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Perception of Political Authority by the Hong Kong Chinese

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PERCEPTION OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY BY

THE HONG KONG CHINESE*

by

Mr. Leung Sai-wing

***This occasional paper is the crystalization and summary of the major ideas of my Master's thesis, "Perception of Political Authority by Hong Kong Chinese".**

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PERCEPTION OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY

BY THE HONG KONG CHINESE

Introduction

After the Second World War, colonialism has been everywhere in retreat. Hong Kong, however, has still remained a British Crown Colony. The city had experienced a long period of political stability during the one hundred and forty-two years of colonial rule. If the citizens had not accepted the sovereignty of the government at a minimal level, the above situation would have been inconceivable. This paper aims at answering two questions regarding the basis of survival of the colonial government: what of the government do the people really support? Why do they support it?

In exploring the objects and the sources of support, what the government is and does is less important than how the people perceive it, because this perception provides an empirical domain for their objects and sources of support. That is to say, if the people have any support for the government, it must be based on their perception of what government is and does; and their perception is a subset of the total possible perceptions of government personnel, activities, and structure. Accordingly, to inquire into the objects and the sources of support we have to identify such a subset at the very beginning. Otherwise, we will be searching for angels in hell. Of course, the perception of government and the objects and the sources of support are empirically intertwined but theoretically distinct. Nevertheless, the perception of government as our starting point is obviously well founded.

Support is the central concept of this study. It is, however, neither clear nor unequivocal. It is vague in that there is no clear-cut distinction between less favorable attitude and tolerance. It is ambiguous in that either supportive action or attitude can be regarded as an indication of support. Both are, however, pseudo-problems. On the one hand, once both less favorable attitude and tolerance refer to the same political phenomenon that the people do not reject the present rule, the remaining controversy becomes one of mere terminology. On the other hand, even though supportive attitude does not necessarily imply supportive action, the existence of the former can still adequately explain the magical survival of the colonial government.

In Easton's conceptualization of political system, there are two levels of support, namely, diffuse and specific (Easton, 1979:249). The former involves attitudes of general "good will", independent of immediate outputs; while the latter involves favorable attitudes in response to outputs which satisfy members' policy demands. His conception is helpful here, but modification is needed. His tendency to equate specific support with satisfaction of policy-demand is too restrictive. For the masses will show positive attitude not only to good policies, but also to good government officials. To neglect the latter will undermine the adequacy of the explanation. So the concept should be broadened to include favorable attitude towards good policies as well as good government officials. Moreover, he is more concerned with the targets or referents of attitudes and behavior than with their psychological basis. The targets of perception are important, but we

bear in mind that our perception is always infiltrated with our interpretation based on our particular psychological needs. So the one-sided emphasis on the former at most results in a partial explanation. Therefore, both the target (the colonial government) and the psychological basis (citizens' demands) of perception should be discussed together. Accordingly, the two central questions become: what of the colonial government do the people show diffuse or specific support for? Why do they have diffuse or specific support for them?

An intensive study of thirteen respondents has been conducted. They were selected on the basis of the principle of diversification in terms of sex, age, education, and occupation from a total of thirty being introduced to me by my old schoolmates, friends, and relatives. The four criteria were selected for they are the most obvious variables affecting one's political attitude as shown by numerous studies (Almond and Verba, 1966; Almond and Verba, 1980; Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1978; Huntington and Nelson, 1977). Although it is meaningless to speak of a representative sample in this type of study, several characteristics of the sample are worth mentioning. On the one hand, less well-educated persons (secondary education or below) only slightly outweigh well-educated persons (post-secondary education). On the other hand, this is a disproportionately young sample. Moreover, there are no millionaires, no ranking government officials, and no pressure group leaders. As such the sample is more one of the masses than that of the elites. The fictive names of the persons in the sample are:

Mr. Lau, 18, waiter, secondary education.
Miss Ma, 19, Form Five student.
Mr. Leung, 20, messenger, Form Four student.
Miss Liu, 23, Fourth year university student.
Miss Kwan, 24, civil servant, secondary education.
Miss Wang, 25, clerk, secondary education.
Mr. Chan, 25, executive officer, university graduate.
Mr. Wong, 26, teacher, university graduate.
Mr. Kong, 30, senior police inspector, secondary education.
Mrs. Ho, 32, housewife, primary education.
Mr. Cheung, 37, manager, university graduate.
Mrs. Cheng, 44, dishwasher, no education.
Mr. Lee, 65, artist, university graduate.

There is an important methodological assumption here that the respondents' spontaneous responses are their true responses. In other words, if there is any area that they show active participation, association, or elaboration, then it is supposed to be their true perception; and if there is anything that they show ignorance or even want to skip, then it must be beyond their perceptive capacity. There are three main topics of study in the scheme of interview: government personnel, policy, and structure. The open-ended questions so designed are supposed to facilitate conversation rather than to structure the respondents' responses. The respondents are free to express their ideas, to jump the topics, and to escape from evaluation of the objects mentioned.

The three main topics nearly exhaust all possible referents to government. The topic of personnel includes discussions of the Governor, the members of the Legislative and the Executive Councils, and those of the Urban Council and District Boards, and civil servants. The topic of policy aims at canvassing the respondents' general policy orientation and specific policy evaluation. The former involves the appreciation and criticism of public housing program, education, and those general policies that they choose; while the latter involves the approval or disapproval of current policy. The topic of structure includes three main sub-topics, namely, the decision-making procedure, the recruitment procedure, and the participation channels. In a word, the first two topics emphasize the non-structural aspect of the government, while the third topic the structural one.

There are two rounds of interview. The first round started from the beginning of January of 1984 to the end of February. Some interviews were conducted at the respondents' home or office, but some were at my home. A tape recorder was used with the permission of the respondents. Fortunately, there was no rejection of tape recording. The interviews proceeded freely. As mentioned above, the strategy is to let the interviewees talk about what they think or associate promptly and feel interested in. The second round was carried out by telephone, merely for clarification of some questions and the discussion of newly emerged issues arising from the first interview (for example, the taxi strike and the Lobo Motion). The average length of each interview is three and a half hours, ranging from three to four and a half hours.

Paternalistic Bureaucracy Without Paternalistic Leader

According to Solomon, childhood socialization in China lays much emphasis on the suppression of aggression and avoidance of conflict. There is consequently psychological "dependency" on a strong and paternalistic authority, just like the father at home, to control one's hostile feelings (Solomon, 1971:99-104). If paternalistic and strong leaders help their subordinates to control their aggressive feelings, then the solicitous attitude of good officials can give the people some assurance that they will not be maltreated. Paternalistic figures are especially needed in a stable colonial regime where there is no ethnical basis of trust on the one hand, and a natural suspicion of colonial conspiracy on the other hand.

For the respondents, there is a general demand for parent-officials who are kind to the people, care for their living, and help them when they are in need. Accordingly, colonial rule is the existential basis for the emergence of chin-min (close-to-the-people) as the major criterion of good officials, and in turn it constitutes the psychological basis for the demand for paternalistic leaders. The emphasis of paternalism is on the leaders' solicitous attitude towards the people. But for the government of Hong Kong, paternalism means a depersonified authority in a superior position. The result is a secluded bureaucracy which is "secluded from political and social forces which might threaten to undermine its autonomy" (Lau, 1982b:25).

The secluded bureaucracy poses a structural constraint on the relationship between government and people. Their contact is confined

to two points: policy output and street-level bureaucrats. The depersonification of officials hinders the people's identification with them. Consequently, the psychological demand of citizens for paternalistic leaders cannot be satisfied by the cool administrative machine. It is thus not surprising that in a small city in which there is a communication explosion of more than a hundred newspapers, periodicals, and journals, two television stations, and so forth, only one respondent (Mr. Chan) could satisfactorily identify the government officials in the relevant contexts. In other words, the officials of the colonial government is not the object of the people's diffuse support.

The Governor of Hong Kong is the single and supreme authority responsible to and representative of the Queen. Needless to say, he is always the centre of attention. Being the top administrator, he has the advantage to be the personified embodiment of the otherwise impersonal colonial bureaucracy (Lau, 1983a:5). Moreover, he "naturally finds it easier than others to identify with the self those symbols which have been given power by community use" (Edelman, 1974:9). In short, among all government officials, the Governor has the greatest opportunity to act as, or at least appear to be, a paternalistic leader. However, for most of the respondents, the present Governor, Sir Edward Youde, is far from being a benign father-figure.

The poor impression of Youde is largely a consequence of a gap between the perception of him and the demand for a paternalistic leader. It is, however, an impression based on purely symbolic rather than factual ground. That is to say, the gap is in fact a symbolic gap.

Specifically, Youde does not seem to take enough care of their lives, their problems, and their demands. The symbolic gap not only means that there is no specific support for the Governor as a result of non-satisfaction of the need for a benign father-figure, but also a loss of chance for constructing a reservoir of diffuse support. In the case of the former Governor, Lord MacLehose, this argument is nearly self-evident.

There is general trust of MacLehose, and it seems to lie mainly on the identification of him with the enormous social welfare programs and the establishment of the ICAC (the Independent Commission Against Corruption). Both are important symbols of chin-min behavior. For MacLehose, therefore, a benign father-figure helps him to draw nearly unquestionable support from the respondents; but for Youde, his moderate, sedate, and cool style, combined with his participation in the Anglo-Chinese talk on the future of Hong Kong, aroused a general dissatisfaction with his symbolic detachment from the people's daily living. Being a benign father-figure, MacLehose thus serves to bridge citizens' demand for paternalistic leader and the superior position of the secluded bureaucracy. But the bridge has now collapsed. This implies a serious erosion of the diffuse support for the government developed through the paternalistic leader, MacLehose. It is especially detrimental in a situation where there is not any personified political authority which is comparable to the Governor.

If the positive effect of the administrative absorption of elites is the legitimation of the governing authority and the establishment of

a loosely integrated political community (King, 1981:130), then its negative effect is the breeding of political cynicism, especially towards those unofficial members of the Legislative and the Executive Councils. Interestingly, the background of the latter arouses more easily the sense of social inequality than that of colonial officials. And this sense of social inequality constitutes the major source of political cynicism. As a matter of fact, to most of the respondents, they are a group of wealthy, upper-class, and highly educated people who manipulate their positions to strive for their self-interests.

The depersonification of the officials increases the feeling of uncertainty among the people. The two Councils are perceived as an administrative apparatus from which no single paternalistic leader can come forward to elicit trust. In fact, no respondent except Mr. Chan could identify Lobo, the senior unofficial member of the Legislative Council, or Chung Sze-yuen, the senior unofficial member of the Executive Council. As a corollary, what the respondents feel dissatisfied with and cynical of is a group of strange big men on one end, and an oppressive political machine on the other. This easily results in a "cabalistic perception": "there is a secret, inscrutable, generally self-seeking, often illegitimate group behind the scene with control over the men who hold the titles of office has certainly been widespread" (Lane, 1964:114). The general distrust is so overwhelming that for those who have heard of Umelco's (the Unofficial Members of the Executive and the Legislative Councils' Office) successful treatment of citizens' complaints, they are still suspicious of their motivation.

The Urban Council and the District Board are in 1984 the only

government institutions that have elective membership. It seems that the elected members are in a better position to draw mass support, for the elective membership of the two institutions, especially the District Board, "carries the symbolic implication that the people will 'count' in the government's decision-making process" (Lau, 1982a:858-9). However, if there is any trust of the members by the respondents, it is a sort of lip service. In fact, there is an undercurrent of cynicism. On the one hand, they do not think they are represented; on the other hand, they do not trust the motivation of the candidates in the elections.

Most detrimental of all, there is no single member of the two institutions with whom the respondents identify. Ironically, they cannot even name any of the elected members. For most of them, there is nothing attractive in the Urban Council and the District Board except their elective membership. And the seemingly successful District Board election has therefore no impact on them at all when there is no identifiable leader. Consequently, these two institutions are not much better than the two Councils.

If there is no paternalistic leader in top-level administration and so a lack of general trust, then any annoying contact with "street-level bureaucrats" (a term borrowed from Lipsky) will help to add to the amount of dissatisfaction, while good experience will not significantly change it (Katz, Gutek, Kahn, and Barton, 1975:126). Moreover, the street-level bureaucrats are always working under the constraints of inadequate resources, threats and challenges to authority, and ambiguous and contradictory expectations about their job performance.

Therefore, routinization and simplification of working procedure easily ensue (Lipsky, 1976:198-201). That is to say, there is a greater possibility of annoying contacts than good experiences. Thus, not surprisingly, those of the respondents who did recall an experience of contact passed bitter comments on street-level bureaucrats. For most of them, the criticism focused mainly on low responsiveness, bad manner, and red tape. Nevertheless, to all of the respondents, officials are in general competent.

All respondents come to the agreement that officials are capable and talented people. Some of them even showed some admiration for them. This absence of crisis of competence does have significant implication. Every political act is both instrumental and expressive (Edelman, 1974:12). If there is no output from the expressive side, in the present case from a chin-min paternalistic leader, then naturally mass attention will focus on the instrumental side. This manifests most obviously in a hypothetical situation in which Haddon-Cave (the Chief Secretary and former Financial Secretary at the time of interview) and Y.K. Pao (a marvelously successful shipping magnate) sat for the election to the Governorship. Only two respondents gave their votes to Pao for an ethnic reason. The others all emphasized the administrative experience of Haddon-Cave and so gave their votes to him. In other words, official competence may gain specific support from the people even though general goodwill cannot be cultivated.

To say that there is no crisis of competence, however, does not mean that there is no crisis of political authority. For one thing,

support on mere instrumental ground implies that there is no affectional base, no trust of leader's personality, and no mutual understanding of his goals, consequently there will be no basis for the development of diffuse support through paternalistic leaders, and specific support (demand-satisfaction of official competence) will put an overload on official performance, especially in policy output. For the other, the specific support even becomes more fragile if there is no structural commitment to the system.

Demand-Satisfaction Without General Trust

From John Cowperthwaite to Philip Haddon-Cave, positive non-interventionism is still the dominant philosophy of the government. However, from 1967 onwards, the government has begun to take an active role in social welfare and the identification and solution of social problems (Lau, 1983b: 549). The active participation of the government in social service delivery and other social constructions may help a secluded bureaucracy come closer to assume a chin-min posture. In other words, the expanded role may convey the symbolic message of a real paternalistic bureaucracy.

For the majority of the respondents, there is a general positive attitude towards government in regard to its outputs. Most of them were satisfied with governmental outputs related to basic needs, for example, housing, social order, and so forth. That is to say, the expanded role of government had indeed attracted their attention. Once there is an association of government's role in social service with

the improvement of living standard, a favorable condition for the development of general trust is present. Some respondents thus believed that, quite unexpectedly in a colonial system, the government had been fulfilling its moral responsibility in providing social services. However, if there is any general trust of government policy, it is merely prima facie.

For most of the respondents, there is seldom any principle of public concern, any ideology, or any detailed consideration of the objective environment besides self-interest in evaluating specific government policies. Moreover, although sometimes they employed the interest of majority as a criterion to comment on policy, they were not aware of any dilemma, or say, any contradiction to their usual adherence to self-interest. As a consequence, self-interest is a matchless conqueror.

Not surprisingly, all of the respondents cared only about whether they had a share of the pie or whether their shares were denied. This so-called "individual-pie orientation" serves as their major criterion for the evaluation of government policy. That is to say, they will agree to government policy if they think they get a share - it does not matter whether they can really get it; and they will be opposed to it if they think they will not or their present share will be deprived. As a corollary, this orientation not only serves as the basis of evaluation, but also helps to shape their perception of government policy. As thus expected, only those specific policies that are directly relevant to their share can arouse their strong feeling and active response.

The individual-pie orientation, however, does not necessarily

exclude public concern. But the latter can have effect only where the "I" is not in the public. In other words, they will take public interest into consideration only if the policy has no bearing on their pies. So there is a general good comment on urban renewal on the ground that the public have a better environment. Similar comments were on the expansion of tertiary education, the establishment of Eastern Corridor on the Hong Kong Island, and so forth.

The individual-pie orientation of the respondents is very detrimental to the support for government at two levels: it restrains the perception from going beyond policy output and so long-term demand-satisfaction cannot accumulate as the basis for general trust of policy direction; its serving as the criterion of evaluation results in easy erosion of specific support by frequent confrontation between private interest and public policy. As shown in their reply in the taxi strike, in which there was a palsy of traffic flow caused by the halt of more than a thousand taxis on the main road to protest the increase of taxi-registration tax, all posed unanimous criticisms.

Strikingly, there is an exceptionally high degree of consistency of the respondents' opinions. However, it is not that their belief system is well structured, but that the majority is ignorant of the government and politics. If there is any organizing principle in their belief system, it is surely not the ideology of the right or the left, but their bare self-interest. As a matter of fact, the majority of the respondents projected an ideal society that was close to the reality of Hong Kong: economic success, political stability, absence of political

intervention, freedom of speech, minimum political ideology, and free competition. It is therefore unlikely seem that their ideas of ideal society are the fruits of any already internalized ideology. Their picture is rather an amendment of the present society on the basis of personal experience and needs. As a result, it is safe to conclude that their life experience and individual needs exert more influence than any specific ideology on their belief and expectation.

If colonial rule is the existential basis for the emergence of psychological need for a chin-min paternal leader, then this psychological need is also the consequence of the interpretation of traditional cultural premises through individual-pie orientation. The respondents do not reject paternalism. But what they care for is always their share, and they fear that they are being deprived. So they need a chin-min paternal leader to secure their share symbolically or actually. In other words, traditional culture is internalized only through the sieve of individual-pie orientation. And the latter is embedded in the more fundamental attitude towards life, which is the product of contemporary Chinese history.

System Affect Without Structural Commitment

From 1842 onwards, the Chinese people began to experience the longest period of insult, disgrace, and humiliation never occurred before in Chinese history. Nearly every page of the history of the last two centuries is the record of riot, rebellion, warfare, turmoil, and violence. Fleeing as refugees was usually the only strategy of survival

in the jungle-motherland. Ironically, the colony of Hong Kong which was ceded to Britain in 1843 became a paradise for refugees even up to the 1980s. As one Chinese Legislative Councillor put it explicitly: "Hong Kong is the life boat; China is the sea. Those who have climbed into the life boat naturally don't want to rock it" (Hoadley, 1970:211).

For the older respondents, therefore, there is no consideration of the future in their life goals. The uncertainty of the future becomes acute because of the 1997 issue. If the future is uncertain, how can the refugees extend their private range of interests and attention beyond their own generation, beyond their own family, and beyond themselves? There is only a lonely self in the world at worst, and a happy family at best. For the younger respondents, the second generation of the refugees, the majority of whom were born in Hong Kong, there should be greater opportunities for the development of a sense of belonging. They do not have the nightmarish experience of their parents. The present stable and free society is taken for granted. But surprisingly, they do not seem to have a long-term time horizon. If there is a "future" in their consideration, it is at most the day after tomorrow. Just like the respondents of Lane's study in Eastport, a bread-and-circus orientation is too contemporary and a chiliastic one is too distant (Lane, 1964:293). They do not plan for tomorrow - they just try to get somewhere halfway in between.

On the whole, the present picture is indeed in tune with Lau's prediction of the prevalence of utilitarianistic individualism, which is the consequence of the "continuous, slow, and inexorable process of

erosion on utilitarianistic familism, engendered by the modernization of Hong Kong" (Lau, 1982b:187). For the younger respondents in general, we do not see aspirations beyond career success, money-making, and marriage; we do not see extended scope of concern beyond self, beyond family, and beyond their own generation. They do not have a sense of history, they live in the here and now. They do not thirst for returning to the motherland. They do not feel ashamed to be under the foreign rule. They do not quest for the reconstruction of a stronger China. They just demand a happy family life, a wife, and a lovely son. They have no past, no future, only present. As a corollary, a destiny produced by history becomes a historyless destiny. So long as the society allows their pursuit of individualistic life goal, there will not be any fundamental challenge to the British rule. Especially when there has been a marvelous development of the colony after 1970, any conflict or dissatisfaction seems to be diluted in an affluent society.

The finding that all of the respondents have perceived the economic development of the city is not surprising; what is relevant is that the persisting improvement of living standard, which, though not even, nevertheless allows everyone to share in it, helps dissolve the conflict between government and citizens on the one hand, and strengthen the perception of the instrumental value of the system on the other hand. However, it is not that there is trust of the government's motivation in actively improving the living standard of the citizens, but that the improvement of living standard and other desirables are possible only in the present system.

For most of the respondents, the effectiveness of the system is beyond doubt. Nevertheless, the long-term prosperity of the society has merely awakened their awareness of the effectiveness of the system. They do not have any perception of the delicate mechanism of the structure. In fact, greater power of abstraction and greater effort at seeking information are usually required to grasp abstract structure and process. For the less well educated, and even for the well educated, structure is something beyond their perception, not to say any structural commitment to the present system of government (the structure of the government as an intrinsic good). As a result, they do think the present government is necessary for their present way of life; but it is at most an unquestionable association, which is justified only by a vested interest in the system.

Their replies to a hypothetical situation in which there would be a reform on the two Councils and their preference on a questionnaire adequately reflect their ignorance of structure. Even for the well educated, there seems to be no awareness of the structural differences among the choices. Although the majority of the respondents are unclear as to who or which is the contributor to the prosperity, it is not surprising that the present government is regarded as a safeguard of the present life-style. As shown in their replies to whether Hong Kong is on the right track towards an ideal society, the majority, who have an ideal society in mind, gave a positive answer.

If the government structure is not appreciated as intrinsically good, if its mechanism is beyond the respondent's perception, and if

the present government is regarded as the guardian of the present life-style, then diffuse support for the colonial government is consequently instrumentally based. Even for those who are alienated from the government, the coming of the Communist China in 1997 brought them a future shock that they become aware of their present pie.

If Hong Kong is a paradise, then the coming of the Communist China could mean paradise lost for the respondents. It seems strange that after the negotiation on the future of Hong Kong started in Peking, there was no general outcry for the evacuation of the British; it seems stranger that there was even the demand for maintaining the status quo of Hong Kong. The reason is simple: they do not welcome communism. Communism is not welcome simply because it is a threat to their present way of life, and to their present share of the pie.

Not surprisingly, for those who had lived in Communist China, there is a kind of alarm as a scalded cat is afraid of cold water. They all fear political intervention and political coercion. 1997 could mean the beginning of tyranny and the end of private life. As a matter of fact, freedom and economic prosperity are the non-material and material pies that Hong Kong has provided and can promise so far. But none of the respondents has trust in Communist China in this respect. For the well educated, who is confident of their future, severe criticisms are then on the structural constraint of communist rule on human freedom.

For the younger generation, however, their fear is nebulous. They may have some sense of belonging. But they do not perceive a

threat, except some feeling of uncertainty. Nevertheless, they definitely do not prefer any change of the status quo. They do not seem to trust the government, and neither do they have any structural commitment. However, they have the hazy association between the present government and their way of life. Therefore, they do not welcome the Communist mother.

To say that the coming of the communist rule helps to buttress support for British rule is clearly no exaggeration. Freedom is a free goods. Long-term economic prosperity becomes something taken for granted. But the coming of the communist authority helps remind the respondents that freedom and prosperity are not guaranteed in a changed system. If social mechanism manifests clearly in social change, then it is the 97 malaise that helps to make apparant the instrumental nature of diffuse support for the government. In a word, the regime is good as an instrument.

The Instrumental View of Political Authority

With the lapse of one hundred and forty-two years, besides the economic miracle, a very strange pattern of relationship between the government and the people has arisen. Government officials are valued for their competency, their efficiency, and their education; policy is appreciated for its assurance for the people's pie; the system is praised for the protection and safeguard of improving living standard. On the whole, the government is a good instrument. Either specific or diffuse support is ultimately instrumentally based. Of course, except governing

on coercive power, almost all relationships between the ruler and the ruled everywhere in the world have some instrumental element. However, it is not a matter of kind, but a matter of degree. Therefore, to characterize the respondent's perception of the government as an instrumental view of political authority is not to single out the exhibition of the particularity, but of a higher degree.

The peculiarity of the instrumental view of political authority gains further substantiation in the respondents' comments on the conferring of honor from her Majesty. As expected, the majority emphasize the instrumental rather than the intrinsic value of the practice. Another interesting substantiation is their reply on nationality. For those (ten respondents) who chose British as their nationality, eight of them emphasized the convenience of getting a passport. But when they were asked about whether they would identify themselves as citizens of a British colony, Hong Kong people, or Chinese, all of them choose the latter two. For them, Chinese is their ultimate identity, and Hong Kong is the place where they come from. There is then a "floating identity" in effect in which "individuals may refer to different identities (or components of a dual identity) in different circumstances" (Horowitz, 1982:334).

If the political authority is treated as an instrument, then its popularity depends on how well it performs. This one-sided emphasis on the performance of government and her instrumental value is in perfect tune with the respondents' individual-pie orientation and individualistic life goal. As a consequence, no structural, affective,

or ideological consideration predominates in the acceptance of the government. We can then expect a lack of total critique of the present system. As a matter of fact, over the debate between the government and the student union of the Chinese University on the inadequacy of the channels of public opinion, a clear majority did stand on the side of the government or show reluctance to criticize the present system. If there is any critique of the present government, it is not a structural one. On the one hand it reflects the cognitive incapability of the masses to comprehend abstract structure and process; on the other hand the present government is accepted whole-heartedly or reluctantly for her instrumental value.

Unlike the Americans, although there was public criticism directed at the performance of governmental institutions and the leaders: the competence, trustworthiness, and integrity of their leaders, the majority still have faith in the structure and norms of the political system as a whole. "The decline of confidence (of the Americans) appears to be general in nature but not fundamental or systemic: the system is good, but it is not performing well because the people in charge are inept and untrustworthy" (Lipset and Schneider, 1983:40). That is to say, the Americans in general have structural commitment to their governmental system. There was "crisis of competence", but once new leaders appeared, the confidence of the masses could be restored as shown in "the Reagan Effect". The structural commitment thus serves as a solid base of diffuse support. But the reverse case is in Hong Kong. For the majority of the respondents, support on a mere

instrumental base is fragile. The situation can even get worse when no one is optimistic about the future of colonial rule. It is therefore no more paradoxical than that on the one hand citizens become keenly aware of the instrumental value of the present government because of the 97 malaise and consequently their support for her is strengthened, but on the other hand, the pessimistic perception of the future of the British rule saps the strength of support.

The instrumentally based diffuse support cannot be easily mobilized. It can help the government to draw people's support in daily life, to obey law, to keep order, to bear the increase of prices, and so many other things; but it is helpless when there is a crisis. People will die for their faith, their highest value, but they will never do so for an instrument. Hence, the majority of the respondents declined to help the government by buying the debenture issued by the government in case there was a crisis of confidence caused by the negotiation on the future of Hong Kong leading to deterioration of economy and difficulty in government's budget. In contrast, only three respondents declined to do so for fear of the possible economic deterioration caused by world-wide economic slump.

The small amount of support derived from the instrumental view of political authority is closely related to the nature of the relationship between government and people under such kind of perception. Both sides in fact become trading partners in the "political market". What they then care for is always how costly and beneficial under her rule, just like they are buying a pen, a refrigerator, or a personal computer

from shops. Of course, political market is not a real market, at least one cannot be in and out freely. But the critical point is that if the government is treated as an instrument, then the resultant relationship between government and people is similar to that between buyers and sellers in open market in which both sides have no motivation to understand, to take care of, or to involve with each other. Whether the relationship can be maintained depends ultimately on the benefit of the exchange for both sides. As a corollary, no one will sacrifice for the other.

The relationship of instrumental exchange does not exclude the development of affection. Nevertheless, even if there is development of affection, the latter can have no effect when one's share is deprived. As a result, the support of the masses can be mobilized only when the exchange is still worthwhile, as in the case of the riot of 1967; but it cannot be so when one side feel deprived or when there is some external intervention, as in taxi strike and the hypothetical case of the political crisis. As a consequence, the instrumental view of political authority is the perception of the most selfish relationship between government and people. However, man is not born selfish. The respondents' perception of the government as an instrument is in fact learned from the nonparticipant polity and the miraculously successful economy of Hong Kong.

Conclusion: Market-Principle in Political Reasoning

In the study of the patterns of support for democratic and capitalist values in the United States, Chong, McClosky, and Zaller found that the internal coherence of the beliefs about capitalism and democracy of the politically unaware remained so weak that their political thought appeared to be little influenced by conventional ideological principle of any kind. They concluded that it was due to their failure to learn the prevailing norms (Chong, McClosky, and Zaller, 1983). The immediate impact of the lack of political education is a loose attachment to ideology in political reasoning on the one hand, and an unstructured belief system on the other. This mechanism in effect is obvious when we compare the leaders and the followers of the two parties in America on their opinions on different issues and study their cleavage. As expected, the leaders are in a better position of receiving political education and the indoctrination of political ideology (McClosky, Hoffman, and O'Hara, 1960).

If one does not have enough political education, then one will naturally apply nonpolitical principles to political reasoning: to comprehend political phenomena, to explain political events, and to justify his actions in politics (Almond and Verba, 1966:324). And if the role of society has significant effect on one's personality, as Lane argues that markets and politics (or government) are the two major agencies for value allocation in Western societies that they structure people's lives and personalities in different ways (Lane, 1981:6), it is not surprising that there is an application of market-principle to political reasoning

in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is a typical case of a depoliticized society. The development of the city seems to approximate Huntington's technocratic model which is characterized by "low levels of political participation, high levels of investment (particularly foreign investment) and economic growth, and increasing income inequalities" (Huntington and Nelson, 1977:23). In fact, the colony can be regarded as a nonparticipant polity. There are only two government institutions with a partly elective membership: the Urban Council and the District Board. The top-level of administration, is non-elective. A low level of participation and insignificant elections result in little chance of political learning and so no pride in the political system.

As Pateman points out, participation has wider educational effects in that "it widens interests and outlook and develops the more practical capacities for political participation" (Pateman, 1980:95). This educational effect is clear in the debate of the public political attitude of the Americans starting with The American Voter. In The American Voter, the general picture of the American people is a largely passive citizenry, unaware of, and unconcerned about political issues, and is guided in its electoral choices primarily by party allegiance (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960). But in The Changing American Voter, modern Americans are not only aware of and sensitive to political issues, but also far more likely to depend on his own issue judgement and to desert his party in making the voting decision (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik, 1979). This change is largely the result of American political

experience in the 1960s and 1970s in which critical elections and events followed one upon another (Nie and Anderson, 1981:144; Pomper, 1972: 424-5). In a nonparticipant polity as Hong Kong, the traditionally apathetic Chinese are thus deprived of the chance of political education from political participation that can counter or reshape the influence of traditional political culture.

Hong Kong is nonparticipant not only in the structural sense, but also in the normative one. A nonparticipant polity does not exclude the incidence of forms of political mobilization like protest, strike, turmoil, and even riot, which are usually aroused by urgent issues. But they are so infrequent that they can be regarded as insignificant in the colony. In a word, Hong Kong is a depoliticized society in which public issues are usually not discussed and solved according to political criteria. As a matter of fact, for the government "politics is seen to threaten the harmony of the bureaucratic regime . . . it will inject irrational criteria into the public decision-making process which would divert resources away from rationally-designed collective goals set by professional administrators" (Lau, 1982b:36). The strategy of depoliticization is clear in the response of the government to the politicization of social needs (social well-being is increasingly tied to government policies) in which further administrative penetration was adopted instead of the resuscitation of social organizations which will easily result in a large number of "private governments" at the grass-roots level (Lau, 1981:880-1).

In a nonparticipant polity, it is not surprising to have a curriculum

of civic education emphasizing a passive role of citizens. In fact, from 1945 to 1974, the stress was on the passive, obedient, and complacent role of citizens. It was not until 1975 that the curriculum began to include topics of citizens participation, the cultivation of a sense of belonging, and the encouragement of the participation of the younger generation. However, the changing emphasis is more on active participation in social service, and concern for public affairs than in politics (Wong, 1983:57-9). In sum, the Chinese in Hong Kong have little chance of political education either from formal civic education in school or informal political discussion and political participation. A non-participant polity will only produce nonparticipant citizens. Huntington puts it nicely, "the individual . . . will be participant if the community generally is participant" (Huntington and Nelson, 1977:90).

Quite in contrast with political education, the Chinese in Hong Kong are provided with an adequate opportunity to internalize the principle of gaining success by whatever means in the economic market. They have a stronger sense of being a member of the economy than of the polity. That is to say, they always care more about the devaluation of the Hong Kong dollar than the election of the District Board, more about the increase of indirect taxes than the criticism of pressure group leaders on social welfare policy. As expected, the people of Hong Kong take pride more in economic success than political achievement.

Indirectly, from best-selling books, from films, from TV shows, and from the news the stories of the struggles of businessmen from small factory owners to millionaires are told. Successful businessmen

are the heroes of the city. In fact, in the election of "the most influential person of Hong Kong" in 1981, Lee Ka-shing, a miraculous businessman for the time being, defeated MacLehose, the paternalistic Governor. However, the businessmen are praised not because of their entrepreneurial spirit, but their wealth. That is to say, financial success can exchange for almost everything. It is therefore not surprising that wealth predominates as the unmistakably clear criterion of high social class. And people "usually do not consider the ways whereby wealth is amassed to be relevant, or that even if wealth is obtained through devious or illicit means, a person will still be accorded a high status provided he is willing to devote part of his wealth to socially acclaimed uses" (Lau, 1982b:95-6).

If markets and politics are two major agencies for value allocation, then the role of the former is far more significant than that of the latter in Hong Kong. As a successful economy, citizens are easily to be indoctrinated in market-principle which is within their cognitive capability and in tune with their individual-pie orientation. And the indoctrination is strengthened by the miraculous success of the bare rock island. As a result, whenever the people have to defend the status quo, they will naturally resort to the economic achievement of the colony. That is to say, the system is supported not on what it is, but on what it has brought about.

To apply market-principle to political reasoning is to consider no issue position, no ideological stand, no structural peculiarity, but only whether the object being considered is contributory to expected gain.

This is exactly the case of sellers and buyers bargaining for the price of products in market. Consequently, only instrumental value has much appeal to such kind of reasoning. Political game is here equivalent to economic transaction. In fact, a clear majority of the respondents confess that they prefer to live under British rule to being ruled by the Chinese Communist. That is to say, subordination, which is taken for granted in other countries, now becomes what citizens can exchange for a stable and prosperous life secured by colonial government. The convergence of goal of both sides indeed indicates a desirable exchange. Whether the exchange will be successful is irrelevant here, what is critical is that whenever in evaluating government official, policy, or system, the focal concern is the actual gain from colonial rule; in other words, they are applying the market-principle to political reasoning.

To conclude, the psychological process of the development of the instrumental view of authority is not at all simple. In fact, there are many nonpsychological factors intertwining with it. If the market-principle in political reasoning is the accurate characterization of the mode of political reasoning in Hong Kong, then the instrumental view of political authority is its specific manifestation. In other words, the market-principle in political reasoning is the more fundamental element of the political attitude of the citizens. As such, every political relationship is transient in the city. Just like the city itself at present, the government and the people are living in a wrecked life boat, which is sailing closer and closer to the shore of red China.

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香港人對政治權威的認知

(中文摘要)

香港在百多年殖民地政府統治下，政治環境尚屬平穩。本文旨在探討市民為何會支持本港的殖民地政府，以及支持政府的那些方面。支持的層面則可分為較穩固的泛佈性和較脆弱的特殊性兩方面。分析的資料來自十三個深入的個案訪問。被訪者大部份是年青人；具中學教育程度或以下者稍多。訪問是利用開放性問題以探討他們對政府的人事、政策及結構三方面的看法。

政府人事方面之討論包括了被訪者對港督、行政局、立法局、市政局、區議會及公務員的觀感。分析的結果顯示，由於政府官員只重視得到家長式統治的權威，而沒有滿足到市民對家長式領袖所要求的“親民”性；被訪者對行政、立法兩局非官守議員，市政局、區議會之民選議員亦不表示認同和信任，故此殖民地的政府官員並不構成被訪者泛佈性支持的對象。然而，官員的辦事能力及效率卻能得到他們的特殊性支持，因為被訪者均一致認為政府官員普遍是稱職及具有才幹，足以滿足市民對他們的工具性要求。

對於政府的政策成效方面，大部份被訪者均感到滿意。然而，他們的評估標準只專注於自我的利益，極少涉及公眾利益、意識型態或客觀環境等因素，例如對已有利的政策才會關注和贊同，反之亦然。此種自利的取向實有損於他們對政府的支持：一方面將他們的眼光局限於個別的政績，即使長期的需求滿足亦不能累積成為對較長遠之政策發展方向的認同和信任；另一方面，由此種評估標準而產生的特殊性支持極易受到常見的自利與公共政策之衝突而破壞。

結構方面的討論包括了決策程序、招募程序及參與途徑。分析顯示大部份被訪者並不了解政府的結構及運作；對現存的制度亦無結構性的投入；但對現行制度的效用則毫無懷疑，甚至認為只有在現存制度下才有可能繼續提升個人的生活水平和保持社會的安定繁榮。他們對政府的泛佈性支持明顯地是出於工具性的考慮，亦由於被訪者認為共產主義是意味着專制、政治干擾、對自由和經濟繁榮之威脅，所以，九七的來臨更突出了港人對英國殖民地統治的支持。

總括而言，基於香港於過去無論是結構上或規範上都是一個非參與、非政治化的社會，香港人極端缺乏學習政治的機會和途徑，故此很自然地會運用從成功之經濟體系得來的市場原則於政治的理解上，他們對政治權威之工具性取向——視個人與政府為“政治市場”上的貿易伙伴，雙方的關係是短暫及維繫於交易的利益上——只是其中的一項表現。