

The Implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" Policy in Hong Kong: A Survey of Public Opinion

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This study examines the basic attitudes that the Hong Kong public has towards the implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy in Hong Kong after its return to the People's Republic of China (PRC). Based on the results of a telephone survey, the study finds that, contrary to the general pessimism about the "one country, two systems" plan prevalent before the handover, the majority of Hong Kong residents now maintain a moderate and positive attitude towards the overall performances of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the Chinese government. Hong Kong's economy has been severely affected by the Asian financial crisis, however, causing increasing public dissatisfaction with the SAR government. As the Hong Kong government is not democratically elected, its political legitimacy comes mainly from its effective management of Hong Kong; if the economy and people's livelihood continue to deteriorate, general dissatisfaction with the SAR government will surely increase and both the legitimacy of the SAR government and the future of the "one country, two systems" policy could be severely challenged.

Keywords: "one country, two systems"; Hong Kong people; HKSAR government; public attitudes; cross-Straits reunification

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In the last days of the run-up to Hong Kong's handover to China on July 1, 1997, the Chinese and British governments were deeply embroiled in a debate over the future political arrangements for Hong Kong.¹ Seeking to protect its interests, Hong Kong society was also drawn into the struggle.² Despite this political skirmishing, however, the sociopolitical situation in Hong Kong both before and after the handover this past year has been remarkably stable. The "one country, two systems" political arrangement appears to have survived both the brawl between the Chinese and British governments and the resulting public opinion divisions in Hong Kong society.³ It must be pointed out, however, that the policy is only in its incipient stages. Effort is called for from all sides if the "one country, two systems" policy is to claim true victory by enhancing Hong Kong's prosperity and stability and in contributing positively to the peaceful reunification of Taiwan and mainland China.

As Hong Kong is the center of the "one country, two systems" experimentation, it is critical to understand the experiences and attitudes of Hong Kong society if the "one country, two systems" principle is to be implemented rationally and with sustained success. In view of this, the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong undertook a series of telephone opinion surveys in early 1998. The first survey was completed in late April of the same year.⁴ This paper pre-

¹For a detailed discussion of the struggle, see Siu-kai Lau, *From "Through Train" to "Setting Up the New Stove": Sino-British Row over the Election of the Hong Kong Legislature* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1998).

²On the political struggle between the Chinese and British governments and its impact on Hong Kong society, see Michael Yahuda, *Hong Kong: China's Challenge* (London: Routledge, 1996), 61-108; Jonathan Dibleby, *The Last Governor: Chris Patten and the Handover of Hong Kong* (London: Little, Brown, 1997); Siu-kai Lau, "Hong Kong's 'Decolonization': Britain's Search for the Power to Rule and the Glorious Retreat," *Guangjiao jing* (Wide Angle) (Hong Kong), no. 284 (1998): 84-98.

³Siu-kai Lau, "The Eclipse of Politics in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region," *Asiarz Affairs* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 38-46.

⁴The telephone survey was conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The sampling was divided into two steps. First, we randomly selected 5,482 telephone numbers from the latest *Hong Kong Residential Tele-*

sents a systematic analysis of the survey results in an attempt to uncover the basic attitudes of the Hong Kong public towards the implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy after the handover.

Measurement of "One Country, Two Systems"

Theoretically speaking, whether the principle of "one country, two systems" can be successfully implemented or not depends on two basic factors. First, the central government in Beijing must keep its promise not to interfere with Hong Kong's internal affairs in order to ensure that Hong Kong's current system can truly operate independently. Second, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government, which replaced the British colonial government, must prove itself capable of effectively ruling society, bringing prosperity and stability to the territory, and meeting the expectations of the local residents as well as the international community.⁵ The implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle would be in jeopardy without the realization of these two factors. Hence, to understand the views of the Hong Kong people on these two issues is particularly indispensable if we are to understand their basic attitudes towards the implementation of "one country, two systems."

In addition to Beijing's policy of noninterference, political and economic developments on the mainland will inevitably bear influence on the implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy. As the main-

phone Directory (English edition). In order to include those telephone numbers unpublished in the *Directory*, we replaced by computer the last two numbers of the selected telephone numbers with two new, random numbers. Second, after successfully reaching the selected resident, we asked for a family member aged eighteen or above as our respondent. The survey was done from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. during April 19-21, 1998. Among the 5,482 sampled telephone numbers, 1,227 had line problems (including long sound and fax lines) or were non-residential telephone numbers; 1,795 were unanswered (we tried twice at different times). We successfully contacted 2,496 numbers, of which 1,114 refused the interview and 379 had no suitable respondents (e.g., they were foreigners or no adults were at home, etc.). Finally, we successfully interviewed 1,003 respondents. Excluding the unsuitable respondents, the successful response rate was 47.4 percent. At the 95 percent confidence level, the estimated sampling error was within the range of ± 3.2 percent.

⁵Yahuda, *Hong Kong: China's Challenge*, 135-42.

land's system forms the basis of the "one country" under which the system of Hong Kong is subsumed, any major political or economic changes on the mainland will surely have direct or indirect impact on the self-rule of the HKSAR.⁶ Therefore, we must also explore how the Hong Kong public assesses mainland China's political and economic developments in an attempt to better understand Hong Kong's attitude towards and confidence in the implementation of the "one country, two systems" plan.⁷

Finally, "one country, two systems" is not only an important principle for the return of Hong Kong to the motherland, it is also a model set up for the reunification of Taiwan. Thus Beijing is quite eager to measure public opinion in Hong Kong regarding how the implementation of "one country, two systems" in the SAR has influenced the likelihood for Taiwan's return to the motherland. Of course, such opinion on the issue of peaceful reunification across the Taiwan Strait is derived from the Hong Kong people's own historical and institutional experience and does not necessarily reflect the success or failure of the implementation of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong. Nor is public opinion in Hong Kong necessarily congruent with the beliefs of the people on the mainland or in Taiwan.⁸ However, due to Hong Kong's unique role as a geographical, political, economic, and social link between the two sides, understanding public opinion in Hong Kong on this issue is still extremely valuable if the two sides wish to achieve better understanding and communication.⁹

In summary, three issues are key to any systematic understanding of

⁶James Allen, *See Red: China's Uncompromising Takeover of Hong Kong* (Singapore: Butterworth Heinemann Asia, 1997), 1-36.

⁷See Li-man Kwok, ed., *Collected Policy Documents of the Chinese Communist Party Towards Taiwan* (Taipei: Yuye Publishing Co., 1992).

⁸For example, most Taiwanese hold negative attitudes towards the principle of "one country, two systems" as a solution to China's reunification. See Milton D. Yeh, "Opinion Polls and the Issues of Hong Kong and Macau," in *Liang'an guanxi wenti minyi diaocha xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* (Proceedings of the symposium of opinion polls on cross-Strait relations), comp. Mainland Affairs Council of the Executive Yuan and the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University (Taipei: 1997), 5.1-5.14.

⁹Timothy Ka-ying Wong, "Hong Kong SAR Government's Policy Towards Its Relations with Taiwan: Possibilities and Directions," in *Hong Kong's Return to China and Hong Kong-Taiwan Relations*, ed. Timothy Ka-ying Wong and Tung-wen Sun (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1997), 101.

the attitudes of the Hong Kong public towards the implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy: the capability of the HKSAR government for self-rule together with the political and economic prospects of the SAR; the ability of the Chinese government to rule over the mainland, abide by the "one country, two systems" principle in dealing with mainland-Hong Kong relations, and create a bright economic future for the mainland; and the impact of the implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy in Hong Kong on the peaceful reunification across the Taiwan Strait. The telephone survey in this paper was designed to analyze these three areas, the results of which are given below. The paper concludes with an analysis of the relationship between respondent attitudes and demographics.

The Capabilities of the SAR Government

Regarding the attitudes of the Hong Kong public towards the SAR government's ability for self-rule and the future of Hong Kong, we set up questions in three sub-domains. The first is the people's degree of satisfaction with the SAR government's administrative performance in various major issue-areas. The second is the degree of satisfaction with the performances of the various SAR government units and of the SAR government as a whole. The third is attitudes towards the political and economic prospects of the SAR. The first sub-domain is targeted at the administrative ability of the SAR government on specific issues. The second focuses on the legitimacy of the key constituents of the SAR government and their acceptance by the public as a whole. The third is concerned with the future development of the SAR. The three sub-domains, while interrelated, more or less have their own independent spheres of operation. The multi-level design of the interview was aimed at uncovering the complex attitudes that the public holds towards both the present and future HKSAR government.

Satisfaction with the SAR Government's Performance in Major Issue-Areas

On the public satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the SAR government's administrative performance in various major issue-areas, a total of eight

items were selected, including housing, education, welfare, economy, mainland-Hong Kong relations, Hong Kong-Taiwan relations, freedoms of expression and association, and democratic development. These items cover economics, politics, livelihood, and Hong Kong's relations with the mainland and Taiwan, all of which are of general concern for the public. Responses to these topics should reflect a comprehensive picture of the public's views on the SAR government's administrative performance.

Among the eight items listed in table 1, the areas in which the Hong Kong government clearly enjoys the highest degrees of satisfaction are the two items concerning the handling of mainland-Hong Kong relations and the handling of issues concerning freedoms of expression and association—the number of respondents who express satisfaction over these two items are much higher than those expressing dissatisfaction. The least satisfactory areas include economic development, education, and housing—the number of respondents expressing dissatisfaction reach over 40 percent. The degree of satisfaction on the issues of democratic development, the handling of Hong Kong-Taiwan relations, and the improvement of social welfare are midway between the other two groups, with the number of people expressing dissatisfaction being slightly higher than those that are satisfied. It is also noteworthy that the percentage of "don't know/unclear" is quite high on the issue of Hong Kong-Taiwan relations (29.5 percent). This more or less reflects the fact that the Hong Kong people are somewhat unfamiliar with Hong Kong-Taiwan relations or Taiwan-related affairs,¹⁰ so that they have difficulty forming opinions on the issue.

In sum, the findings show that out of the eight issue-areas, the public is satisfied only with the handling of mainland-Hong Kong relations and the freedoms of expression and association, whereas they are disappointed with the remaining issue-areas. Notice that the areas that enjoy the highest degrees of satisfaction are political in nature while those issue-areas with lower degrees of satisfaction belong to economic and standard-of-living issues. This poses a sharp contrast to the public dismay over political issues

¹⁰See Timothy Ka-ying Wong, *Exchange and Interaction Among the Mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong: Trends of Public Opinion in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Center for Studies on Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, 1998), 20.

Table 1

Satisfaction with SAR Government's Performance in Major Issue-Areas (%)

	Not satisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Don't know/ unclear
Housing (N=986)	44.8	26.6	22.5	6.1
Education (N=984)	41.3	26.6	24.8	7.3
Welfare (N = 986)	37.2	32.6	25.2	5.1
Economic development (N=985)	49.5	25.7	18.0	6.8
Mainland -Hong Kong relations (N=980)	17.6	30.7	43.2	8.6
Hong Kong-Taiwan relations (N=973)	22.8	26.8	20.9	29.5
Freedoms of expression and association (N=975)	29.1	25.9	39.9	5.0
Democratic development (N=976)	31.4	30.3	27.8	10.6

and the bright mood over the economy evident before the handover.¹¹ The findings more or less indicate that the performance of the SAR government in handling politically sensitive issues after the handover was fairly appropriate,¹² alleviating public anxiety over these issues and thereby winning public appreciation.¹³ On the other hand, the Asian financial crisis, which came out of the blue, dealt a heavy blow to Hong Kong's economy, sagging the inflated property market and forcing the SAR government to brace itself. This led to much criticism levied at the SAR government on the issues noted above.¹⁴

¹¹On the public anxiety in Hong Kong society over the political future prior to the handover, see reports on the regular telephone opinion polls conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong starting from the end of 1995. The reports are available at the Documentation Unit of the Institute.

¹²Lau, "The Eclipse of Politics in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region," 39-40.

¹³The positive assessment can be seen from the telephone opinion polls conducted every month after the handover by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for *Pingguo ribao* (Apple Daily), from July to October 1997. The detailed reports of these polls are also available at the Documentation Unit of the Institute.

¹⁴See *Pingguo ribao*, April 28, 1998, A8.

Satisfaction with SAR Administrative Departments and Overall Performance

Eight items were also selected to indicate the degree of public satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the performances of the various SAR government units and of the SAR government as a whole. They include the performance of the civil service, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), the Provisional Legislature, the Executive Council, the legal system, SAR Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, as well as the performance and trustworthiness of the SAR government. Out of these eight items, the performances of the civil service and of the ICAC are of particular importance as they were regarded as the two pillars of clean and effective rule in the past.

The overall performance of the SAR government and its credibility indicate the acceptance by the public of the SAR government as a whole. As shown in table 2, 35.0 percent expressed satisfaction with the performance of the civil service, while 20.4 percent of the respondents were not satisfied. Only 5.5 percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the performance of the ICAC, compared to the 70.5 percent who were. While roughly 20 percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the fairness of the legal system, a preponderant 48.4 percent were; and while 23.3 percent of the respondents were unhappy with the performance of Tung Chee-hwa, 30.6 percent of them were satisfied.

However, 41.6 percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the performance of the Provisional Legislature (compared to the only 17.6 percent that were) This stands in sharp contrast with the high degree of satisfaction with the performances of the ICAC and of the legal system. One of the reasons for this is that the ICAC was able to crack several major corruption cases over the short period of time after the handover and has thus maintained its image as a fighter for clean government.¹⁵ The legal system continued to function as normal, even accepting cases challenging the SAR

¹⁵Such major corruption cases brought to light include the multi-million dollar cover-up case involving the Housing Authority, the prosecution of bribery charges against the head of the Printing Department, and the cracking of the bribery case involving senior customs officers.

government on several occasions. Therefore, the legal system was able to maintain public trust in its fairness.¹⁶

In contrast, the setting up of the Provisional Legislature was the outcome of the political struggle between the Chinese and British governments and it has thus never enjoyed broad public acceptance in Hong Kong. In addition, since the day of its founding the Provisional Legislature abolished a number of existing laws and ratified new ones, arousing serious controversy. Such moves have further reduced its acceptance by the public.¹⁷

The low degree of satisfaction with the Executive Council should reflect dissatisfaction with the conservative and pro-China attitudes of some of its members,¹⁸ plus the inability of the Executive Council—the ultimate decision-making body for the SAR—to save Hong Kong from the economic downturn.¹⁹ In addition, it should be noted that the percentages of "don't know/unclear" are relatively high on the issues of the Provisional Legislature and the Executive Council. This phenomenon should be closely related to the low publicity and low profile of many of the members of both the Provisional Legislature and the Executive Council. Without adequate knowledge, the public finds it difficult to evaluate their performance.

The poll also indicates that only 26.1 percent of the respondents were not satisfied with the overall performance of the SAR government as

¹⁶Cases against the SAR government that were accepted by the court include the issue of the legal standing of the Provisional Legislature and the right of abode of mainland-born Hong Kong children. The former case was a direct challenge to the legal status of the Provisional Legislature and the case is still not closed. The latter was a challenge to the bill passed by the SAR government, which stipulates that mainland-born Hong Kong children must register first in mainland China before they can stay permanently in Hong Kong. Part of the stipulations in the bill were ruled by the court as contradicting the Basic Law and were subsequently declared invalid.

¹⁷See the telephone opinion polls conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for *Pingguo ribao*, the results of which were published in the newspaper in early August 1997 and early April 1998. The detailed reports of these polls are also available at the Documentation Unit of the Institute.

¹⁸Timothy Ka-ying Wong, "Constraints on Tung Chee-hwa's Power and His Governance of Hong Kong," *Issues & Studies* 33, no. 8 (August 1997): 40.

¹⁹Major economic and livelihood issues that emerged after the handover include the spiraling of Hong Kong dollar's interest rate in the aftermath of the Asian financial storm, the steep fall of the property market, bird flu, fish-poisoning, vegetable poisoning, and red tide.

Table 2

Satisfaction with SAR Government's Units and Overall Performances (%)

	Not satisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Don't know/ unclear
Civil service (N=978)	20.4	34.5	35.0	10.1
ICAC (N=970)	5.5	14.1	70.5	9.9
Provisional Legislature (N=972)	41.6	24.8	17.6	16.0
Executive Council (N=962)	25.3	31.0	15.7	28.1
Legal system (N=962)	18.8	23.6	48.4	9.1
Chief Executive (N=973)	23.3	42.0	30.6	4.0
SAR government (N=977)	26.1	40.2	31.2	2.4
Trustworthiness of SAR government (N=965)	15.3	22.2	56.8	5.8

against the 31.2 percent who expressed satisfaction. In addition, only 15.3 percent of the respondents expressed distrust in the government, while up to 56.8 percent said that the SAR government is trustworthy. Speaking from the findings on these two items, the overall acceptance of the SAR government is relatively high and has not been seriously challenged even in the wake of the collapse of Hong Kong's bubble economy. Note that satisfaction with the last item is remarkably high when compared with the less than 30 percent rating given to the trustworthiness of the British-Hong Kong government before the handover.²⁰ This may reflect the fact that the residents in Hong Kong identify the SAR government as its own.²¹ In any case, despite the strong dissatisfaction with specific policies and particular components of the government, the public is more satisfied with the overall performance of the SAR government and, to a large extent, trusts the government.

²⁰Siu-kai Lau, "Democratization, Political Leaders, and Political Disengagement," in *Indicators of Social Development: Hong Kong 1995*, ed. Siu-kai Lau et al. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1997), 119.

²¹For the Hong Kong people, the British-Hong Kong government under the control of Britain was intrinsically a colonial regime external to them, whereas the Tung Chee-hwa government, however undemocratic, is a Chinese government run by Hong Kong Chinese. Hence, it is quite natural for them to feel close to and identify themselves with the SAR government.

Table 3
Attitudes on Hong Kong's Future (%)

	Pessimistic	Neither pessimistic nor optimistic	Optimistic	Don't know/ unclear
Political future (N=970)	27.2	21.6	44.7	6.4
Economic future (N=971)	45.0	18.2	30.1	6.7

The Future of Hong Kong

Opinions regarding the future of Hong Kong were measured in two areas—political and economic—with the understanding that politics and the economy are the two fundamentals necessary for any society to prosper. Though closely linked, these two areas are not necessarily identical. Separating the two issues can help us better understand differences in public opinion.

As shown in table 3, 27.2 percent of the respondents were not optimistic about Hong Kong's political prospects, while those expressing optimism amounted to 44.7 percent. On the economic side, 45.0 percent were not optimistic about Hong Kong's economic prospect, compared to 30.1 percent who were upbeat. Clearly, the public is more concerned about the economic prospects of the SAR than its political future. In comparison to both the prominent public dismay over Hong Kong's political future and the strong optimism over the economic future before the handover, there obviously has been a radical shift in public opinion towards Hong Kong's political and economic future. The shift likely reflects the relatively calm political situation and the unexpected economic downturn after the handover.

The Ability of the Chinese Government and the Future of the Mainland

On the issues of the Chinese government's administrative ability and the future of the mainland, three sub-domains were looked into. These include satisfaction with the performance of the Chinese government in

Table 4

Satisfaction with the Chinese Government's Performance in Major Issue-Areas (%)

	Not satisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Don't know/ unclear
Democratic development (N=964)	49.4	20.4	18.4	11.8
Economic development (N=968)	14.7	26.0	49.0	10.3
Hong Kong-related affairs (N=955)	15.5	27.4	49.7	7.5

various major issue-areas, satisfaction with the performances of the Chinese government leaders and of the Chinese government as a whole, and attitudes towards the future of the mainland.

*Satisfaction with the Chinese Government's
Performance in Major Issue-Areas*

Recognizing that the residents in Hong Kong are less familiar with the specifics of the Chinese government,²² we reformulated our query on the satisfaction with Chinese rule to cover three general aspects: democratic development, economic development, and the handling of Hong Kong-related affairs. The first two questions were targeted as the two general areas of Chinese rule and the third was specifically directed at the Chinese government's handling of Hong Kong affairs in keeping with the principle of "one country, two systems."

An examination of table 4 shows that Hong Kong residents are very satisfied with the Chinese government's handling of Hong Kong-related affairs and economic development on the mainland but have reservations regarding its handling of democratic development. Such findings are not unexpected. On the one hand, the Chinese government has not openly intervened in the SAR's internal affairs after the handover²³ and the mainland has witnessed rapid economic development in recent years. These two fac-

²²Wong, *Exchange and Interaction Among the Mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong*, 16-17.

²³Lau, "The Eclipse of Politics in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region," 23.

tors combined should significantly help increase favorable public opinion in Hong Kong regarding the Chinese government's performance in these areas. On the other hand, Beijing has maintained its authoritarian one-party rule with little change and the level of political freedom and democratic development is still being kept to a minimum. In an open society like Hong Kong where the free movement of information is a norm, residents are not blind to the political reality in mainland China—thus the low rate of satisfaction on this question should come as no surprise.

*Satisfaction with Chinese Government Leaders'
and Overall Performances*

On the attitudes towards the performance of both Chinese governmental leaders and the Chinese government as a whole, five items were chosen in our measurement design. They include the performances of Jiang Zemin (PRC president), Zhu Rongji (premier), and Li Peng (chairman of the National People's Congress), and the overall performance and then trustworthiness of the Chinese government.

Note that our assessment in this section focuses on key political leaders at the individual level instead of on government units at the institutional level as done earlier. This is done because the general public in Hong Kong is quite unfamiliar with the composition of the Chinese government and because Chinese society today is still largely characterized by the rule of individuals as opposed to the rule of law. The attitudes of the residents in Hong Kong towards the three selected individuals holding the highest position in the Chinese government should be able to more accurately reflect the degree of acceptance on the Chinese government by the Hong Kong public. Nevertheless, we have also selected the other two items—the overall performance and the trustworthiness of the Chinese government—in an attempt to present a balanced picture of the public opinion in Hong Kong towards the Chinese government.

From table 5 we see that the residents in Hong Kong hold quite positive attitudes towards Jiang and, in particular, towards the newly elected Premier Zhu. Jiang's popularity is likely a result of China's stable development under his leadership in recent years. As for Zhu, his charisma at the press conference upon his election of premiership earlier in the year

Table 5

Satisfaction with the Chinese Government Leaders' and Overall Performances (%)

	Not satisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Don't know/ unclear
Jiang Zemin (N=949)	10.4	30.1	47.8	11.6
Zhu Rongji (N=953)	5.2	15.8	65.7	13.2
Li Peng (N=946)	48.3	27.3	9.0	15.4
Chinese government as a whole (N=954)	16.8	35.3	42.2	5.7
Trustworthiness of Chinese government (N=955)	25.0	27.0	39.8	8.2

has left an indelible impression on the residents in the territory.²⁴ On the other hand, the public has many reservations concerning Li Peng, most certainly due to his role in the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown as well as to his expressed political conservativeness and rigidity.

On the question of the overall performance of the Chinese government, 16.8 percent of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction, while 42.2 percent expressed approval. A quarter of the respondents thought the Chinese government untrustworthy, while 39.8 percent felt otherwise. Thus it is clear that the general public not only held more positive attitudes towards the overall performance of the Chinese government, there was also a considerably high degree of trust in the Beijing government among the general public. It should be noted that before the handover, consistently less than 20 percent of the residents thought the Chinese government was trustworthy.²⁵ In less than a year after the handover, that figure has more than doubled. This is partly a result of the Chinese government upholding the principles of "one county, two systems" and "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong." It is also a result of the mainland's economic achievements

²⁴Perhaps it is due to political considerations stemming from Hong Kong's return to China that the Hong Kong media gave extensive coverage of newly-elected Premier Zhu Rongji, thus imbedding Zhu's image deep into the mind of the Hong Kong public.

²⁵See note 20 above.

and Beijing's increasingly more practical and open policies. These two factors combined should play an important role in winning the trust of the Hong Kong residents in the Chinese government.

The Future of Mainland China

The question on the future of China was also divided into the sub-arenas of politics and economics. Almost 20 percent of the respondents were not optimistic about the mainland's political prospects, while 48.6 percent expressed optimism. Roughly 13 percent of the respondents admitted being pessimistic about the mainland's future economic development, while 62.3 percent were optimistic. In short, Hong Kong residents are quite optimistic about both the political and economic future of the mainland. Their optimism over the mainland's economic prospects, in particular, should be considered to be very strong even in absolute terms.

This optimism is not difficult to comprehend. As mentioned earlier, mainland China enjoys robust economic growth at present and it is only natural for the general public in Hong Kong to be optimistic about the prospects for continued economic growth across the border. Most surprising, especially given the public dissatisfaction expressed over the Chinese government's handling of the issue of democratic development, is the optimistic mood regarding mainland China's political prospects. One possible explanation for this is that the general public has witnessed the recent releases of political dissidents such as Wang Dan, Wei Jingsheng, Wang Juntao, and others as well as the willingness on the part of the Chinese government to sign the International Covenant on Human Rights. In face of these emerging signs of political relaxation, it is simply not difficult for the public to raise their confidence in mainland China's political prospects despite the Hong Kong public's dissatisfaction with the current political situation and democratic development on the mainland.

Implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" and Its Impact

We asked three questions regarding public attitudes towards the im-

Table 6

Attitudes on Implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" and Its Impacts (%)

	Not implemented/ no negative impact	Partially implemented/ no impact	Implemented/ positive impact	Don't know/ unclear
"One country, two systems" or not (N=966)	15.0	29.1	48.4	7.5
Impact of Hong Kong's "one country, two systems" ex- perience on cross-Straits reu- nification negative/positive (N=966)	9.4	34.3	43.2	13.1
Impact of Beijing's handling of Hong Kong-related affairs on cross-Straits reunification negative/positive (N=955)	10.1	33.5	42.4	14.0

plementation of the "one country, two systems" policy. The first question was whether the Hong Kong people think the principle has been truly implemented after the handover. For the last two questions, we wanted to know how the Hong Kong public viewed the possible impact of both Hong Kong's "one country, two systems" experience and the Chinese government's handling of Hong Kong-related affairs on cross-Straits reunification. These three questions were our attempts to measure the overall public assessment of the practice of "one country, two systems" and its impact on cross-Straits reunification. The results are given in table 6.

Regarding the first question, we can say that the general public has a fairly positive view on the implementation of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong after the handover. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to point out that for the last two questions, public opinion is quite divided. Those holding a negative or neutral view constitute more than 40 percent, the equivalent to the number of people holding positive attitudes on the issues. Such findings more or less reflect that although the Hong Kong people feel quite positive about their experience under "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong, they have reservations on the applicability of the principle to Taiwan.

Impacts of Demographic Factors

Does the demographic background of the respondents have an influence on their attitudes towards the implementation of "one country, two systems"? To answer this question, we selected some important demographic variables and cross-tabulated them employing the chi-square test to determine their relationship with the various concerned attitudes. The selected variables include gender, age, education, income, and collective identity (in the form of "Hongkongese" versus Chinese). The reason for this last variable is because collective identity has played a distinctive role in Hong Kong's sociopolitical development and in mainland-Hong Kong relations.²⁶ As the present analysis is concerned directly with the implementation of "one country, two systems," it will be interesting to see what influence the variable of collective identity has on attitudes towards such issues.²⁷

On attitudes towards the SAR government and the future of the SAR, the selected demographic variables show the following patterns. First, male respondents tend to be more satisfied than female respondents over the government's performance in handling the housing issue, promoting education, dealing with mainland-Hong Kong relations, and handling issues concerning freedoms of expression and association and democratic development. They are also more satisfied with the performances of Tung Chee-hwa and of the SAR government as a whole, express more trust in the SAR government, and are more optimistic about Hong Kong's political and economic future.

²⁶See Timothy Ka-ying Wong, "The Ethnic and National Identities of the Hong Kong People: A Liberal Explanation," *Issues & Studies* 32, no. 8 (August 1996): 105-30; Siu-kai Lau, *Hongkongese or Chinese: The Problem of Identity on the Eve of Resumption of Chinese Sovereignty over Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1997).

²⁷Our survey finds that 56.2 percent of the respondents consider themselves "Hongkongese," 29.3 percent consider themselves Chinese, 9.9 percent consider themselves both "Hongkongese" and Chinese, 1.4 percent consider themselves neither "Hongkongese" nor Chinese, and 3.1 percent answer "don't know/unclear." Apparently, "Hongkongese" and Chinese are still the two most important collective identities in Hong Kong after the handover, and their relative percentages have not shown any significant change compared with previous studies. See also Lau, *Hongkongese or Chinese*, 5.

Second, older respondents (over fifty years of age) are more satisfied than younger ones with the government's performance in promoting education and economic development, handling mainland-Hong Kong relations, and dealing with the issue of democratic development. They are also more satisfied with the Chief Executive's performance and with the overall performance of the SAR government and have more trust in the government.

Third, respondents with less education (primary or lower) are more satisfied than respondents with higher education with the SAR government's performance in promoting education, improving welfare for the residents, promoting economic development, and handling the issue of democratic development. They are also more dissatisfied with the performance of the ICAC, are more satisfied with the performances of the Provisional Legislature and the Executive Council, and have more trust in the fairness of the SAR legal system.

Fourth, respondents with less income (less than HK\$10,000 per month) are more satisfied than those in higher income brackets with the SAR government's performance in promoting education and with the performances of the Provisional Legislature and the Executive Council.

Fifth, "Hongkongese" identifiers are less satisfied than Chinese identifiers with the SAR government's performance in promoting education, improving welfare for the residents, handling mainland-Hong Kong relations and Hong Kong-Taiwan relations, and dealing with the issues of freedoms of expression and association and democratic development. They are also less satisfied with the performances of the Provisional Legislature and the Executive Council, the fairness of the legal system, the performance of Tung Chee-hwa, and the overall performance of the SAR government. Finally, they have less trust in the SAR government and are less optimistic about Hong Kong's political and economic future (see table 7).

On attitudes towards the Chinese government and the future of mainland China, the following relationships are found. First, male respondents tend to be more satisfied than their female counterparts over the Chinese government's performance in handling the issue of democratic development and in dealing with mainland-Hong Kong relations. They are also more satisfied with the performance of Jiang Zemin, Zhu Rongji, and Li Peng and of the Chinese government as a whole. They also express more

Table 7
Demographic Factors and Attitudes Towards the SAR Government and the Future of the SAR

	Sex		Age		Education			Income (HK\$)			Identity		
	Male	Female	30 or below	Between 31-50	51 or above	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary	Below \$10,000	Between \$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000 or above	Hongkongese	Chinese
Housing													
Not satisfied	49.9	45.2	46.8	51.6	39.7	40.0	48.2	52.2	46.5	50.2	53.9	49.6	47.6
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	22.9	34.5	30.1	25.9	32.5	29.2	27.9	29.0	28.2	26.6	28.1	27.6	27.7
Satisfied	27.2	20.3	23.1	22.5	27.8	30.8	23.8	18.8	25.4	23.2	18.0	22.8	24.7
(N)	(497)	(429)	(312)	(467)	(126)	(130)	(562)	(224)	(142)	(267)	(167)	(518)	(267)
χ^2	16.483**		6.465				7.759			3.076		0.434	
Education													
Not satisfied	41.3	48.2	45.1	46.5	37.4	35.2	44.3	52.2	34.3	49.2	53.4	47.9	40.8
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	27.3	30.4	26.3	30.7	25.2	26.6	28.5	29.0	35.0	24.2	30.7	29.7	27.1
Satisfied	31.4	21.4	28.6	22.7	37.4	38.3	27.2	18.8	30.7	26.5	16.0	22.4	32.1
(N)	(491)	(421)	(304)	(462)	(123)	(128)	(548)	(224)	(137)	(260)	(163)	(509)	(262)
χ^2	11.619**		12.009*				17.390**			17.778**		8.600*	
Welfare													
Not satisfied	41.4	36.6	40.7	39.4	38.9	36.7	40.7	37.7	43.4	40.8	41.5	42.8	35.3
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	29.7	39.6	32.7	36.2	26.0	24.5	35.5	35.9	30.3	33.8	36.5	34.4	31.6
Satisfied	28.9	23.7	26.6	24.3	35.1	38.8	23.8	26.5	26.2	25.4	22.0	22.8	33.1
(N)	(502)	(439)	(312)	(469)	(131)	(139)	(563)	(223)	(145)	(272)	(159)	(521)	(269)
χ^2	10.417**		7.930				14.462**			1.657		9.945**	
Economic development													
Not satisfied	53.8	52.4	50.2	57.2	49.2	47.7	57.1	48.9	58.3	57.3	55.9	53.4	52.0
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	24.0	31.8	31.1	26.9	18.3	25.4	26.5	30.8	25.0	28.8	24.2	27.9	30.7
Satisfied	22.2	15.9	18.8	15.9	32.5	26.9	16.4	20.4	16.7	13.9	19.9	18.8	17.3
(N)	(496)	(422)	(309)	(465)	(120)	(130)	(555)	(221)	(144)	(267)	(161)	(517)	(254)
χ^2	9.770**		21.182**				10.842*			3.321		0.739	

Table 7 (Continued)

	Sex		Age		Education		Income (HK\$)		Identity				
	Male	Female	30 or below	Between 31-50	51 or above	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary	Below \$10,000	Between \$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000 or above	Hongkongsese	Chinese
Mainland-Hong Kong relations													
Not satisfied	18.0	20.6	18.0	21.9	14.0	17.2	21.6	14.9	18.2	20.2	17.3	23.3	15.6
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	28.3	39.8	31.4	36.4	28.1	30.3	34.4	34.2	34.3	32.8	36.5	34.3	29.4
Satisfied	53.7	39.6	50.7	41.7	57.9	52.5	44.0	50.9	47.4	46.9	46.2	42.4	55.0
(N)	(484)	(412)	(306)	(448)	(121)	(122)	(541)	(222)	(137)	(262)	(156)	(503)	(262)
χ^2	19.025**		12.619*				7.089			0.905	11.921**		
Hong Kong-Taiwan relations													
Not satisfied	31.6	33.3	32.9	33.8	22.7	35.6	34.5	26.0	36.1	36.3	26.2	36.7	27.3
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	35.8	40.8	39.4	36.5	38.6	30.0	37.7	42.8	39.8	33.8	38.9	38.5	37.6
Satisfied	32.6	25.8	27.6	29.7	38.6	34.4	27.8	31.2	24.1	29.9	34.9	24.8	35.1
(N)	(380)	(306)	(246)	(337)	(88)	(90)	(414)	(173)	(108)	(201)	(126)	(379)	(205)
χ^2	3.962		5.761				6.929			5.903	8.506*		
Freedom of expression and association													
Not satisfied	28.7	33.0	34.1	30.3	24.8	35.0	31.0	28.4	28.4	31.2	27.7	35.5	25.5
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	24.8	30.4	23.5	30.5	25.6	20.8	28.3	28.8	29.1	25.2	27.7	26.7	26.3
Satisfied	46.5	36.6	42.4	39.3	49.6	44.2	40.7	42.8	42.6	43.6	44.6	37.8	48.2
(N)	(505)	(421)	(311)	(476)	(117)	(120)	(565)	(229)	(141)	(266)	(166)	(516)	(274)
χ^2	9.486**		8.455				3.723			1.154	10.173**		
Democratic development													
Not satisfied	35.2	34.9	33.7	39.0	25.9	28.2	34.2	42.1	35.4	37.0	38.5	40.0	30.5
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	28.2	41.1	37.4	34.7	19.8	27.4	36.4	31.0	33.1	33.1	30.8	34.5	32.4
Satisfied	36.6	24.0	29.0	26.3	54.3	44.4	29.4	26.9	31.5	30.0	30.8	25.5	37.0
(N)	(486)	(387)	(297)	(441)	(116)	(117)	(530)	(216)	(130)	(257)	(156)	(487)	(262)
χ^2	21.581**		36.662**				16.197**			0.437	12.122**		

Table 7 (Continued)

	Sex		Age		Education			Income (HK\$)			Identity		
	Male	Female	30 or below	Between 31-50	51 or above	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary	Below \$10,000	Between \$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000 or above	Hongkongese	Chinese
Civil service													
Not satisfied	24.8	20.4	20.8	25.5	17.9	19.8	21.6	27.8	22.9	24.0	25.6	24.9	19.2
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	35.2	42.0	39.6	36.3	42.0	41.3	39.3	32.9	37.4	37.8	33.1	36.2	39.6
Satisfied	40.0	37.6	39.6	38.3	40.2	38.8	39.1	39.4	39.7	38.2	41.3	38.8	41.2
(N)	(472)	(407)	(303)	(444)	(112)	(121)	(532)	(216)	(131)	(254)	(160)	(497)	(255)
χ^2	4.863		4.236				5.208			1.108		3.160	
ICAC													
Not satisfied	6.5	5.5	5.5	7.0	5.0	3.9	7.5	3.8	4.5	6.3	5.8	6.1	6.3
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	16.0	15.3	15.4	16.4	13.3	22.0	15.3	12.9	13.6	13.4	16.7	15.9	12.3
Satisfied	77.5	79.1	79.2	76.6	81.7	74.0	77.2	83.3	81.8	80.2	77.6	78.0	81.3
(N)	(476)	(398)	(293)	(444)	(120)	(127)	(530)	(210)	(132)	(253)	(156)	(491)	(252)
χ^2	0.476		1.952				10.056*			1.421		1.709	
Provisional Legislature													
Not satisfied	48.6	50.7	46.4	53.7	42.5	36.9	50.1	55.1	45.2	50.4	60.7	55.3	44.8
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	29.5	29.6	30.4	27.8	31.1	35.9	28.2	28.8	29.4	32.0	22.0	27.5	30.3
Satisfied	21.9	19.7	23.2	18.5	26.4	27.2	21.7	16.1	25.4	17.6	17.3	17.2	24.9
(N)	(461)	(355)	(276)	(417)	(106)	(103)	(503)	(205)	(126)	(250)	(150)	(454)	(241)
χ^2	0.640		6.993				10.719*			9.804*		8.483*	
Executive Council													
Not satisfied	36.5	33.2	33.5	37.7	32.6	22.5	34.7	42.6	31.4	38.5	44.8	39.4	30.2
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	40.3	46.8	46.4	39.7	44.2	42.5	43.3	42.0	40.0	45.9	35.2	43.0	42.0
Satisfied	23.2	20.0	20.2	22.6	23.3	35.0	22.0	15.3	28.6	15.6	20.0	17.6	27.8
(N)	(397)	(295)	(248)	(345)	(86)	(80)	(432)	(176)	(105)	(218)	(125)	(393)	(205)
χ^2	2.956		3.002				16.233**			10.905*		9.889**	

Table 7 (Continued)

	Sex		Age		Education		Income (HK\$)			Identity			
	Male	Female	30 or below	Between 31-50	51 or above	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary	Below \$10,000	Between \$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000 or above	Hongkongese	Chinese
Legal system													
Not satisfied	19.6	22.1	18.8	22.9	17.1	15.6	19.8	25.8	18.9	23.6	23.7	23.2	17.6
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	24.2	28.2	23.1	27.8	27.9	32.1	23.7	28.1	20.5	24.7	23.7	26.9	21.5
Satisfied	56.2	49.7	58.1	49.3	55.0	52.3	56.5	46.2	60.6	51.7	52.6	49.9	60.9
(N)	(484)	(390)	(303)	(446)	(111)	(109)	(540)	(221)	(132)	(267)	(156)	(495)	(256)
χ^2	3.651		6.583				10.507*			3.071			8.317*
Chief Executive													
Not satisfied	24.4	24.2	28.1	24.8	14.2	23.1	24.8	23.9	23.9	23.4	26.7	26.7	23.0
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	38.6	50.1	44.5	44.9	38.6	36.6	44.3	47.7	40.6	47.6	44.8	45.4	40.5
Satisfied	37.0	25.7	27.4	30.3	47.2	40.3	30.9	28.4	35.5	29.0	28.5	27.9	36.5
(N)	(513)	(421)	(317)	(472)	(127)	(134)	(569)	(222)	(138)	(269)	(165)	(520)	(274)
χ^2	16.404**		19.962**				6.553			3.015			6.273*
SAR government													
Not satisfied	24.4	29.5	25.9	29.3	20.5	23.3	27.1	28.2	26.4	24.5	31.3	33.1	18.3
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	38.1	44.9	42.8	42.3	31.5	37.6	43.3	37.9	43.8	45.6	38.6	41.4	41.0
Satisfied	37.5	25.6	31.3	28.5	48.0	39.1	29.6	33.9	29.9	29.9	30.1	25.5	40.6
(N)	(517)	(437)	(320)	(485)	(127)	(133)	(582)	(227)	(144)	(274)	(166)	(529)	(278)
χ^2	15.411**		18.451**				5.889			3.047			27.707**
Trustworthiness of SAR government													
Not satisfied	12.5	20.6	14.9	18.3	12.2	13.1	16.6	16.9	14.0	15.8	20.3	19.3	10.9
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	18.6	29.3	23.4	25.9	12.2	21.3	22.2	27.9	20.6	22.3	24.1	28.4	18.4
Satisfied	68.9	50.1	61.7	55.8	75.7	65.6	61.3	55.3	65.4	61.9	55.7	52.3	70.8
(N)	(488)	(413)	(308)	(464)	(115)	(122)	(555)	(219)	(136)	(265)	(158)	(507)	(267)
χ^2	32.821**		16.267**				4.844			3.518			24.952**

Table 7 (Continued)

	Sex		Age		Education		Income (HK\$)			Identity			
	Male	Female	30 or below	Between 31-50	51 or above	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary	Below \$10,000	Between \$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000 or above	Hongkongese	Chinese
Political future													
Pessimistic	25.4	33.5	28.6	31.3	22.9	31.7	30.4	24.9	33.1	30.7	23.6	31.6	24.6
Neither pessimistic nor optimistic	18.3	28.9	23.5	23.7	17.8	21.4	21.5	28.0	17.3	21.9	23.6	26.0	19.4
Optimistic	56.3	37.6	47.9	45.0	59.3	46.8	48.2	47.1	49.6	47.4	52.8	42.4	56.0
(N)	(496)	(412)	(315)	(460)	(118)	(126)	(550)	(225)	(139)	(270)	(161)	(512)	(268)
χ^2	32.212**		7.890				5.168		4.755		13.068**		
Economic future													
Pessimistic	43.1	54.2	42.0	52.3	50.0	53.6	48.9	43.7	54.3	47.2	42.5	51.4	43.1
Neither pessimistic nor optimistic	18.0	21.3	22.4	17.4	16.7	20.8	19.3	19.4	14.3	20.0	17.5	20.9	16.9
Optimistic	38.9	24.5	35.6	30.2	33.3	25.6	31.8	36.9	31.4	32.8	40.0	27.8	40.1
(N)	(489)	(417)	(312)	(453)	(120)	(125)	(550)	(222)	(140)	(265)	(160)	(508)	(267)
χ^2	21.454**		8.640				5.130		5.888		12.235**		

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.

trust in the Chinese government and are generally more optimistic about the mainland's political and economic future.

Second, older respondents (over fifty years of age) are more satisfied than younger ones with the Chinese government's performance in handling the issue of democratic development and in dealing with mainland-Hong Kong relations. They are also more satisfied with the performance of Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji and have more trust in the Chinese government.

Third, respondents with less education (primary or lower) have more trust in the Chinese government than those with higher education, but they are less optimistic about the future political and economic development of the mainland.

Fourth, respondents with less income (less than HK\$10,000 per month) are less optimistic about the future political and economic development of the mainland.

Fifth, "Hongkongese" identifiers are less satisfied than Chinese identifiers with the Chinese government's performance in handling the issue of democratic development and in dealing with mainland-Hong Kong relations. They are less satisfied with the performance of Jiang Zemin, Zhu Rongji, and Li Peng and of the Chinese government as a whole, have less trust in the Chinese government, and are generally less optimistic about the political and economic future of the mainland (see table 8).

With regard to the attitudes towards the implementation of "one country, two systems" and its impact on cross-Straits reunification, the following relationships are found. First, male respondents are more likely than female respondents to think the principle of "one country, two systems" has been truly implemented in Hong Kong after the handover. They are also more inclined to believe that the performance of the Chinese government in handling mainland-Hong Kong relations has a positive impact on cross-Straits reunification.

Second, age shows no significant impact on any attitudes in this respect.

Third, respondents with less education (primary or lower) are more likely than respondents with higher education to think that the experience of the practice of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong has no impact on cross-Straits reunification. In addition, they are less likely to think that

Table 8
Demographic Factors and Attitudes Towards the Chinese Government and the Future of Mainland China

	Sex		Age		Education			Income (HK\$)			Identity		
	Male	Female	30 or below	Between 31-50	51 or above	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary	Below \$10,000	Between \$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000 or above	Hongkongese	Chinese
Democratic development													
Not satisfied	16.4	28.4	59.0	57.1	40.4	51.8	57.1	55.3	59.4	56.3	51.9	64.4	47.2
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	21.3	26.7	27.6	20.6	24.8	20.2	23.0	26.0	21.1	22.0	24.7	20.4	26.2
Satisfied	62.3	44.9	13.3	22.2	34.9	28.1	19.9	18.6	19.5	21.7	23.4	15.3	26.6
(N)	(470)	(405)	(293)	(427)	(109)	(114)	(513)	(215)	(128)	(254)	(154)	(491)	(252)
χ^2	29.099**		27.802**				5.300			1.648	22.031**		
Economic development													
Not satisfied	10.5	19.2	14.7	17.6	17.0	25.0	15.8	13.6	20.9	13.6	14.3	19.9	13.3
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	14.6	20.9	30.1	27.3	32.1	21.7	31.4	26.2	32.8	25.3	26.6	29.7	28.9
Satisfied	74.8	59.9	55.1	55.2	50.9	53.3	52.8	60.3	46.3	61.1	59.1	50.4	57.8
(N)	(485)	(411)	(292)	(444)	(112)	(120)	(525)	(214)	(134)	(257)	(154)	(498)	(256)
χ^2	23.993**		2.181				12.040			8.696	5.966		
Hong Kong-related affairs													
Not satisfied	14.9	18.9	21.1	15.9	10.0	15.7	17.7	15.3	25.0	18.9	11.9	19.8	12.2
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	22.5	38.0	29.4	31.0	23.3	39.4	28.4	25.9	22.8	27.4	28.1	32.5	27.4
Satisfied	62.6	43.1	49.5	53.1	66.7	44.9	53.9	58.8	52.2	53.7	60.0	47.7	60.5
(N)	(484)	(408)	(299)	(452)	(120)	(127)	(538)	(216)	(136)	(259)	(160)	(511)	(263)
χ^2	35.638**		13.369**				8.848			8.913	12.691**		
Jiang Zemin													
Not satisfied	9.6	14.6	15.2	10.9	8.5	11.4	12.5	10.7	19.5	11.3	12.5	14.4	8.2
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	30.6	38.5	38.8	34.8	20.3	25.2	35.2	36.1	32.0	38.5	36.8	38.1	28.9
Satisfied	59.8	46.9	46.0	54.3	71.2	63.4	52.3	53.2	48.4	50.2	50.7	47.5	62.9
(N)	(470)	(369)	(276)	(431)	(118)	(123)	(505)	(205)	(128)	(247)	(152)	(478)	(256)
χ^2	14.576**		22.153**				6.015			5.399	16.779**		

Table 8 (Continued)

	Sex		Age		Education		Income (HK\$)			Identity			
	Male	Female	30 or below	Between 31-50	51 or above	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary	Below \$10,000	Between \$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000 or above	Hongkongsese	Chinese
Zhu Rongji													
Not satisfied	3.7	9.0	10.4	3.1	6.9	6.0	5.7	7.2	7.5	8.2	3.3	7.7	2.8
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	17.1	19.7	21.9	18.6	8.6	12.8	18.4	21.2	20.1	17.6	19.7	19.7	18.4
Satisfied	79.2	71.2	67.6	78.3	84.5	81.2	76.0	71.6	72.4	74.2	77.0	72.6	78.8
(N)	(462)	(365)	(278)	(419)	(116)	(117)	(495)	(208)	(134)	(244)	(152)	(468)	(250)
χ^2	12.183**			26.634**			4.357			4.201		7.296**	
Li Peng													
Not satisfied	51.8	63.7	55.6	59.3	55.0	56.3	55.8	61.5	61.4	57.5	57.8	65.4	48.5
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	34.6	29.3	32.5	31.6	33.0	26.8	34.3	30.5	23.6	32.5	33.3	26.9	37.3
Satisfied	13.6	7.0	11.9	9.1	11.9	17.0	9.9	8.0	15.0	10.0	8.8	7.7	14.1
(N)	(442)	(358)	(268)	(408)	(109)	(112)	(496)	(187)	(127)	(240)	(147)	(465)	(241)
χ^2	14.686**			2.128			8.385			5.575		19.732**	
Chinese government as a whole													
Not satisfied	15.4	20.6	18.8	18.2	13.4	17.8	17.4	19.0	24.4	18.3	16.7	21.0	12.5
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	29.9	46.4	39.3	38.3	30.3	36.4	38.2	35.7	34.8	34.0	36.4	42.7	30.3
Satisfied	54.7	33.0	41.9	43.5	56.3	45.7	44.4	45.2	40.7	47.7	46.9	36.3	57.2
(N)	(488)	(412)	(308)	(457)	(119)	(129)	(545)	(221)	(135)	(262)	(162)	(515)	(271)
χ^2	43.106**			7.758			0.550			3.740		31.950**	
Trustworthiness of Chinese government													
Not satisfied	20.8	34.9	28.9	28.5	19.0	20.8	27.2	32.1	29.3	26.8	34.0	32.5	20.7
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	24.6	35.2	34.9	30.1	14.0	23.8	31.5	27.4	30.8	28.0	27.6	34.5	25.2
Satisfied	54.6	29.9	36.2	41.3	66.9	55.4	41.3	40.6	39.8	45.2	38.5	32.9	54.1
(N)	(476)	(401)	(301)	(438)	(121)	(130)	(530)	(212)	(133)	(250)	(156)	(501)	(266)
χ^2	54.832**			35.940**			11.483*			3.221		32.828**	

Table 8 (Continued)

	Sex		Age		Education		Income (HK\$)			Identity			
	Male	Female	30 or below	Between 31-50	51 or above	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary	Below \$10,000	Between \$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000 or above	Hongkongese	Chinese
Political future													
Pessimistic	16.4	28.4	23.5	21.0	20.4	27.4	22.7	17.4	31.9	19.4	10.3	26.8	16.1
Neither pessimistic nor optimistic	21.3	26.7	22.2	25.6	21.2	28.2	24.6	19.2	21.0	20.9	23.7	25.6	20.6
Optimistic	62.3	44.9	54.3	53.4	58.4	44.4	52.7	63.4	47.1	59.7	66.0	47.6	63.3
(N)	(470)	(405)	(302)	(442)	(113)	(117)	(537)	(213)	(138)	(263)	(156)	(496)	(267)
χ^2	29.099**		2.266				12.255*		22.305**		18.529**		
Economic future													
Pessimistic	10.5	19.2	13.2	14.3	17.9	19.8	14.5	11.8	23.0	13.1	8.7	16.2	13.1
Neither pessimistic nor optimistic	14.6	20.9	17.1	17.3	18.8	24.0	17.0	14.5	21.6	12.7	14.9	17.4	17.1
Optimistic	74.8	59.9	69.7	68.4	63.4	56.2	68.5	73.6	55.4	74.3	76.4	66.3	69.8
(N)	(485)	(411)	(310)	(456)	(112)	(121)	(546)	(220)	(139)	(268)	(161)	(505)	(275)
χ^2	23.993**		1.852				11.054*		21.817**		1.496		

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.

the performance of the Chinese government in handling mainland-Hong Kong relations has a positive impact on cross-Strait reunification.

Fourth, respondents with less income (less than HK\$10,000 per month) are more likely than respondents with higher income to think that the "one country, two systems" principle has been truly implemented in Hong Kong. They are also more likely to think that the performance of the Chinese government in handling mainland-Hong Kong relations has a negative impact on cross-Strait reunification.

Fifth, "Hongkongese" identifiers are less inclined than Chinese identifiers to think that the "one country, two systems" principle has been truly implemented in Hong Kong. They are also more likely to believe that the performance of the Chinese government in handling mainland-Hong Kong relations has a negative impact on cross-Strait reunification (see table 9).

From the above analysis, we can see quite clearly that respondents who are male, older in age, with lower education, and with lower income, and are Chinese identifiers are more likely than their counterparts to hold positive attitudes towards the three domains of the implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy in Hong Kong as outlined at the outset.

Among them, male respondents and those who identify themselves as Chinese show the strongest tendency in this direction. The reasons for such a tendency among the male respondents may be that they are less idealistic than their female counterparts and therefore more readily accept the reality of "one country, two systems." In fact, such a tendency among males has often been observed in other studies.²⁸

As to those who are Chinese identifiers, such a tendency is also not difficult to explain. As the concept "China" at least partially contains the existing political regime on the mainland, identification with "Chineseness" easily makes people more inclined to take a sympathetic and tolerant stance towards the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty. They thus

²⁸Timothy Ka-ying Wong, *Civic Awareness and National Identity: The Experience of the Hong Kong People in the Late Transitional Period* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1997), 14-15.

Table 9
Demographic Factors and Attitudes Towards the Implementation of "One Country, Two Systems"

	Sex		Age		Education		Income (HK\$)			Identity			
	Male	Female	30 or below	Between 31-50	51 or above	Primary or below	Secondary	Post-secondary	Below \$10,000	Between \$10,000-\$19,999	\$20,000 or above	Hongkongese	Chinese
"One Country, Two Systems"													
or Not													
Not implemented/no negative impact	13.0	20.1	20.8	14.7	11.3	13.1	17.3	14.8	19.5	17.5	13.1	18.6	13.2
Partially implemented/no impact	28.7	34.8	28.0	33.6	29.6	36.9	29.9	32.4	36.1	25.5	35.9	35.8	26.7
Implemented/positive impact	58.3	45.0	51.1	51.8	59.1	50.0	52.8	52.8	44.4	56.9	51.0	45.6	60.2
(N)	(492)	(402)	(307)	(456)	(115)	(122)	(216)	(216)	(133)	(274)	(153)	(500)	(266)
χ^2	17.118**		9.361				3.190			9.690*		14.748**	
Impact of Hong Kong's "one country, two systems" experience on cross-Straits reunification negative or positive													
Not implemented/no negative impact	9.4	12.8	12.6	9.7	9.7	16.3	10.6	7.5	13.4	11.1	7.8	13.1	7.5
Partially implemented/no impact	37.6	41.9	39.5	41.0	33.0	45.2	40.2	35.2	41.7	38.5	33.1	42.4	33.3
Implemented/positive impact	53.0	45.3	47.8	49.3	57.3	38.5	49.1	57.3	44.9	50.4	59.1	44.5	59.2
(N)	(481)	(358)	(301)	(422)	(103)	(104)	(517)	(213)	(127)	(262)	(154)	(467)	(255)
χ^2	5.746		4.254				12.202*			6.426		15.289**	
Impact of Beijing's handling of Hong Kong-related affairs on cross-Straits reunification negative/positive													
Not implemented/no negative impact	10.0	13.9	14.5	10.5	9.0	12.5	11.0	12.5	16.5	11.2	7.8	12.2	10.4
Partially implemented/no impact	37.2	41.4	38.7	39.9	34.0	42.3	42.0	29.6	36.4	40.0	31.2	42.0	34.8
Implemented/positive impact	52.8	44.8	46.8	49.6	57.0	45.2	47.1	57.9	44.1	48.8	61.0	45.8	54.8
(N)	(468)	(353)	(282)	(421)	(100)	(104)	(493)	(216)	(127)	(250)	(154)	(474)	(250)
χ^2	6.060*		5.401				10.731*			11.295*		5.336	

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.

become more likely to accept or to be satisfied with the HKSAR and Chinese governments.²⁹

Conclusion

In sum, the majority of Hong Kong residents maintain a moderate and positive attitude towards the overall performance of the HKSAR and Chinese governments at the end of the tenth month after Hong Kong was returned to mainland China. In particular, they speak highly of the implementation of the principle of "one country, two systems." This contrasts sharply with the general pessimism of the public before Hong Kong's handover. At that time, they were especially skeptical on whether the promise of "one country, two systems" could really be kept. The contrast indicates that the relative calmness of Hong Kong society and political life after the handover has alleviated the anxiety over the issue and produced positive results. At the same time, it also shows that the Chinese government has made the right move in adopting a noninterference policy towards Hong Kong-related affairs, thus winning general praise and increased trust from the Hong Kong people.

Nevertheless, Hong Kong's economy and the people's livelihood have been severely affected by the Asian financial crisis that struck the territory by surprise after the handover. As a result, the general public has shown increasing dissatisfaction with the SAR government, especially with its handling of economic and livelihood issues. They also have become less optimistic over Hong Kong's economic future. This is an alarming trend because the SAR government is not a democratically elected one and its political legitimacy comes mainly from its effective management of Hong Kong. If the economy and people's livelihood continue to deteriorate, the residents' dissatisfaction with the SAR government will surely increase and the legitimacy of the SAR government will be at stake. If any legitimacy crisis of the SAR government is to occur eventually, it will certainly pose

²⁹Ibid., 22-33.

a very serious challenge to the implementation of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong.³⁰

To be objective, Hong Kong's current economic problems are mainly caused by the persistent Asian financial crisis in connection with the collapse of Hong Kong's bubble economy. Hence, it is not fair for the SAR government to receive all the blame. Yet, as the escalation of these problems may directly undermine the political legitimacy of the nascent SAR government and thus threaten the implementation of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong, all concerned parties must be prepared to rigorously look for solutions.

³⁰Wong, "Constraints on Tung Chee-hwa's Power and His Governance of Hong Kong," 48.