

2000

## Hong Kong higher education in transition: The academic community's perception at the time of 1997 retrocession

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HONG KONG HIGHER EDUCATION IN TRANSITION:  
THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTION AT THE TIME OF  
1997 RETROCESSION

A Dissertation


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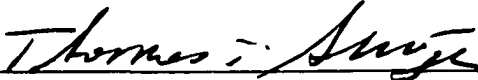
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of the Requirements for the Degree


Doctor of Education


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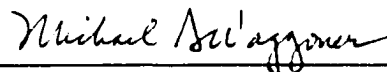
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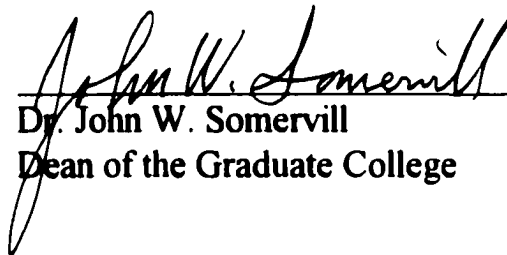
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perceptions of selected faculty and academic administrators of the 1997 retrocession of Hong Kong to China with respect to the dual challenge of Hong Kong higher education assisting with the modernization of socialist Mainland China while maintaining its function supporting the capitalist system in Hong Kong. Twenty-five selected faculty and academic administrators in two representative universities of Hong Kong were interviewed at the eve of the retrocession. Four related themes were investigated in the interviews: the implications of “one country, two systems,” the ability of the Hong Kong higher education system to reposition itself in its new context, the perceived impact of the retrocession on the work of faculty and academic administrators in higher education, and the respondents’ advice to the government of the Special Administrative Region.

Interviewees responded that “one country, two systems” could result in the modernization of Mainland Chinese society while preserving Hong Kong’s historic autonomy. Hong Kong higher education experienced a rapid expansion within the fourteen year transitional period (1984-97). Two major tasks were identified for the time following the retrocession: first, redefine the



mission of each institution to emphasize different functions, and second, with increased emphasis on research during the transition period, insure a continued balanced emphasis on quality teaching. In serving the goal of China's modernization, Hong Kong academics thought themselves to be in a strong position to assist in the areas of business, social sciences, natural sciences, and technology. Hong Kong academics could foresee working together with their counterparts on the Mainland to strengthen a modern research enterprise and a civil culture with all the proven values from the East and West. They believe that the preservation of the academic freedom in Hong Kong's universities was vital for the transformation of the two societies.

**Dedication**  
**To My Father**

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I would like to take this opportunity to express my great appreciation to the members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Michael Waggoner, Dr. Thomas Switzer, Dr. Gregory Stefanich, Dr. Larry Keig, and Dr. Taifa Yu, especially my chair, Dr. Waggoner, for all of his time devoted to the whole process. Special thanks also should extend to Dr. Linda Quinn, who once served on my committee and provided great help with the preparation of the study. I would also like to extend special thanks to Dr. Bob Leestamper for his assistance of my field work in Hong Kong and Dr. Gerard Postiglione for his useful expertise.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The resolution of the Hong Kong question is a significant event in the diplomacy of the end of the twentieth century. In 1982, the British Government initiated discussions with China regarding the sovereignty over Hong Kong as the New Territories lease was going to expire in 1997. After two years of difficult London-Beijing negotiations, the two powers signed an agreement on December 19, 1984--the Sino-British Joint Declaration. This agreement stipulated China's resumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong on July 1, 1997. This started the 13-year transition to revert Hong Kong from British colonial rule to local autonomy under Chinese sovereignty.

On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong was returned to China, becoming a "Special Administrative Region" (SAR) under the "one country two systems" arrangement. The Chinese government promised to keep Hong Kong's institutions and way of life unaltered for 50 years to allow the Hong Kong people to rule Hong Kong after the transfer of sovereignty. According to the terms of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Hong Kong will be allowed to maintain its liberal, internationalized economic system under China's rule.

Yet the three parties of the Hong Kong sovereignty issue had different expectations and understandings of the “one country, two systems” formula. Therefore, the retrocession also has different meanings to them. To Beijing, the retrocession of Hong Kong is being determined at an important time in the Chinese history; China is in the process of fundamental change. The country confronts immense problems that do not lend themselves to easy solutions. Communist ideology has lost its appeal on the younger generation (Yahuda, 1996), and the monolithic influence of Soviet Communism on Chinese society has actually dissipated over the last 30 years. It is being replaced by Chinese innovation and experimentation, including a market economy after Deng’s open-door policy. Authority is exercised in the name of ensuring stability and providing for rapid economic growth. The return of Hong Kong means ending the 150 years of humiliation to China. Beijing leaders have made it clear they want to maintain Hong Kong’s prosperity, but as with the Tiananmen Square incident of June 4, 1989, they have also shown that they will not hesitate to take a tough line if they feel that Hong Kong is being turned into a base for subversive activities against the Chinese government (Mesquita, Newman, & Rabushka, 1996). To London, the return of Hong Kong is the final step in ending the British Empire. British officials wanted to

assure an honorable exit and to preserve the economic interests of their businesses. They had to balance deals between a hard line in Beijing and demanding voices in Hong Kong. To many Hong Kong people, the retrocession means an uncertain future. They are concerned about maintaining and enhancing their viability after the retrocession. Lawyers and business people want to ensure the vitality of the legal system. Professionals remaining in Hong Kong are busily strengthening their ties with counterparts abroad as well as with those on the mainland (Liu, 1996). All of this portends an uncertain transition period ahead.

Hong Kong's connection with Britain started in 1841 when Britain seized Hong Kong to secure a base for the opium traders expelled from Guangzhou (Canton). Hong Kong was then a small fishing community. Commercial development soon attracted thousands of migrants from the mainland. This inflow has continued ever since, particularly when China was convulsed by war or internal disorder. In 1941, the Japanese invaded Hong Kong and occupied it until the end of World War II when colonial rule was restored. In 1949, the People's Liberation Army reached the Hong Kong frontier, after the Communist victory in the Chinese civil war, but made no attempt to invade, although the Chinese government repeatedly declared that

the treaties governing Hong Kong had been imposed by force and were not binding (Ishikawa, 1996). The People Republic of China (PRC) government adapted the principle of "long-term planning and making full use of Hong Kong" (Lu, 1997, p. 18). During the past three decades, Hong Kong has been developed into an economic powerhouse in Southeast Asia and one of the five international financial centers. It is now a cosmopolitan city of over 6 million people enjoying one of Asia's highest standards of living. Since the end of the Cold War, the world has developed a trend toward the two antagonistic social systems (the capitalist and the socialist system) trying harder to interact, understand each other, and create a better global village for people to live in. Thus, the incorporation of Hong Kong into China can be a great opportunity in this regard. Hong Kong now is the most autonomous region of China and continues to serve as a bridge between China and the Western world.

Now the change in Hong Kong's sovereignty means change in many areas. One area of major concern is Hong Kong's education system, especially the higher education system and its academic community: How do the academics perceive the "one country, two system" formula as the think-tank of the society while there is still much confusion on this concept?

What kind of adjustments will higher education need to make to adapt to the new situation of helping to modernize the socialist motherland while maintaining its function for the capitalist system of Hong Kong? How will the retrocession affect the academic professionals' work? What do the academics think the new government needs to do during this transformation to help the society adapt to the change and facilitate the development of Hong Kong's higher education? As stated in the Lima Declaration (1988), "Education shall be an instrument of positive social change. As such, it should be relevant to the social, economic, political, and cultural situation of any given country" (Denial, Hartley, Lador, Nowak, & Vlaming, 1995, p. 231). Bok (1982) also discussed this issue:

. . . universities have an obligation to serve society by making the contributions they are uniquely able to provide. In carrying out this duty, everyone concerned must take account of many different values--the preservation of academic freedom, the maintenance of high intellectual standards, the protection of academic pursuits from outside interference, the rights of individuals affected by the university not to be harmed in their legitimate interests, the needs of those who stand to benefit from the intellectual service that a vigorous university can perform. The difficult task that confronts all academic leaders is to decide how their institution can respond to important social problems in a manner that respects all of these important interests. (p. 88)

Today's Hong Kong situation has special implications for Hong Kong's universities in such a historical transition time. Universities play a very

important role in the development of modern societies in the world. As Hong Kong confronts an uncertain future, its education system is attempting to reposition itself within the transitional process leading to the recovery of sovereignty by China. Education, especially higher education, is expected to play a part in cementing the reunification.

However, the repositioning of the Hong Kong higher education system will present many challenges. Historically, education issues during decolonization have long been a serious problem in former British colonies. Political observers and educational reformers have suggested that in the past, education was used as a powerful tool for Britain to control its colonies following decolonization. “The elite education system allowed the British government to continue its influence on those who received tertiary education and would become community leaders. This would ensure a favorable link with the territory after British withdrawal” (Postiglione, 1996b, p. 36). This may be a problem when Hong Kong joins the different situation of the higher education system of China. Higher education in China is undergoing momentous change just as higher education is in Hong Kong. Although both systems place a high value on education and are highly selective in admitting students, the difference is enormous regarding the philosophy, structures,



administration, academic freedom, autonomy (Leung, 1992), and connections with the free flow of information with the outside world.

Within the context of decolonization, higher education in Hong Kong is confronting several big issues as Postiglione identified: (a) The rapid expansion of the system causes increased competition among the seven major institutions of higher education for funding, students, and faculty; (b) the higher education system must work toward serving the goals of modernization in China and serving the needs of Hong Kong society; and (c) the higher education system must balance a localization of administration, a nationalization of the university mission, and a regionalization of academic leadership with the internationalization of knowledge (1996b).

### Statement of the Problem

The Hong Kong higher education system, for most of its history, was designed to meet the demands of the labor market to ensure smooth economic growth in the territory and to meet the needs of civil servants for the colonial government. However, its development has lagged behind in recent decades compared to the industrial and business sector. Although the retrocession of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China has been carefully negotiated and the terms are delineated in selected documents such as the Sino-British

Declaration, these terms remain deep concerns among many regarding the implementation of the agreements for the near and long terms. The Hong Kong higher education community is among the several aspects of Hong Kong society potentially affected by this retrocession. The transformation could mean crises as well as opportunities for the Hong Kong people. The academics are needed to provide vision and knowledge to help Hong Kong people cope with the rising problems. The new Special Administrative Region (SAR) government also needs the academics' constructive suggestions for the future development of Hong Kong and its educational system. Facing such a complex and changing transition period, could the Hong Kong academic community become an active and influential group? The purpose of this study is to ascertain the perceptions of selected faculty and academic administrators in two representative Hong Kong higher education institutions regarding the problems and opportunities at the time of and following the retrocession.

The overarching research question for this study is this: What are the perceptions of selected faculty and academic administrators regarding the retrocession of Hong Kong to China with respect to the dual challenge of higher education assisting with the modernization of the socialist Mainland

China while maintaining its function supporting the capitalist system of Hong Kong? A set of closely related specific questions will be used to guide the inquiry:

1. What do selected faculty and academic administrators from two Hong Kong higher education institutions perceive to be the implications of the concept “one country, two systems” for the Hong Kong higher education community?
2. How do the Hong Kong academics think the higher education system of Hong Kong should reposition itself to fit in the new situation after the retrocession?
3. How do selected faculty and academic administrators of two Hong Kong higher education institutions perceive that their work may be impacted by the retrocession?
4. What do academics of Hong Kong think the Special Administrative Region government should do for the future development of Hong Kong as well as Hong Kong’s higher education system?

#### **Importance of the Study**

**In this historic time of Hong Kong’s retrocession to China under the “one country, two systems” arrangement, the academic community of Hong**

Kong is a very important group which merits study. A literature review shows that limited survey research has been conducted with this group. The academics in the universities of Hong Kong come from all over the world and have the unique quality of understanding the two social systems as well as the Eastern and Western cultures. They are investing great energy interacting and working with related government agencies and international and mainland counterparts to help the world understand many crucial issues in Hong Kong during the transition time of the retrocession. The three sides--China, Britain, and Hong Kong--should listen to what the academics say because they are the think-tank of the society. The academics' perception of the concept of "one country, two systems" is extremely important in this transformation time because the Hong Kong people will experience a life which is totally new to the world: living in a capitalist society under the leadership of communist China after the retrocession. How to make it happen smoothly and positively will be a great challenge to Hong Kong and China. As the two value systems confront Hong Kong in the approaching retrocession, this imposes a need for the academic community to provide intellectual analysis of the complex forces shaping the future of Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the higher education

system of Hong Kong and its academics need to deal with the new situation from within, repositioning themselves to adapt to the transformation.

### Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding this study:

1. The faculty and academic administrators selected from the two higher institutions (University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Chinese University) will willingly answer the interview questions.
2. The responses of the faculty and academic administrators will accurately reflect their perceptions, but they may vary by political opinion and other variables.
3. The faculty and academic administrators are all interested in the important issues involved in this study and have thoughtful opinions.

### Parameters

This study does not deal with the colonial history of Hong Kong or with how Hong Kong developed into an economic power center in southeast Asia. Other studies and books have done that well. This study will focus on two major higher education institutions, their faculty and administrators, and their perceptions of issues involved during the transition.

The reason why other higher education institutions are not included in this study is that most of them are either newly upgraded from smaller institutions or founded during the rapid expansion a few years ago. Many of their faculty are newly recruited from outside of Hong Kong and, therefore, may not be familiar with the history and the important issues in the transition time.

Due to the highly complex and broad nature of the Hong Kong reversion issue, this study will only provide part of the picture which could hopefully be used for subsequent related studies.

### Definitions

Academic freedom: The freedom of members of the academic community, individually or collectively, in the pursuit, development, and transmission of knowledge through research, study, discussion, documentation, production, creation, teaching, lecturing, and writing (Sino-British Joint Declaration-1994, 1996, p. 2).

Academic autonomy: The idea and practice of the academics professional rule of the higher educational institutions. This is expressed in the academics' control over what should be taught in the university, the selection of students, their admission into the university, the responsibilities

and privileges of masters, and most aspects of internal structure and organization (Hayhoe, 1996, p. 5).

**Chief Executive**: The highest government official of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

**CUHK**: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

**Expatriates**: Those academics who live and work in Hong Kong as foreigners.

**Faculty and administrators**: Administrators and leading professors in different subject areas identified by key informants as reliable sources of expertise for this study.

**HKU**: The University of Hong Kong.

**Hong Kong Basic Law**: The complete name is The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. This is the mini-Constitution for Hong Kong after the 1997 retrocession. The Basic Law incorporated the policy of “one country, two systems” so that Hong Kong will maintain its capitalist system for 50 years which was stipulated in the Sino-British Declaration.

**Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong:** The Chinese government promise in the Sino-British Joint Declaration allowing Hong Kong people to rule Hong Kong after the retrocession.

**One country, two systems:** According to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, the Chinese government promised to keep Hong Kong's institutions and way of life unaltered for 50 years after the transition. This means Hong Kong can continue with its capitalist system while other parts of China use the socialist system.

**Retrocession:** The return of a title to property to its former or its true owner.

**SAR:** Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong is the establishment for keeping Hong Kong's capitalist system intact after its return to China.

**The Sino-British Joint Declaration:** The agreement signed by China and Britain on the resolution of the Hong Kong question. The formal title of the agree is Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong and can be found in Appendix E.



**Transition period: The transition period of Hong Kong's reversion (1984-2000) includes two parts: (a) the 1984-1997 period during which Hong Kong remained under the British rule; and (b) the 1997-2000 period after the turnover, during which time the Sino-British Liaison Group still works together to oversee and ensure the actualization of the Joint Declaration.**

**UGC: University Grants Committee of Hong Kong higher education.**

### **Methodology**

**A qualitative case study design is chosen for the following reasons. First, the researcher found many quick surveys in the field but not many involved in-depth research such as interviews. Second, the researcher feels that the phenomena and process existing in such a dramatic period against a rapidly changing background is complex and better suited for an in-depth interview study than many other means of research. Society is "a complex system that cannot be understood if it is reduced to simply a collection of component parts. We need to pursue social knowledge by focusing on society as a whole" (Smith, 1986, p. 42). Finally, the variety of the informants' backgrounds (the selected faculty and administrators) as they make long-term observations might reveal different points of view that can be better understood through individual interviewing.**

The theory basis supporting the study is from the interpretivist paradigm. Social scientists define theory in different ways. Some of their positions are attributable to their alignment with either the positivist paradigm or the interpretivist paradigm. Positivists assume that phenomena are best understood by objective observations or measurements that produce empirically verifiable results. They view theory as a set of propositions that explains and predicts the relationships among phenomena (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Interpretivists, such as Denzin (1988), offer yet a different understanding of theory, which is neither explanation nor prediction. Rather, it is interpretation, or the act of making sense out of a social interaction. Thus, the researcher sees the goal of the study as providing an understanding of direct living experiences instead of abstract generalizations. More details will be discussed in the methodology chapter.

This study will be conducted at two interview sites: Hong Kong University and Hong Kong Chinese University. The key informants are Dr. Robert Leestamper, the Acting Director of Hong Kong-American Academic Exchange Center at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Dr. Gerard Postiglione, Associate Professor at the Department of Education of Hong

Kong University. They will be asked to recommend 25 key faculty and administrators whose expertise could shed light on reversion issues.

### Summary

Hong Kong was returned to China from the British on July 1, 1997-- after one and a half centuries of colonial rule. The transition time of the retrocession has been difficult and problematic due to the historical and contemporary differences in economic interests, culture, and ideology. Sovereignty change means change in many areas including functions of the higher education system in the territory and changes in its academic community. Within a period of 13 years of transition time, Hong Kong has moved from a colonial society with two universities serving a small elite to a transitional society with seven universities serving a larger population. What could they offer society towards understanding the concept of “one country, two systems” which will be the basis of Hong Kong’s future? What do they think higher education needs to position itself for this new future? How will the retrocession affect the academics’ work, and what could they contribute to the future development of Hong Kong as society’s think tank?

This researcher believes that understanding the thinking of faculty and academic administrators in the Hong Kong higher education community is

key to addressing the above questions. Through indepth interviewing of appropriate selected subjects, and careful analysis of their comments considered in relation to their corespondents, a rich portrait of this group at the time of retrocession may be rendered.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction of Literature Review

Chapter One discussed the fact that Hong Kong has entered its transition period of retrocession after the signing of the Sino-British Declaration in 1984. China and Britain told the Hong Kong people that they will be allowed to maintain their way of life, capitalist economy, and legal system for 50 years after 1997. China will grant Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy. The predominant vision of the Hong Kong people toward the territory's future at the beginning of the retrocession was one of continued stability and prosperity within the framework of "one country, two systems" with a high degree of autonomy and freedom. However, the June 4, 1989, incident changed the whole condition. Suddenly, many of the Hong Kong people lost their vision of the future. Within this context, as public opinion leaders, the academic professionals could do many things, such as clarifying the public's confusion and providing new visions for people to be able to adapt to the change.

Education is an instrument of positive social change that is relevant to the social, political, and cultural situation of any given country. This could be

applied to the Hong Kong situation, especially the higher education sector.

The retrocession transition gives Hong Kong's universities and their academics a historical challenge and unique opportunity to deal with the issues and problems within the universities themselves and in the broad changing social context. But, to do so, the academics first need to have a clear perception of the transformation and the “one country, two system” formula themselves, and feel that they have a professional obligation to apply their knowledge and expertise to problems emerging in the transition period of the society. For the above reasons, this literature review will focus on the historical elements for the success of Hong Kong and the potential crises and opportunities for its future which lead to the initial research questions.

In parallel with the research questions, this literature review will report the following: (a) a review of the formula of “one country, two systems” and the historical context; (b) the position of Hong Kong higher education in and after the transition; (c) how the retrocession may affect the academics' work; (d) what suggestions the academics could offer the SAR government regarding the development of Hong Kong and its higher education system after the retrocession; and (e) a summary of this chapter.

### On the “One Country, Two Systems” Formula

To discuss the concept of “one country, two systems,” a review is needed of the theory base of the concept and the agreement (the Sino-British Joint Declaration) reached by China and Britain to resolve the question of Hong Kong. The Basic Law must also be discussed because it is the legal fundamental framework for the future of Hong Kong. Since an awareness of the historical and political context of Hong Kong is necessary for truly understanding the construction of the “one country, two systems” formula, the formula will also be examined briefly in the historical context of the Hong Kong question following the lines of China, Britain, and the Hong Kong people.

#### The “One Country, Two Systems” Concept

The concept of “one country, two systems” was first put forward by Deng Xiaoping for the peaceful solution to the issue of China's reunification. It is a new policy adapted by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) toward Taiwan under the new situation of the normalization of the Sino-American relationship, because the United States insisted that it must be a peaceful reunification. The contents of “one country, two systems” can be briefly described as follows: Within the unified People's Republic of China, the

mainland will continue to practice socialism, while the current capitalist system of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao will remain unchanged. Although the socialist system and the capitalist system are "antagonistic," as Wen Qing (1990) explained for the Chinese government,

. . . they also maintain close ties. Socialism is established on the capitalist material foundation; the two are linked in the chain of development of human history. . . . the value of the 'one country, two systems' concept is that in a socialist country, it is possible to keep several capitalist regions intact, a practice which also benefits socialism. (p. 19)

For the implementation of the "one country, two systems" formula, the Chinese People's Congress amended Article 31 of its Constitution, which stated: "The state may establish special administrative regions when necessary. The systems to be instituted in special administrative regions shall be prescribed by laws enacted by the National People's Congress in the light of specific conditions" (Appendix E, Sino-British Joint Declaration, 1994, p. 5).

Therefore, the policy of the People's Republic of China toward Hong Kong's 1997 sovereignty retrocession is based on "one country, two systems" formula with two principal national objectives: China's reunification with Hong Kong, setting the example for Macao and Taiwan, and the maintenance



of Hong Kong's stability and prosperity, which will contribute significantly to China's economic reform and modernization (Chen, M. K., 1996).

### The Sino-British Joint Declaration

The governments of China and the Britain signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984. According to the Joint Declaration, Britain agreed to return the whole colony of Hong Kong to China on July 1, 1997, after the expiration of the current lease of the New Territory, while China would take account of the history of Hong Kong and its reality and promise to establish a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. China and Britain told the Hong Kong people that they will be allowed to maintain their way of life, capitalist economy, and legal system for 50 years after 1997. China will grant Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy. As the Joint Declaration stated:

**The current social and economic systems in Hong Kong will remain unchanged, and so will the life-style. Rights and freedoms, including those of the person, of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of travel, of movement, of correspondence, of strike, of choice of occupation, of academic research and of religious belief will be ensured by law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Private property, ownership of enterprises, legitimate right of inheritance and foreign investment will be protected by law. (Sino-British Joint Declaration, 1984, p. 2, Appendix E)**

The "one country, two systems" policy applying to the Hong Kong question, as it was explained by the Chinese government, has given full

consideration to Hong Kong's history and existing conditions, "proceeding from China's long-term strategy for economic development, and considering the will of Hong Kong inhabitants and the interests of investors from various countries and regions" (Lu, 1997, p. 18). The policy was abstracted into a so-called "twenty-character policy" by Chinese officials which could be translated as follows: "resumption of sovereignty, founding of Special Administrative Region (SAR), Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong, keeping the social system intact, and maintaining the prosperity" (Ito, 1997, p. 70). It was promised that the SAR government will be composed by local inhabitants, practicing "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong." No central government officials will participate in management. Hong Kong laws previously in force shall be maintained, with the exception of those that contravene the Basic Law or will be subject to amendments by the SAR legislature. All policies and systems which have proven successful during the course of Hong Kong's development will be retained, including trade, monetary, banking, shipping, operation and management, and low taxation systems, as well as the financial system designed to keep expenditures within the limits of income (Lu, 1997). Appendix A of the Joint Declaration stated that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government should

**maintain the educational system previously practiced in Hong Kong and decide educational policy on its own, “. . . including policies regarding the education system and its administration, the language of instruction, the allocation of funds, the examination system, the system of academic rewards and the recognition of educational and technological qualifications”**

**(Sino-British Joint Declaration, 1994, p. 12).**

### **The Special Administrative Region Basic Law**

**Six years after the Joint Declaration was signed, China promulgated, in 1990, the Basic Law for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Basic Law provides the constitutional basis for the establishment of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China for the next 50 years. It will set out in legal form the principle policies and premises included in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. As such, it will shape the future development of Hong Kong well into the middle of the 21st century. The Basic Law provisions define in institutional and constitutional terms the future relationship between the central authorities in China and the Hong Kong SAR. It promises that the socialist system and policies will not be practiced in Hong Kong; the laws previously in force shall generally be maintained; Chinese national laws shall not, with some minor exceptions, be applied to**

Hong Kong; the SAR will have its own government with clearly specified legislative, executive, and independent judicial powers; and the civil liberties of Hong Kong residents will be given constitutional protection (Wesley-Smith, 1996). As to the SAR's education, the Basic Law stipulates in Clause 136 that community organizations and individuals may run educational undertakings of various kinds in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Educational institutions of all kinds may retain their autonomy and enjoy academic freedom. They may continue to recruit staff and use teaching materials from outside the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Schools run by religious organizations may continue to provide religious education, including courses on religion. Students shall enjoy freedom to choose between educational institutions and pursue their education outside the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Zheng, 1996).

Although the objective of Basic Law is to maintain the metaphorical and institutional distance that currently exists between the Chinese and Hong Kong communities, under Deng Xiaoping's concept of "one country, two systems" it is evident that the present systems of China and Hong Kong are incompatible and that they have coexisted because of Hong Kong's colonial

status under the British rule. The buffer between the systems is now to be replaced by the Basic Law. The essential question for Hong Kong people, therefore, is whether the Basic Law can operate to isolate the SAR from interference from China, since the fundamental purpose of the Basic Law is to safeguard the capitalism through the maintenance of the rule of law-- specifically economic efficiency rather than democracy (Ghai, 1993). In other words, the Basic Law provides the means to give at least autonomy and separateness genuine prospects by ensuring an independent capitalist system. If the Chinese government takes the Basic Law seriously and the judiciary in the SAR is prepared to speak for it, the Basic Law can be made to work and the Hong Kong legal system can thus be defended.

However, the Joint Declaration and the Basic law which are the fundamental legal documents for China's and Britain's discussions and interactions on the question of Hong Kong still left a lot of "gray areas" as Yi Li described (1996). These unclear areas could mean a lot of controversy for the two systems. This is also pointed out by Ghai (1995): "Difficult and complex questions of interpretation will have to be tackled by this contradictory mechanism, its constituent parts perhaps pulling in different directions" (p. 129). Yet, for all the tensions and contradictions, the Basic

Law provides at least the means to give autonomy to Hong Kong and separateness of the two systems by ensuring an independent judiciary.

### The Historical Background and Current Context

An historical review of the political background and current context is necessary for the discussion of the academics' perception of "one country, two systems" as well as other research questions. The following review will focus on the historical context from the lines of the Chinese government, British colonial government, and the Hong Kong people.

The 'new' master: China. There is no doubt that China is the dominating force of the retrocession of Hong Kong. In a sense, the China factor necessitates fundamental change in Hong Kong's politics and social-cultural mentality, which could yield great opportunities and new dynamics for a challenging future for both Hong Kong and China. In fact, the successful story of Hong Kong has to rely a great deal on China. As Skidmore (1996) described,

**One need only consider China's forbearance through the years, as it permitted British administration to continue. Not only could modern Hong Kong not be defended against a Chinese assault, but it requires positive assistance from China merely to exist. China supplies much of Hong Kong's electricity, most of its food, and most of its water. Hong Kong and China clearly are vital to each other; it is hardly less clear that their future is vital also to the world. (p. 10)**

There are few who doubt the Chinese government's intention to do its very best to make the transfer of sovereignty smoothly and implement the policy of "one country two systems" successfully. The recovery of sovereignty of Hong Kong has great implications for China's three major national goals: (a) achieving national reunification, (b) developing and modernizing its economy, and (c) maintaining social and political stability of the country. If the transition of the sovereignty should turn out badly, it could damage the confidence in the new leaders, create big problems between China and the outside world, and presage a period of turning inwards with incalculable consequences for the Chinese economy that could lead to social and political instability. It could also fail to demonstrate its application for reunification of Taiwan under the "one country two systems" format. The doubtful world focuses on their capacity to resolve the political problems that arise from the enormous difference between the two systems.

In fact, there has been a great deal of worry that the Chinese leaders do not seem to know what is at work in Hong Kong. However, Shu Jiaten's Hong Kong Recollection (1994-cited in Xu, 1993) indicated those on the top were working very hard to understand the whole issue and were pretty well informed. However, the majority of Chinese officials may not understand the

value and fragility of Hong Kong's system of laws. The worry was also expressed by the Chinese top leaders. For instance, in March of 1995, the chairman of the Chinese Political Consultative Committee, Li Ruihuan, admitted errors in China's hard-line policy toward Hong Kong and appealed to his fellow leaders to handle Hong Kong with care in the future. In a public speech, he told the story of an old woman selling a valuable old Yixing tea pot which could make good tea because of the old tea stain inside of it. However, the old woman tried to clean it for the customer and scrubbed the teapot free of the stain, thereby inadvertently destroying the teapot's worth entirely. As Li pointed out: "There was much about the way of life and the running of the territory. If it were not handled well, Hong Kong could be damaged--like an ancient tea pot--even as a result of good intentions" (Yahuda, 1996, p. 95). The message he sent had clear applications to Hong Kong: if you don't understand how things such as the rule of law have been the foundation of Hong Kong's success, you may inadvertently scrub it out.

Keeping Hong Kong's economic prosperity is also a major concern of the Chinese government. Economically, Hong Kong 'has already returned to China,' as some people said. Mainland China is now Hong Kong's largest trading partner, its largest export market, and its largest source of capital.



Since the signing of the Joint Declaration, the internal balance of forces in Hong Kong's economy has undergone a quiet transformation. Some of the old British companies saw a poor future for themselves in Hong Kong without the protection of their own government. As a result, they began to sell off their stock shares and subsidiaries or even arranged for a gradual withdrawal from Hong Kong. At the same time, the capital China had rapidly accumulated since the implementation of its economic reform flowed into Hong Kong to purchase these assets. Especially after the Tiananmen event in 1989, many other funds were pulled out of Hong Kong and the property prices fell. Then, China's capital was not only added in, but actually drove the property prices up again and maintained the economic boom. Currently, thousands of mainland-invested companies are extending their activities from service industries, such as property, finance, and trade, into Hong Kong's large-scale infrastructure projects (Li, L., 1996). It could be viewed that the interests of Chinese capital are deeply implanted in Hong Kong and will become a leading force in Hong Kong's future economy.

It is also clear that the political and economic landscape of China is filled with uncertainty at the transition time. China by itself has enormous problems to solve. While people talked about how the Chinese government

needs to understand the question of Hong Kong, Hong Kong people also need to be aware of the tough situation and enormous problems the Chinese government faces. Then, they might be able to understand the contradictory mentality of the Chinese leaders and try not to add fuel to the fire. The instance of Tiananmen Square may hurt the confidence of the Hong Kong people in the Chinese government, but it also revealed China's bottom line. Jiang Zemin, the President of China, used the analogy "river water and well water should not mix" to indicate that the Chinese socialist system should not be subject to subversive interference from Hong Kong (Leung, 1992, p. 125). One reading of this message is that the Chinese government also agrees that for "one country, two systems" to succeed the two political systems should be kept insulated from each other.

It is argued that China is moving in the right direction and that the autocratic central government has become somewhat liberal. If what has happened in China over the past decades has any historical meaning, if the urge for advancing toward modernization and excellence in China has shown any consistency, and if there is any sincerity about the adoption of a flexible policy, then it seems unreasonable to assume that the "one country, two systems" policy is only an ostensible measure. In fact, the insurance of the

"one country, two systems" arrangement is the open-door policy and the economic reform of China. Capitalist Hong Kong is a major resource for the economic reform and free market experiment of China; it not only provides capital, talent, technology, etc., it also will provide China with experience for free market development. Politically, this is also an example for China's reunification, toward its next target--Taiwan. China could not afford to lose all of these modernization advances (Xu, 1993).

Decolonization: The British legacy. During almost 140 years of British colonial rule until the 1970s, Hong Kong was a place of injustice and inequality. Even in the common law legal system there was a considerable body of race-based, anti-Chinese discriminatory legislation, with a long record of injustice (Wesley-Smith, 1996). Not only were the economic freedoms and legal rights of Hong Kong residents far from fully protected, but even laissez-faire was accused as an excuse for the avoidance of the basic responsibilities of a modern state government toward its own people. The long record of the colonial regime's repression on behalf of big business and British government against grassroots collective actions substantiated popular suspicion that the economic and legal-administrative arms of the British establishment were the same (Chen, M. K., 1996).

But things changed over time. After the chief Chinese United Nations delegation announced in 1973 that Hong Kong should not be categorized as a colony, the British Hong Kong colonial government undertook measures to decolonize Hong Kong (Leung, 1992). The decolonization process has accelerated since the announcement of the Sino-British Declaration of returning Hong Kong to China. During the past several decades, Hong Kong became an open and liberal society, the world's eighth largest trading economy and the financial center of the region. In the success story of Hong Kong, two of the most positive things the British have built in the past decades and left for Hong Kong are a relatively efficient and relatively incorrupt civil service and the rule of law. Many people argued that these were the foundation of Hong Kong's economic success and social stability. For decades, Hong Kong also had the freest press in East Asia, and it was possibly one of the freest presses in the world with no ideology (Roberti, 1994, cited in Lee, M.). This was believed to also enhance the fairness of the government in the territory.

To look at the concept of "one country, two systems" from the British view, as former British Foreign Minister Jeffrey Howe stated, leaders of Beijing should respect the system and laws of Hong Kong, understand the

importance of rule of law, and grant various freedoms for the Hong Kong people. In addition, the future chief executive of the SAR should listen to different voices from people at various levels of the society, and Hong Kong people should not use their own views to turn Hong Kong into a base of anti-Chinese communist authority (World Journal, 1997). Because of his formal official position, Howe's opinions should not be merely taken as his personal point of view. His speech showed that even the British had accepted this reality at last. Concerning the political future of Hong Kong, Ian Scott (1996) pointed out, the political legitimacy of the post-1997 Hong Kong government depends on three sets of concerns stipulated in both the Sino-British Declaration and the Basic Law: (a) the autonomy of the post-1997 government, (b) the development of representative institutions, and (c) the maintenance of civil liberties (Kwok & So, 1995).

Hong Kong's developmental experience as a British colony is unique. Its free trade, market economy, and open society have been sharply contrasted to its lack of a genuinely democratic form of government. In this sense, its prosperity and stability within the context of freedom without democracy has been the hallmark of British colonialism. The failure to develop a functional, deeply rooted, and mass-based democratic polity

remains the darkest legacy of British rule. "Yet the Hong Kong government officials and others often proclaim that Hong Kong is essentially democratic" (Morris, 1991, p. 16). Only in the transition time after the June 4th event did the Hong Kong Colonial Government start the political reform with representative democracy. Indeed, it was a change for the colonial government to recognize the difference between administrative legality, functional popularity, and genuine legitimacy. Actually, the belated effort to democratize was "too little, too late," as many people said.

Democratization: The wish of Hong Kong people. More than half of the 6 million Hong Kong people came from Mainland China during the two panic upsurges of immigration in the modern history of China. The first upsurge was around 1949 with the withdrawal of the Nationalist government from the mainland after being defeated in the civil war. The second was the upsurge of immigration during the so-called Cultural Revolution. In this 10-year period only, it is estimated that over 600,000 people got to Hong Kong by illegal means (Mesquita et al., 1996). If the people who left the mainland during other political campaigns after the founding of the new China were included, the number would be even much larger. Most of these people have a very bad memory for the Communist government. They are afraid of

the Communists. They built their life in Hong Kong and many of them are financially successful. When they heard that the Chinese government was going to reassume the sovereignty of Hong Kong, they were afraid that the Communists would take away what they have.

To many Hong Kong people "one country, two systems" still remains nothing but a conceptual formula, or an empty promise, as some people said. A picture of the formula is very vague. Some doubt that even the Chinese leaders themselves know what this concept will really look like because coexistence of two different systems in one country is unprecedented. The vague and evolutionary mind of the Chinese leaders was seen in the changeable explanation and clarification the Chinese officials made along with the transition time. China has introduced some of the capitalist elements at experiments in its special economic zone (SEZ). While these China experiments have achieved remarkable success, Hong Kong is not a similar case in many important areas.

China has not been very successful in bolstering the confidence of the Hong Kong people because it has appeared too eager to influence the affairs of Hong Kong and its way of domestic political control, especially with its handling of the student movement June 4, 1989. In fact, the confidence of

the people of Hong Kong toward both the British and the Chinese government has been fully shattered. The Hong Kong people felt they were left powerless and unable to decide their own future in view of the political maneuvering between Britain and China. Studies have shown that the political expectations and confidence of Hong Kong people has been declining since the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration (Chen, M. K., 1996).

Related to the confidence crisis was the massive “brain drain” and exodus of Hong Kong’s professional talent to other countries. This reached a new peak following the Tiananmen events.

Hong Kong’s middle class, especially those intellectuals from the mainland, were worried that the Chinese authorities would turn Hong Kong from “rule of law” into “rule of man,” and that the Communist party would run a political campaign in Hong Kong after 1997. Younger intellectuals whose education was in the West were worried about their freedom in Hong Kong. The majority of the Hong Kong residents were not really in favor of the return to China either. They were worried that their living standard might drop. So, when Chris Patten, the last British Hong Kong governor, introduced the political reform of decolonization with representative democracy in Hong Kong in 1991 (Lam, 1997), the majority of Hong Kong



people, especially the middle class, thought that democratization would be a good way to protect them from China's political interference.

The election on September, 1995, showed how strong the will of the majority of Hong Kong people is towards a representative democracy. It was the last time and only the second time the Hong Kong people have had the right to elect members of the Legislative Council through universal suffrage under the 150-year British rule. Public opinion surveys showed that the pro-democracy forces would not have the same success at the polls as in 1991 because the democrats had benefitted from a "Tiananmen Square effect," which led Hong Kong people to vote overwhelmingly for pro-democracy candidates at that time. Yet it turned out that the pro-democracy candidates swept 17 of the 20 seats despite the fact that pro-Beijing politicians had substantially greater resources. In voting overwhelmingly for pro-democracy candidates, Hong Kong people showed they were ready to take charge of their own affairs as the Chinese government promised (Li, Y., 1996).

### The Potential Crises and Opportunities

As mentioned before, the lack of clarity of the Basic Law and the different understandings of it among the involved parties could cause

potential crises. Indeed, few people would expect the transition toward 1997 to be trouble free. The parties involved did not have enough trust in each other from the very beginning due to the different value systems, ideologies, and interests. The Tiananmen Event added a new dimension to the already complex and problematic nature of Hong Kong's transition process. The Joint Declaration explicitly called for the Hong Kong Legislature to be fully elected after 1997, and to London and most of the Hong Kong people this meant the Western-style democratic system of a directly elected legislature. However, to the Beijing authorities and local conservatives it meant many types of electoral arrangements except universal franchise direct elections. This different understanding between the two sides eventually contributed much to the deterioration of their relationship (Chen, M. K., 1996).

Politically, the Chinese leaders have been troubled by their fears of possible British attempts to retain influence in Hong Kong after 1997 and by challenges from democratic forces in Hong Kong that have been regarded as intentionally independent and subversive. Therefore, Beijing seemed to be preparing for a certain degree of political control that was not envisioned in the Joint Declaration or in the Basic Law.

During the times when the Sino-British relationship became strained, the Chinese government tended to perceive most of the British actions as conspiratorial; for example, the attacks on the Right of Abode issue and the Bill of Rights which the British claimed as a stabilizer for Hong Kong's transition. The British also accused the Chinese government of undermining the implementation of the Joint Declaration. The establishment of the Provisional Legislative Council and revisions of some of Hong Kong's existing laws were two examples. "The British Foreign Secretary voiced opposition to the provisional Legislative Council just before its election and accused the Chinese side of violating the Sino-British agreement, and asserted that it may bring this issue to the International Court" (Ren, 1997, p. 8). The Chinese government argued that it was the British side who first violated the Joint Declaration and prompted the Chinese government to block the "through train" arrangement to the current Legislative Council of Hong Kong. As a consequence, the Chinese government had to set up the Provisional Legislative Council. The contradictions revealed the Chinese authorities' different understanding of such fundamental principles as constitutionality, jurisprudence, administrative control, elections, autonomy, and representative democracy (Leung, 1992).

However, democratization was the most problematic transformative process underlying the whole transitional period. China's "one country, two systems" formula contained the pledge for a high degree of autonomy, while both the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law specifically called for a fully elected legislature and an elected chief executive as the foundation of Hong Kong SAR politics. Thus, it seemed that the 1997 sovereignty retrocession could pave the way for a very promising prospect of decolonization with representative democracy. Unfortunately, there has been a big gap between rhetoric and reality. On the one hand, the scope and pace of British democratization differed substantially from the demands and expectations of a majority of the people. As M. K. Chen (1996) described,

**A gradualist and small-steps approach by the colonial government received support from the conservative elite and big business interests who feared that rapid emergence of a fully directly elected legislature would undermine administrative efficiency and executive authority and would favor grassroots interest at the expense of business privilege and colonial patronage. On the other hand, the Chinese Government has sharply different understandings of democratic politics, especially practices such as open elections, public accountability, and constitutional limits to executive power, which are contrary to its tradition of absolute control. (p. 18)**

**The election of the Chief Executive of the SAR and the Provincial Legislative Council in May 1997 showed that the Chinese government**

avored big business and agreed with the conservative elite in a small-step approach toward democratic reform. The Chief Executive chosen, Tung Chee-hwa, is a shipping tycoon. This could be understood as the Chinese version of democracy for the Hong Kong capitalist system. The Mainland Chinese argue that since the people of Hong Kong could be successful without genuine democracy in the past, they might do equally well with the delay of the evolution of democracy. If the Basic Law meant anything, Hong Kong would still be more liberal and democratic than other places in the Mainland.

The turnover produced two opposite kinds of viewpoints or expectations of Hong Kong's future: the optimists and the pessimists. The optimists, the pro-China people in Hong Kong, argue passionately that China "will not kill the goose that lays the golden eggs--at least not knowingly or willingly" (Mesquita et al., 1996, p. 5). Hong Kong is so important to China's economy because Chinese firms belonging to the state, military, and collective enterprises have invested billions of HK dollars in Hong Kong and would incur substantial losses in any economic downturn. Given that China values Hong Kong's investments in its booming Southern provinces, it would

make no sense to shut off the inflow of capital and technology. Moreover, the PRC wants to set an example for the reunification with Taiwan.

The pessimists, the pro-democracy mass in Hong Kong, however, also have many reasons for their view: China repeatedly interfered in the internal affairs of Hong Kong. It set up a "Preliminary Working Committee" of notables that resembled a shadow government in Hong Kong. China announced plans to dissolve Hong Kong's legislature on July 1, 1997, in protest of its goal to expand local democracy. The Chinese are worried about the rule of law, the free flow of information, human rights, or especially, the freedom of expression. Without the protection of a representative legal system, corruption might encroach again which would eventually erode the society of Hong Kong (Situ, 1997).

Nevertheless, it could be argued that as long as China's intention to modernize the country continues, so will the open-door policy. The continuity of the open-door policies continued in recent years even after the June 4th incident. As long as China's interest in modernization remains, China's concern for upgrading education persists, China's open-door policy continues, the "one country, two system" policy, no matter how vague, will allow Hong Kong to make contributions to China's economic, educational,

and other reforms in the near future. Thus, the way in which China lives up to its promises and legal obligations will not only determine the fate of Hong Kong and its people, it will also shape the evolution of China's political identity and its integration in the international community. If the Chinese leaders are able to allow Hong Kong to maintain its rule of law, the basic freedoms, and the autonomy of its government that has led to its success as a center of international trade and finance, China will continue to benefit from the enormous economic contribution the territory makes to its modernization. The benefits from the political consequences would also be immense.

#### Hong Kong Higher Education's Position in Transition Period

Although the education system of Hong Kong, including higher education, has been strongly influenced by the cultural traditions of China even under the British rule, the advent of colonization markedly changed the principal source of ideas for educational innovation. As Gunnar Myrdal (as cited by Xie, J., 1984) pointed out, one of the necessary conditions for a stable rule of the colonial government was the support of the local privileged groups. Therefore, since World War II, every colony left would establish a system that banded the colonial government and the local privileged groups together. The latter depended on the former to keep the law and order of the

society to maintain their social status, property, and privilege. The colonial government also used the privilege class's social influence to protect its interests. The educational policy of the colonial government was to oppress the universal education of the ordinary people while educating a group of elite to help rule the colonial government. This was the so-called "separate and rule" principle (Xie, 1984).

Now the colonial period is drawing to the end, yet the patterns introduced under colonial rule will not be totally abandoned in spite of the fact that the government has pursued a deliberate localization of the administrative structure including the educational system in recent years. The literature on colonial education stereotyped the legacies with the creation of: (a) a privileged, educated elite divorced from the aspiration of the majority; (b) citizens unsure of their identity or caught between two cultures; (c) an unchangeable administrative bureaucracy; (d) a system hostile to the indigenous culture, with a Euro-centric, academic curriculum; (e) a racially segregated school system based on "divide and rule;" and (f) a "culture of silence" with low political aspirations (Leung, 1992, p. 268).

During the transition time, higher education in Hong Kong and China is undergoing momentous change, reflecting new social and economic needs



in the two societies. The capacity of Hong Kong education to adapt to the transition will be greatly determined by the degree to which it justifies its existence within the “one country, two systems” framework. However, the application of the concept of “one country, two systems” in Hong Kong’s educational transition has been met with ambivalence. Section six of the Basic Law, as shown in the previous section, stipulated that Hong Kong will keep all of her unique educational features intact, including the existing structure of schooling, academic freedom, and language policy. The underlying rationale, as Leung (1992) described:

Education is merely the super-structure that rests on Hong Kong’s economic foundation, defines education’s function strictly in terms of its service to a capitalist economy. Educational changes in Hong Kong will be made by local educators in response to Hong Kong’s economic changes. (p. 266)

Some questions are raised in this regard: Does the preservation of the status quo education in Hong Kong mean that the two education systems should be insulated from each other as are the two political systems? Will the specific ideological and structural differences between educational systems of Hong Kong and the PRC remain insulated from each other? Should there be more academic exchange and cooperation between the two systems in the future? If the answer is yes, then how?

The two educational systems actually have some important similarities. For example, both are highly centralized in administration and curriculum development and both make a separation between the arts and sciences with social science given the lower priority. Both have an overemphasis on higher education at the expense of primary and secondary education. Above all, Hong Kong is basically a Chinese community which has a strong cultural identity with Mainland China. Hong Kong preserves most of the Confucian traditions in its education--obedience to the school authority, obedience to the enforced school regulations, and high esteem for success on examinations (Leung, 1992).

In the next section, the higher education system of Hong Kong will be closely examined regarding its changes during the transition period. The higher education system of China will also be briefly discussed because one of the focuses of this study is on the future interaction of these two educational systems.

### Hong Kong's Higher Education System

Higher education in Hong Kong has existed for more than a century. For most of its history, education in Hong Kong generally followed a colonial pattern, although Chinese education was always an accepted part of the

system because Hong Kong's population is 98% Chinese. Until the 1990s, the scale of higher education in Hong Kong was very modest. As a British colony, the purpose of its higher education was to train civil servants for the government and educated people to meet the demand of the labor market to ensure economic growth in the territory (Lueng, 1992). This purpose stood as the operating philosophy of higher education institutions in Hong Kong through the direction and tight control of the funding council--the University Grants Committee (UGC). The UGC is the most influential body in higher education. It was established in 1965 as Universities and Polytechnic Grant Committee (UPGC) "to advise the government on the facilities, development, and financial needs of the universities" (UGC Report, 1996). In 1993, the body included eight local Hong Kong Chinese, five members from the United Kingdom, three Americans (including a professor of Hong Kong Chinese origin), and one Australian. It is expected that the future UGC will include members from Mainland China. The first Chief Executive (CE) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 1997 will appoint the members of the UGC. The UGC greatly changed its conservative pace toward developing the Hong Kong higher education system during the transition period, and started a rapid expansion of the higher institutions during 1992 to 1995.

There are now nine degree-granting institutions of higher education in Hong Kong, including six universities, a tertiary institution, an Academy of Performing Arts, and the Open Learning Institute. All but the last of these is fully government funded. Before 1990, most degree courses were offered in two universities. A third university was established in 1991. One polytechnic began offering degree courses in 1983 and the other polytechnic and one of the tertiary colleges began offering degree courses in 1986. This represented 42% of all first enrollments in the UGC-funded institutions by 1988-1989. The polytechnic and one of the tertiary colleges earned university titles in 1994. At least one more tertiary institution was expected to be upgraded to university status by 1997-1998.

The three top research universities--the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology--each provide a range of programs leading to undergraduate and graduate qualifications. They offer research programs in every subject area and provide opportunities for faculty to undertake consultancy and collaborative projects with industry. The medium of instruction is English except in the Chinese University of Hong Kong which is a bilingual institution. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and City University of

Hong Kong (the former polytechnics) offer a range of courses leading to the awards of diploma, higher certificate, high diploma, and bachelors degree. They offer a small number of graduate degrees and have research programs in some areas. They also emphasize the application of knowledge and vocational training and maintain strong links with industry and employers. The Hong Kong Baptist University and Lingnan College together provide undergraduate courses in the arts, sciences, social sciences, business, and communication studies. They plan to offer or already offer a small number of courses at the graduate level, with research programs in some subject areas and strong links with the community (UGC Report, 1996).

Looking toward the future, it is obvious that Hong Kong will have increasing contact with China. The two higher educational systems will have much to learn from each other. On one hand, Hong Kong will probably have much to teach China about curriculum development, teacher support, educational technology, and administrative efficiency. But on the other hand, Hong Kong can also learn from China in the areas of teaching Mandarin and promoting a feeling of national identity through the school system.

## The Higher Education System of China

Since Hong Kong will have a closer tie with China after the reversion, Hong Kong higher education institutions will have to adapt their position as part of China's higher education system. It is appropriate to look at the higher education system in Mainland China.

As Hayhoe (1996) described, China has a long history of traditional bureaucratic institutions, but it was not until 1911 that the modern universities were founded. These universities may have borrowed their forms from the West, yet remained untouched by the values of academic freedom and university autonomy. Only with the efforts of Cai Yuanpei, the president of Beijing University from 1917, were university autonomy and academic freedom introduced. In the following years, there were a variety of interactions between newly developing Chinese universities and the Western universities. These interactions gradually led to the emergence of a China's modern university identity "characterized by values that lay somewhere between a broad intellectual freedom and a more narrowly defined academic freedom" (Hayhoe, 1996, p. 142). In the 1950s after the founding of the new China, under Soviet influence, a system emerged made up of a few comprehensive and polytechnic universities and many specialized higher

educational institutions. Then came the chaos of the Cultural Revolution period. Only after Deng Xiaoping launched the modernization reform started from the late 1970s were the Chinese universities again allowed some degree of autonomy and the opportunity to develop their own institutional identities (Hayhoe, 1996).

The reform period began with a major national education conference in April, 1978 where the restoration of unified national entry examinations for higher education was decided. This was followed with a rapid expansion of higher education. Another important change during this period included establishing programs of educational exchange with many Western universities which opened up further opportunities for study abroad. With the educational reform document of 1985, universities were promised a degree of autonomy never experienced before since the founding of the new China in 1949. This was a hopeful and promising period for most universities. The new programs that emerged were guided by a desire to raise standards of knowledge that connected Chinese academics to the outside world of scholarship. However, during the second half of the 1980s many problems developed as Chinese universities sought to establish a new identity, yet found themselves impacted by broader forces of change largely outside of

their control. By 1989, there was considerable pessimism in the universities over the outcome of both economic and political reform with a sense that the problems of economic reform had to be understood in relation to increasingly evident political corruption. This is the main theme of the democracy movement in April and May, 1989, followed by the Tiananmen event in June 4, 1989. The following years to the present, the higher education institutions of China experienced tighter political control often justified in terms of cultural autonomy and national pride (Hayhoe, 1996). Academic freedom and autonomy in the university has been limited since.

#### Changes and Challenges to Reposition Hong Kong's Higher Education

The shift of sovereignty from Britain to China has introduced changes in the direction or, even possibly, the philosophy of higher education in Hong Kong (Liu, S., 1996). Change will come not only to the personnel and management culture of the institutions, but in other areas as well: community affairs, professional and academic qualifications, the educational system, and curricula. For example, Chinese was made a parallel official language with English. The urge for civic education in the early 1980s could be interpreted as a way to equip the young people of Hong Kong for their responsibilities as citizens of the future SAR (Leung, 1992).



In 1985, concerned about the higher education area in the transition, the Society of Hong Kong Scholars hosted a symposium on “Current Developments of Higher Education” in Hong Kong. At that symposium, scholars determined that the future of the higher education in Hong Kong will have the following challenging goals: (a) ‘Mandate’ a genuine bilingualism (Chinese and English) language policy in all of Hong Kong’s institutions of higher learning, (b) reform Hong Kong’s institutions of higher learning to match the needs and development of industry and commerce of Hong Kong, (c) educate Hong Kong’s future leaders and administrators to meet the needs of “Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong,” and (d) establish Hong Kong’s institutions of higher learning in the front rank of world academe for Hong Kong to become a regional center in business and in higher education (Zee, 1985).

As to higher education’s role in Hong Kong’s transitional period, Postiglione identified these functions: (a) It shapes the thinking of the generation that will lead Hong Kong after 1997; (b) it influences the selection criteria for recruitment into important positions within the civil service of the transitional government; (c) it works to maintain a highly skilled labor force in the face of the large-scale emigration of talented people from the territory;

(d) it also determines, to some extent, the degree of interaction between the educational systems of Hong Kong and that in other parts of China; (e) it influences school socialization processes that build a cultural identity essential for reuniting people in Hong Kong with the rest of China; and finally, (f) it bolsters or restrains the general process of democratization in the society (1996b).

Of these functions, four related areas need to be discussed in the repositioning of Hong Kong's higher education: (a) the integration of the two higher education systems, (b) training leaders and professionals for Hong Kong's future, (c) serving local economic development and modernization of China, and (d) becoming an excellent international center of higher learning.

The integration of the two higher education systems. The most difficult questions facing Hong Kong's educational future concern the potential for increasing integration between the two educational systems of Hong Kong and Mainland China. This has special implication to the two higher education systems. "Given the successful levels of cooperation and integration that the two economic systems have experienced, and the growing association of post-secondary education with economic concerns such as human

capital development, the question of educational integration is well posed” (Leung, 1992, p. 265).

As Hong Kong’s economy has become closely tied to the Chinese economy in recent years, the academic linkage between Hong Kong and the mainland has correspondingly become closer. A growing number of the Mainland Chinese students are enrolled for higher degree studies in Hong Kong’s universities. In the meantime, Mainland Chinese higher education institutions recruit hundreds of Hong Kong students every year.

Many examples show that Hong Kong has already used the talent of Mainland Chinese professionals. They are now the major source of Mandarin teachers in Hong Kong. The Chinese higher education institutions are eager to sell their research results to Hong Kong industries. The newly established University of Science and Technology of Hong Kong is considering joint research and development with Chinese institutions as one of its major tasks (Leung, 1992). Concerning the rapid expansion of higher education in Hong Kong triggered by the severe brain drain, the Hong Kong Education Commission has advocated that short-term contracts be offered to mainland Chinese scholars (Fan, 1990). Meanwhile, China actively uses Hong Kong universities as workshop locations for learning Western management skills.

The Beijing-Hong Kong Academic Exchange Center is working to promote technology transfer between Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese higher education institutions. The State Education Commission of China sends secondary school principals and teacher trainers to the University of Hong Kong for advanced training, as Leung (1992) described, to “. . . adopt Western educational philosophies and practices” (p. 127). In the field of higher education, it is expected that a kind of educational inter-dependence, mutually beneficial and complimentary for both systems, will develop throughout and beyond the transitional period.

Training leaders for Hong Kong’s future. After the signing of the Joint Declaration that decided to return the sovereignty of Hong Kong to China, the local scholars continued to raise questions about the implications of reincorporating Hong Kong in 1997, especially related to the apparent tension in the cultural identity of Hong Kong students. They identified the educational challenge of 1997 as socialization into a “one country, two systems” society. Hong Kong education will be faced with a major dilemma: building an educational system that can reconcile the ideological contradictions between capitalism, socialism, and patriotism, and preparing local political leaders who can guide Hong Kong through the post-colonial

transition (Postiglione, 1996b). However, the concept of “one country, two systems” can only work if each system produces its own leaders. But how the Hong Kong higher education system can help in this will still be a question.

What was the impact of the colonial era on the society of Hong Kong? Several important issues such as the language and the self-identification problem have caught scholars’ attention. Most of the Hong Kong people speak some English or Mandarin, but that is not the language they grew up learning. The majority of them speak Cantonese as their mother tongue, but that is not a language that lends itself to writing. Hong Kong’s educational system has a particular problem here, where fluency in both Chinese and English is desirable but rarely attained, except possibly in spoken Cantonese. This problem became especially outstanding after the retrocession when the official language added more emphasis on Mandarin. So there is an increasing need for competence in Mandarin which is the standard written language in China, Taiwan, and in Hong Kong SAR. The UGC has been sufficiently unhappy with the language skills of recent graduates from its own Higher Education Institutions (UGC Report, 1996).

Liang Bing-jun, a writer who has explored the identity of Hong Kong people, wrote: “When you compare a person from Hong Kong to a foreigner, of course the Hong Kong person is Chinese. But when you compare him to people from Taiwan or the PRC, he seems to carry some foreign influence ” (Chen, J., 1997, p. 19). Important issues such as identity crisis for Hong Kong people, especially related to the apparent tension in the cultural identity of Hong Kong students, also caught the attention of the academics of Hong Kong’s higher education institutions. A number of scholars noted the identity crisis of the Hong Kong people as a post-war phenomenon that has become more obvious with the onset of the transition to 1997 and the rise of the younger, more educated generation (Postiglione, 1996b). They suggested the existence of two identities in young people of Hong Kong: as Chinese and Hong Kongese. The main reasons behind the crisis of identity are the long-time education policies of the colonial government. “The (colonial) government deliberately choose not to teach Chinese history and culture, nor civics, in the schools” (Chen, M. K., 1996, p. 19). These scholars continued to raise questions about the implications of this problem towards leading to reincorporating Hong Kong with China in 1997 into a society under the arrangement of “one country, two systems.”

The planned return of sovereignty changed that problem also to some degree by leading to the issue of school curriculum modifications. The number and range of school curriculum topics dealing with political awareness increased. Changes in the school curriculum, as noted by Paul Morris, provided much needed legitimacy to a colonial government that was often accused of dragging its feet before introducing opportunities for representative government (1991). Yet the steps the government made towards this end were small and careful. The greatest stress was placed on the responsibilities of good citizenship and not encouraging political involvement. This was reflected in the government guidelines as cited by Postiglione: "In light of Hong Kong's recent political development, evolution should be the watch-word and the emphasis in this guide will be on civic education as a politically socializing force for promoting stability and responsibility," and "Democracy means different things to different people. . . . so education for democracy per se would be difficult to interpret" (1996b, p. 108).

#### Serving local economic development and modernization of China.

The most important contribution higher education can make to the well-being of Hong Kong is, as in the past, the production of high quality manpower both

through initial qualifications and by the growth of continuing education. In the general area of research in the next decade hopefully the higher education institutions will all strengthen their ties with Hong Kong industry and commerce, as well as that in China.

In 1996, more than 50,000 Hong Kong businesses had operations overseas and in the Mainland. Many companies have grown greatly by expanding their operations overseas. For example, many manufacturing companies expand into South China. This has stimulated the growth of other companies in the areas of banking, finance, insurance, real estate, business services, imports and exports, telecommunications, transportation, and legal and accounting services. Equally spectacular has been the emergence of numerous new companies that provide high value added services for specialized markets, although many have fairly small operations. These companies provide services to a large network of businesses and facilities in the region and throughout the world. These developments are likely to continue and grow in the future. They bring enormous opportunities as well as challenges for the higher education system in educating and training a workforce with skills to operate and work in diverse environments. As Hong Kong develops into Asia's economic hub, its workforce will have a better



chance of remaining competitive if it is endowed with these qualities. Two special features among others, on which much more effort needs to be expended, are the multi-lingualism and the students' ability to understand and work readily in both Eastern and Western cultures (UGC Report, 1996).

Although all international contacts are of value, the most important external linkage Hong Kong higher education institutions will have in the future will be with the economy and education system of China. It is expected that educational interdependency will be developed throughout the transition time that will be mutually beneficial and complimentary for Hong Kong and China (Leung, 1992). UGC also agreed in its Interim Report (1993) that the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong to China in 1997 meant that the role of higher education institutions of Hong Kong had to be considered in the context of the Mainland new in ways. The universities of Hong Kong will have frequent contacts with universities in China along with the closer economic and political ties. Areas of great potential for the Hong Kong universities will be in industrial consultancy and services for Chinese enterprises, including governmental agencies concerned with health care and the social services. Hong Kong scholars have expertise that is largely lacking in China's universities. They may also help firms in the West and the Pacific

Rim who wish to do business with or engage in technology transfer to China but prefer to do it through Hong Kong because they understand and trust the infrastructure there than in China. Another development is research carried out by Hong Kong higher education institutions to enhance products made in China by Hong Kong firms because manufacturers apparently find it difficult to get market-oriented research done in China itself (UGC Report, 1996).

Becoming an excellent international center of higher education. The health and vigor of Hong Kong's higher education institutions depends on strong international inputs, including the recruitment of staff and research students from outside Hong Kong and participation in joint teaching and research ventures with overseas partners. This aspect of the extension of Hong Kong's external links is the opportunity for Hong Kong to become an excellent regional center of higher education. There will be an increasing demand for initial, high quality, higher education for young people in south China and other Pacific Rim countries. The one factor likely to dominate the development of Hong Kong's higher education institutions over the next decade, as UGC pointed out (1996), will be perceptions of quality. If Hong Kong universities are regarded as providers of high quality teaching and as

engaged in high quality research, then they have a good chance of becoming regional centers for higher education.

If Hong Kong is to retain a leading position in the commercial and industrial development of China and the Pacific Rim, it will need world-class higher education institutions. It may not be reasonable for Hong Kong to have world-class universities yet, but the Hong Kong universities could each foster a number of excellent groups, recognized internationally on an equal status with their peers in the same subject area. These groups could justify the investment in state-of-the-art facilities and activities which will maintain them among the world leaders. Hopefully, a significant proportion of these “centers of excellence” will be working in areas of direct interest to Hong Kong industry, commerce, and culture, and their existence will precipitate curriculum development which is also locally and regionally oriented (UGC Interim Report, 1993).

#### How the Retrocession Affects the Academics' Work

Hong Kong's academic profession has much to gain or lose in the coming years as it becomes part of the academic community of China. It is more closely bound to Western university traditions and practices than is the case elsewhere in Asia. This gives Hong Kong the potential to influence the

academic profession in China by offering a unique model of successful East-West academic integration. In addition, given the status of intellectuals in China, Hong Kong's reincorporation into China in 1997 could have major implications for its academic freedom and autonomy. (This will be discussed in the following section.) It also has a tremendous potential to influence the education reform process in Hong Kong and in China as well. As Morris (1991) pointed out, the extent of Beijing's influence will be determined by whether it is worked through an educational reform process that is essentially democratic, or exerted through a restructured consultative system designed to align educational developments with Mainland interests. Toward this end the academics of Hong Kong's higher education institutions have the capacity to act as a catalyst for a smooth transition, or as a vehicle of resistance, which in both ways could have a positive and negative effect on the "one country, two system" arrangement.

### The Characteristics of Hong Kong Academics

As previous mentioned, the durability of academic freedom would certainly be related to the degree to which Hong Kong academics maintain a viable international dimension. Again, as Postiglione pointed out:

**The character of the academic profession in Hong Kong is highly international, not only in terms of its composition but also in terms of the academic activities in which its faculty are engaged. This includes publishing articles or books outside of Hong Kong and writing them in non-mother tongue languages . . . Faculty often work collaboratively with academics from outside Hong Kong on a research project, travel outside to study or do research, or serve on the faculty of an institution outside Hong Kong . . . Faculty belongs to an average of two international and two local scientific societies. (1996a, p. 22)**

**What preparations are academic professionals in these higher education institutions making for the transition to China after 1997? Many of them already have extensive contacts with their counterparts in Mainland China through training, exchanges, and collaborative research programs. There are also growing numbers of graduate students from the Mainland who come to Hong Kong for degree programs (Leung, 1992). In addition, some young faculty, originally from China and with Ph.D.s from the United States and other countries, are being recruited to teach in the universities of Hong Kong. But scholars coming directly from China can obtain only short-term visas in Hong Kong. Another disparity and possible source of friction is the fact that salaries for Hong Kong faculty are many times greater than those in China. In fact, they are among the highest in the world. Special benefits for expatriate staff are being eliminated in order to “localize” Hong Kong’s seven government-funded institutions (Postiglione, 1996a).**

The rapid expansion of Hong Kong university enrollments begun in October 1989 was a decision to nearly double the number of students admitted to university first-degree programs by 1994-1995. Referred by the Hong Kong government as crisis management, the sudden expansion acted as a confidence booster in the wake of increased emigration following the Tiananmen crisis. A secondary feature of the expansion was its reliance on public provision for students because many Hong Kong young people had to purchase their higher education in the private sector abroad and many overseas tertiary institutions offered “off-shore” courses in Hong Kong. The expansion, no matter how you look at it, improved the opportunities of secondary school graduates to attend universities in Hong Kong (Morris, McClelland, & Yeung, 1994).

This rapid expansion has not occurred without difficulty. The resulting decrease in student ability levels, especially language ability, has created a need for more effective teaching and increased demands on university administrators to operate more transparently in order to contribute to improved morale and institutional loyalty among the faculty (Postiglione, 1996a).

### The Academics' Influence on the Society in Transition Period

Because Hong Kong is primarily a business and commercial community, and possibly due to the colonial heritage, academics and intellectuals have not enjoyed the influential role placed by scholars within traditional Chinese culture. As Postiglione (1996a) found, despite the influential role reserved for intellectuals in traditional Chinese culture, few Hong Kong faculty agreed that academics are the most influential opinion leaders in their society. Academics from Hong Kong's two East Asian neighbors, Japan and Korea, received the highest scores in an international study that showed their academics were the most influential opinion leaders in society. Almost half of the Hong Kong faculty agreed that respect for academics is declining, though this number was far less than in most countries. Nevertheless, 7 of 10 do not view professional service beyond teaching and research as a distraction or as competing with essential academic work. Most agree that they have a professional obligation to apply their knowledge to problems in society. Postiglione further described:

**The position and influence of the academic profession within Hong Kong society pales in comparison to the commercial and financial sectors. Only one in four surveyed describe academics as among the most influential opinion leaders. [On] The one hand, the expansion of higher education has the potential of enhancing the role of the**

**academic profession. Already academics are becoming more well represented in the legislative and executive organs of government. Yet academics that have risen to influential positions do not constitute a homogeneous group that takes a unified position on most issues. Moreover, those academics that have joined the party commanding the most elected seats in the legislative council of the Hong Kong government stand a strong chance of being isolated by Beijing after 1997. (1996a, p. 21)**

**The concern here is that the academics will lack the unity to become key players in the future struggle over representative democracy in Hong Kong.**

**Another concern is that Hong Kong has lagged behind other Pacific territories in conducting its own research and development at the beginning of the transition period due to the colonial historical reasons. Yet, things are changing during the transition time. Recently there has been a rapid growth in research within the higher education institutions in Hong Kong due to government initiatives and the introduction of an overt funding model of the UGC in which grants depend upon research performance. There is now a flourishing research culture in the academic community. This in turn strengthens academics' influence in the society. In fact, many of the academics have been moving from the periphery toward the center of the society in the past two decades. As M. Li observed: "There were more and**



more of them coming out of the 'ivory tower,' facing the public, and giving responsible comments on politics and economy, for they expressed their concerns and responsibility to Hong Kong, and won respects and admiration from the society" (1987, p. 42).

### Exchange and Working with China's Counterparts

In the future, the development of Hong Kong higher education will increasingly need to take into account the China factor. Since the early 1980s, there has been a growing number of academic exchanges between Hong Kong and the rest of China. Already joint research works, joint teaching arrangements, and visiting scholars have occurred between higher educational institutions of Hong Kong and China. Some were supported by the government funds specifically allocated for these purposes, but the scale is fairly modest (UGC Report, 1996). The early phase of these efforts brought university staffs together but resulted in little substantive cooperative work. The later phase initiated joint cooperative projects between departments or faculties of different institutions. Because of the rapid expansion of higher education in Hong Kong and the brain drain, the Hong Kong Education Commission has advocated short-term contracts be offered to Mainland Chinese scholars (Lueng, 1992). Although, as Postiglione noted

(1991, cited in Morris), the imbalance of these exchanges were in favor of science and engineering until the late 1980s. This kind of experience surely helps the academic professionals of both sides understand each other and learn from each other.

### On the Issues of Academic Freedom and Autonomy

Many of the current debates in Hong Kong involve the different values of the socialist and the capitalist social systems. The Chinese authority resists many of the Western values or has a different understanding of these values. Academic freedom and autonomy are only two of these values related to the education issues.

Academic freedom. Academic freedom and free intellectual inquiry are generally well protected in Hong Kong. However, they may face challenges in the future, as Postiglione (1996) pointed out. The tenure system in Hong Kong's university still protects the critical scholar. Yet, the concern was with the non-tenured, three-year renewable contracts offered to new recruits. These kinds of contracts have shown their potential to make critical academics more vulnerable. Postiglione also worried that:

**Dissident academics could be singled out in the years to come. Institutions may only be willing to protect members of their faculty as long as it does not jeopardize the amount of resources they receive**

from the government. Since the UGC is the major decision maker in resource allocation involving the institutions, the future composition of its members will be important. Academic freedom as an issue will be watched closely in the coming years as an indication of the openness of Hong Kong society, and the vitality of its intellectual life. (1996a, p. 21)

The university leaders of Hong Kong, most of whom are members of Beijing's local advisory committee on Hong Kong, held to their established positions that the transition period would have little impact on higher education. They said that "academic freedom would be preserved and that the international recruitment of faculty members would continue uninterrupted" (Hertling, 1996, p. A39). However, there was still reason for the intellectuals of Hong Kong to worry about their future academic freedom because of the restrictions that the Chinese government puts on the academic freedom at the Mainland's universities and other academic institutions.

PRC has a history of severe academic interference by politicians and has learned a lesson on this issue the hard way. A classic case described by Hayhoe (1996) is that of Ma Yinchu, president of Beijing University in the 1950s and a distinguished economist. Ma published his theory of population in May 1957. His population theory actually was criticized in 1955 by Mao and blocked from presentation at the second session of the National People's

Congress. As a result, Ma was subjected to a series of attacks and forced to resign from the presidency of the university. Under enormous pressure to retract his statement of defense entitled "My Philosophical Thought and Economic theories," he refused to do so. He insisted that the issue was academic rather than political. There is a particular implication in Ma's case. It became increasingly evident in the decades to follow that "China could have been spared some of its most wrenching trauma, if sensible population control policies had been initiated at this time instead of fifteen to twenty years later" (Hayhoe, 1996, p. 91). Despite hard lessons like this, the Chinese government still uses its political standards on the Mainland academics frequently. This raises great concerns for the Hong Kong academic community.

The preservation of considerable academic freedom in Hong Kong universities could be a consensus point of view for a sustained period. It seems most likely that the level of such freedom would be reduced from the status quo, but at least the schools would not completely be tools of the state. The prospect of this consensus, however, suffers from two important deficiencies (Postiglione, 1996a): it is fragile, and it depends on sustained international pressure. How to preserve and use the values of academic

freedom and autonomy wisely remains a question for Hong Kong universities and academics.

**Institutional autonomy.** The Hong Kong higher education institutions enjoy autonomy, a tradition from the British universities (Hayhoe, 1996). Institutional autonomy has many and complex components. According to the UGC report (1996), the institutions of Hong Kong are legally entitled to freedom of action in managing their affairs within the restraints of the laws of Hong Kong. The claim for autonomy rested upon the argument, based on long experience, that the institutions can properly undertake the work expected of them by the community which supports them only if they have freedom of choice and of action. This does not exempt them from public interest and criticism, nor does it mean that their policies should not be under review by themselves and by others.

One of the important areas of institutional autonomy, for example, is in the selection of staff and students. Although pay scales and conditions of employment may require government approval, the individuals appointed to posts, even at the highest level, are ultimately a matter for the institution's Councils alone. Student numbers are determined by the government on the advice of the UGC, but the acceptance or rejection of applicants is entirely a

matter for the institutions. Another example of institutional autonomy is in curricula determination and setting standards, especially the content in the social sciences. These issues are practiced very differently in Mainland China. How should they deal with the books in the libraries which do not agree with the ideology of the Mainland government, or even offend their leaders as some academics worried. Will these be taken away after the retrocession?

### What the SAR Government Should Do for Hong Kong's Future

#### The Future of Hong Kong

The people of Hong Kong have already been forced to accept the reality of 1997. They are not as resistant as they were a decade or so ago when Britain and China first began to negotiate on their future. Whatever the outcome will be after the British leave, China and Hong Kong will have to work out their own destiny. Certainly no one, including Chinese leaders, is exactly sure what will happen. And certainly there are severe limitations as to what outside influences can accomplish, especially in view of China's great resistance to others' interference in its internal affairs. The things that most ease the fears of Hong Kong people are the ongoing economic reforms and changes in lifestyle in Mainland China itself. These things reduced the fears

after 1997 that Hong Kong would be subjected to communism. All of the Chinese at the top positions of the British Hong Kong government were retained. More encouraging news is that Hong Kong entered 1997 in her best economic and financial situation at the Eve of the return (World Journal, 1997). No matter how many disputes China and Britain raised in Hong Kong, they have enormous common interests there and both hope that Hong Kong's stability and prosperity will be maintained. They chose cooperation as the turnover approaches. Probably, this is another opportunity for everybody together to create a new success story.

There are actually many arguments and predictions about Hong Kong's future. Political pessimists argue that if there is prevailing civil alienation, out-migration of professionals, urban riots, and political unrest, then there will be a crisis of confidence among Hong Kong's entrepreneurs and the economic superiority of Hong Kong will quickly erode. Then a large-scale out-migration of capital will follow, depreciating Hong Kong's currency, with a downfall of stock and real estate prices, inflation, and unemployment. Anticipating that the Hong Kong economy could collapse at any moment, Beijing will then be forced to take over, abolish the capitalist market economy, and impose the Chinese style of socialist economy (Davies, 1991).

However, economic optimists argue that Hong Kong will continue to prosper and play a significant role in China's Four Modernizations. Hong Kong is the single largest foreign investor in China and its investment is expanding from Guangdong across the nation. Expanding higher education is producing a higher level of human resources to replace the migrants, and there is a massive return of migrants to Hong Kong after they have fulfilled the residence requirement and cannot find a decent living overseas. Thus, the optimists believe, the Hong Kong economy will continue to prosper in the late 1990s, and Hong Kong people just had a false alarm on the 1997 issue. On the other hand, China's economic problems are getting more severe. The Pearl River Delta economy is the only bright spot for the Chinese nation. That region will become China's most advanced economy and most influential political region (Kwok & So, 1995).

### The Future of Hong Kong's Higher Education

Education has a two-fold function in society--conservative and creative. The conservative function mirrors the characteristics of a particular society at a particular time. In this respect, as Hong Kong has close ties with China, and in view of the increasing influence of China over Hong Kong, the Hong Kong education system has to make constant changes to adapt to the



**new situation with China. With the creative function, education changes will contribute as a leading force of social change. To operate this function effectively, Hong Kong should make a conscious effort to raise its educational standards, to continue its present education reforms, and to increase its international linkage to offer impetus and examples for future economic and educational development in China.**

**Issues of concern for academics in the Transition Period. Postiglione (1996a) researched issues which concerned academics the most during the transition period. They were: (a) protecting free intellectual inquiry, (b) strengthening the society's capacity to compete internationally, (c) educating students for leadership, and (d) helping to solve basic social problems. Faculty were asked to rank nine selected global issues based on which ones should have the highest priority for government. They were rank ordered: basic education; environmental quality; human rights; world economy; AIDS and other health-related issues; population growth; racial, ethnic, and religious conflict; arms control; and world food supply.**

**In agreement with the need to strengthen the society's capacity to compete internationally, Hong Kong academics are greatly concerned with science and technology education's ability to meet the needs and**

development of industry and commerce in Hong Kong at the beginning of the transition (Zee, 1985). Show (1997) pointed out that, "Hong Kong might have become a center for science and technology. . . Unfortunately, the colonial government invested little in science education until the belated opening of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in 1991" (p. 58). Yet the academics always move ahead of the government to this end. After research, Young and Kao (1991) identified four areas which matched the condition of Hong Kong: (a) information technology, (b) biotechnology, (C) materials technology, and (d) environmental technology.

Future scenarios for Hong Kong higher education. Three broad options are related to school politics and educational change in Hong Kong's transitional period (Postiglione, 1996a). Each deals in a different way with reconciling emerging problems. The first option, mostly in the short run, sees maintenance of the status quo. The second option hinges on increased democratization of the society, which would bring the pluralism of Hong Kong schools more into the forefront of the reform process. The third option envisions the replacement of the influence of one central government by another and sees the shoring up of traditional consultative mechanisms to ensure support for educational changes with greater influence exerted by

those individual schools and groups of schools having or building closer ties with Mainland institutions.

As 1997 was approaching, the UGC also came up with three related possible scenarios on the future of the Hong Kong higher institutions. They described them as follows:

(I) The institutions should limit their interests to local student recruitment and the local labor market. Teaching might gradually be given more and more in Cantonese. In time, the institutions could become indistinguishable from many similar ones in the neighboring province.

(II) The institutions should limit their interests to local recruitment and the local labor market, but should make a positive stand on bilingualism. This would require much more effort than is being made at present. Their graduates would be distinguished from those in the hinterland primarily because of their communication skills (including fluency in English) and this would help to maintain Hong Kong's international position.

(III) The institutions should incorporate centers of excellence having local, regional, and international functions. They should provide very high quality bilingual manpower for both Hong Kong and the hinterland and should act as points of reference, particularly in Business and Social Studies and in innovative science and technology for developments in Southern China and more widely. Some undergraduate students and many postgraduate students would be recruited from outside Hong Kong. (UGC Interim Report, 1993, p. 5)

The third scenario was the one favored by the UGC, since it believed that if Hong Kong is to retain a leading position in the commercial and industrial development of China and the Pacific Rim, it will need world-class

higher education institutions. This is extremely important to Hong Kong's future, as Show (1997) appealed,

No city I know of has attained greatness without being a home for great universities and a magnet for creative talent. Rome, Paris, New York, London--many of the finest institutions are either in or within driving distance of them. Beijing and Shanghai were such centers before 1949 and are slowly returning to their former glory. Hong Kong never was such a center, and will have to struggle to become one. (p. 58)

### Summary

After a century and a half of the British rule, Hong Kong had become a prosperous modern city of 6.2 million people. Hong Kong entered a fundamental transition period as the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration mandated the end of British colonialism and the sovereignty retrocession to China on July 1, 1997. Contradictions arose during this transitional period between China and Britain because of their differences in culture, values, ideologies, interests, and their struggle for pre-1997 control. This left many problems unsolved which cause great worry and confusion to the Hong Kong people.

Real success for the reintegration of Hong Kong and China will depend solely upon the faithful actualization of the Basic Law provisions and proper functioning of SAR institutions. The real challenge will be in winning the

allegiance of the 6 million Hong Kong Chinese who are no longer British colonial subjects but are fast becoming Chinese nationals with all their rights and aspirations of the People's Republic of China's SAR. As M. K. Chen (1996) described, even discounting the differences between Communism and capitalism, serious problems will remain after 1997 because there are sharp discrepancies between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong in terms of: (a) size, scale, and magnitude; (b) level of socioeconomic development, income, and lifestyle; (c) popular mentality, ideo-cultural orientation, and world-view; and (d) legal, political, and economic systems and administrative practices. Given the above situations, to overcome the existing and potential problems would require from both sides considerable restraint, tolerance, patience, goodwill, and trust. How PRC copes with this Hong Kong challenge will affect both its cherished reunification with Taiwan and its relations with Hong Kong's many global partners including the United States and other industrial countries.

Hong Kong now is entering a period of rapid political and social change. The transfer of sovereignty will obviously accelerate the links with China and the movement of labor between China and Hong Kong, although both are already occurring. Two advantages which Hong Kong graduates

possess in making their way in the global village are they are already used to working in two cultures, and they are speaking the international language for both business and science--English.

Could intellectuals of Hong Kong higher education institution make an important contribution to the transformation in this historical moment? Hong Kong's higher education system bears the characteristics of colonial heritage and Westernization. Some studies show that the faculty and administrators have not been the most influential opinion leaders in the society despite the fact that academic freedom has been well protected in Hong Kong. As is mostly the case in Western academic circles, Hong Kong academics who have risen to influential positions do not constitute a homogeneous group taking unified positions on most issues. But it is this heterogeneous nature of academics with differing perspectives that make for better understanding of the problems and opportunities that exist during the transformation.

As to the future interaction and exchange with the higher educational institutions on Mainland China, Hong Kong universities should have opportunities to have influence on and make contributions to the educational system of China and vice versa. To this end, Chinese universities also have had a history of interaction and exchange with Western universities, with

reversions from time to time. This is strengthened by the recent years of an open-door policy of the Chinese government. However, there are still many problems to be solved: how far the new master will constrain the academic freedom and autonomy of the higher education institutions; the adaptation of the standard Chinese (Mandarin) language to the SAR and how it will affect the education system; and what curricula content needs to be changed, especially in the political and social science areas.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction of Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate, using qualitative case study methodology, the unique position Hong Kong universities and their academic professionals might have during the transition time after the territory returns to China in 1997. What was their vision for actualization of the "one country, two systems"? What did they think their position as a whole would be after the retrocession? What kind of problems and opportunities would they face? And how might they help in this difficult and problematic time? These and more specific questions were the foci of this case study in which the combined perceptions of selected participants were considered as a case and each individual was regarded as a sub-case for an interview.

The participants were selected faculty and administrators of the two major institutions of higher education of Hong Kong (University of Hong Kong and Chinese University of Hong Kong). Their experience of transition in higher education is discussed in the broader context of the transition of the society of Hong Kong. These study subjects were to represent the leaders in



their academic areas at the universities of Hong Kong. They had been identified by two key informants who were familiar with the Hong Kong higher education community. The study examined their perceptions and interpretations of the situation of Hong Kong higher education during the transition period. Through interviews conducted with these individuals, the researcher attempted to investigate below the surface of the official pronouncements. Therefore, this is not an experimental study in search of generalization, but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is an interpretation that derives from the elaborated responses of the interviewees who provided insight into the affective and cognitive underpinnings of the respondents' perceptions.

This methodology chapter will discuss the following issues: (a) the theory basis; (b) the design of the study; (c) limitations and leading initial research questions; (d) experience, possible input, and bias of the researcher; (e) procedures; (f) the collection of data; and (g) data analysis. An interview protocol is also attached (see Appendix A).

### The Theory Basis

Social scientists define theory in different ways. Some of their positions are attributable to their alignment with either the positivist paradigm

or the interpretivist paradigm. Positivists assume that phenomena are best understood by objective observations or measurements that produce empirically verifiable results; they view theory as a set of propositions that explain and predict the relationships among phenomena (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Interpretivists such as Denzin (1988) offer a different understanding of theory, which is neither explanation nor prediction. It is interpretation, or the act of making sense out of a social interaction. Theory building proceeds by "thick description," defined as "description that goes beyond the mere or bare reporting of an act (thin description), but describes and probes the intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations and circumstances of action" (Denzin, 1988, p. 39).

The interpretivist position is the theoretical basis of this study. Interpretivist theory views the goal of theorizing as providing understanding of direct "lived experience" instead of abstract generalizations. Lived experience emphasizes that experience is not just cognitive, but also includes emotions. Interpretive scholars consider that every human situation is novel, emergent, and filled with multiple, often conflicting meanings and interpretations. The interpretivist attempts to capture the core of these meanings and contradictions (Denzin, 1988). Considering the differences of

cultures and ideologies involved in different sides of the question of Hong Kong, a post-modernist perspective is also incorporated into the study which believed that “Reality is the result of the social processes accepted as a normal in a specific context” (Rosenau, 1992, p. 111).

A qualitative case approach is chosen for this study for two reasons: first, the researcher found mostly descriptive, survey-based reports in the field with few in-depth qualitative studies available; and second, the complexity of the social context of the study is of important, that is the complex nature of the higher education system in Hong Kong, the problematic transition process, and the broad social context of this case. Therefore, the researcher felt that the phenomena and process existing in a rapidly changing context was complex and better suited for a case study created through in-depth interviews than another methodology. As cited in Stake (1988) Louis Smith defined a case study as "the study of a bounded system," in this case, the academic community of the two oldest Hong Kong universities. “The crux of this definition is having some conception of the unity or totality of a system with some kind of outlines or boundaries” (Stake, p. 255). Merriam also described a case study as an "examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group"

(1988, p. 9). A broad-scale approach to understand the case was drawn from the assumption that qualitative research is directed to understanding phenomena in their fullest possible complexity (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

The major research technique of this case study is described as “key-informant interviewing” (Wolcott, 1988, p. 188) in ethnographic research in education. This type of qualitative inquiry is based on the interpretivist paradigm which can better facilitate the researcher’s attempt to investigate the complexity of the Hong Kong higher education transformation in the transition period. Glesne and Peshkin stated qualitative inquiry “is an umbrella term for various philosophical orientations to interpretive research. For example, qualitative researchers might call their work ethnography, case study, phenomenology, educational criticism, or several other terms” (1992, p. 9), which is well suited to the examination of the academic community of Hong Kong as a social group and the transitional process and its close linkage to the social and historical context of this study. The philosophical basis of this study was described by Smith (1986):

**Social reality is not something that exists external to or independent of us; rather it is a reality that is humanly constructed or shaped through social interactions. This constructed reality is a product of the meanings people give to their interactions with others and of the meanings social investigators give to their interactions with subjects**

**and with each other. Inquiry is a matter of interpreting the interpretations of others. . . . all of the parts of a society were interconnected, and social phenomena could only be understood if their functions were defined within the social organism. (p. 42)**

**This pertains to the case of the higher education system of Hong Kong in the transition process. The nature of collaboration of the participants within the chosen context involves a complex communication process having various components which will not be easily placed into distinct categories. Consequently, the attempt will be made to approach the study from a holistic perspective.**

### **Design of the Study**

**This study is designed as a qualitative case study in which the selected faculty and administrators of the two sites (the Hong Kong University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong) as a whole are considered as a case, and each category of participants is regarded as a representative sample of the study selected through the method of purposeful-sampling (Patton, 1989). This approach is applied under the consideration as Stake (1988) stated: "A case study that portrays an educational problem in all its personal and social complexity is a precious discovery. . . . It is a complex, dynamic system. We want to understand its complexity" (p. 254). And also as Wolcott (1988)**

stated: "The ethnographer, like other social scientists, is concerned with the issue of 'representativeness' but approaches that problem differently, by seeking to locate the particular case under study among other cases"

(p. 203). In this case study, the researcher was trying to look at the perceptions of the selected academic faculty and administrators as a whole and to analyze the differences of their perceptions individually, to derive different ideas and common themes for a final interpretation. Traditionally, case studies rely much more on the researcher's extensive observation, but given the scope of the academic community and time range of the transition period, this study was designed under the assumption that the selected informants had been observing the transition of the retrocession along with the full process of the transformation of the Hong Kong society.

Therefore, as mentioned before, the major research technique for this study is "key-informant interviewing." This approach, as Wolcott (1988) described,

. . . flies quite in the face of a prevailing notion in education research that truth resides only in large numbers. Informant has a special meaning--it refers to an individual in whom one invests a disproportionate amount of time because that individual appears to be particularly well informed, articulate, approachable, or available. For the anthropological linguist, one key informant is as large a sample as

one needs to work out the basic grammar of an unknown language.  
(p. 195)

Although the research plan is organized around the activity of interviews, other research techniques were also applied: collected related documents and written materials, observed and participated in academic activities at the site universities, and sought advice and talked informally with the faculty and administrators at these universities. The detailed procedure will be described in the following sections.

#### Focus Limitations and Initial Research Guiding Frames

This study was limited to the examination of certain research themes identified at the outset of the investigation. As Hong Kong became a focus of attention during the 1997 transition, many of the scholars studied various aspects of this situation. But the complexity and richness of this issue invited varying approaches from different perspectives. Interviewing was selected as the primary method of data collection because it would hopefully allow the investigator to access deeper levels of the issues while keeping a broad view of the whole picture. One result of the study might be to establish baseline data to be used as a basis for further research in each of the issues.

Guiding frames of the study that provided the basis for questions included:

1. The meaning of "one country, two systems" for Hong Kong people and Hong Kong's higher education system;
2. The change of position of Hong Kong higher education in the transition period during its retrocession to China;
3. How the retrocession affects the academics' work regarding the issues such as academic freedom and autonomy of the higher institutions;
4. What do academics of Hong Kong think the Special Administrative Region government should do to the future development of Hong Kong as well as Hong Kong's higher education system?

#### **Experience, Possible Input, and Bias of the Researcher**

The researcher completed his undergraduate degree in a teacher's college in China and an advanced school administration program in Oklahoma as a visiting scholar. He also earned a master's degree in educational psychology from the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). He had experiences as both an educational administrator and researcher in a provincial education commission in China before coming to the University of Northern Iowa. He participated in several large international projects of educational research and investigations plus many local educational research projects. His seven years in the United States studying in different



educational graduate programs gave him an opportunity to compare the Western educational system with the Chinese socialist educational system. Also, through family linkages in Hong Kong, he kept close track of the important events and social issues in Hong Kong. He speaks and reads Cantonese, the primary language in Hong Kong, as well as Mandarin.

Considering the fact that many studies on Hong Kong higher education were conducted by scholars from the West as well as those from Hong Kong, this researcher provided a Mainland Chinese perspective gained through his experience in the People's Republic of China. It is understood that these perceptions may be biased. Eisner (1991) has stated, "Bias occurs because of omission as well as commission, and since there is no form of representation that includes everything, in this particular sense, all forms of representation are biased" (pp. 239-240).

### Procedures

Generally speaking, a research method is a set of orderly, systematic procedures applied in pursuit of knowledge. In this case, the method is the perception and interpretation of selected Hong Kong academics regarding the change of the Hong Kong higher education system and the society in the transition process under the arrangement of "one country, two systems." The

following sections describe in detail the rationale of selecting research sites, participants, and a method of collecting data.

**Characteristics of the academic staff.** Higher education is an important employer in Hong Kong with a total full-time workforce of some 17,000 of whom 5,000 are teaching or research staff in the University Grant Committee (UGC) funded institutions. In 1994-1995, about 30% of the academic staff received their own higher education in Hong Kong. Within the UGC institutions, 20% of the teaching and research staff have first degrees from universities in the United Kingdom, 15% from universities in the United States, and 5% each from universities of China, Taiwan, and Canada. Partly because of rapid expansion, there are many relatively junior staffs. Only 22% of the academic staffs are in senior grades: professor, reader, and senior lecturer (UGC Report, 1996).

The staffing of individual institutions is heavily Westernized. Most obvious is the University of Hong Kong (UHK) which teaches in English and prides itself on the fact that its faculty are internationally recruited. The situation at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) is different because it conducts most of its teaching in Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), and therefore would not be expected to have as many expatriates.

However, even the local faculty are also Westernized in their background, and a high proportion of its faculty have degrees from Western universities. In this transition toward the “one country, two systems” arrangement, an academic professional group is emerging that will be younger and increasingly local rather than international (Postiglione, 1996b).

Identification of the participants. The “maximum variation” approach of purposeful sampling (Patton, 1989) was used to select participants for this study. Maximum variation sampling can refer to both sites and people (Tagg, 1985). “The range of people and sites from which the people are selected should be fair to the larger population” (Patton, 1989, p. 42). These considerations are all reflected in the following criteria used.

A key-informant from each of the two selected universities was asked to provide a list of approximately 15 prospective faculty and administrators for possible interviewing. The two key-informants were Dr. Robert Leestamper and Dr. Gerard Postiglione. Dr. Leestamper was the Director for Research and Development of the Hong Kong-America Center at the Chinese University of Hong Kong whose expertise is in higher educational administration. He also served as Assistant Vice President for International Programs and Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University

of Northern Iowa. Dr. Postiglione is the President of the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong and associate professor at the University of Hong Kong whose expertise is comparative higher education. They were asked to identify interviewees who could shed light on the research topic due to their special expertise or perspectives. The following criteria were used to select interviewees:

**Have a record of scholarly productivity in their discipline, or hold rank as a senior administrator, or be acknowledged as an opinion leader.**

**Represent the various views of Hong Kong, Mainland, and the expatriate community, as well as different political opinions.**

**Be primarily from senior tenured ranks: senior lecturer, associate professors, and professors.**

**Have worked at least 6 years at the university.**

The major criterion for appropriateness, as Seidman (1991) described, “is whether the subject of the researcher’s study is central to the participant’s experience” (p. 39).

When the interview list was finalized, a cover letter and a return letter (see Appendix B) was sent to each of 30 prospective participants of the study with a brief description of the purpose and intent of the study and some major related definitions. The participants were asked about their interests and their permission for the interview. Upon receipt of return letters indicating their

interest and participation, a confirmed list of 25 selected participants was finalized.

### Description of the Sites

The selected sites--the University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Chinese University--are the two largest and oldest universities in all Hong Kong's higher education institutions. The oldest current institution is the University of Hong Kong, founded in 1911, but it incorporated a College of Medicine that had been established in 1887. The Chinese University of Hong Kong was formed in 1963 by the amalgamation of three post-secondary colleges: New Asia (1949), Chung Chi (1951), and United (1956). A fourth college, Shaw College, was established in 1968. The rationale for selecting these two sites is because the rest of the higher education institutions are either newly founded or were elevated to university level during the recent expansions. Many of the staff and faculty at these new or upgraded universities are relatively new, while the two selected institutions have a long stable staff and faculty. The selected institutions are more research oriented. In fact, they are the only universities which conduct research in most disciplines and both have high level links with industry or community. (The Hong Kong University of Technology and Science is also research oriented.

It was founded in the most recent expansion and is only three years old so its faculty is relatively new.) Both of the selected institutions have more professional schools and the strongest international level of faculties in the region. Therefore, the academic professionals who know Hong Kong and is most familiar with the history of the relationship among Britain, China, and Hong Kong are most likely to be found in these two universities. The University of Hong Kong is located in Hong Kong Island and Hong Kong Chinese University is located in the New Territory.

### The Collection of Data

In-depth interviews were the main method of data collection in this study because it is assumed that the faculty and administrators, working and living in Hong Kong, were observant and had thoughtful ideas about the retrocession and transition. The type of interview technique used was as Wolcott (1988) named "key-informant interviewing" (p. 194). The idea of this approach was to allow those in the setting whose perspectives were deemed especially valuable to give their perception of their world.

### The Interview Protocol

Since the interviews were the major means of collecting data for this study, preparing the interview protocol, the procedure, and guidelines of the

interviews were very important. A protocol was constructed for interviewing the selected faculty and administrators in the two universities. The protocol is an instrument that states rules and procedures to be followed during the course of the study. The features of the protocol for the investigations included an overview of the project, the field procedures, the questions guiding the study, and an outline or format for the final report. (See Appendix A for the proposed protocol.)

The overview of this case study project consisted of background information needed to explain the development of the project. It also consisted of the relevant issues being investigated and any literature important to the issues. The literature reflected the guiding research frames and the theoretical importance of the topic.

The research questions, focal points, and possible prompts posed in the protocol served as a reminder to the investigator of the information to be collected during the course of the study. These questions only served as guidelines for interviews, not necessarily to be followed exactly. The protocol also included an outline or format for reporting the data. This enabled the researcher to keep data organized.

Creating research questions with the advice of facilitators or testing a pilot study was advisable. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stated, "A pilot study can test many aspects of your proposed research . . . . The idea is not to get data per se, but to learn about our research process, interview schedule, observation techniques, and yourself" (p. 30). A properly organized pilot study, with people as close to the realities of the actual study as possible, is a desirable procedure. To improve interview questions and the data collection procedures for the plan, the researcher conducted a pilot test with three of the Chinese faculty at the University of Northern Iowa.

A formal pilot study with the population in Hong Kong was not feasible for this study because of the site distance from the University of Northern Iowa. Rather, Peshkin's idea was proposed--that the researcher design "a period of piloting that encompasses the early days of interviewing with the actual respondents" (1992, p. 68). Toward this end, a pilot study was done. This began with a test of the interview protocol with four faculty members at the University of Northern Iowa prior to the researcher's departure for Hong Kong. Of these four faculty members, three were from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China. The pilot continued in the few days immediately upon the arrival of the researcher in Hong Kong. The results of



this pilot led to the refinement of the questions for the beginning of the formal interviewing process of the 25 related respondents.

### Interviews

Following an introduction of the researcher, the brief idea and purpose of the study, and some warm-up questions and discussion, the interview was preceded to the formal questions on the first frame, starting with a confidence scale towards the "one country, two systems" arrangement. (See the scale in the interview protocol.)

Under each of the frames, a semi-structured interview followed the list of questions. Prompts were also followed by an open free style discussion in which the investigator asked questions of the participants regarding their perception of the "one country, two systems" concept, their view of the position of Hong Kong higher education in the transition, academic freedom, and the suggestions for priorities of what should be done. The second frame discussion started with three possible scenarios for future Hong Kong higher education institutions. (These scenarios were drawn from the UGC 1996 Report and are introduced in the literature review chapter.) Questions regarding the position of Hong Kong's higher education systems in the transition period and beyond were discussed. All interviews were

prearranged and scheduled through written or verbal communication with the participants. Interviews were held before or after school or during contract time designated available to participants.

When the investigator met with the participant, he also mentioned the protection of identity, the procedures for the course of the study, the reporting of data, and the time needed. A one-hour session was planned for an average interview, but if both the investigator and the participant agreed, the time could be extended or arrangements were made for another interview session. The researcher attempted to establish a rapport with the participants if possible prior to interview sessions by finding an opportunity to meet and talk with them. Extra effort might be needed with some participants whose political background and philosophical perspective differed from most of the other participants.

When a tape recorder was used during the interview, the participant might ask for the tape recorder to be shut off for a few moments due to the sensitive nature of a discussion. After such interviews, the researcher would dictate into the tape recorder a summary of the conversation held when the recorder was shut off. Other interview techniques are found in the Interview Principles and Guidelines in Appendix A.

The next section on data analysis includes the criteria needed for judging the quality of the study and the treatment of the data collected.

### Data Analysis

#### Judging Research Design Quality

The quality of a research design for a case study, as in other forms of research, involves the examination of procedures which might affect the credibility of data. The researcher incorporated a self-monitoring procedure of moving back and forth among the data, documentary sources, and field notes as a process of analysis and synthesis which subjected the research process to continuous evaluation. This incorporation of multiple data sources, investigators, and theoretical perspectives would increase confidence in research findings (Denzin, 1988). Yin (1984) also suggested several approaches to ensure the credibility of the data, which included the establishment of a chain of evidence and a review of a draft report.

Three data gathering techniques dominate in qualitative inquiry: participant observation, interview, and document collection. For this study, interviewing was the principle method of data collection. Documents were also collected and analyzed. Participant observations were conducted, but to a lesser extent than the above methods. The interview procedure was

adopted from what Seidman (1991) called the three-interview series. This first considers the establishment of the context and history of the participant's experience, second, allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which they occur, and third, encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them. Again, it was expected that the perceptions of the interview participants would be influenced by the interactions between environmental, historical, economic, organizational, and ideological factors existing within the context of the transition time of Hong Kong. A set of research questions and possible prompts related to each of the above study frames for the possible discussions of these factors was developed for the research protocol which will be described below. (See the actual protocol at Appendix A.)

Within each technique, a wide variety of practices can be carried out. The qualitative researcher draws on some combination of techniques to collect research data, rather than a single technique. The principle here is that the more sources tapped for understanding, the more believable the findings. To figure out what techniques to use depends on what you want to learn. Different questions have different implications for data collection. Approaches to different participants might also require adjusting the tactics.

As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) advised: “Choose techniques that are likely to 1) elicit data needed to gain understanding of the phenomenon in question, 2) contribute different perspectives on the issue, and 3) make effective use of time” (p. 24). A researcher’s approach to different participants might also require adjusting the interview tactics.

Another course taken by the researcher to ensure credibility of the data was to seek assistance from an advisor in the field or others not involved in the research directly throughout the course of the data collection and analysis stages of the study. Also help was asked of the dissertation committee when developing theories regarding the meanings and patterns discovered.

### Treatment of Data

The researcher searched for data which identified important meanings and patterns and coded chunks of data, or exemplars, utilizing identifying terms for later sorting. Once all data were coded, the researcher reread the coded data and sorted the information into categories for pattern matching and linkage for developing theories. The researcher attempted to rule out alternative interpretations of the data, and/or developed ideas for future study by applying an explanation-building technique to analyze the existing data. Each case of participants was compared to other cases to test

the matching and different patterns of meaning in order to build explanations within the themes that emerge. These explanations were then revised while continually being checked against other data as appropriate so that emerging propositions could be reformulated. The meanings for each theme were then defined and described.

### Summary

This chapter focused on the methodology used during the course of the investigation. The rationale for choosing the qualitative (interpretive) case study design was illuminated and the theoretical and conceptual perspective of the researcher was described. The case selection, data collection, and data analysis procedures were also delineated.

A qualitative case study design was chosen for this study for several reasons. First, the complex social context within which the study was conducted is important since the researcher felt the phenomena and process existing in such a dramatic moment against a rapid changing background was too complex for other means of research. Second, the researcher found that most of the research conducted in this area were surveys with little if any in-depth interviews. Third, a broad-scale approach to understanding was

**drawn from the assumption that qualitative research notably was directed to understanding phenomena in their fullest possible complexity.**

**The case study proposed 20-30 participants involved in the investigation of several aspects of each participant's perceptions which related to each research question under one of the four themes influenced by the interactions between historical, political, economical, organizational, and ideological factors existing within the context of the transition period of Hong Kong back to China.**

**A brief description of the experience and possible bias of the researcher was also presented. The habit of the researcher in closely tracking the political and economic situation of Hong Kong as well as China is significant to this study.**

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of the interviews in line with the research questions. The findings will be presented in the following order:

- (a) arrival and initial preparation for the interviews (including the general atmosphere of Hong Kong at the eve of the retrocession, the starting process of the investigation at the site, the pilot study, and the interviews);
- (b) perceptions regarding "one country, two systems" (issues including confidence in the arrangement of "one country, two systems," separation of politics and economy, and "Asian values" vs. democracy); and
- (c) perceptions regarding Hong Kong higher education. This last section will discuss the two research questions related to Hong Kong higher education. The first question is (a) on the repositioning of Hong Kong's higher education system including the rapid expansion of the higher education system, (b) training leaders for Hong Kong's future, (c) serving the goal of China's modernization, and (d) designing a regional excellent center of higher learning. The second question looks at how the retrocession will affect work of academics including (a) teaching to changing students in



a changing environment, (b) localization and maintaining international status, (c) research and academic freedom, (d) the academics' influence on the society, (e) suggestions for the Special Administrative Region (SAR) government, and (f) summary.

### Arrival and Initial Preparation of the Interview

#### The General Atmosphere of Hong Kong at the Eve of the Retrocession

I arrived in Hong Kong at the end of April 1997 with great excitement. As a doctoral student, I felt fortunate that I had such an opportunity actually to witness a historical event--the retrocession of Hong Kong--and to research it. I went out the next day to observe "Central," the downtown area in Hong Kong Island and Kowloon's Mongkok. Hong Kong is always a mysterious city to me although I have visited it several times before and have had many relatives and friends there. After 13 years of transition time, the territory was approaching the eve of the return to Chinese rule. People here seemed calm and as busy as usual in their daily life. The Hong Kong people chose not to follow the example of other British colonies (e.g., India) in engaging in an outpouring of emotion through burning the Union Jack as the British were about to withdraw. Rather, the people of Hong Kong said good-bye to their colonial overseer in a more reserved

fashion. I was impressed that the salespeople at the stores addressed me with good Mandarin when they sensed me as a non-local. The Hong Kong people usually did not like to speak Mandarin and spoke it terribly when they did. The businessmen sponsored a several-mile-long light dragon for the celebration of retrocession on Nathan Road of Kowloon while they were busy making sales during this big event. There were stories in the newspapers about how the British felt as they were leaving, of how confident the businessmen were in the future of Hong Kong, and of how journalists worried about their freedom of expression. Many books in Chinese and English addressed the past, the present, and the future of Hong Kong covering topics of economics, politics, and education. The moods and feelings were mixed in Hong Kong and made one feel certain that this was a pluralistic and business oriented city. I found the two selected university sites in the second and third day of my arrival. The atmosphere there was pretty much like that in the city. Celebration signs mixed with wall-papers of political debates between students' organizations posted around the building-boards at the academic departments and canteens. Pamphlets, student newspapers, and fliers talking about democracy and change-over delivered at the door-ways of campus stores and students' dorms. An

incident of a group of students confronted the authority at the Hong Kong University when officials tried to put a June 4 statue in front of the library. These all showed that the political awareness at the two campuses was rising.

### Starting the Investigation Process at the Sites

Having settled down at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), I discussed my research plan and began to construct an initial list of potential interviewees for the CUHK in detail with a key informant of my study, Dr. Robert Leestamper. Dr. Leestamper was a Fulbright scholar and the director for research and development of the Hong Kong-America Center at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He was the Assistant Vice President for International Programs and Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs of the University of Northern Iowa before he came to Hong Kong. He encouraged me to take part in some of the academic exchange activities and to meet more people related to the Asian Study Center, which is located in the same building with the Hong Kong-America Center. I found an active educational exchange program at the Asian Study Center and I met other academics from Hong Kong, China, the United States, and other countries who were interested in research on issues of

Hong Kong and China. Of course, I had excellent opportunities to meet and get acquainted with some of the faculty and academic administrators from the two sites I selected, the Hong Kong University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Later, two of these administrators were helpful to me in my study. One was the new vice chancellor of the Hong Kong University and the other was graduate dean of Chinese University of Hong Kong.

A few days later, I went to the Hong Kong University (HKU) to meet with the other key informant of my study, Dr. Gerard Postiglione, president of the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong and associate professor at the University of Hong Kong, who is also a top scholar in the field of my study. Dr. Leestamper introduced him to me. We discussed my plan and the initial list of potential interviewees at HKU. Dr. Postiglione gave me a lot of useful advice and helped me determine how to contact those prospective interviewees selected. During our discussion, one of the target interviewees, a local faculty member, came in the office. This encounter foreshadowed some difficulties I could expect in this process. Dr. Postiglione introduced me to him and said, "You can interview him." After a brief explanation of my project, the local faculty member said, "No, no, I am very busy right

now; I don't have time for this." I said, "Come on, I need your help. We can schedule whenever it is convenient for you." He responded, "Please go find someone else." I said in a joking manner, "No, I like you and I am going to catch you!" "No, no, please don't catch me, please don't catch me," the person begged as he retreated from the office. This gave me a feeling that later proved true that there would be problems interviewing some of these people because they might be fearful of speaking on sensitive issues.

Later, for example, one person at the Faculty of Education in CUHK changed his mind about the interview right at the beginning of the interview session when I took out my tape recorder and asked him to sign the informed consent form. He said he never thought it was that formal. However, I managed to talk to him informally and took notes afterwards. This instance was an example of how much political pressure was put on some of these people at that time. Still later, one of the expatriates at CUHK objected to the anonymous research design of my study which he thought would allow the researcher to manipulate the data and results. Instead of signing the letter of consent, that professor wrote me a letter indicating that he wanted me to reveal his name if I used his words (see Appendix D). However, I

**maintained the anonymity, considering the political pressure on the local faculty and administrators. With the help of the two key informants, Dr. Leestamper and Dr. Postiglione, I finally developed a list of prospective interviewees.**

**When I finished preparing the list of the selected interviewees with their office location, phone number, and e-mail address, 10 days had passed. I started to contact these people by phone and e-mail. Some of them immediately agreed to an interview after I explained my study project and how I selected them; most of these people were expatriates. But I soon found out that some of the local faculty members were trying to avoid me. I changed my strategy at once. I made appointments to meet with the vice chancellor of the Hong Kong University and the graduate dean of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, asking them to help me. They introduced me to some of the deans in different colleges and asked them for assistance in helping me to obtain interviews. In this way, I finally reached almost all of the people on my list and started to schedule interview times with them. I decided to schedule interviews first at Hong Kong University because of the difficulty in getting there; it would take me a couple of hours by train and then by bus to travel from CUHK to HKU.**

### The Pilot Study

After arriving in Hong Kong, I had to finish my “built-in” pilot study. The pilot study included two parts as discussed in Chapter 3. The first part was conducted at the campus of the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) testing the interview protocol on some of the UNI faculty and making the necessary adjustments. The second part, the “built-in” part, would be conducted at an actual site at a Hong Kong higher education institution. For this part, I conducted interviews with two professors at the Baptist University of Hong Kong, and I soon analyzed the results and determined the strategies needed for the actual research interviews. Both built-in interviews went very well except for the research questions about academic freedom. I decided to adjust that question, because in the pilot interviews I found when we discussed the topic of how the retrocession would affect the professors’ work we naturally talked a lot about academic freedom. Therefore, I believed it was appropriate to put the issue of academic freedom under the question of how the retrocession affected the academics’ work. I also made a few other minor adjustments concerning some related prompt questions and the way I should approach the local academics. I reflected on these results and discussed them with Dr. Leestamper and Dr. Postiglione.

I finally felt that I was confident enough to do the actual interviews for the study. I then started full scale data collection with the selected participants.

### The Interviews

I began the interviews with a professor of political science at CUHK. I chose him deliberately because I expected that he could give me a better picture of the political context which could serve as a background for my study. I felt later that I had made a correct decision on this because this person did give me a very clear context and timeline of the period for my study, which is used in the section of perceptions regarding the "one country, two systems."

The following tables present the profiles of the interviewees:

Table 1

### Field of Study

Field of Study	HKU		CUHK	
	Faculty	Administrator	Faculty	Administrator
NS (Natural science)	4	1	3	1
SS (Social science)	6	1	8	1
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>



Table 2

Nationality

Nationality	HKU	CUHK
Chinese	6	9
Expatriates	6	4

Note. Chinese: 3 Mainlander 2 Taiwanese 10 Local  
 Expatriates: 3 British 1 Canadian 1 Australian 1 Japanese 4 American

Table 3

Longevity of Service in Hong Kong Universities

Longevity	HKU	CUHK
13 years or more	10	11
6 to 12 years	2	2

Table 4

Genders

Gender	HKU	CUHK
Male	11	13
Female	1	1

Note. Although the later analysis did not find significant pattern related to the different demographic and type of the groups, the researcher thought that the above tables still provided useful information regarding the study.

Perceptions Regarding “One Country, Two Systems”

Confidence in “One Country, Two Systems”

The professor of political science at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) gave me the following brief description of the political background of the transition period during my first interview. He explained that by the time the retrocession was first announced in 1984, Beijing had already begun the economic reform by opening its doors to the outside world for almost a decade since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. Now many in China were talking about political reform. Everything sounded good and the world thought that China was well on its way toward

modernization and democratization until the June 1989 Tiananman Square event changed the view of many people. Nevertheless, China continued maintaining its open-door policy and its economic growth well into the 1990s despite the political setback of the June 4 Tiananmen event. The continuing economic reform in China helped many people recover a degree of confidence in the reunification of Hong Kong with China under the concept of “one country, two systems.”

The “one country, two systems” concept was first put forward by the Chinese government in the 1970s for the proposed reunification with Taiwan. When the Hong Kong question needed a solution in the early 1980s, the same idea came up. The concept of “one country, two systems” could be defined this way: within the unified People’s Republic of China, the Mainland will continue to practice socialism, while the current capitalist system of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao remain unchanged (Wen, 1990). The idea was aimed at bolstering the confidence of the Hong Kong people by allowing them to keep their system intact to stabilize the political and economic situation during and after the retrocession.

At the beginning of the interview, each interviewee was asked to indicate their confidence with respect to the successful implementation of

"one country, two systems." A scale was used for this with a rating from 1 to 5--1 being the most pessimistic and 5 the most optimistic. Then they were asked to explain their thinking. Eleven out of 25 interviewees fell into the optimistic side, while seven were in the pessimistic side. Four out of the seven pessimists admitted they were extremely pessimistic. None of the 12 optimists felt extremely optimistic. The other seven indicated they were in the middle of the scale and a few said their confidence fluctuated from time to time as the political situation changed. Those who did not fall into either side had a balanced view in the middle of the scale, indicating they were trying to be neutral.

Table 5

Scale of Confidence in "One Country, Two Systems"

Distribution of the interviewees				
4	3	7	11	0
/	/	/	/	/
1	2	3	4	5
very pessimistic	somewhat	uncertain	somewhat	very optimistic

The optimists argued that from the historical point of view the concept was a breakthrough from the Chinese “great unification thought” (*da yi-tong*) the unity ideal that has dominated over 2000 years of Chinese history. (The notion of “great unification thought” will be discussed in Chapter 5). It was also a breakthrough for the Chinese government to acknowledge that the capitalist system could also work in China. There were people in Hong Kong who worried that the SAR government would be too subservient to the Beijing government because the chief executive was obviously hand-picked by the Chinese leaders. But the optimists thought there was little firm ground on which to base those worries. The optimists thought “one country, two systems” might work because Chinese society was changing. Economically, China had adopted an “open door” policy and increased interaction with the outside world. They claimed that an open door policy would not just be limited to the economy. It might lead to other openings including Western culture and values, ways of management, and other social changes. They saw signs that the Chinese economic system was becoming closer to Hong Kong’s capitalist system. The Chinese government appeared to have seen value in a free market system and was

moving toward the market economy. One of the local professors in computer science at HKU commented on this shift:

Because in recent years, the economic development of China is extremely rapid and so as the society, in such a development speed, the gap between China and Hong Kong is actually narrowing very fast. What people worried about before was the fact that the gap of living standards between China and Hong Kong was too big, and it would be hard for the people in the hinterland to accept the large discrepancy in the living standard when Hong Kong returned to China. But now, many things in the Mainland are pulling closer to those in Hong Kong. The people from the outlying areas, especially Guangdong, would not feel shocked since they don't feel too much difference between their lives compared with ours in Hong Kong. They believe their living standard will catch up with Hong Kong's sooner or later. Given time, the two places will merge well. I think people of the Mainland and people of Hong Kong now feel closer than ever before. After all, we are all Chinese. I think the retrocession will be good for all of us.

The pessimists, especially the extreme pessimists (4 out of 7), however, argued that the Chinese government had been trying to do something that was impossible, which was "to encourage people to be entrepreneurial and self-motivated, and to disdain red tape while at the same time to be politically docile," as one of them said. The political leaders in China were insecure and, therefore, they could not allow anything that might weaken their power. One of the pessimistic interviewees from CUHK pointed out: "There was a major power struggle going on in China. It was shown in 1986 when Hu Yaobang fell (the former party general secretary

was forced to step down after a student movement), and it also was embodied in the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989.” Several of the interviewees (7) said that their confidence regarding "one country, two systems" was diminished after the June 4 event. Some of them (4) even felt that the government would never have its own people's trust again, let alone the world's confidence. One of the professors at CUHK gave his observations supporting this view:

**Right after the event of 1989, you found taxis driving around with black pennants flying to signify their disgust or shame. Very ordinary people like those taxi drivers suddenly became political because they became aware for the first time that the Chinese government had used its army against its own people. And this was something that they thought was completely unthinkable. Of course, that put doubt into their minds about their own fate under the new regime.**

**An expatriate professor at CUHK expressed similar thoughts:**

**The key, and people realize this more and more, is: will we continue to exist with some kind of a rule of law? This is the biggest issue. China has a very bad record of abiding by a legal system for certain misdemeanors among its citizens. I mean, when China wants to crack down on crime or whatever, they will just line up a few people and kill them. This, in the minds of the rest of the world, is barbaric. This is not the way you deal with resistance. No matter how bad they have been to you, you deal with them from the rule of law. You have a trial and you punish them according to the law. There is certain fatalism in China's culture generally and it extends itself to Hong Kong. What can I do? It is a kind of an acceptance of the inevitable; therefore, apprehensive. Most people in Hong Kong, because they are very commercially minded, think that China will let Hong Kong continue in its present way because it is good for China commercially. But I**

personally think that whenever there is a conflict between economic considerations and political ones, political will always win. Politics is always uppermost in China. Economics is always uppermost in Hong Kong. That's where there is a great source of misunderstanding and therefore source of apprehensiveness.

Some of these pessimists (3), however, thought there was still the possibility of successfully working out "one country, two systems" if China allowed political freedom and dissent in Hong Kong. One of them pointed out that this system actually would encourage a loyal opposition that would only do good for the system. He believed that there were few people in Hong Kong who would not be nationalistic or unpatriotic toward China because Hong Kong was basically a Chinese society. The Hong Kong people were Chinese who wanted what was best for China although they might disagree with some of the current policy of the Chinese government.

As one of them explained:

An intelligent government, a mature political system would encourage this kind of difference of opinion and dialogue to keep themselves honest and then to project to the world that they were considering all views in order to come to what is best for their citizens. They did not have to agree but they had to hear. It would be disastrous if they became too heavy-handed in suppressing the dissents. After all, these people were harmless. They were not going to make any big difference. But it would make a very important difference in China's public image if they were given the opportunity.



Some professors (4) indicated that they were in the middle of the scale and their confidence fluctuated as the political situation changed. One of them provided the following rationale:

At the beginning, I was optimistic. People had been extremely worried about the future of Hong Kong before 1984, and the Basic Law seemed to offer them the best solution that they really could expect. And the idea of "one country, two systems" was endorsed by Deng Xiaping and people thought that it was a viable solution. They wanted Hong Kong to be a completely different system because they liked the system and it seemed perfectly possible. But, as time for the turnover comes closer, not only can you perceive theoretical problems with the idea of "one country, two systems," but you can also see practically that the Chinese party don't [doesn't] feel that it can operate in quite the way that we were led to expect it would operate in 1984. I don't think an independent system with independent laws and completely different sets of freedoms which is what people hoped for in 1984 is now thought by anyone to be realistic possibility. Now I think I have to wait and see, so I shift right into the middle of the scale.

There were other thoughts among these pragmatists. A professor in the mass media field who had conducted opinion research on the Hong Kong people believed that the average Hong Kong citizen would not necessarily stand on either of the above extreme sides: the optimistic side or the pessimistic side. The professor believed they had more important things with which to concern themselves than taking sides. An administrator expressed this view as follows:

In my particular case, since I do research in these areas in the light of expression, I will match it very carefully. And one of the differences is, for example in 1997, we have talked to 7094 people in Hong Kong. This runs a full political spectrum. We've got the average people, and their views are vastly different than what people usually read in the press. I do not see a wide spread underlying fear, but I see the underlying of desire for security, stability, and making things work, and pragmatism of the future. That directs their attitudes toward the future. I believe very much that that characterized Hong Kong, which is a very positive expression to me because that bodes well for the future. If we are not pragmatic, I would be very pessimistic about the future of this city.

A professor from HKU also supported the above point with this observation:

I think after time when it becomes clear to China that people here are mostly nonpolitical, they just want to get on with their jobs and make money like they always have done, that China won't regard Hong Kong as such a threat. And perhaps we will see the value in the mechanisms for survival, working, and making money. They will see the virtues in those things and let people continue in the way they have been doing. At the moment, they [the Chinese government] regard Hong Kong like Tibet in a way, sort of potentially very subversive, potentially a threat to the motherland. I believe after sometime they won't perceive Hong Kong in that way at all. They will see that Hong Kong people just want to be left alone to get on with their work.

So, a pragmatic view was popular in Hong Kong in the summer of 1997. It was believed that in the political area there was no ground to be too optimistic because of the setback of 1989, the Tiananmen crisis, while in the area of economics there was no reason to be too pessimistic. In other words,

many people believed that the economic development was not necessarily related to the political system. Even if the political environment was controlled strictly, as long as there was economic freedom, economic development would continue. But the question of this view was whether politics could be totally separated from economy. This was important because it would directly affect people's view of the future of Hong Kong. I discussed this question with the interviewees following the question of confidence on "one country, two systems."

#### Separation of Politics and Economy

After the 1989 Tiananmen crisis, the Chinese leaders became conservative concerning political reform in China. About the transition of Hong Kong, the major concern was that the Chinese leaders had been troubled by challenges from democratic forces in Hong Kong that they had regarded as internationally independent and subversive. Therefore, the Chinese government seemed prepared for a certain degree of political control in Hong Kong after the retrocession. In other words, they would insist the SAR government act conservatively. Some of the interviewees worried that this would eventually affect the economic prosperity of the territory. Yet a majority of the interviewees (15) agreed politics and

economy could be separated. (Most of those interviewees were Chinese. Eight of the nine local academics were on this side.) They argued that economic prosperity needed economic freedom, but not necessarily political freedom. Economic freedom and the right of private property were important. One said, “In any country, if the people have no economic freedom, if they could not choose their own career, or what business they wanted to do and what and where they want to spend their money, then these countries would not be able to develop well.” These professors felt that political freedom would not so directly affect the economic activities of the people and, therefore, the economic development of the society. Hong Kong itself was a good example. The Hong Kong colonial government never gave much political freedom to the Hong Kong people, yet Hong Kong’s economy still became prosperous. Some of them even pointed out that there were good examples across the world that showed that economics could be well-developed without a great deal of political freedom. Some economies even prospered under an authoritarian government. Singapore was an example about which they liked to talk.

One of the pragmatists, an expatriate professor at the English Department of CHUK, Professor Parkin (see Appendix D), gave an argument to support this viewpoint:

I don't think that if you have a free market system it automatically follows that you have to have a democratic system. I don't believe that. People argue that but I think they are wrong, because you can see many states with booming economies that are not totally democratic. I think that given the number of people involved in China itself, it would be chaos if there were suddenly democracy out of the night. But, I think that what China is doing is a process of gradually moving towards a better rule . . . and more opportunities for individual growth and development of people, a better education system throughout the country and so on. And I think all those things gradually add up to a society which is freer and more open than the old feudal society [which history repeated between in order and chaos]. Don't forget China was a feudal society until the Cultural Revolution and then there was chaos, tragic chaos. So that these things take time and I think that what China is doing is balancing this gradualism in the approach to a modern society, whether it is partially democratic or totally democratic. There are lots of modern societies with different kinds of political systems. So basically it is going for a modern society.

The pessimists (7) who disagreed (there were more expatriates on this side) thought that the economic and political systems worked together. In a democratic system, individuals had freedom to choose not just consumer goods but also their leaders. Capitalism, built on democracy, respected people's freedom and protected their individual property. These ideas all stemmed from the same origin: the concept of individual freedom. As an economic professor at CUHK argued:

**The market economy needs more freedom than just economic freedom. The Chinese leaders seemed to have a different idea on market economy, and they were saying that they are creating a different kind of market system which works even under the socialist (communist) government in Beijing. But politics and economics were obviously entangled in one another and certainly the Mainland government considers them intimately related.**

**As an expatriate interviewees pointed out, “Communism, such as it was, did not really exist anywhere any more in the world, but Communism was not only a political theory but also was, first and foremost, an economic theory. It had to do with the distribution of wealth.” It was because the Chinese government was going to meddle with things politically that it would effect Hong Kong’s economy. Some pessimists (6) thought Hong Kong people were also concerned that corruption would return if political progress were moved backward. As a philosophy professor from HKU expressed:**

**A large number of people really wish that they should be able to continue with the system of representative election. I think the reason for that is that there is a certain fear of the alternative that is a dictatorial regime where you have government by rulers as it were, rather than government by servants. If someone is elected, they are servants of the people and they serve until the people don’t like them and throw them out. So, they don’t constitute a threat. Whereas if you have very powerful dictators who are ruling you, you can’t throw them out if you don’t like them. Then you have something to fear if your views don’t coincide with those of the leaders.**

He stopped for a moment, thinking, and then further explained his point:

**There is always this danger that authority breeds corruption. If somebody is in a position of power, then they can ask for some sort of favor, or give some power to another person. So you get a hierarchy of dependencies that depend on the basically corrupt practices. I think, in 1989, the students in Tiananmen Square were principally concerned with corruption in the government. Hong Kong people are very concerned with corruption as well. They fear that it will lead to corrupt practice which in turn leads to inefficiency, and Hong Kong thrives on efficiency. You might know that many years ago, Hong Kong used to be an extremely corrupt community itself. There was tremendous corruption in the police force. Businesses had to pay the police for protection and some criminal policemen made millions of dollars from these kinds of practices. And then the Independent Commission Against Corruption was set up and corruption in Hong Kong was cleaned up dramatically. Anybody who was thought to be corrupt could be investigated no matter how high his position might be. Nobody was above the law. Without a true independent agency like that, corruption is likely to reemerge, and it will eventually hurt the economy.**

**There was also compromised thinking from the pragmatists (4). Even if politics could not be separated from the economy, they believed there were other ways to work things out. One of the local Chinese professors of political science at CUHK offered the following comment:**

**I don't think economy and politics are separable, and neither do I think the two systems under one country are totally separable, because life is rich and complex. When you live together you interact with each other. They will naturally influence each other: one side today wants to realize their will, the other will do the same tomorrow. So if you have to live together you have to think about what is reasonable**

to the other. The Hong Kong system and the Mainland system would be the same. Things are not always simply right or wrong, they are complicated. I give you a simple example. If the stock market in Hong Kong falls, the Chinese government steps in and helps to support it, many people would certainly welcome that. But then some people would look at it from another perspective, and say, "Wait a minute. If the Chinese government starts out this way and will interfere in the political matter in the future, what should we do?" So, there are many different interpretations to a single behavior. For those who think it is not right, they would call it an interference. Nevertheless, for those who believe it is right, they would call it a help. So many things just cannot be clearly separated, no matter whether it is in the area of economics or politics.

The same professor continued:

However, things could also find ways to work out no matter how complicated they are. I've always believed that plural cultures, economies, and political thoughts can coexist under a unified structure. If a country allows pluralism, I believe it will be prosperous because pluralism is a source of dynamic. So I view the retrocession as an opportunity. If all of us value this opportunity and work hard for it, the arrangement of "one country, two systems" could be realized. But I should warn the people that this is a very difficult goal to achieve. Yet, a mountain could be moved bit by bit. If everyone involved work hard, it could be done. Its realization will greatly benefit the future of Hong Kong and China.

Nevertheless, more participating faculty (17) believed that for a period of time it was possible to allow an economy to grow rapidly without increasing the levels of influence and levels of expectations from the people. People did care about many basic freedoms, among which political freedom was but one, but economic freedom was a more fundamental one.



However, they did not believe that, in the long run, people would accept the benefits of economic growth without also affecting their expectations of the nature of governments and their desire to participate in the political decision process. As one of the expatriate professors from the English Department of CUHK said:

You can see this in Singapore since people mentioned it. For a long period of time, Singapore has maintained quite a tight vertical control, while at the same time also managing to have a thriving economy. But you do see signs of increasing concern and expectations among the populace in Singapore that, I think, is forcing the government to reconsider the relationship between economic growth and changing political expectations. But, you can see now in Singapore, high levels of immigration showing that the people are not happy with a very tight political control. And a long-term survival for a state is going to have to develop some sort of shift in the nature of the political system, whether it is democracy or whatever. So, really, as people become more educated, more affluent, they expect to increasingly have a say in the nature of the political system. It might take a long time. But the two cannot be completely separated. The question is not are they related, because I think they are bound to be related, but the question is what sort of time scale do adjustments take? And there is certainly a lag. The argument is not so much about political institutionalization, the nature of democracy, or something like that. I think the view is a concept of personal freedoms--the freedom of what to say, what to wear, to express your views. It is the ability, for example, to phone up a radio program and criticize the government. It is these personal freedoms that people actually are concerned with.

Another expatriate professor from HKU supported this view:

In Singapore, we know the government exerts tremendous pressure on citizens. It throws members of the opposition into prison, and it manipulates the judiciary. For example, if you stand up against the

government and don't vote for the ruling party, it will remove your housing. It encourages young people to live near their parents and imposes some sort of social structure through financial means. You have a financial inducement for doing that.

Therefore, more people thought economy and politics were inseparable. The question then was Which way people wanted to go and what kind of time frame would the adjustment take?

### "Asian Values" vs. Democracy

The discussion naturally came to the topic of "Asian values" when talking about Singapore because its leaders talked about that so much. Most of the Chinese professors believed that Asian people generally shared the values of Confucianism, the core of Chinese culture. A few of them explained that Confucian values related to society (i.e., unity, harmony, and conformity) repressed private interests for the sake of public interests, and stressed that individualism should be constrained by collectivism. Values related to family, such as being hard-working, saving for the future and for children, stressing education, respecting seniority and authority, and avoiding any extreme (Confucius called it *zhong yong*--the rule of the golden mean), were traditional values for Chinese society. Many of these values were later adopted by other East and Southeast Asian people. They later became the so-called Asian values. Many of the Asian people still live by

these values in guiding their daily lives. Some of the local Chinese interviewees believed these values would help with the integration between Hong Kong and China. But a number of expatriate academics had different viewpoints. They saw the rise of these values as supporting Western popular values, such as freedom, individualism, and democracy. One interviewee expressed a strong argument against the concept of "Asian values:"

I would like to see the government standing up more for those values and Mr. Tung [the Chief Executive elected] saying things like, the West stands up for individuals, but in Asia they are much more communitarian, and all this talk of Asian values I find very dangerous, quite alarming. I don't think there is such a thing as Asian values. I have never found any. I don't find it among my students. You can't generalize. You can't say Philippines are the same as Indonesia, or that China is the same as Japan, or Hong Kong is the same as Malaysia. It just doesn't work. Confucianism is being distorted for political aims. Of course people believe some of the values of Confucianism but that's not an excuse to stamp out individual freedom. I don't read Confucius as being supportive of infringements of individual liberty, not at all. Confucianism is fine. Some of the values are deeply entrenched in Chinese people all over the world, not just here. Even Chinese people in America have those values. They are fine. But I don't think you want Confucianism or Communitarianism, or whatever it's called, or Asian values if it means that it's just there to preserve privilege of those in power. I think this is beginning to become what is happening in Singapore and Malaysia, in Burma, in these places. I think it just has to change and it will change. It is unstoppable. I never believed that South Africa would change growing up in that racist society or repressive society. I never ever thought that we would have a black government with everyone having the vote. It seemed to me to be a dream that would never ever come true. And yet it happened, relatively peacefully. I just don't

think that people in the 21st century wherever they happen to be will be pushed around. Those days are gone.

Whether or not so-called “Asian values” figure into modernization initiatives remains undecided. But the optimists (10) argued that given the situation of imbalance with enormous problems in China, the Chinese government might have to do whatever necessary to stabilize the country if things got worse in China economically and politically which might mean sacrificing the interests of Hong Kong. Things could become even worse if China became chaotic when Hong Kong might need to become involved because of its dependency on China. A local professor in the Chinese University of Hong Kong argued for this:

Of course Beijing would not allow Hong Kong to be turned into a subversive base against its government. I think there is nothing wrong with the Chinese government's concern about the security of the country. Will any other country not worry about its own security? The SAR of Hong Kong is only part of the whole China. The government of China not only needs to concern the interests of Hong Kong but also the interests of the whole country. If the national interests are being threatened, the government would certainly sacrifice the interests of Hong Kong to protect the whole nation first. It would do the same to Shanghai or Beijing if there is no choice. I believe the government of other countries will do the same thing, to put national interests over the local interests. Any country has to put its national security in its top priority. I do not know too much in detail of the event of June 4. However, I heard that it was because the students in Tiananmen Square could not even control themselves at the time, so the government had to act to maintain stability and protect the interests of the majority and the security of the nation. This kind

of thing not only happened in the Chinese history, it happened in other countries in the world including the Western countries as well. If we do not consider the context of the whole picture, the discussion will be meaningless, right? My point is that China has to consider the national interests first, and only in this greater context, Hong Kong's interests will also be considered. I believe that the central government would not easily sacrifice the interests of the local people. On the contrary, it would help to protect their interests because they are usually also part of the interests of the whole nation.

Later, in the interview, it was mentioned that the students in the Tiananmen Square event were fighting for democracy which might benefit the majority of the people politically. "Democracy," the professor commented, "meant a hundred things to a hundred people. You could say maybe Hong Kong will have more democracy than before after the retrocession." Actually a number of local interviewees (6) did not believe Western style democracy would work well for Hong Kong and China. Some of them (4) even thought that it did not even work well in America. All educated in the West, they criticized what they saw happening in the Western society, especially in the States, such as higher divorce rates, drug abuse, senseless violence, and uneven distribution of wealth.

The pessimist side (7), of course, had argued the opposite view, as the same philosophy professors at HKU argued:

**It's convenient for a one party government to exercise as much control as possible, and I think the reason for that is obvious. If you**

are in a society where there are many parties and where there are elections every four or so years, then if people don't like the moving party, they vote that party out, and another party comes in. And there are peaceful mechanisms for doing that: the voting system. But, if you just have a one party system and people don't like that party, then there are not safe mechanisms for removing that party. The only way that the party can be removed is through violent revolution. So, a one party state is extremely worried about disruption, dissent, and it will try its best to stamp it out or even prevent it from arising.

But a professor from HKU thought that the push for democracy was in a sense symbolic. It was an extension of the political and institutional arena of peoples expectation to be able to express themselves. But it could not be pushed too far, or it would have the opposite results. As long as the government was making progress, it would be OK. So, why did Hong Kong people feel comfortable with the British Hong Kong government? The professor said, "One of the good things about the Hong Kong government-- it was basically not very legitimate [as a colonial establishment]--but it was at least becoming more and more sensitive to social movements for more political rights since the 1970s." Now the Hong Kong people had things like the expansion of schooling and higher education. In this sense, the government was trying to take care of those mass expectations.

**An expatiate professor from HKU explained:**

**If the provisions of the basic law are taken seriously and we have free multi-party elections in Hong Kong in 6 or 10 years, then that will be**

fine, then all of these worries will be unfounded. But, if it turns out that what actually happens in practice is that the government here is appointed by Beijing and is effectively only one party, then I think it's almost inevitable that we find along with that the sort of repressive measures that are in place in Singapore. In Singapore there is a high degree of popular approval for that kind of firm government. But, I don't know whether there would be such strong support for it in Hong Kong where people have the benefit of a lot of freedoms that people in Singapore perhaps have not experienced.

The key for the success of "one country, two systems," as several (11) of the interviewees talked about again and again, was whether the Chinese government would truly help Hong Kong maintain "the rule of law," allowing Hong Kong people to rule Hong Kong, and be "highly autonomous" as stipulated in the Basic Law. One of the optimists from HKU provided the following analysis:

There are certain aspects of policy over which the SAR government can't have control. For example, defense is not a matter for the SAR government. But according to the Basic Law, apart from instances like this where power is not vested in the SAR government, the SAR government should be almost completely independent and autonomous. This was the promise. As to "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong," I am fairly optimistic that this could be made to work, because in Hong Kong there are a lot of people with wide experience of the system and with the knowledge that disrupting that system could be ruinous financially for Hong Kong, and, therefore, for China as well. So, I think there are enough good and experienced people around. But to be perfectly possible for Hong Kong people genuinely to rule Hong Kong in a way that is reasonably well independent of Chinese influence, that would be a pretty good scenario.

Those interviewees (12) with uncertain confidence in the arrangement of “one country, two systems,” however, had different ideas in mind. A few expatriate interviewees believed in a kind of mixture of socialism and capitalism for Hong Kong. Professor Parkin from CUHK explained:

We should link our system with all the powerful systems in the world. This goes for China as well as for the West. And it's already happening within the Chinese system as well. . . . “one country, two systems” doesn't mean over the border you have socialists, here in Hong Kong we have capitalists, so we [Hong Kong] can forget about the poor people--all the old people, all the deformed people, all the mentally defective people, and just forget about them. No. It means that we become increasingly aware of the problems in the society. As Hong Kong is a rich society, it can afford to have a safety net for those people who cannot fend for themselves. I think some countries in the West, maybe France is an example, have probably gone too far in the direction of the welfare safety net. [This is] Often because governments have not been quick enough to plug all the loopholes and stop the abuse of the system. Where people really need help I think the society should be helping them. So there should be a kinder, what you might call a center socialism, that cares for ordinary people with real problems who cannot fend for themselves. But, it doesn't mean the kind of socialism where everybody has the right to everything and nobody has the right to anything more. I think if you just pull everybody down to the same level, you destroy the impetus that keeps the society going. I believe in a kind of mixture of socialism and capitalism. I think Hong Kong can do that very well.

Most of the local Chinese professors (9) expressed confidence in Hong Kong's future. One of the local professors at the Chinese University represented the optimists' point of view. He thought that Hong Kong people did not need to worry too much. Instead, he suggested, they should think



about things more positively and try hard to work things out with the Chinese government. He said, "Why don't we think we could possibly get more freedom from Beijing instead of less after July 1, 1997? People should not always use 'colored glasses' to look at the central government of China." He further argued that things have been changing a lot over the past two decades. The Hong Kong people can work together with the Mainland people to embrace a bright future. Of course the bright future will not come automatically; there is a great deal of work to do.

#### Perceptions Regarding Hong Kong's Higher Education System

The two research questions related to Hong Kong's higher education were put together in this section which looks at the changes in Hong Kong's higher education at the system level and the academics' work level.

#### Repositioning Hong Kong's Higher Education System

No matter how people defined the concept "one country, two systems," it would become the reality of Hong Kong after the retrocession. Therefore, the capacity of Hong Kong's higher education system to adapt to the transition would be greatly determined by the degree to which it justified its existence within the "one country, two systems" framework. The actual shift of sovereignty would introduce changes in terms of the direction or

even possibly the philosophy of higher education in Hong Kong (Liu, 1996). Change was not only going to come to the personnel and management culture of the institutions, but in other areas such as curricula, and professional and academic qualifications (Leung, 1991). Within the context of the transitional period mentioned above, higher education in Hong Kong confronted many important issues. The issues discussed with the interviewees in this section were: first, the rapid expansion of the Hong Kong higher education system; second, training leaders for Hong Kong's future; third, Hong Kong's role in China's modernization; and fourth, attainment of the goal to become a regional center of excellence for higher learning.

### The Rapid Expansion of the Higher Education System

When talking about the repositioning of Hong Kong's higher education system, the research interviews usually began with a discussion of the rapid expansion of the system because that was the biggest change during the past several years. The decision to accelerate the expansion of higher education in Hong Kong was made in 1989 and implemented in the early 1990s. There were many positive and negative interpretations for this motivation in the territory (Morris, McClelland, & Yeung, 1994). One of

the administrators from CUHK explained the two main factors for the rapid expansion. The first one, in process since the 1980s, is the “brain drain” of Hong Kong. Most of the people who emigrated were college graduates, since educated people in different areas were badly needed at that time. The second factor, which many people ignored, was that much of the assembly line work done in Hong Kong had been moved to the hinterland, yet the employed population of Hong Kong had not changed. That meant a lot of new jobs had been created. There were jobs in management, marketing, technical and designing areas, and service jobs in banks. This meant that Hong Kong encountered an obvious economic shift from factory workers to a need for many more professionals than before.

These two factors triggered the government’s initiation of a rapid expansion of the higher education system. The college admission rate of secondary graduates increased from 4-5% 10 years ago to 18% today. This has greatly affected the academics’ work at the universities. The administrator further explained:

**I’ve worked here for more than 20 years, and this is the biggest change I’ve ever seen. First, it is obvious the quality of the newly enrolled students is lower. The lower quality doesn’t mean that the Hong Kong young people are getting worse, it is because we compare the top 3% before with the top 18% of today. There must be differences. So we have to change greatly regarding our education**

policy, the contents of teaching, as well as expectation towards the students. These differences would require us to change our mindset a lot to adopt them. This creates an enormous work load for us, which we still have to work on today. We have a lot of academics who just worked in their areas and never look at the change around them. They still haven't accepted the change or even its existence. This greatly affects higher education here in Hong Kong. This may not directly relate to the retrocession, it is not a political issue. Even if there were no retrocession, this would happen anyway.

After a short silence, thinking, he continued:

The second thing is because we expanded so many universities; the competition among them is becoming serious. This forces them to raise their standards and education quality within themselves. This, in turn, creates great pressure on the younger teachers in these institutions. It is not so much pressure on elderly faculty such as us. Compared to when I came into the institution, they have much better pay, yet also much greater pressure. The competition, of course, would have its good side, the research quantity and quality is increasing rapidly in recent years. The Hong Kong academics have entered the international stage. It is all happening in these 10 years. But there is also bad competition. For example, we all compete for the same resources. Now some of the institutions advertise themselves in the media, boasting their research projects, which have not even started yet. This kind of thing will only harm the higher education system here.

The administrator worried that many of their teachers were not aware of these changes or found it difficult to admit they were happening, because, he explained, "In today's reality, if one said I was doing pretty well at teaching, or developing a good curriculum, the respect they received would be less than if they published many research papers." So, to stress research

or teaching was a contradiction within the universities and could become a problem.

Many of the interviewees (16) thought that the rapid expansion of the higher education systems of Hong Kong during the 1990s was happening too fast and the rapid pace at which it occurred created the problem.

However, they generally agreed that it was a good thing for Hong Kong.

Some interviewees thought even the pace was not a problem. One professor of political science from the CUHK gave his thoughts:

I don't know. I think the development of the higher education needs to consider the economic growth of the society and the needs of the development of industries. If the needs are there, it seems to me the faster you go, the better off you are maybe regarding the competition you will face with other regions and countries. But for making decisions, you have to do research to build a theory for your assertion. You might have to find out the ratio of the higher education's growth compared with the economic development, then you have to compare it with that in other countries. What is the proper speed for the expansion of Hong Kong's higher education system, I really don't know because I haven't done any research on that. I think, if you see college students coming out without jobs and they have to go sweeping the streets, then you may question whether higher education is growing too fast.

An interviewee from HKU, however, looked at this differently:

I think there were some mistakes there. Education, training college students, is not like cooking food--simply putting something into the wok and you can eat a few minutes later. You could not expect to raise the production of college students in such a short time. People

are not machines that you could make in a short time. It takes years to put them through programs before you can use them.

When talking about the political motivation of the Hong Kong government on this issue, as Morris, McClelland, and Yeung (1994) called “a short-term reaction to a perceived crisis of confidence and credibility.” Most professors did not want to speculate on the motivating factors. They thought the demand was there and the pressure for expansion was great at that time because many educated people were emigrating. The government expanded the higher education system because Hong Kong is so rich and could afford to do it. One interviewee at CUHK commented:

I haven't done any research on this or compared them with other universities in other countries, but I feel, by common sense, there were 1,000 more openings in our universities. This is not a healthy situation obviously. How could you find so many excellent scholars to fill them from anywhere over the world? Even if Hong Kong can offer first class salaries, I don't think they could recruit so many excellent scholars. We should have done it gradually, but I don't know why they just jumped so fast in the past several years. Not just upgrading these colleges to universities, they all have graduate schools. You may see that the U.S. produces too many Ph.D. holders today. This is a kind of waste if they could not find appropriate jobs. I think Hong Kong needs to avoid this. College students would be necessary; it would not hurt to have more college graduates in the society. But do we really need the same number of Ph.D. holders? We have to question that. You need more resources to produce doctors. What are you going to do if you cannot find a job after you graduate from the graduate school? I think we should hold most of our graduate schools until later when we are more ready for them.

Some of the academics (7) agreed that there were mistakes or side effects in the rapid expansion because the government could not foresee potential problems at that time, things like the return of the immigrant, and the upgrading polytechnics to universities which made them confuse their missions. Now they had to make clear the different missions for different institutions. Many of them felt pity that the polytechnics had been turned into universities. They thought that was just copying the English model, which they also felt was a shame. They thought there were plenty of people who wanted and needed a more practical vocational kind of education and that Hong Kong needs higher education institutions with different functions. Each institution should do what they are good at, rather than everybody doing the same thing. A professor in the faculty of education at HKU said:

In a polytechnic you are not necessarily expected or you didn't used to be expected to do quite so much research and so on. We did more teaching. The whole emphasis of your career was more practical and pedagogical and now they are being turned into universities and everybody's expected to publish, publish, publish. And I think the ones who suffer in the end are the students. The students don't get very much out of the faculty being active in terms of research. I know the cliché or the conventional wisdom is that publishing scholars are better teachers but my experience has not borne that out. And I have been in absolutely first rate institutions--at Amherst College, at Yale University where I did my masters and Ph.D. So, I am very skeptical about this move.

Some of the faculty (5) felt that Hong Kong once had a couple of first class polytechnic institutions, but now these institutions had been changed into third class universities. The change, they thought, did not make much sense. The society not only needed leaders in different areas, it also needed skilled workers as well. The discussion naturally shifted to the topic of training leaders for Hong Kong's future which was another popular topic.

### Training Leaders for Hong Kong's Future

Since the Basic Law of the SAR stipulated that "Hong Kong people [rule] Hong Kong" (Chen, M. K., 1996) in the future, Hong Kong higher education institutions needed to consider how to prepare local leaders for the Hong Kong government after 1997. Many of them believed this was an extremely important issue because the higher leadership positions were almost all held by the expatriates throughout the colonial history. However, some of the academics thought that the purpose of the higher education need not be so limited. It could be viewed as a whole; if the higher learning institutions helped raise the intellectual quality of the whole society, this would affect the politics and the development of the society and shape the thinking of the generation that would lead Hong Kong in the future. Of course, there naturally would be elite students who would stand out among



college graduates. It was not necessary, meaning that the universities trained the students today and they would rule Hong Kong tomorrow. Maybe after 20 years, some would reach the top and stand out as leaders.

Yet some of the professors (6) at the Chinese University of Hong Kong thought their university had already assumed that function. One comment from a professor of the Chinese University about its students represented a popular view there:

In the past decades, I think the Chinese University was doing quite well in this regard. We have rightists and leftists among our graduates, but at least most of our students have a deeper understanding of the political situation of Hong Kong and of China, and have more understanding of the Chinese culture. They tend to know more about the society whether they are involved in politics or not. Quite a number of them do get into the government and work as civil servants; some of them even become leaders.

One of the administrators of the Chinese University of Hong Kong supported that point of view:

The Chinese University is founded as a bilingual and bicultural higher education institution under the foreigner's rule but operated mainly by Chinese. This is very unique: actually, I don't see a second one quite like ours in the world. Our students have a wide exposure to both Chinese and Western cultures. The University is very important to the integration of Hong Kong and China. Why? Now among the 26 top officials in Hong Kong government executive branch, 18 of them are graduates of our university, and there will be more in the future. The SAR government will pretty much depend on these bilingual and bicultural officials. The Chinese University of Hong Kong will not only serve the development of the SAR but also the development of

**Southern China. It should become a very important university in Southern China equal to Peking University and Qinghua University in the North.**

**However, when interviews were conducted at Hong Kong**

**University, the story seemed quite different. One of the professors of the education faculty commented on students there as follows:**

**They are very much job-oriented. It is very hard to find a student who is interested in education for education's sake, the training of the mind. This is very short-sighted in Hong Kong students. They are looking for a job immediately after graduation. I told many students that it is too bad because they will reach the level of incompetence very quickly once they graduate because they haven't trained their minds. They have just enough information to pass the exam and get their degrees and get a job. The business world looks for leadership, looks for people who can think, people who can contribute to the system. These people cannot; they are not thinkers, so they will be clerks all their lives. Those people who are trying to train their minds, to think critically, to improve their communication and organizational skills, to be able to pick out the main idea of an issue, or to problem solve, these are the people who are going to become leaders. Very few of our students understand that concept because they are too short-sighted.**

**His opinion was shared by several of the interviewees who felt Hong Kong students had been so much under the influence of a civil service type of education that was reinforced by the commercial mentality. "It did not help produce thinking leader types of graduates," one professor from the faculty of foreign language at HKU commented. He noted, however, in fairness to the students in Hong Kong, the parental pressure was enormous,**

explaining that children from kindergarten are pressured to prepare for the best school so they would be in a position to earn lots of money. This idea was in the minds of most Hong Kong people as normal success--a monetary reward for getting a well-paying job. China, too, was becoming more like Hong Kong. It will take people of great vision to try to combine the best of both systems and eliminate the negative aspects.

The interviewees were asked if there was an identity problem with their students because there was much discussion concerning the identity problem at that time. As Sweeting (1995) put it: "the Hong Kong Chinese had special characteristics" (p. 106). Some of the Chinese professors thought this was because the British colonial government took away all nationalistic content from education for ruling purpose, so that nationalism never had a place in the heart of the young. Many young people took for granted those basic supports from the motherland and never thought about what would happen without those supports. They did not know that a lot of problems would be impossible to solve without the support of the motherland. They felt that the Hong Kong education system needed to be kept intact, but one thing needed to be changed: adding back the education

of nationalism, patriotism, and the good traditions from thousands of years in Chinese history. This answer by a local professor represented that view:

**There is a certain confusion in the identity of our students and many people in the Hong Kong society as well because of the British rule and their educational policy in the past. The Chinese history, culture, and tradition have been missing in our education for a very long period of time. So some of our young people know very little about the Chinese tradition and culture although they live so close to it. Now they are going to become citizens of China, which I think they should belong to. I think we should reinstall the value system for these young people. First, as Chinese citizens, they need to be patriots and know when to stand up for our motherland. Secondly, our young generation needs to be able to analyze independently and understand the whole situation of our country. They need to be able to see the real shortcomings of our country from the bias of the Westerner. China is such a large country that ugly things happen every day, but it doesn't mean that we should hate her. Otherwise we would think it is better to let foreigners come conquer us. Thirdly, they have to be able to see some of the basic things, for example, in new China. It is only in its third generation of leaders. For the government to put such a country in order, is a great achievement compared with the history of many European countries and even America. If our young people could not see this, how could we stand in the world? So, the goal of educating our students as Chinese citizens is much more important than that of training them for certain jobs.**

**Another local professor at CUHK supported these ideas:**

**We need our students to know the meaning of the five star flag, to understand our motherland and her modern history, and the tradition of its thousand years of history. They need to have these basic concepts as citizens of our country, to love and feel proud of her. It is very natural to add these contents into our educational programs.**

Yet a professor of architecture from the Hong Kong University gave quite a different thought about students' identity problems:

I think probably because the contrast with people with China is so strong. If you have all these Mainlanders coming here and you talk to them and you realize how different they are from you and they are the real Chinese, and you are not like them, then what are you? . . . I think that's one of the reasons that people here are so adamant about being Chinese, because they feel insecure as one of them. If you're secure in what you are, you, I'm sure, have no doubt that you are Chinese. Most of the people I know from Taiwan have absolutely no identity crisis there. As I say, there are Mainlanders coming down here and these are obviously Chinese people and they are not like them. That's why they get confused.

A number of the interviewees (8) did not feel their students had a greater identity problem than young teenagers anywhere else. Several (6) of the expatriate professors thought that the problem was a lack of any political identity in the young people. For many years, they had felt it was very strange working in Hong Kong because people could not make any appeal to a person's national feelings or a person's identity and loyalty to their country. As one of them commented, "Obviously, nobody is loyal to the British, and yet if someone said I was loyal to Hong Kong, someone else would ask 'What is Hong Kong?'"

The professor thought the identify was this lack of distinct political identity that makes Hong Kong difficult to live in. The older people, however, would not be so confused because all of them came from China.

### Serving the Goal of China's Modernization

Since the announcement of the retrocession, faculty in the higher education system of Hong Kong have come to think that they must work toward serving the goals of modernization in China as well as to serve the needs of Hong Kong society after July 1, 1997. Two main ways to do this were through academic exchanges with their Mainland counterparts and receiving and guiding the Mainland graduate students.

Academic exchanges with Mainland scholars. Starting in the mid-1980s, more and more academic exchanges were made between Hong Kong universities and the universities of the Mainland. Many Hong Kong academics felt this was a good opportunity for mutual understanding through interactions and discovering areas of new research and collaboration. Some of them thought that Hong Kong was in a favorable position to help China. The universities of Hong Kong opened the doors to many Mainland scholars and graduate students offering them a training course to give them research opportunities, and to give them money, and, to promote self-development

(Leung, 1991). In 1997, many of the academics in Hong Kong had accumulated quite considerable experience in exchange and collaborative work with the academics on the Mainland; they have had exchanges in almost every discipline. At the beginning, the academics of Hong Kong felt these exchanges were one way. As one of the interviewees at the education faculty of the Hong Kong University commented:

The modern research tradition seemed non-existent in China at that time. Although some of the Mainland academics had a good foundation for research, most of them were not really up on the literature. They were not into the stream of ideas that were really happening in their particular field. So they would come up with things from the 1950s because they did not have the resources and the libraries.

With more interactions between the two sides, Hong Kong academics noted other important differences between them and the Mainlanders. For example, the academic culture in Hong Kong and the West tended to be, particularly in the social sciences and the humanities, geared towards greater critical evaluation and independent thinking. A law professor from Hong Kong University explained:

Areas such as legal and philosophical scholarship in China tend to be less independent and critical. Much of the work tends to be discursive of other people's writings and there is not the same degree of individuality or individualism, which one perhaps should expect in a socialist society.

Some of the local Chinese interviewees (5) thought that this might be a consequence of the trauma of the Cultural Revolution. People now began to break from that mold, and, as a result, much of the scholarship tended to be more discursive rather than independent or political. Some interviewees believed that China was more keen on getting its scientists and its business people some experience in Hong Kong because those kinds of people would have more value to the universities than those in the social sciences.

However, many of the interviewees (11) disagreed saying social sciences were equally, if not more, important especially in this time of transition for Hong Kong and the social transformation for China itself. "If we make more exchanges, we have to offer our own initiatives rather than rely on programs that are organized for us," a professor from the education faculty of CUHK said. He believed there was a urgent need for exchanges in the social science fields.

They also believed that there were differences between academics in Hong Kong and those from the Mainland. They found working conditions in Hong Kong much better than those on the Mainland. As one of the law professors in the University of Hong Kong said:

**I think we can help in a whole variety of ways by going there, by them coming here, and in exchanges of the academic thoughts of teachers**



and students. The universities in China tend to be very quirky and the conditions are terrible. I always feel very embarrassed when I go there or particularly when scholars come here. We have powerful computers, e-mail. We have very good libraries, we have quite luxurious accommodations, particularly for expatriates like me. But in China, the lights are switched off, in summer there is no air conditioning, in winter there is very little heating. People sit in their coats. And you can't really operate very successfully in those circumstances. I was the head of the department of law for seven years. I visited all the major law schools in Beijing and Shanghai, and I tried to encourage more joint research projects, which is very useful particularly now that we are all under one country. However, there are language problems and ideological problems. In this faculty, there are practically no British people even though we teach English law. But this university may still be perceived in China as somehow colonial. We have to overcome that and show that we are willing to work without compromising our principles. And the ideas of academic freedom are very important because I don't think they were necessarily adopted in the same form in China. I think scholars in China would welcome the kinds of liberties and privileges that scholars have in Hong Kong.

Things were changing rapidly, as more and more of the Mainland academics had opportunities to go abroad to study and return. As more and more academics from the outside world were coming in to work and teach in the Chinese universities, the Chinese academics were catching up. As one professor at HKU said in the interview:

I've also done some collaboration with people in Taiwan and it's very clear there that they are developing a strong research tradition because they have invested so much money into sending people abroad to study and do research. And you can see the same patterns starting to emerge in China. But the problem with China is some of these people who return are not always given the sorts of jobs that

allow them to use their skills. So I think collaboration is obviously important and useful and it's especially productive if you can identify people with an understanding of modern research traditions and education. They are there but they are not always easy to identify because sometimes they are working under people who have more limited horizons.

However, most of the professors (17) believed that exchange, no matter how you looked at it, was a good thing. Some felt exchanges should be the other way around, that Hong Kong academics have a lot of things to learn from their colleagues on the Mainland. One of the local professors from CUHK expressed this viewpoint:

As people from the hinterland come to Hong Kong to learn about our system, we also feel that we have to go and learn more about our motherland, especially the young faculty. They do not seem to know enough about China, our cultural tradition. For the integration of Hong Kong and the Mainland in the future, the younger generation of academics here need to make an extra effort to learn about our own country. If possible, they wanted to go to the institutions for a certain period of time so that they could truly know about them. These younger academics will have more and more opportunities to work and cooperate with people from the hinterland. You could not just think they should come and learn things from you, you also have things need to learn from them. Especially after the integration of the two economies, we really need to learn more of the other system. The development of the hinterland is very rapid. Their academic levels in many areas are actually pretty high and other areas are rising very fast. The two sides will benefit by exchanges and cooperation. The expatriates in our institutions also need to make adjustments. Speaking English under the British rule is pretty natural, but not enough for the future at this corner of the world if they want to work here for a longer time. They may also need to think of learning Chinese, learning more about the Chinese culture. This is now going

to be a truly Chinese society, not a British colony any more. The British could not think they are superior in Hong Kong like they used to.

This shows the sentiment of some Chinese faculty towards the retrocession of Hong Kong to China and to the expatriates, especially the British at the universities in Hong Kong.

Graduate students from the Mainland. Since the expansion of Hong Kong's higher education institutions and their graduate schools, more and more younger academics from the Mainland have had opportunities to come to the Hong Kong universities to work for their graduate degrees. Many Hong Kong scholars hired academics in the Mainland as research assistants, first in the science and later in the social science. It was thought that recruiting some of the best minds from the Mainland universities to study in the better facilities of Hong Kong universities would benefit both sides. Many felt that this could be a potential competitive advantage for Hong Kong higher education as a center of excellence in the region because they could select better graduate students from a much larger pool in China. Many of the Hong Kong professors felt they could help upgrade the Mainlanders because they were sort of backward in research scopes. But they also complained about some of the negative aspects. Some of the Hong

Kong professors felt that they got good students at first, but after several years that was no longer the case. They would sometimes get “playboys” (a spoiled son of a friend or a government official). Not until later did they find out that their Mainland colleagues would introduce sons of their friends or their superiors instead of good students. One of the professors at HKU commented:

They [the colleagues in Mainland] started to ask for some favor or wanted some benefit for sending us their students. They would not give you a good student unless you invited them to come down for a visit. They treated exchanges as playing cards, and they used their good students as good cards.

A professor at CUHK also complained about some of these students:

Now we enroll graduate students from the Mainland, but some of them are using Hong Kong as a jumping board. As soon as the Western universities admit them, they leave no matter how short a time they’ve been here. I think this is cheating. Some of them just arrived; they used the printer here to print out applications to send to the American schools. Another thing that is not healthy, I think, is that the graduate assistantship here is way too high--it is two times a worker’s salary here. Many Mainland students just come for the money, not for the knowledge.

However, many Hong Kong faculty (8) thought it was a good start to have graduate students from the Mainland. They believed it was important to educate more in the social science, which were still a small proportion

compared with those in the natural sciences and business. Hong Kong scholars felt that soon science students from the Mainland needed special help to enable them to return as leaders in establishing a new research tradition and academic culture. One of the professors in Hong Kong University commented:

For some of them, I think their education has been very harmful to them. There is one student who we have who more or less thinks that you get through graduate school and get your doctorate by having other people who are in your corner working on your behalf. And he doesn't really understand that the problem is the quality of his own work. He also doesn't understand what genuine scholarship looks like. His stuff looks like Jolly and Joe kind of stuff from five, 10 years ago, which is awful. It's a purely descriptive kind of thing. Wonderful things in so and so county are now happening; this kind of rubbish. No concept of what scholarship even begins to look like. He's having a very tough time. His education is not up to par at all. But many of them are very bright.

A professor in the political sciences field shared the same feeling. He believed the social science students from the Mainland not only needed to improve their research methodology but also their way of looking at their field of study. He commented:

One of them is working on a topic of human rights and Marxism. And I think in many ways his approach to the work is symbolic of the sorts of things that I have been saying. His original pieces tend to be very bound up with the text of Marx and Engels and Mao, and he didn't analyze very closely or in some cases very well. He has been reluctant to give voice to his own thoughts about it. I think it's a fascinating question, how classical Marxism was reinterpreted by Mao

and is now re-interpreted by the Communist Party in China. How that can be reconciled with human rights developments and other things that are happening in China, theoretically anyway.

Most professors believed that, given time, this attitude toward higher education would change. The Mainland scholars and students needed time to adjust to the outside world after being isolated for such a long time. This was especially true for those from the field of social sciences.

### Regional Excellence Center of Higher Learning

All of the people I interviewed said they favored scenario three of the University Grant Committee (UGC) report describing the future possibility of the higher education system of Hong Kong which is spelled out as follows:

The institutions should incorporate centers of excellence having local, regional, and international functions. They should provide very high quality bilingual manpower for both Hong Kong and the hinterland and should act as points of reference, particularly in the business and social studies fields, innovative science and technology for developments in Southern China and beyond. Some undergraduate students and many postgraduate students would be recruited from outside of Hong Kong. (UGC Report, 1996)

This suggests that they all agree with Postiglione (1996) that the Hong Kong higher education system must balance a localization of administration, a nationalization of the university mission, and regionalization of academic leadership with the internationalization of knowledge. It meant that Hong

Kong needed to become a regional center of excellence in higher education.

As the UGC Interim Report (1993) stated: “If Hong Kong is to retain a leading position in the commercial and industrial development of China and the Pacific Rim, it will need world-class higher education institutions.”

The issue of world class universities in Hong Kong was raised during the interviews. Although there had been talk about making Hong Kong universities into world class universities, many of the interviewees had clear views of that. Many of them (11) did not think there was a possibility or even a necessity for this. One of the administrators offered this analysis:

As far as aiming to build world-class universities here, there are many people in Hong Kong who hope and appeal for that. I have a conservative point on this issue. Why? It is not that we should not make this effort, but there are three necessary conditions for a world class university coming into being. I think we only have one of these three conditions. The other two conditions are impossible for us. So, in such a situation, if we said we want to become a university as good as Harvard or MIT, we only fool ourselves. What are the three necessary conditions? First is world class teachers (the world class academics), second is first class students, and the third is much greater financial resources. World class teachers, I think we can satisfy that. Harvard and MIT, their faculty are from all over the world, although they have more from America, but they hire people from all over the world. We have quite good working conditions for our faculty, our salaries are among the highest. So we could also recruit people from all over the world and pick the best. We may not be able to recruit many of the best from the foreigners, but the best yellow faces. We really found many of the best people during the past 10 years.

He thought for a moment and continued:

But when we turn to the question of the students, we've got a problem. Because we are using Hong Kong taxpayers' dollars, they would say they only pay for their own children to be educated. So based on this political reason, the Hong Kong government could not allow the Hong Kong universities to recruit too many students from outside of the territory. Especially for the undergraduates, we can recruit only 1 to 2 percent at most. Therefore, it is obvious, say, if the States only allow Harvard to recruit students from Cambridge or Massachusetts, then Harvard will not be today's Harvard any more. So the average level of our students makes it impossible to be competitive as a world class university. The third condition is financial resources. The Hong Kong government is now very rich and allocates quite high education funds for us. But for those first class universities of the world, their financial resource are not a local budget. In the U.S. for instance, the budget of Harvard is supported by the federal government and other sources. Their money is not from only Boston. The same is true for Beijing University and Qinghua University. It is the central government funding them. Only in this way could they afford a few best institutions. So I conclude that with only local financial support, it is very difficult for the Hong Kong universities to become world class.

Some of the interviewees (6) thought that the Hong Kong universities should focus more on the local and regional needs. If the institutions served local needs well, they would perform the functions well. One of the professors at the Chinese University gave his viewpoint as follows:

I don't know how people classify universities, I often wonder. When people, say, name the five best universities in the world, they just come up with the names of Harvard, Yale, Cambridge, and Oxford. Greatest in what sense? Harvard is a great university because they sent out a lot of politicians who turn into presidents, senators, judges, and all this. Cambridge, too. It's great. How about us? We sent a lot of people to Hong Kong society to become political leaders, business leaders, so we are great, too. So, what is a great university? My



feeling is we don't have to be Harvard. We don't have to be Cambridge or Oxford. We just stay as us. Why do we have to love Harvard or Oxford? Why not HKU? We serve a different society, in different ways. In China you can name three top universities and I am sure there are reasons for that. Now I don't think Chinese U and HKU can compete with those top three Mainland universities. But we don't have to compete; we have our own roles to play. We do not need to compete with Mainland universities or overseas universities.

A number of the academics (11) agreed with this analysis. They also thought that the Hong Kong institutions needed to put more emphasis on teaching rather than on research, because teaching was more locally need-oriented. However, there is a view from other perspective, too. One expatriate professor from HKU commented:

It is certainly good if the faculty can concentrate on more local problems and do research useful for Hong Kong. But business and innovation in science and technology are not all locally significant. If you have to work these things internationally to make progress, you have to work with scholars all over the world and share their interests. You just could not serve a particular locality.

So a balance between local and international needs was also important. In one interview, an English faculty at CUHK thought international linkage was extremely important, that Hong Kong's higher education system needed to do whatever it could to maintain it. He explained:

Go for best teaching and stimulate the research and publication internationally. Hong Kong now has salaries which can attract the

best people in the world. But it needs to keep a stable society. The top researchers don't like to be messing about. They don't come to a place, set up a laboratory for experiments, and then find they have to run away on the next plane out because there is turmoil.

Some of those interviewed, however, felt that sometimes it was not so clear cut between pure theory and practical applications. Obviously, there were academics who pursued ideas and did not know much about reality, but some of those ideas can lead to many practical applications. There was also a question about the relationship between teaching and research. To balance all of the above goals would be not only a real challenge to the Hong Kong higher education system, but also a vital necessity for its competitiveness in the region.

### Effects of Retrocession on Academics' Work

As shown in the literature review, the retrocession affected the academics' work in many ways. Findings showed that the effects were mainly on two areas, teaching and research.

### Teaching the Changing Students in a Changing Environment

Most of the academics (16) felt that they still could say whatever they wanted to say in the classroom, but the retrocession did affect their teaching in some ways. A professor of education from CUHK said:

**I think our faculty has been probably used to those good students because they were teaching those among the top three percent of high school graduates. Now they have to deal with students less bright and with all kinds of problems. They, of course, have to adjust their teaching methods and work harder to find out and solve the problems. They certainly start to complain. But I think it is us who need to change not the students.**

**A professor of business from CUHK agreed:**

**When used to the elite students, the faculty tends to forget their duties and responsibilities. Teaching is a much more demanding job today than it was 10 years ago. Not just because we have more students, but also because we simply have too many things to teach. We cannot forget that we are in an information explosive age and have to constantly change the way of teaching to fit the pace of that.**

**An interviewee from HKU thought that his colleagues had become more careful in their discussions of political issues in the classroom in order to avoid troubles:**

**I think it is true to say that a high proportion of colleagues at this university are not particularly political. They don't speak out very much in or outside of the classroom on sensitive issues. They don't involve themselves in politics and it may just be because they are not interested, or it may be because they fear for their jobs. I think that's perfectly true for many of those local academics.**

**They found that there were changes in their students, also. Some professors were not quite sure whether this was directly related to the retrocession. However, many of them felt that their students were becoming more politically conscious and becoming more interested in China although**

many of the students had not been to China or had been there for just a short visit. They had not been used to be that interested in China. Now more of them are visiting China.

Many professors (10) noted that the students had become more politically aware. Some of them had become more fearful, and some of them told the professors they were emigrating to Canada, and so on. But it was not a panic by any means yet. The fear mostly happened in the social science areas. For some time, particularly history students have been feeling anxiety about the problems they would face when teaching the recent history of China. As one of the interviewees of the education faculty of CUHK told me:

Because of the feeling of insecurity, in the last several years, there has been a tendency for especially sixth form (grade 11 and 12) teachers to stop their coverage of modern Chinese history in particular earlier than they used to. They are stopping it as early as 1918-1919, when in fact the curriculum would allow them to go on well into the post-second war period, till about 1970 or 1980. In a sense, the students were being deprived of a very important area of Chinese history.

So, it really affected teachers and students in Hong Kong. Starting in the 1980s, people could see some effects of the retrocession on the curriculum primarily in subjects like civic education, public affairs, social studies, and even economics and business. There had been bias against

China as a result, not necessarily in political terms but simply mentioning China and what was going on in China. Information about China had become much more common since the agreement in 1984.

In the natural and applied sciences, such as physics, biology, and computer science, the effect was less. Most of these students would not talk much about politics or think very much about politics. Many of them were focused on how to get jobs after they finished their university education. The professors in these areas had not sensed much anxiety about the handover or any general trends in their thinking about how job prospects were going to change under the new government. They thought their students had for many years been quite pragmatic, and so if there were to be good opportunities of making money, then they may well go for that. Some of the students would want to get out of Hong Kong if there are opportunities for graduate studies or any other studies abroad, particularly the United States and Canada.

Many (14) agreed that the quality of their students had declined, and the most noticeable aspect of it had been in powers of expression, particularly in English. Most of them believed that this was because of the rapid expansion of higher education in Hong Kong, when the universities'

enrollment increased from 3% to 18%, and many more young people with lower academic skills had the opportunity to go to college there. The problem actually started in the secondary level of education. One of the interviewees complained:

The government deliberately mixed good students with poor ones and called it equality. The education department claimed that students on the average were higher not lower. Part of their claim may be true, but if you look at this from the university perspective, there are problems. The means they provide would be the same, but it is narrower, so the top 15% who were admitted to the university were actually lower quality students.

That was why many professors felt the difference was significant when they taught these students. Many middle class families were sending their children overseas for a college education because they now could afford it. So the Hong Kong universities had lost many of the top students from the upper middle class families. All educators believed that there was a positive relationship between the students' academic achievement and their families' social status. So the students recruited in the Hong Kong universities were lower academically than those who went abroad, especially their English language skills and their broad world view. What was even worse was that the students of Hong Kong now had a much higher living

standard and the students had a relatively easier life. They did not feel the hardship of the last generation, and so they tended to work less hard.

Nevertheless, some of the faculty (7) felt that it was inappropriate to complain about their students. Though these students were not from the upper middle class families and not as elite as those who studied in the universities some years ago, there are still bright ones. One of the professors at HKU concluded:

We see that the universities here are drawing on a much broader spectrum of the population. They are not even getting the top 18% because some of those will be abroad doing their studies. We might be getting people within the top 30%, which means inevitably that the quality of the students is not nearly as good as it was 10 years ago. But I would say it is still pretty good because in Australia or America, 35%, 40%, or 50% of people of that age get university education. I think our students are still relatively bright. For one thing, most of them can speak two languages pretty fluently. Most of them have come from backgrounds where education is valued, so these students tend to be more education oriented and more diligent. And in certain areas like math, for example, these students tend to be excellent.

He paused and then continued:

I don't think one should complain about the ability of the students here. A lot of them have been victims of the school system. Many of them have been educated in the language they don't understand well and they are at an obvious disadvantage. A lot of them have been educated in over-crowded classrooms--45 to 60 kids to a class where they don't get the proper attention. The classrooms are tremendously noisy. Much of the noise is from traffic outside. Also the teaching profession here is rather undervalued and underpaid. So you don't get very good teachers in the profession. I think the students who do

make it to this university have really got to be admired, because they have overcome all of the obstacles. They probably come from a home environment which is far from ideal for studying, unlike an American student who probably has a study of his own. If they are working at home, then they are sharing a living room with other people with TV on all the time. If the kids can make it through that sort of obstacle, then they are doing well. It is true that nowadays they, because of prosperity, don't have to struggle as hard as kids in the past did. So they think they have rights now that their predecessors would not have claimed. But if you were just asking me about their brightness, I would say that compared with other countries around the world, ours are doing okay.

Since many of the professors felt that their students' language ability had been declining, the discussion naturally turned to another related popular topic in Hong Kong: the language should be used for instruction at the schools.

### The Language Problem

The language problem was raised 13 years ago in a conference in Hong Kong, but is now widely discussed in the whole society. Many of the interviewees felt this was not just a problem of Hong Kong higher education; it was a problem for the whole society of Hong Kong. This question is as yet unresolved. One of the administrators offered this view:

I would say it is definitely more effective using the mother-tongue to teach all kinds of subjects, mathematics, physics and so on. But in Hong Kong as an international business city, there is a need for people to know English. If you discuss this question in the whole society, it is confusing. If you separate it, then it become clearer. If you say as



**an international business center, everybody should handle English very well, write good reports, or read articles, or discuss with foreigners deeply in philosophical issues, I don't think so. You probably need 20% to be able to do that at most. And if you ask whether everybody has the ability to use a second language to study other subjects? I don't believe that everybody could do that. I believe probably again only 20% of the population will be able to do that. So if you look at this problem separately, and only keep 20-30% of our secondary schools as English high schools, it would meet the needs of the society, and fit into the ability of some of students. I think if we do this, it would seem more reasonable. The Education Department recently issued a guideline on this question. In junior high, their students need to meet a certain English language objective standard so that they will be allowed to use English as an instruction language; otherwise, they have to use Chinese. Some of the high schools claim that they are English high schools, but, in fact, they use Chinese as the teaching language. I think we have to come back to reality.**

**Another debate centered around whether there should be a mother tongue (Cantonese) instruction or English language instruction. At that moment, the schools were offering both. The problem was that most of the parents and children were opting for English education because they were afraid that if they taught the mother tongue students wouldn't be able to learn English properly, important in the academic and business world. So, far from English declining prior to the retrocession, there was a perception among the students, the parents, and the population at large that English must be improved. One of the interviewees from CUHK offered his view:**

**I know that there are political reasons why you might have some political activists who are nationalists and say, well we are Chinese,**

why do we need this opium war language [British imported English]. But, that's really a kind of retro that some of those people are very good at English themselves. And most common people think well, history is history, but we are living now in the present. If you look at the South China Morning Post for the job lists, what you find they want in job after job are people who have Cantonese or Putonghua [Mandarin] and English. They don't want people who say, "I'm Chinese and I'm never going to let a word of English cross my lips." They want to hire all kinds of people who can operate in the modern world. It so happens that English and Chinese are now the main languages that trade in this region. So if you are in trade and you want a job, you have both of those languages, and most people can struggle by in both of those languages.

Professor Parkin from CUHK provided an analysis from a different perspective:

I see more bilingual situations in the universities. I don't think you can have a modern university that operates in all its subjects in Putonghua. I think that some of its subjects would be in Putonghua and some would be in other modern languages. Ninety-eight percent of the publications in science are in English, 98%, according to a linguist who is a professor of English as an international language at the University of Cambridge. If you believe that professors of science are going to translate every scientific article that appears into their own language and then teach the students in their own language, I think that would be a gigantic undertaking that can't be done. It's going to waste a lot of their time. What they are going to do is demand that students of science have a reading knowledge of English and that they read a lot of their materials in English. They may teach a lot in their own language, but they are going to demand a lot of reading and even writing in science. And it's science that is driving the modern universities, not Buddhist studies, religious studies, or fine arts.

Some of those interviewed (5) did not see the situation of language in Hong Kong higher education as a problem at all. It was a problem under the colonial rule because it deliberately oppressed the Chinese language which was not used as an official language for a long time. Now it has been put back. People will learn it well before long. Faculty pointed out that many Europeans can use several languages and never have a problem. They also said we should never underestimate the ability of young people.

### Localization and Maintaining International Status

To some local academics, retrocession has meant more opportunities for them to develop and to move up to a higher position in both academic and administrative posts. Most of the interviewees thought this was inevitable and appropriate, since there are more and more people getting higher degrees from Hong Kong. The pool of Chinese scholars is much larger than before. And it is quite natural that they should be viewed as better qualified than somebody who does not speak the local language or who has never lived in this society.

But some of the expatriates (5) were concerned that this movement was going so far that it would be unfair to them. Then, many of them would

have to leave. One of the expatriate professors in HKU expressed this concern:

**There is no question about it. There is increased localization, particularly at the administrative level. A number of my friends who are in administration feel as if they have been forced out. The vice chancellor is known as the “ghost buster.” Maybe, under the colonial system of higher education, there was probably discrimination against Chinese to the advantage of foreigners, and this is less in this university and more at the University of Hong Kong. Now we feel that there is a reverse. And the foreigner sees himself as a foreign expert, you know, sort of like “I am an outsider, and I have certain skills and values.” We can be a part of the administration, but never a majority, and always able to be voted down. That’s the reality and it is part of the change occurring in the system. This is not a criticism, it’s simply an observation, and it probably should have occurred years ago. This is probably the last bastion of the colonialism from the point of view of academic institutions.**

**This concern about faculty leaving is related to the concern of maintaining Hong Kong universities’ international status. Some warned that if some of the Hong Kong universities aspired to be first-class universities with high international standing, then the universities should hire from abroad as well as locally, except for some of the areas which need contact with local people who speak the language, such as nursing. So far, this is the policy that has been implemented in Hong Kong. The administration has largely been cleared of its expatriate style. Some departments which have close association with the community, like the medical department, have had**

a certain degree of localization for good reasons. In other departments which pursue pure academic work, there has been no attempt to inhibit them from the academic market and then a scholar from anywhere in the world has an equal chance of competing on equal terms with anybody else.

Some (5) thought that there was still a need to balance Chinese versus Western, or local versus international, perspectives of the academics in Hong Kong. They saw that the Westernized nature of the academics' mentality could be a problem as well. As one of the professors from the international business department at CUHK said:

I think even though most if not all academics working from this campus and other university campuses are trained abroad, many of them have teaching experience abroad. Maybe because of that when they come and start working here, their attention is still pretty much in that part of the world. This is something I don't find in Japan, for example. University professors in Japan are doing all the work that would be useful for Japan. And of course in the U.S. most university professors are doing work useful to the U.S. But Hong Kong is a very small place. People are not doing enough work useful for Hong Kong but are studying about the U.S. market, how do people behave there and this and that. And, of course, study of the U.S. if conducted from Hong Kong will benefit here because a lot of people go to the U.S. It seems that here there is a lack of attention to Hong Kong itself. Some people call it academic colonialism. We pay too much attention to the west, to Europe and U.S. Now, why don't our academics here pay more attention to China, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and so on instead of paying so much attention to the Americans? Why don't we pay more attention to the Asia region? This is how I feel and some people share this view, too. I don't know how long it takes for most academics in Hong Kong to get rid of this academic colonialism that

anything West is better than what we do here. I think that is not quite right.

Whether the words “academic colonialism” were accurate or not, the point he made was important and needed to be examined more closely.

Although Hong Kong is an internationalized city, the academics still needed to put more energy into works that would be useful for Hong Kong, rather than in work for other countries. But sometimes the lines between whether it is useful for Hong Kong or just for other countries is not clear cut, especially in the time of globalization.

### Research and Academic Freedom

Academic freedom was among the issues of most concern for many interviewees. Everyone discussed it when talking about his/her work. The majority (16) did not actually feel too much effect or change in their teaching and research. They felt if they had to think of politics when they were teaching or doing research, then Hong Kong must be really changed. Hong Kong and China would not be “one country, two systems” any more.

One of the optimists argued that:

Some people are worrying about their academic freedom, but up till now, could you give me a single case that any academic professional has been controlled in their academic freedom because of the 1997 retrocession? Now, including the press, they still could say anything they want to say. For instance, the PLA [People’s Liberation Army]

official who came to Hong Kong forgot to show his document and was put on the news. So if there's a case of controlling academic freedom, I believe people will yell bloody murder. If anyone could not produce any research results, it is his/her fault not to catch the opportunities, not that there is no academic freedom.

There were assertions of only positive effects. A professor of education at CUHK claimed:

Up till now, there is no negative effect on my work in teaching and research, or my academic freedom, not at all in the whole transition period. But I could also say there are effects. Research, for example. I mainly do two areas of research, one is political sociology, and the other is educational sociology. The retrocession provides me with many opportunities. It gives me many good research topics. Think of it, to emigrate to another place in this period is really not a wise move. We as researchers, whether you are in social science or education, you will find yourself in a place and period better than any other place across the world to do research. For example, you could study an election, political development, or education in transition. This is a rare and unique case in human history. If you ask me the effects on my work, I think they are all positive. I don't have to worry about a communist party secretary in our department yet. If there will ever be one, it would be a few decades in the future. So I feel we are still going to have academic freedom. And the UGC grants us money to do whatever research we want to do. I got grants in 1991 and 1995 to conduct research on elections. Without the retrocession, I don't think I would have these opportunities.

A professor of philosophy at HKU agreed that the retrocession was a great opportunity for academic research. He commented:

It hasn't really affected my work personally. There are one or two in this department who specialize in Chinese philosophy, and the reunification opens up new opportunities for them. So, from the point of view of our department, reunification has had a positive benefit. I once had to write an article for an English philosophical magazine

about the philosophy of Hong Kong and I made the point that for scholars, the reunification should be a tremendously interesting event. It should provide material for scholars; it shouldn't be anything that inhibits their work but gives impetus to it. Lawyers, for example, see the transition of the legal system happening right before their eyes. It's a fascinating phenomenon. How is Hong Kong going to negotiate a legal system which perhaps can accommodate the best of the common law tradition but also can adjust itself, for example, to cases being heard in Chinese in court or when it has to deal with the Chinese companies? There are tremendous interesting changes in the law, in politics, obviously in new political system being devised in economics. For an academic theorist, it should be a fascinating period, because, rather than simply theorizing abstractly, there is this or that political system or this or that economic system. They are seeing the transition take place in front of their eyes. If he's a contentious academic, he might even take part in the process, offer his views and opinions. So this reunification is a significant event in history, which throws up unique possibilities. They should be particularly fascinating to scholars in a variety of disciplines. Just making the transition to a completely new system and seeing all of the structures changing, modifying, adapting to themselves, all that is good for academics because it is pushed through the theoretical mill.

Yet, a number of people (6) thought there was some pressure on faculty, and there were complaints that people's freedom was somehow restricted. They felt that some of their research projects might not be funded due to political reasons. However, they said if faculty wanted to do research but not depend on funding, then they could do research pretty much on what they liked. But some professors did start to censor themselves. One of the interviewees was quite sure there was growing self-censorship from his experience:



I think there has been a growing self-censorship for the last seven years. I do quite a lot of editing so I read a lot of articles. The critical part in an analytical sense, not emotional sense, has become more positive. It may be, if I look at myself, that other people are feeling the same way.

There were also people (3) who thought a threat was there. A

professor from HKU said:

I haven't seen anything yet and people have rung me up. There are people in this university and in one or two other universities that have told me stories. I don't necessarily want to generalize them from particular experiences in the other academic institutions because people may view their own problems in particularly subjective ways. We must be very careful to distinguish what people regard as infringements on academic freedom with real infringement. I think there are two major sources from which threats emerge. One is the internal one. The one I just described where people might feel that they should steer their research in a particular way and not in any particular direction. The other one is the external source dressed up as efficiency and a means by which to test whether they are doing a good job or not. And often I think the softer disciplines have suffered because there is that tendency and I think this is perhaps universal. But certainly there is a tendency for the paradigm to become paramount that people begin to think that we should measure output by measuring relevance, quantity, contribution to society, or that sort of stuff. These, of course, are important, but they shouldn't become paramount. To the philosopher, sociologist, historian, or political scientist, some of those tests have very little meaning in some cases and there is always the danger you may wish to restrict that sort of research in pursuit of the other paradigm and I think that has to be guarded against.

Another professor from the same university suggested there had been potential threats for the academic freedom. He reasoned:

There might be some reasons why the future government would want to reduce academic freedom. For one thing, the universities are sometimes regarded as hot beds of dissent over a revolution. A couple of days ago, the students here confronted the police because they wanted the Statue of June 4th on the campus. I think the Chinese government is rather nervous about the free wheeling attitudes in the universities. They think perhaps that the students ought to be restricted in what they do and perhaps be taught more ideology and so they become more patriotic and more supportive of the government. And there will be certain areas of research which the Chinese government may think unhelpful to China, in which case they may intervene to try and curb that kind of research. I can easily see that happening. The only question is to what extent will it happen?

Some of those interviewed (5) did not think they would have the same level of academic freedom that they once had. The expatriate professors felt that they could probably continue to utilize the same level of freedom of expression and academic freedom because they could leave at any point in time if something happened. But the local academics would not have that opportunity, and because of that, they would practice more self-censorship. One mass communications professor thought that even the students were also not as willing to express their opinions. For five years he tracked people's willingness to express their opinions, asking the people about how willing they were or what caused them to be unwilling to express themselves. The results showed a rising fear of retaliation, and a fear of being sued and arrested. These fears had increased dramatically since 1994,

and this fear of retaliation kept people quiet. One of the administrators of the education faculty of CUHK offered this analysis:

As far as research and writing are concerned, the most sensitive area would be in the teaching of Chinese history, and civil education, moral education in Hong Kong. Do we incorporate June 4 in the textbook? That would be a sensitive issue, for example. Professors who teach Chinese history have to address it, right? Are we still going to teach social studies related to America, Britain, and Canada which goes by nurturing participation in democracy, or do we keep upon civil education along with patriotic, nationalistic kind of content? We have to deal with sensitive topics. I cannot speak for other people, but as far as I am concerned in publication, I would do research in my area of interest. I would not shy away from sensitive topics. I don't know if one day people would come in and say, "Well, let's see, you know, you couldn't write this in paragraph three, you make this claim, shouldn't you tear it down?" If that will be the case, I think I would think about leaving. I think, as responsible scholars, we have to have academic freedom and be autonomous. But to be responsible, we also have to use the freedom very carefully and in a scholarly way, not in a political way.

One of the professors from CUHK said she did not yet feel any pressure on the academic community there. However, she found that there were other interesting things happening in the academic community of Hong Kong. It seemed that some of the academics were eager to do research that sounded nice to China, distorting the reality to show their loyalty to the Chinese government. The purpose was that they could move up in their positions. She said, "These people would not do any good to anybody;

fortunately, there are not many of them. Most of the academics are honest people.”

Academics as a whole shared some of the fears and apprehension of the general public. But for far more important reasons, particularly people in the social sciences had very good reasons to be worried about their future research and publications. One of the professors from HKU said:

Some instances I can think of are that, say, someone in the politics department here who voluntarily refrains from doing certain types of research because he thinks that it might be sensitive. For example, supposing a scholar in our politics and public administration department is particularly interested in the subject of human rights. He might think it wouldn't be wise to continue doing this kind of work with the transition about to take place. I know quite a few people here who have curbed their research programs.

The fears might have developed from what happened in China. The social sciences were not very popular in China because social sciences could lead to criticism of government policy and certain areas. So the government saw this as source of destabilization and did not encourage it. Although much progress has been made since the end of the “Cultural Revolution,” both social scientists and humanists still had good reasons to be worried about areas such as political science, philosophy, sociology, history, and even literature. Although not many people would expect a Cultural Revolution in any form to occur again, its history was still indelibly

imprinted in the minds of everyone. One of the professors from HKU expressed his worry as follows:

A large part of the basic law was devoted to a guaranteeing of protection for the tertiary institutions in effect. Academic freedom was guaranteed, the right of scholars to pursue their studies independently and without fear of coercion. If those provisions are abided by, then there should be very little change in the universities. But, I meant this entirely for speculation as to whether there will be government interference in the running of the universities. And it seems to me that what probably will happen is that there will be interference fairly swiftly. Already you can see it in the secondary schools. There is a sort of recognition that things are going to have to be different after July, 1997. For example, English has been removed as the medium of instruction. I'm not saying that it is good or bad. It just means that changes are being forced upon us because of the change of sovereignty.

After a short break, he started to raise many questions following the above comment:

So, if the education system is being changed at that level, then it can't be too long it gets changed at the tertiary level, also. For example, what will happen to history departments within the universities? If they concentrate on recent Chinese history and if some of the scholars depict recent events in a way that is unfavorable to China, will the government step in and close down the history department? Or will it perhaps make sure that some of the professors are fired because they are not being supportive of the government? And we know from Singapore that there is tremendous intervention by the government in running the universities, then it seems to me this is a real danger that, similarly here, the universities will become more and more under government control. And the government can exert its control in various ways, some more than others. For example, it can exert control financially, it can insist on differential pay structure for academics and insist that universities be self-financing. The effect in

humanities and social science subjects will be severe because they cannot finance themselves. And universities will become much more oriented to vocational subjects because it is much easier for engineers to get outside support than it is for humanities. So, through this and various other means, government, if it wanted to, could alter the pace of the universities quite considerably.

A number of professors (6) even thought that internationalization of the Hong Kong higher education system was not only significant for knowledge, it was also a choice made by some universities and their academics to try to establish contacts outside of China or Hong Kong for political consideration. This linked them with universities in Europe or North America in exchanges and research projects. In this way, they put themselves in public view of the world, so that in the future if anything would happen to anybody or to any college or the faculty, international media would know about it and criticize it if anything bad happens in Hong Kong. The universities of Hong Kong sought to establish links outside as well as inside China, so they would have this kind of protection.

### The Academics' Influence on Society

Since academics thought academic freedom was not only important for the development of the higher education system but also for the development of the Hong Kong society, I was also interested in how academics saw their influence on society. "The position and influence of the

academic profession within Hong Kong society pales in comparison to the commercial and financial sectors,” according to a study of Postiglione (1996, p. 21). But several of the academics interviewed for this study disagreed. They claimed that it depended on the time period. During most of the history of colonial rule, the academics in Hong Kong had no opportunity to influence the ruling policy of the government and, therefore, had little opportunity to influence the society. A professor of political science at CUHK explained:

Academics in other countries, say, those in the United States, could influence the government from their work as a “think-tank” or as an official of the government. But the Hong Kong government was different. If they needed people to do policy research for them they would rather invite people from outside of Hong Kong to help them. Many times they would invite a consultant firm or academics from Britain to do such research for them. They rarely used the academics in Hong Kong. One reason might be that the academic circle in Hong Kong was relatively small. Hong Kong used to have only two universities and expanded to seven only recently. So the academics themselves have not been an established and forceful social entity. Given this above condition, they had little influence on the society. But there were some individuals from the academic community who were higher profile and vocal, and who did have certain influence on the government as well as on the society.

But things have been changing in recent years, as some of the interviewees argued, especially during the retrocession period. Hong Kong academics have done a lot to try to influence the government and the society

in many ways. They worked as consultants for the government as the government established more and more consultative committees. And they worked in the Legislature. And they joined a political club like the Hong Kong Observers, an academics organization, which criticized the Hong Kong government. But how effective they were was still a question.

Academics had conducted research on this topic some time ago and found that the Hong Kong academics lacked many conditions for influencing society (Postiglione, 1996a). However, most of the interviewees did not agree. They admitted that it is true that the main impetus for putting Hong Kong on the world stage had been business, but that is also true of more or less every society. One of the interviewees from the education faculty of CUHK argued:

**You cannot say that academia has nothing to do with the running of Hong Kong. If you start thinking about the government of Hong Kong, the people who actually run the playing field, as it were, for businesses, the top civil servants, the advisors, and the numbers of middle level civil servants climbing up the ladder, they are all educated people. How do these people get trained? How do the top business people get trained?**

Another professor, also from the education faculty, tried to put this issue more objectively:

**I would say that if you looked at people who are politically active in Hong Kong many of them are associated with tertiary institutions**



[universities and colleges in Hong Kong]. The most obvious one would be Young Sung who works at the department of social work here. But there have over the years been many others. A current member of executive council is Prof. Mack. So, I would say that there are academics who are very heavily involved in the political system, both as members of government committees and government “think tanks.” Quite a lot people who are active in the political sphere I would say come from the universities. However, I think it would be fair to say that a majority of academic staff are not really involved or engaged in politics. But there are some who are very active. And that’s probably a reflection of the mentality of wider society. The governor’s executive council, which is the body that really directly advises the government, has got a number of academics on it, including Edward Chen, and Phillips Lee Mack. Committees advising on education are full of academics and I was on the education committee for six years. Professor Young is the chairman, etc. So, I would say at the level certainly of the advisory process, the policy making process, academics are heavily involved.

Another interviewee from the education faculty of HKU added:

There are academics on the various advisory boards, the education commission, the board of education, the university grants committee, and so on. There is representation of academics in the government. These would tend to be a small number of very highly selected academics. There wouldn’t be as much connection between policy makers and representatives of staff associations. That doesn’t exist to any great extent. But I wouldn’t say education policy at the tertiary level is made in the absence of consultation. It’s not always necessarily happy and it’s not always productive to a consensus, but there is consultation going on.

They also felt that in Hong Kong, a business-dominated city, the new generation of business people at the top were more sophisticated, better educated modern people. They were, for example, more sophisticated than

the journalists writing about Hong Kong, meaning that they had been through academia. So the academics were actually the people who produced a large proportion of their top leaders in the business sector. They might be low profile but they had an impact and an influence. And that was what it meant to say a modern country needed an education system.

### Advice for the SAR Government

The interviews elicited advice from respondents regarding desired future actions of the SAR government. Although a few of them felt that they might not be in the position to advise the government, many of them would like the future SAR government to hear what they had to say during the interviews. Regarding the future development of the higher education system and the society of Hong Kong, the academics offered these suggestions to the SAR government:

Seventy-five percent of interviewees discussed the ideas in Items 1 through 4.

1. The SAR should keep its investments in the higher education institutions. The decision of cutting back funds by 9% in 1998-2001 is unwise and it could do a great harm to the system. Meanwhile, they must insist that the institutions and their academics need to demonstrate that they

are providing value for the money. They need to show that they are doing useful research projects, providing services needed by the society, and spending a lot of time thinking about teaching by incorporating innovative teaching methods. And more important, their students must also be progressing.

2. As to academic freedom, the SAR government should take a hands-off approach with the universities and their faculty even if there is pressure from the central government. The government should help to put in place both a culture and a set of infrastructure arrangements that will maintain the possibility of pluralism. It should help maintain the possibility of different academics, different people being able to communicate, to express or exchange a range of ideas. It should try to restrict the climate for political correctness being forced on people.

3. As to institutional autonomy, the government should, to a large extent, trust the universities to determine the goals within the community, their obligations to the community, and their autonomy in operating the institutions, while bearing in mind that the government itself has the right to ensure that the universities are accountable to society.

4. Hong Kong needs to maintain its international center status so that its higher educational system will adapt to the trend of globalization. Hong Kong's value is on its internationalization, without which Hong Kong would be little different from cities in the Mainland. Therefore, the SAR government should help to maintain the elements of internationalization of its higher educational system. For example, the SAR government should help to keep a free flow of information within the higher educational system as well as between Hong Kong society and the outside world.

Fifty to 75% discussed the ideas in Items 5 through 9.

5. The higher education system still needs to raise more funds for research. This means that research funds should come not only from the education budget, but also from industry. There is criticism that the research projects of the higher education institutions are not applied enough, too often ivory tower type of research projects. This is because the funding system favors the ivory tower type of research. The institutions could work with industry sector to generate funds for the R&D projects. The system should manage to add research projects that are more useful for the development of Hong Kong.

**6. Institutions should put more emphasis on improving teaching as they encourage the faculty to conduct research and publish. They should also avoid requiring faculty to publish for the sake of publishing and ensure that they maintain a balance between research publication and teaching. Teaching, research, and service to students as well as the community are equally important.**

**7. The SAR government should be somewhat more practical in its aims for the higher education of Hong Kong. People in the universities in Hong Kong like to pretend that they are in world class higher educational institutions and tend to forget or not notice that their students are desperate for basic help. Students in these institutions have basic problems with the language and yet the curriculum that we are teaching is much like the curriculum of a British university, which is set up for the benefit of native speakers. So, the SAR government should place greater emphasis on pedagogical improvements and effective teaching rather than overemphasize advanced research and publication.**

**8. The Hong Kong higher education system needs a long-term plan of development. The British Hong Kong colonial government did not have a long-term commitment because its rule was coming to an end. The SAR**

government should conduct manpower research and planning, so the universities can plan development accordingly. The universities themselves could help with the research projects, but government should support funds for that.

9. The institutions should encourage faculty to do more research on topics related to the needs of local area, the region, and China instead of focusing too much on the West, such as England, America, and other western countries. In the meantime, academic administrators need to realize that a large part of their work is internationalized in nature. There are areas that could not be separated from the local and the international; there are areas with pure academic work that need to connect with the rest of the world and share their interests.

Twenty-five to 50% of respondents discussed ideas in Items 10 and 11.

10. The SAR government should help the higher education system of Hong Kong to move away from some aspects of the British system which are not effective in the development of Hong Kong and the higher education system itself. The British system is not in step with the general trend of the world. The Hong Kong higher education system should consider adopting a

system closer to four-year system of the U.S. and China. Two important changes, for example, need to be made. First, a credit system needs to be installed in the higher education institutions, which would allow the students to move forward easily and have the flexibility in changing courses and majors among programs. Second, there is a need to change the three-year college system into a four-year system, as higher education in Hong Kong changes from elite education to mass education. Many new students are less capable in one way or another compared with those elite students in higher education in the past. So they may need more help and a longer program.

11. There has to be a clear policy for higher education about whether there are local institutions satisfying local needs or regional needs, or whether they see themselves as international institutions. And then they must work out the theory issue of language of instruction. Are all universities expected to use English? If they are using Chinese, what is the policy on Mandarin?

One respondent discussed the ideas in Item 12.

12. The SAR government should help the higher education institutions avoid unhealthy competition. Are all the universities or only some of them research oriented? This is also a significant issue in other

developed countries. Therefore, there is a need to make clear the mission of different institutions. Each institution should do what it is good at rather than everybody doing the same thing. Society needs institutions which perform different functions.

### Summary

Three basic types of academics emerged from the interviews on Hong Kong's higher education system and the retrocession. They were the optimists, the pessimists, and the pragmatists. The optimists and the pessimists had their reasons for arguing their positions on the "one country, two systems" arrangement. Many academics shared the popular view with the Hong Kong people which was also the viewpoint of most of the pragmatists: in the area of economics there was no reason to be especially pessimistic about Hong Kong's future because of the economic progress of China, but in political area, there were few reasons to be overly optimistic because of the politically conservative nature of the Chinese government. But there were also people who doubted whether the economy could be separated from politics. That means economic progress eventually will be dragged back by the political conservatism of China, which in turn will affect the development of the SAR of Hong Kong. The majority of



interviewees, including some of the pessimists, however, believed that there was a possibility of working out the success of “one country, two systems” if the provisions of the basic law were taken seriously and pluralism was allowed. Many of the academic participants believed that if a country allowed pluralism, it would be prosperous because pluralism was a source of dynamism. They thought plural cultures, economic systems, and political thoughts could exist under a unified structure. If everyone was involved in valuing the opportunity and worked hard for the realization of “one country, two systems,” the plan could be worked out and both Hong Kong and China would benefit.

Most of the academics interviewed thought that the higher education system in Hong Kong must work toward serving the goals in modernizing China in addition to serving the needs of Hong Kong society after the retrocession. The rapid expansion of the higher education system was seen to assist in the development of Hong Kong. Since the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law of the SAR stipulated “Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong,” the Hong Kong higher education institutions should consider how to train local leaders for the Hong Kong SAR government after the retrocession. However, many of the interviewees worried that

Hong Kong students had been so influenced by a civil-service type of education that was reinforced by the commercial mentality that it would not help to produce thinking-leader type of graduates. The participants all agreed the higher educational institutions of Hong Kong should incorporate centers of excellence having local, regional, and international functions. As for serving the goal of modernizing China, this had already been started with exchanges between academic communities in business and science. Faculty believed that it was equally important to establish exchanges in the social sciences and to recruit more graduate students in social sciences from the Mainland.

The retrocession affected the academics' life and work in many ways. Two areas interviewers said were of most concern were teaching and researching in a changing situation and academic freedom. On teaching, many of the academics agreed that the quality of their students had declined and that such a reality made teaching a much more demanding job. Students needed the most help in their power of expression, particularly in English. Most academics believed that this was because of the rapid expansion of higher education in Hong Kong during the past several years. There had been a long debate about whether there should be mother tongue instruction

or English instruction. Most of the interviewees did not think that this should be a big problem. They believed the Hong Kong education system should and could be bilingual.

On the issue of academic freedom, they shared some of the fear and apprehension of the general public. Particularly, those who taught in social sciences felt that they had reasons to be worried about their future research and publications. But they believed academic freedom was important to the academic community as well as the society. Although studies showed that the Hong Kong academics were not particularly influential on society, many academics interviewed in this study disagreed with the kind of image imposed on them. They argued that many of them were actually quite active in the transition period in trying to influence the retrocession in a positive direction. The participants also put forward many significant suggestions for the future SAR government.

## CHAPTER V

### INTERPRETATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

After examining the findings presented in Chapter IV, some significant and important themes emerged from the many interesting issues that the selected faculty and academic administrators discussed under each of the research questions. This chapter will interpret the meaning of these themes within the historical context of the retrocession and discuss their implications for the development of Hong Kong's higher education system, for Hong Kong society, and for the transformation of China. Conclusions will be drawn from the discussions along with implications for future studies.

This chapter is organized in the following sections:

1. Interpretation on perceptions regarding "one country, two systems."

Topics discussed in this section are: (a) the three perspectives (optimism and its criticism, pessimism and its criticism, and pragmatism and its criticism); (b) from authoritarianism to democracy: economic reform and political reform; (c) traditional Chinese values and China's modernization; (d) a strong state for a slow transformation; (e) economic development as a condition for sustained democratization; and (f) a word for pragmatism.

**2. Interpretation of perceptions of Hong Kong's higher education.**

Themes in the section on the repositioning of Hong Kong higher education include: (a) the changing higher education system, (b) training leaders for Hong Kong's future, and (c) serving the goal of China's modernization.

**3. How the retrocession affected academics' work. Themes include:**

(a) teaching in the changing situation, (b) the language problem, and (c) academic freedom concerns.

**4. Conclusions and implications for future studies.**

**Interpretations of the Findings**

**Perceptions "One Country, Two Systems"**

The retrocession of Hong Kong to China was first and foremost a political transition at the time that China was engaging in its social transformation. All of this attracted great attention from many of the academics at the Hong Kong universities. Concerning many political issues, the selected faculty and academic administrators at the two Hong Kong university sites for the study had different view points and feelings, just as the general public did. One of the academics' main points of focus was Hong Kong's future political structure and the relationship with China, that is, the "one country, two systems" form of government.

The "one country, two systems" arrangement was designed according to the history and the realities of Hong Kong and China. As seen in Chapter IV, the topic was broad and the perspective of each interviewee was different. However, if one followed the two national goals of China--re-unification and modernization--these could serve as a thread to link all perspectives together. Determining where China and Hong Kong lay in the progressive spectrum of modernization will help us to see where they started and where they are headed. It also will help us understand the different viewpoints of the interviewees and draw significant meanings and implications for the study.

Coming from a feudalistic autocratic state, China is now transforming from a socialist planned economy into a socialist market economy, since socialism as an economic management approach has failed and the communist ideology has lost its appeal. At the same time, capitalism has become more and more prevalent in the world. The Chinese government, however, still imposes tight political control on its people while freeing up their economic activities. This has made China's political advancement extremely slow. Hong Kong's capitalist system and its free market economy are ahead of the Mainland in economic development. Also, some of Hong

Kong's people are pursuing political reform towards democratization. Since both of the systems have distinctly different political institutions, the political evolution in both systems became a main concern of the academics of Hong Kong as well as the society at large.

### The Three Perspectives

Three basic types of perspectives regarding “one country, two systems” emerged after analyzing transcripts from the interviews (see Chapter IV, Table 5). The first perspective was the optimistic one (11 out of 25 interviewed). These people viewed the retrocession positively and urged others to do the same and work together with Beijing for a brighter future for Hong Kong. They saw the retrocession as an opportunity for both Hong Kong and China. The second perspective type was the pessimistic (7, 4 very pessimistic and 3 somewhat pessimistic). These academics interviewed saw the negative side of the picture because of the power struggle in Beijing and the way the Chinese government treated the dissidents who called for democracy. The third perspective type was the pragmatic (7, all in the middle of the scale). They saw the transition period as an opportunity for research and tried to stay neutral and objective and have a better understanding of the retrocession.

Interviewees in the several academic positions had very different perceptions of the “one country, two systems” issue. Although the groups of participants spoke from their political standpoints, their perspectives also affected their positions on educational issues in many ways (see below). Three lines of thinking emerged and the academics in each area all had their own evidence and considerations to support their points. They also all seemed to have their own limitations. The following sections will examine these viewpoints, interpret their underlying meanings, discuss their implications for Hong Kong and China, and construct a picture for the arrangement of “one country, two systems.”

Optimism and its criticism. In this majority group, academics interviewed expressed two contradictory arguments. Some emphasized the fact that China has been making progress politically and economically from an historical standpoint compared to Mao’s years, and especially compared to the Cultural Revolution period. They pointed out that the concept of “one country, two systems” itself was a breakthrough from seeing the communist ideology of socialism as the superior system and the only way to save China.

More fundamental to this way of thinking was the tradition of “great unification thought” that has dominated Chinese history. Historical



experience has made the Chinese people believe that a unified country brought stability and prosperity. After a long struggle with communist ideology and the failure of its economic and social experiments, the Chinese government admitted that capitalism could work and could coexist with socialism in China. China has been making progress in many areas since it adopted the “open-door” policy and began its experiment in the market economy in 1977, first in the Special Economic Zones and then in the rest of the country. Although there was a setback in 1989 after the June 4 event, it was important that the country continued its economic reform and gave its people more economic freedom. The optimists claimed that an open door policy would not be limited only to the economy; it might lead to other openings, including Western ways of management, values, and culture, eventually leading to other areas of social change.

Another argument for optimism was based on the unique history, culture, and current situation of China and Hong Kong. The foundation of the Chinese culture--Confucianism (which also is the core of Asian values according to some of the interviewees)--is the backbone of the tradition for respecting authority. Through this philosophy, Chinese society has been particularly concerned with unity, harmony, and conformity. For the Chinese,

**this philosophy means repressing private interests for the sake of public interests; emphasizing that individualism should be constrained by collectivism; adopting family values of hard-work, saving for the future and for children; emphasizing education; respecting seniority and authority; and above all, avoiding any extreme. These values are still deeply planted in Chinese society both in Hong Kong and China.**

**Optimists from the survey believed that in a large country like China with its long history and unique traditions, an authoritarian state might be preferable to a democracy. They worried that abrupt democratization might lead the nation into anarchy and chaos. The Chinese people have suffered from constant chaos with frequent government changes throughout their history, until the most recent Cultural Revolution. As one of the interviewees warned, “Don’t forget China was a fugal society in which history repeated itself again and again between order and chaos.” Many Chinese people, including their leaders, worried that a democratic government could be a guise for ineffective government or anarchy. They have good reasons to fear that anarchy might bring nothing but disaster to them again. So, the optimists argued that a strong, authoritarian state was necessary to maintain political**

stability, and that a stable political environment would allow continued economic development and prosperity for the country.

However, the optimists' opponents (the pessimists) worried that China would emphasize political stability and economic development at the cost of justice for the people. One pessimist noted, "China has a very bad record of abiding by a legal system." He also thought that people needed to be aware that "[authoritarian government should not use Confucianism or "Asian values"] to preserve the privilege of those in power at the cost of the common people." They argued that a stable social order also must be a just one; therefore, rule of law was seen as being equally as important as stability.

Others pointed out this optimistic perspective ignored the fact that the traditional culture in China had greatly changed in modern times with the introduction of Western thoughts including communism, which was damaged greatly in the Cultural Revolution. Secondly, the optimistic perspective ignored globalization of the world economy and information technology advancement which gave people much more information than before. This could mean that the younger generation especially would not necessarily hold on to the traditional values and would have very different expectations with a rise in their standard of living. As one of the critics said, "They would expect

to increasingly have a say in the nature of the political system as they became more educated and more affluent.” They would become more willing to participate in the political domain which would decide how they are going to earn their living and live their own lives. Critics felt this was especially true for the younger generation of educated Chinese people.

Pessimism and its criticism. Arguments for a pessimistic view of “one country, two systems” were based on the fact that China was still a “one party dictatorial regime.” The pessimists pointed out that it was the nature of the regime that created the greatest problem. It made the Chinese leaders feel insecure and reluctant to give their people political freedom or tolerate any opposition. They would crack down on any political dissent. “It would be disastrous if they became too heavy-handed in suppressing dissent,” one of the pessimists warned. “An intelligent government and a mature political system would encourage differences of opinion and dialogue to keep themselves honest.” An interviewee on the pessimists side asserted that the Chinese government tried “to encourage people to be entrepreneurial and self-motivated and to disdain red tape while at the same time to be politically docile, and this is not possible.”

The pessimists further argued that a one party dictatorship would not run a capitalist market economy well because a capitalist system is built on democracy that respects people's rights and freedom, and protects their individual property. [They all come from common historical roots.] They believed that the insecurity of the Chinese government came from the one party system itself. "If a country just has a one party system and people don't like that party, then there are no safe mechanisms for removing that party," one pessimist pointed out. "Then the only way that party can be removed is through violent revolution." Therefore, the pessimists felt a multi-party democracy was the only way out. They claimed that democratization was a worldwide trend. They saw the democratic system, based on the concept of peoples' innate equality with the right of freedom and the pursuit of happiness, as the most progressive system in human history. Although far from perfect, a democratic system could prove to prevent the worst-- dictatorship (like Mao's years in China) and government corruption (that was wide-spread after China's economic reform and opening up to the outside world). Democracy had also helped maintain a just and stable social order and economic prosperity in many developed countries. As one of the interviewees commented, "[People] fear . . . a dictatorial regime where you

have government by rulers, as it were, rather than government by servants.”

He believed those elected in a democratic system were more likely to be public servants, and if they were not, people could vote them out using a peaceful mechanism--the voting system.

The criticism of the pessimists' perspective said it overlooked the fact that the two societies (especially in China) still lacked many elements to immediately install a successful democratic system. And Hong Kong would have to adjust its democratization pace to China's after the retrocession. Otherwise, the opposite results could occur. One interviewee also pointed out, “The push for democratization too fast could give the Hong Kong people a more conservative version of the Basic Law” because the Chinese government would suspect ulterior political motives. This showed the Chinese government hesitated in every step towards democratization because of the concern for security among other reasons. From the general population's perspective, there were problems, too. Most of the people in China have not been educated and do not understand much about genuine democracy. The same is true in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong democratic advocates liked to cite the '95 election in Hong Kong when more than a million people voted for pro-democracy candidates. But those voters were

still a small proportion of Hong Kong's 6.3 million population. The fact was that the majority of the people in Hong Kong did not truly understand what democracy was and what such a system would mean to them. As one of the interviewees commented, "Democracy means a hundred things to a hundred people." During the 150 years of British rule, Hong Kong never had genuine democracy. If the British had started de-colonialization and democratization earlier, most of the Hong Kong people might have been more ready for it. The people of China and Hong Kong needed more time to be educated and have the experiences with the necessary institutions before they could truly participate in the democratic game. China, with a large and complex society which is very different from the West, might need considerably more time for its social transformation. "In the promotion of democracy, patience is truly a virtue" (Harding, p. 176). That was also the rationale behind the idea of no change over 50 years for the "one country, two systems." Or, in other words, if China could be transformed from an authoritarian society into a democratic one after a process of 50 years, that would be a reasonable time period. As some of the interviewees reasoned, "The [transitional] period could be very long."

**Pragmatism and its criticism.** The pragmatists, whose ideas were based on the unique and complicated social reality in Hong Kong and in China at the time, believed there were many ways of reforming a society. One of them reasoned, “There are lots of modern societies with different kinds of political systems, whether it is partly democratic or totally democratic.” They did not believe that a free market system necessarily came automatically with a democratic system. They seemed to agree with Harding’s analysis that democratization was a long-term process. As one of them pointed out, “You can see many states with booming economies that are not totally democratic.” As for the relationship of the two systems, another pragmatist professor claimed, “I don’t think an independent system with independent laws and completely different sets of freedoms, which is what people hoped for in 1984, is now thought by anyone to be a realistic possibility.” The pragmatist thought this because the conflicts between the two sides, China and Britain, came out of their mistrust and misunderstanding of each other. They felt the two sides needed to communicate more sincerely and come to a compromise grounded in reality. One of the pragmatists found, through research, that “the views of ordinary people in Hong Kong were vastly different from the views people usually read in the press.” The



ordinary people were apolitical and desired security and stability. They wanted things to work and to have the opportunity to make money. They “just want to be left alone to get on with their life.” These people would not be a threat to China at all, and they were the real majority. Since the social systems needed to be changed, the people of China and Hong Kong had to look for the one most suited to their situation--maybe a system between capitalism and socialism.

The criticism of the pragmatic line of thinking is that they do not have a clear vision for the future; they just emphasize that people want to compromise and keep going on with their lives. Compromise may be necessary a lot of times, but it does not mean people should accept anything blindly. That is why one of the pessimists worried that, “there is a certain fatalism in China’s culture generally and it extends itself to Hong Kong.” The Chinese were ruled autocratically for too long and developed such a culture that they probably would accept what the Chinese government imposed on them; this kind of attitude would certainly not do anything good for the future of the two systems. Pragmatists said Hong Kong people should negotiate (and should sometimes struggle) with the Chinese government for their own

rights and interests, especially for those rights that were already specifically stated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

It became apparent that the interviewees had different opinions on the arrangement of "one country, two systems." Each of the three views seemed focused only on part of the whole picture. They were all right on some points, but each view also had its limitations. The optimists among the interviewees tended to look at the positive side of the situation for the arrangement of "one country, two systems;" the pessimists looked at the negative side; and the pragmatists laid their own views between, but leaned more towards the optimists' side. How could these three viewpoints fit into the whole picture, and what meaning did they have for the arrangement of "one country, two systems?" "One country, two systems" would not remain a concept forever; it was a goal for the two sides (Hong Kong and China) to pursue because it would become a reality after the retrocession. However, the majority of the interviewees (all of the optimists, pragmatists, and some of the pessimists) believed that the structure of the arrangement could be worked out.

A majority of the interviewees agreed that democracy was desirable for the future. The major issue was whether it was realistic to turn China into a

democratic system? The chaotic potential pointed out by the optimists was real for the Chinese society because of the enormous scale of problems existing there. During the past 3,000 years of its history, China has enjoyed only about 300 years of peace and prosperity; 90% of the time was chaos (Yuan, Z., 1999). Therefore, the interviewees thought China should look for a unique path for China's advancement to modernity.

Additional points for consideration emerged from the interviews.

### From Authoritarianism to Democracy

Economic reform and political reform. The discussion of the separation of politics and the economy related to whether political reform needed to follow economic reform. China put political reform on hold while continuing with economic reform after the 1989 Tiananmen crisis. As Hong Kong banded together with China under the arrangement of "one country, two systems," the leaders of China also wanted Hong Kong to put off its democratization in order to keep pace with that in China. It was obvious that the Hong Kong system worked better and it was the system in China that had many problems that needed to be addressed. So, the process of the social and economic transformation in China was an important issue to the development of both systems and had become a major concern for the Hong Kong

academics. Separating politics and the economy would help the people of Hong Kong and China to see the picture of “one country, two systems” clearly, because in economic reform the Chinese government was aggressive, while in political reform it was extremely conservative. The question then became could the two elements be totally separated and sustained, which meant could the economy move to the capitalist market system without touching the political system? However, at that time the economic reform begun in 1976 had not only improved productivity and doubled the GDP growth rate in China, but also had changed in many ways how the Chinese society was organized.

The Chinese government had tried to move in the direction of democratization. Political reform, which was approved by the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1987 to build a more effective, responsive, and less corrupt government, failed in the 1989 Tiananmen crisis. After that the Chinese government became skeptical and careful with political changes. They looked for a way to maintain economic growth without changing much of their political institutions. Singapore’s authoritarian model was thus attractive to them, as some interviewees pointed out. However, many interviewees believed that China eventually needed to continue its

political reform as the economic reform was going into a deeper and more profound stage.

Many interviewees talked extensively about this issue because they believed it was important and was unavoidable. In this regard, the interviewees, especially the pessimists, made some important points they felt Chinese leaders needed to consider seriously. They strongly believed that politics could not be totally separated from the economy. “The question is not are they [politics and economy] related, because I think they are bound to be related,” one of the pessimists argued. An American expert on China, Harding (1997), pointed out, “Political reform is a necessary concomitant of successful economic modernization, especially when economic development results from allowing private enterprise and integration with the outside world market ” (p. 179). By denying the need for political reform, the Chinese government was only exacerbating the danger that the Chinese political system would eventually be swamped by social and political contradictions. Conversely, if they allowed democracy, they would be building the institutions that were the key to genuine stability and long-term economic prosperity. Furthermore, political reform would be necessary if China was to remain an attractive environment for foreign investment.

Traditional Chinese values and China's modernization. To operate, a society needs a set of basic values that are the core of a culture. This core guides and constrains people's thinking and behavior, and hence, influences the formation of the structure of society and its operation. Mao tried to build a new set of values during the Cultural Revolution and threw away the old ones. When the Cultural Revolution failed, the new Chinese leaders found many of the Eastern countries had been successful in developing their economy. Their leaders attributed that success to the so-called "Asian values" which were from Confucianism. As a result, the Chinese leaders tried to find their lost traditional values. But the question remained whether the ancient Chinese values still fit China's goal to move to modernization. Some of the interviewees seemed skeptical. They believed the new generations would not hold the old values. Giddens (1998) reasoned, "Because we [now] live in a [modern and reflexive] world where we have to decide what values to hold, as individuals, and in a democracy, collectively--essentially through reflexive discourse. In more traditional cultures those values are more given" (cited in Pierson, 1998, p. 219). Yu Ying-shih also said that one of the barriers to China's modernization was a confused value system. A major source of the confusion was the notion that traditional and the modern culture

were opposite and incompatible entities (cited by Chang Chin-ju, 1999).

Because of this and the ideology they held, Chinese leaders had a very different view of modernity than Westerners did. The Chinese leaders related modernity to the modernization of industry, agriculture, defense, science, and technology, while to Westerners it referred to the industrial civilization. As Giddens portrayed it, "[Modernity] is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; and (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy " (cited in Pierson, 1998, p. 94). Obviously the Chinese leaders thought that China could become a modern society without adopting modern world views and values. This would eventually affect the process of China's modernization.

A strong state for a slow transformation. Nevertheless, as seen in Chapter IV, most of the academics interviewed believed that for a period of time, it was possible to allow an economy to grow rapidly without increasing the levels of influence and levels of expectations from the people. However, they did not believe that, in the long run, people would accept the benefits of economic growth without also expecting that the nature of governments

would change, that they would have an opportunity to participate in the political decision making process. If China learned from Hong Kong to build a more powerful legislature, a stronger judicial system, and a better trained civil service through political reform in the short run, the two political systems would gradually become closer like their economic systems, and both Hong Kong and China would have a brighter future. That would be more attractive to Taiwan regarding the goal of China's reunification. Furthermore, it would allow China to be more easily integrated into the international community.

Then the question became "How much time do these adjustments take for the political reform?" as one of the interviewees asked. It seemed the Chinese leaders needed a longer time to take small steps for careful adjustment. As Confucius once said, "You cannot reach your goal if you want to be quick, and you cannot accomplish great things if you seek petty gains (*yusu ze buda*)" (Legge, J., 1971: Confucian Analects, Tsze Lu 13.17). Lao Tzu once also said, "Ruling a big country is like cooking a small fish: you have to handle it with care. [it is very easy to burn it]" (1993, p. 140). Soros (1998) pointed out that social reform could have unintended consequences. He realized as in the case of former Soviet Union that "the



collapse of a closed society does not lead automatically to the establishment of an open society; on the contrary, it may lead to the breakdown of authority and the disintegration of society.” In China’s case, the result of the 1989 struggle brought the Chinese people a stiffer authoritarian government that otherwise would have been a more open, democratic one. The failure of the 1987 political reform caused by the 1989 crisis might also have had a more profound reason: the ossification of the traditional Chinese political structure and the underlying cultural foundation developed from that was very complicated and not easy to deal with. As Fairbank stated, “Behind Chinese communism lies the world’s longest tradition of successful autocracy” (1992, p. 1). Changing that tradition would require a lot of time and sophisticated political skills. Some of the interviewees advised that people needed to understand more about the difficult situation the Chinese government faced, the traditional Chinese heavy-handed measures for maintaining political order during periods of dynamic social and economic change (*luanshi yong zhongdian*), and that heavy-handed measures were sometimes necessary during the process of social progress. In recent years, some Western economic and social thinkers also reasoned that there were different paths for transforming societies. A stronger state or even a authoritarian one could be

merited in some cases (Galbraith, 1996; Giddens, 1998; Soros, 1998).

Galbraith stated:

**There is a large area of economic activity in which the market is and should be unchallenged; equally, there is a large range of activities that increases with increasing economic well-being where the services and functions of the state are either necessary or socially superior.**

Soros pointed out:

**Economic development requires low wages and high savings rates. This is more easily accomplished under an autocratic government that is capable of imposing its will on the people than a democratic one that is responsive to the wishes of the electorate. (1998, p. 109)**

Hence, for the future (after 50 years as stated in the Sino-British Declaration), the final goal is to merge the two systems into one, as some interviewees hoped, to progress from an authoritarian system to a system with a market economy and a form of political democracy, maybe with a stronger state form than those in the advanced Western countries.

**Economic development as a condition for sustained democratization.**

**Although the three perspectives of the interviewees advocated different political orientations concerning current political structures for both systems, most of them were justified based on some degree of democracy in the long run. Even the Chinese government leaders claimed they were working for some form of democratic system. This showed that they all realized**

democracy was a universal ideal and a worldwide trend. But, for the current situation, an authoritarian style of government might be necessary so the country could maintain political stability and focus on the development of the economy on both sides. A higher stage of economic development would help people to win more and more freedom and democratic rights. Harry Harding (1997) wrote,

. . . successful and sustained democratization requires a variety of accompanying institutional and cultural preconditions. High levels of income, the emergence of a middle class independent of the state, higher levels of education, the development of a culture of mutual tolerance (what is often called a civic culture) are all preconditions for democratization, and takes time to develop. (p. 175)

He further pointed out that “although democracy is not necessarily a prerequisite for economic modernization, economic development and the cultural changes that such development produces may be a condition for successful democratization” (p. 175). One ancient Chinese scholar, Guan-tze, once said, “When they had sufficient food and clothing, people would be aware of honor or disgrace; as they had plenty in their grain depot, people would be refined and courteous (*yishi zhu er zhi rongru, cangbing man er liyi sheng*)” (Wang, 1997). Some interviewees claimed economic development would ultimately result in political diversity.

The three interviewees who questioned the democratic system argued that problems still existed in democratic societies. There seemed to be a misunderstanding about democracy among these interviewees, since democracy does not mean everything will be perfect after adapting the democratic system. Rather, the democratic system seems to be a viable system to deal with social problems. It is also important to point out that democracy, in theory or in practice, is still evolving. Starting from the direct-democracy of the city-states in ancient Greece, it developed later into representative-democracy, and the popular social-participatory-democracy of today (Liu & Hoo, 1990). It still does not have a standard form. Many Western countries are practicing different versions of democracy according to their history and current political context, and none of these forms are necessarily appropriate for all contexts.

Given the unique history and complexity of the political context of Hong Kong and China in the above discussion, many interviewees suggested that rather than an abrupt transition to a full-fledged liberal democracy, a dual transition first from an authoritarian form of state (authoritarian socialism/capitalism) gradually towards a form of partial democracy and

finally to total democracy may be more politically feasible for both Hong Kong and China.

To summarize thoughts from the three perspectives on “one country, two systems,” this form of government could mean that a benign, authoritarian state capitalism along the East Asian lines may be a reasonable choice for the Hong Kong SAR government for the present. Plus, an authoritarian state socialism would be a good choice for China’s social transformation toward modernization according to its current situation. It is hoped and expected that gradually the two systems will merge into a modern prosperous and democratic society. The successful development of Hong Kong into a democratic society as part of the “one country, two systems” arrangement will not only set an example for the goal of reunification with Taiwan but more importantly, it can be an excellent example for the modernization of the Mainland itself.

A word for pragmatism. Representative democracy is a desirable goal for both Hong Kong and China, but a pragmatic attitude may still be important towards China's political evolution given the complexity of its situation. Fairbank (1992) had a more profound analysis:

**By almost any definition, an autocratic state appeared in ancient China, with institutions of bureaucratic administration, record-keeping, selection of officials by merit on the basis of examinations, and central control over the economy, society, literature, and thought. . . . Our repertoire of social science concepts derived from the pluralistic Western experience seems still inadequate to encompass this early Chinese achievement. (p. 3)**

**Some of the interviewees felt that some elements of the West's democratic system were just not realistic for China. "One man, one vote," for example, would not suit the current situation in China; not only does China lack the necessary resources, but this concept would be impossible from an operational standpoint. Pressing it too hard might create the opposite results, for the Chinese society is so complicated and fragile, and it might not respond to a political reform that pro-democracy advocates desire. If not conducted properly, democratic reform could lead to social disorder and political instability. Democratization is usually a long-term process. In South Korea and Taiwan, for example, more than 30 years passed from the beginning of their economic improvement until they embarked upon democratization. Harding warned that democracy would not necessarily always promote stability and prosperity as some people believe. He pointed out that recent research showed that democratization, especially in immature societies, could permit the expression of nationalism and adopt protectionism and other**

policies that can contradict the principles of free trade and restrict economic growth (Harding, 1997).

Deng Xiaoping's theory with pragmatism as part of its core proved to be workable in China. China could now adopt whatever was working and avoid any ideological extremes. (As Deng's famous philosophy said: "It does not matter whether it is a white cat or a black one, as long as it can catch mice, it is a good cat.") It seemed from the arguments of the three prospectives on "one country, two systems" that the highly ideological era is over, and it does not make too much sense to press anybody's ideology in the era of globalization. As John Galbraith pointed out recently, "This is an area where we should not be controlled by formulas, by ideology, but by what is best in practical case" (cited in Caminis, 1999, p. 5). He also argued in *The Good Society* that "if socialism can no longer be considered the controlling framework of the good or even the plausible society, neither can capitalism in its classical form" (1996, p. 18). Giddens pointed out, "Some of the most entrenched forms of ideology are grounded in everyday convention--in practical consciousness and in day-to-day talk" (Pierson, 1998, p. 93). From this view, neither Marxism nor Western democracy have been rooted in the Chinese society. According to these influential Western social thinkers, the

Western countries also should not press their ideology too far on China. The change has to happen from within because the Chinese people know their situation better. The evolutionary development of the two systems may not be on a path familiar to the outside observer, but as long as it is headed in the right direction, this represents progress. The right direction means China maintains economic prosperity, social stability and rule of law; respects people's human rights, improves people's standard of living, keeps trying to meet the needs and expectations of its people, and makes efforts to cooperate with the international community. Whichever path China and Hong Kong choose to take and whatever they want to call it should be regarded as less important than the outcome.

#### **Interpretation of Perceptions of Hong Kong's Higher Education System**

Given the above political context in the transition period, we can now examine more closely how the selected faculty and academic administrators perceived events in Hong Kong's higher education system and the changes occurring in their work. We can interpret their meanings and implications for the higher education system itself and for the development of the Hong Kong and China society.



### On the Repositioning of Hong Kong's Higher Education System

Several important and interesting themes emerged from the question about the repositioning of Hong Kong's higher education system. The discussion in this section will focus on the rationale and implications of the changing higher education system, training leaders for Hong Kong's future, and serving China's modernization.

The changing higher education system. The interviewees had many concerns about the change of the higher education system during the transition. The discussion here will focus only on the most significant concerns. Most of the participating academics agreed that among many other factors, the rapid expansion of Hong Kong's higher education system in the 1990s was basically triggered by the "brain drain" after the announcement of the retrocession. Despite its abnormal speed and the problems created, the rapid expansion was a good thing for Hong Kong in boosting economic development since society could afford it.

The interviewees believed two important things needed to be done to higher education after this rapid expansion. First was a need to redefine the mission for the institutions to emphasize their different functions. Second

was a need to balance the work of the academics between research and teaching and to help faculty adapt to the rapid change.

The research growth in the transition period was important because it helped Hong Kong's universities enter the international stage, but interviewees thought that not every university in Hong Kong could or needed to become a world-class university. The universities first have to consider and serve local needs. Moreover, the emphasis on research should not come at the cost of the quality of teaching which is a more fundamental purpose of higher education institutions. As one interviewee commented, "When we were a polytechnic . . . the emphasis of our career was more practical and pedagogical. Now, being turned into a university, everybody is expected to publish. The ones who suffer in the end are the students." These academics said society needs not only leaders for different areas but also skilled workers. Some of the interviewees, however, suggested that often there was not a clear line between pure theory and practical applications. Although some of the academics pursued ideas and did not know much about reality, some of their ideas could lead to many practical applications. There is a relationship between research and teaching, so one must be cautious when trying to balance the two. Interviewees felt these concerns should help the

new educational authority of Hong Kong plan for further reforms in the higher education system.

The interviewees all believed that it would be important for Hong Kong to become a regional center of excellence in higher education because then Hong Kong's higher education system will have a much more important future role. It will not only continue to serve Hong Kong's international business and financial sector, but will also help to build its high-technology industrial sector in the future. Moreover, this would help develop not only Hong Kong society, but also help modernize China which will have regional competitors, such as Singapore and Shanghai. The competitive advantage of Hong Kong's higher education system will rest on the fact that it has sufficient funds, world class facilities and equipment, high salaries, and, most importantly, a unique position as a center of international finance, business, and culture exchanges. These attributes can attract highly competent academics from all over the world, and help recruit highly able students from Hong Kong and graduate students from China, one of the largest pools in the world. Hong Kong's universities could become some of the best universities in Southern China and Southeastern Asia.

Training leaders for Hong Kong's future. "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" is one of the principles stated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. The Chinese government later added that selected leading officials must be patriots. To this end, the academics interviewed assured the government that "there are not many people in Hong Kong who would not be nationalists and patriots." One person noted, "They are Chinese who want what was best for China, although they might not always agree with the current policy of the Chinese government." The optimists believed "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong" could be made to work after the retrocession because "in Hong Kong there are a lot of people with wide experience of the Hong Kong system." The interviewees agreed that the Hong Kong higher education institutions needed to keep in mind that society will depend on them to train future leaders. To this end, they thought the colonial type of education needed to be changed because Hong Kong society needs not just civil servants who know only how to obey orders and rules and an educated labor force for businesses and industries, but Hong Kong also needs people who have vision plus good communication and organizational skills to work with the Chinese government to lead Hong Kong to a better future. This is particularly important due to the legacy of colonial

**rule: almost all of the high leadership positions were held by expatriates.**

**The interviewees noted that Hong Kong will find it lacks leaders in the future if its educational system does not prepare them.**

**Those interviewed were especially concerned that Hong Kong students have been so strongly influenced by a civil service type of education that was reinforced by the commercial mentality and did not help produce leaders.**

**They were also deeply concerned that Hong Kong university students were very much job-oriented. Few of them were interested in education for education's sake--the training of the mind. The academics said these kinds of students are not thinkers and will reach their level of incompetence quite quickly once they graduate because they have not trained their minds. They noted that the business world looks for leadership, for people who can think and are able to identify the main idea of an issue, and people who can contribute to the system.**

**Specifically, some of the professors interviewed stressed that a liberal arts education was important to the students both in Hong Kong and China. In this regard, interviewees at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) felt more confident. "Our students have a wide exposure to both Chinese and Western cultures," one of them explained. They claimed that the Chinese**

University was founded as a bilingual and bicultural higher education institution which is important to the integration of Hong Kong and China. This appeared true from the analysis of my observations at CUHK. There were active exchanges and other academic activities among CUHK faculty and faculty at institutions in the Mainland and those in the West, especially in the social sciences and humanity areas. The experience of CUHK would be valuable for other institutions in Hong Kong since many of them are newly expanded or even newly founded.

Related to the concern about educating leaders is the identity issue for the younger generation in Hong Kong. This was a hot topic at the time of transition. The interviewees had some thoughtful insights regarding this issue. From a broader perspective, some of the Chinese professors worried that their students would have an identity problem because the Chinese history, culture, and tradition was missing from their past education, and nationalism never had a place in the hearts of these young people. The identity problem of the young people seemed to relate to confusion between the Chinese culture they know in Hong Kong and that in the Mainland. This problem needed to be looked at in a broader view and resolved for the whole nation. Hong Kong young people's identity problem came from the colonial

education and the confusion in the Mainland caused by the communist dictatorship, especially during the Cultural Revolution. As one interviewee pointed out, the Taiwanese students had no such problem because they preserved the traditional culture better.

More fundamentally, interviewees believed China needed a cultural reconstruction for its modernization. Some of the interviewees (most of them expatriates) contended that traditional Chinese culture was pernicious to the spirit of civil society, democracy, and liberty. This could be found in some of the negative aspects of Confucianism. Therefore, a rethinking of the role of the traditional culture was imperative in the effort to bring about institutional change that will eventually transform China into a democratic society based on individual property rights, a free market, and withdrawal of the state from economic management.

Serving the goal of China's modernization. Hong Kong academics were involved in two main areas of work in serving the goal of China's modernization: promoting academic exchanges with their counterparts from higher educational institutions and receiving graduate students from China. Since the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed in 1984, increasing numbers of academic exchanges occurred between Hong Kong's universities

and the universities on the Mainland. Most of the interviewees thought that Hong Kong universities were in a good position to help their counterparts from China in many areas because they found “the modern research tradition seemed non-existent in China at that time . . . and most of them [the academics from the Mainland] were not really up on the literature, . . . [and] not into the stream of ideas that are really happening in their particular field.” A modern research tradition needed to be built in the universities in China, and the Hong Kong academics could help them do this.

The Chinese universities first showed more interest in fields of natural sciences, technology, and business management. Some of the interviewees thought they also had much to offer in the social sciences and humanities. These areas were more important for an understanding between the two sides and the Western and Chinese cultures, especially during the partial transition for Hong Kong and the social transformation of China. The integration of the two systems created many misunderstandings between the two cultures, and many of the interviewees thought that this was a good opportunity for a mutual understanding through collaborative work and areas of research on common interests. For example, the academic culture in Hong Kong and the West tended to be, particularly in the social sciences and the humanities,



geared towards greater critical evaluation and independent thinking. Some of the interviewees expressed, "If we make more exchanges, we have to offer our own initiatives rather than rely on programs that are organized for us." This showed that they truly believed there was an urgent need for exchanges in the social sciences. Moreover, they believed a modern Chinese culture, which included the best of the old culture and the best from the West, needed to be rebuilt for the Chinese society after the old one was almost totally destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

Similar things happened in the Hong Kong faculty's work with the graduate students from China--the Mainland institutions showed more interest in science, technology, and business areas. Many interviewees received graduate students from the Mainland, first in the natural sciences and technology fields and later in the social sciences. But they believed that the students from the social sciences needed more help to restore many of the academic traditions that were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. As one professor commented, "For some of them, I think their education has been very harmful to them . . . . He [one of the graduate students from the Mainland] has no concept of what scholarship looks like . . . . His education is not up to par at all. But many of them are very bright." Another professor

added, "He didn't analyze very closely or in some cases very well. He has been reluctant to give voice to his own thoughts about it." However, they all agreed that recruiting some of the best minds from the Mainland universities to study at the better facilities in Hong Kong universities would benefit both sides, and this could be a potential competitive advantage for Hong Kong's higher education system as a center of excellence in the region. Many of these graduate students were very bright and hard working, while some of them were less able. Some of them were using Hong Kong as a springboard to attend institutions abroad.

This was just one example that showed there are problems that need to be addressed in the future. The professors thought they could solve the problem in the exchange activities and with the Mainland graduate students when more experience was gained later. They thought all of the exchange research and student programs were significant tasks for Hong Kong and China. The Hong Kong universities now need to prepare for more students (including both graduate and undergraduate) from the Mainland and to provide special services and, maybe, specially tailored programs.

### How the Retrocession Affected the Academics' Work

The themes under the topic of how the retrocession affected the academics' work concerned both teaching and research. These included themes of teaching in the changing situation related to the declining quality of students, the language problem, and research as it related to academic freedom concerns.

Teaching in the changing situation. The retrocession affected the academics' work in several areas. One important area was teaching. The interviewees noted that changes occurred in their students, and they had to adjust their teaching accordingly. For example, they found that their students were becoming more politically aware and some of them had become fearful for the future of Hong Kong, especially those who studied the social sciences and humanities. The students also showed more interest in China and wanted to know what was going on there and the possible opportunities for business in the future. Some students even visited the Mainland.

The interviewees also saw a decline in their students' learning ability, partly because of the expansion of the higher education system and partly because more and more families could afford to send their children abroad for education and chose to do so. Therefore, the professors had to change some

of their teaching practices to adapt to these less elite students. One of the interviewees commented, "Teaching is a much more demanding job today than it was 10 years ago."

The language problem. The most noticeable aspect in the decline of the student quality was in students' ability to express themselves articulately in English. The language problem had been debated in Hong Kong throughout the transition period. Many of the participants felt that this was not only a problem for higher education but also for the whole society of Hong Kong. They shared three main concerns. First, they said the SAR government will need to make Chinese (Mandarin) an official language for political reasons and it should be taught at all schools. Second, although the mother-tongue (Cantonese) would be a better choice for classroom instructional reasons the problem is that Cantonese does not have a formal written form. One administrator said, "It is definitely more effective in using the mother-tongue to teach many subjects." Third, the major concern for the society, especially for parents, is whether a strengthening of the mother tongue would be at the cost of lowering the students' English level. The academics interviewed thought that was just a political issue that would eventually go away after the retrocession. English should not simply be

looked at as a colonial language, they explained. It is, in fact, the only language that is close to an international language.

“English is such an important language in science, international business, and law,” one of the interviewees explained. “Ninety-eight percent of the publications in science are in English, and it is impossible to translate every scientific article into Chinese.” He further pointed out, “It is science that is driving the modern universities. But no matter whether it is for instructional reasons, business reasons, or political reasons, a standard Chinese (Mandarin) is equally important for Hong Kong students. The availability of high quality bilingual manpower could be a comparative advantage of the Hong Kong labor forces.”

The solution, interviewees said, was to find a way to teach effectively both of the two written languages (Chinese and English) and three spoken languages (Cantonese, Mandarin, and English). One of the professors pointed out this should not be a problem if you look at people who handle several languages well, such as in the European community. The Hong Kong students are just as bright as others and would master the languages in the environment of Hong Kong as an international city. This challenge can only

turn Hong Kong college students into more capable students if the future education authority would make the appropriate policy.

Concerns about academic freedom. Another effect of the retrocession was on the area of academic research, where many faculty were concerned about their academic freedom. The political pressure had made many academics leave or consider leaving Hong Kong. For those who stayed, there were true worries about their academic freedom in some of the sensitive areas, although there still had been no obvious interference from China and the university administration during the transition period. The professors, especially those in the social science fields, shared with society the apprehension and even feeling of fear because the political pressure was real. Some believed there were two major sources from which threats could emerge: internally, people might feel that they should steer their research in a particular way or not in a particular direction; externally, the threat might be dressed up as efficiency and the means by which to test whether the academics were doing an effective job or not by measuring the research's relevance, quantity, contribution to society, etc. However, to a philosopher, sociologist, historian, or political scientist, some of these tests have little meaning in some cases and there was always the danger of restricting their

research. One of the interviewees commented, "There will be certain areas of research which the Chinese government may think unhelpful to China, in which case they may intervene in an attempt to curb that kind of research. I can easily see that happening."

Some interviewees worried there might be some reasons why the future SAR government would want to reduce academic freedom. The universities were sometimes regarded as hotbeds of dissent and the Chinese government was rather nervous about the free wheeling attitudes in the universities. As one professor commented, "They think, perhaps, that the students ought to be restricted in what they do and perhaps be taught more ideology so they become more patriotic and more supportive of the government."

Some of the interviewees noted there were professors in social science fields who had started to apply self-censorship in their research, particularly local academics. The expatriates would not be affected so much, but they believed there would not be the same level of academic freedom in the future.

Some of them, however, thought that other people were just oversensitive in this regard. They claimed, "We must be very careful to distinguish what people regard as infringements on academic freedom with real infringement." They saw that the retrocession was actually a great opportunity for doing

research and everyone should take advantage of it. Generally speaking, research flourished during the transition time because the Hong Kong government had become more supportive of the academics' research and their institutions. Both sides agreed that academic freedom was important for the academics in the universities as well as for the development of society and that any restrictions had be guarded against.

People may not be able to agree on many values, as this study showed, and a value such as freedom is supple and elusive. However, academic freedom would be the one freedom which may be defined without contradiction. In the opinion of the interviewees, both the Chinese government and the SAR government should truly understand the importance of this issue, the reasons why academics worried about it, and help to prevent any restrictions from happening. As some Western historians pointed out, "Societies appear to remain vigorous only so long as they are organized to receive novel and unexpected--and some times unpleasant--thoughts" (Bronowski & Mazlish, 1960, p. 501). The experiences of Hong Kong and other developed countries have shown that these societies are most creative and progressive with the safeguard of academic freedom: the free expression of new ideas. Academic freedom would become even more important if the



Chinese government felt that democracy was still unrealistic to China and chose to maintain its authoritarian style. Such an authoritarian political system would tend not to cultivate the mechanisms to encourage critical thinking and autonomy. As reflected in comments from a number of respondents, such a system would lack a civil society given to self-reflection and self-correction. Two clauses in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and a large part of the Basic Law were devoted to guaranteeing protection for the higher education institutions in effect. Academic freedom was guaranteed by these documents, along with the right of scholars to pursue their studies independently and without fear of coercion. If those provisions are abided by, then there should be little change in academic freedom in the universities of Hong Kong.

### Summary

As to the political advancement of Hong Kong and China in the transition time, most of the selected faculty and academic administrators interviewees believed a “one country, two systems” arrangement could be worked out through the cooperation of Hong Kong and China. The ultimate goal was to help Hong Kong and China transform into a modern civil and democratic society. Because of the complexity of the situation of China and

Hong Kong during the transition period, the nearest goal was to maintain the stability and the economic prosperity of Hong Kong and China that they had in the two separate social systems. Moving from an authoritarian style of government to a partly democratic style of government and, finally, to a modern democratic government would be the best path for the transformation of the two systems into one in the long-term future (50 years as stated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration).

Besides drastic political change, Hong Kong academics experienced great changes within their own system, especially its rapid expansion during the transition. They claimed two important things needed to be done afterwards: first, to redefine the mission for the institutions to emphasize their different functions, and second, to balance the work of the academics between research and teaching. They also suggested that it was important for Hong Kong to become a regional center of excellence for higher education because it would have a much more important role to play in the future.

In serving the goal of China's modernization, Hong Kong academics were in a good position to help in the areas of natural science, technology, business, and social science. Hong Kong academics could work together with their counterparts on the Mainland to rebuild their modern research

tradition and, more importantly, a civic culture with all the proven useful values from the East and West, which are an important foundation for a modern democratic society. Hong Kong's social science and humanities faculty could contribute more than faculty at other universities in China due to their continuity of research and collections in those academic areas. In contrast, universities on the Mainland had been blocked from most of the outside world since the liberation and were seriously disrupted during the Cultural Revolution. The academics interviewed also believed the preservation of academic freedom in Hong Kong's universities was vital for the transformation of the two societies.

### Conclusions and Implications

#### Conclusions

The reunification of Hong Kong with China puts the two systems (capitalism and socialism) under the close examination of the world. It also gives people in China and Hong Kong an opportunity to review their own system, study the other system, and understand both of them better because they have to work out a new political and economic structure called "one country, two systems" which will tie them together into the future. This study revealed that the Hong Kong academics were actively helping with this goal

in one way or the other. The academic community of Hong Kong, though still a relatively small group and not an established and forceful social entity, grew rapidly during the transition period as the retrocession gained great attention from the academic world and Hong Kong's higher education system expanded. The academics had made considerable efforts to influence the related parties and Hong Kong society in helping with difficulties in the transition time. Some worked as consultants for the Hong Kong government and the Chinese government at different levels of advisory processes, while others even participated in policy-making processes.

Although many of the academics were not high profile, they did have an impact on the transition in one way or the other. Some did research for the healthy progress of society, others worked on plans or road maps for the development of industries in the territory, while still others provided services to the public and businesses. Most importantly, they were training leaders, professionals, and skilled workers for government and other sectors of society. In sum, Hong Kong academics as a whole became more and more active politically and academically in contributing to the understanding between the two systems (the socialist system in China and the capitalist system in Hong Kong) with one end tightly banded to China and the other end

closely connected to the West. Many of them tried to help push the retrocession process in a more desirable direction throughout the transition period.

The Hong Kong academics as shown in the interviews have risen to influential positions but do not take a unified position on many issues. This is especially true when it comes to political issues. Of course, such diversity of opinion has long been a valued tradition in the academy. Concerning the arrangement of “one country, two systems,” the optimists (most of them local Chinese and in the natural science fields) formed the majority of the participants in the study. They believed that as long as China continues its economic reforms and maintains an “open door” policy, it will head in the right direction. This means China would eventually evolve into some form of democratic modern society. As the living standard of the Chinese people keeps improving and the economic gap between Hong Kong and China narrows, the two systems will integrate more harmoniously with the Chinese economic system becoming closer to that of Hong Kong.

However, the pessimists (most of them expatriates and overseas Chinese) worried about the power struggle going on in China. They worried about whether Hong Kong would be able to keep its rule of law and basic

freedom of the people. Yet, even some of the pessimists believed that there was still the possibility of “one country, two systems” working if China lived up to its promises to allow a high degree of autonomy for the new Hong Kong government. The pragmatists (most of them local people and expatriates) believed a compromise would help.

After examining all the opinions, one can conclude that a long-term process is needed for transforming China (including Hong Kong) into a modern democratic society. A path from an authoritarian style of government to a partly democratic form and, finally, to a democratic one would be a feasible design. To achieve this ultimate goal of democracy is very important not only to Hong Kong and China but also to the rest of the world. Heading in the direction of democracy will help China and Hong Kong achieve genuine stability and prosperity, and be more attractive to Taiwan regarding the goal of China’s final reunification. Furthermore, it will allow China to be more easily integrated into the international community. To achieve this goal, there is much work to do and the Hong Kong academics can help a lot. One of the most important things is to rebuild a civic culture including all useful values and other cultural elements from both the East and West for a modern unified Chinese society.

The different opinions of the Hong Kong academics reflected the views of a typical modern pluralistic society. They contained significant messages for different people. The message for the Hong Kong people was that now Hong Kong and China are under the “one country, two systems” structure. Whenever people think of their own business, their development in the future, or try to negotiate for their interests and rights as stated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law, they have to consider what effects this will have on the other system in China. They need to understand the difficulties the motherland has and keep national goals in the back of their minds while they enjoy the benefits from the vast Mainland market and the support of the people and government of their own country. They even need to consider how they can contribute to or help with the development and modernization of the motherland, which in turn helps them as the Mainland becomes more politically stable and economically prosperous.

The message for China is that the Hong Kong people have reason to worry about the inconsistency of China’s policy and the government’s heavy-hand on dissent. They are concerned with maintaining the rule of law in Hong Kong to protect their freedom and individual property. The Chinese government should truly trust that the Hong Kong people can manage their

own business. If China will really hear what the Hong Kong academics and people have to say and encourage a loyal opposition, it would help to keep their government officials more honest and less corrupt. Then, China's international image will be greatly improved which will help bring in more foreign investments that China badly needs for its economic development. This would also help China deepen its engagement with the rest of the world, join the global economy, and bring tremendous benefit to its future development.

The message for the British, other Western countries, and the rest of the world is that after the retrocession it is up to China and Hong Kong to work out their own destiny; they have their own traditional values historically banded together which will help them work things out positively. The retrocession of Hong Kong to China can be an opportunity to speed up the process of moving China toward a modern democratic society, which will only be good for the rest of the world. However, this should be viewed as a long-term process and the West should not press its values and agendas to the extreme on the political development of China, keeping in mind the complexity of the historical context and the scale of the problems existing there. The changes need to happen from within. The Hong Kong story--



starting from the Opium Wars, which can be understood as basically “the clash of civilizations,” as Huntington termed it (1993)--hopefully will end with an improved understanding of the two major cultures. The Hong Kong academics, with their unique qualities and position, certainly have been playing a role in this regard. The settlement of the Hong Kong question shows the world that the resolution of differences between nations can be worked out peacefully through promoting understanding and cooperation.

The academics of Hong Kong have made great efforts to improve understanding between the two systems by promoting exchanges and doing research with academics on the Mainland. They have also helped bring in graduate students from Mainland universities and taught them the latest developments in their fields. These activities have been thought of as ways to help the universities of China upgrade their academic level, build a modern academic tradition for the higher education institutions in the Mainland, and indirectly, serve the goals of modernizing China’s economy and its society. The original thinking about these activities was that they would benefit both Hong Kong and China. However, Hong Kong academics confronted problems and experienced difficulties when working with their Mainland counterparts on those exchange projects and teaching the graduate students

from the Chinese universities. The experiences made the academics realize how big a gap there was between these two systems and to see that special tailored programs and services might need to be developed for these activities. Nevertheless, they believed all those problems could be resolved with more experience.

Many of the academics' views were reflected in their suggestions to the SAR government. They had great concern, among many other important things, about the autonomy of their institutions and their academic freedom. They thought these were very important issues directly related to the development of the higher education system as well as the society of Hong Kong in the future. Therefore, they felt they should guard against any political restriction on the universities' autonomy and academic freedom. They all agreed the higher education system should keep working toward the general goals described by the University Grant Committee (UGC) in its 1996 report for the future development of the Hong Kong higher education system. This report urged the higher education institutions in Hong Kong to incorporate centers of excellence having local, regional, and international functions. Hong Kong's higher education institutions were encouraged to provide high quality bilingual manpower for both Hong Kong and the

hinterland and act as resources, particularly for business and social studies, as well as assist with innovative science and technology developments in Southern China and more widely. Some undergraduate students and many graduate students should be recruited from outside of Hong Kong (UGC Report, 1996), especially from China. The recruitment of graduate students actually could become a major competitive advantage for the Hong Kong higher education system by drawing elite college students from one of the largest pools in the world. The Hong Kong universities could later select some of the best minds out of these Mainland students for their faculties. The brightest ones could also be absorbed by the business and industrial sectors of Hong Kong. This certainly would contribute to the competitive capacity of the Hong Kong's higher education institutions and the social and economic development of Hong Kong.

#### **Implications for Future Studies**

Due to the time limitations, this study only touched on some of the many interesting and important issues. Some of these topics are being written about by others, but not much has been written on the issue of different understandings of modernity between China and the West. More research will be needed on changing the social science and humanities research

tradition in China which will lead to a clearer vision for training future leaders and for developing both Hong Kong and China toward a democratic modern society.

In preparing for more students from the Mainland, the issue of planning special services and specially tailored programs for them will be another significant research topic. Still another issue worth looking at is that most of the selected faculty and academic administrators in this study are seniors due to the time standard for the selection procedure (they had to be in the system long enough to observe the transition). Therefore, this study does not include the younger local group of academics who could have a very different perspective, because most of them were born and grew up in Hong Kong, while most of the senior Chinese academics moved there from the Mainland before the liberation. The younger academics who grew up in Hong Kong's middle class might have very different perceptions regarding the research questions. A further study of this group is desirable.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Spring 1997

Dissertation Research: Jiyu Yang--the University of Northern Iowa

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Site Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Interviewed: (Code with other name) \_\_\_\_\_

### Overview

**The Investigator:** First of all thank you for participating in this study and please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jiyu Yang, I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration at the College of Education, the University of Northern Iowa. I have some experience as an assistant administrator and researcher in Guangxi Education Commission (provincial). I have participated in several large international projects of educational research and investigations, and in many Chinese local educational research and investigations, sometimes as a group leader. Before we begin the interview, do you have any specific questions you would like to ask about my professional background?

**The Purpose of the Study:** This is a study for my dissertation research as you already know from the letter I sent to you to arrange this appointment. I think this topic is one of the extreme importance and of interest to the academic world. Hong Kong is drawing attention from all over of the world. Many of our professors have watched closely what is happening here. The purpose of this study is to investigate, using qualitative methodology, the unique position Hong Kong universities and their intellectuals might have during the transition time and after the city returns to China. What is their vision for actualization of the "one country, two systems" arrangement? What do they perceive their position as a whole will be after the retrocession? What kind of opportunities and problems might they anticipate and what kind of feelings might they have? And as the think-tank of the society, how do they think they could help in this historical time? Some of the background questions I will ask you may be politically sensitive, but are not avoidable to a serious intellectual. However, we are going to focus mainly on the academic areas. What I am after is a thick and rich description of the

academic community in Hong Kong. This description goes beyond the mere or bare reporting of the surface of situation, and attempts to probe the feelings, intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations, and circumstances of the professions here. Nothing you say will be directly attributed to you personally. We try to look at the faculty and administrators as a whole and take a rich snap-shot picture of them at this important historical significant time.

As indicated in the appointment letter, the interview may last about one hour. I would like to tape it if possible, which will allow me to concentrate on your answers. I will transcribe the tape and any information identifying you personally will be removed from the transcript. I will let you review the transcript to see if you agree with the content or not. The tape will be erased and will not be accessible by other people once it has been transcribed.

**Noted literature:** The Hong Kong academics are very well trained and of high academic quality even by international standard. However, they are not very active and influential toward the society, as compared to people in the business sector. These academics disagree with one another over many issues. The major resource of the information and description of the Hong Kong academic community I have is from the official report by the University Grants Committee. Maybe you can help me by giving me some direction to other resources here in your university.

(The above overview could be used as possible information for opening the interview but it depends on the actual talking situation with the informant).

(The following order of questions is recommended, although it may be departed from if necessary. Try to get as much example and concrete detail as possible. Probe as needed and as appropriate.)

## Study Frames and Research Questions

### Study Frame 1: Perception of "One country, two systems"

#### Research questions:

**1. What do selected faculty and academic administrators from two Hong Kong's higher education institution perceive to be the implications of the concept "one country, two systems" for the Hong Kong higher education community?**

#### Prompt Questions:

(Starting with the Hong Kong Legco story, and show the interviewee the scale):

**The scale of confidence on "one country, two systems:"**

1	2	3	4	5
/	/	/	/	/
very pessimistic	somewhat	half/half	somewhat	very optimistic

- 1) Which point on this confidence scale of "one country, two systems" most clearly matched your perception on the concept ten years ago when the basic law came out? (What factor made you feel . . .?)
- 2) Which point most clearly matched your perception of the concept at this time as the retrocession is coming near? (What factor made you feel . . .?)
- 3) What do think the retrocession will mean for the Hong Kong people? What will it mean for Hong Kong higher education? (There are sayings that China will change Hong Kong or Hong Kong will change China. How do you interpret this? Hint: Deng's idea of building several Hong Kong's out of the Special Economic Zones.)
- 4) What do you perceive as the major differences between the British Hong Kong government and the SAR government?

## **Study Frame 2: Anticipate Changes**

### **2. How do you perceive the current position of higher education in Hong Kong and its position after the region has reverted to the People's Republic of China?**

#### **Prompt Questions:**

1) How ready do you think Hong Kong institutions of higher learning are for the retrocession? And how ready do you think the academic community as a whole is for the retrocession?

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of Hong Kong higher education regarding its ability to help society during the transformation?

3) Here are three possible scenarios for the future Hong Kong higher education institutions. Which scenario do you think will most likely happen in next 5 years? Which one do you like to see happen in the future? Or do you have your own scenario? If yes, what is that?

- (i) The institutions should limit their interests to local student recruitment and the local labor market. Teaching might gradually be given more and more in Cantonese or Putonghua. In time, as their interaction with the institutions in hinterland increasing, they will be influenced by the central government and could become indistinguishable from many similar ones in the neighboring province of China.
- (ii) The institutions should limit their interests to local recruitment and the local labor market, but should make a positive stand on bilinguals and keep connected with the outside world. This would require much more effort than is being made at present. Their graduates would be distinguished from those in the hinterland primarily because of their communication skills (including fluency in English) and this would help to maintain Hong Kong's international position.
- (iii) The institutions should incorporate centers of excellence having local, regional, and international functions. They should provide very high quality bilingual manpower for both Hong Kong and hinterland and should act as points of reference, particularly Business and Social studies and in innovative science and technology for developments in Southern China and more widely. Some undergraduate students and



many postgraduate students would be recruited from outside of Hong Kong. (UGC Report, 1996)

### **Study Frame 3: How Does the Retrocession Affect Your Work?**

**3. How do selected faculty and academic administrators of two Hong Kong higher education institutions perceive that their work may be impacted by the retrocession?**

#### **Prompt Questions:**

1) How does and will the retrocession affect your work? What kind of adjustments do you think you need to make personally (academia as a whole) in this changing time? (policies, teaching, research, and service, for instance, avoid sensitive topic, etc. . . .).

2) Could you please describe the level of academic freedom and autonomy before the announcement of the Basic Law? Have you witnessed any changes in the level of academic freedom since then? Compare for me any change made in your teaching, research, or service? (What are the concerns you and your colleagues have regarding academic freedom? Have you or your colleagues begun to practice self-censorship in your teaching and public expressions?)

3) After the retrocession, do you think academic freedom will diminish further or improve? Why? What can be done to maintain and improve academic freedom and autonomy in your university?

4) Do you know any mainland scholars? Could you describe your impression of mainland scholars? Do you think that they perceive academic freedom differently from you? If so, what do you attribute this difference to?

5) Do you think the Western mind-set of the Hong Kong scholars will affect their perception of higher institutions in China and their communication with the mainland scholars? How and why?

**Study Frame 4: Suggestions for Success of "One Country, Two Systems" Arrangement**

**4. As an academic leader and advisor of the SAR, what suggestions could you offer regarding what should and could be done to contribute to the future development of Hong Kong as well as the modernization of China? How do you prioritize your suggestions?**

**Prompt Questions:**

- 1) Do you believe that it is a responsibility of the academic community to help solve basic social problems that may occur in Hong Kong during this transition period and beyond?
- 2) Does the Hong Kong academic community act as an influential leader of Hong Kong society? What topics are they talking about during the transition period?
- 3) What do you think the Hong Kong academic community can do to help with the transformation during this transition time? (What opportunities might they have and what difficulties might they confront?)
- 4) What are the problems and difficulties you expect to emerge after the retrocession? How do you think these problems should be handled? What is your priority for solving these problems? (What needs to be taken care of immediately and what can be planned for a longer term?)
- 5) How do you think the transformation can be navigated in a positive direction?

**5. Any other things might relevant to ask . . .**

Such as:

- 1) What else should we know that we haven't asked? What have we overlooked? Have we under-emphasized important things? Have we over-emphasized unimportant things?

**(add questions special for the administrators)**

**Ending the Interview**

Thank them for the time and express gratitude and other informal talk.  
If you tape the interview, ask them if they would like to review any transcript that is produced.

**APPENDIX B**

**LETTER OF APPOINTMENT AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

May 25, 1997

Dissertation Research  
Jiyu Yang  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614  
USA

**Appointment Letter**

Dear Prospective Interviewee:

My name is Jiyu Yang. I am a doctoral student at the College of Education, University of Northern Iowa, USA. I am now conducting my dissertation research here in Hong Kong. My topic is: Hong Kong Higher Education in Transition. The purpose of the study is to investigate, using qualitative methodology, the unique position of the Hong Kong academic community might have during the transition and after the territory returns to China. What is their vision for actualization of the “one country, two systems” arrangement? How do they perceive their position after the retrocession? What kind of opportunities and problems do they anticipate and what kind of feelings might they have? And, as the think-tank of the society, what do they think they can do to help in this problematic changing period?

I believe this is a very important topic because intellectuals might be able to provide vision and direction for the society in such a vital time. It is also very significant to have a rich record for the Hong Kong academic community in this historical time.

You are recommended as a key individual for my study. It is my hope you can participate in this research by allowing to arrange an interview with you soon. If you agree to help with my study, please e-mail me your willingness so we can set up a time for an interview. My e-mail address is: [lees@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:lees@cuhk.edu.hk).

Sincerely yours,

Jiyu Yang

## Dissertation Research

## LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

May 25, 1997

Dear Participant:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Northern Iowa. The topic of my doctoral research is: Hong Kong Higher Education in Transition. The purpose of the study is, as indicated in my appointment letter, to investigate the unique position Hong Kong universities and their academic professions might have during the transition period.

As part of the study, you are being asked to participate in an in-depth interview which will focus on your perception of "one country, two systems", the concern of academic freedom and autonomy, how the retrocession will affect your work, and your suggestions for the future of Hong Kong higher education as well as for Hong Kong SAR government. The interview will take approximately one hour.

The interview will be audiotaped and later transcribed by me. You may require, at any time, for me to turn off the audio recorder for some sensitive topic or even withdraw from the research process. You will be offered an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview. I will not use your name, or the names of people you have identified.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research and/or subjects' rights, you may contact the Human Subjects Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa, at (319) 273-2748.

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I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this study as stated above. I here by agree to participate in this research. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

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(Signature of the participant)

Date

---

(Print name of participant)

---

(Signature of the researcher)

Date

**APPENDIX C**  
**ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SAR GOVERNMENT**

## **Additional Suggestions for the SAR Government**

**Only five selected faculty and academic administrators felt comfortable to offer suggestions to the SAR regarding the future development of Hong Kong society, and their suggestions are summed up as follows:**

**1. Some things that are in danger of exploding in Hong Kong, and the most serious one now from the commercial point of view is housing. The commercial speculators have cornered the market on housing. They have empty flats available that they will not sell because they think the price can be higher. The government has to find way to deal with this. On the one hand, it wants to encourage free enterprise, on the other hand it cannot allow speculators to push the housing prices up continuously and get richer at the cost of the whole society.**

**2. As Hong Kong is a rich society, it can afford to have a safety net for those people who cannot fend for themselves. But it needs to avoid going too far in the direction of a welfare society because governments often have not been quick enough to plug all the loopholes and stop the abuse of the system. The government needs to care for ordinary people with real problems.**

**3. The new government needs to encourage people to be critical in their thinking and to communicate. The key is communication. The SAR**



**government has to encourage communication even if they do not like what they hear. History has proven that when you try to crush people's views, whether they are right or wrong, you have an explosion sooner or later. It might take years but it will happen. People have to be heard. If you have a sophisticated enough government that is genuinely listening to grievances or differences of opinions and tries to deal with them, you will be able to diffuse most explosive situations by keeping the door of communication open. It would be even better not to just keep the door open, but to actively go out and seek information and criticism.**

**4. Hong Kong is an extremely civilized and very impressive society in most of its spheres. It's also one of the least violent societies. Things are working reasonably well in Hong Kong, and intervention is almost sure to have an effect on things for the worse. In terms of the old adage, "If it does not itch, don't scratch it." By hard work and thought, the society functions and is harmonious. It gets on only with what it does best and the government should respect that.**

**APPENDIX D**  
**INTERVIEWEE CONSENT**

**THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG****DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH****(2609-7005/7006)**

17 June 1997

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

**I certify that I have been interviewed by Mr. Jiyu Yang with a view to his use of the interview in his research project. Since I do not want to be cited as an anonymous source, I give him permission to use, cite, and paraphrase my remarks for his research project giving my name as his source.**

**(Signature)****Andrew Parkin****Professor of English**

**APPENDIX E****JOINT DECLARATION  
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM  
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND  
AND THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
ON THE QUESTION OF HONG KONG**

**Joint Declaration  
Of the Government of the United Kingdom  
Of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
And the Government  
Of the People's Republic of China  
On the Question of Hong Kong**

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China have reviewed with satisfaction the friendly relations existing between the two Governments and peoples in recent years and agreed that a proper negotiated settlement of the question of Hong Kong, which is left over from the past, is conducive to the maintenance of the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and to the further strengthening and development of the relations between the two countries on a new basis. To this end, they have, after talks between the delegations of the two Governments, agreed to declare as follows:

1. The Government of the People's Republic of China declares that to recover the Hong Kong area (including Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, hereinafter referred to as Hong Kong) is the common aspiration of the entire Chinese people, and that it has decided to resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong with effect from 1 July 1997.

2. The Government of the United Kingdom declares that it will restore Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China with effect from 1 July 1997.

3. The Government of the People's Republic of China declares that the basic policies of the People's Republic of China regarding Hong Kong are as follows:

- (1) Upholding national unity and territorial integrity and taking account of the history of Hong Kong and its realities, the People's Republic of China has decided to establish, in accordance with the provisions of Article 31 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region upon resuming the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong.
- (2) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be directly under the authority of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will enjoy a high degree of autonomy, except in foreign and defence affairs which are the responsibilities of the Central People's Government.
- (3) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be vested with executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. The laws currently in force in Hong Kong will remain basically unchanged.
- (4) The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be composed of local inhabitants. The chief executive will be appointed by the Central People's Government on the basis of the results of elections or consultations to be held locally. Principal officials will be nominated by the chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for appointment by the Central People's Government. Chinese and foreign nationals previously working in the public and police service in the government departments of Hong Kong may remain employed to serve as advisers or hold certain public posts in government departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

- (5) The current social and economic systems in Hong Kong will remain unchanged, and so will the life-style. Rights and freedoms, including those of the person, of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of travel, of movement, of correspondence, of strike, of choice of occupation, of academic research and of religious belief will be ensured by law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Private property, ownership of enterprises, legitimate right of inheritance and foreign investment will be protected by law.
- (6) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will retain the status of a free port and a separate customs territory.
- (7) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will retain the status of an international financial centre, and its markets for foreign exchange, gold, securities and futures will continue. There will be free flow of capital. The Hong Kong dollar will continue to circulate and remain freely convertible.
- (8) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will have independent finances. The Central People's Government will not levy taxes on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
- (9) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may establish mutually beneficial economic relations with the United Kingdom and other countries, whose economic interests in Hong Kong will be given due regard.
- (5) Using the name of "Hong Kong, China," the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may on its own maintain and develop economic and cultural relations and conclude relevant agreements with states, regions and relevant international organizations. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may on its own issue travel documents for entry into and exit from Hong Kong.
- (11) The maintenance of public order in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be the responsibility of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
- (12) The above-stated basic policies of the People's Republic of China regarding Hong Kong and the elaboration of them in Annex I to this Joint Declaration will be stipulated, in a Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, by the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, and they will remain unchanged for 50 years.

**4. The Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the People's Republic of China declare that, during the transitional period between the date of the entry into force of this Joint Declaration and 30 June 1997, the Government of the United Kingdom will be responsible for the administration of Hong Kong with the object of preserving its economic prosperity and social stability; and that the Government of the People's Republic of China will give its cooperation in this connection.**

**5. The Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the People's Republic of China declare that, in order to ensure a smooth transfer of government in 1997, and with a view to the effective implementation of this Joint Declaration, a Sino-British Joint Liaison Group will be set up when this Joint Declaration enters into force; and that it will be established and will function in accordance with the provisions of Annex II to this Joint Declaration.**

**6. The Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the People's Republic of China declare that land leases in Hong Kong and other related matters will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Annex III to this Joint Declaration.**

**7. The Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the People's Republic of China agree to implement the preceding declaration and the Annexes to this Joint Declaration.**

**8. This Joint Declaration is subject to ratification and shall enter into force on the date of the exchange of instruments of ratification, which shall take place in Beijing before 30 June 1985. This Joint Declaration and its Annexes shall be equally binding.**

**Done in duplicate at Beijing on 1984 in the English and Chinese languages,  
both texts being equally authentic.**

**(Signed)**

**For the Government of the  
United Kingdom of  
Great Britain and  
Northern Ireland**

**(Signed)**

**For the Government of the  
People's Republic of  
China**