

Liberal Studies Independent Enquiry Studies

Research Question: To what extent do Hong Kong people comprehend the concept of sustainable development? A case study on cultural heritage conservation and urban development

Area(s) of study: Society and Culture, Technology and Environment

Module(s): Hong Kong Study, Energy Technology and the environment

Theme(s): The environment and sustainable development

Abstract

The concept sustainable development is well-known to be able to contain both urban development and heritage conservation. Similar to all implementations, public support and understanding is proven to be crucial in enforcing sustainably-developed policies.

This study looks into the degree of comprehension of Hong Kong citizen' towards sustainable development. Perception towards urban development, heritage conservation and public socio-political participation will also be further enquired.

Case study was conducted to testify the pros of sustainable development. Quantitative research via online questionnaire survey was used with the sampling group of 150 respondents. First and second hand information were both utilized in this study.

Findings showed that a fair number of respondents showed consciousness towards sustainable development. Many also revealed the importance of a balanced development through sustainable development. Importance of civil engagement in contributing to a successful policy implementation was also widely accepted while every stakeholder should bear equal responsibility during the course of implementation.

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Chapter One: Introduction on sustainable development

Heated debates have long since been aroused when two dichotomized concepts—urban development and heritage conservation emerged. While urban development stressed the importance of continuous economic expansion, heritage conservation places emphasis on the preservation of historical monuments from the economic growth. People have been questioning the effectiveness in pursuing either one of the ideologies to the maximum when the idea of sustainable development has been proposed, suggesting a balance between the two to settle the contradiction.

Sustainable development implies a strike of balance generally between environment, society and economy. The ideology seems, the well-thought alternative to lobby the dichotomized views of either heritage conservation or urban development protagonists.

Active engagement and supportive attitude are fundamental attributes in having a successful policy implementation. Recently, the government has taken initiatives in introducing policies based on the principle. However, how does the general public perceive this concept? What are their attitudes? Do they have a comprehensive view towards this ideology?

In this study, researcher aims at looking into how Hong Kong people comprehend the concept of sustainable development, which is proven to be a fundamental milestone in determining the success of sustainable-related policies.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The chapter aimed at reviewing the opposition between urban development and heritage conservation, the concept of sustainable development in Hong Kong, the importance of concerted effort in policies implementation and Hong Kong citizens' responsiveness towards sustainable development under the five categorized sections. Sources selected from academic reviews, reference books, researches and official websites shall be utilized to facilitate the many reviews in this chapter.

Contradiction between urban development and heritage conservation

Urban development as interpreted by David Scatterwaite (United Nations Population Division presentation), is the increasing proportion of a nation's population living and working in urban areas. It can also be referred as the transformation of individual locality from less to more urban (Academic Kids.com 2010).

As a growth-oriented cosmopolitan city, Hong Kong has played a crucial role in the development of local and global economy. Emphasizing economic diversification, urban development continues at a fast pace under the market-oriented mechanism.

Besides arousing environmental concerns, the phenomenal expansion poses challenges to local heritage, which is considered as less economically valuable.

Heritage conservation, as defined by Commissioner for Heritage Office, is the protection, conservation and revitalization of appropriate historical and heritage sites and buildings for the enjoyment of generations.

Heritage conservation has not aroused awareness of both the government and citizens until the several demolitions of monuments in 1970s.

While urban development places value on monetary reward, heritage conservation stresses the protection of historical legacy. The significance of heritage conservation is not to be doubted. David Lowenthal verified the significance of heritage conservation when he argues that preserved objects validate memories and the actuality of objects, drawing people to the past literally (David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 2008). The importance of it is further reinforced when the SAR Chief Executive Donald Tsang mentioned the key component of quality city life is the cultural element in the 2007 policy address “A New Direction for Hong Kong”.

The fast-paced urban development adheres to the building of more modernized amenities to facilitate efficient productivity. Indirectly, it means heritage in Hong Kong is facing the threat of demolition. Reversibly however, heritage conservation proposes oppositely and emphasizes on preservation of monuments. Both concepts appear to be crucial. Contradictions therefore arouse when both concepts urge to achieve its aims to the maximum.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is defined by World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) as the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need” (Our Common Future, 1987)

In other words, it implies a balanced development, through achieving long-term economic

prosperity, diversities in human resources and culture and geographical equity as proposed by Ng and Hills (Ng and Hills, 2006). It is said that two inter-related ideas are essential in sustainable development: “a respect for the ecosystem” and “a demand for intra-and inter-generational equity” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)

According to the Habitat Agenda under the United Nations, in order to implement sustainable development, societies have to “make efficient use of resources within the carrying capacity of ecosystems”. Precautionary approach instead of a reactionary one shall be taken into account to promote sustainability effectively.

Advantages of developing sustainable development in Hong Kong

Hong Kong has adopted several documents from the United Nations as framework in developing Hong Kong’s sustainability. The Agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, shall be one of the typical examples that acts as guidance. In the paper, it is stressed that sustainable development should be able to “fulfill basic human needs”, “improve living standards for all” and “protect and manage ecosystems”.

The advantages of sustainable development are significant. In the case of sustainable development scheme of Grade One Monument, Mei Ho building, a block in an estate since 1954 has been revitalized and preserved by transforming it into City Hostel. Concerned Association provided a review and assessment of the project (Revitalizing Historic Building through Partnership Scheme, Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association, 17 February 2009). It can be observed from the presentation

that the revitalization has brought about many positive impacts to the community.

The scheme will benefit the community economically by creating numerous job opportunities and increasing estimated headcounts per year.

Environmentally, it acts as a platform to provide capacity for interaction with the nature where the building comprises of a courtyard.

Socially, without major alterations of monuments, Mei Ho building manages to preserve tangibles and further roots the concept of sustainability into citizens' mindsets. It further prompts social betterment by providing entertainment to local residents.

Keeping the monuments' authenticity and fulfilling economic requirement at the same time, the above mentioned are merely the highlights of the merits of sustainable development. It can be manifested from the findings that sustainable development is the most suitable alternative for Hong Kong to take up at the moment.

The Importance of concerted effort for implementation of sustainable development

Recently, the Hong Kong government has been advocating sustainable development through taking diverse initiatives and proposing concerned policies.

An effectively directed policy is not the only elements that contribute to the success of its enforcement. According to McDonald (McDonald, 1996), the level of social-political participation of the society determines greatly the efficiency of implemented policies.

In other words, without effective partnership between the public sector, private sector and society

as a whole, implemented policies can hardly be successful.

Hong Kong citizens' consciousness and responsiveness towards sustainable development

Terri Mottershead mentioned that sustainability is at stake (Terri Mottershead, Sustainable Development in Hong Kong, 2004) under the situation that Hong Kong as a whole is not responsive enough to related policies. Researcher believes the reasons for the above phenomenon can mainly be explained through the economic and government factors.

In the perspectives of economics, Hong Kong has suffered several economic recessions recently. At this point, few are interested in sustainable development that involves ecological and sociological modernizations. It is common for a market-oriented cosmopolitan to have drastic economic growth, increase in population and demand in various facilities. All these factors impose a hindrance to sustainable development (Barron and Steinbrecher, 1999; M.K. Ng, 2000) Thus economically, there are not many who come to agree with the development of sustainable development.

Governmentally, the Hong Kong government has not provided adequate platform to pool public opinion. In a survey conducted in 1996 (Ng and Chui, 1999), it was found that 60 percent of planning experts perceived planning as a top-down activity. Statutory consultation upon sustainable development are mostly participated by professionals who are being supportive. This shows that government lacks the incentives to empower the public. Even sufficient consultations are held, Hong Kong citizens generally seldom participate in socio-political issues.

The above findings allow researcher to comprehend the possible reasons behind why some

Hongkongers fail to respond positively towards sustainable development. However, what is the actual responsiveness of Hong Kong citizens towards sustainable development? How do they comprehend the ideology exactly? There are limited researches on people's knowledge on sustainability. A survey adapting a quantitative approach will therefore be conducted in the later chapters. It will be effective in making a generalization to whether local population has a general grasp of the concept.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, researcher aimed at providing some definitions concerning the research topic in “*Part One: Terminology*”. Research method used in the study: online questionnaire survey, will be introduced in “*Part Two: Research Method and Design—Online Questionnaire Survey*”.

Part One: Terminology

1. Urban development (Urbanization)

David Scatterwaite (2010) defined the word as “increasing proportion of a nation’s population living and working in urban areas”. It is generally greatly associated with economic success. It can be also known as “a geographical area combining urban and rural parts or to the transformation of an individual locality from less to more urban”. (*Academic Kids.com, 2005*)

2. Heritage conservation

As defined by the official website of Conserve and Revitalize Hong Kong Heritage, heritage conservation refers to the protection, conservation and revitalization of appropriate historical and heritage sites and buildings through sustainable approaches for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. It is also known as “the long term preservation of cultural property through examination, documentation, treatment, and preventive care” (*Michael C.Carlos Museum of Emory University, 2010*)

3. Sustainable development

Brundtland Report released by World Commission on Environment and Development(WCED)

defined it as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability

of future generations to meet their own needs” (*Our Common Future* 1987. Sustainable development principles basically are “ethical utilization of natural resources” and “intra-and inter-generational equity” among economic, human, environment and social capital.

Part Two: Research method and design—Online Questionnaire Survey

2.1. Aims of questionnaire survey and expectations

The research aimed at investigating the whether the Hong Kong population understands the idea of sustainable development and to what extent they comprehend the ideology with the collected first-hand information. It was also predicted that researcher would be able to find out the attitudes of informants towards urban development, heritage conservation, sustainable development, related policies and public socio-political participation.

With the survey, it was expected that the outcome of the survey would be “to a small extent that the Hong Kong public comprehend the concept of sustainable development” .

2.2. Approaches used in online questionnaire survey

Quantitative approach, with the use of online questionnaire survey, was used in the study to understand the social attitude and knowledge towards sustainable development.

To ensure convenience and that the informants can gain optimal understanding of the questions, the questionnaires were both in English and Chinese at the spot online. No leading questions were asked so as to prevent deteriorating the credibility of the data.

Random sampling through the Internet was adopted in the research. Random sampling was selected so as to prevent bias of informants' towards the concept of sustainable development.

150 informants completed the survey so as to gain a higher representation of the Hong Kong people's general view towards the issue concerned.

Informants were not necessarily the interest groups concerning the research. However, they were aged 12 years old or above as the questionnaire involves various questions that required a critical mindsets. It was generally expected that completing a questionnaire takes no more than 6 minutes.

2.3. Data analysis and presentation

Data of the survey was presented in table and chart form with respective analysis (Chapter 4: Data Analysis-- Part One: Data Analysis). Analysis of data was generally divided into five parts:

1. Background information,
2. Public attitude towards urban development and heritage conservation,
3. Public consciousness and familiarity towards sustainable development,
4. Public attitude and support towards sustainable development, and
5. Public attitude towards citizens' engagement in society

A conclusion with further data interpretation and reference to other researches (Chapter 4: Data Analysis—Part Two: Data Interpretation and Conclusion) was provided in the data analysis chapter.

2.4. Online Questionnaire Survey Design

(Please refer to Appendix One for the sample of the online questionnaire survey)

Excluding the “Personal Information” part, the online questionnaire survey was divided into five parts, each with a corresponding aim. Respective aims of each part are as follows:

Part I: To understand informants’ perception towards urban development and heritage conservation

Part II: To understand informants’ familiarity towards sustainably-developed projects

Part III: To understand whether informants comprehend the ideology of sustainable development

Part IV: To understand informants’ support towards sustainable development policies

Part V: To understand informants’ perception on socio-political participation of general public

2.5. Limitations and Solutions

A foreseeable limitation was that the informants’ acknowledgment and familiarity towards sustainable development, no matter intense or disperse, it did not essentially representing the whole Hong Kong population.

In light of this, researcher had 150 informants to complete the survey to ensure a better representation of the data. Additionally, Random sampling was also used to prevent possible bias in choosing respondents.

Another limitation was the inability of the online questionnaire survey results to reveal the difference in perception towards sustainable development among different age groups. As it was impossible for researcher to obtain individual survey results on the internet, the data itself was

limited in showcasing the diversified concept of informants of different generations towards the ideology.

In view of this, researcher would identify different views of stakeholders towards sustainable development in the in the literature review chapter. The perception towards the ideology will be explored by generalizing the information gathered to understand different stances taken on the issue in a broad perspective.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

Chapter four was divided into “*Part one: Data Analysis*” and “*Part Two: Data interpretation and Conclusion*”.

Analysis on the data was divided into five parts:

1. background information,
2. informants’ attitude towards urban development and heritage conservation,
3. consciousness and familiarity towards sustainable development,
4. attitude and support towards sustainable development and
5. attitude towards citizens’ engagement in society

A conclusion with data interpretation was provided in “*Part Two: Data Interpretation and Conclusion*” after the five parts of analysis.

Part one: Data Analysis

1.1. Background information

Among the one hundred and fifty respondents, 58% were female and 42% were male.

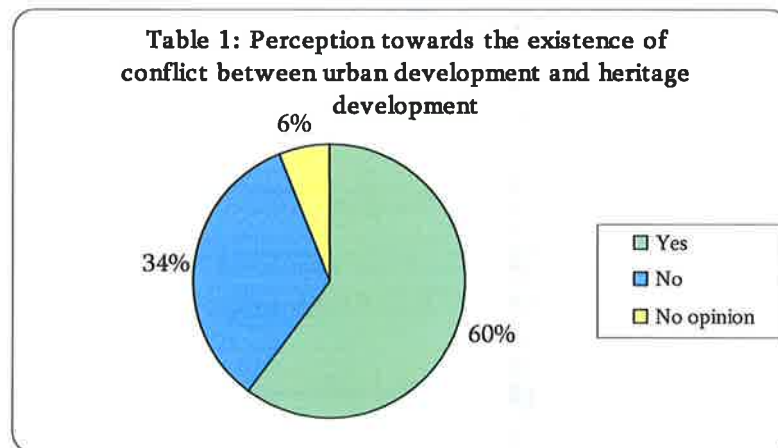
There was a sizeable proportion (53%) of interviewees ageing from 12 to 18. While there were comparable proportions of respondents ageing from 19 to 25 (13%) and from 26-32 (14%), 8% of respondents aged from 47-53 and less than 5% of interviewees were aged 54 or above.

A large proportion of interviewees (47%) were securing senior-secondary-school education level while almost half of the respondents (40%) were undergraduates. About one-tenth of respondents were securing master degree or above.

About 63% of the respondents had monthly income below or above five thousand dollars. More than a quarter of the respondents received income monthly from ten thousand dollars to forty thousand dollars. Less than 5% of respondents received income higher than forty thousand dollars.

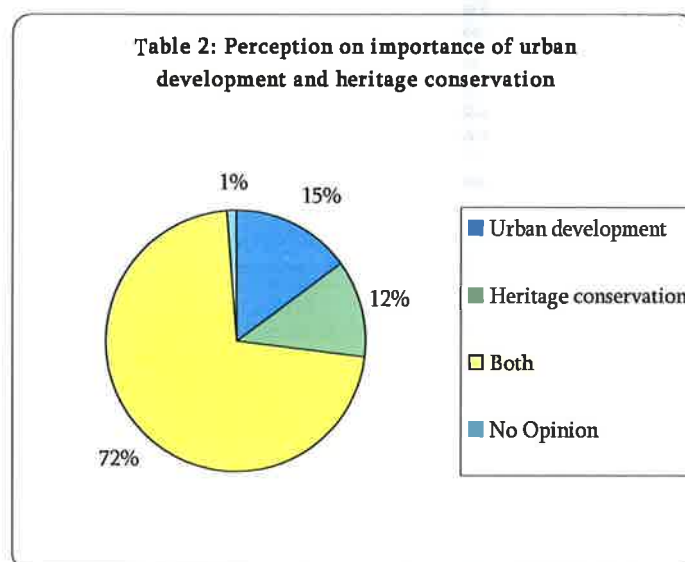
1.2. Attitude towards urban development and heritage conservation

Question 1: In your opinion, do you think the conflict between urban development and heritage conservation exists?



From Table 1, it can be seen that more than half of the respondents (60%) acknowledged the presence of conflict between urban development and heritage conservation while about one-third (34%) of the respondents disagreed.

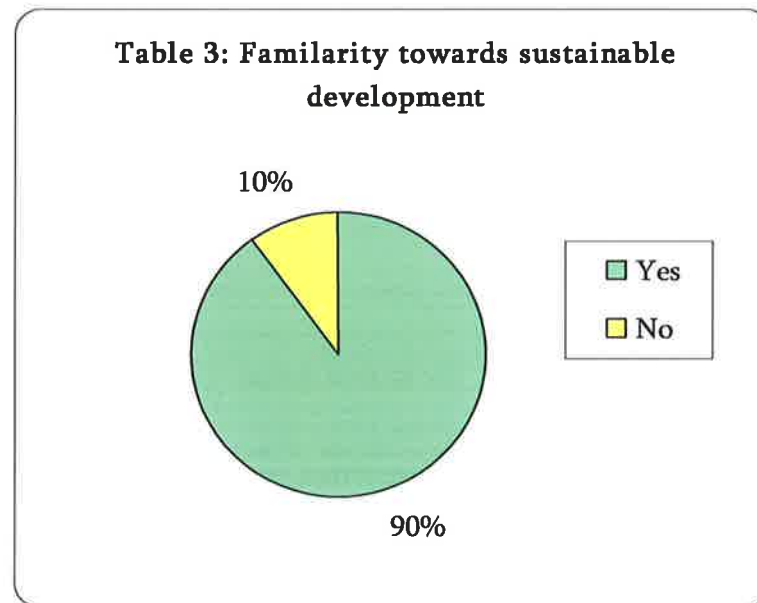
Question 2: In your opinion, which is more important? Urban development or heritage conservation?



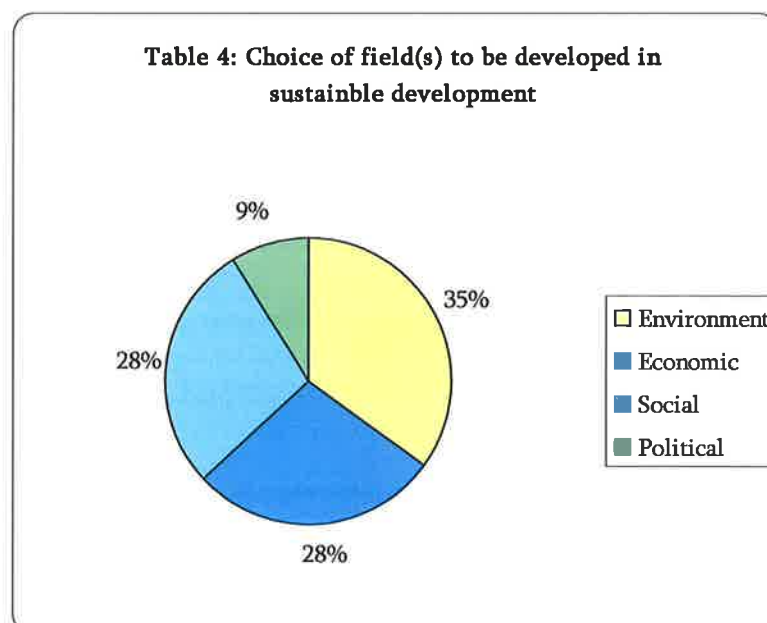
More than half of the respondents (72%) pointed out the significance of both heritage conservation and urban development while two minority groups admitted the importance of mere urban development (15%) or heritage conservation (12%).

1.3. Consciousness and Familiarity towards Sustainable development

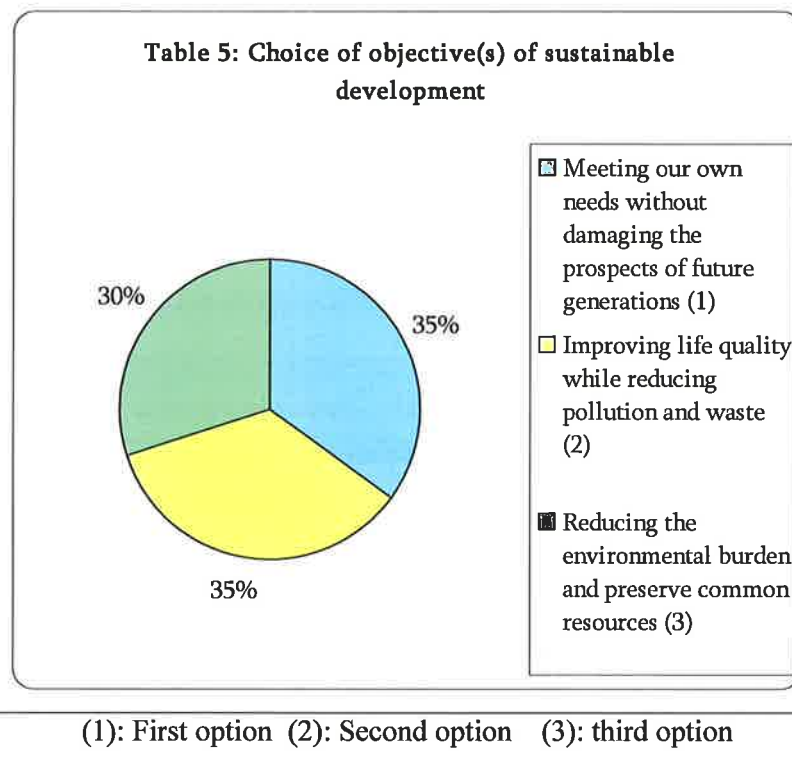
Question 3: Have you ever heard of the concept of sustainable development?



Question 4: Based on your knowledge, what are the fields that sustainable development aims to develop?



Question 5: What are the objectives in actualizing sustainable development in Hong Kong?



Almost all of the interviewees (90%) heard of the concept of sustainable development as shown in Table 3.

Although a total of 133 respondents claimed to have heard of the concept of sustainable development, when asked to choose the right fields and objectives for sustainable development, discrepancy aroused.

Sustainable development is the tripartite development of “environmental”, “economic” and “social” aspects. In Table 4, a sizeable proportion (35%) chose “environment” as the centre element, few were able to choose the three options at the same time.

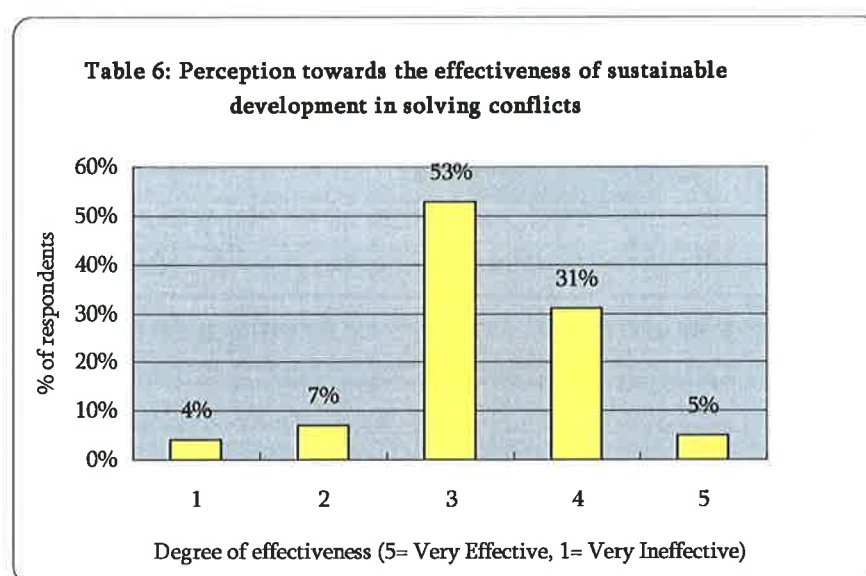
All three options in Table 5 are the exact aims and objectives involved sustainable development. The percentages of choosing option one, two are three are 35%, 35% and 30% respectively. It can be

seen that respondents failed to select the three designated answers at the same time.

In general, tables 3-5 mirrored the fair consciousness of interviewees towards sustainable development. However, very few of them were able to fully comprehend the valid objectives and fields considered in sustainable development itself, suggesting their lack of deeper understanding towards the subject.

1.4. Attitude and Support towards sustainable development

Question 5: In your opinion, how effective is sustainable development in solving the conflict between urban development and heritage conservation?

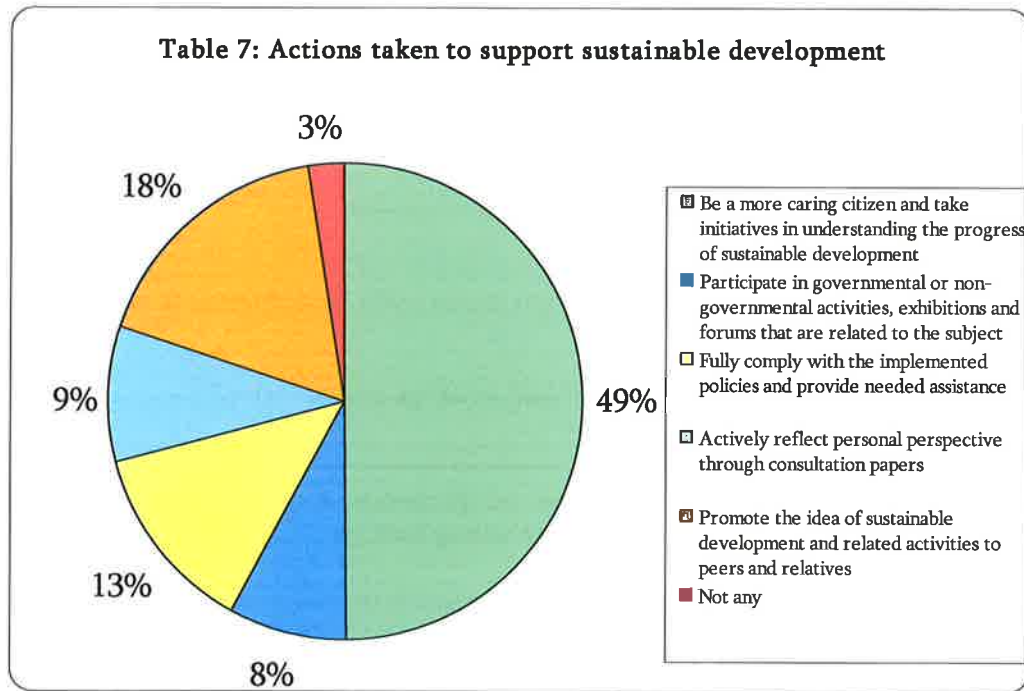


The findings indicated respondent's general acceptance towards using sustainable development to solve conflicts between urban development and heritage conservation.

While 53% of respondents believed that sustainable development was fairly effective (3 marks) in solving conflicts between heritage conservation and economic development, a total of 36% interviewees suggested the efficiency of the concept by rating it as "effective" or "very effective". A

minority (11%) interviewed ranked the ideology as “ineffective” and “very ineffective” by rating 1 or 2 mark(s).

Question 7: What actions have you taken so far to support sustainable development?



Of the 150 respondents interviewed, 51% indicated the willingness to be “a more caring citizen and took initiatives in understanding the progress of sustainable development. Interviewees also, had a fairly high tendency, to promote relevant ideas (18%) and provide required compliance during policies’ enforcements (13%).

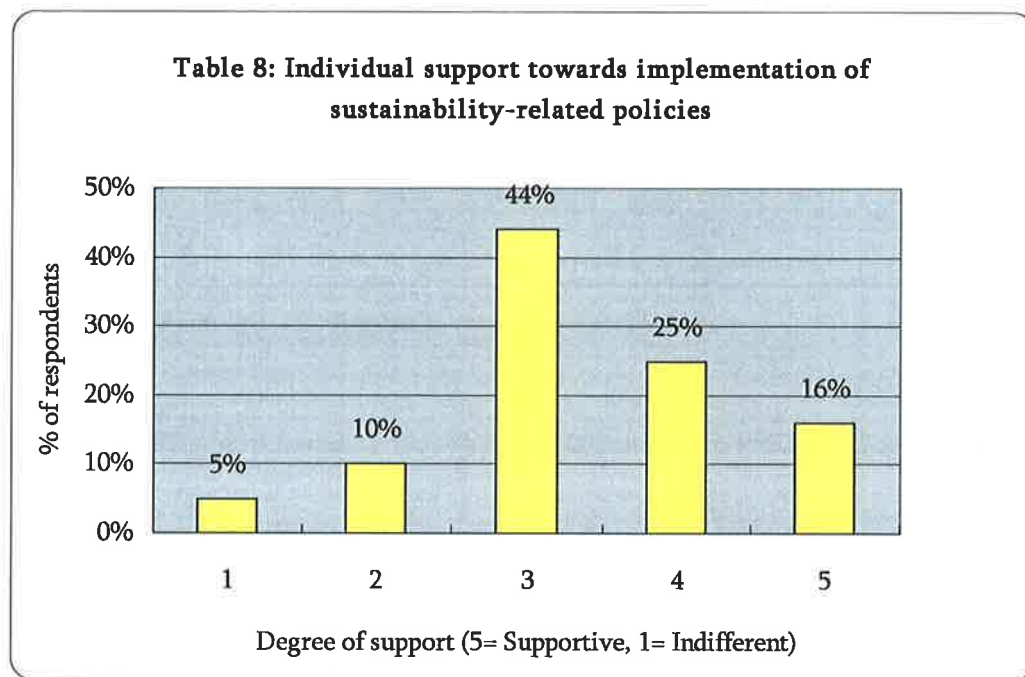
The findings indicate that more than one-third of respondents were less dynamic in directly reflecting personal insights through participating in government-held exhibitions, forums or consultations. A minority group (3%) even reflected their “spectator” participation by not taking any actions to support sustainable development.

On the whole, it can be reflected that respondents were fairly devoted to sustainable development

but were comparatively passive in participating through governmental channels, for instance public forums and consultations.

Question 6: To what extent do you support the policies related to the implementation of sustainable development?

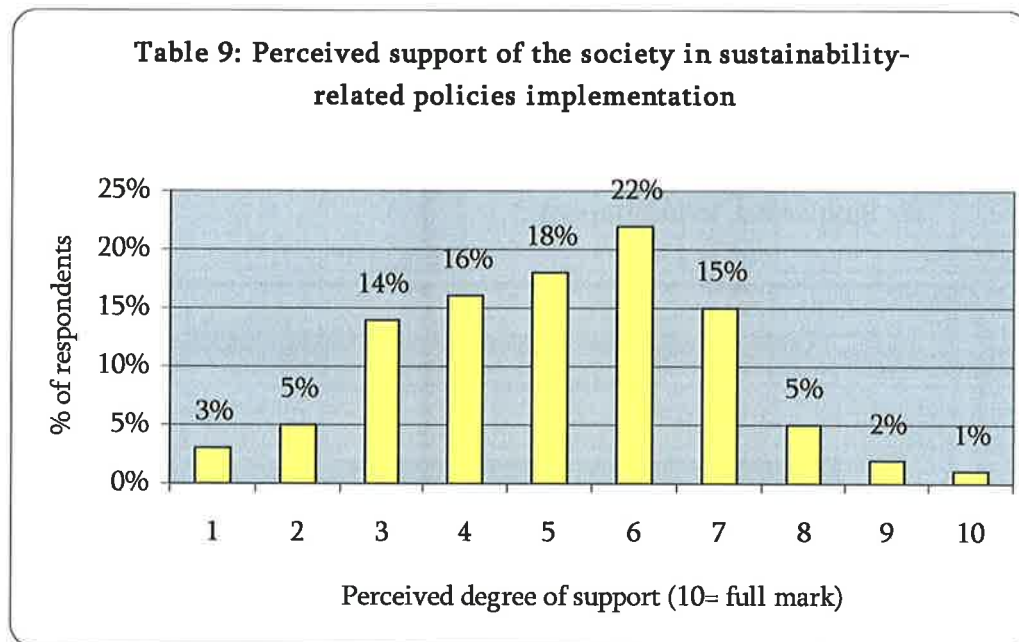
(5= Supportive, 1=Indifferent)



Overall, respondents had a quite satisfactory support towards relevant policies implementation.

Respondents were required to rank their supportiveness towards the implementation of sustainability-related policies. Table 8 manifests that respondents in general (44%) were in a neutral position as they expressed their engagement as neither “indifferent” or “supportive”. More than a quarter of the respondents have referred their participation as fairly supportive or above. A comparatively small proportion expressed their indifferent attitudes, which account for a merely 15%, rating themselves deserving 1 or 2 mark(s).

Question 10: Out of 10 marks, how would you rate the activeness of Hong Kong citizens in supporting the sustainably-related policies? (10 = full mark)

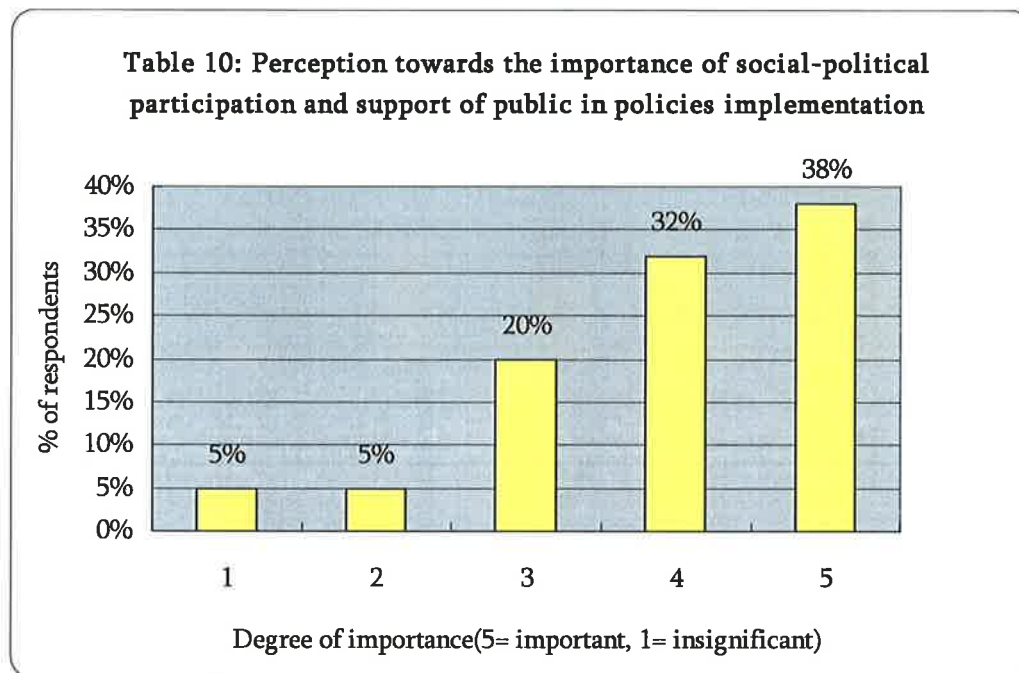


Roughly one-fifth (22%) of respondents rated society's support in sustainably-related policies with 6 marks, which indicated a fair support of Hong Kong citizens in the implementation of policies related to sustainable development. While another rough quarter rated society's activeness with 7 marks or above, more than half of the interviewed individuals (56%) reflected the unresponsiveness of the society through rating a mark lower than or equal to 5.

In general, the findings indicated that the society as a whole is having a reasonable participation in governmental policies implementation related to sustainable development, however, participation could be more active.

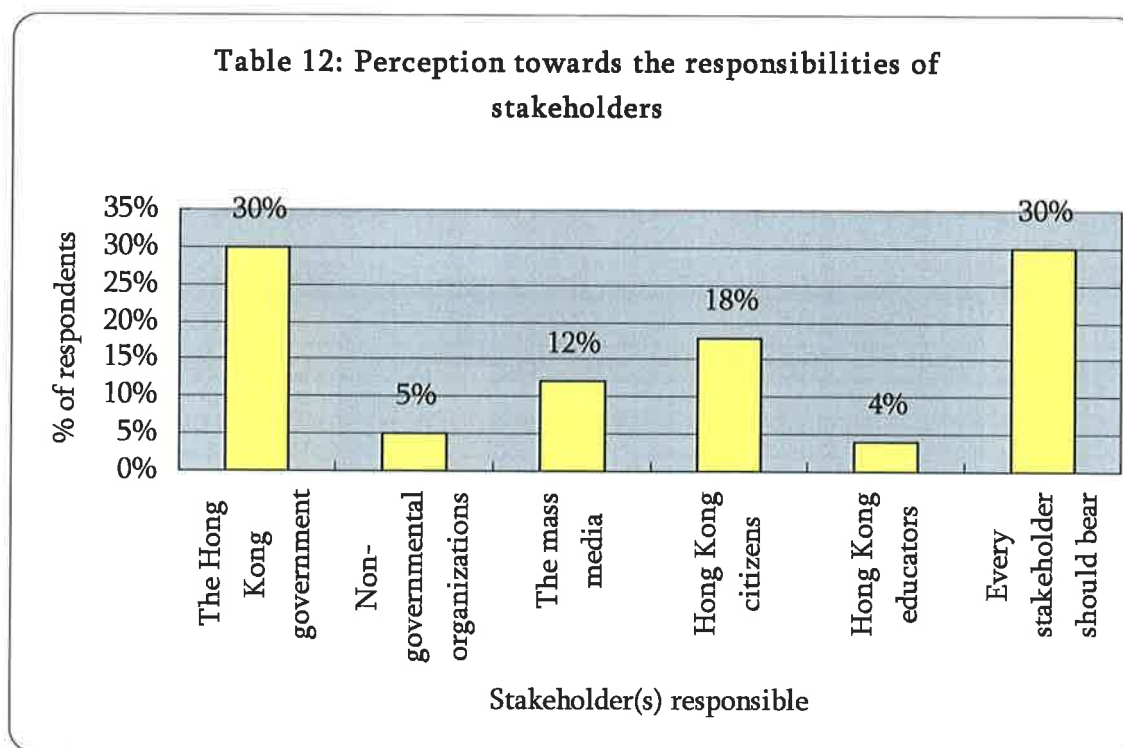
1.5. Attitude towards citizens' engagement in society

Question 9: In your opinion, how important is socio-political participation and the support of the public in successful policies implementation?



Figures shown above has portrayed that Hong Kong citizens on the whole placed a high value on social-political participation. They understood the significance of the support of public in policies implementation. While 38% and 32% rated the participation as “very important” and “important” respectively, merely 10% of respondents rated it as “very insignificant” and “insignificant”.

Question 8: In your opinion, which stakeholder(s) would need to be responsible if the implementation of sustainable development policies was unsuccessful?



When asked which stakeholders should be accountable for the failure of sustainable development policies, about one-third (30%) of respondents believed “each stakeholder should bear equal responsibility”. Another rough one-third stated (30%) that the Hong Kong government should bear the ultimate responsibility. At the same time, the percentages of respondents that chose “Hong Kong citizens” and “the mass media” are 18% and 12% respectively, while 5% and 4% of respondents selected “non-governmental organizations” and “Hong Kong educators” correspondingly.

On the whole, the findings shows respondents placed a certain value on equal contribution and accountability of every stakeholder involved. At the same time, the leading role of the Hong Kong government was acknowledged to be prominent in implementing sustainability-related policies.

Part Two: Data Conclusion and Interpretation

In this chapter, researcher aimed to provide conclusion and interpretation on the following four parts:

1. Hong Kong citizens' attitude towards urban development and heritage conservation
2. Hong Kong citizens' understanding towards sustainable development,
3. Hong Kong citizens' support towards sustainable development, and
4. Hong Kong citizens' attitude towards citizens' engagement in society.

2.1. Hong Kong citizens' attitude towards urban development and heritage conservation

Of the 150 respondents, a majority acknowledged the possible clash between urban development and heritage conservation. In general, respondents recognized the significance in both urban development and heritage development. The respondents, representing the Hong Kong citizens as a whole, identified the importance of a balanced development. It could be seen that the findings in the survey contradicts with the statements made in earlier research which claimed that few were interested in ecological and sociological modernizations that sustainable development involves (Barron and Steinbrecher, 1999; M.K.Ng, 2000).

Most respondents also found sustainable development fairly effective in solving the conflict between heritage conservation and urban development. This reflects their confidence and belief of this ideology to be cooperated in the long-term development of Hong Kong.

The above phenomenon can be probably explained by the increasing government effort in promoting sustainable development through advertisements, education and policy addresses in the society. Importance of sustainable development might also be rooted in minds of the public with

recent news concerning inconsistency or development of heritage and economy, for example, Queen's Pier, Mei Ho building.

2.2. Hong Kong citizens' understanding towards sustainable development

Few studies are conducted concerning the understanding of Hong Kong citizens towards sustainable development. From the survey, it can be attained that a majority of the informants are conscious of the concept. However, few were able to grasp the authentic implications of the ideology as reflected in the survey as they failed to validly point out the accurate fields to be developed and objectives of sustainability.

The findings matched with earlier expectations made in the methodology chapter. It could be concluded that "to a small extent that the Hong Kong public comprehend the concept of sustainable development". Comprehension is more than merely knowing the concept, it is also about understanding the principles and objectives behind.

This limited degree of comprehension can probably be explained by the government policies concerning the promotion of the principle, where most of them are top-down and reactionary (Ng and Chui, 1999). It is possible that associated government's promotional policies are still inadequate and lacking.

2.3. Hong Kong citizens' support towards sustainable development

Surprisingly, individuals interviewed have shown reasonably response and support towards sustainable development by taking actual actions. For example, they tended to take initiatives to understand the latest progress of sustainable development, complied with policies implemented and

took part in promotional roles. Also, most of them reflected the tendency to actively or moderately support the policies related to the implementation of sustainability.

Thus, the finding is not coherent with the point mentioned by Terri Mottershead (2004), which claimed that Hong Kong as a whole was not responsive to related policies.

The above discrepancy can be possibly explained by the realization of the public of the inevitability of a balanced development for a bettering future of society through intense promotion on governmental and international levels recently. It is also probable that the respondents saw the necessity in fulfilling citizen's responsibility through utmost supportiveness.

In the findings, an interesting pattern in the ways respondents took actions to support sustainable development was shown. While most of them tended to be engaged in policies compliance, principle promotion and enhancing consciousness, respondents were less likely to participate in government-related activities, forums or consultations to show support.

This occurrence is consistent with the research conducted by Ng and Chui(1999). It suggested the reason behind this happening is due to the lack of incentives of the government in empowering the public and inadequate platform to lobby public opinion. Most of the consultations are participated by the professionals and are perceived to be pre-initiated. Therefore, Hong Kong citizens are more passive in showcasing their support through governmental channels.

2.4. Hong Kong citizens' attitude towards citizens' engagement in society

It is known that an effectively designed and directed policy is not the only elements that contribute to the success of policy enforcement. Social-political participation and collective decision making of the society also greatly determine the efficiency of implemented policies. (McDonald, 1996)

In the findings, it was reflected that a majority of respondents perceived social-political participation and support of public in policies implementation is indispensable. Even some preferred to lay the responsibility on government shoulders or other bodies in face of related policies failure, many still believed the significance in bearing equal accountability in times of policy failure. This directly revealed the public willingness to be engaged, eagerness to compensate and consciousness of equivalent contribution of every stakeholder involved. In other words, they saw policy failure as society's failure and responsibility as a whole.

This revelation once again contradicted with the argument of Ng and Chui, who proposed the submissive mindsets of Hong Kong people in dealing with issues, believing that they didn't play an effective role in issues. Right here, researcher could see the respondents placing a high value on identical participation and responsibility bearing among the Hong Kong government, non-governmental organizations, the mass media, educators and Hong Kong citizens themselves.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Perceiving a clash between urban development and heritage conservation, the Hong Kong government in recent years has taken initiatives in utilizing the concept sustainable development as one of their long-term developmental values. Sustainable development values the importance of a balanced development mainly in environment, economic and society's aspects. Acknowledging the significance of citizens' understanding, support and participation during the course of implementation, it is inevitable that a sustainably-developed policy wouldn't be proven successful without the public. Therefore, researcher hopes to look into this matter in a more in-depth way by conducting a research.

The research aims at fulfilling three main objectives: looking into the degree of understanding of Hong Kong citizens' towards sustainable development, attitudes towards urban development, heritage conservation and sustainable development and, public perception towards socio-political participation.

In this concluding chapter, researcher will be addressing the key findings of the research study, research significance and limitations and provide suggestions for studies furthering this enquiry.

In order to realize the as aforementioned aims, researcher adopted quantitative research through online questionnaire survey. Dividing the survey into different parts that intend to investigate specific areas concerning the research question, the key findings will be presented in four paragraphs as followed.

On finding out respondents' attitude towards urban development and heritage conservation, most

of them recognized sustainable development as an effective platform to contain the involved conflict between the two beliefs. This phenomenon can be explained through government's advocacy work in sustainable development through mass media, education system and policy addresses. Recent news concerning the contradiction between the development of heritage and economy such as the demolition of Queen's Pier may as well swayed respondents in demanding of a more balanced lifestyle.

Although it had been expected that "to a small extent do Hong Kong people comprehend sustainable development", understanding of Hong Kong citizens' towards sustainable development is on the whole acceptable. Most of the respondents were conscious of the ideology. It should be noted that however, comprehension does not only involve consciousness, but also a certain degree of knowledge on a certain issue. Few were able to grasp the authentic implications and aims of sustainable development accurately. This occurrence can be explained through government's non in-depth promotion on concerned principles. Government's top-down behavior may also contribute to this limited degree of understanding.

Support of respondents' towards sustainable development was reasonable. It was revealed that most of them were willing to take actual actions. By engaging in the latest progress of sustainable development, complying with policies and taking up promotional roles, Hong Kong citizens' reflected moderate support in the implementation road of sustainability. This devoted effort can be explained by their realization of the need of a long-term development. Through various institutions' promotions, it is possible that respondents were more aware of the necessity in fulfilling citizen's

responsibility through supportiveness.

The pattern of the actions taken by respondents is also proven to provoke curiosity. While most engaged in policies compliance and promotion, many showed reluctance in adhering to government-organized activities such as forums and consultations. This can probably be explained by the public lack of confidence in government's capability in public consultation, which is mostly pre-initiated by professionals. Thus, it can be concluded that while respondents showed fair support towards sustainability, few were eager to express this support through governmental channels.

A fair number of respondents understood the importance of civil engagement in contributing to a successful policy implementation. Also, a reasonable portion perceived equal responsibilities among all involved stakeholders in face of a policy failure. This shows the willingness of the public in shouldering responsibility and how they valued the contribution of every unit.

After concluding all the key findings above, the answer in short to the enquiry study "to what extent do Hong Kong people comprehend the concept of sustainable development?" is "to a fair extent with improvements anticipated".

It was believed that this research is significant both in expanding the field of study and suggesting other possibilities to related arguments in previous studies.

It is known that the ideology of sustainable development has been recently advocated and promoted. However, few studies have revealed how the public perceives and supports this principle. By conducting this study, researcher will be able to better realize how and to what extent the general public comprehends sustainability. On top of this, researcher will also be able to find out their

insights on other related issues such as urban development, heritage conservation and socio-political participation.

Though past studies conducted by scholars suggested uninterested attitude and unresponsiveness of Hongkongers toward sustainable development, and public submissiveness in socio-political engagement, this study is significant in shedding light on arguments in another perception with the support of concrete statistics. According to the key findings in this study, it was suggested that Hong Kong citizens' have shown fair enthusiasm towards sustainable development.

A few limitations were encountered in this research.

Firstly, owing to the limitation of an electronic survey, the quantitative online questionnaire survey with 150 respondents could not accurately provide information on the comprehension of Hong Kong citizens' towards sustainable development. It fails to allow researcher to carry out in-depth investigation on the matter with respondents through means such as face-to-face discussion.

Secondly, on technical level, online questionnaire surveys were unavailable in reflecting responses of respondents individually. This thus hindered researcher from comprehensively looking into the different pattern of understanding towards sustainability among different age groups or occupation.

In light of this, researcher looks forward to further studies that are more extensive in quality and quantity. Besides enlarging the sampling size, it is suggested that more extensive questions are raised to test respondents' knowledge towards sustainable development. Thus, comprehension of Hong Kong citizens' towards the idea can be looked into in a more comprehensive manner. If possible, it is

also suggested that a more technically-supported survey can be carried out so as to reflect the differentiations in understanding and support towards sustainable development among different groups.

This research study is proven to be fruitful and rewarding. May we all wish Hong Kong a bright future in initiating her road towards sustainable development hand in hand with public's enthusiastic support and participation.

Appendix

Independent Enquiry Study (IES)個人研習專題 New Senior Secondary (NSS) Liberal Studies 新高中通識教育 Questionnaire Survey 問卷調查

Hi, I am a secondary student and am currently conducting a study on the general public understanding of the concept “sustainable development”. The survey will take less than 6 minutes. Data collected is merely used for academic purposes and the survey results will be kept confidential. Thank you. 你好!本人為中學學生,現正探討大眾對可持續發展的認識。問卷調查所需時間不會多於6分鐘。所蒐集的數據僅作參考用途並會保密處理。謝謝!

****Please X the most appropriate answer in corresponding areas 請於適當位置上填上 X ****

PART ONE 第一部份

1. In your opinion, do you think the conflict between urban development and heritage conservation exists?
你認為城市發展及文物保護二者間的衝突存在嗎?
☐ Yes 存在 ☐ No 不存在 ☐ No opinion 沒意見
2. In your opinion, which is more important? Urban development or heritage conservation?
城市發展及文物保護,你認為那一個較重要?
☐ Urban development 城市發展 ☐ Heritage conservation 文物保護
☐ Both 兩者皆重要 ☐ No opinion 沒意見

PART TWO 第二部份

1. Have you ever heard about the following government sustainably-developed projects?
你有否聽過以下以可持續發展為中心的政府發展項目?
(You may choose more than one answer 可選擇多於一項)
☐ Murray Building 美利樓
☐ Central Government Offices Complex 政府總部
☐ Central Market 中環街市
☐ Central Police Station Compound 中區警署
☐ Blue House 藍屋
☐ Mei Ho Building 美荷樓
☐ I have heard about other projects 我有聽過其他項目,
for example 如: _____
☐ No, I have never heard about the above sustainably-developed projects
我從沒聽過這些政府發展項目(Please proceed to question 3 請回答問題三)

2. How did you obtain the information concerning the above sustainably-developed projects?

你是如何得知上述的政府發展項目?

(You may choose more than one answer 可選擇多於一項)

- ☐ Mass media 大眾傳媒 (e.g. 如 newspaper 報紙, news reports 新聞報道)
- ☐ Government websites and press releases 政府網頁或研討會
- ☐ Exhibitions and museums 展覽或博物館
- ☐ Friends and relatives 朋輩或親人介紹
- ☐ Advertising brochures 宣傳刊物
- ☐ School education 學校教育
- ☐ Others 其他: _____

PART THREE 第三部份

3. Have you ever heard of the concept of sustainable development?

你有否聽過可持續發展的概念?

- ☐ Yes 有 ☐ No 沒有

4. Based on your knowledge 根據你的認識,

(A) What are the fields that sustainable development aims to develop?

那些為可持續發展的發展方向?

(You may choose more than one answer 可選擇多於一項)

- ☐ Environment 環境 ☐ Economic 經濟 ☐ Social 社會 ☐ Political 政治
- ☐ Others: _____

(B) What are the objectives in actualizing sustainable development in Hong Kong?

那些為於香港推行可持續發展概念的目的?

(You may choose more than one answer 可選擇多於一項)

- ☐ meeting our own needs without damaging the prospects of future generations
在滿足我們自己各種需要與期望的同時，不損害子孫後代的福祉
- ☐ improving life quality while reducing pollution and waste
在改善生活的同時減少污染和浪費
- ☐ reducing the environmental burden and preserving common resources
減少環保負擔，協力保護共同擁有的資源

5. In your opinion, how effective is sustainable development in solving the conflict between urban development and heritage conservation?

你個人認為可持續發展的實踐能否有效解決城市發展及文物保護兩者之間的衝突?

(Please circle the most suitable answer 請圈中你的選擇)

非常有效 Effective 5 4 3 2 1 Ineffective 絕對沒效

PART FOUR 第四部份

6. To what extent do you support the policies related to the implementation of sustainable development?

你會以那個分數來形容你對任何有關可持續發展政策的支持度?

(Please circle the most suitable answer 請圈中你的選擇)

Supportive 非常支持 5 4 3 2 1 Indifferent 莫不關心

7. What actions have you taken so far to support sustainable development?

你採取了甚麼行動支持有關政策?

(You may choose more than one answer 可選擇多於一項)

- ☐ Be a more caring citizen and take initiatives in understanding the progress of sustainable development 多關心社會大事並自覺性地了解有關可持續發展的事宜
- ☐ Participate in governmental or non-governmental activities, exhibitions and forums that are related to the subject 參與官方或非官方組織活動,展覽或論壇
- ☐ Fully comply with the implemented policies and provide needed assistance 支持有關政策並提供所需協助
- ☐ Actively reflect personal perspective through consultation papers 活躍參與公眾諮詢並反映個人意見
- ☐ Promote the idea of sustainable development and related activities to peers and relatives 向朋輩或家人推廣有關概念或活動
- ☐ Others 其他: _____

PART FIVE 第五部份

8. In your opinion, which stakeholder(s) would need to be responsible if the implementation of sustainable development policies was unsuccessful?

當政府推行的政策失敗,你認為那位持分者需要負上責任?

(You may choose more than one answer 可選擇多於一項)

- ☐ The Hong Kong government 香港政府
- ☐ Non-governmental organizations 非政府組織
- ☐ The mass media 大眾傳媒
- ☐ Hong Kong citizens 香港市民
- ☐ Hong Kong educators 從事香港教育工作人士
- ☐ Every stakeholder should bear equal responsibility 每位持分者都有均等責任

9. In your opinion, how important is socio-political participation and the support of the public in successful policies implementation?

你認為市民的支持及社會政治參與對成功的政策有何重要?

(Please circle the most suitable answer 請圈中你的選擇)

Important 非常重要 5 4 3 2 1 Insignificant 非常不重要

10. Out of 10 marks, how would you rate the activeness of Hong Kong citizens in supporting the sustainably-related policies?

如果以 10 分為滿分,你會如何評價香港市民對可持續發展有關政策的支持度?

(Please circle the most suitable answer 請圈中你的選擇)

Very active 非常活躍 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 Very inactive 非常被動

PERSONAL INFORMATION 個人資料

1. Sex 性別:

☐ Female 女 ☐ Male 男

2. Age 歲數:

☐ 12-18 ☐ 19-25 ☐ 26-32 ☐ 33-39 ☐ 40-46
☐ 47-53 ☐ 54-61 ☐ 62-68 ☐ 68 or above 或以上

3. Education level 學歷

☐ Lower secondary school 初中
☐ Senior secondary school 高中
☐ Undergraduate 大學生
☐ Master degree or above 碩士或以上

4. Monthly Income level 每月收入

☐ <1000
☐ 1000-5000
☐ 5000-10000
☐ 10000-20000
☐ 20000-30000
☐ 30000-40000
☐ >40000

*****Thank you for your time 謝謝你!*****

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