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**THE DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS OF
POLITICAL DISTRUST AND ACTION IN HONG
KONG**

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF A BACHELOR'S OF ARTS
DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, Hong Kong has seen massive encroachment from Mainland China, resulting in Hong Kong's own legislature introducing policy aimed at supporting Mainland Chinese authority in Hong Kong. As a result, Hong Kong has seen two large scale acts of political dissent, The Umbrella Movement/Occupy Central Movement in 2014, and the protests in response to an Extradition Bill in 2019. These events highlight that Hong Kong's political landscape is shifting, and shifting fast. This study employs data provided by the World Values Survey to measure how measures of trust in state institutions and willingness to take political action have changed over the years, and along what demographic lines. Quantitative analysis shows that trust in state institutions has degraded over the last decade and a half, especially amongst younger, university-educated citizens with low prospects for upward mobility. Findings also show the same people who distrust the state are more likely to take confrontational political action, especially those within this group who identify as male. These findings provide a good indication of the trajectory of Hong Kong's political landscape and raise concerns for China's long term re-integration plans for Hong Kong.

Keywords: Political trust, political action, Hong Kong, Mainland China, legitimacy, Umbrella Movement

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong has for a number of decades now flown its flag under the title of Special Administrative Region (SAR). Currently, Hong Kong sits squarely between its past as a former British colony, and its future as a city soon to be fully re-integrated into China under the rule of the CCP. Hong Kong's time under colonial rule and its subsequent short time thus far as an autonomous region has led its cultural development on a path that greatly differs from that of the mainland. This has produced a cultural and political identity that some have said to be incompatible with the trajectory that China is currently heading on, making the CCP's early moves towards reintegration quite unpopular amongst certain portions of the local Hong Kong population (Chan, 2015). How China's moves to incorporate a national identity in Hong Kong has been received by the general public brings into focus contentious identity politics that have been manifesting itself ever since the handover in 1997. Who exactly Hong Kong people are has been a complex and often difficult question to answer, as Hong Kong people both wrestle with escaping its colonial legacy, contend with how to handle new-found autonomy, all in the shadow of an eventual reintegration with China. These factors have led to a set of unique circumstances that has formed the underlying tension in how Hong Kong people choose to define themselves (Fung, 2017).

In recent years, this underlying tension has bubbled to the surface, resulting in numerous large scale protests. The "Umbrella Revolution" of 2014 saw hundreds of thousands of students and members of the general public take to the streets to protest new electoral reforms aimed at restricting electoral candidates to those cleared by the Communist Party. The 2014 movement was the first time in post-colonial history that Hong Kong experienced such large scale political dissent, and an equally brutal police response as law enforcement attempted to quell protesters with tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets. The move by the CCP was seen by the general

public as a violation of Hong Kong autonomy under the “One Country, Two Systems” rule that had until then been relatively preserved. Since then, the central government has been even more aggressive in introducing policy aimed at curbing political dissent in Hong Kong, most likely as it prepares for the year 2047 when Hong Kong is set to be fully incorporated into the mainland. Discontent amongst the general public once again reached a boiling point when the central government introduced an extradition law that would allow Hong Kong citizens to be tried in Mainland courts. The resulting protest, starting in 2019 and extending into 2020 saw, yet again, more police brutality in response to violent protests. These protests are merely milestones that track an underlying growing separation between identifying as a “Hong Konger” and identifying as Chinese. While this political differentiation has existed long before Hong Kong obtained its SAR status, according to a survey conducted by the University of Hong Kong, the last decade has seen a dramatic increase in people wishing to make the distinction (*Categorical Ethnic Identity Poll, 2019*). More so now than ever, the cultural contention between Hong Kong and the mainland has caused a major shift in the relationship between the local Hong Kong government and its people, due to the growing influence and control that the central government has over Hong Kong’s leadership. The 2014 and 2019 protests, while ideologically against mainland encroachment, were mainly acts aimed at voicing discontent and dissatisfaction with the local government, who many citizens view as having failed to create an equitable and fair economic and political system and uphold the constitution set in place during the first few years of Hong Kong’s post-colonial birth.

This paper seeks to understand and examine how the relationship between the Hong Kong authority and the people has changed over recent years by investigating the demographic indicators of political distrust and political dissent. By determining of meaningful relationships

exist between political trust and action, and certain demographics of the Hong Kong population, this paper strives to achieve a more complete understanding of how the political landscape of Hong Kong has changed, and how it may continue to change in the years to come. The trajectory of these relationships will be of the utmost importance in understanding and predicting how the people of Hong Kong will react to growing encroachment from China in the near future, and the as well as how effective China's attempts at cooptation may be in the years to come.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing Legitimacy and Political Trust

While there is no singular consensus on the exact definition of “political trust”, Wong (2009) puts forward a definition that is built upon existing definitions. Stokes (Stokes, 1962) and Miller (Miller, 1974) both similarly posit that political trust should be defined as peoples’ “normative or value expectations towards the ruling administration” (Wong, 2009). On the other hand, Gamson (Gamson, 1968) defined trust as a situation in which authorities have not been questioned and in which people feel as though their interests are looked after. Similarly, Hetherington (Hetherington, 2005), sees political trust as the public’s assessment of the actions of the ruling administration are consistent with their expectations. These only begin to scratch the surface of the ever-growing literature surrounding political trust, but in any case, Wong determines trust to be a kind of endorsement from the people, developed through their expectations of the present and future, and experiences of the past. Wong operationalizes this definition to cover all the institutions that represent the ruling authority, including legislature and law enforcement. In addition, those who have high levels of trust are the foundation of political support and tolerance. If political trust is absent, this is an indication that people may withdraw their support and tolerance, and seek to oppose the ruling authority in order to protect their own rights and interests (Gamson, 1968). If the ruling authority fails to garner enough trust, this inevitably leads to a loss of legitimacy of any given ruling political system (Hetherington, 1998). For the purposes of this paper, Wong’s operational definition of political trust will serve as the foundation for defining trust.

Determinants of Legitimacy and Trust in Government

In a comparison of Hong Kong and Taiwan on the determinants of political trust, Wong found that the conditions of governmental performance, life satisfaction and cultural orientation only had moderate effects on people's trust in the government (Wong, 2009). However, Wong conducted his study on the condition that democratic rights and interests were preserved, and this study was conducted in 2009. Since then, the Hong Kong political landscape has shifted immensely, having faced the two largest scale strikes in Hong Kong history in the period since then – these protests were chiefly concerned with the erosion of democratic and fair judicial processes. Because of this, I find Wong's findings to be outdated and in need of re-evaluation given current political contexts.

Jeff Loo (Chi Loo, 2018) provide additional insight regarding legitimacy, in the context of Hong Kong's political decay, legitimacy crisis and reverse democratization. Loo puts forward a belief that the "Localists" in Hong Kong believe Hong Kong to be experiencing a reversal of democratic institutions due to the "emergence of political decay and enduring legitimacy crisis" – (Chi Loo, 2018). He describes "political decay" as a failure of political institutions and refer to Huntington (Huntington, 1968) in describing the role of institutions as critical in maintaining political order. Huntington (Huntington, 1968) asserted that political decay increases when political institutions are weak, being affected by things such as corruption, military coups, albeit in developing countries. In developed countries, Huntington (Huntington, 1968) iterates that decay comes about when the leading administrative authority fails to absorb the demands of the polity. Chi Loo links these theoretical discussions of political decay and legitimacy crisis to de-democratization or reverse democratization. In regards to China and its relationship to Hong Kong, Nathan (Nathan, 2015) argues that China's influence and presence in the global arena is a direct factor leading to reverse democratization and may even assists regimes in transitioning

into authoritarian rule, something that is highly applicable to Hong Kong as it prepares to be re-absorbed back into Chinese rule. This is also in light of, as Wong points out, efforts made by the Chinese central government in using cooptation strategies by “actively and selectively recruiting and appointing Hong Kong citizens to serves as local “delegates” and “advisors” under various titles” (Wong, 1997, p.103) – a strategy that China has been implemented since 1984, years before the handover (Wong, 1997). With the approaching 2047 deadline, China has begun preparing Hong Kong to transition away from its own political system and into China’s existing political structure.

Determinants of Legitimacy and Trust in Police

Focus groups conducted by Michael Adorjan and Maggy Lee (Adorjan, 2016) aimed at investigating the factors that led the Hong Kong public to trust in the police. Adorjan and Lee in their investigation find a need to go beyond singular, one-dimensional measures for evaluating the success of the police, and call for a multi-dimensional approach that goes beyond single-indicator measures of satisfaction such as low-crime rates. Scholars have pointed out certain conceptual distinctions between the police as crime-fighters and the police as public-order authorities (Adorjan, 2016). Adorjan and Lee find that younger, lower-income people bear the brunt of “stop and search” policing and asserts the public’s understanding and opinions of the police go beyond simply stopping crime, but extends to the capacity at which people view the police to be enforcing a specific government agenda or policy. People in Hong Kong care about “fairness and respectfulness” as Adorjan and Lee put it, rather than simple crime rates as a single metric for police success. A number of scholars also point out that “trust in the police cannot be examined separately from trust in the government” (Goldsmith, 2005, p.466). Adorjan and Lee emphasize the need to consider the structural relations between the police and the state, given

that, according to them, police are “the state made flesh” – (Adorjan, 2016) Adorjan and Lee also emphasize this in the context of changing attitudes in the public towards the police that increasingly relate the police with state efforts to maintain order and suppress dissent. This paper will advance this understanding through a quantitative analysis of the relation between trust in government and trust in police by investigating the overlapping demographic determinants of each in an attempt to analyze how closely one’s level of trust in one institution relates to one’s trust in the other.

Determinants of Protests

Shek (Shek, 2020) posits that the protests that occurred in 2019 were a product of several pre-existing “fuels” that helps light the fire that were the 2019-2020 protests. Among these fuels were distrust in the central government, weak identification with a national identity, dissatisfaction with the political system in Hong Kong, as well as economic strains. In regards to the last two strains, Shek (Shek, 2020) asserts that the current citizens in Hong Kong are, in short, dissatisfied with the current political system that they view to favor wealthier individuals and create economic and social inequality that is related to the fourth fuel: economic strains. Shek (Shek, 2020) believes that a heavy emphasis has been placed on Hong Kong youth to strive for academic excellence, which Shek believes to be fuel no.6 – a morbid emphasis in academic excellence which impairs the development of personal well-being, and leads to a lack of perceived authenticity in ones’ life. Many young people are not reaping the benefits of education that they were told would lead to a prosperous life, with one in four adolescents growing up in poor households (Shek, 2020). Shek (Shek, 2020) also mentions a lack of adequate and affordable housing to be a point of contention for Hong Kong youth, who overall feel disenfranchised by their lack of economic and quality life prospects (fuel no. 5). This paper seeks

to add to this understanding by investigating how age, education, and income are quantifiably linked to one's distrust in government institutions and one's willingness to strike, as Shek suggests they are.

Adding to this, Dodson (Dodson, 2015) finds that there is also a gender divide in the types of protest people engage in. Specifically, Dodson, in his findings, puts forward the idea that while men and women show similar levels of political activism, women are far more likely to engage in "non-confrontational" activities, whilst men are more likely to engage in forms of activism that involve conflict and violence. Dodson states that these results suggest gender ideology plays a crucial role in creating conditions that foster such behavior (Dodson, 2015). This paper will seek to investigate the extent to which this is true or not true for Hong Kong.

By using a quantitative approach, this paper will seek to build off of existing literature by investigating to what extent trust in the police and the government have changed over the last decade and a half, give or take. This paper will also investigate the extent to which, as Shek, Loo, and Adorjan and Lee point out, educated and economically stagnant youth are at the center of this political distrust and dissent, as well as if gender plays a role in confrontational political action (Dodson, 2015). In addition, this paper will add to existing literature by incorporating a time series component to investigate how these attitudes and relationships have changed over time, as well as to what extent these attitudes translate to tangible political action. As Hong Kong has undoubtedly seen a major shift in political discourse over the last twenty or so years, it is valuable to examine exactly how these relationships have developed over time, and how they might develop into the future.

CHAPTER III: DATA & METHODOLOGY

Data

Data for this study will come from the World Values Survey conducted in Hong Kong. Data from the world values survey is available from the past three “waves” - Wave 5 (World Values Survey: Round 5), conducted in 2005, Wave 6 (World Values Survey: Round 6) conducted in 2014, and Wave 7 (World Values Survey: Round 7), conducted in 2018. Data from these surveys encompasses a wide range of topics, including demographic data on people’s age, sex, education, etc., as well as people’s social and political preferences such as political party alignment, views on social issues such as immigration, opinions on LGBTQ issues, race issues, and others. The World Values Survey is in their words “the largest non-commercial, cross-national, time series investigation of human beliefs and values ever executed” and “seeks to help scientists and policy makers understand the changes in the beliefs, values, motivations of people throughout the world.” (*World Values Survey Association*)

The World Values Survey uses a common questionnaire that is implemented fully and faithfully in all countries and is aggregated into one “wave”. Omission of no more than 12 questions for any given country is allowed. A strict minimum sample size of 1200 per country is required and must be representative of all people aged 18 and older, regardless of nationality, citizenship or language. The main method of sampling for this survey is face-to-face interviews at respondents’ place of residence and can be recorded by both paper questionnaires or electronically through CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview). This is all to achieve a nationally representative sample of the country in question. No country can be included in any given wave before full documentation and sampling is completed, and the minimum requirements for sampling and consistency with the completed methodological questionnaire are

met. Non-responses are expected to be kept to a minimum. To do this, the WVS demands the following steps are taken (*World Values Survey Association*):

- No replacements allowed in countries using a full probability design sampling.
- In countries that utilize quota sampling, every effort should be made to interview the first contact.
- In all cases, a full report of non-responses is required.

Dependent Variables

The measuring of political attitudes can include an infinite variety of measures that may indicate how attitudes shift. Specifically to Hong Kong, however, the main contention that is cited in existing literature refers to how the general population views and interacts with governmental institutions that carry out the will of the central government in China. This relationship was seen in the 2014 protests, where citizens expressed discontent with reforms that allowed Beijing to first vet candidates for Hong Kong elections. In 2019, citizens yet again responded with mass political dissent in response to a new extradition law that allowed Beijing to try Hong Kong citizens in mainland courts. These two events both sparked protest and were met with an equally strong police response. In reflecting on these events, there are three primary actors involved: the government who implemented these unpopular policies, the police that enforce these policies, and protesters that protest these policies. As the current literature states, an investigation of political trust mustn't separate trust in government from trust in police (Goldsmith, 2005), by looking at both, this paper seeks to understand if this relationship holds up in the case of Hong Kong. It is important to not only use variables that measure skepticism towards the police and government, but to also include a measure of political action to see how any potential skeptical attitudes manifest them in tangible political action, as the current body of literature puts forth

political action as a direct result of de-democratization and political decay (Chi Loo, 2018).

Thus, this paper will investigate the following three dependent variables:

1. Confidence in the Police
2. Confidence in the Government
3. Political Action: Joining Strikes

Both the “Trust in Police” and “Trust in Government” variables gave possible answers within a range of 1-4 using the following scale in reference to how much one holds trust for the institution in question:

1. None at all
2. Not very much
3. Quite a lot
4. A great deal

The variable “Political Action: Joining Strikes” measured one’s likelihood of joining in a strike/protest by using the following scale:

1. Have done
2. Might do
3. Would never do

Independent Variables

Dependent variables above were weighed against the following variables found in Table 1

TABLE 1
Definitions of Independent Variables

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Age	Age of respondent in years, consolidated into the following cohorts: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. up to 292. 30-493. 50 and up
Male	1 if respondent is male, otherwise 0
Education (ISCED 2011)	Respondents level of education using the following breakdown: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Early childhood education (ISCED 0)/ no education2. Primary education (ISCED 1)3. Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)4. Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)5. Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4)6. Short-cycle tertiary education (ISCED 5)7. Bachelor or equivalent (ISCED 6)8. Master or equivalent (ISCED 7)9. Doctoral or equivalent (ISCED 8)10. Other
Scales of income	Household income measured using the following ascending scale: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lower step2. Second step3. Third step4. Fourth step5. Fifth step6. Sixth step7. Seventh step8. Eighth step9. Ninth step10. Tenth step11. Don't know12. No answer

Notes: Education is measured using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

Methodology

This study will first look at frequency distributions of the three independent variables in order to gain a general understanding of how (if at all) patterns for trust in government and police, as well as political action have changed over time.

This study will then employ linear regression analysis in order to compare each dependent variable against the selected independent variables. This was done in order to see whether or not, all other things being equal, meaningful relationships existed between these variables in order to highlight potential determinants of political dissenting attitudes and political action. In doing so, this paper seeks to determine the indicators of political distrust, as well as political action, and also see to what extent the presence of political distrust is an indicator of political action.

Limitations

It is important to note that a limitation of the “Political Action: Joining Strikes” variable is that data for it is only available for Wave 6 (2014) and Wave 7 (2018) and is not available for Wave 5 (2005). That being said, this variable was still worth including due to the fact that its relationships to our independent variables is still of the utmost importance in deepening our understanding of the determinants of political attitudes.

In addressing broader limitations of this dataset, it is important to note that 2018 is the latest data that is available for the WVS. With Hong Kong’s most recent protest making headway in 2019. Findings made on the progression of our variables is therefore limited to the social and political conditions leading right up to the 2019 protest, but do not necessarily reflect Hong Kong’s current political climate, but are indicative of potential trends of political tension that helped spark the 2019 protests.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Frequency Distribution

TABLE 2
Confidence in Police (%), Frequency Distribution

<i>Amount of Confidence</i>	<i>2005 (n=1240)</i>	<i>2014 (n=1000)</i>	<i>2018 (n= 2061)</i>
A great deal	11.5	25.2	14.5
Quite a lot	71.4	54.7	53.3
Not very much	16.2	17.5	26.1
None at all	0.9	2.7	6.1

From 2005 to 2018, confidence in the police has seen drastic change. People reporting they trust the police a great deal increased by 13.7% between 2005 and 2014, then decreased once again by 10.7% by 2018. People who maintained that they trust the police quite a lot decreased steadily over this total period by 18.1%, sharply decreasing from 2005 to 2014 by 17.7% and then decreased again between 2014 and 2018 by 1.4%. Negative attitudes towards the police have contrastingly been on the rise. From 2005 to 2018, people who reported having not very much confidence in the police rose from 16.2% to 26.1% -- an almost 10% increase over the 15 year period. People who report to have no confidence in the police whatsoever have also increased significantly over this period -- a 5.2% increase from 2005 to 2018.

From these frequency distributions it is apparent that confidence in the police has changed dramatically over the last decade and a half. While those who adamantly support the police have seen an overall increase over this time period, those who support the police quite a lot have dwindled, and those who hold negative views of the police have increased dramatically over this 13 year period. These findings fit with our current understanding of skepticism amongst the Hong Kong population as over the past two decades Hong Kong has experienced two major events of political dissent that has resulted in the deployment of police using riot and crowd

control tactics. These findings add to Lee’s investigation of the nuances of perceived legitimacy towards police by the Hong Kong people by confirming that trust in the police has indeed dropped even while crime rates have not risen, something that conventional metrics that determine effectiveness be defined through the police’s ability to combat crime cannot account for (Adorjan, 2016).

TABLE 3
Trust in Government (%), Frequency Distribution

<i>Amount of Confidence</i>	<i>2005 (n= 1215)</i>	<i>2014 (n=995)</i>	<i>2018 (n=2067)</i>
A great deal	5.3	17.5	11.8
Quite a lot	51.3	42.2	43.4
Not very much	39.8	32.1	33.4
None at all	3.6	8.3	11.4

People’s trust in the government has also changed significantly over this 13 year period, albeit not in the same way to people’s attitudes towards the police. People who report a great deal of confidence in the government increased from 2005 to 2014 by a margin of 12.2%, after which there was a decrease of 5.7% from 2014 to 2018. People who reported quite a lot of confidence in the police has seen an overall decrease of 7.9%, going from 51.3% to 42.2% and increasing slightly again to 43.4 percent in 2005, 2014, and 2018 respectively. In the category of not trusting the government very much, there has surprisingly been a decrease of respondents in this category of 6.4% over the 13 year period. While there has been a decrease in this category, there has been an increase of 7.8% for people who don’t trust the government at all. These findings show that at least 44.8% of respondents hold some level of distrust towards the government. This is in line with existing literature that suggests levels of distrust are high due to a lack of communication and transparency between the government and the people on matters of policy, as well as a lack of leadership, accountability and systems to sustain meaningful dialogue with

the public. These findings also are consistent with existing literature that connects wavering legitimacy to de-democratization (Wong, 2009), however adds nuance to this understanding, showing that while negative attitudes towards the government have intensified, so have positive attitudes in turn.

TABLE 4
Political Action: Joining Strikes (%), Frequency Distribution

<i>Amount of Confidence</i>	<i>2005 (n= 0)</i>	<i>2014 (n= 996)</i>	<i>2018 (n= 2065)</i>
Have done	n/a	2.9	3.1
Might do	n/a	36.7	38.1
Would never do	n/a	60.3	58.8

From 2014 to 2018, we see slight changes in people’s willingness to join strikes. Those who would say they would never protest decreases from 60.3% to 58.8% -- a 1.5% decrease over this time period. Those who said they might protest increased in this time period by a similar margin of 1.4%, while those who say they have joined strikes increased by only 0.2%. While there isn’t as dramatic a change as seen in the distributions of previous dependent variables, this data is limited by the lack of data for this variable in 2005, where a potentially large change in these frequencies may have occurred, although without data no definitive statements can be made.

When comparing variables some interesting trends are immediately visible. Overall negative opinions of police and government (responses for not very much and none at all combined) of police have nearly doubled from 2005 to 2018, most likely as a result of increased authoritative behavior from the police over this time period. Negative opinions of government when aggregated in the same way show only around a 1.5% increase over the same period.

However, the distribution of opinions on government has become more extreme, with extremely positive opinions on government (Goldsmith, 2005) those who responded with “a great deal”) rising 6.5% over this period as well as extremely negative opinions on government (those who responded with “none at all”) rising nearly 8% over the same period. Those with more mild negative or positive opinions have decreased as a result, illustrating a polarization amongst the population on the “Trust in Government” variable. This suggests that while perhaps anti-China sentiment has risen, as has pro-China sentiment as China has made efforts to implement pro-Chinese individuals into key Hong Kong legislative positions, as well as social elite (Wong, 1997). There is a less pronounced pattern of polarization for the “Trust in Police” variable, with those who have extreme positive opinions rising 3%, however overall those with overall negative opinions of the police have carved out a larger stake hold over time, with mild positive opinions of the police decreased by almost 20% over this period. While these attitudes have seen a dramatic shift over time, this has not resulted in a similarly dramatic increase in those willing to or having participated in strikes, although once again, data for this variable is limited and therefor a fuller picture cannot be painted, as data from 2005 as well as data from post-2019 protest is not present here. While limited by the availability of data, these findings supplement an existing understanding that the 2014 protests were the largest in Hong Kong’s history (Chan, 2015) until the events of 2019 which surpassed the 2014 protest in terms of duration and intensity (Arranz, 2019), with actual protests numbers for either event widely varying based on source. Sources, however, largely name the 2019 protests as larger than in 2014, which is supported by our findings here. Important to note is most recent data for the WVS is only from 2018, while the most recent protests happened in 2019 and 2020. Therefore, these numbers are not necessarily reflective of post-2019 Hong Kong, but are indicative of the social and political

conditions that lead up to such a wide-scale protest. From these findings we are still able to analyze trends of how attitudes have changed over time, with conventional wisdom understanding the 2019 protests to be extension of the protests that occurred in 2014, albeit with heightened violence, greater duration, and potentially larger numbers. The results found here are still consistent with this conventional understanding of the relationship between the protests that occurred in 2014 and the protests that occurred in 2019.

Linear Regression Analysis

TABLE 5
Confidence in Police, Linear Regression

	2005 (N=1240)	2014 (N=1000)	2018 (N=2061)
Age	-0.001 (0.001)	0.005** (0.002)	0.006** (0.001)
Male	-0.055 (0.034)	-0.010 (0.047)	0.038 (0.033)
Education	0.015 (0.011)	-0.040** (0.012)	-0.080** (0.011)
Income	-0.015 (0.009)	0.012 (0.013)	0.026** (0.010)
Constant	2.999** (0.107)	3.003** (0.138)	2.597** (0.088)
R-Squared	0.008	0.038	0.079

*Notes: Standard error in parenthesis. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$*

Table 5 shows that in 2005, no meaningful relationships existed between confidence in the police and any of our demographic determinants. It is only in 2014 when patterns start emerging. By 2014, age becomes a significant indicator, with a positive relationship indicating that the younger one is, the more likely they are to hold distrustful opinions on the police at a 99% confidence level in both 2014 and onto 2018 where this relationship becomes stronger still. Being male or female in this case doesn't make one more or less likely to have negative opinions on the police – this is true for all waves. Education becomes meaningful in 2014 and becomes even more significant in 2018, showing that the more educated one is, the more likely they are to have negative opinions of the police – this is again at the 99% confidence level for both 2014 and 7. Income in 2005 and 2014 doesn't appear to have significance, showing that at least until 2014,

one's income level had no bearing on one's opinions of the police. This, however, changes in 2018, where income is shown to have a strong positive relationship with opinions on police. This means that the more economically disadvantaged one is, the more likely they are to hold distrust for the police.

As suggested by Adorjan and Lee (Adorjan, 2016), these findings support the notion that age is a significant factor in trust towards the police, as youth are more likely to be the victims of stop and search public policing (Adorjan, 2016). These findings also confirm Adorjan and Lee's findings that being male or female have no significance towards these attitudes. Consistent with the time period of Adorjan and Lee's findings, income had no discernable connection the trust levels, however does become significant in 2018. With this being said, Adorjan and Lee found that low levels of satisfaction with the police were linked to broader anxieties about Hong Kong's future and lack of trust in mainland authorities. This specific points supports these findings related to income when taking into account Shek's later findings that suggest the fuels of the 2019-2020 protests largely concerned economic strains and lack of upward mobility, in addition to distrust in the central government, highlighting the fact that between 2014 and 2018, income and economic prospects have become central to the public's anxieties about their future, especially for those who have worked hard to achieve academic success (Shek, 2020).

Table 6, confidence in the government is shown to be related to a number of variables. In 2005, age is shown to be significance at the 95% confidence level, but increased to the 1% significance level by 2014 and 2018. Similar to attitudes towards the police, the younger one is, the more likely they are to distrust the government. This relationship has only become more significant with time, but was the strongest during 2014, but still remains highly significant in

2018. Like with attitudes towards the police, being male or female has no bearing on one's likelihood to distrust the government.

TABLE 6
Confidence in Government, Linear Regression

	<i>2005 (N=1215)</i>	<i>2014 (N=995)</i>	<i>2018 (N=2067)</i>
Age	0.003* (0.002)	0.013** (0.002)	0.008** (0.001)
Male	0.044 (0.040)	-0.072 (0.052)	-0.039 (0.036)
Education	0.025* (0.013)	-0.053** (0.014)	-0.068** (0.012)
Income	-0.019 (0.010)	0.031* (0.014)	0.025* (0.011)
Constant	2.366** (0.125)	2.325** (0.154)	2.289** (0.096)
R-Squared	0.011	0.112	0.076

*Notes: Standard error in parenthesis. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$*

Education was a significant factor in all three waves, however in 2005, distrust in the police is correlated with lower education at a 95% confidence level whereas in 2014 and 2018, distrust in the police is correlated with higher education levels at the 99% confidence level. This reversal of trend from 2005 to 2014 is likely due to the dramatic shift in the orientation of Hong Kong students in their methods of protest, shifting from peaceful demonstrations with respect to the establishment to anti-establishment attitudes seen in the years leading up to and during the 2014 Umbrella Movement (Chan, 2015). Income, while not significant in 2005, becomes significant during 2014 and 2018, suggesting that similar to that of trust in police, the less wealthy one is the more likely they are to distrust the government. It is unsurprising that the relationships between our independent variables and attitudes to both the police and the government are so similar. As Goldsmith stated, trust in government cannot be examined

separately from trust in the police (Goldsmith, 2005), and the similarity in the significant of our independent variables for both these measures supports the notion that trust in government and trust in police are invariably linked.

TABLE 7
Political Action: Joining Strikes, Linear Regression

	2005 (N=1240)	2014 (N=1000)	2018 (N=2061)
Age	n/a	0.007** (0.001)	0.007** (0.001)
Male	n/a	-0.093** (0.035)	-0.089** (0.023)
Education	n/a	-0.018* (0.009)	-0.041** (0.008)
Income	n/a	0.005 (0.009)	-0.016* (0.007)
Constant	n/a	2.389** (0.103)	2.454** (0.062)
R-Squared	n/a	0.069	0.128

*Notes: Standard error in parenthesis. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$*

Table 7 shows that there is significant overlap between the determinants of distrust and the determinants of political action. Like with previous dependent variables, age is a significant indicator of one's likelihood of participating in strikes. From 2014 to 2018, the significance of age as a determinant remains exactly the same and is significant at the 99% confidence level. One's level of education is also, again a significant indicator of this, being significant at the 95% significance level in 2014 and increasing in significance to the 99% confidence level in 2018. A notable difference in the political action variable when compared to the trust variables above is that being male becomes a significant determinant of one's likelihood of participating in strikes, and is significant in both 2014 and 2018 at the 99% confidence level. This data suggests that

males are significantly more likely to participate in strikes than females are, as is in line with Dodson's findings about the gender divide in types of activism (Dodson, 2015).

Perhaps the most interesting pattern we can observe when comparing how trust levels impact political action is in relation to income. For our previous trust variables, poorer individuals are shown to be not as trusting of the police or government as wealthier individuals, especially by 2018. We see a reversal of this trend in regards to political action, with wealthier individuals being more likely to engage in strikes. While this may seem to run counter to our understanding of the relationship between distrust and civic engagements, they are still grounded in current literature. The barriers to political action become greater as the methods of political action become more physical and violent. While many poor people may hold distrustful views, it is important to consider the demographic breakdown of said economically disadvantaged. As recent statistics suggest, accounting for 60% of the increase in low-income households is the rapidly increasing number of elderly people in Hong Kong with little or no income (*Report On Elderly in Poverty, 2007*) that would not have the physical means to participate in strikes (however since elderly are also less likely to hold distrustful views it stands to reason that this subsection of Hong Kong's poor population would not be galvanized in the first place). Overall, with nearly 16% of Hong Kong's entire population below the poverty line (*Poverty in Hong Kong and Oxfam's Advocacy Work*), it is likely that many of the city's poor people who rely on meager day-to-day wages cannot afford to strike due to the ensuing loss of crucial income. To add more nuance to this, it is important to not conflate a lack of upward mobility that Shek cites (one of the causes of the protests) with simply being lower income (Shek, 2020). Rather, while education does still have a positive relationship with income (Richard, 2013), the extent to which higher education leads to greater income beyond a certain point has diminished considerably and

has led to a stagnation of real income for university graduates since the handover (Shek, 2020). The data found here therefor supports the current literature that states higher-income is associated with greater likelihood of striking, since students are at the center of these protests, while their education places them at a higher income level than those without a university degree, the extent to which they can further climb the social ladder is at the heart of their discontent (Shek, 2020).

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Trust in institutions of authority like the government and the police is an important cornerstone of political legitimacy, and a lack of trust will always be indicative of discontent and unrest amongst a country's population towards its ruling and governing bodies. Both democratic and non-democratic systems of governance must grapple with the fact that perceived legitimacy will be a hurdle that must be faced (Wong, 2009). This paper used measures of trust for the government and the police within a nationally representative sample provided by the World Values Survey in order to examine the demographic indicators of distrust in the government and the police. Furthermore, this paper utilized the political action measure of joining strikes in order to examine the overlap between the indicators of trust/distrust and the indicators of political action. The comparison of measures of trust/distrust and political action are telling of how holding attitudes of skepticism and distrust translates to taking political action within the Hong Kong context.

We compared these measures of trust and political action against common demographic characteristics of age, sex, education level, and income, in order to examine which people in Hong Kong are more likely to hold attitudes of skepticism and distrust, and furthermore, who was willing to manifest these attitudes into concrete political action. A review of the recent literature has shown that the Hong Kong public's relationship has been tested over recent decade and a half, evidenced by the occurrence of two major political strikes that resulted in major conflict between Hong Kong people and police, and by extension, the government (Shek, 2020). This paper aimed to add to the existing body of literature surrounding this topic by investigating, on a quantifiable bases, to what extent this growing tension is reflected in the data, if at all (Chi Loo, 2018). Going beyond this, this paper also aimed at examining the demographic determinants of such growing negative attitudes by examining levels of distrust in the police and

government against variables such as age, sex, education, and income levels, as current literature suggests that university students/recent graduates with low levels of upward mobility are at the heart of political unrest in Hong Kong (Shek, 2020).

With regard to trust, we found that the Hong Kong people have grown significantly in their distrust towards the police. Simple distribution frequencies from the last three waves of the World Values Survey shows that distrust in the police has almost doubled from 17% in 2005 to over 30% in 2020. Within this, somewhat negative attitudes (not very much trust) have increased by a matter of 10% over the last 15 years, while extremely negative attitudes (no trust at all) have increased six fold, from slightly under 1% in 2005 to over 6% in 2020. Conversely, those who hold extremely positive views of the police have increased slightly as well – 3% to be precise – and is reflective of the portion of the population that is empathetic to the police and current status quo (Wong, 1997).

Attitudes towards the government in the last 13 years have not shifted as extremely, those who hold overall negative or overall positive views of the government hold the same statistical share hold now as they did in the past. However, what is reflected in our findings is an increased polarization of these beliefs at either end. Those who hold extremely positive opinions of the government have increased by a similar and significant margin as those who now hold extremely negative views of the government. This illustrates a pattern that highlights the increasing tension within the public, with moderate opinions on either ends lowering as extreme trust and distrust rise. Findings from these frequency distributions help confirm Loo's findings that there is an increasing perception of reverse democratization and political decay that has resulted in increasing distrust in these institutions (Chi Loo, 2018), as well as Adorjan and Lee's findings that perceptions of police and government success are not limited to an ability to keep crime

rates low but also a result of perceptions of fairness and respectfulness, which is supported by this pattern of increasing distrust and polarization even when overall crime has remained relatively the same over this period of time (Adorjan, 2016).

Frequency distributions for our political action variable show only a slight increase in those who might or already have taken political action. There is, however a limitation to this variable as data from 2005 is not available. It is possible that 2014, which marked the year of the Umbrella Movement, marked a new baseline for those willing to join strikes, with the majority of change happening between 2005 and 2014, however no conclusions on this can be drawn at this moment due to the limitations mentioned above.

After determining that significant change to our trust variables had occurred over the time scope this paper is investigating, this study also ventured to determine if relationships existed between the growing distrust and any particular social demographics, i.e. whether these changes were generalizable to the public as a whole, or if certain subsections of the population were responsible for these changes.

We found that trust in government and trust in the police had changed in relation to several demographic determinants. To start, age was found to be a highly significant determinant for one's level of trust in the government, as young people were found to be substantially more likely to hold distrustful views of both the government and the police, while older people tended to be more likely to trust the police and is consistent with findings from both Lee and Loo (Adorjan, 2015)(Chi Loo, 2018). Education was also just as significant as age, with data suggestion to a high degree of significance that the more educated one is, the more likely one will hold negative opinions on both police and government institutions, and is consistent with Shek's findings that name university students and recent graduates with low economic prospects

central of these protests (Shek, 2020). These three variables in 2005 held no significance but by 2014 changed to being of great significance when considering trust in police, while both age and income has significance to one's trust in the government in 2005, but also increased in significance in subsequent years.

When considering trust in government, even by 2005 age and education are significant variables with younger people being more distrustful. We, however, see a reversal from a positive to a negative relationship from 2005 to 2016 in regards to education. This is likely due to a shift in attitudes of young people from being willing to voice grievances through institutional processes, but switched to more contentious political strategies by 2014, as evidenced by the Occupy and Umbrella Movements (Chan, 2016). Regarding trust in government, and similarly to police, poorer people show lower levels of trust in government while wealthier people show higher levels of trust, likely due to the same reasons. These results are once again consistent with existing literature that suggests young university students with low economic prospects were at the heart of the discontent put on display in these large-scale protests (Shek, 2020). This data suggests that the 2014 Umbrella Movement (and the years leading up to it) had a significant impact on the way young, educated people viewed the police, where in prior years such significant distrust did not exist. Income also played a role in this, with wealthier people displaying more trust in the police likely due to wealth being an effective insulator from exogenous events such as protest or policy change.

When accounting for how these demographic determinants impact trust in government and police, we see how similar patterns emerge in one's willingness to engage political action (strikes). Age, education, and income were all found to be significant to ones willingness to engage in strikes. However, it is only when looking at the political action variable when sex

plays a significant role as this paper found being male to be a significant factor in one's willingness to strike. Therefore, while age and education are both likely indicators of one's distrust in the police and government, being male also makes one far more likely to manifest these feelings of distrust into concrete physical action. These findings are also in agreement with existing literature that shows while political activism is equal across gender, males are far more likely to engage in confrontational methods of political activism while females are more likely to take non-confrontational approaches. Existing literature suggests that conventional gender ideology plays a crucial role in this by creating environments that foster these patterns of gendered activism (Dodson, 2015).

While lower income was found to be linked to greater levels of distrust, when considering how attitudes towards police and government translated to political action, income was the only variable in which this relationship changed from positive to inverse. While higher levels of income were shown to be correlated with higher levels of trust, higher levels of income were also shown to be correlated with increased levels of participation in strikes. We found this relationship was likely due to a combination of factors: first, while poorer people have high levels of distrust, their higher levels of economic vulnerability likely makes the costs of participating in strikes too great. Secondly, while poorer people as a whole tend to be more distrustful, a significant portion of poorer people are elderly who are either likely are more trustful of these institutions or simply do not have the physical energy to be mobilized. Thirdly, the university students at the heart of these protests still possess higher income than those without university degrees, but the wages for young university graduates have been relatively stagnant since the handover, leading to a lack of further upward mobility that has frustrated young, university students and recent graduates (Shek, 2020).

In sum, data from the World Values Survey suggests a pattern of increasing distrust and polarization in Hong Kong's government and police institutions. This paper adds to the current body of literature by confirming these demographic patterns of wavering trust and increasing political dissent through quantitative analysis. This paper also adds to the literature by investigating how patterns of distrust relate to a likeliness to take political action – something that has not been thoroughly investigated up until this point. These patterns have significant relationships to demographic determinants of age, education, income, as well as gender, and illustrate how political tensions in Hong Kong have been on the rise for the better part of two decades. Future studies should investigate how these patterns of change will either continue to rise or fall over the coming years leading up to the reunification date of 2047 as the central government in China makes further preemptive measures at reabsorbing Hong Kong into mainland rule. How these patterns change will be a good indicator of the relative ease or friction at which China will accomplish this goal. The National Security Law introduced in 2020 made great steps towards prohibiting future attempts at large-scale strikes, but while there may be fewer public displays of discontent, future studies should also consider how opinions on government and police will change as a result of this. The above findings should merely be considered as a stepping stone towards the next stage of possible research aimed at examining how Beijing's advances in Hong Kong will affect the cultural divide between Hong Kong and Mainland China, as well as how effective Beijing's attempts at cooptation will be moving forward.

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