) the respondents had a higher educational attainment as revealed in Table 11.8. Among the sub-samples, sample E has a much lower participation rate than the other samples. One reason for this is that sub-sample E has more students than the other sub-samples.

Table 11.9 compares the distribution of the working respondents by occupation. The comparison is among sub-samples only because the classification of occupations in the 1991 Population Census has been modified from the previous census and the categories are not the same as our questionnaires which adopted the previous census classification. It can be seen that there is certain variation among the sub-samples. Sample D, for example, has a much lower percentage of "Professionals" but a much higher percentage of "Production and related workers." This could be a result of the cluster sampling method that we have employed.

Table 11.9 Comparison of Occupation of Working Respondents (%)

Occupation	Sample A	B	C	D	E	Total
Professional, technical and related workers	20.4	24.5	13.2	8.5	20.1	17.6
Administrative and managerial workers	11.7	11.9	13.2	10.0	16.2	12.5
Clerical and related workers	15.3	17.0	15.5	17.4	16.2	16.3
Sales workers	8.4	9.0	4.1	8.1	6.6	7.4
Service workers	13.1	11.2	14.6	13.3	10.0	12.4
Production and related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers	25.5	20.9	30.6	37.0	26.6	28.0
Others	1.1	1.1	7.8	4.1	3.5	3.3
No answer	4.4	4.3	0.9	1.5	0.8	2.5
(N)	(274)	(277)	(219)	(270)	(259)	(1,299)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 11.10 compares the distribution of the working respondents by industry. Speaking overall, the sample distribution does not fully resemble the population distribution. The sample has a much smaller percentage in the category "Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels" but bigger percentages in other categories. This could be partly due to the difference between the target population and the Hong Kong population and could also be due to the fact that the working hours of the industry make this section of the population more difficult to contact.

Table 11.10 Comparison of Industry of Working Population (%)

	Sample						1991 Census
Industry	A	B	C	D	E	Total	Population*
Manufacturing	25.2	24.9	30.6	26.7	33.6	28.0	28.2
Construction	9.5	7.6	7.3	7.4	6.6	7.7	6.9
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	13.9	12.6	11.0	14.4	10.0	12.5	22.5
Transport, storage and communication	13.1	12.6	10.5	7.4	6.6	10.1	9.8
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	12.0	14.8	11.0	16.7	19.7	14.9	10.6
Community, social and personal services	20.8	22.0	20.5	24.8	20.1	21.7	19.9
Others	2.6	1.1	7.8	0.7	2.3	2.7	2.1
No answer	2.9	4.3	1.4	1.9	1.2	2.4	–
(N)	(274)	(277)	(219)	(270)	(259)	(1,299)	(2,715,103)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* All population aged 15 and over.

Table 11.11 compares the distribution of the individual monthly income from main employment of the working respondents. The table shows that there is not much difference among the sub-samples. There is, however, a certain discrepancy between the samples and the population. The lower income groups in the samples have smaller percentages than that of the population. This, together with the previous discussion, shows that the older age group and those with lower educational attainment and lower income are under-represented in the samples. The middle and upper-middle income groups such as those with a monthly income between HK$6,000 and HK$15,000 are over-represented while the very rich ones are again very difficult to contact and are usually under-represented.

Table 11.11 Comparison of Monthly Income from Main Employment of the Working Population (%)

Monthly	Sample						1991 Census
income (HK$)	A	B	C	D	E	Total	Population*
Under 1,000	1.5	1.1	1.4	0.0	0.4	0.9	3.4
1,000-1,999	0.0	3.7	1.8	3.7	3.1	2.5	3.4
2,000-3,999	12.2	12.1	11.0	15.9	10.9	12.5	20.8
4,000-5,999	24.0	24.5	26.9	26.7	21.0	24.6	29.6
6,000-7,999	24.4	20.1	19.2	21.1	21.0	21.2	17.2
8,000-9,999	11.8	11.0	13.7	13.7	12.8	12.6	8.3
10,000-14,999	11.4	9.9	13.7	11.1	18.3	12.8	9.1
15,000-20,000	2.2	2.9	3.2	1.9	3.9	2.8	3.1
20,000 and over	3.0	4.4	4.6	2.6	5.4	4.0	5.1
No answer	9.6	10.3	4.6	3.3	3.1	6.3	–
(N)	(271)	(273)	(219)	(270)	(257)	(1,290)	(2,681,583)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* All working population aged 15 and over.

Table 11.12 compares the household size of the respondents. The distributions of the sub-samples are very consistent. They all have lower percentages of the small households of sizes "1" or "2" and larger percentages of the large households. The reasons are twofold. Larger households are more likely to consist of eligible persons and also larger households are more likely to have somebody at home and are therefore more accessible.

Table 11.12 Comparison of Household Size (%)

	Sample						1991 Census
Household size	A	B	C	D	E	Total	Population*
1	5.5	5.2	6.0	4.9	6.3	5.6	14.3
2	10.5	14.0	13.6	10.3	10.4	11.7	18.4
3	20.3	16.1	17.2	24.1	20.3	19.6	19.4
4-5	46.8	48.1	50.6	45.1	48.7	47.8	37.0
6 and over	17.0	16.6	12.7	15.6	14.3	15.3	10.9
(N)	(400)	(422)	(332)	(390)	(413)	(1,957)	(1,582,215)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* All population.

Table 11.13 compares the monthly household income. As with the individual income comparison above the lower income groups and the highest income group are under-represented while the middle and upper-middle income groups are over-represented.

Table 11.13 Comparison of Monthly Household Income (%)

Monthly household	Sample						1991 Census
income (HK$)	A	B	C	D	E	Total	Population*
Under 2,000	2.3	0.7	2.7	1.3	2.9	1.9	4.8
2,000-3,999	2.5	1.9	0.6	2.6	2.2	2.0	7.3
4,000-5,999	7.0	6.9	10.5	9.5	9.2	8.5	12.8
6,000-7,999	8.8	10.2	12.3	15.4	8.0	10.8	13.8
8,000-9,999	13.8	14.5	16.9	14.9	11.6	14.2	11.5
10,000-14,999	23.0	19.2	22.6	18.7	19.4	20.5	19.9
15,000-19,999	9.5	11.4	11.7	10.8	10.7	10.8	11.1
20,000-24,000	8.0	8.1	6.3	5.4	10.9	7.8	6.3
25,000-29,000	2.3	1.9	3.9	4.9	8.2	4.2	3.6
30,000 and over	3.8	6.4	3.3	6.2	8.2	5.7	8.9
No answer	19.3	19.0	9.0	10.5	8.7	13.5	–
(N)	(400)	(422)	(332)	(390)	(413)	(1,957)	(1,582,215)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* All population.

Table 11.14 compares the housing types of the respondents. It can be seen that the percentages of "public and aided housing" are slightly higher and that of "private housing" are usually lower than that of the population. This is mainly because the majority of private housing buildings have private guards or other devices to prevent strangers from entering. The difference between the sub-samples could be due to the clustering effect. The difference, however, is not serious.

Table 11.14 Comparison of Housing Types (%)

Housing type	Sample A	B	C	D	E	Total	1991 Census Population*
Public and aided housing	40.5	44.1	43.4	45.4	43.8	43.3	38.1
Housing authority home ownership estates	4.5	5.9	7.2	4.6	12.1	6.9	7.7
Private housing	50.3	46.7	47.3	46.9	42.1	46.6	49.1
Temporary housing	4.3	3.3	1.8	2.8	1.5	2.9	4.2
Institutions	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.9
(N)	(400)	(422)	(332)	(390)	(413)	(1,957)	(1,507,997)

Percentage may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

* All households in Hong Kong.

Remarks

The above comparisons show that some discrepancies do exist among the sub-samples and also between the samples and the population. Reasons for this could be our cluster sampling method and also non-response.

Cluster sampling does reduce the efficiency of estimation. For each sub-sample, therefore, the estimates obtained will be less efficient than those in the survey conducted in 1988 when simple random sampling was employed. In the combined sample, however, the reduction in efficiency will be counteracted by the increase in sample size (from 1,662 to 1,957).

Most of the interviews were carried out in the evenings after 6:00 p.m. Very frequently more than one visit was required to contact a respondent. If a respondent was not available the interviewers were instructed to make six visits at different times of the day and on different days of the week before they could declare "failure to contact." On average, each completed questionnaire required 2.5 visits. About 10 per cent of the completed questionnaires actually achieved completion at the sixth visit. The time taken to complete a questionnaire ranged from 15 minutes to three hours. The majority of them required 35 to 45 minutes.

Note that in each of the original samples of addresses, there are a number of unused addresses as shown in Table 11.1. The number of these addresses in sub-samples D and E are most striking. The reasons are (1) time limit and (2) difficulties in keeping the interviewers to finish visiting all the addresses. The number of unvisited addresses by district are summarized in Table 11.15 for reference.

There is no other detailed account of the distribution of the addresses visited and the addresses unvisited. Whether any biased element had been introduced into the samples is difficult to assess. Researchers, however, should beware of this situation and be cautious when interpreting the data collected.

Table 11.15 Number of Unvisited Addresses by District

District	Sample D	Sample E
Islands	8	8
Sai Kung	13	16
Sha Tin	17	7
Tai Po	23	19
Tsuen Wan	2	12
Tuen Mun	23	20
Yuen Long	4	6
Kwai Tsing	5	11
Shum Shui Po	0	10
Wong Tai Sin	13	23
Kwun Tong	24	3
Kowloon City	0	10
Central and Western	8	7
Eastern	25	25
South	22	3
Total	187	180