



Strengthening social cohesion

This survey asked young people about social togetherness at a point when a new administration was about to take charge of a society that has been split by diverse opinions.

Hong Kong, a city with a long history of diversity, has recently witnessed deep controversy and serious confrontations over economic development, livelihood issues and the changing political landscape. Some people worry about the erosion of Hong Kong's basic values, its governance and long-term prospects.

An overwhelming majority (95.2%) of respondents in the survey thought social cohesion and togetherness in Hong Kong was important. For them, the greatest meaning social togetherness has for Hong Kong was its potential to improve livelihoods (27.6%), to keep the city moving on (27.4%), or to increase people's sense of belonging (20.8%). On a scale of 0-10, 7.3 the average extent to which respondents felt society had been serious risk of fracture in recent years. The biggest obstacle to cohesion was considered to be lack of mutual trust between citizens and the government (33.0%).

One outcome of the study was a recommendation for



an increase in youth membership of advisory and statutory bodies from about 10% today to no less than 15% in order to show the government's trust in and willingness to listen to young people while providing them with more opportunities for training in public service.

Comments from think tank members

Richard Cheng, convener "In the past, society was more focused on problem-solving and solution-finding. Now, Hong Kong needs a clearer vision. The government should think about the city's development and put more emphasis on public engagement."

Ansel Lam, member "It is normal for people to have diverse views in any society but that does not mean social togetherness is impossible. It requires cooperation and the engagement of each individual. Achieving a greater sense of togetherness is a challenge for the government, for civil society

Ray Poon, member "I believe that young people have high expectations of togetherness and they are willing to take action individually to realize this goal. The government and of opportunities for youngsters to experience unity."

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519 15-34 year-olds took part in a territory-wide random sample telephone survey from May to June 2017.

Four focus groups were held in April and May with 17 young people. Four academics or experts were interviewed.

Full details [in Chinese]

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