

The Leadership of Tung Chee-hwa in His First Year of Governing Hong Kong

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This paper aims to analyze the leadership of the first Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in his first year of governance after the transfer of sovereignty from Britain to China. It is argued that the leadership of Tung Chee-hwa stresses "incremental development" based on the status quo, "reflector model" of governance, "transactional mediation," and "role-determined leadership." Tung firmly sticks to the narrow meaning of the Basic Law and the words of Chinese leaders, being fully aware that his leadership derives from a consultative-legal basis of authority with the consent of Beijing's leaders. In the context of the existing Beijing-Hong Kong power relationship and Tung's conservative political outlook, significant change or innovation in Hong Kong's political system seems unlikely. Yet, it is a matter of doubt whether Tung's Leadership can effectively withstand the impact and challenge posed by the adversarial political parties, the quest for more political accountability, and the rising dissatisfaction of the public towards the government's economic and social performance.

Keywords: Hong Kong; leadership; incremental change; reflecting model; role-determined leadership; transactional mediation

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This paper aims to analyze the leadership of the first Chief Executive

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of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government in his first year of governance after the transfer of sovereignty from Britain to the People's Republic of China (PRC). As Hong Kong enters into a new period of politics under the formula of "one country, two systems," there are several major political tasks that the HKSAR Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa must handle. These include the recent election of the first Legislative Council in May 1998 as a result of an absent through-train arrangement for the pre-handover legislature to finish its term of office in 1999; the reintroduction of certain laws related to public security prior to the enactment of the 1991 Bill of Rights Ordinance as a result of the Chinese non-recognition of the Ordinance; the establishment of provisional district boards and municipal councils by reintroducing appointed membership into these local representative organs; striving for balance between Hong Kong's autonomy and China's involvement in the region's domestic affairs; and the maintenance of the balance of power among Hong Kong's major political forces and parties. These tasks require a strong and capable leadership under the Chief Executive. It is therefore significant and timely to evaluate Tung's leadership so as to project Hong Kong's political development in the remaining four years under his leadership.

Leadership as defined by Jean Blondel is "the ability to make others do what they presumably would not have done otherwise; it is the power exercised by an individual to direct members of the polity towards action in a particular direction."¹ Similarly, William Welsh defines leadership as "the ability to mobilize human resources in pursuit of specific goals."² James Burns adds that leadership is "a process by which leaders induce followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations of both leaders and followers."³ Bert Rockman introduces an element of change to the concept, which is perceived as "a process of producing significant change."⁴ In the same vein, David Loye regards the function of

¹Jean Blondel, *Comparative Government* (New York: Philip Allan, 1990), 278.

²William A. Welsh, *Leaders and Elites* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979), 18.

³James M. Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 2.

⁴Bert A. Rockman, *The Leadership Question* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 20.

leadership as "the intervention in the social flow to direct change towards ends that are favorable to the leader and his group."⁵ Under these definitions, a systematic study of leadership embraces the analysis of origin of leadership, institutional bases of leadership, scope of leadership, models of governance, leadership skills, style of leadership, methods of influence, forms of change, impact of leaders, and willingness to follow.

Using the above framework to evaluate the leadership of Tung, this paper argues that Tung's leadership stresses "incremental development" based on the status quo, a "reflector model" of governance, "transactional mediation," and a "role-determined leadership." Although Tung enjoys immense constitutional power, he has not attempted to fully use his power to transform the Hong Kong polity. Instead, Tung has firmly stuck to the narrow meaning of the Basic Law and the words of Chinese leaders, being fully aware that his leadership derives from a "consultative-legal" basis of authority with the consent of Beijing's leaders. Perhaps Tung also understands that his bargaining power is far below Beijing's power, and has hence chosen to adopt a softer approach in dealing with the sovereign master. In the context of the existing Beijing-Hong Kong power relationship and Tung's conservative political outlook, significant change or innovation in Hong Kong's political system seems unlikely. Yet, it is a matter of doubt whether Tung's leadership can effectively withstand the impact and challenge posed by the adversarial political parties, the quest for more political accountability, and the rising dissatisfaction of the public towards the government's economic and social performance.

The Origin and Institutional Basis of Tung's Leadership

The PRC's National People's Congress (NPC) established a Preparatory Committee in January 1996 for prescribing the specific method for selecting the first HKSAR Chief Executive. The Preparatory Committee was

⁵David Loye, *The Leadership Passion: A Psychology of Ideology* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1977), 3.

composed of 150 members, including 56 mainland Chinese representatives and 94 Hong Kong residents. Among the 94 Hong Kong representatives, 36 percent were from the business sector, 35 percent from the professional sector, 12 percent from the political sector, and 17 percent from other sectors. In terms of political division, twenty-one members came from the four pro-China political parties: the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), the New Hong Kong Alliance (NHKA), the Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA), and the Liberal Democratic Federation (LDF). The One-Country Two-System Economic Research Institute, Beijing's think-tank in Hong Kong, occupied eight seats. The conservative Liberal Party (LP) and the moderate Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL) had four and two seats, respectively. However, the Democratic Party (DP), the most popular party in terms of seats and votes gained in the 1995 Legislative Council election, was not granted any seats. This pro-China dominated and business-oriented Preparatory Committee was in turn responsible for preparing the establishment of a Selection Committee to select the first HKSAR Chief Executive.

The Selection Committee, established in November 1996, was composed of four hundred permanent residents of Hong Kong from four sectors (industrial/business, professional, labor/grass-roots, and political). Similar to the composition of the Preparatory Committee, the pro-China and business-oriented members dominated the Selection Committee. Only one member from the ADPL was in the Selection Committee, while the rest of the democrats were either excluded or determined not to join the Selection Committee. On November 15, 1996, the Selection Committee nominated three candidates out of eight to the final round of selection of the first SAR Chief Executive. Tung Chee-hwa received an absolute majority of votes (208 out of 400) from the Selection Committee, followed by Yeung Tit-leung, who secured 82 votes, and then Wu Kwong-ching, who received 54 votes. Tung and Wu are business magnates with a close relationship with China and Yeung was a former Chief Justice supported by some pro-China members. In the final selection round held on December 11, 1996, Tung received a landslide majority (320 out of 400 votes) and was officially appointed by Beijing as the first Chief Executive of the SAR. Yeung and Wu received 42 and 36 votes, respectively.

The origin of Tung's leadership mainly derives from a legal-consultative basis. The selection method and the compositions of the Preparatory Committee and the Selection Committee indicated that Tung's leadership position was largely backed by the pro-Beijing forces. As Tung was not elected directly by the general citizenry, consultation between the Beijing officials and the Selection Committee was the main basis in selecting the Chief Executive. Beijing's consent and support was perhaps the major force that secured Tung's leadership position. The phenomenon that Tung's leadership originates from China will very likely affect how he governs Hong Kong in general and how he deals with the democratic forces in particular. As the Basic Law grants immense constitutional powers to the Chief Executive (to appoint members and chair the meetings of the Executive Council; to refuse the advice of the Executive Council; to refuse bills passed by the Legislative Council; to dissolve the Legislative Council; and to appoint judges and other principal officers), Tung is legally the most powerful political figure in the HKSAR. With sufficient political power and resources, Tung's leadership position is effectively backed up by legal and formal sanctions.

Since Tung faces few constitutional constraints on his exercise of power under the executive-led system, he has room to maneuver against actions or issues that would alienate China. As China is a principal pillar of Tung's ruling legitimacy and a constraint on Tung's political power, Tung has supported China's major political principles and policies on Hong Kong.⁶ The publication of his document on Civil Liberties and Social Order in April 1997 was a case in point demonstrating that Tung had to do something to alleviate Chinese dissatisfaction and opposition against the 1991 Bill of Rights Ordinance. The document proposed to amend the Societies Ordinance and the Public Order Ordinance in order to "prevent Hong Kong from being used as a subversion basis against mainland China"⁷ and "to take steps to prevent Hong Kong from being used for

⁶Timothy Ka-ying Wong, "Constraints on Tung Chee-hwa's Power and His Governance of Hong Kong," *Issues & Studies* 33, no. 8 (August 1997): 38-39.

⁷Statement made by Tung. See the *Hong Kong Standard*, April 17, 1997, 1.

political activities against China."⁸ The proposals were passed by the provisional legislature in June 1997 with only minor modifications. Tung's consultative document was totally in line with the Chinese stance on the issue of human rights in Hong Kong, and stated that "the Standing Committee of the NPC of China decided that three sections of the Bill of Rights Ordinance were in contravention of the Basic Law and should not be adopted as the laws of the SAR."⁹ Perhaps Tung had no choice but to follow the NPC's decision to amend the 1991 Bill of Rights Ordinance, as he admitted in his first Policy Address on October 8, 1997 that "Hong Kong's prosperity and stability are closely linked with those of the mainland. . . . It is also the starting point for the SAR government when formulating policies for our relationship with the mainland. . . . We will be able to find the way forward and will be well able to handle the relationship between Hong Kong and the Central Government."¹⁰ The Basic Law (Art. 43) clearly stipulates that the Chief Executive is accountable to the central government of China. Thus the origin and institutional basis of Tung's leadership suggests that the interests of China will be duly respected and seriously considered in formulating SAR government policies, which also shapes the scope of his leadership and his model for governing Hong Kong.

The Scope of Leadership and Model of Governance

As leadership is concerned with a process of producing significant change and making others act in the direction which leaders choose, the scope of leadership is referred to as the "extent of change" which leaders wish to bring about.¹¹ The effort of change could be directed towards either "progress" or "a return to the past." This can lead us to distinguish between

⁸Chief Executive's Office, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, *Civil Liberties and Social Order: Consultative Document* (April 1997), B4.

⁹*Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹⁰*Policy Address by the Chief Executive at the Provisional Legislative Council Meeting on 8 October 1997* (Hong Kong: Printing Department, Hong Kong SAR Government, 1997), 2-3.

¹¹Blondel, *Comparative Government*, 278.

leaders who aim at transforming society by bringing about significant changes to the existing framework and leaders who are primarily concerned with keeping the status quo by making compromises and transactions to maintain the existing framework. A review of Tung's stance on Hong Kong's political development suggests that Tung is keen on running a traditional, consultative, and executive-led system by regressing to the governmental system prior to the political reforms undertaken by former Governor Chris Patten.

On the issue of democratization and political change in Hong Kong, Tung shares the same view with Beijing, objecting to Patten's 1992 democratic reforms to broaden the electoral base of the Legislative Council's functional constituencies. Instead, Tung reduced the number of eligible voters in the 1998 Legislative Council functional constituency election from 2.7 million (in 1995) to 232,000 by adopting corporate voting at the expense of individual voting in most of the functional constituencies.¹² During his campaign for the Chief Executive position, Tung admitted that he disagreed with Patten's decision to separate the Executive and Legislative councils in terms of membership and powers.¹³ He further added that consultative rather than Western adversarial politics was better. After Tung assumed office, he brought back the previous style of executive- and business-led politics in Hong Kong. He appointed eleven members into the SAR Executive Council: three of them are also members of the provisional legislature; six of them had openly opposed Patten's democratic reforms; seven of them are businessmen; one is a DAB member and another is a member of the Liberal Party; and over half of them are either Preparatory Committee members or Beijing's Hong Kong Affairs Advisors. Tung also reintroduced appointed membership into the provisional district boards and municipal councils, where appointed membership had been abolished by Patten since 1994. In January 1998, Tung established a Commission on Strategic Development which was composed of seven leading businessmen, one leading accountant, two professors, and one pro-China

¹²*South China Morning Post*, September 29, 1997, 3.

¹³*Ming Pao* (Hong Kong), October 28, 1996, 2.

Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) leader.

Tung's conservative political outlook is fully reflected by his public speeches and performance. Shortly after winning the Chief Executive position, Tung openly criticized the leader of the Democratic Party, Martin Lee, for "saying negative things about Hong Kong" during Lee's visit to the United States in April 1997.¹⁴ Prior to the official assumption of office, Tung was perceived among the general public as a political conservative who was not expected to promote Hong Kong's democratization.¹⁵ In a survey conducted by *Time* magazine in June 1997, a significant portion of the respondents (39 percent) even perceived Tung as a leader representing Beijing's interests, 34 percent perceived him as representing Hong Kong's interests, while 27 percent said "not sure."¹⁶ In another survey conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, respondents quoted "democracy" as the most worrying problem in Hong Kong after the transfer of sovereignty.¹⁷

Tung upholds the Confucian values of paternalism, loyalty, and hierarchy, and also stresses the importance of collective rights over individual rights and consultation over confrontation. His political philosophy is explicitly expressed in his document on Civil Liberties and Social Order: "We must strike a balance between civil liberties and social stability, personal rights and social obligations, individual interests and the common good."¹⁸ Tung therefore insists that permission from the police on public processions must be reintroduced in order to give the police sufficient time and information to thoroughly assess the implications of any event from the point of view of national security, public safety, and public order. In the same vein, Tung decided to reintroduce registration of societies in order to screen "which society should be allowed to operate in Hong Kong."¹⁹

¹⁴*Hong Kong Standard*, February 14, 1997, 1.

¹⁵Surveys conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong. See *Pingguo ribao* (Apple Daily News) (Hong Kong), March 24 and April 28, 1997.

¹⁶See *South China Morning Post*, June 23, 1997, 3.

¹⁷*Pingguo ribao*, May 29, 1997, 6.

¹⁸*Civil Liberties and Social Order*, 8.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 13.

Tung's conservative political outlook is also implicitly expressed in his 1997 Policy Address: "My administration is devoting attention to . . . the steady development of Hong Kong's democracy . . . and to ensure the development of democracy by proceeding in an orderly fashion and in accordance with the principle of steady progress."²⁰ In a meeting with British Foreign Minister Robin Cook in January 1998, Tung reiterated that he would only take incremental steps to develop democracy in Hong Kong.²¹ Tung also emphasized in the Policy Address that "Hong Kong SAR has an executive-led government . . . which remains committed to listening to community views and responding by setting out clearly how we plan to meet our long-term objectives."²² The above suggests that the scope of Tung's leadership in initiating major political changes and development towards democracy will be narrow and incremental.

Tung's incremental scope of leadership in political development is associated with his "reflector model" of governance, which largely envisions the government as a ratifier of the social and political consensus, a representative of its diversity, or a responder to dominant and intense societal demands.²³ In contrast, a "director model" emphasizes planning, directed social and political change, active intervention in processes of sociopolitical development, and positive government action to propel change.²⁴ In essence, a "reflector model" emphasizes minimum government effort to produce minimum change, while a "director model" emphasizes maximum government effort to produce maximum change. A review of Tung's political agenda reveals that unlike his predecessor Patten, he has not introduced any major changes to the political system. In justifying his insistence on maintaining the pre-1995 political system, Tung is of the view that there is a broad social consensus to maintain Hong Kong's prosperity and stability through the established system of constructive consultation rather than adversarial party politics. Tung's government still sticks to the con-

²⁰Policy Address, 49, 52.

²¹*South China Morning Post*, January 22, 1998, 3.

²²Policy Address, 50.

²³Rockman, *The Leadership Question*, 30.

²⁴*Ibid.*

ventional ways of seeking consensus, consultation, compromises, and transactions among Hong Kong elites and Beijing officials.

Perhaps Tung's cautious move to develop democracy in Hong Kong is related to the pressure exerted from China and his literal interpretation of the Basic Law. In his Policy Address, he mentioned many times that "Hong Kong and China share the same fundamental interests" and that "Hong Kong's prosperity and stability are closely linked with those of the mainland."²⁵ The strong Chinese opposition to the democratic reforms implemented during 1992-97, the subsequent Chinese decision to establish the provisional legislature, municipal councils, and district boards, and the Chinese denouncement of the 1991 Bill of Rights Ordinance all gave Tung a clear political message on the pace and direction of Hong Kong's democratization. Tung also mentioned many times in the Policy Address that "the SAR government is developing a political system in accordance with the Basic Law" and that it will work out details "in accordance with the principles of democracy and openness required by the Basic Law."²⁶

Unlike Patten, who intentionally explored and exploited the grey areas of the Basic Law to develop his 1992 constitutional reform package, Tung has stuck rigidly to the literal sense of the words laid down in the Basic Law and the speeches delivered by Beijing officials. He is what Barbara Kellerman describes as a "role-determined" leader who fills his role in the manner of the punctilious bureaucrat, being dictated by his role, the rules, and the surrounding environment.²⁷ In contrast, a "role-determining" leader would enact his role in a highly personal style, with behaviors beyond those prescribed by rules and the surrounding environment.²⁸ On the issue of political development, Tung has taken a similarly cautious approach, citing relevant sections and articles of the Basic Law under each of his policy programs in his Policy Address. The narrow scope of Tung's

²⁵ *Policy Address*, 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁷ Barbara Kellerman, *The Political Presidency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 14.

²⁸ *Ibid.*



leadership and his restrictive mode of governance have thus shaped his leadership skills and style.

Skills and Style of Leadership

In order to convince opponents and followers to achieve a common goal, Richard Neustadt suggests that a leader must have the skills to win over others to his support and a willingness to engage with others in political battle.²⁹ Other scholars such as Erwin Hargrove have also suggested that leaders should be able "to hold discussions with those who work in their immediate circle and to exhibit the ability to persuade, to maneuver and manipulate, and to structure situations."³⁰ Kellerman states that the most fundamental leadership skill is "interpersonal competence," which is the leader's ability to maneuver skillfully and to use others for his own purposes.³¹ This is similar to Andrew McFarland's "dynamic mediation," which is a process minimizing multilateral conflicts by upgrading common interests.³² The process of "dynamic mediation" involves a mutual exchange of benefits among the leader, followers, and opponents. Edwin Hollander suggests that "when leaders are effective, they give something and get something in return. This social exchange, or transactional approach to leadership, involves a trading of benefits."³³ Similarly, Burns proposes that "the relations of most leaders and followers are transactional—leaders and followers approach each other with an eye to exchanging one thing for another."³⁴

Tung certainly understands the importance of building a broad polit-

²⁹Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power* (New York: Praeger, 1960), 33.

³⁰Erwin C. Hargrove, *The Power of the Modern Presidency* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 78.

³¹Kellerman, *The Political Presidency*, 16.

³²Andrew S. McFarland, *Power and Leadership in Pluralist Systems* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1969), 177.

³³Edwin P. Hollander, *Leadership Dynamics: A Practical Guide to Effective Relationships* (New York: Praeger, 1978), 2.

³⁴Burns, *Leadership*, 19.

ical consensus on the structure and operation of Hong Kong's political system. Controversial issues such as the amendment of the Public Security Ordinance and the Societies Ordinance, the reintroduction of appointed membership into the local representative bodies, and the adoption of corporate voting in functional constituencies have divided the general citizens, politicians, and political parties. Tung has attempted to find a consensus among the contending forces with respect to these political issues, but has failed to create a commonly acceptable formula between the democrats and the conservatives. Political transactions and exchanges have taken place, but they have mainly been among Tung, conservative businessmen, leftist pro-China politicians, and Beijing officials. Tung's decisions on the above issues all seem to go along with the wishes of the conservative and pro-China factions; however, the democrats all opposed Tung's decisions on these issues. The democrats have also been excluded from Tung's power center, including the Executive Council, the Commission on Strategic Development, the Central Policy Unit, and the provisional legislature. Consensus has thus been reached between Tung and the conservative factions, and a conservative political model has been exchanged for business and Chinese support to the SAR. Tung and the democrats, however, have not been able to convince and persuade each other, hence failing to reach a deal in the transaction process.

If leadership ability is partly measured in terms of the ability to make consensus and transactions among the leader, opponents, and followers, then Tung has certainly failed to draw the support of his main opponents, namely the Democratic Party, by reaching any meaningful political consensus and transactions. Perhaps Tung is torn between two conflicting positions on many political issues, but he seems to have acted consistently towards a more conservative political model. Even his close advisors have all been drawn from conservative business and leftist factions at the expense of the democratic faction. As the democrats have been excluded from formal political structures (the Executive Council, the provisional legislature, the Commission on Strategic Development, and the Central Policy Unit), they and Tung lack a forum for political mediation, communications, exchanges, compromises, and transactions. If balance of political power and interests is an objective that Tung hopes to achieve in Hong

Kong, his current policies and immediate advisory circles have failed to integrate democratic interests and forces. As the democratic faction won landslide victories in the 1991 and 1995 Legislative Council direct elections, it would be sound to incorporate democratic forces into the government in order to build up comprehensive political transactions for attaining a higher degree of legitimacy. Two recent surveys conducted in January 1998 reveal that the Democratic Party is still the most popular political party among the general citizenry. A survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong found that 55.9 percent of the respondents would vote for the Democratic Party in the 1998 Legislative Council election.³⁵ Another study conducted by the Hong Kong Baptist University also had the same result: most respondents indicated that they would vote for the Democratic Party.³⁶

The study of leadership inevitably involves the study of leader-follower relationships based on the styles used by leaders and the responses engendered in followers.³⁷ As a majority of the citizens in Hong Kong voted for the Democratic Party in the 1995 elections and surveys further indicate that citizens would continue to support the Democratic Party in the 1998 election, Tung needs to change either his own political orientations or those of the citizens in order to achieve a leader-follower consensus. In the words of Jerzy Wiatr, "Leadership is a relationship which consists of systematically influencing others so that they behave according to leaders' desires. . . . Some congruence between followers' behaviour and leaders' desires is the definitional characteristic of leadership."³⁸ The key point is that effective leadership requires a congruence of behavior and desires between the followers and leaders. The immediate question for Tung then is how to make the majority of the followers who aspire for a more democratic government in Hong Kong to share his political desires for a less democratic and open government.

³⁵*South China Morning Post*, January 27, 1998, 3.

³⁶*Hong Kong Standard*, January 23, 1998, 4.

³⁷See note 2 above.

³⁸Jerzy Wiatr, "Political Elites and Political Leadership: Conceptual Problems and Selected Hypotheses for Comparative Research," *Indian Journal of Politics*, December 1973, 139.

There are generally four methods of influence that leaders can use: (1) control over followers' gains and costs through reward and punishment; (2) persuasion through altering his followers' perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes regarding the common good; (3) affective control through charisma and personal appeal; and (4) control over the followers' environment through bringing additional pressures on followers to induce the desired change of attitude or behavior.³⁹ Leaders with a democratic style tend to rely on persuasion, while leaders with an authoritarian style tend to rely on control to change followers' behavior and orientations.⁴⁰ Tung has adopted all four of the above methods in an attempt to change followers. He has awarded like-minded people by appointing them into his power center while punishing his opponents by excluding them. He has attempted to persuade both democrats and the general citizenry to accept a gradual pace of democratization and a cooperative Hong Kong-China relationship, in accordance with the Basic Law. He has also tried to convince followers by using his personal appeal as a warm-hearted and father-like figure. Lastly, he has warned that Hong Kong would be vulnerable if China became unstable, as both share the same interests. In the continuum between the authoritarian and democratic styles of leadership, Tung's location has shifted around the middle. In view of his decision to exclude the democrats from the power center and the formal decision-making process, Tung has presented himself as a leader of authoritarian style with an emphasis on control rather than a leader of democratic style accepting and integrating differences.

Willingness to Follow and Leadership Impact

Not all leaders are successful and effective in governing their societies and leading their followers towards achieving the common good. A leader can produce a significant impact or make no change on the political and socioeconomic life of followers. Although a leader is expected to

³⁹Kellerman, *The Political Presidency*, 19.

⁴⁰See note 2 above.



engage in a number of important activities (such as crisis management, program design, morale building, priority setting, and political coalition building) in order to achieve the common good, whether a leader has the ability to mobilize human resources to carry out these activities is another question. Kellerman suggests that there are four factors affecting citizens' willingness to follow the leader: (1) the desire to receive a reward or avoid punishment; (2) the desire to be similar to an admired leader; (3) the desire to abide by the leader's values; and (4) dependency needs.⁴¹

The popularity of a leader suggests how willing followers are to follow their leader. Recent public opinion surveys indicate that Tung's popularity has dropped significantly since he was appointed as Chief Executive designate. A study conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong revealed that the citizens' overall evaluation index of Tung dropped from 71.3 in December 1996 to 59.1 in January 1998.⁴² The same survey showed that the number of respondents expressing dissatisfaction towards the performance of the SAR government increased from 12.0 percent in July 1997 to 36.9 percent in January 1998. The survey also found that the number of respondents expressing no confidence regarding the principle "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" increased from 13.0 percent in July 1997 to 28.2 percent in January 1998. As for leadership ability and reliability, respondents gave Tung lower scores in the January 1998 survey compared to the scores gained in the December 1997 survey.

A study conducted by the University of Hong Kong reaffirmed a similar phenomenon, as Tung's popularity index dropped from 63.4 in November 1997 to 57.7 in January 1998.⁴³ The same study also showed that the number of respondents expressing confidence in the SAR government dropped from 61 percent in October 1997 to 43 percent in December 1997. Even a survey conducted by the Hong Kong government itself showed that the percentage of respondents expressing satisfaction with present social and economic situations has been the lowest since 1983.⁴⁴ These surveys

⁴¹Kellerman, *The Political Presidency*, 20.

⁴²*Ping guo ribao*, January 26, 1998, 3.

⁴³*South China Morning Post*, January 30, 1998, 3.

⁴⁴*Ping guo ribao*, February 3, 1998, 4.



consistently indicate that citizens are particularly dissatisfied with Tung's leadership in areas such as management of the recent financial crisis, the bird flu incident, the closing down of financial companies, and the collapse of the property market. Thus, Tung is not perceived by the general citizens as an admired leader with a high ability. Tung's values on governing society in general and managing the economy in particular are also not largely shared by citizens, who do not perceive Tung as a reliable leader who could provide Hong Kong citizens with a prosperous economy. Although economic construction and improvement of livelihood could be a major sphere for Tung to exercise his autonomy and gain support from the people,⁴⁵ his poor performance and leadership in the economy since the handover has diminished his legitimacy. Consequently, the willingness of the people to follow Tung has become weak and fragile, which could in turn affect the impact of Tung's leadership.

The impact of leaders, in the words of Blondel, should be measured by assessing the extent to which they are able to change the framework within which the population approaches public policy problems, as well as by the concrete reforms which they bring about.⁴⁶ According to this logic, leaders who intentionally administer the system as it is and do not aim to alter policies may be regarded as having very little impact, although the unintended consequences may be large. The essence of Blondel's argument is that the assessment depends on the extent to which that society is predisposed by the leader and the followers to undergo change.⁴⁷ Thus, the form of change that a leader undertakes and the consensus between the leader and followers on the direction of change are essential factors affecting the impact of leadership. Change could take the forms of accelerative change (a quick pace of changes), incremental change (piecemeal changes), and innovative change (a complete change).⁴⁸

Basing on the intended forms of change that Tung has undertaken and

⁴⁵Wong, "Constraints on Tung Chee-hwa's Power," 41.

⁴⁶Blondel, *Comparative Government*, 287.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸Rockman, *The Leadership Question*, 22-24.

the degree of consensus between Tung and the people, the impact of Tung's leadership in his first year of governing Hong Kong seems to have been slight, with mainly incremental change. In his 1997 Policy Address, Tung emphasized an efficient, executive-led government.⁴⁹ However, instead of proposing any new innovative ideas and concrete reforms on government structure and operation, he has merely reiterated the general principles of "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" and the timetable laid down in the Basic Law with respect to the composition of the Legislative Council. He has not gone into detail about the proper role of the Legislative Council, the Executive Council, and political parties in the political system. He has mentioned the importance of maintaining an efficient and accountable executive, but he has offered nothing new on how to increase political accountability and executive responsibility. "Steady progress," "executive-led government," and "operation of Hong Kong's society according to the Basic Law" have become the salient principles that have defined Tung's incremental form of change.

In terms of social welfare and economic development, Tung has also not offered any new philosophy or comprehensive programs to further enhance the well-being of society. He has been more concerned with maintaining the previous standards set by his predecessor than further improving the social and economic environment. A commentary pointed out that Tung has proposed a conservative welfare policy and tried to protect the interests of businessmen.⁵⁰ Others have also commented that a comprehensive review of the education system and philosophy was absent in Tung's 1997 Policy Address.⁵¹ On care for the elderly, Tung has continued to stick to the principle that "caring for the elderly is the responsibility of every family."⁵² In housing, he has offered to provide 85,000 housing units per year, but his plan lacks a comprehensive understanding of market forces and the economic environment. Tung's government also announced on

⁴⁹*Policy Address*, 4.

⁵⁰*Xinbao caijing xinwen* (Hong Kong Economic Journal), November 6, 1997, 2.

⁵¹*South China Morning Post*, October 15, 1997, 8.

⁵²*Policy Address*, 38.

February 9, 1998 that a flexible land policy will be adopted while admitting that the pledge of providing 85,000 houses might not be realized in the coming two years.⁵³ As for medical services, Tung has not provided a convincing package that could relieve public concerns regarding malpractices and mistreatment in hospitals. Finally, in terms of regulating the operation of financial companies, Tung did nothing before the collapse of several Hong Kong financial companies in January 1998. All of the above indicate that Tung lacks a long-term vision to undertake innovative and comprehensive reforms in Hong Kong.

Public response towards Tung's Policy Address sheds light on how much consensus has been reached between Tung and the general public. A survey conducted by the Hong Kong Policy Viewers in October 1997 showed that there was a low degree of consensus between Tung and citizens over the direction and pace of change to be undertaken in Hong Kong.⁵⁴ For instance, 40.9 percent of the respondents thought that the government was not responsive to public demands for democratization; 61.4 percent of the respondents thought that monthly payments to the elderly could not improve their living standards; 52.6 percent of the respondents thought that the high value-added industries and services would not enable citizens to earn more income; and 49.7 percent of the respondents thought that the government could not effectively stabilize the property market. In another survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong in January 1998, more than half of the respondents stated that they were not satisfied with the economic and social environment.⁵⁵ A study conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in January 1998 even discovered that there were some respondents who wanted Tung to resign.⁵⁶ If these consistent public opinion results reflect a certain degree of truth, the consensus between Tung and the general citizenry on major policy areas is low. As Tung's proposed changes have been limited and the leader-follower con-

⁵³*South China Morning Post*, February 9, 1998, 1.

⁵⁴*Xinbao caijing xinwen*, October 20, 1997, 4.

⁵⁵*Pingguo ribao*, January 31, 1998, 7.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, January 28, 1998, 1.

sensus has been low, the impact of Tung's leadership is expected to be slight.

Conclusion

The above analysis suggests that Tung's leadership bears the following characteristics: (1) his authority derives from a legal-consultative basis with the effective backing of constitutional powers and China; (2) an incremental scope of leadership has been adopted to develop democracy in Hong Kong under the executive-led government; (3) a reflector model of governance has been employed, with an emphasis on the role of government as a ratifier of social demands under a relatively stable equilibrium and environment; (4) he has acted as a role-determined leader who is dictated by the literal meanings of the Basic Law and the words of the Chinese leaders; (5) political transactions have mainly been made among Tung, the businessmen, and pro-China political forces, while the democrats have largely been excluded; (6) he has emphasized control through restricting civil liberties and rights as well as excluding the democrats from the power center; (7) the willingness of citizens to follow him has been weak; (8) incremental changes have been undertaken on social and economic aspects; and (9) a low degree of leader-follower consensus has been recorded.

It seems doubtful that these characteristic features of Tung's leadership can effectively deal with Hong Kong's political, social, and economic challenges in the coming years. Tung's style of leadership might be effective if Hong Kong's political and social environment was similar to that of the 1970s, wherein people were apathetic, political parties had not developed, elected politicians were absent, and social demands were lesser. However, the current political environment is complicated by adversarial party politics and an alienated political culture; an economy which is finance-led and hence more subject to external influences; and a society filled with more social demands on housing, education, medical services, and care for the elderly. A simple top-down but less sophisticated type of leadership as exercised by Tung will not be enough to deal with the complexity of the problems encountered in today's Hong Kong.

Although Tung faces few constitutional constraints and is backed by China and pro-China forces in Hong Kong, he faces numerous political constraints that exert certain impacts on his leadership. The political challenge from the democratic factions is formidable, and the first SAR Legislative Council elected in May 1998 will closely monitor and criticize Tung's administration. Although the SAR Legislative Council is not a powerful political body relative to the executive, Tung has to persuade legislators to pass his bills and defend his policies in the legislature. Tung's administration, after all, has to gain an acceptable degree of popular legitimacy in order to maintain stability. To Tung, China and pro-China forces in Hong Kong are a double-edged sword, as they offer Tung political support and power to administer Hong Kong on the one hand, but also exercise restraint on the other. Tung cannot deviate too far from the views of Chinese officials and pro-China forces in Hong Kong, especially on the issue of democracy. Given the complex interaction of political forces under play, Tung's present style of leadership seems inadequate to deal with the current political situation, and as the public has already expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the government and cast doubts on Tung's leadership ability, it may be timely for Tung to review and map out a new strategy for building Hong Kong for a new era.