

Research Notes

**Support for Democracy and
Willingness to Emigrate from Hong Kong**

Brandon Alexander Millan and Joel S. Fetzer

Abstract

After Beijing refused to grant Hong Kongers' demand for free elections for Chief Executive during the Umbrella Movement of 2014, many young citizens began to question their future in the SAR—especially given the evermore threatening countdown to 2047. These research notes apply Albert Hirschman's theory of "exit, voice, and loyalty" to the political and migratory situation in Hong Kong by testing whether dissatisfaction with the local political regime and pessimism about the prospects for political reform are creating a greater willingness to emigrate to countries such as Taiwan, Australia, and Canada. After reviewing official census and migration data from the four regions and estimating a Logit model of data from the 2015 Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators survey, the notes conclude that support for democracy is becoming an increasingly large motivator for Hong Kongers who are considering moving abroad to areas that are more politically liberal, even if not necessarily more affluent. After the failure of "voice," Hong Kong's democrats feel they have no other option but to "exit."

Keywords: 2014 Hong Kong protests, Albert Hirschman, brain drain, democratization, emigration, Hong Kong, human rights, Umbrella Movement.

Brandon Alexander Millan is Adjunct Professor of Political Science at Pepperdine University and a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy. <millan_brandon@smc.edu>

Joel S. Fetzer is Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Pepperdine University. <joel.fetzer@pepperdine.edu>

You can lock up our bodies, but not our minds!
We want democracy in Hong Kong. And we will not give up.
—Imprisoned Hong Kong democracy activist Joshua Wong Chi-fung¹

Some people say that we are emigrating,
but I feel like we are refugees escaping from Hong Kong.
—Former Hong Kong resident Terence Ta
on his pending emigration to Taiwan²

The global authoritarian resurgence has been cruel to Asian democratizing societies. Once seen as potential models of transition,³ these young democracies or hybrid regimes have reversed the progress of political liberalization. Authoritarian rulers have demonstrated a willingness to jail electoral challengers,⁴ crack down on internet dissent and freedom of expression,⁵ seize power through coups,⁶ sanction extrajudicial killings of critics,⁷ undermine

¹ Joshua Wong Chi-fung, “@joshuawongcf,” Twitter (August 17, 2017), <https://twitter.com/joshuawongcf/status/898097474358738944> (accessed August 18, 2017).

² Katie Hunt, “Hong Kongers Look for an Exit 20 Years after Handover to China,” CNN (June 26, 2017), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/06/26/asia/hong-kong-handover-exit/index.html> (accessed September 21, 2017).

³ Abdul Rashid Moten, “2008 General Elections in Malaysia: Democracy at Work,” *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2009): 21-42; Michael Kelly Connors, *Democracy and National Identity in Thailand* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003); Douglas E. Ramage, “Indonesia: Democracy First, Good Governance Later,” *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2007): 135-157; Marte Nilsen, “Will Democracy Bring Peace to Myanmar?” *International Area Studies Review* 16, no. 2 (2013): 115-141; and Mikael Baaz and Mona Lilja, “Understanding Hybrid Democracy in Cambodia: The Nexus between Liberal Democracy, the State, Civil Society, and a ‘Politics of Presence’,” *Asian Politics & Policy* 6, no. 1 (2014): 5-24.

⁴ “Malaysia: Anwar’s Conviction Sets Back Rights,” Human Rights Watch (February 10, 2015), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/02/10/malaysia-anwars-conviction-sets-back-rights> (accessed September 17, 2017).

⁵ “Laos Attempts to Control the Internet,” *Economist* (September 26, 2014), http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1412320725&Country=Laos&topic=Politics&subtopic=For_6 (accessed September 17, 2017), and Freedom House, “Vietnam,” *Freedom in the World 2016*, Freedom House (2017), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/vietnam> (accessed September 17, 2017).

⁶ “Thailand: Junta Entrenched 3 Years after Coup,” Human Rights Watch (May 21, 2017), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/21/thailand-junta-entrenched-3-years-after-coup> (accessed September 17, 2017).

⁷ Felipe Villamor, “In Philippines, Doubts about Police Raid That Killed a Mayor,” *New York Times* (August 1, 2017), https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/01/world/asia/philippines-mayor-police-raid-rodrido-duterte.html?_r=0 (accessed September 17, 2017).

lauded democratic institutions,⁸ engage in ethnic cleansing,⁹ and dissolve opposition parties.¹⁰

Hong Kong is regressing as well. Although the Chinese Special Administrative Region (SAR) still enjoys a “very high” human development index (HDI) value¹¹ and a gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$58,322 per capita,¹² rule of law in the city, according to Hong Kong’s first prisoner of conscience,¹³ Joshua Wong Chi-fung, has been reduced to the will of Hong Kong’s authoritarian rulers.¹⁴

In 2012, students¹⁵ took to the streets to demonstrate against the introduction of a Beijing-imposed “patriotic” curriculum designed to celebrate the mainland’s one-party system. By September 2014, evermore frequent, but

⁸ Phelim Kine, “Indonesian President Jokowi’s ‘Democracy Problem’,” Human Rights Watch (February 23, 2017), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/23/indonesian-president-jokowi-democracy-problem> (accessed September 17, 2017).

⁹ “Myanmar: Scorched-Earth Campaign Fuels Ethnic Cleansing of Rohingya from Rakhine State,” Amnesty International (September 14, 2017), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/09/myanmar-scorched-earth-campaign-fuels-ethnic-cleansing-of-rohingya-from-rakhine-state/> (accessed September 17, 2017).

¹⁰ “Cambodia: Drop Case against Opposition Leader,” Human Rights Watch (September 6, 2017), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/06/cambodia-drop-case-against-opposition-leader> (accessed September 17, 2017).

¹¹ 2015 HDI value is 0.917 (twelve of 188 countries and territories); see United Nations Development Programme, “Hong Kong, China (SAR),” *Human Development Report 2016* (2016), http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/HKG.pdf (accessed September 17, 2017).

¹² International Monetary Fund, “5. Report for Selected Countries and Subjects,” World Economic Outlook Database (April 2017), <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2017/01/weodata/weorept.aspx?sy=2016&ey=2016&scsm=1&ssd=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&pr1.x=42&pr1.y=7&c=532&s=NGDPD%2CNGDPDPC%2CPPPDP%2CPPPDP&grp=0&a=> (accessed September 17, 2017).

¹³ “Hong Kong: Vindictive Jail Terms for Pro-Democracy Leaders,” Amnesty International (August 17, 2017), <https://www.amnesty.org.hk/en/hong-kong-vindictive-jail-terms-for-pro-democracy-leaders/> (accessed September 17, 2017).

¹⁴ Gina Tam and Tyrell Haberkorn, “How the Opposition Is Silenced in Hong Kong and Thailand,” *Foreign Affairs* (September 15, 2017), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/east-asia/2017-09-15/how-opposition-silenced-hong-kong-and-thailand> (accessed September 17, 2017).

¹⁵ Carter J. Eckert et al., *Korea Old and New: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 353-355; Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *China Wakes: The Struggle for the Soul of a Rising Power* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 77-91; Kieran Williams, *The Prague Spring and Its Aftermath: Czechoslovak Politics 1968–1970* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 55-56; Soong Hoom Kil, “Development of Korean Politics—A Historical Profile,” 33-69, in *Understanding Korean Politics: An Introduction*, ed. Soong Hoom Kil and Chung-in Moon (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); Zhang Liang, Perry Link, and Andrew J. Nathan, *The Tiananmen Papers: The Chinese Leadership’s Decision to Use Force against Their Own People—In Their Own Words* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2002); and Roderic Ai Camp, *Politics in Mexico: The Democratic Transformation*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 136 and 245.

independent, prodemocracy¹⁶ protests had merged into what became known as the Umbrella Movement. In opposition to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) decision¹⁷ to prescreen candidates for Hong Kong's chief executive post, demonstrators demanded an open nomination system. In justifying Beijing's ruling and responding to the protesters, Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying commented:

[Y]ou look at the meaning of the words “broadly representative”; it's not numeric representation. You have to take care of all the sectors in Hong Kong as much as you can, and if it's entirely a numbers game and numeric representation, then obviously you would be talking to half of the people in Hong Kong who earn less than \$1,800 a month. Then you would end up with that kind of politics and policies.¹⁸

Unimpressed with this reasoning, democracy advocates who took to the streets numbered 100,000. Hong Kong's largest protest in a decade ended after seventy-nine days, however, when police dispersed participants with force.

Reminding Hong Kong that it was now just another PRC city,¹⁹ President Xi Jinping attended the twentieth anniversary celebration of the handover on July 1, 2017, and the inauguration of the SAR's fifth administration. Adding symbolism to the visit, the People's Liberation Army's navy marked the occasion with an unprecedented port call by its first aircraft carrier, the *Liaoning*.²⁰ Meanwhile, in an attempt to safeguard the Beijing delegation from “embarrassment,” the city government removed all political banners

¹⁶ Throughout these research notes, the definition of democracy is that common in the West, not “direct democracy with Chinese characteristics” or other semi-authoritarian understandings of this term (cf. Yue Yin, “The Understandings of Democracy, Commitment to Democracy, and Opinions about the Government among China's People,” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 2 (December 2018):143-171).

¹⁷ Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, *The Practice of the “One Country, Two Systems” Policy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2014).

¹⁸ Keith Bradsher and Chris Buckley, “Hong Kong Leader Reaffirms Unbending Stance on Elections,” *New York Times* (October 20, 2014), <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/21/world/asia/leung-chun-ying-hong-kong-china-protests.html> (accessed August 22, 2017).

¹⁹ However, according to a recent survey of 120 youth conducted by the University of Hong Kong, only 3.1 percent of those between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine identify themselves as “broadly Chinese”; Public Opinion Programme, *People's Ethnic Identity* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 2017), <https://www.hkpop.hku.hk/english/release/release1474.html> (accessed August 17, 2017).

²⁰ Kristin Huang and Minnie Chan, “Pride of PLA Navy to Make Port Call in Hong Kong,” *South China Morning Post* (June 23, 2017), <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/2099772/pride-pla-navy-make-port-call-hong-kong> (accessed June 25, 2017).

and images from the official route, banned demonstrators from assembling in Victoria Park, and deployed 9,000 of the city's 27,000 police officers.²¹

Nevertheless, large-scale protests are on the rise. In 2016, authorities in Hong Kong recorded 11,854 public assemblies and 1,304 public processions of more than 50 or 30 people, respectively.²² The total increase of 7,129 permitted civic activities year-on-year indicates more energetic citizen engagement in response to Beijing's encroachment on the city's political space. And the numerous and sometimes violent clashes between police and prodemocracy protesters in the summer of 2019 hardly suggest that ordinary Hong Kongers have consented to communist rule from Beijing.²³

At the same time that mass political participation has been increasing, one in five residents of the SAR is considering emigration.²⁴ As many as two of every three young adults may now be a potential migrant.²⁵ This hypothesis of substantial current actual emigration receives further confirmation from official statistics. According to a Hong Kong government estimate—probably an undercount given data from receiving countries—7,600 Hong Kongers moved abroad in 2016. This figure was 8.6 percent higher than the previous

²¹ Benjamin Haas, "Xi No Evil: Hong Kong Bans Protest Slogans as Chinese President Visits," *Guardian* (June 24, 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/24/xi-no-evil-hong-kong-bans-protest-slogans-as-chinese-president-visits> (accessed June 25, 2017).

²² Hong Kong Police Force, "Public Order Event Statistics," The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Revised 2017, http://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/09_statistics/poes.html (accessed September 16, 2017).

²³ Mike Ives, Ezra Cheung, and Elsie Chen, "Chaos Grips Hong Kong's Airport as Police Clash with Protesters," *New York Times* (August 12, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/12/world/asia/hong-kong-airport-protest.html?module=inline> (accessed August 16, 2019).

²⁴ Ng Kang-chung and Jeffie Lam, "One in Five Hongkongers 'Considering Emigration' as Pessimism Hangs over City," *South China Morning Post* (September 22, 2014), <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1597646/one-five-hongkongers-considering-emigration-pessimism-hangs-over-city> (accessed March 23, 2017); "Emigration Generation: Will Hong Kong Experience Another Brain Drain?" *Time Out Hong Kong* (November 8, 2016), <https://www.timeout.com/hong-kong/blog/emigration-generation-will-hong-kong-experience-another-a-brain-drain-110816> (accessed March 23, 2017); Li Zhen, "Emigration out of Hong Kong Increasing Dramatically," *Epoch Times* (July 27, 2014), <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/817149-migration-out-of-hong-kong-increasing-dramatically/> (accessed March 23, 2017); Peter Guy, "First Signs Appear of a Rising Tide of Young Hong Kong Emigrants," *South China Morning Post* (October 13, 2016), <http://www.scmp.com/business/article/2027793/first-signs-appear-rising-tide-young-hong-kong-emigrants> (accessed March 23, 2017); and "Hong Kongers Look to Emigrate to Taiwan, Elsewhere," *Taipei Times* (October 13, 2016), <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/world/archives/2016/07/19/2003651363> (accessed March 23, 2017).

²⁵ Fiona Sun, "Emigrating Hongkongers Seek Stability Elsewhere, Heading to Australia, Canada, Singapore: Migration Agencies Report Sharp Increase in Inquiries in Recent Months, as Anti-Government Protests and Street Violence Grip the City," *South China Morning Post* (August 17, 2019), <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3023166/port-storm-emigrating-hongkongers-seek-stability-elsewhere> (accessed August 17, 2019).

year.²⁶ Statistics from preferred destination countries tell a similar story of high or increasing emigration, sometimes even exceeding the levels of the immediate prehandover period in the late 1990s. Australia's Department of Home Affairs, for example, registered 1,796 permanent migrants from Hong Kong for the 2016–2017 administrative year compared to 3,591 for 1996–1997.²⁷ According to records from the Consulate General of Canada in Hong Kong, 2016 saw the largest number of Hong Kong-origin permanent residents moving to that country since the handover. While only 24 Hong Kongers became permanent residents of Canada in 1997, by 2015 the number had risen to 630, and the following year it doubled to 1,210.²⁸ Taiwanese figures for the number of Hong Kongers (and a presumably much smaller number of migrants from the Macau SAR) arriving to take up long-term residence in the country also indicate that post-Umbrella Movement emigration from Hong Kong is the most dramatic exodus since the handover era. For 2015, the Republic of China's National Immigration Agency reported 7,230 permanent-resident arrivals from the two SARs, but even in 1996, only 3,388 such pending or approved applicants entered Taiwan from the region.²⁹

The current period is not the first time that Hong Kong has experienced a notable pattern of increased emigration. For example, during the post-World War II years, fearing an end to their traditional way of life and confronting industrialization, many indigenous inhabitants of the New Territories chose to relocate to the United Kingdom. Additionally, prolonged social unrest in the late 1960s to mid-1970s caused well-positioned residents to move to Southeast Asia, South Africa, or South America. However, whereas earlier waves were prompted by economic and physical insecurities, the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984 and later the massacre in 1989 at Tiananmen Square provoked large-scale population flight³⁰ during which Hong Kongers

²⁶ Estimated by the number of “certificate of no criminal conviction” applications; see Hon Chan Hak-kan and Lai Tung-kwok, “Press Release: LCQ20: Applications for Certificates of No Criminal Conviction,” The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (May 24, 2017), <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201705/24/P2017052400855.htm> (accessed September 17, 2017).

²⁷ Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, “Historical Migration Statistics” (April 2019), <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/historical-migration-statistics/resource/8aa8ef88-8418-4b65-ad48-48cad7f7e58b> (accessed August 16, 2019).

²⁸ Phila Siu, “Number of Hongkongers Migrating to Canada Hits 20-Year High, Stretching Back to Handover in 1997 but Top Diplomat in City Declines to Say Whether Political Turmoil Is Reason,” *South China Morning Post* (September 11, 2017), <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/2110557/last-year-saw-highest-number-hongkongers> (accessed August 16, 2019).

²⁹ National Immigration Agency, “Dalu diqu, Gang Ao jumin, wu huji guomin lai Tai renshu tongji biao” [Statistical table on the number of Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong, and Macau citizens and stateless persons entering Taiwan] (Taipei: Republic of China, Ministry of the Interior, May 3, 2019), <https://www.immigration.gov.tw/5385/7344/7350/8883/> (accessed August 16, 2019).

³⁰ Deborah A. Brown, *Turmoil in Hong Kong on the Eve of Communist Rule: The Fate of the Territory and Its Anglican Church* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993); Cait Murphy,

chose to “[vote] with their feet”³¹ rather than attempt to express their intense political indignation through other means.

According to the conundrum first presented in Albert O. Hirschman’s classic treatise, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*,³² individuals confronting an unfavorable situation face three possible options. Applied to political migration, “exit” refers to leaving one’s country of birth; “voice” is the option to publicly express grievances; and “loyalty” means remaining within national borders without communicating one’s dissatisfaction. While Hirschman introduced the first two options as mutually exclusive, one scholar of migration in Latin America has noted that “exit does not mean abandoning the option of voice, but rather a change of context for its articulation.”³³ Another study of student activism during the 1990s in Taiwan has modified Hirschman’s model of “‘exit’ or ‘voice’” to become one that includes the possibilities of “‘exit’ and ‘voice’.”³⁴

For a young democrat in Hong Kong, Hirschman’s classic theory means that he or she has three major options. The individual can despair of the government ever relaxing its grip on power and decide to abandon the territory permanently. If the individual believes that protest in today’s Hong Kong ultimately will prove to be as futile and suicidal as it was for the many victims of the Tiananmen Massacre a generation ago,³⁵ a rational person should simply look out for oneself and start a new, better life elsewhere. A second path is to continue to believe in the possibility of progressive political change in Hong Kong. This entails working all the more strenuously to publicize one’s prodemocracy views, in part by appealing to ordinary citizens to take to the

“Hong Kong: A Culture of Emigration,” *Atlantic* (April 1991), <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/91apr/emi491.htm> (accessed March 23, 2017); Ronald Skeldon, ed., *Reluctant Exiles? Migration from Hong Kong and the New Overseas Chinese* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 1994); Wendy W. Y. Chan, “Home but Not Home: A Case Study of Some Canadian Returnees in Hong Kong” (M.Phil. thesis, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, 1996), <http://repository.ust.hk/ir/Record/1783.1-5507> (accessed August 18, 2017); Siu-lun Wong and Janet W. Salaff, “Network Capital: Emigration from Hong Kong,” *British Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 3 (1998): 358-374; Ronald Skeldon, ed., *Emigration from Hong Kong: Tendencies and Impacts* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1995); and Lawrence K. Hong, “Taiwan and Hong Kong,” in *Encyclopedia of American Immigration*, vol. 4, ed. James Ciment (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 1229-1232.

³¹ Wong Siu-lun, “Emigration and Stability in Hong Kong,” *Asian Survey* 32, no. 10 (1992): 918-933, and Janet W. Salaff, Siu-lun Wong, and Arent Greve, *Hong Kong Movers and Stayers: Narratives of Family Migration* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010), chap. 4.

³² Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

³³ Bert Hoffmann, “Bringing Hirschman Back In: ‘Exit,’ ‘Voice,’ and ‘Loyalty’ in the Politics of Transnational Migration,” *Latin Americanist* 54, no. 2 (2010): 57-73.

³⁴ Brandon Alexander Millan and Joel S. Fetzer, “Public Support for the 1990 Student Democracy Movement and Emigration from Taiwan: Exit and Voice or Exit or Voice?” *American Journal of Chinese Studies* 15, no. 2 (2008): 111-121.

³⁵ Zhang, Nathan, and Link, *The Tiananmen Papers*.

streets and by helping to mount public pressure on the state to respect the human rights of Hong Kongers and allow nonelite voters to influence public policy and select officials. The third major option is to reject emigration as the coward's way out and a violation of filial piety (if, for example, his or her parents still live in the SAR and cannot or will not move). A believer in democracy also might look at political realities on the ground and conclude that the government holds such a monopoly on the use of force that public protest is doomed. This person privately might continue to hold liberal beliefs, yet refrain from expressing them for fear of harming family members or because the individual has become exceptionally cynical about the chances of any political improvement.

Hong Kong appeared to have arrived at a critical juncture in its political decline by the fall of 2014. The theoretical goal of these research notes is to determine whether ordinary Hong Kongers perceived their choice at the time as emigration versus political participation or instead saw the two options as independent of one another. Since our dependent variable is willingness to leave, our study focuses more on the causes of pro-“exit” sentiment than on the roots of “voice” or “loyalty.” Despite widespread media coverage of the protests,³⁶ relatively few English-speaking writers have produced scholarship on the migratory implications of the 2014 demonstrations.³⁷ This investigation uses a previously unexplored Hong Kong dataset from 2015, less than nine months after the participants of the Umbrella Movement were forced from the streets, to analyze the causes of public support for democracy and of willingness to emigrate from Hong Kong.

³⁶ Ben Bland, *Generation HK: Seeking Identity in China's Shadow* (Beijing: Penguin Books China, 2017).

³⁷ See Mathew Y. H. Wong, “A Game-Theory Model of Democratization and Political Reform in Hong Kong,” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 12, no. 2 (December 2016): 127-154; Stephan Ortmann, “Democratization and the Discourse on Stability in Hong Kong and Singapore,” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 1 (July 2014): 123-145; Chun Wing Lee, “Schools, Peers, and the Political Socialization of Young Social Movement Participants in Hong Kong,” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 12, no. 2 (December 2016): 105-125; Hao-Chieh Chang and Hsiang Iris Chyi, “Voting with Their Feet: The Relationship between Political Efficacy and Protest Propensity among Hong Kong Residents,” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 5, no. 2 (December 2009): 127-144; Ma Ngok, “Civil Society and Democratization in Hong Kong: Paradox and Duality,” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 4, no. 2 (December 2008): 155-175; Francis L. F. Lee and Joseph Man Chan, “Activating Support for Social Movements: The Effect of the Internet on Public Opinion toward Social Movements in Hong Kong,” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 8, no. 1 (July 2012): 145-167; Ortmann, “Democratization and the Discourse on Stability in Hong Kong and Singapore”; and Lee, “Schools, Peers, and the Political Socialization of Young Social Movement Participants in Hong Kong.”

Hypotheses

Testing the Hirschman-based theory against an existing public-opinion dataset, this study aims to determine the extent to which Hong Kongers in 2015 chose between “exit” (emigration), “voice” (the Movement), and “loyalty.” If the ternary-choice hypothesis is correct, support for democracy will have a positive effect on willingness to emigrate for respondents wanting to exit;³⁸ a negative effect for interviewees selecting voice; and no effect for those choosing loyalty. Previous studies of the determinants of emigration in East Asia suggest that, among socioeconomic status variables, higher education,³⁹ greater income, and increased occupational prestige⁴⁰ will motivate Hong Kongers to leave the SAR. Although the literature indicates that some Hong Kong pensioners move to mainland China to take advantage of the lower cost of living,⁴¹ younger residents contribute more to human capital flight than their elders.⁴² Similarly, one should expect Hong Kongers with foreign cultural or familial ties, especially those identifying as Christian⁴³ or whose family members live abroad, to be more inclined to emigrate.

³⁸ E. G. Ravenstein, “The Laws of Migration,” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 52, no. 2 (June 1889): 241-305; Samuel P. S. Ho, “Industrialization in Taiwan: Recent Trends and Problems,” *Pacific Affairs* 48, no. 1 (1975): 492; Alejandro Portes, “Determinants of the Brain Drain,” *International Migration Review* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1976): 492; John Herschel Barnhill, “Political, Ethnic, Religious, and Gender Persecution,” in *Encyclopedia of American Immigration*, vol. 1, ed. James Ciment (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 284-294; and Joel S. Fetzer and Brandon Alexander Millan, “The Causes of Emigration from Singapore: How Much Is Still Political?” *Critical Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2015): 462-476.

³⁹ Ho, “Industrialization in Taiwan,” 27-41; Portes, “Determinants of the Brain Drain,” 489-508; George J. Borjas, “Economic Theory and International Migration,” *International Migration Review* 23, no. 3 (Fall 1989): 457-485; Shirley L. Chang, “Causes of Brain Drain and Solutions: The Taiwan Experience,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 27-43; Shyh-jer Chen, “Migrant Selectivity and Returns to Skills: The Case of Taiwanese Immigrants in the United States,” *International Migration* 33, no. 2 (1995): 251-274; and Saskia Sassen, “Economics II: Push Factors,” in *Encyclopedia of American Immigration*, vol. 1, ed. James Ciment (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 265-276. Also see Siu-lun Wong and Janet W. Salaff, “Network Capital: Emigration from Hong Kong,” *British Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 3 (1998): 358-374.

⁴⁰ Portes, “Determinants of the Brain Drain,” 492.

⁴¹ Lamin Leigh, “Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: Macroeconomic Impact of an Aging Population in a Highly Open Economy,” IMF Working Paper No. 06/87 (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, April 2006), 1-19, and Kee-Lee Chou, “Cross-Border Retirement Migration Plan in Hong Kong Middle-Aged Adults,” *Habitat International* 31, nos. 3-4 (2007): 366-374.

⁴² H. C. Tsai, “A Study on the Migration of Students from Taiwan to the United States: A Summary Report,” *Renkou xuekan* 12 (June 1989): 91-120, and Chang, “Causes of Brain Drain and Solutions.”

⁴³ Deborah A. Brown, “Hong Kong’s Catholic Church and the Challenge of Democratization in the Special Administrative Region,” in *Religious Organizations and Democratization: Case Studies from Contemporary Asia*, ed. Tun-jen Cheng and Deborah A. Brown (London: Routledge, 2006), and J. Christopher Soper and Joel S. Fetzer, “Democratization, Human

Data and Methods

To test these hypotheses about democracy and emigration, these research notes use bivariate Logit to analyze data from the first wave of the Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators survey,⁴⁴ which principal investigators Carine Lai and Michael E. DeGolyer conducted in August 2015, using computer-assisted telephone interviews⁴⁵ in Cantonese, Putonghua, and English of 1,508 quota-sampled Hong Kongers aged 18–65. Interlocking quotas were set based on age (under 40 and 40 and over) and gender according to the most recent (2011) available official census.⁴⁶ Within the interlocking quotas, noninterlocking quotas were established for age bands 18–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, and 60–65. This study concluded with 1,246 usable data, including those for 15 nonresidents and 129 students.

Willingness to emigrate, of course, may not be easily reduced to a simple binary decision or caused by a single push or pull factor.⁴⁷ However, among all questions posed in the Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators survey, this study used the item exploring whether the respondent, if given the chance, would “stay in Hong Kong,” “move away,” or “[didn’t] know” (question 1.1). The dichotomous variable was coded as 1 if the interviewee preferred to “move away,” 0 if the choice was to “stay,” and left missing if the answer was “don’t know.”

The first set of independent variables was linked to support for democracy. Three indicators were chosen. The first was a 16–99 scale measuring the political freedom⁴⁸ of each respondent’s ideal place of residence, regardless

Rights, and Religion—State Relations in Taiwan and Hong Kong,” in *Religion and Regimes: Support, Separation, and Opposition*, ed. Mehran Tamadonfar and Ted G. Jelen (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 157–185.

⁴⁴ Carine Lai and Michael E. DeGolyer, *Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators Comparative Report: Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai* (Hong Kong: Civic Exchange, June 2016), <https://civic-exchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Asian-Urban-Wellbeing-Indicators-Comparative-Report-HKSGSH-REPORT.pdf> (accessed August 9, 2019). The analysis and interpretations in these research notes in no way reflect the opinions of Civic Exchange or the producers or collectors of these data.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* In 2014, household landline penetration rates were 100 percent.

⁴⁶ Lily Ou-Yang, *2011 Population Census* (Hong Kong: Census and Statistics Department, 2012), <http://www.census2011.gov.hk/pdf/summary-results.pdf> (accessed August 24, 2017).

⁴⁷ Michele Bruni and Alessandra Venturini, “Pressure to Migrate and Propensity to Emigrate: The Case of the Mediterranean Basin,” *International Labour Review* 134, no. 3 (1995): 377–400.

⁴⁸ Freedom House’s “Freedom in the World 2016” data that are analyzed in these research notes cover developments in 195 countries and fifteen territories from January 1, 2015, through December 31, 2015. Neither the producers nor distributors are responsible for these analyses or interpretations. Note: “North America” (regional term used by interviewees in open-ended response) = United States and Canada (it is assumed that respondents were not thinking about Mexico); “Europe” = Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Monaco,

Table 1. Question Wording and Summary Statistics

	Question Text and Coding	Mean
Government Dissatisfaction	1.8j. Now I'm going to ask about your overall satisfaction with several issues in Hong Kong: Quality of government. [Are you] 1 = Very satisfied, 2 = Satisfied, 3 = Dissatisfied, [or] 4 = Very dissatisfied?	3.03
Hong Kong Worse	1.3. Since you started living in Hong Kong, overall, has it become a better or worse place to live? Much better [= 1], Better [= 2], About the same [= 3], Worse [= 4], or Much worse [= 5]?	3.86
Family Abroad	12.14. Do you have any parents, children, brothers, sisters, or a spouse living overseas right now? Yes [= 1], or No [= 0]	.24
Christian	12.6. What is your religion, if any? (<i>open ended</i>): Protestant [= 1], Catholic [= 1], all other answers [= 0]	.23
Woman	A6. Gender of respondent (<i>recorded by interviewer; do not ask</i>): Male [= 0], or Female [= 1]	.53
Education	12.3. What level of education did you finish? 1 = Primary or less, 2 = Secondary, 3 = Vocational, Technical, or Associate, 4 = University degree, [and] 5 = Postgraduate	3.08
Income	12.20 & 12.21. How much income does your household receive each month from other sources, such as business profits, rents, interest, investments, government benefits, or contributions from relatives? <i>Each city should fill in its own income brackets in local currency according to metropolitan household income distribution data, if available.</i> 1 = 0 to 20th percentile, 2 = 20th to 40th percentile, 3 = 40th to 60th percentile, 4 = 60th to 80th percentile, [and] 5 = 80th to 100th percentile	3.76
White Collar	12.5. What is your main occupation? (<i>open ended</i>): Managers & Administrators [= 1], Professionals [= 1], or all others answers [= 0]	.25
Age	A7. In what year were you born? 1 = 18-29, 2 = 30-39, 3 = 40-49, 4 = 50-59, [or] 5 = 60-65	2.79

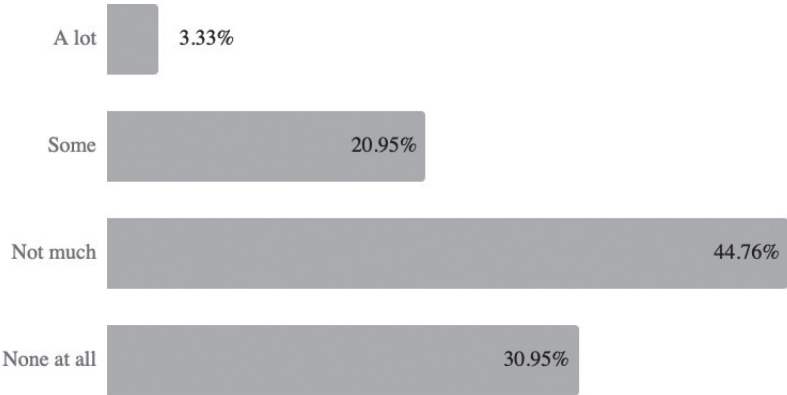
Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom (no data for Vatican City); "North Europe" = Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Ireland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom; "Western Europe" = Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom; "Asia" = Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China (and Tibet), Cyprus, Georgia, India (and Indian Kashmir), Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar (a.k.a. Burma), Nepal, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan (and Pakistani Kashmir), Palestine (i.e., West Bank and Gaza Strip), Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Yemen; "Place with Better Air Quality" = Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, based on 2017 data (limited to East Asia) from Numbeo, https://www.numbeo.com/pollution/rankings_by_country.jsp?title=2017®ion=142 (accessed May 26, 2017); "Don't Know" and "Non-specific" = Hong Kong value. Where a respondent chose more than one country, we averaged the Freedom Scores of those areas.

of her or his migratory intentions (a combination of questions 1.1 and 1.2). The regressor Government Dissatisfaction indicated the degree to which interviewees were “overall [satisfied] with [the] quality of government in Hong Kong” (question 1.8j), and Hong Kong Worse, reflecting whether, according to the respondent, Hong Kong had “become a better or worse place to live” (question 1.3). The two indicators of foreign affiliation were whether interviewees had “any parents, children, brothers, sisters, or a spouse living overseas” (Family Abroad; question 12.14), and whether respondents were Catholic or Protestant (Christian; question 12.6). Finally, to include socioeconomic status, the analysis used the following three regressors: completed “level of education” (question 12.3); “total household income” percentile (question 12.21); and whether one’s occupation was classified as “managers & administrators”/“professionals” (question 12.5). For further details concerning the wording of survey questions, see table 1.

Findings

The first empirical question we examined was whether ordinary Hong Kongers feel politically efficacious. The answer is a vehement “No!” Of the respondents who indicated they “personally care...a lot”⁴⁹ about the

Figure 1. Politically Engaged Hong Kongers’ Views on Their Political Efficacy



Source: Hong Kong subset of the 2015 Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators survey.

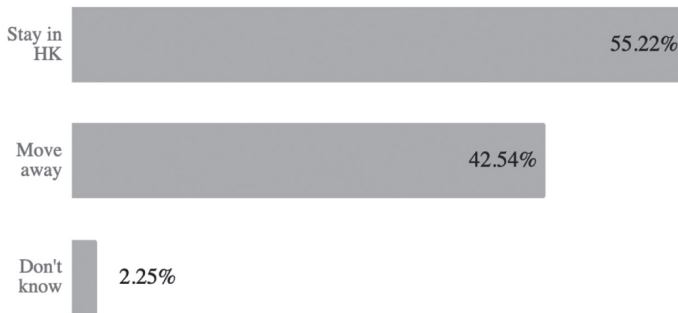
⁴⁹ This selection question was used to eliminate apolitical respondents whose views on political efficacy are arguably less likely to influence their willingness to emigrate. To achieve a more representative sample, however, the main analysis below includes all interviewees who answered the items on which the regression equation is based. If the main analysis were restricted to only politically engaged individuals, the effects of prodemocratic attitudes on willingness to emigrate would presumably increase, but the much smaller sample size probably would be too restrictive to produce robust regression estimates for the entire Hong Kong population.

“quality of government” in Hong Kong (see figure 1), 75.7 percent said they have little or no say “in the decisions that affect them” (question 11.2), and only 3.3 percent of interviewees stated that they have “a lot” of political influence in Hong Kong. A similar story holds for Hong Kongers’ views on “government’s performance” in “[l]istening to residents’ views” (question 11.1b). Here, none of the 210 respondents is “very satisfied,” whereas 197 expressed varying degrees of dissatisfaction.

The second issue explored was the extent to which Hong Kongers wanted to exit the city in 2014. Figure 2 indicates the percentage of respondents who answered “stay in Hong Kong,” “move away,” or “don’t know” when asked, “If you could freely choose to live anywhere in the world [what would you do]?” As this graphic demonstrates, 530 respondents (42.5 percent) indicated that they would leave Hong Kong if given the opportunity. Figure 3 summarizes the respondents’ preferred country of immigration if they answered “move away” in the previous figure. Australia topped the list at 18.5 percent, followed by Taiwan at 12.5 percent. Only slightly fewer Hong Kongers intended to emigrate to Canada (11.1 percent) and the United Kingdom (10.9 percent). Other top destinations include Japan (8.1 percent) and the United States (7.5 percent).

Table 2 presents the results of the regression analysis. As anticipated, the second model in this table suggests that being attracted to more open societies ($b = .096, p < .01$),⁵⁰ expressing dissatisfaction with the government ($b =$

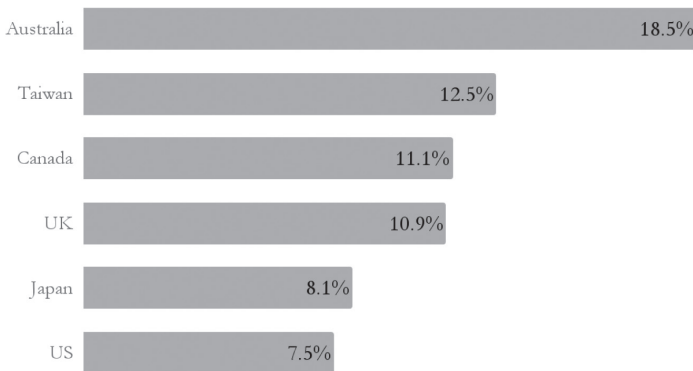
Figure 2. Hong Kongers’ Attitudes toward Emigration



Source: Hong Kong subset of 2015 Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators survey.

⁵⁰ To examine whether respondents were thinking more of political freedom or economic prosperity when they referred to a preferred country or region, we reran the second model in table 2 but added an Economic (development) Score. This new regressor equals the 2015 GDP per capita in nominal US\$1,000s of the interviewee’s favorite area of emigration, if she or he would like to leave. Should she or he wish to remain in the SAR, this independent variable simply takes on the 2015 GDP per capita for Hong Kong. Data came from

Figure 3. Hong Kongers' Preferred Country of Emigration (Top Six)



Source: Hong Kong subset of 2015 Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators survey.

Note: UK includes respondents who answered “Europe” or “Western Europe”; Canada includes those who answered “North America.” As some respondents indicated a desire to emigrate to multiple countries, the total exceeds 100 percent.

Table 2. Regression Models of Willingness to Emigrate from Hong Kong

	b	SE	Exp(B)	b	SE	Exp(B)
Freedom Score				.096**	.010	1.101
Government Dissatisfaction				.481**	.112	1.618
Hong Kong Worse				.981**	.116	2.668
Family Abroad	.396**	.147	1.486	.575**	.179	1.778
Christian	.423**	.147	1.527	.273	.179	1.314
Woman	.007	.123	.653	-.124	.149	.883
Education	-.090	.066	.914	-.174*	.081	.841
Income	.110*	.055	1.117	.024	.067	1.024
White Collar	.130	.154	1.139	.010	.187	1.010
Age	-.482**	.054	.617	-.489**	.066	.613
Constant	.680*	.314	1.974	-10.396**	.864	
Nagelkerke R ²	.117			.481		
χ ²	111.131**			535.161*		
Degrees of Freedom	7			10		
N	1218			1218		

Source: Hong Kong subset of 2015 Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators survey.

Note: Equations for pro-emigration attitudes estimated with bivariate Logit. All indicators are dummy variables except for Freedom Score (range = 16 to 99), Government Dissatisfaction (1 to 4), Hong Kong Worse (1 to 5), Education (1 to 5), Income (1 to 5), and Age (1 to 5). *p<.05; **p<.01.

.481, $p < .01$),⁵¹ and believing that life in Hong Kong is becoming worse ($b = .981$, $p < .01$) increased the interviewees' desire to leave Hong Kong. Older respondents, on the other hand, appeared less eager than younger ones to leave the SAR ($b = -.489$, $p < .01$). Although the second model in table 2 treats the three forms of support for democracy as separate variables, in a parallel analysis, the study combined the three regressors into a single index⁵² and obtained similarly powerful and statistically significant regression results ($b = .882$, $p < .01$, range = 5.15 to 13.95, $\text{Exp}(B) = 2.415$).

Because Logit is not a linear model, it is more difficult to interpret. However, let us imagine a relatively typical Hong Kong resident who is a thirty-five-year-old, blue-collar, Buddhist male with a high school diploma, whose income is at the eighteenth percentile and has no family living abroad. If he scores at the minimum observed level on the three democracy indicators (i.e., Freedom Score, Government Dissatisfaction, and Hong Kong Worse), he would have a probability of wanting to go abroad of 0.02 percent. If this individual demonstrated the maximum possible support for democracy, however, he would have a 99.04 percent chance of intending to emigrate. Obviously, prodemocracy attitudes have a huge effect on the desire to abandon Hong Kong.

World Bank, "Data Bank: World Development Indicators" (2019), <https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=> (accessed August 15, 2019), and Republic of China (Taiwan), "Latest Indicators" (2019), <https://eng.stat.gov.tw/point.asp?index=1> (accessed August 15, 2019). Coding was similar to that for Freedom Score, except that "Europe" = European Union, "Western Europe" = European Union, "North Europe" = Euro area + Sweden + Norway + UK, and "Asia" = East Asia and Pacific. In the resulting regression, the estimates for Freedom Score remained virtually unchanged ($b = .103$, $p < .001$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.109$), as did those for the two other democracy-related independent variables ($b = .496$, $p < .001$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.643$ for Government Dissatisfaction; $b = .972$, $p < .001$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 2.644$ for Hong Kong Worse). Economic Score itself achieved statistical significance ($b = -.026$, $p < .001$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .975$), but its substantive effect appears to be at least slightly less than that for even the least influential democracy-related regressor, and the negatively signed coefficient indicates that the desire to live in a particularly affluent environment *reduces* one's likelihood of wanting to leave Hong Kong.

⁵¹ In additional analysis exploring why respondents opted to emigrate to a particular country, we re-estimated the second model in table 1 but substituted as the Y a dummy variable for preference for Taiwan only. The most notable result was that disapproval of the Hong Kong government doubled ($b = .988$, $p < .001$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 2.685$). Income, occupation, and education all failed to reach statistical significance. As one of our anonymous reviewers hypothesized, "more democratic but less wealthy" Taiwan is "particularly attractive to strong democrats."

⁵² To ensure that each of the three components made a similarly sized contribution to the index, Freedom Score was divided by 20 to obtain a new variable that ranged roughly from 1 to 5. This revised version was then added to Government Dissatisfaction and Hong Kong Worse to create a new Democracy Support index. Because the reliability of the index is not high (Cronbach's $\alpha = .577$; inter-item correlations from .175 to .545), however, we chose not to report the full regression results in table 1 and instead relied mainly on analysis of the three separate democracy-related regressors in table 1.

A few of the control variables produced unexpected results. Although having family overseas ($b = .575, p < .01$) and being young ($b = .489, p < .01$) boosted support for emigration, higher education⁵³ seems to have reduced one's willingness to move abroad, at least as a direct effect.⁵⁴ It is possible that the institutionalized educational system in Hong Kong is not teaching liberal democratic values. Alternatively, education may be linked more to elite status than to skill acquisition and therefore produces different results than it would in the West.⁵⁵ Despite the assumption that those sharing Western values are more likely to want to exit, the direct effect of Christian identity did not reach statistical significance in the second model from table 2. Since being Christian has a significant (indirect) influence in the first model of table 2 (which does not include the political variables), however, religious affiliation seems to act primarily via attitudes toward liberal democracy and perceptions of Hong Kong's decline. Presumably, respondents first become Christians, next adopt religiously rooted, profreedom and prodemocratic views, and finally decide to leave communist-ruled Hong Kong.

Discussion

The most significant empirical finding from the regression analysis is that support for democracy has become by far the single most important motivator of brain drain and general emigration from Hong Kong. Although family abroad, education, and age⁵⁶ also produced statistically significant effects, none of the other substantive or control variables reaches this level. In Hirschman's terms, the results for the three indicators of support for democracy confirm

⁵³ A parallel model also estimated an interaction term between education and age, which was added to the second regression model in table 1. This interaction term, age, and education all achieved statistical significance ($b = .136$ and $p = .016$ for interaction; $b = -.908$ and $p < .0005$ for age; $b = -.549$ and $p = .002$ for education). Taken as a whole, these results may suggest that the education system under the British colonial government was more likely to teach democratic values than the present Beijing-dictated program that young Hong Kongers have experienced.

⁵⁴ If one reruns the regression from the second model in table 1 without any of the three democracy-related regressors, however (see first model in table 1), the effect of education still does not achieve statistical significance at normally accepted levels ($b = -.090, p = .170$).

⁵⁵ Further experimentation with the education variable suggests that it is more-or-less politically inert. When we estimated an ordinary least-squares regression of the effect of all of the regressors in the first model of table 1 on Government Dissatisfaction (a 4-point scale), greater education did not achieve statistical significance ($p = .186$), but age did ($b = -.083, p < .001$). A parallel regression of the influence of the same Xs on Hong Kong Worse resulted in similar statistics ($p = .886$ for education; $b = -.092, p < .001$ for age). These equations therefore indicate that youth is more responsible than higher education in motivating antigovernment protests in Hong Kong.

⁵⁶ To test the assumption of linearity for the age variable, we included a squared version of this regressor as well as the original age term in a regression parallel in the second model in table 1. Neither age-related variable achieved statistical significance, however ($b = -.065$ and $p = .821$ for age; $b = -.077$ and $p = .135$ for age²).

the exit version of his theory; Hong Kongers who are especially committed to democratic norms are the most likely to want to leave authoritarian Hong Kong, and most residents seem to believe that exit is the best response to the SAR's political problems. Since the statistical relation between support for democracy and willingness to emigrate is positive and strongly significant statistically instead of negatively correlated or nonsignificant, it seems that most respondents have not adopted the alternative strategies of "voice" or "loyalty." The analysis suggests that many, if not most, democracy advocates have given up on persuading Beijing to implement liberal democratic reforms and have become increasingly pessimistic about the long-term quality of life in Hong Kong. Abandoning the SAR appears to be the only viable option.⁵⁷

In contrast to earlier studies on the effects of affluence and occupation on brain drain from Hong Kong over the last five decades,⁵⁸ this study finds that neither variable consistently produces pro-emigration sentiments. One can hypothesize that this difference stems from the divergent fears of affluent Hong Kongers before 1997 as opposed to now. When the Beijing government was still arguably socialist, rich Hong Kongers may have feared losing their wealth to Mao-style expropriation. But now that the CCP is only too happy to protect capital from the demands of workers, a typical Hong Kong executive seemingly has little to fear from a Beijing takeover but might remain very apprehensive about true democracy in the SAR. According to the dean of the law school at Tsinghua University in Beijing and the Chinese central government's Hong Kong adviser, Wang Zhenmin,

Democracy is a political matter; it is also an economic matter. A political system by its nature reflects and embodies the economic structure of said particular place. Universal suffrage means the redistribution of economic interests among society's members. We have to take care of every class: every group of people, every person, rich or poor. No one should be ignored. No one should be left behind, especially those whose slice of pie will be shared by others upon the implementation of universal suffrage.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ To explore whether Hong Kongers might continue to voice opposition to the government, even though they would prefer or are planning to emigrate (i.e., "voice" and "exit"), we attempted to interpret our dataset's five items on political participation. One battery of four questions asked about such actions as "participating in a boycott" or "contacting a government official." Another inquiry covered whether an individual had voted recently. The apparently fear-induced, very high levels of nonresponse (above 80 percent) to all such items precluded valid analysis, however. Only a very small percentage of the respondents (between 3 and 10 percent) acknowledged any political participation at all.

⁵⁸ Ronald Skeldon, "Emigration and the Future of Hong Kong," *Pacific Affairs* 63, no. 4 (1990): 500-523.

⁵⁹ Wang Zhenmin, "Beijing Experts' View: The White Paper and Elections in Hong Kong," Lunch Club, The Foreign Correspondents' Club (August 28, 2014), Hong Kong, <http://www.fchhk.org/>

The rich today may very well be rational in their assumption that Beijing will protect their assets through government action. For example, in his prepared remarks, Wang again explains Beijing's refusal to allow unrestricted access to the chief executive post: "[Rich residents'] slice of pie will be shared by others through universal suffrage. So we have to take full consideration of their concerns. That's why we require balanced participation. We require nominating committees and functional constituencies."

For many opponents of the Hong Kong government, of course, democracy is indeed both a political and economic concern. Yet, Hong Kong's advocates of liberal democracy disagree vehemently with Wang Zhenmin. For the leaders of the Umbrella Movement, democracy means inherently equal political power for each individual, not domination of the government by a small clique of Beijing-friendly politicians. For the protesters, democracy also assumes at least equal opportunities for economic advancement by all citizens of Hong Kong, not a stranglehold by the superrich over virtually all the territory's financial resources.

For both political and economic reasons, therefore, young Hong Kongers seem to be considering emigration to liberal democracies. Politically, democracies are the type of government least likely to oppress or murder its own citizens.⁶⁰ Economically, many scholars believe that liberal governments also are best able to foster material prosperity and true well-being.⁶¹ So, while political freedom might be at the forefront of many migrants' minds, they are hardly consigning themselves to a life of poverty by escaping the city with the highest cost of living in the world.⁶² They seem to believe that they can find both political liberty and a reasonably comfortable existence abroad.

In the end, this case study illustrates the downside of operating an authoritarian regime. Hong Kong's loss of human capital is its democratic neighbors' gain. If President Xi continues along his path of risking damage to the economy in exchange for maintaining political power,⁶³ the Australian, Taiwanese, and Canadian immigration authorities may find themselves busy indeed.

event/club-lunch-beijing-experts-view-the-white-paper-and-elections-in-hong-kong/ (accessed August 22, 2017).

⁶⁰ R. J. Rummel, *Death by Government: Genocide and Mass Murder since 1900* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2018).

⁶¹ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 2013).

⁶² Mercer, "Cost of City Rankings" (2019), <https://mobilityexchange.mercer.com/Insights/cost-of-living-rankings> (accessed August 16, 2019).

⁶³ Gwynn Guilford, "Xi Jinping's Latest Power Grab Is Bad News for China's Economy," *Quartz* (March 1, 2018), <https://qz.com/1217559/> (accessed November 18, 2018).