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The Case of Hong Kong

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CHINESE BUREAUCRATS IN A MODERN COLONY:

The Case of Hong Kong

For many years, bureaucracy as a particular type of social organization has been accused by many social scientists as responsible for producing a peculiar human mentality which contains many abominable features. The bureaucratic mentality, so it is said, generates arrogant, haughty, impersonal, and rule-bound behavior toward clients (Goodsell, 1983: 92). If the bureaucracy is located in a colonial setting, exercises autonomous political power, and is staffed primarily with Chinese officials, expectations must be such that the bureaucratic mentality will be tremendously reinforced. Furthermore, if the bureaucrats concerned are local officials who are charged with service-delivery functions and who deal directly with essentially inarticulate clients and community leaders, we should expect to find a group of bureaucrats who should represent an extreme manifestation of the bureaucratic personality.

(1) Bureaucrats bred in the British colonial tradition are oftentimes cast in an unfavorable light, even though the positive function of the civil bureaucracy in the political system of many former colonies is normally underscored, albeit not without misgivings. In a depoliticized context, colonial officials are said to conceive of government in terms of administration, not politics. "For better or worse colonialism in most territories meant absolute rule by Platonic guardians or perhaps enlightened despots of the eighteenth century" (Fieldhouse, 1983: 29). This over-concern of colonial bureaucrats with administration

in lieu of politics has been eloquently described by Pye (1962: 100):

> [T]he British officials became very quickly a distinct
> class of men with extremely strong feelings for their
> profession, which they saw in terms of the rationalistic
> standards of public administration. The colonial society,
> in which they were never challenged by the conflicting
> demands and emotional pressures of an open political
> process, offered a unique opportunity for pure admini-
> stration, for rational and efficient government.
> British officials were able to convince themselves that
> good government was essentially an administrative
> phenomenon in which routine service functions were
> the ultimate test, that in the good society, specialists
> and technicians could apply their skills without being
> harassed by the irrational acts of popular politicians.
> In short, they saw themselves as administrators who
> should properly be judged according to the skill with
> which they provided services for the community.

And it is not accidental that such preoccupation with admini-
stration per se and abhorrence of politics and politicians are combined
with a hierarchical conception of society and an elitist-cum-paternalistic
self-image. In colonial Kenya, according to Berman (1976: 151):

> central [to the colonial officials] also was the concept
> of a ruling or 'political' class, linked with a strong
> emphasis on hierarchy and obedience. . . . The various
> segments of society were viewed as hierarchically ordered
> according to differentials of wealth, status and power,
> and each had a specific role to play if the organic unity
> of society was to be sustained. The task of preserving
> the harmony and continuity of society fell to the ruling
> class. While this class had great power, it had an
> equally great moral obligation to use its power in behalf
> of the common interest. Colonial administrators thus
> operated with an essentially traditional concept of
> authority in which the ruler was expected to promote
> the physical and spiritual well-being of the ruled, in
> return for the latter's deferential loyalty and obedience.
> This vision of society had no place for the disruption
> of social conflict and the squalid pursuit of self-interest
> of 'the disease of politics,' as the Chief Native Commi-
> ssioner put it in the tense days before the Emergency.

Likewise, in Malaya the nature of colonial administration gave
rise to a preference for paternalistic, administrative rule, which was
then fortified both by the actual gap between the Westernized elite and
the masses, and by the virtual bureaucratic monopoly of knowledge and
skills. Even after independence, bureaucrats continued to treat the
citizen as a subject; and the obligations of bureaucrats as parental
rulers were emphasized (Scott, 1968: 215-226).

(2) Compared with colonial bureaucratic ethos, the bureau-
cratic culture of traditional Chinese society is no less authoritarian,
elitist and intolerant. This culture is an integral part of the larger
Chinese culture which has been sustained by two millenia of unchecked
bureaucratic rule (Pye, 1968 and 1985; Solomon, 1971). The reciprocal
relationship between bureaucrats and the people is one of parent-
children or, alternatively, that of superior-dependent. Under the
supremacy of bureaucratic officials,

> citizens never demanded their rights, they sought
> instead the sympathy, and indeed the pity, of those
> more powerful than themselves. . . . Above all else
> citizens were taught that they should never be
> aggressive or demanding in their relations with
> public authorities; and officials were expected to
> be considerate and understanding of those who were
> docile and properly dependent (Pye, 1968: 19).

On the other side of the coin are a group of officials whose

> fundamental belief remains that the masses of the
> people can be readily satisfied and, more important,
> kept docile and compliant merely by the appearance
> of a potentially sympathetic and not unreasonably
> hostile system of authority (Pye, 1968: 22).

Such attitudes obviously engender a posture of condescension toward the people and community leaders among bureaucrats in China.

(3) In a colonial society, the bureaucracy as the ruling power is only slightly restrained by other political forces. As a matter of fact, these political forces, if they exist at all, are in all likelihood weakly organized and severely fragmented. The autonomous and superior position of the bureaucrats and the weakness of the 'politicians' are not conducive to an equal and cordial bureaucrat-politician relationship. The deferential and diffident manner of the 'politicians' when dealing with the bureaucrats only serves to magnify the status gap between the two.

The different role requirements of bureaucrats and politicians and self-selection in the process of their recruitment, invariably generate role conflicts between them. In advanced societies, it normally takes centuries of political development, involving in particular the increasing interpenetration of the administrative and political sectors as well as increasing similarities in the socio-economic background of the two groups, to establish a decent level of rapprochement and mutual accommodation between the bureaucrats and the politicians (Aberbach et al, 1981; Putnam, 1973; Rose, 1969; Anton, 1980; Eldersveld, 1981; Dogan, 1975). In the United States the fragmentation of political power and the politicization of the top echelons of the bureaucracy have contributed to a situation of role convergence between bureaucrats and politicians (Aberbach and Rockman, 1977). However, in some western societies, such as Italy and France, such rapport between

bureaucrats and politicians has yet to be developed. In the first case, it is because of over-encroachment of political influence upon bureaucratic discretion, and in the case of France it is the result of bureaucratic dominance and intransigence (LaPalombara, 1964; Zuckerman, 1979; Suleiman, 1974). In the developing countries, the continual political significance of the bureaucracy, particularly in cases where bureaucratic prestige has strong traditional underpinnings, the relationship between bureaucrats and politicians ranges from covert strains and overt conflict (LaPalombara, 1967). The lingering sense of bureaucratic supremacy, abetted by the threat of status loss in face of the rise of the 'despised' politicians, certainly is the major cause of it. This perennial condition of bureaucrat-politician conflict has been amply reported in Thailand (Prachyapruit, 1985), Korea (Kim and Bell, Jr., 1985; Bark and Lee, 1976), the Philippines (Abueva, 1970), Egypt (Berger, 1957), India (Taub, 1969), Malaysia (Scott, 1968; Puthucheary, 1978), Burma (Pye, 1962) and in pre-War Japan (Silberman, 1978).

(4) Bureaucrats at the local level are particularly prone to be arrogant, paternalistic and rigid. This is largely because of the bigger status and educational gap between themselves and the local people as well as the inarticulateness of these people as political actors. In Malaysia, for instance, although politician-civil servant relations have generally been cordial at the national level, this has not been the case at the lower levels of government. According to Puthucheary (1978: 41-42),

One of the reasons for the conflict between politicians and civil servants at lower levels of government may be due to the fact that at those levels the civil servant has to deal with politicians who are of a different calibre than the national leaders. . . . Those [politicians] who are able and hard-working soon gravitate to Kuala Lumpur where there are opportunities to acquire more responsible political posts, leaving the older and less dynamic ones behind. Many of them tend to take a narrow party line and expect the civil service to use whatever influence it has to assist them in their quest for personal gain and political power. Civil servants, on the other hand, do not take proper cognizance of the fact that while national leaders do not entirely depend on constituency support as they are well-known national figures, local politicians have to build their support on what immediate gains they can get for their constituencies. Civil servants do not appreciate the problems of local politicians and tend to prefer to deal directly with the national leaders with whom they have better rapport.

Taub's (1969) study of the Indian local officials furnishes further evidence on this phenomenon.

The influences of colonialism, Chinese bureaucratic culture, bureaucratic autonomy in a depoliticized or weakly politicized context and bureaucratic encounter with local people on the attitude and behavior of bureaucrats are apparently convergent. If unalleviated by other factors, we should expect to find in a context where all these factors are operative a group of bureaucrats with the following characteristics: arrogant, elitist, self-centered, self-righteous, authoritarian, paternalistic, conservative, averse to politics and politicians, seclusive and illiberal.

THE STUDY

It is against this almost unquestioned understanding that we proceed to study the local officials in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is a British crown colony populated predominantly by the Chinese people. At the time of study - between 1981 and 1982 - the Hong Kong Government still ruled over a basically depoliticized society. Even though pressure group activities on a small scale could be found (revolving around a multitude of social and community issues) (Lau, 1981), the political scene was largely placid. Elections to local advisory bodies (the district boards), scheduled for 1982, were not yet held (Lau, 1982a), and the local leaders were mostly deferential, authoritarian and conservative (Lau, 1985). In addition to the major influences discussed above that have effects on bureaucratic mentality, two more factors, though not necessarily specific to our case, can be mentioned to provide a more complete understanding of the Hong Kong scene. Firstly, local officials are in fact locally-assigned officials in Hong Kong. In the absence of local governments, officials in Hong Kong are dispatched to the localities for the sake of administrative deconcentration. Normally they are posted to a particular area for only a short period of time. Accordingly, local officials are merely sojourners in an area, and this brief stay is naturally not conducive to the emergence of pro-locality sentiments with all the concomitant salutory effects on bureaucrat-client relationship. Secondly, since the late 1960s, the Hong Kong government has increasingly expanded its service delivery

functions in society. As a result, the local officials there have
gradually taken on the character of the so-called 'street-level bureaucrats'
(Lipsky, 1980; Prottas, 1979). 'Street-level bureaucrats' are prone to
adopt a manipulative and control-oriented approach toward their clients
in order to negotiate more realistically with bureaucratic imperatives
and resource constraints. Consequently, the relationship between the
bureaucrats and their clients is impaired. In Hong Kong, channels to
redress grievance against the 'street-level bureaucrats,' in comparison
with those available in more advanced societies, are scarce and less
effective. These two factors hence should tend to reinforce the
bureaucratic mentality already undergirded by the major factors to
which we have already albeded.

In our study of the local officials in Hong Kong, a research
design which aimed at the inclusion of different types of local officials
from a variety of localities was used. The four localities selected
include an old residential neighborhood (Sai Ying Pun) (SYP), a newly-
developed industrial town (Tuen Mun) (TM), a moderately old
residential-industrial complex (Kwun Tong) (KT) and a small neighbor-
hood dominated by public housing estates (Tai Hang Tung) (THT).
The local officials we interviewed belonged to departments with
different functional responsibilities. The City District Office and
District Office (only in TM) were 'political' departments acting as the
general liaison between the government and the people. The Social
Welfare Department was a primarily service-delivery organization.
And, finally, the Housing Department was charged with public housing

management. All these departments had great relevance to the local
people. In all, 143 officials in KT, 75 in TM, 39 in THT and 21 in SYP
had been successfully interviewed, making for response rates of 96.6
percent, 94.9 percent, 77.8 percent and 90.3 percent respectively.
In each of the departments concerned, we interviewed all the senior
officials and a random sample of the middle and lower officials. Overall,
the response of the local officials to our queries was forthcoming.

VALUE ORIENTATIONS

In order to probe into the fundamental normative orientations
of the local officials, which presumably affect their approach to specific
issues and actions, a series of questions were placed before them which
tapped into the key dimensions of their mentality. These dimensions
include: conception of the role of government and civil servant,
decision-making style, conflict orientation, attitude toward citizen
participation, localism, action tendencies and change orientation. The
results of such a comprehensive survey on the basic orientations of
the local officials are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Value Orientations of Local Officials
(percentage of respondents who agreed with or agreed very much with the listed statements)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Value Identification				
To advance their interests, it is essential that citizens be allowed to elect their representatives to oversee the government.	72.7	76.0	74.4	90.5
Even if Hong Kong's economic development will thus be slowed down, still it is worthwhile for government to provide more social services.	45.5	52.0	53.8	42.9
If civil servants are allowed to criticize the government openly, its administrative performance will be improved.	36.4	34.7	48.7	52.4
Decision-making Style				
If the public disagrees with the policies of government, it should discard them.	28.0	24.0	33.3	19.1
Government should not seek to please everybody. It should act in accordance with conscience, and should not be concerned that some powerful figures in society will thus be offended.	91.6	84.0	76.9	85.7
Conflict Orientation				
It is more important to preserve social harmony than to successfully implement public policies	55.9	48.0	46.2	57.1

Table 1 (Cont'd)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Attitude Toward Citizen Participation				
Issues in modern societies are too complicated, therefore only the simple ones should be thrown out for public discussion.	24.5	18.7	15.4	19.1
It is most important to let citizens express their opinions before policies are decided, even if doing so will slow down the decision-making process.	76.9	80.0	76.9	81.0
Only those with good understanding of the relevant issues should be allowed to participate in the policy making process.	63.6	69.3	43.6	61.9
Localism				
Even though affairs related to Hong Kong as a whole are important, we should first of all concern ourselves with the problems in the locality where we work.	46.9	54.7	35.9	47.6
Things beneficial to the locality where I work must also be beneficial to Hong Kong as a whole.	12.6	20.0	20.5	19.1
Action Tendencies				
Even for a trivial matter, I like to think it over thoroughly before taking action.	72.0	76.0	64.1	81.0
Decision-making on major issues must be fast, even though doing so will result in certain undesirable consequences.	27.3	44.0	30.8	28.6

Table 1 (Cont'd)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Change Orientation				
A society should not adopt new programmes that would upset settled ways of conducting business.	15.4	20.0	10.3	4.8
Those who always express dissatisfaction with existing arrangements usually forget that new ways of doing things carry the possibility of bringing about even worse consequences.	62.9	58.7	46.2	52.4
Sense of Responsibility				
A civil servant should not act against his sense of rightness, even though he will then lose his job.	48.3	60.0	53.8	42.9
Civil servants have the responsibility to act in accordance with public opinion, even if they consider it erroneous.	6.3	9.3	7.7	38.1

KT: Kwun Tong;   TM: Tuen Mun;   THT: Tai Hang Tung;   SYP: Sai Ying Pun.

Further analysis of the distribution of responses across departments does not reveal significant inter-departmental differences. Thus, attitudewise local officials constitute a relatively homogeneous lot.

Table 1, however, does not conjure up a caricature made up of arrogant, haughty, conservative and elitist bureaucrats, even though elements of elitism can definitely be seen, particularly in the respondents' emphasis on a government which was able to exercise independent judgment untrammelled by the fleeting, whimsical desires of the people. But the attitude of the local officials toward citizen participation in decision-making was at best ambivalent. The right of the people to express their opinion on public issues was generally recognized by the respondents, but they were quite reluctant to allow public opinion to determine policies. There was thus a moderate tendency among local officials to accommodate conflicting interests and hence a fair amount of tolerance for people speaking out for themselves. Yet responsiveness on the part of government as the guardian of collective interests did not mean acting in conformity with popular demands. By the same token, local interests seen as partisan interests would not be accorded priority by officials who were supposedly serving the localities.

The local officials were by no means conservative and rigid. While there was an apparent hesitancy to delve into quick but risky endeavors, our respondents also felt that under some circumstances moderate and well-considered changes were necessary. A substantial proportion of the respondents would hence endorse an expansive,

service-oriented role for the government, which was in contrast with its professed doctrines of laissez-faire and social non-interventionism[1].

In brief, what emerges from Table 1 is a group of local officials jealous of the guardian role of the government, watchful of their decision-making autonomy, receptive to mild forms of citizen participation, supportive of governmental expansion and showing 'cosmopolitan' inclinations. They were elitist for sure, but it is a kind of elitism so diluted and qualified that it is a far cry from what should be expected of a colonial, Chinese and autonomous bureaucrat.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CITIZENS

The local officials' ambivalence toward citizen participation in politics appeared even more sharply in their actual relationship with the residents in their localities. Most of them had a rather disparaging view of the residents as political participants. In their judgment, local residents rarely concerned themselves with local affairs. Only 14.7 percent of the respondents in KT, 32.0 percent in TM, 28.2 percent in THT and none in SYP felt that the people in their localities were interested in local issues. Nevertheless, they at the same time were able to detect a trend of increasing citizen activism in local affairs, as 53.8 percent of them in KT, 65.3 percent in TM, 43.6 percent in THT and 19.0 percent in SYP thought that people were more active than in the past to apply pressure on the government. What is surprising however is that a majority of those who thought so admitted

that this increasing activism on the part of the people was politically healthy. More than half of them even accepted a duty to account for their decisions to the public (64.3 percent in KT, 50.7 percent in TM, 46.2 percent in THT and 81.0 percent in SYP).

Most officials claimed that they maintained good relationship with the people in their areas and that they were quite satisfied with the way the services of their departments were utilized by the people. Most of them were of the opinion that they had done a lot of good work for their localities (92.3 percent in KT, 89.3 percent in TM, 84.6 percent in THT and 85.7 percent in SYP), and they generally thought that they were praised by the people for that. But this sense of complacency seems to be built on somewhat shaky grounds, as it can be seen in Table 2 that there were only limited contacts between the local officials and the people they were serving. Table 3 also demonstrates that the bulk of these contacts were particularistic in nature, centering on the concerns of individuals and small groups.

If this sense of complacency is only based on limited actual contacts with the people, then it must be the nature of the contacts which is gratifying to the local officials. More specifically, it must be the way the people approach the local officials which is instrumental in fostering an official-people relationship perceived to be satisfactory by the local officials. Looking into the manner by which the local officials conceive of their relationship with the people should throw light on the bureaucratic mentality.

Table 2

Number of Residents Per Month Discussing their Problems with Officials
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
15 and less	25.9	30.7	20.5	28.6
16-50	23.8	28.0	23.1	14.3
51-100	17.5	12.0	12.8	14.3
101-200	7.7	8.0	2.6	9.5
201-300	4.9	0	0	0
More than 300	0	1.3	0	4.8
None	10.5	8.0	5.1	14.3
Don't know/No answer	9.8	12.0	35.9	14.3
	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.1

Table 3

Types of Problems Discussed with Residents by Officials*

% Residents Discussing		KT (N=114)	TM (N=61)	THT (N=23)	SYP (N=15)
Personal problems:	≤ 25	18.4	14.8	26.1	20.0
	26-50	11.4	27.9	4.3	6.7
	51-75	8.8	4.9	8.7	20.0
	76-100	57.9	41.0	39.1	53.3
Group problems:	≤ 25	60.5	49.2	56.5	73.3
	26-50	23.7	21.3	8.7	13.3
	51-75	3.5	1.6	4.3	6.7
	76-100	1.8	9.8	4.3	6.7
General problems:	≤ 25	76.3	63.9	60.9	93.3
	26-50	7.9	8.2	4.3	0
	51-75	4.4	3.3	4.3	0
	76-100	2.6	8.2	4.3	6.7

*Only those officials who have discussed problems with residents were included.

Overall, about half of our respondents said that they liked most of their clients. The proportions of local officials who did so were 49.1 percent in KT, and the figures for TM, THT and SYP were 64.3, 47.8 and 75.0 respectively. Those who were critical of the local officials were naturally disliked, and a majority of our respondents - 73.4 percent in KT, 78.7 percent in TM, 84.6 percent in THT and 71.4 percent in SYP - contemptuously dismissed their critics as ignorant, even though in their eyes the critics were few.

Which kind of people was most liked by the local officials? The answers can be sought in Tables 4 and 5, which list the characteristics most liked and most disliked by them. As many of the answers given

Table 4

Residents' Characteristics Most Liked by Officials
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Concern for local affairs	3.5	2.7	2.6	0
Needing help from government	5.6	10.7	15.4	4.8
Educated	5.6	2.7	2.6	0
Courteous and cooperative	2.1	12.0	5.1	4.8
Reasonable	17.5	21.3	15.4	23.8
Those one serves	0	17.3	0	0
More than one characteristics	22.4	0	10.3	28.6
Others	18.2	6.7	5.1	14.3
Don't know/No answers	25.2	26.7	43.6	23.8
	100.1	100.1	100.1	100.1

Table 5

Officials' List of Traits of Uncooperative Citizens

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Unreasonable	16.1	21.3	28.2	9.5
Ignorant/Uneducated	5.6	8.0	0	4.8
Prejudiced against civil servants	0.7	6.7	0	0
Selfish	9.1	9.3	7.7	0
Distrustful of government	7.0	1.3	7.7	0
Disorderly	2.1	1.3	2.6	4.8
More than one traits	20.3	22.7	28.2	33.3
Others	23.1	10.7	10.3	38.1
Don't know/No answer	16.1	18.7	15.4	9.5
	100.1	100.0	100.1	100.0

are grouped under the two broad categories of 'more than one characteristics' and 'others,' it is difficult to draw definite conclusions. But still the pattern of responses is easy to interpret. Local officials would prefer clients who were deferential, who were cognizant of the bureaucratic context and sympathetic with the constraints under which they worked and who were generally supportive of government. People who came to local officials with genuine complaints and needs were liked, while those who sought to pursue selfish interests were unwelcome. In short, those who understood and respected the outlook of the local officials were the ones with whom they would prefer to interact.

That local officials preferred people who were respectful and reasonable can be seen in their repertoire of the proper and the undesirable

ways to influence the government (Tables 6 and 7). Again the answers provided are scattered, but the pattern is also straightforward.

Table 6

Officials' List of Most Effective Ways to Influence Government
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Apply pressure on higher officials	4.9	4.0	5.1	4.8
Discuss matters with higher officials	19.6	26.7	25.6	19.0
Publicity through mass media	14.7	9.3	25.6	9.5
Private personal influence	1.4	1.3	2.6	4.8
Report/complain to department concerned	9.1	12.0	5.1	0
Others	18.9	10.7	12.8	4.8
More than one ways	6.3	1.3	5.1	9.5
No most effective way	11.2	4.0	7.7	9.5
Don't know/No answer	13.9	30.7	10.4	38.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 7

Officials' List of Undesirable Influence Tactics
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Petitions	2.8	2.7	2.6	0
Strikes and demonstrations	10.5	25.3	17.9	19.0
Manipulating mass media opinion	2.1	13.3	10.3	9.5
Confrontation	4.2	6.7	5.1	9.5
Violence and riots	9.1	8.0	12.8	9.5
Manipulating personal/ particularistic relationship	0.7	1.3	0	0
More than one answer	23.1	8.0	15.4	28.6
Others	26.6	14.7	28.2	23.8
Don't know/No answer	21.0	20.0	7.7	0
	100.1	100.0	100.0	99.9

Local officials would like their clients to utilize the conventional or

bureaucratic channels of influence-making. Those who resorted to

unconventional or even confrontational tactics were disliked. Local

officials liked to solve the problems of their clients within the unruffled,

regularized administrative arena. They would shun as far as possible

the open, hurly-burly bullring of mass politics.

Despite these strands of elitism, the Hong Kong bureaucrats

cannot be singled out as distinctively different from their counterparts

in other societies, advanced western societies included. At the very

least, the increasingly educated Hong Kong populace do not find the

demeanor of their local officials overbearing. In point of fact, the

popular impression of local officials in Hong Kong had been improving

over the last two decades (Lau and Kuan, 1985).

RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL LEADERS

Unlike the situation in many post-colonial societies, the

relationship between local officials and community leaders in Hong Kong

is not hampered by mutual hostilities and nefarious status competition.

Many officials (58.1 percent in KT, 45.3 percent in TM, 56.4 percent

in THT and 47.7 percent in SYP) rated their relationship with local

leaders as good or very good. Almost none of the respondents

considered the relationship to be not good or bad. As can be gathered

in Table 8, the local officials were able to maintain a decent level of

contacts with local leaders. And the channels whereby these contacts

were made were mainly formal meetings and personal contacts (Table 9).

Table 8

Officials' Amount of Contact with Local Leaders
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Very many	11.2	10.7	20.5	14.3
Many	23.1	9.3	25.6	23.8
Fair	11.2	16.0	7.7	9.5
Few	21.7	16.0	10.3	9.5
Very few	16.1	29.3	23.1	33.3
None	0	1.3	0	4.8
Don't know/No answer	16.8	17.3	12.8	4.8
	100.1	99.9	100.0	100.0

Table 9

Channels Used by Officials to Learn the
Opinion of Local Leaders
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Meetings	30.8	29.3	28.2	19.0
Personal Contact	18.9	14.7	5.1	4.8
Through third parties	0.7	0	0	0
Communication by letter	2.1	2.7	2.6	0
Through other officials (e.g. liaison officers)	4.2	5.3	5.1	4.8
Opinion surveys	0	0	0	0
More than one channels	26.6	26.7	41.0	19.0
Others	7.0	2.7	0	19.0
Don't know/No answer	9.7	18.6	18.0	33.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Because of these interactions, most officials when queried could name a number of local leaders in response (53.1 percent in KT, 82.7 percent in TM, 56.4 percent in THT and 33.3 percent in SYP). Substantial proportions of local officials even thought that they had good leaders in their localities (49.7 percent in KT, 41.3 percent in TM, 53.8 percent in THT and 19.0 percent in SYP).[2] This favorable impression of leaders is also reflected in the finding that overall less than half of the respondents agreed with the statement that local leaders were preoccupied with their own political future instead of the needs of the community (37.1 percent in KT, 50.7 percent in TM, 23.8 percent in THT and 28.6 percent in SYP). In addition, most of them disagreed

with the argument that the government would be able to perform better without the intercession of the local leaders (74.8 percent in KT, 73.3 percent in TM, 82.1 percent in THT and 76.2 percent in SYP).

In order to mobilize their support for the government, it is quite common for the government to offer leaders rewards (basically) symbolic recognition) in return. It was the general feeling among local officials that the local leaders had been more or less sufficiently rewarded for their service to the government (as 46.9 percent of them in KT, 62.7 percent in TM, 38.5 percent in THT and 47.6 percent in SYP thought so).

Now let us look closely at the content of the relationship between local officials and local leaders which appeared to be cordial.[3] What is pertinent here particularly is the extent to which the relationship between local officials and local leaders poses a threat to the power and autonomy of the former. Let us start by saying that local officials were able to recognize that local leaders and the organizations of which they were in charge did have influence on the government. That this influence was not seen as detrimental to official-leader rapport by our respondents can be shown by the finding that most of them would urge the government to take the initiative to strengthen these local organizations (77.6 percent in KT, 78.7 in TM, 84.6 in THT and 81.0 percent in SYP). Granted that the nature of official-leader relationship with regard to influence-making by the leaders was non-antagonistic, we then proceed to analyze what in the eyes of local officials was the nature of access of local leaders to the government

and the manner whereby that access was conducted.

Table 10 lists the major types of inputs by the local leaders which were known to our respondents. It is quite clear there that

Table 10

Officials' Evaluation of the Inputs of Local Leaders
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Influence on policy-making	48.3	44.0	48.7	23.8
Provision of useful information to local officials	62.9	57.3	61.5	66.7
Assistance in policy implementaion	61.5	56.0	64.1	47.6
Mobilizing public support for local officials	60.8	62.7	66.7	57.1

Percentages above indicate the proportions of officials who considered that local leaders had the quoted inputs.

in general local leaders were seen to be primarily useful in rendering support of various kinds to the government. We even suspect that such a supportive role sought from local leaders verges on a role which is basically para-administrative in character. If such is the case, local leaders would be seen as a junior partner in the administrative game. This interpretation does receive some support from another piece of information. When they were asked about the major criteria used to make decisions to allocate public services, the suggestions of local leaders and organizations only occupied a dismally unimportant fourth place, lagging quite behind the criteria of departmental administrative

technical criteria, past experience and special stipulations of higher level officials (Table 11).

Table 11

Criteria for Allocating Public Services
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Departmental administrative/ technical criteria	23.8	17.3	5.1	19.0
Past experience	14.7	8.0	20.5	9.5
Special stipulations of higher level officials	9.1	14.7	5.1	4.8
Suggestions of local leaders and organizations	2.1	4.0	7.7	0
Others	21.0	21.3	35.9	14.3
More than one answers	20.3	12.0	20.5	38.1
Don't know/No answer	9.1	22.7	5.1	14.3
	100.1	100.0	99.9	100.0

Understandably, not all local leaders can win the attention of local officials. It is those leaders who possess the characteristics appreciated by local officials and who approach them in the appropriate manner that can pull the trick. A study of the leadership traits and influence tactics cherished by local officials can tell a lot about the mentality of local officials. Tables 12 and 13 give us an idea about the officials' criteria for assessing local leaders and the way they perceived the basis of influence of local leaders. What is glaringly absent in the two tables is anything related to the political skills of local leaders.

Table 12

Officials' Criteria for Assessing Local Leaders
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Public spirited	30.1	36.0	41.0	33.3
Know the locality well	0.7	1.3	2.6	0
Enthusiastic in participating in local affairs	10.5	4.0	17.9	4.8
Representative	4.9	2.7	2.6	0
Educated	0	0	0	0
Capable	9.8	2.7	2.6	28.6
More than one criteria	21.7	28.0	17.9	14.3
Others	4.9	6.7	10.3	4.8
Don't know/No answer	17.4	18.6	5.1	14.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 13

Officials' Perception of Local Leaders' Basis of Influence
(in percent per category)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Representativeness	18.2	21.3	20.5	14.3
Knowledge	4.2	1.3	5.1	0
Social support	17.5	13.3	17.9	14.3
Government support	4.9	12.0	7.7	0
Financial Power	6.3	40.0	7.7	0
Traditional influence	2.1	20.0	5.1	0
Ascriptive factors (place of birth, ethnicity, original inhabitant status)	0.7	17.3	2.6	4.8
Others	21.0	18.7	33.3	9.5

Obviously local leaders were not conceived as politicians by local officials. They were instead expected to be public-regarding, educated, respectable and competent citizens who were willing and able to assist the government in its work. In short, local leaders were expected to play a complementary role to that of local officials. By nature the relationship between the two should not be competitive or antagonistic, as they were supposed to be enmeshed in a web of consensus and harmony.

Given this general understanding, local officials would have no difficulty in distinguishing between proper and improper methods of applying influence on the government by local leaders. In fact, they were able to do so easily. As clearly illustrated in Tables 14 and 15, officials would like to confine local leaders within the administrative channels established by the government. They were loath to see local leaders resorting to channels of influence which would publicize the issues and embarrass the government. Furthermore, many local officials were worried that such improper influence tactics would mislead the people and set ugly precedents for the resolution of conflict between the government and the public.

While it is true to say that the local officials in Hong Kong still adopted a condescending and apolitical stance toward local leaders and their functions, they are not vastly different from their counterparts in advanced western societies and many post-colonial societies. In fact, the relationship between local officials and local leaders in Hong Kong might even be more cordial and less unequal than that in

Table 14

Officials' List of Appropriate Tactics to
Influence Government by Local Leaders
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Meeting/consultation/discussion	58.0	61.3	64.1	42.9
Letter-writing and suggestions to the government	9.8	8.0	2.6	9.5
Private contact with officials	9.1	4.0	7.7	14.3
Letters to newspaper editors	3.5	2.7	2.6	14.3
Dispassionate reasoning	4.2	4.0	7.7	4.8
More than one tactics	0	1.3	2.6	0
Others	1.4	0	2.6	4.8
No appropriate tactic	4.2	1.3	0	4.8
Don't know/No answer	9.8	17.4	10.1	4.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 15

Officials' List of Improper Tactics to
Influence Government by Local Leaders
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Petition	3.5	0	2.6	0
Strikes and demonstration	4.2	4.0	0	9.5
Publicity in media	22.4	37.3	33.3	47.6
Riot and violence	5.6	2.7	7.7	0
Confrontation	2.8	5.3	5.1	0
Personal influence	4.2	8.0	2.6	9.5
More than one tactics	12.6	6.7	7.7	0
Others	14.7	8.0	12.8	0
No improper tactic	16.8	6.7	5.1	23.8
Don't know/No answer	13.2	21.3	23.1	9.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

many other societies. Accordingly, the next question we should ask is the factors which to a certain extent counteract or alleviate the effects of colonialism, Chinese bureaucratic culture and bureaucratic autonomy on the mentality of the local officials in Hong Kong, granted that these influences really do have the effects as envisaged in the literature.

ALLEVIATING FACTORS

Post-War Hong Kong has experienced dramatic changes, which eventually have transformed it into the most modern and industrialized colony in history. The formal political institutions of Hong Kong admittedly have changed much more slowly, but informal arrangements and the actual behavior of the government have undergone changes to adjust to the changing socio-economic environment. Increasingly responsiveness on the part of the colonial government can be accounted for by the imperatives to rule over an industrial society where the colonized Chinese people are capable of wielding more and more economic power as a result of the rise of the indigenous capitalist and managerial/professional classes (Lau, 1982b; 1983).

The 1967 riot, though aroused by the local Leftists and inspired by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, nevertheless unravelled the facade of social tranquillity and uncovered strands of discontent among the masses, particularly the youngsters. Thereafter a series of changes in the institutional mechanisms which mediated between the government and the people were introduced,

coupled with the establishment of some monitoring devices both within and outside of the bureaucracy so as to make it more responsive and less overbearing. For the sake of managing better the relationship between the bureaucracy and a more educated, vocal and demanding public, bureaucrats were given the appropriate, though not necessarily sufficient and effective, training in public relations skills. Most of our respondents informed us that in the training they had received from the government, they were taught the techniques to deal with their clients properly so that conflict with the people could be avoided. While the evaluation of the performance of officials by the people was not yet the most important criterion in their promotion, in general slightly less than half of our respondents considered that it was however important or very important in the promotion process (47.6 percent in KT, 40.0 percent in TM, 41.1 percent in THT and 28.6 percent in SYP). All these changes in the context in which the government entered into relationship with the people would not fail to leave their mark on the attitude and behavior of the local officials.

Even the internal relationships in the bureaucracy have not failed to undergo some changes in the direction of openness and 'democratization.' The hierarchical and centralized bureaucratic structure has been loosened to a certain extent in connection with the process of deconcentration. There were frequent interactions between superiors and subordinates. 73.4 percent of the respondents in KT, 77.3 percent in TM, 69.2 percent in THT and 71.4 percent in SYP reported that they were able to see their superiors everyday, and most

of them claimed that their superiors were familiar or very familiar with their work and performance (89.5 percent in KT, 80.0 percent in TM, 69.2 percent in THT and 85.7 percent in SYP). In general, our respondents felt that morale was high in their departments. In a less rigid and regimented context, it is not surprising that our respondent had a relatively high sense of autonomy on the job, and this can be seen readily in Table 16. Internal 'democratization' and administrative deconcentration, we surmise, should have spillover effects on modifying the mentality of the bureaucrats in an open and responsive direction.

Table 16

Sense of Autonomy Among Officials
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
1. Those who think that general departmental regulations are not suitable to the particular conditions of the locality	48.3	42.7	30.8	9.5
2. Those who think that in order to improve performance, they need to avoid strictly applying departmental regulations	69.9	54.7	76.9	47.6
(2a. Among those who think so, those who can really apply regulations flexibly)	91.0	75.6	83.3	50.0
3. Those who think they have enough decision-making power	56.6	34.7	51.3	57.1

The composition and character of the bureaucrats in Hong Kong are different from their counterparts in the former colonies in one very significant sense. Because of the modernity of Hong Kong, the bureaucracy is not the only source of prestigeous and gainful employment for the able and ambitious. The limited role of the government in the economy and society and its overall success in limiting administrative corruption and malpractices furthermore discourage those who want to use or abuse governmental power as the stepping-stone to economic success.[4] As the bureaucracy is an open meritocracy located in a society without an entrenched and powerful upper socio-economic class, it is an important channel of social mobility for the people of Hong Kong. In short, bureaucratic employment is not monopolized by a closed bureaucratic 'caste, which sets itself apart from society and catering solely to its own interests. In our sample, an overwhelming majority of the respondents' fathers were not civil servants (89.5 percent in KT, 94.7 percent in TM, 87.2 percent in THT and 81.0 percent in SYP). Once in the civil service, psychologically (though not necessarily in reality) they refused to be its permanent captives and forever separated from the private sector. About half of our respondents told us that they would accept offers from private firms if they were attractive enough (51.7 percent in KT, 50.7 percent in TM, 25.6 percent in THT and 52.4 percent in SYP).

Thus, while institutionally the bureaucracy is separate from society and remains politically autonomous, in terms of personnel composition the bureaucracy is never completely secluded from society.

It is true that bureaucratic socialization will more or less produce a type of bureaucratic personality distinct from the character of the average Hong Kong man, but the open recruitment of bureaucrats coupled with the strong familial networks wherein the bureaucrats are involved, would mean that psychologically the bureaucrats in Hong Kong can still have some measure of empathy with the people outside of government.

These changes in the relationship between the government and society and within the bureaucratic organization, and the fact that it is increasingly meritocratic are clearly reflected also in the local officials' conception of the role of a civil servant and the nature of their work.[5] We had asked our respondents to give us a list of the characteristics of a good civil servant. No dominant characteristic emerged from the answers, testifying to the incomplete success of bureaucratic socialization and perhaps the changing conception of the role of a civil servant. Nevertheless, among the major characteristics that had been mentioned, most ('responsible,' 'principled,' 'diligent' and 'capable') had to do with the character of a civil servant qua civil servant rather than with the relationship between a civil servant and his client. However, this cannot be taken to interpret that our respondents were not aware of the changing environment and its implications for the role of the civil servant in society. Many of them had become more sensitive to the changing definitions of the role of the civil servant by the people, and were aware of need to be 'friendly' and helpful' to their clients (Table 17). Overall, while the changes in

the role definitions of the bureaucrats should not be exaggerated because they are still fluidic, nevertheless, their significance cannot be overlooked either.

Table 17

Citizens' Perception of Role of Civil Servant
as Seen by Officials
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Friendly, helpful	18.9	24.0	17.9	23.8
Having authority	2.8	2.7	7.7	9.5
Respectable	0.7	1.3	0	0
Unreasonable	4.2	1.3	0	0
Comfortable	11.2	9.3	7.7	4.8
Bureaucratic	11.2	12.0	10.3	14.3
Comfortable and bureaucratic	4.2	6.7	7.7	9.5
Others	30.8	34.7	48.7	33.3
Don't know/No answer	16.1	8.0	0	4.8
	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0

Such increasing concern with the relationship between bureaucrats and clients can also be seen in the way the bureaucrats related to the people whom they were assigned to serve. The facts that they were assigned to local areas only for a short term[6] and that they were responsible ultimately to the colony-wide Hong Kong government were naturally detrimental to the nurturing of localistic feelings, and it had been shown before in connection with the analysis of the value

orientations of the bureaucrats that generally speaking 'localism' was not evident among our respondents. Nonetheless, when we look closely the picture is somewhat different. In Table 18, which presents different indicators on local involvement of the respondents, it is found that, despite their 'cosmopolitanism' and identification with the central government, at least a portion of local officials were sympathetic to local interests and had particularistic sentiments for local inhabitants.

Table 18

Officials' Involvement with their Localities
(in percent)

	KT	TM	THT	SYP
Particular liking for local residents	31.5	42.7	41.0	38.1
Feel that gov't.'s attention & service to locality inadequate	14.7	25.3	12.8	9.5
Have heatedly argued with or confronted superiors on behalf of locality	28.7	25.3	20.5	28.6
Agree with departmental policy toward locality	80.4	77.3	76.9	71.4
Able to cite examples of valuable service delivered to locality by department	79.7	89.3	82.1	71.4
Among those consulted by superiors on local policies, those who act as representative of locality	9.7 (N=72)	12.5 (N=40)	11.1 (N=18)	55.6 (N=9)

Finally, we must consider the age and educational level of the local bureaucrats. It can be reasonably averred that bureaucrats who are younger and more educated should be less gripped by the bureaucratic mentality particularly in its colonial and traditional Chinese forms. Our respondents can be considered young in age, as a majority of them were aged 40 or below (80.5 percent in KT, 88.0 percent in TM, 79.5 percent in THT and 76.2 percent in SYP). They were uniformly well-educated. An overwhelming majority of them had received upper secondary education or higher. 57.4 percent of them in KT, 60.0 percent in TM, 69.2 percent in THT and 80.9 percent in SYP had received post-secondary education of one kind or another. It is easier for the younger and more educated bureaucrats to adjust to the new role of requirements of civil servants in a changing context. Unfortunately, it is impossible to test statistically in a conclusive manner the significance of age and education as alleviating factors in this connection due to the paucity of aged and lowly educated respondents in our sample.

Taken together, the alleviating factors we have discussed provide only a plausible rather than a definitive explanation of the only partial conformity of the local bureaucrats of Hong Kong with the stereotype of a colonial bureaucrat reared in a Chinese culture and exercising autonomous political power. While there is always the possibility that other crucial factors have been neglected, it is our opinion that the above-mentioned factors should supply the bulk of the explanation needed.

DISCUSSION

It is difficult to resist the suggestion that the local bureaucrats in Hong Kong have been able to adjust admirably well to the changing political and institutional context. The fact that the local leaders and local inhabitants we had studied alongside with our study of the local officials (Lau, 1985; Lau and Kuan, 1985) held local officials in relatively high esteem should attest to successful adjustment on the part of the latter. Nevertheless, even though the static nature of our data in no way provides the proof, we strongly suspect that such smooth adjustment by the local officials is due more to the slow pace of political and institutional changes up to 1982, which did not heavily tax the adaptive ability of the bureaucrats, than to their capability and determination to make the attitudinal and behavioral transition.

Since 1982, when Britain and China negotiated over the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, the pace of politicization in Hong Kong has accelerated. Bureaucrats in Hong Kong have been compelled to cope with a much more turbulent and complicated political environment. The decline in the authority of the colonial government and the increasing stridency of the people and their leaders in pressing demands on the government have posed serious threats to administrative autonomy and the status of the civil servants. The nagging sense of uncertainty about their political future has demoralized quite a number of civil servants in Hong Kong. Hostilities toward the more vociferous and populist leaders, who have not much respect for the conventional ways

of doing business, are pervasive among civil servants, and the relation-
ship between the bureaucrats and their clients has suffered. The
long-term trend of transferring more political power to non-bureaucratic
bodies with popular elective elements is received with abhorrence and
consternation by many bureaucrats we came across in the past few
years.

The argument that it is much easier for bureaucrats to adjust
to a situation which changes gradually rather than suddenly or
tempestuously has been corroborated by events since 1982. Never-
theless, some data in our study also provides hints on this point. The
key to the smooth adjustment of local bureaucrats to the changing
political context is the soothing sense of security that they are still
able to enjoy despite all the potential threats to their status and power
coming from the environment. Thus, even with the establishment of
the district boards in the early 1980s which were supposed to advise
and to a limited extent monitor them, local officials still thought that
they in general possessed enough power to make appropriate decisions.

With respect to citizen participation, it is obvious that despite
their general receptivity to increasing citizen activism, our respondents
were worried about the problems and dangers it might bring about, as
65.7 percent of them did so in KT, 58.7 percent in TM, 64.1 percent
in THT and 38.1 percent in SYP. Nevertheless, they were able to
assuage their fears by persuading themselves that there were only a
small number of citizens who were uncooperative with the government.
The proportions of our respondents who said that a small proportion,

a very small proportion or none of their clients in the localities were
uncooperative were 68.1 percent in KT, 82.3 percent in TM, 80.0 per-
cent in THT and 89.5 percent in SYP.

The same sense of security can be spotted in our respondents'
relationship with local leaders. Only a small percentage of them (28.7
in KT, 28.0 in TM, 30.8 in THT and 38.1 in SYP) were convinced that
local leaders were increasingly resorting to improper tactics in applying
pressure on the government. Moreover, even if they were to do so,
that did not constitute a serious threat as only a minority of the local
leaders were seen as united among themselves by our respondents.[7]

Apparently, once this lingering sense of security is withdrawn,
as in the period after 1982, the whole process of smooth adjustment may
come to a halt. In its place will be a much more rough and uncertain
process of political transition for the Hong Kong bureaucrats.

Notes

[1] In another connection, our respondents were asked about the best way to solve the problems of their localities. The percentages of local officials picking the option 'expanding the activities of the government' were 50.3 in KT, 53.3 in TM, 48.7 in THT and 33.3 in SYP.

[2] The figure for SYP is surprisingly small mainly because of the fact that half of the respondents there opted for the answers of 'don't know' or 'no answer.'

[3] Local leaders also had good opinions of local officials. They had great respect for the competence and expertise of the local officials (Lau, 1985).

[4] By far the most important reason for joining the government cited by our respondents is 'job security.' Only 16.8 percent of the respondents in KT, 14.7 percent in TM, 7.7 percent in THT and 9.5 percent in SYP gave 'salary' as the most important reason for becoming a civil servant.

[5] In the past, the ethnic factor (expatriates were favored) had somewhat tarnished the meritocratic image of the bureaucracy. Over the last decade or so, the ethnic factor had become increasingly insignificant.

[6] Most of our respondents had been posted in their localities for less than five years (90.9 percent in KT, 88.3 percent in TM, 89.4 percent in THT and 81.0 percent in SYP).

[7] Only 16.9 percent of the respondents in KT, 26.7 percent in TM, 43.6 percent in THT and 19.1 percent in SYP considered the local leaders in their localities as united with one another. The figure for THT is larger because THT had comparatively stronger grassroots organizations and leadership.

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現代殖民地的中國官僚——香港的例子

（中文摘要）

劉兆佳、關信基著

在許多社會科學家的眼中，官僚通常都有一些不值得稱道的心態，例如傲慢、無情、重規章而輕人情等等；加上殖民地的環境和中國傳統官僚文化的影響，上述官僚心態更會變本加厲；最後如果這些官員是地方上掌權和支配政府服務的話，我們預期可以觀察到官僚性格的極端面相。

香港是一個華人聚居的殖民地，在政治上，殖民官員控制著極大的權力，不受任何其他政治勢力的牽制。可是出乎意料地，我們發現香港的地方官員並不是那麼傲慢、無情和重規章而輕人道；相反地、他們表現得很開通，善於處理公共關係和靈活適應。

我們的研究是在一九八二年間以問卷調查形式進行的。訪問的對象來自三個不同部門的官員（即民政署、社會福利署和房屋署，分別代表三種不同的施政功能）；他們分別負責四個特徵不同的社區。這個設計的原意是要檢討官僚文化有沒有不同的類型。結果發現香港的官僚文化是相當劃一的，區域和部門特徵起不了影響作用。

調查結果顯示，香港的地方官員既不保守、也不墨守成規。相反地、他們傾向於溫和而慎重的改革。他們對市民參政的看法是複雜的。一方面他們承認市民表達意見的權利，另一方面卻不甘心讓輿論決定政策；他們對不同意見有相當大的容忍，也能遷就衝突性的利益。可是歸根到底，他們相信政府才是公共利益的判斷者及維護人，因而不必對市民有求必應。

香港的地方官員難免還有些精英主義的心態。不過他們不是傲慢無情的。因此在地方上、官民關係是挺不錯的。事實上，在過去廿年、市民對官員的觀感是在不斷改善中。官員和社區領袖也維持著友善互助的關係。社區領袖對官僚的權力，自主和威望並不構成威脅；而地方官員也樂意敦促政府，採取主動來加強社區組織。

為甚麼香港的官員沒有染上一般的官僚習氣呢？為甚麼他們和地方領袖之間的關係沒有像許多其他地方那樣充滿敵意呢？

我們認為，首要因素是香港的整個政治環境改變了。香港雖然在憲法形式上是個殖民地，但是在實際上它已經不是。為了有效地統治一個由華人掌握社經命脈的工業社會，香港政府不得不尊重和順應民情。許多被訪者告訴我們，在他們受訓的時候，有公共關係的課題；而且他們認為，民眾對他們工作表現的評價是會影響到他們的昇遷的。

其次，香港官僚的組成也跟別的殖民地不一樣。在其他地方仕途往往是唯一既有威望又會發達的途徑，而且往往由一個封閉的階級所壟斷。在香港、官僚架構是一個開放而且用人唯才的組織。在我們的被訪者中、絕大多數官員的雙親都沒有當過公務員；我們發現，香港官員雖然身在官場，然而卻非死心於宦途；要是有私人機構向他們招手，我們一半的被訪者都會欣然接受。總之，香港的官僚並不是與社會脫節的階級，這就有助於官民的和諧了。

最後，年齡和教育對官僚文化是有影響的，年紀越輕、教育程度越高的官員比較不會受殖民主義或傳統觀念所污染。在我們的抽樣中，絕大多數的官員都是四十歲以下的，受過高中或以上教育的也佔多數。

香港官員之所以能成功地適應工業現代化的統治要求，不見得是由於本身的能力。可能是由於第一：政治及制度的變化是漸進的，第二：官僚的安全感從來沒受過挑戰。一九八二年以來，政治變幻加速了，官僚的政權開始受到威脅，那麼香港的官僚恐怕要經歷一個比較艱辛的適應期了。