

# **Sticking Your Neck Out, The First Ten Years of the HKSAR: A Study in Unintended Consequences**

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## **Parameters and Dynamics of Change**

The real challenge to Hong Kong ahead is NOT how to preserve Hong Kong for fifty years unchanged; it is the race between the accelerating pace of global transformation within which Hong Kong serves as the major pipeline between the world and China, and China and the world, and the inevitable reactions which will build up as these changes become more deeply felt and deeply sought or resented among the hundreds of millions of aspiring Chinese. The major driving forces of this global transformation which has caught up Hong Kong and China are international trade, tourism, communication, media and cultural products. Hong Kong has an unusual depth and breadth of experience and expertise in this international trade—in goods, services, media and cultural products—and a wide array of international, regional, and China-oriented networks which facilitate it. No other economy in the world is so dependent on international trade. If it capitalizes on those networks as in the past and remains the broker and comprador—the bridge—between East and West and local, mainland, and overseas Chinese, Hong Kong will thrive. However, new forces have been unleashed by Hong Kong's changed status, and with any substantial new forces introduced into a system, inevitably new interactions and dynamics arise. These new dynamics make the carefully spelled out provisions of the Basic Law, which details the intended direction, pace, and result of changing Hong Kong's status over the next fifty years a classic study in outcomes versus intentions. We won't have to wait fifty years; the first ten years will tell the tale.

An example of the unintended consequences of change arose in China after Deng Xiaoping introduced the Four Modernizations. While Deng expected “flies” such as corruption and western influences to come in through the newly opening window, he never anticipated the rapidity and depth of changes China experienced and certainly didn't anticipate Wei Jingsheng's 5th modernization of democracy to arise, persist, and spread as quickly as it did. However, unintended consequences do not have to be the same as unanticipated consequences. Unintended consequences may, indeed, be expected and even prepared for. Good government requires alertness to the possibilities as well as the probabilities and the intended as well as unintended effects of policy decisions. Disasters may be prevented or their effects alleviated by good planning. No planning at all makes a recoverable disaster into a true calamity. The lack of preparation for riots and social protests made Tiananmen of 1989, a situation the South Koreans could have handled with relative ease, into a near calamity for China and a searing experience still reverberating through its society and relationships with the world.

The desire to be prepared leads to scenario drafting—a way of exploring and assessing the possibilities and the likeliest of outcomes—as well as preparing even for the unlikeliest of outcomes. Four scenarios have commonly been proposed for Hong Kong's future. First, nothing will change (conversely, everything will stay the same). This is the Deng, now Tung, scenario. Second, Hong Kong's preeminent role will fade and it will become just another Chinese city, behind a rising Shanghai. This is the Dr. Doom (Marc Faber) scenario. Third, Hong Kong's new status will lead to a new boom as China itself grows rapidly. Here Hong Kong prospers with China, but fundamentally it is really just a projection of present trends. This is the Ted Thomas scenario. Fourth, Hong Kong will collapse as the suppression of democracy leads to economic chaos. This is the *Fortune* “Death of Hong Kong” scenario, or alternatively, the Martin Lee scenario.

I would like to propose a 5th scenario: that Hong Kong will transform itself and China into something different, becoming neither the same, nor fading or booming. The possibility of chaos certainly exists, but

so does the possibility, if not the certainty, of something different, something unintended, arising. If I am right, it will at least not be unanticipated. Here is the scenario in detail.

### **Unintended Consequences: More Dynamic Interaction**

Just as Hong Kong's economy became more and more integrated into that of China's over the past ten years, the next ten years will see a speedup in the increasing pace of political, economic, and cultural integration with China already apparent during the final months of British rule in 1997. This enhanced integration, rather than dominantly financial and of managerial expertise in Hong Kong financed factories, will become infrastructural and increasingly involve cross-border flows of people and, inevitably, ideas, information, perspectives, and cultural products like films, software, fashion, and music. The effects of this enhanced and transformed interchange will be increasingly difficult to predict.

Hong Kong will continue, and enhance, its role as the focal center of over 50 million overseas Chinese and as the conduit of Taiwan's investment, trade, and cultural and political interchange with China. Further, the international and Asia-regional character of Hong Kong's business will deepen and expand as China continues its own explosive growth. Internal stresses in both Hong Kong and China are set to grow, as differential development in location and pace widens income gaps regionally in China and among social and working groups in the cities, including Hong Kong. The demographic effects of aging populations and China's one child policy will exacerbate these internal stresses. The process of enhanced exchanges of various types with their inevitable social and economic repercussions will make integration both problematic and increasingly unavoidable for Hong Kong and China despite the "one country, two systems" slogan and intentions of continued separation. Hong Kong's role as a cultural products producer and broker will grow, even while it will provoke Shanghai and other mainland cities to hasten their own imitation of Hong Kong's successful model. The increased exchange between China and Hong Kong and its more far flung offspring will challenge the conservative culture of the mainland, and make Hong Kong even more a center of suspicious regard by ideological and cultural conservatives.

The changed logic of this integration rather than separation and preservation process is already becoming apparent. Now that Hong Kong has become part of China, its practices and experiences become "Chinese" and not foreign or imperialist, and thus, the influence of Hong Kong on China will grow substantially over the next ten years as Hong Kong becomes looked to as a "Chinese" model and benchmark. The logic is also simple: if what makes the Chinese of Hong Kong, China 10 to 20 times richer works there, and makes it among the richest societies on earth, then it should have the same effect elsewhere among other Chinese in China. This logic will be further promoted by Taiwan's continued growth, despite all the obstacles the PRC can pile on. "One country, two systems" will not be accepted as long as it means one country, one poor and one rich system. National pride in reunification will last only so long before the other and more substantial benefits of reunification will be expected, and these, while posed primarily as economic, will take on other aspects as the political economic culture of Hong Kong becomes more familiar and more desirable and less threatening and less "foreign" to the people and leaders of the mainland. Taiwan's own democratization and prosperity will continually pressure Beijing to produce the goods for its own people, both to enhance the legitimacy of its rule, but also to lessen the gap between them with the goal of eventual peaceful reunification.

The integration is thus not just one direction, of Hong Kong toward China, but of both entities in new directions, together, altogether, from the direction each had been going separately. For example, the desire to integrate with Taiwan will continue to exert hidden pressures enhancing the pull toward democracy and an open economy generated by the Hong Kong example. Hong Kong thus becomes the democratic and free economics "Trojan Horse" brought in behind the socialist Great Wall, and Taiwan's influence as prosperous example remains to protect and enhance the projection of the influence of the "safe" and acceptable and "Chinese" alternative of the Hong Kong way. As with all such changes, there will be winners and losers, and thus Hong Kong may become a target of resentment by those damaged by changes attributable to Hong Kong's influence and example. As long as the winners outnumber and outrank the losers, Hong Kong will

be secure, but if the changes it foments destabilize key groups which focus on it as the source of their suffering, then Hong Kong may be in for a rough ride.

One thing is certain, the job of analysts in understanding the Hong Kong political economy and in forecasting the strains and stresses to which it is subject and the directions and trajectories of its development, has now become even more complex and riddled with unknowns and unquantifiables. While the intentions of both China and Hong Kong and the expectations of the rest of the world are spelled out in the Basic Law, the realities of life are that intentions seldom result in the outcomes desired.

### **Unintended Consequences: Economic**

The economic integration of the past ten years brought more benefits than costs to both China and Hong Kong. That pattern may not hold for the next ten. Although cross-border corruption and illegal immigration from China rose during the past decade, the pace of economic growth in China, roughly double that of Hong Kong's 5% average, and lower costs for manufacturing, provided substantial support for Hong Kong's transition to a service economy largely based on trade, tourism, management, and finance. These factors helped considerably to keep unemployment low during the massive economic change from 1972, when textiles alone accounted for 50% of domestic exports and 46% of the industrial labour force, and industrial workers outnumbered service workers by 2 to 1, to 1996, when service workers outnumbered manufacturing workers by 10 to 1 and manufacturing produced less than 10% of GDP. Technological changes in air transport such as jumbo jets and global trends such as increased competition driving down ticket prices also contributed to the lubrication of smooth economic change in Hong Kong. Tourism numbers surged from 1 million visitors in 1972 to 12 million in 1996 and now tourism is a substantial sector of the economy, vastly outcontributing local manufacture which, shifted to Guangdong and elsewhere, employs as many people in Hong Kong owned and managed factories (along with spinoff employment) as live in Hong Kong itself.

The sovereignty and economic shift to China means stronger reliance on China's stability or instability and its fundamental economic, international, and political directions. These provide one side of the dynamic in determining Hong Kong's future. At the same time, on the other side, the development of very different political and social cultures in Hong Kong and the conflict of these with those of China comprises the other.

Deng Xiaoping, after all, expected Hong Kong and China to become more alike during the 50 years stipulated under the Sino-British Declaration. But, he did not specify the directions of change, other than for China to become richer, like Hong Kong. He did expect the PRC's social and political system to continue "unchanged" as well as that of Hong Kong's "unchanged for fifty years", but one suspects that Deng knew better than anyone the vicissitudes of history and the necessity and inevitability of change in both Hong Kong and the PRC. The certainty of change, however, does not mean smooth, unidirectional progress. It simply means that new challenges and uncertainties and pressures will arise which may bring about either slow or abrupt transformation. But transformation there will be, for certain, and more than likely, some rough periods when social and political reactions to economic and technological change generate powerful forces of disruption in the status quo.

There will be no fifty years without change in Hong Kong or the PRC, nor fifty years of no change in Hong Kong while China catches up enough to make unconditional merger imperceptible. Instead, there will be considerable change for both entities, and what had once been the separate directions and dynamics of the two separate societies now differs completely. Their new relationship changes the dynamics and direction of change for both societies and what is created is a new society with new and still developing dynamics and trajectories.

While there may be some reassurance that three out of four Hong Kong people believe that Hong Kong's economic achievement is a pillar of China's modernization, (results from the June 1997 Hong Kong Transition Project survey), the down side is that if reform falters in China it will have immediate and

perhaps considerable repercussions for Hong Kong. Further, as discussed below, whereas in 1973 the *Annual Report* could boast that: “Hong Kong is probably the only territory still completely faithful to liberal economic policies of free enterprise and free trade,” the fate of the laissez-faire policy in future looks open to considerable tinkering. Some sort of “industrial policy” appears more and more likely. The only questions about the future changes in policy are first, how much will it cost and what directions will industrial policy take, and second, how much will it involve “cooperation” with Guangdong and Central Government authorities. A third question is whether any government can be sufficiently aware of global changes and challenges as to plan and prepare societies sufficiently in time to buffer, much less capitalize on, their effects.

In reality, economic direction giving is not wholly a new pattern for Hong Kong, though “industrial policy” is. What is new is who are giving the directions and what directions the economic guidance takes and especially the more fundamental and widespread economic and political integration with the Pearl River region and Central Government.

In the past, the Hong Kong civil service monitored the economy and infrastructure and produced policy reports and recommendations after thorough consultations with interested parties in a clearly understood and fairly open process. Mr. Tung has introduced what appears to be a very different model, with policy deriving from a small coterie of Executive Councilors whose consultation process is by no means as formalized, extensive, transparent, or accountable. Also, the degree of intervention may increase such as to become a qualitative rather than merely quantitative shift. And finally, the record of government intervention in the areas of land supply, housing, education, medical care, and transport planning are not uniformly good, or even adequate. Indeed, there is much room for criticism in precisely in the areas the government has intervened and “planned” most. Pushing the government further into “planning” may not reduce uncertainties as intended; instead, it may generate precisely the sorts of social and political reactions which would introduce more chaotic elements which would exacerbate the uncertainties such planning was intended to reduce. This is even more the case with Tung’s more politicized policy originating process—for after all, he was elected by 400, next time 800 will do so, and eventually everyone will participate. His appointments, are, therefore, the result of a political process entirely different from the politically neutral processes of the civil service. In seeking to reduce political disputes, and facilitate decision making, Tung risks the near certainty of the exact opposite occurring.

This can be seen in public opinion. In an open ended question posed to 1,130 people in Hong Kong in June 1997 on which problem in Hong Kong most concerns you personally now, people overwhelmingly cited economically and socially related issues.

**Table 1. Current issues of personal concern**

Economic Issues		Social Issues		“Political” Issues	
Stable economic growth:	21%	Education:	9%	Corruption:	5%
Affordable housing:	13%	Elderly:	7%	Political stability:	5%
Employment:	9%	Crime:	8%	Freedom of press:	3%
		Medical:	2%	Freedom to demonstrate:	2%
				Autonomy of Hong Kong:	2%
				Fair judges/free to travel:	2%

The government has a major active presence in housing, education, crime, and corruption, all areas of great concern. The high concern with stable economic growth may reflect some considerable unease with what appears to be rampant speculation in the stock and property markets. Having witnessed booms and busts more than once, many people fear that Hong Kong’s booming economy is unsustainable. Calls for the government to step in and cool speculation ignores the fact that it was government control of the property market, and government inaction on the redevelopment front, which fomented so much of the fever in the first place. That the government also collects a massive portion of its income from property and stock market transactions means that the government does not so much regulate as profit from the feverish

activity. While a more healthy and wider tax system would demand careful assessment of need, effects, and expenditure, and cost-benefit analysis of social investment and tax collection, the present system of income generation appears unregulated and unregulatable, and the income from it may be spent irresponsibly and ineffectually without too much protest from anyone since, to the average person who doesn't directly participate in the stock and property market, it appears to be a tax on others' wealth. In reality, these taxes are a tax on everyone and everything, and ultimately may result in both a stock and property bubble, and/or in pricing Hong Kong out of its ability to compete. The less fortunate and educated and retired and ill are also forced out of Hong Kong by such pricing and speculation, with these less fortunates being driven into the less costly regions of China. But such processes also distort the society; after all, a society cannot exist if there is no one to clean its streets, bathrooms, offices, hospital rooms, and staff its stores, theatres, and so on. The 160,000 Filipinos and scores of thousands of others from foreign countries whose rights and stay are limited has dampened social demands in among the poorer groups. But, if the foreign workers are expelled and their place taken by Chinese, as expected, (see below) there will be a rise in demands from the bottom of the society.

While these economic and social issues may be distinguished from so-called "political" issues, the reality, of course, is that an economic or social issue can very quickly become a political issue, and political issues such as freedom to demonstrate can very quickly become a focus if, for example, a union group were to seek to demonstrate on housing or unemployment. So the potential that concerns on these social and economic issues may become political is real, and rising.

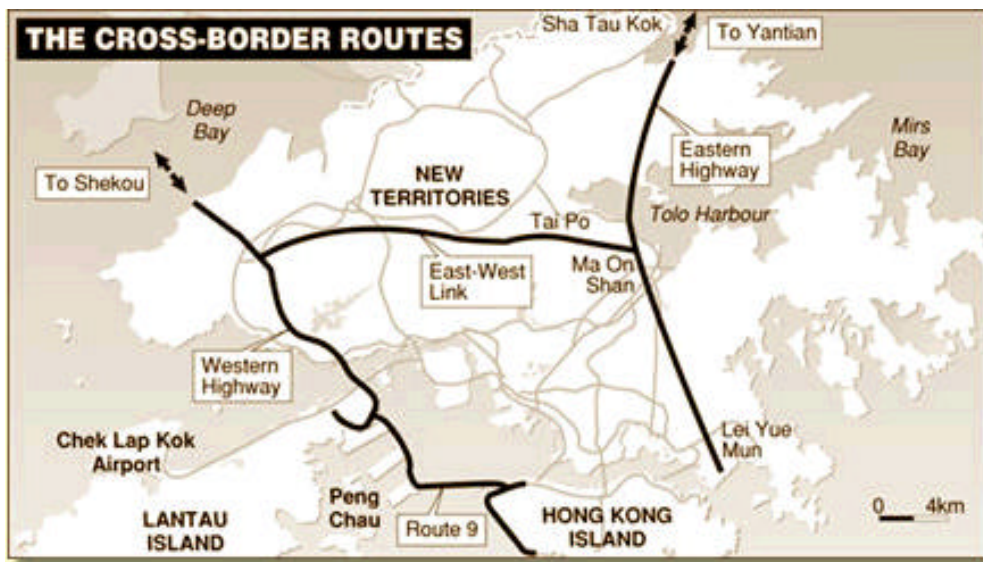
One factor in Hong Kong's prosperity often overlooked in laissez-faire propaganda is that in fact, Hong Kong has pursued a series of largely government driven infrastructural projects which have boosted, if not underpinned, its development. For example, except for the economic boost from the new airport and related construction, growth in 1994 would have been nearly 0% and not the 5.4% reported. Some of those works, such as the MTR, KCR, light rail, Mid-Levels Escalator, considerable road works, harbour fill projects, new tunnels and new harbour tunnels and the new airport construction project are obvious, and in many cases, considerable contributors to Hong Kong's new economy which developed over the past 20 years. But others, such as the enormous public housing and new town constructions over the same period, and the considerable investment in the education sector, in capital building of plant and in expansion of programs and new curricula and new majors, have also played a large role in transforming Hong Kong and sustaining (or retarding) its growth. The Hong Kong government has in reality spent a great deal of money, and in turn affected even more private investment in certain directions by a type of economic and tax, if not "industrial" policies. These policies have by and large been successful or at least not detrimental enough to generate severe social reaction, at least for a generation, but now the dynamic changes, and that raises questions about these expenditures and interventions, in terms of pattern changes and especially in terms of conditions and effects of expenditures.

An example of the changed effects and dynamics of capital infrastructural expenditure may be seen in the next ten years in the dramatically improved and enhanced transport links with Guangdong and the rest of China. A very visible manifestation of the increased ties with China will come in the form of vastly increased infrastructural tie-ins with Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Macau, and Guangzhou. The Western Rail Corridor is being pressed to tie in not only with a crossing into Shenzhen, but also with a bridge, already under construction, to the Special Economic Zone on the west side of the Pearl River, Zhuhai. Shenzhen authorities are pushing for a Guangzhou-Shenzhen high speed rail link, with the prospects of its extension into Hong Kong an explicit part of discussions. A private consortium has floated a proposal to build a bridge directly to Macau. Twenty-four hour border crossing appears certain by 1998, with electronic registry of vehicle passages also likely. There have even been proposals to add several more border crossings to those presently existing. Closer ties and easier transit with Shenzhen are a near certainty in the immediate future. The express train recently opened to Shenzhen (and hence, Hong Kong) from Beijing is merely the first "iron" step in integrating Hong Kong physically into China and speeding up the flow of goods and persons (and ideas and influences). An example of the latter is the publication of the *China Daily* in a Hong Kong edition which will also expose that venerable organ to the winds of competition within the frenetically competitive local Hong Kong press. Can its staid manner and content win out, or will it adjust

to new realities? In the marketplace contest between *Apple Daily* and *China Daily*, the winner will be clear and for the sake of influence, the so-called pro-Beijing papers must and will change their content and presentation, just as many papers in China already try to do. The dominance of the market here means influence will have to be “bought”--but voluntarily, by the customer. Once such effects are allowed their run against the official organs, other papers and media will want to follow suit, and if it is safe and profitable for *China Daily* and other official papers and media to adapt to the Hong Kong style of market sensitive news and media, then the pressures within China to make and allow changes in media and press will become quite strong and probably irresistible.

These closer transport infrastructural ties have several clear implications as well. The property price differentials of between 10 and 20 to 1 which currently exist between Hong Kong and its surrounding neighbors appears certain to fall to these greatly facilitated transport links. Already Sun Hung-kai, a major Hong Kong based construction firm, launched a billion-dollar development project in Shenzhen and a Hong Kong civil service union brokered a deal with Guangdong and central government interests to build several hundred very high quality but extremely low-cost “holiday” homes for Hong Kong civil servants immediately north of Shenzhen in a protected forest reserve. Further, it appears clear that housing for the rise in population from 6.3 million to around 10 million envisioned by 2020 will be built in the northern parts of Hong Kong, along the border with Shenzhen and in the newly connected up and soon to be strategically sited Yuen Long. The ending of the border regions as undeveloped “frontier lands” and their transformation into urbanized, integrated arms of the Hong Kong megalopolis, will also have its effects on populations within sight of the boundaries and within eye and earshot of Hong Kong’s media, which will be extended more strongly into areas now on the fringe of broadcasting.

Hong Kong’s “natural” direction of growth is north, toward Guangzhou and across the Pearl River. Only the artificial constraints of sovereignty boundaries and the deliberate focusing of infrastructural development on Hong Kong island and in making the New Towns originally as factory focused industrial estates has created the Hong Kong of today. The new airport, the new western rail, the new doubling of the Kowloon peninsula by the harbour projects, the new and enhanced ties with Shenzhen and Zhuhai, the building of many more homes and projects in Yuen Long and along the border between Taipo and Shenzhen, and the increased MTR development in the Kowloon area and redevelopment in the same area means that the effective centre of Hong Kong will move off the island and onto the peninsula, with the pressure of growth shifting strongly toward the north, where the lower cost land and lower cost labor supply exist.



Source: SCMP 28 June 1997 Road routes only shown.



Source: Hong Kong Standard, 14 April 1997

The certainty of further infrastructural developments rests with nearly inevitable demographic changes apparent over the next 5 to 20 years. Hong Kong is expected to see a major increase in population from its present 6.5 million up to 8.2 million in official estimates by 2016 (up to 9 to 10 million by that date according to other estimates by SAR and academic sources, including this author) due to a mainland influx of immigrants and perhaps as many as 100,000 children and their usually female parent who gain right of residency in Hong Kong with the handover. Hong Kong has long barred most residents who marry mainlanders from bringing their spouses and offspring with them to Hong Kong. There will also be an unknown proportion of the more than half million emigrants in the 15 years before its return to China who will elect to move back to Hong Kong, especially if its prosperity, stability, and freedoms prove retained at a satisfactory level after 1997. Our surveys show that instead of the 12% of emigrants the Hong Kong Government has cited as the level of return, it may be closer to 16% of those who have left. If the next year is smooth, and the elections proceed without incident, then that rate should go as high as 25% to 33%, with a much larger portion of Hong Kong students who now go abroad and do not return instead electing to return. Also, an unknown number of overseas Chinese may elect to come to Hong Kong as their entry port to China's trade and culture. Already this is happening with a number of ethnically Chinese but culturally and nationally foreign residents coming to Hong Kong to study languages, restore or investigate roots and networks, and inaugurate business.

Further, the Filipino amahs presently holding some 160,000 jobs in Hong Kong will be replaced by mainland Chinese, who, as in the past before the vastly increased flow from the Philippines and Southeast Asia was encouraged and substituted, will use these jobs as entry positions, from which to form and/or import family members from the mainland. The reason for the change in policy toward the Filipinos is that with massive unemployment among Chinese on the mainland, giving to foreigners 160,000-200,000 jobs or more as the economy grows, which in turn may support twice or three times that number, simply won't be tolerated by a central government regime increasingly concerned with labour unrest. Hong Kong can, and will be expected, to make a contribution toward assisting the mainland's stability by providing such entry level jobs for countrymen. Also, there will be the hidden pressure and desire by many on the mainland to come to Hong Kong in order to escape the one child limitation, and those who have the skills to command a job in Hong Kong will also engage in perquisite of having more children. The removal of



uncertainty and worry about the return to China will also have its well known reproductive effects. Educational interchanges, already accelerating, will further enhance these interchanges of ideas and perspectives, and bring to Hong Kong many of the best and brightest in China, who in turn will want to stay in Hong Kong, or in the immediate area. The Hong Kong population growth rate will consequently pick up, and the likely population figure is 10 million by 2020. Shenzhen and Hong Kong, and, with the bridges completed, Macau and Zhuhai, will together form a megalopolis of some 17 to 20 million by that date, with Guangzhou itself beginning to stretch south along both banks toward the northern-advancing arms of the Hong Kong megalopolis. Regional cooperation and planning on infrastructure and environment (sewage and water) will, by the end of ten years from now, be important. Twenty years on, it will become requisite for further development.

The cooperative networks of the Pearl River delta within Guangdong will form the core of its political power elite. Hong Kong's connections in the Delta and with Shanghai along the coastal arc between them will make the two cities the dominant center of China's modernization. There will be political repercussions from these economic patterns, locally, nationally, and internationally.

### Unintended Consequences: Political

The present uncertainties about the political aspects of the transition in contrast to the economic are apparent from the June 1997 Hong Kong Transition Project survey. After a series of questions about politics and economics, the two aspects were considered separately, and in future terms.

**Table 2. Having thought about the issues relating to the 1997 handover, how do you feel about the future of Hong Kong's ECONOMIC performance?**

	Percent	Cumulative	Percent	Cumulative
	Feb 97	Feb 97	June 97	June 97
Very Optimistic	4	4	4	4
Optimistic	56	60	62	66
Neither	25	85	21	87
Pessimistic	13	98	11	98
Very Pessimistic	—		1	99
Refuse to Answer	2	100	2	101*

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 3. Having thought about the issues relating to the 1997 handover, how do you feel about the future of Hong Kong's POLITICAL performance?**

	Percent	Cumulative	Percent	Cumulative
	Feb 97	Feb 97	June 97	June 97
Very Optimistic	2	2	2	2
Optimistic	38	40	37	39
Neither	32	72	27	66
Pessimistic	21	93	27	95
Very Pessimistic	1	94	1	96
Refuse to Answer	6	100	4	100

The dominant optimism economically certainly rests on convictions that the Chinese economic growth boom will continue. In part, this can be seen from responses to the question, "Thinking 10 years ahead, do you think Hong Kong will then look more like China is today, or that China will then look more like Hong Kong is today?" Fully 59% expected China to look more like the Hong Kong of today, while only 22% expected Hong Kong to look more like today's China. When asked, "Do you think Hong Kong will



be better or worse or about the same 10 years from now?" 44% expected Hong Kong to be better, 20% worse, 11% the same, and 24% didn't know or wouldn't guess. What is fairly startling is that the level of economic confidence isn't much higher, given the record of strong growth over the past 20 years. And that only 44% expect Hong Kong to be better in 10 years must be considered soberly in light of the effects belief in improvement and steady progress have played in buying social and political peace for Hong Kong. A breakdown in the belief in progress and in the efficacy of one's efforts would have serious negative repercussions on Hong Kong's economy and stability, with rises in crime and in emigration the minimal effects.

Apparently, though, a significant proportion of Hong Kong people expect the future of China to go Hong Kong's direction, toward greater and greater economic and perhaps political freedoms and greater and greater prosperity. Overseas, Chinese in the US were not as hopeful, with 23% expecting Hong Kong to get better, 27% worse, 35% stay the same and 15% not sure. These expectations undercut the idea that there will be a new wall raised on Hong Kong's northern border, that "one country, two systems" means that Hong Kong has until 2047 to enjoy its separate status, and that meanwhile "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" and the "People's Democratic Dictatorship" will continue unchanged in China. When the time comes for "one country, two systems" to become simply one country, Hong Kong people expect the Greater China of so many dreams to look, in reality, more like a Greater Hong Kong. But, I argue that the future will look neither like the one nor the other, but that both will look like something else.

While enhanced economic interchanges are anticipated, political disputes over rights of way, redevelopment, land sales, and corruption stemming from these and the consequent construction contracts and sales or rentals may be expected to occupy large amounts of government time and energy on both sides of the border and river. Liaison with Guangdong and central government entities and interests will further complicate, and allow entry for corruption, into these developments. There will be inevitable disputes with various authorities, and various authorities will have to be placated. The pace and cost of infrastructural development, especially those into Guangdong, will be slower and more complex than those within Hong Kong, as Gordon Wu has found to his cost. Also, there will be some tradeoff with Guangdong parties in the sense of participation in Hong Kong projects in order to buy cooperation in projects in their turf. Again, the process will slow, become more complicated, and certainly have more room for corruption to enter.

The currently politically troublesome areas of housing, educational, and old-age provisions will only grow in significance. If the government has underestimated population growth over the next ten years as badly as it has over the last ten, the current growing unrest over these issues may reach a critical stage, particularly if the conservative and pro-business interests, and Beijing's hesitancy and inherent lethargy, prohibit effective and prompt action by the SAR government. The rise of the over 65 population from some 630,000 out of 6.29 million now to 1.09 million out of 8.2 million in 2016 according to Hong Kong Government forecasts (more likely 9 to 9.2 million, this estimate is from the same government which has consistently missed its surplus or deficit estimates by major margins nearly every year without fail) means the current pressures for action on a government provided or government guaranteed retirement scheme will only grow. The current dissatisfaction with educational quality, in terms of plant, staffing, curriculum, and in the case of primary schools, full-day schooling for all children and in that of the universities, four year rather than three year courses, has been building for some time. These three issues have so clearly come to the fore as the pressing political issues of the day that Chief Executive Tung set up three special task forces on them months before he even took office. The demands of action on these issues will dominate all others through the interim period of the Provisional Legco and will also become the major election issues in 1998 with the election of the first regular four-year term Legislative Council. They will also put severe strains on land and infrastructure development. Politics will come to matter more, not less, in future as the seriousness and difficulty of the issues involved becomes more apparent.

The Democratic Party, the largest and most electorally successful party led by Martin Lee and its allies in the Frontier Party and Citizen's Party dominated Legco politics the final two years of British rule. The new electoral rules for 1998 put these parties at a serious disadvantage, with multi-member, single-vote

constituencies certain to make pro-democratic candidates vie for the same voters. The fragmentation of pro-democratic parties furthers this prospect. The Democratic Party was formed from a merger between two groups in 1994, leaving it and the Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL), a much smaller pro-democratic populist party which sought accommodation with Beijing, and the now nearly defunct, more pro-business Hong Kong Democratic Federation (HKDF) as the only three organized pro-democratic political parties in the elections of 1995. Since then, the Frontier Party (more confrontative and democratically radical than the DP), the Citizen's Party (more moderate and middle class), and the Social Democratic Front (a localized fragment of the pro-Beijing but democratically populist ADPL) have set up as pro-democratic political parties, with lesser groups like Civil Force splitting more liberal voters in some precincts.

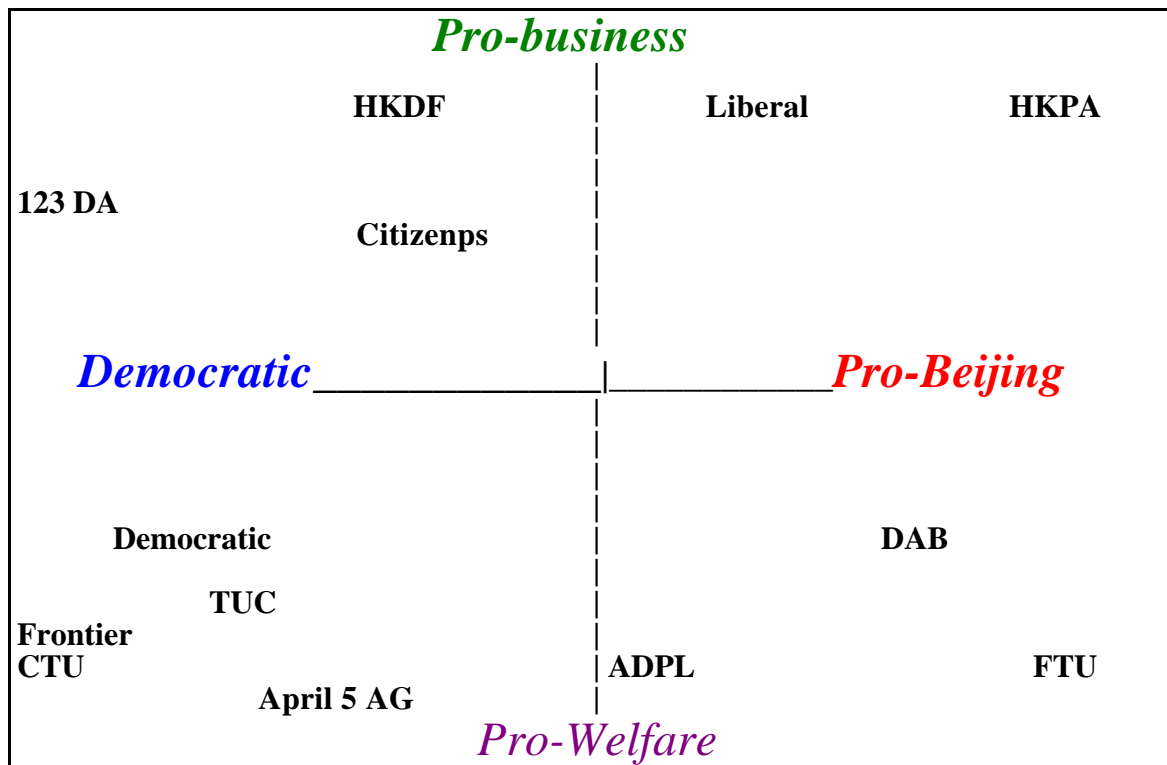
Pro-Beijing groups, rather than fragment, have consolidated, with the pro-Beijing business dominated Liberal Democratic Federation merging with the similar Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA) to form the most conservative, most pro-Beijing party. The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) aligned as the more populist but also pro-Beijing party and the pro-business Liberal Party occupies the centre. Three trade union groups also participate in electoral politics. The shrinking TUC is pro-Taiwan, the much larger FTU is pro-Beijing, and the third, the CTU, is comprised of independent unions but tends to be pro-democratic and functions as an ally of the DP and the Frontier, providing or endorsing candidates and/or giving canvassing support.

There may be considerably more restrictions on electioneering in the 1998 and following elections. Constraints on demonstrations currently under consideration may also conveniently apply to election rallies and other activities such as marches. The practice of spontaneous meetings and frequent rallies will run into the restrictions that groups of 30 or more meeting in public places will require permits from seven days to 48 hours ahead. Rather than the first past the post, single seat, single vote constituency election rules for Legco and direct election of all District Boards and municipal councils implemented under the Patten Reforms of 1994, the first elections of the HKSAR in 1998 will provide for the government appointment of some 25% more members for the District Boards and municipal councils and the implementation of multi-seat, single vote constituencies for the 20 seats allocated to direct election to Legco. This change will more than likely lessen the proportion (19 seats for the DP and nearly half with allies) of Legco occupied by the Democratic Party and its supporters in the short term. These rules are also intended to reverse the pattern of the growing influence of political parties at all levels of politics and especially in elections which developed in 1991 and 1994-5. The numbers of independents, which dropped steadily from 1988, was increased substantially in the appointed bodies which dominate politics in 1997 and until the elections in 1998. The multiplication of pro-western and democratic parties and the consolidation of pro-Beijing and conservative parties will further strengthen the inbuilt advantage conservative business interests and pro-Beijing parties enjoy in the 30 functional constituencies and the Election Committee which elects 10 members in 1998, 6 in 1999 and none in 2003. Only in 2003 will the potential for a restoration of the populist and democratic Legco majority which served from 1995 to 1997 be even possible given the rules, though it is unlikely to occur unless business seriously overplays its hand and arrogantly triggers an anybody but pro-business candidates backlash. Whether business interests will use the interim between its undoubted and built in dominance and the time when they become challenged by more "populist" parties will spell the difference on whether Hong Kong will proceed beyond the 10 years ahead with its favorable business climate. This is crucial for stability beyond the next ten years. The "center" of Hong Kong politics is unoccupied; indeed, there is no real consensus on what a center might even consist of. (See chart below.) Business cannot afford to allow itself to be pushed out of politics as the rules change.

This danger to and instability in the system can be clearly seen the chart below. The political spectrum in Hong Kong tends to four rather than two dimensions, with pro-welfare populism pitted against business and democratic forces against pro-Beijing groups. While the HKPA and the FTU are equally hardline Beijing supporters, there are business and socially related issues on which they split strongly. The distinctions among the democratic groups are more aligned with attitudes toward the central government than their populism, with the exception of the electorally untested Citizen's party. Alignments and voting patterns tend to shift issue by issue, with the likelihood that the pro-Beijing groups will experience much more of a

falling out in future as the issue of Beijing begins to recede and local issues wherein the growing trend in support of growth in social services witnessed over the last decade, and rising concerns for housing and education, pit pro-business alignments against populism. Land rights in the New Territories has already been a cause of dispute among the conservative and usually pro-Beijing Heung Yee Kuk and other pro-Beijing groups. Beijing's clear support for business interests in Hong Kong over populist concerns will cost it allies in the 1998 elections, and, more importantly, some popular legitimacy as well. Voters in the 1995 elections chose not among the nearly identical social stances of the parties but their views of China-Hong Kong relations. Standing up for Hong Kong interests, especially on the dominating concerns of housing, education, and old-age provisions, will comprise the key issues in the elections of 1998. Beijing may be expected to back the conservativeness of the pro-business groups, making these elections a referendum on populism versus business interests, and indirectly one on Beijing's "interference" in Hong Kong affairs.

### Hong Kong Political Matrix



- Legend:**
- April 5 AG      April Fifth Action Group--Trotskyite street agitators.
  - ADPL            Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood--Fredrick Fung's social action group seeks conciliation with Beijing while pursuing democracy.
  - Citizen's        Citizen's Party--Christine Loh's new party of the center and environment.
  - CTU              Confederation of Trade Unions--umbrella organization for independent unions neither affiliated with Beijing or Taipei.
  - DAB              Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong--moderate China patriots, main contenders with the Democratic Party. Led by Tsang Yok-Tsing.
  - Democratic     Democratic Party--merged Meeting Point and United Democrats of Hong Kong to form the largest party, under Martin Lee.
  - Frontier         Frontier party--coalition seeking rapid democratization, willing to demonstrate fiercely and often to get it. Led by Emily Lau and Lau Chin Shek.

FTU	Federation of Trade Unions--the leftist unions, usually fiercely loyal to the party line, yet also willing to oppose Beijing's business friends. Aligns with DAB on all but business affairs.
HKDF	Hong Kong Democratic Federation--Jimmy McGregor supported this nearly defunct pro-democratic, pro-business organization.
HKPA	Hong Kong Progressive Alliance--merger of Maria Tam's Liberal Democratic Federation and the Hong Kong Progressive Alliance. Hard core supporters of Beijing and business with roots in the rural Heung Yee Kuk.
Liberal	Liberal Party--Led by Allen Lee, while occasionally critical of Beijing, usually seeks accommodation. Business as usual the byword and goal.
TUC	Trades Union Council--shrinking bastion of pro-Taiwan workers.
123 DA	123 Democratic Alliance--pro-Taiwan, pro-democracy and usually more pro-business demonstrators.

Heung Yee Kuk, Hong Kong Business and Professional Federation, Civil Force, Tsing Yee Concern Group and other lobby groups also support or oppose candidates in elections, with only Civil Force running candidates as such. Many Mutual Aid Committees and Resident's Committees also endorse candidates and provide canvassers.

The "donut" shape of Hong Kong politics is inherently unstable and polarizing. While there has been much remark about the consensus politics in Hong Kong, and there are also strong school, family, and business ties among the various elite groups, the potential exists that these informal connections which now smooth the debate and narrow the decisions on policy will break down under the unfamiliar pressures arising over the next ten years. Certainly corruption scandals have a very strong potential of damaging the pro-business groups, and if Hong Kong's economy falters through what appears to be Beijing interference and/or local business corruption and incompetence, these informal connections may not serve to hold together under the assaults of diametrically opposed interests and constituencies. Tung, after all, is the first businessman to be the leader of Hong Kong, rather than a civil servant or political figure. The onus is now on him and his friends to prove that they can run things better. The cost of failure could be discrediting much of Beijing's whole plan to turn Hong Kong over to business interests. The first to reject business dominance would be some of their staunchest allies, the FTU.

### **Constitutional Development and Transformation**

The Basic Law, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's constitution, spells out the (expected) scope and pace of constitutional development until 2007. Up to that date half the 60 seat Legislative Council will be directly elected in multi-member, single vote constituencies and the other half by single seat, single or corporate vote functional constituencies. A vote of 2/3 of the Legislative Council may propose Basic Law amendments and on approval of the Chief Executive and 2/3 of HKSAR delegates to the National People's Congress, the amendments will go to a committee of twelve (half mainlanders, half from Hong Kong) for study and recommendations before submission to the NPC for vote by a majority. However, amending the proportions of the Legislative Council allotted to functional and direct constituencies in each election may be made by a vote of 2/3 of the Legislative Council and the endorsement of the Chief Executive. No approval by the NPC or outside vetting is required. This means that business arrogance and misbehavior could result in great pressure being put forward to amend the Legislative Council constituency allotments to lessen the functional constituency proportions. Also, members of some of the groups which have functional constituencies may not be comfortable with the politicization surrounding their presence on the Council. As the proportion of direct elections rises, the legitimacy of the functionally elected will fall, particularly those with very small mandates. This will not matter that much unless and until critical votes on divisive issues are won or lost by small margins, and by the votes of these less regarded functional groups.

There will likely be no amendments in the next ten years other than by legal interpretation and within administrative initiative. However, given the new constitution and administrative structure introduced in 1997, the scope of change within these bounds is substantial, with considerable new legislative and administrative powers, and central government entities like the Foreign Ministry, the PLA garrison, and the

New China News Agency (the official home of the unofficial Communist Party) interacting with these new powers and structures in new patterns. If the new constitutionally based system of Hong Kong develops as other constitutionally based systems have in the past, law will be a growth area in the labour market, and politics will increasingly involve specialists in the law. The populism of the teachers and social workers who now comprise so many of the political groups will be tempered by the natural process of lawyers moving in larger numbers into the system by which laws are made--that is, politics. Also, as the proportion of functional seats drops, pressures will grow to abolish them altogether. The transition from half and half to all directly elected will likely come abruptly, not gradually.

Other constitutional processes will also appear, and these will also dominate the political process. The pace and steps to achieve the promises entailed in the Basic Law of ultimate direct election of the Chief Executive and all members of the Legislative Council will surely comprise some of the major political discussion and dispute over the next ten years. Assuredly, in the final elections before such amendments must be proposed the pace and steps of constitutional change will become an election issue, and also in the next election by a committee of 800 of the next Chief Executive (or Tung's second term of five years) his or her position on constitutional development will become more important. So, by 2002 this issue will begin to form the core of political dispute in Hong Kong, and perhaps between Hong Kong and central government officials until it is settled. Since most constitutional changes in Hong Kong must be approved by mainland authorities, the environment within which these changes are proposed will be critical. If Hong Kong is seen as pushing the envelope of democratic development, and if other provinces have begun to adopt Hong Kong ways, pressures may arise to slow that pace somewhat to allow the mainland to catch up a bit with Hong Kong. Already the mainland had introduced local level, pluralistic elections at the rural village level, at approximately the same time as Hong Kong introduced District Board elections. The spread of such election processes into urban areas, and the extension of elections further up the power hierarchy, are a delicate matter, but probably inevitable.

Another area of pressure on China will come from the necessity of each province and entity to have arbitration and other laws and agreements with Hong Kong which facilitate and protect the conduct of business and finance and the extradition of "criminals". This process is already one of the driving engines behind the development of rule of law in the PRC. Hong Kong investors, not the major multinationals but the multitudinous middle level investors such as those buying property or trying to expand business into the Pearl River region, will also press for legal change. Already one of the demonstrations at handover was by property investors in China who felt they had been cheated without legal recourse. It was the one demonstration which provoked a response by Chinese leaders. Interaction with Hong Kong's very different concepts and practices of law, and Hong Kong's transformation from a foreign to a Chinese entity, and its definitions and punishments of "criminals" will strengthen the hand of those who wish to develop in China an attitude toward law more like that in Hong Kong and the west. Conversely, if rule of law begins to weaken substantially in Hong Kong, China's likelihood of developing the legal framework necessary for the stability and continued progress and reform of the nation past the initial stages is severely compromised.

The slower pace of change in China will either hinder Hong Kong's own speed of development, or, the pace of change will speed up in China, or, if Hong Kong is seen as a danger to China's stability, the pace might be frozen or even a reverse attempted. In the latter case, Hong Kong would be in for severe disruption unless its people realize the effects their example has on China and in the name of patriotism decide a slower pace, or even a pause, might be acceptable given the situation. This is unlikely. Surely the pressures from abroad will be to speed up democratization, and Taiwan will also likely push in that direction, so the marginal likelihood is a faster pace of change in China, a slower pace at the edge of social acceptability in Hong Kong, and a deliberate attempt to use Hong Kong as a model and example of phased in development and legal and political reform. The first elections in pluralistic competitions for a specified portion of the NPC delegations may occur near the end of the 10 year period in some Chinese provinces. Hong Kong will witness these and a move to direct and general election of such NPC delegates well within the 10 years ahead. There will be growing pressure to imitate Hong Kong's election structures in other special regions and the provinces. Hong Kong may expect the arrival of many more provincial fact finding

groups studying the electoral and representative processes used in Hong Kong, and Hong Kong's experience will become a matter of NPC discussion and debate.

### **Hong Kong's Transformative role in Foreign Affairs**

Technically, foreign relations and defense are relegated to the central government by the Basic Law. The Foreign Ministry and the PLA maintain a considerable presence in Hong Kong to realize just those stipulations. However, by that same document Hong Kong remains a signatory to, and member of various international bodies and agreements ranging from the WTO and the IMF down to having special arrangements on shipping and investment with Taiwan. The US-Hong Kong Act of 1992 provides that the US will continue to treat Hong Kong as a separate entity from China for many purposes so long as its autonomy continues in practice. Thus, Hong Kong may not take a common or identical position to the PRC in all issues before various international bodies to which it and China may be, or may not be, members. The US has stipulated that if Hong Kong begins to act as a mere counter for China that it will reconsider its separate treatment of Hong Kong under the 1992 Act. Hong Kong also has a separate legal system and a separate set of extradition and criminal cooperation agreements with various countries, and separate tourism, visa and passport arrangements as well. There is thus a fair scope for independent action for Hong Kong in certain limited areas of international relations, particularly trade, tourism, finance, crime, economic and environmental areas. There will be tensions, at the least, between Hong Kong and China over a number of issues falling within these areas, and, at the same time, the pressure will grow on China to join these same bodies and achieve the same standards as Hong Kong in order to do so. These agreements will, in effect, put pressures on the PRC to adjust its foreign policies toward the standards and practices stipulated by these agreements, and not to change Hong Kong to match its own standards and practices.

This is a clear case of the tail wagging the dog, and in an area, foreign relations, which is supposedly entirely outside Hong Kong's competence. There will be tensions over the next ten years in these areas, perhaps severe tensions, and all the troubles will not be between China and Hong Kong. China may seek to press the international organizations toward changes in standards and practices which it would find more comfortable, or at least to gain concessions allowing their practices to continue for a time. (Somewhat like the opt out clauses in the European Union agreements.)

However impermeable the PRC-Hong Kong barrier may be in some cases, the fact remains that Hong Kong increasingly over the next ten years becomes caught up in the various disputes to which the PRC as a whole is a party. These are numerous. The Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute between the PRC and Japan has proven particularly troubling in Hong Kong. The Spratly Islands dispute between the PRC and Vietnam and the Philippines involves Hong Kong in terms of its trade, and even in the security of its seaward borders. Its frequent shipping ties and growing investment in Vietnam and other ASEAN nations make Hong Kong's location as the major port in the disputed South China Sea a locus of repercussions in the frequent rows over claims. Hong Kong's special relationship with Taiwan continues. The PRC has insisted that the "One Country, Two Systems" formula applied in Hong Kong lays the foundation for future relations with Taiwan, so Taiwan may be expected to look most closely at precisely how that slogan translates in practice, even while distancing itself from Hong Kong in order to allow a repudiation of the formula in case it results in subjugation rather than autonomy.

One comforting fact seems clear. The desire for and commitment to technical improvement and modernization by the PLA means that Hong Kong as a center of technology and information transfer, and of finance for modernization (even if indirectly via industrial investment from Hong Kong to China in factories controlled by the PLA) will be preserved at all costs. This means that the PLA will be far more tolerant and low profile in Hong Kong than in any other "Chinese" city. The chance of it intervening directly in civil disturbances is very low, precisely because it does not wish to destroy this vital component of its own, and in its eyes, China's security.

The MFN disputes between the US and the PRC also have their effects on investment in Hong Kong. Loss of MFN for China would cut Hong Kong's growth rate in half, at the least, and immediately put several score thousand people out of work. China's poor foreign image also has cost Hong Kong. The second largest sector of the economy is tourism, with nearly 12 million tourists arriving in Hong Kong in 1996. In contrast, Shanghai had about a million tourists last year. Social stability and Hong Kong emphasizing its separate yet gateway status to the PRC will be vital to protecting its lustre as a tourist destination. Chief Executive Tung has beefed up the Government Information Service in an attempt to reverse the deterioration of Hong Kong's image abroad and improved and increased his own interaction with the foreign media. Nevertheless, these efforts will be much more deeply affected by China's own actions than ever before, and tourism numbers may be expected to become much more volatile, especially if China chooses to raise its military profile and actions in Taiwan, the Diaoyu/Senkakku Islands, and the South China Sea. There will be more volatility in this sector than ever before, and planning for hotel and other tourist related developments will be more complicated in the next decade.

## A Transformed Political Culture

Ultimately, people in Hong Kong will be working out their own sense of identity, learning how to function under a new constitutional structure, slowly adjusting to their destiny of self-administration within a larger whole. The sense of uniqueness may be lost. Certainly the sense of Hong Kong as a refugee society, as a stopping place to somewhere else has already changed somewhat over the last twenty years as many in this society have constructed a new sense of who they are focused on Hong Kong.

If identity rests in part with what you would like to have happen to your country (or part of it, as, for example, the question of the future status of Quebec as part of Canada or independent), just as important, and closely correlated, are the terms one uses to describe oneself. Again, as in choosing Canadian or Québécois might indicate one's political choices. Hong Kong is consistently described as 98% Chinese. This is fact is not true, with 95% of the population being ethnically Chinese, but as much as 10% more having a foreign passport and defining themselves as of another nationality. As well, several hundred thousand Chinese are actually Southeast Asian Chinese, from Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Taiwan, and other countries. These distinctions may help explain in part the results below.

**Table 4. What do you consider yourself to be? (IDENTITY)**

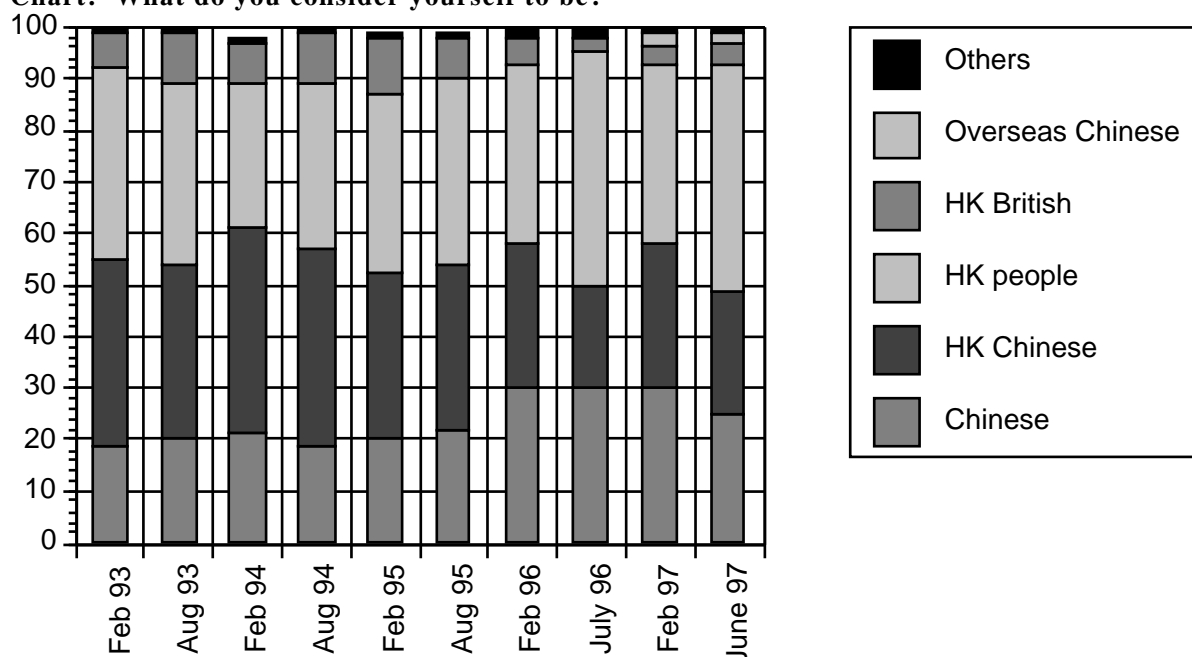
	Chinese	HK Chinese	HK people	HK British	Overseas Chinese	Others
Feb 93	<b>19</b>	36	37	7		1
Aug 93	20	34	35	10		1
Feb 94	21	40	28	8		1
Aug 94	19	38	32	10		1
Feb 95	20	32	35	11		1
Aug 95	22	32	36	8		1
Feb 96	<b>30</b>	28	<b>35</b>	5		2
July 96	<b>30</b>	20	<b>45</b>	3		2
Feb 97	<b>30</b>	28	<b>35</b>	3	3	1
June 97	<b>25</b>	24	<b>44</b>	4	2	1

In part, the choice of Chinese is the most "patriotic" choice, with Hong Kong Chinese as second, being a kind of regional identity no more significant than describing oneself as a Californian or Parisian or Shanghainese. But Hong Kong person choice seems to connote a stronger sense of separate identity from Chinese or Hong Kong Chinese, and those with this identity also appear overall to be more reluctant and skeptical about the reunion with China. If the attempt by Tung to speak of developing Chinese values becomes confused with conservativeness or worse, reactionary policies and business arrogance, the clarification and coalescing of agreement on a new Hong Kong identity will be frustrated. The interplay of globalization forces which also tend to weaken national identities worldwide will also affect the process of



identity formation in Hong Kong. Interest, ethnic, linguistic, clan, village, school, business, and other identities may continue to play a strong or stronger role in identification of the self in Hong Kong than the national identity for a long time to come.

**Chart: What do you consider yourself to be?**



Gender makes a big difference in identity, especially as Chinese. The status and role of women in China must improve significantly before women in Hong Kong will feel more comfortable claiming it. Up to three weeks before handover according to the June 1997 HKTP survey, while 70% of men supported reunion with China under the one country, two systems principle, only 44% of women did so.

**Table 5. Identity by Gender (Distribution of choices by gender)**

Rows are levels of Identity  
Columns are levels of Gender 1130 total cases

	Male	Female
HK Chinese	23	25
Chinese	28	21
HK person	44	45
HK British	2	7
Overseas Chinese	2	2
Other	1	1
Total	100	100

table contents: Percent of Column Total  
Chi-square = 18.46 with 5 df p = 0.0024

Who people say they are will be a key measure over the next ten years on the acceptance, even celebration, of Hong Kong's changed status. What they would like the future to be like, whether they are nostalgic for British rule, whether resentment of foreigners develops, whether a hyper-nationalism arises; these will be critical in determining Hong Konger's real reactions to the change of sovereignty.

The effects of China on Hong Kong over the next ten years will be seen in this most subtle but fundamental measure, even if China makes no moves to eliminate political parties nor if it fails to manage Hong Kong well and causes a severe economic and social disruption. Then the effects of China on Hong

Kong would be apparent to, and decried by, the world and the effects would probably reverberate throughout China as its last, best hope for rapid and successful social, economic, and political change dies under its own hand.

On the other hand, the effects of Hong Kong on China should be obvious to all by the end of ten years.

### **Conclusion: Images and Intentions**

The best image of these dynamics and effects has been raised on the handover billboard posted over the main doors of the Bank of China in Central Hong Kong itself. These show the image of the Great Wall to the extreme left. This is the traditional image of the closed China, suspicious of outsiders and fearful of their influences. To the extreme right is the new Exhibition Centre, the place where goods, services, and people meet in international and regional trade shows, where the whole point is to facilitate exchange of goods, services, information, peoples, and influences. Connecting the two images: the Tsing Ma Bridge, the magnificent span linking the mainland to the new Chek Lap Kok airport, and the veritable image of Hong Kong, the bridge between East and West, itself. Hong Kong is the "Bridge to the Future" as an earlier report by this project argued, and as this signboard implicitly recognizes. You can, of course, lead a culture to the bridge, but you cannot make it cross. That will not stop the future, come it will, though not crossing will certainly make it different from what it could be. Hopefully, as a final prediction, over the next ten years the Hong Kong Transition Project will be here to record, analyze, and with work and luck, predict many of the turns in the road ahead, and most importantly, to watch the Bridge.