About Civic Exchange

Civic Exchange is a Hong Kong-based nonprofit public policy think tank that was established in 2000. It is an independent organisation that has access to policy makers, officials, businesses, media and NGOs—reaching across sectors and borders. Civic Exchange has solid research experience in areas such as air quality, energy, urban planning, climate change, conservation, water, governance, political development, equal opportunities, poverty and gender.

For more information about Civic Exchange, visit www.civic-exchange.org.

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Data Access Enquiries

As part of Civic Exchange’s commitment to promoting public policy research and civic engagement, the Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators database, on which this report is based, will be made available to the public. For data access enquiries, please contact Civic Exchange at info@civic-exchange.org.

The views presented in this report are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of Civic Exchange.

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Perception (from the Latin *percipere*) is the organisation, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand an environment.

*perception is everything*

How people perceive their lives may be more important than how well they are actually living, as measured by commonplace objective metrics. Perceptions are linked to sentiments. Sentiments drive voting behaviour, among other things. This is an election year.

The Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators, as a concept, is the brainchild of Christine Loh, co-founder of Civic Exchange. The development of the tool, the execution of the survey and the analysis are the achievements of Professor Michael DeGolyer, Civic Exchange Fellow and Carine Lai, Project Manager of Civic Exchange. Initially launched in 2012, this project was supported by a number of local engagement partners in its pilot phase: Chee Anne Roño of Clean Air Asia (Manila), Stuart MacDonald of Penang Institute (Penang), Subhash Agrawal of India Focus (Delhi), Zhang Junzuo (Chengdu & Shanghai), Ni Huan Helen (Shanghai), Penny Low (Singapore), and Michele Weldon (Delhi). To these partners, we are deeply grateful. We would also like to thank our technical partners for their fieldwork contribution and advice: Raymond Sun and Alfred Chan of Consumer Search Group, and Channey KY Chan of the Centre for the Advancement of Social Sciences Research of Baptist University. We are also indebted to Pooja Pradhan for her Hindi translation work and to Evan Auyang for his advice and supplementary data analysis. Last but not least, we would like to express our appreciation to RS Group Asia and WYNG Foundation who provided funding support to make our Asian Urban-Wellbeing project possible.

We hope policy makers and society can take a good look at the survey results and ask the question:

“Why do our people feel the way they do?”

A lot more work can be done to come up with the answer(s). A responsible government should not lose time in digging deep into the areas of greatest deficiency as shown up in our survey results. Civic Exchange will make our survey data open to anyone interested. By sharing our data, we welcome everyone to join in this conversation. People deserve better answers and better results.

Maura Wong  
CEO, Civic Exchange  
7 June 2016
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We live in an age of cities. During the past decade, for the first time in human existence, more human beings dwell in urban than rural areas.¹ In Asia, urbanisation is happening rapidly, with the United Nations projecting that the urbanised population will rise from 48 per cent urban in 2014 to 65 per cent urban in 2050.² This means that the governance of cities will affect the lives and wellbeing of billions more people in the coming decades.

Policy experts have also become increasingly interested in more holistic metrics of societal progress beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which was never designed to measure overall wellbeing and has well-known limitations. For example, it does not include non-market contributions to society such as parenting and volunteering, and makes no effort to distinguish between socially productive and destructive spending.³ However, most available comparative data—especially subjective data—are between countries, not cities, despite the importance and distinctiveness of cities.

The policy challenges of cities are different from those of rural areas. Cities have concentrated populations, accelerated socioeconomic activity, greater diversification and specialisation, and cities of similar sizes face similar challenges in urban planning, traffic management, congestion, environmental degradation, crime and inequality.⁴ Urban populations are more cosmopolitan in nature than rural residents, and their support or opposition for different policies is affected by different factors than those for their rural counterparts.

In 2012, Civic Exchange launched the project that would become the Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators. The Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators is a public opinion survey designed to measure public attitudes towards urban life. It measures how much people care about and are satisfied with 10 different policy domains—housing, medical care, education, work and business opportunities, transportation and utilities, environmental protection, community and belonging, public safety and crime control, recreation and personal time, and quality of government.

The survey was developed over 3 years in collaboration with local partners from five diverse Asian cities—Chengdu, Delhi, Hong Kong, Manila and Penang—in order to ensure that the resulting instrument could be used in a broad range of Asian cities. The first survey wave was conducted in August 2015 to January 2016 in three selected Asian cities, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore, all major commercial ports and financial centres with Chinese heritage and extensive international connections. It is hoped that the findings will provide insights into city dwellers’ attitudes and priorities in order to identify areas for further research and to provoke discussions on how urban policymakers can better meet people’s needs.

This graphic summary presents a brief overview of the key findings from the full comparative report, “Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators—Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore (2016 First Report)” which is available at Civic Exchange’s website at http://civic-exchange.org/en/publications/8290304. However, even the full report only manages to scratch the surface of a rich and complex dataset. Researchers interested in conducting their own analyses are welcome to approach Civic Exchange for access to the database (see Data Access Enquiries, p.2).

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2. Ibid.
2 Principles, Structure and Methodology

2.1 Principles

- **City focused**
  The survey focuses on cities, not countries.

- **People focused**
  Unlike other well-known urban liveability indices, the Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators focuses on people’s subjective attitudes and experiences rather than on policy inputs (e.g. educational spending) or policy outputs (e.g. graduation rates).

- **Inclusive**
  In cities where migrant workers (defined as workers without full legal residency status) make up a large proportion of the population, efforts were made to include them in the survey despite difficulties in contacting them.

- **Comprehensive, but in-depth**
  The survey instrument was designed to cover a broad spectrum of 10 policy domains enabling comparison of residents’ priorities. However, it also included in-depth questions about specific domains selected by the respondent.

- **Methodologically flexible**
  In order to achieve the best chance of obtaining a representative sample in each city, the survey mode was determined by each city’s level of telecommunications penetration and economic development.

2.2 Structure

The survey is structured in three parts. At the start of the survey, all respondents are asked a set of core questions about their perceptions of their city as a place to live, their overall life satisfaction, their overall satisfaction with each domain, and how much they care about each domain. Each respondent is then asked to select the domain they think the government should make its top priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Level</th>
<th>City Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective Data</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Human Development Index</td>
<td>EIU’s Global Liveability Rankings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD Better</td>
<td>Mercer’s Quality of Living Rankings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legatum</td>
<td>AT Kearney’s Global Cities Index</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subjective Data</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Initiative</td>
<td>Asian Urban Wellbeing Indicators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gallup World Poll</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Barometer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Positioning of the Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators Compared with Other Major Indices
Based on their response to this question, respondents are directed to the second part of the survey, which contains more in-depth questions about their selected domain. (This summary does not cover the domain-specific questions. Please consult the individual city reports, to be released in late 2016, for details.) Finally, all respondents are asked the same set of demographic questions.

2.3 Methodology

- Approximately 1,500 randomly contacted respondents aged 18-65 were interviewed in each city.

- Interlocking quotas were set based on age (under 40 and 40 and over) and gender according to the most recent available official census or household survey data. Within the interlocking quotas, non-interlocking quotas were set for age bands 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 and 60-65.

- The majority of interviews were carried out through Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). In Hong Kong and Singapore where household landline penetration rates in 2014 were 100.38% and 99% respectively, landline dialling was used. In Shanghai, although the official household landline penetration rate was 90.9%, as many households did not answer or plug in their telephones, dialling was expanded to mobile phones.

- In Shanghai and Singapore, quotas were set for contacting migrant workers according to the most recent available official data. In Shanghai, this was 43 per cent of the overall sample and the figure for Singapore was 20 per cent. The Singapore quota only included those on temporary work permits, which are given exclusively to low-skilled workers, as it was assumed that this group had the least telephone access. Migrant workers were interviewed through random street intercepts using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI).

- In Hong Kong, interviews were carried out in Cantonese, Putonghua and English. In Shanghai, Putonghua was used. In Singapore, languages included Mandarin, English, Tagalog and Hindi.


Figure 1: Caring and Satisfaction, Hong Kong

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with each of the 10 domains, and then were asked how much they cared about each domain. This enables a comparison to be made between the two dimensions, i.e. the caring-satisfaction gap. This indicator sheds light on the degree to which a city’s performance meets residents’ expectations. A domain is underperforming where satisfaction dips far below caring. The spider diagrams below illustrate the caring-satisfaction gaps for each domain, while the scatter graphs plot the two variables relative to each other.
Of the three cities, Hong Kong exhibited the largest gaps between caring and satisfaction, especially in the domains of housing (-1.3 points), quality of government (-1.2 points), education (-1 point) and environmental protection (-0.7 points). The maximum possible gap is -3 points.

Shanghai also showed significant gaps, but on a smaller scale than Hong Kong, in areas such as housing (-1 point), medical care (-0.8 points), education (-0.6 points) and environmental protection (-0.5 points).

However, in Singapore, satisfaction levels came very close to meeting, and in a couple of cases, exceed caring levels in all domains except for housing (-0.6 points) and to a lesser extent medical care (-0.4 points). To a large degree, dissatisfaction with housing in Singapore came from migrant workers, who lived in employer-provided dormitories and rented accommodations, sometimes in very crowded conditions.

**Figure 2: Caring and Satisfaction, Shanghai**

Shanghai showed significant gaps, but on a smaller scale than Hong Kong, in areas such as housing (-1 point), medical care (-0.8 points), education (-0.6 points) and environmental protection (-0.5 points).
However, as the scatter graphs make clear, in Singapore and Shanghai, even where there were caring-satisfaction gaps, the average satisfaction score was greater than 2.5, which meant that a majority of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied. The exception was with housing in Shanghai, which fell just below the neutral point. On the other hand, Hong Kong had a cluster of domains—housing, quality of government, education and environmental protection—where a majority of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
Later I’d like to ask you some more detailed questions about the issue you think the government should focus on the most. Out of your \([n]^{8}\) choices, what is the number 1 issue that the government should address?

Figure 4: Domain Priorities in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore

In all three cities, housing was in the top three priorities for government action; however in Hong Kong it was not only the top issue, it exceeded the next most popular priority, education, by 18 percentage points. In general, the three cities also assigned a high level of priority to education and medical care.

Medical care was the top issue in Singapore, and virtually tied with housing for the top issue in Shanghai. In Singapore, public attention on medical care may have been elevated due to the government’s November 2015 roll-out of the MediShield Life programme, Singapore first universal health care policy, which coincided with the survey’s timing.

The cities did have some unique concerns. In Hong Kong, quality of government tied for second place with education, selected by 16 per cent of respondents. Given the political events of the last two years and reported widespread dissatisfaction with government performance,\(^9\) this was to be expected.

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8. \(n = \) The number of issues the respondent said that he or she cared a lot about. If the respondent did not care a lot about any issues, he/she was asked about the issues he/she cared about “some”. If the respondent did not care “some” about any issues, he/she was asked about the issues he/she cared “not much” about.

9. For example, in November 2015 (which coincided with the Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators survey period), the University of Hong Kong’s Public Opinion Programme reported that 45.4% of respondents gave the HKSAR Government...
Figure 5: Top Four Domain Priorities by Occupation

Hong Kong

1st
Managers & Administrators 31
Professionals 35
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 40
Clerks 42
Craft, Trades & Factory 31
Service and Sales 33
Elementary Occupations 32
Homemakers 37
Retired 38
Unemployed 33
Students 29

2nd
Managers & Administrators 25
Professionals 23
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 18
Clerks 15
Craft, Trades & Factory 22
Service and Sales 23
Elementary Occupations 16
Homemakers 16
Retired 14
Unemployed 22
Students 22

3rd
Managers & Administrators 13
Professionals 14
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 13
Clerks 14
Craft, Trades & Factory 16
Service and Sales 14
Elementary Occupations 11
Homemakers 11
Retired 16
Unemployed 22
Students 16

4th
Managers & Administrators 7
Professionals 10
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 13
Clerks 14
Craft, Trades & Factory 9
Service and Sales 11
Elementary Occupations 10
Homemakers 11
Retired 16
Unemployed 23
Students 32

Singapore

1st
Managers & Administrators 24
Professionals 24
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 23
Clerks 28
Craft, Trades & Factory 28
Service and Sales 26
Elementary Occupations 23
Homemakers 23
Retired 24
Unemployed 20
Students 27

2nd
Managers & Administrators 18
Professionals 17
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 19
Clerks 28
Craft, Trades & Factory 23
Service and Sales 24
Elementary Occupations 24
Homemakers 20
Retired 18
Unemployed 15
Students 19

Shanghai

1st
Managers & Administrators 24
Professionals 23
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 19
Clerks 18
Craft, Trades & Factory 17
Service and Sales 13
Elementary Occupations 15
Homemakers 14
Retired 19
Unemployed 21
Students 36

2nd
Managers & Administrators 17
Professionals 19
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 18
Clerks 17
Craft, Trades & Factory 17
Service and Sales 18
Elementary Occupations 13
Homemakers 13
Retired 19
Unemployed 12
Students 16

3rd
Managers & Administrators 14
Professionals 17
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 15
Clerks 18
Craft, Trades & Factory 18
Service and Sales 14
Elementary Occupations 14
Homemakers 14
Retired 16
Unemployed 10
Students 14

4th
Managers & Administrators 8
Professionals 12
Assoc. Professionals & Technicians 12
Clerks 12
Craft, Trades & Factory 14
Service and Sales 13
Elementary Occupations 11
Homemakers 11
Retired 15
Unemployed 10
Students 10

Figures show percentage of respondents who chose the domain as their number 1 issue for the government to address.

In cases where there are more than one domain tied for 4th place, the more popular domain overall is shown.

Chi-square = 337.2 with 90 df
p ≤ 0.0001
In Shanghai, environmental protection was chosen by 12 per cent compared to just 4 per cent in the other two cities. Given the severity of air pollution in Shanghai it was understandable that environmental protection had captured the priority of a small but significant segment of the public.

In Singapore, work and business opportunities stood out as the second ranked priority, chosen by 16 per cent of respondents. In Hong Kong and Shanghai, it did not even achieve double digits. However, this prioritisation of work opportunities was disproportionately found among low-wage migrant workers, who made up 20 per cent of the sample but 45 per cent of those who wanted the government to address it first.

Breaking down respondents’ priorities by occupation (see Figure 5), a few data points stood out. A large plurality of retirees in all three cities wanted the government to prioritise medical care. This was to be expected as medical need tends to increase with age. Perhaps the more surprising finding was that in Hong Kong, although retirees were the only occupational group that did not put housing first, medical care only exceeded the second choice (housing) by 11 percentage points, compared to 23 percentage points in Singapore and 29 points in Shanghai.

In Singapore, most occupations aside from professionals, clerks, elementary occupations and students put medical care in first place. Aside from migrant workers (all of whom were categorised as elementary workers) putting work opportunities first, students also wanted the government to prioritise work opportunities alongside housing, with 20 per cent choosing the two domains. Clerks also put housing ahead of medical care by quite a large margin, 28 per cent to 19 per cent.

In Shanghai, the pattern of responses was more dispersed among housing, education and medical care. However, students stood out in choosing environmental protection as their top government priority, just ahead of job opportunities. Young educated people in Shanghai may be leading a change in environmental awareness and it will be interesting to see how this develops in the future.

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9. a “negative” or “very negative” rating, compared to 25.9% who gave a “positive” or “very positive” rating. Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme (2016), “People’s Satisfaction with the HKSAR Government - per poll (31/5/2016) - Table”, https://www.hkupop.hku.hk/english/popexpress/sargperf/sarg/, accessed 2 June 2016.

Overall Life Evaluation

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 representing the worst possible life for you and 10 representing the best possible life for you, what score would you give to your life as a whole?
Using the same scale, what score would you give to your life in 5 years?

Hong Kong respondents gave their lives lower scores than respondents in Singapore and Shanghai (see Figure 6). However, a majority of them still scored their lives at 6 or above. This contrasted with their much more negative views about life in Hong Kong, as will be shown in later sections. This is indicative of a difference between personal dissatisfaction and sociopolitical dissatisfaction.

Shanghai is one of China’s richest cities and its mean score of 7.4 was considerably higher than the national mean score (5.245) reported by the Gallup World Poll in 2013-15, which used the same question.\(^\text{11}\) Non-residents in Shanghai (those without household registration) gave significantly lower scores than residents, at 6.9 vs. 7.8. Since eligibility for social services in China is tied to household registration, rural migrants to cities cannot access public benefits from subsidised housing to education. They also face social and employment discrimination. Many (but not all) work in low-wage positions in the service industry, manufacturing and elementary occupations. Their lower satisfaction scores may reflect their lower social status.

However, in Singapore, the pattern appeared to be reversed, with non-citizens scoring their lives more highly than citizens, at 7.8 vs. 6.9 (close to the 6.739 recorded by Gallup)\(^\text{12}\). It would be interesting to carry out further research into why Singapore’s migrant workers, who come from abroad, work in low-wage positions, and are vulnerable to labour abuses, are so much more satisfied with their lives relative to citizens than Shanghai’s migrant workers are to residents.

Respondents were also asked what score they would give to their lives in 5 years’ time as a measure of optimism or pessimism. Shanghai’s respondents were the most optimistic, with the mean score rising from 7.4 to 8.2. Hong

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Figure 6: Present Life Evaluation Score, 0-10 Scale, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore


\(^{12}\) Ibid.
Kong respondents were marginally pessimistic, with the mean score dropping from 5.8 to 5.7. Singapore’s mean score was unchanged.

Analysing life evaluation by age, in all three cities, older respondents were more likely to give the “best” scores (9-10). The pattern was especially pronounced in Shanghai. However, in Singapore and Hong Kong, all age groups had fairly similar distributions of life evaluation scores and differences were barely statistically significant.
6 Perceptions of Improvement or Worsening

Since you started living in [city], overall, has it become a better or worse place to live?

Out of the three cities, Hong Kong was the most negative, with 70 per cent of respondents saying their city has become worse or much worse, whereas only 11 per cent and 9 per cent in Shanghai and Singapore said the same, respectively.

In Shanghai, about half of both residents and non-residents said Shanghai has got better, although residents were more likely to pick the extreme response categories of “much better” or “much worse”. This is perhaps expected since 65 per cent of migrant respondents had lived there for 5 years or less, and have therefore had less time to experience changes.

Singapore’s non-citizens, however, viewed changes in the city even more positively than citizens did, with 74 per cent compared to 64 per cent saying that Singapore had got better. This was despite the fact that 60 per cent of migrant respondents had been present in Singapore for 5 years or less. Further investigation is needed to explain this finding.

Analysing responses by age, in Hong Kong, younger respondents were more likely to say that Hong Kong has worsened: 79 per cent of 18-29-year-olds say Hong Kong has worsened, compared to 61 per cent of 60-65-year-olds.

In Shanghai, differences by age among residents and non-residents were insignificant or weakly significant, respectively. In Singapore, older respondents said that Singapore has got better. Among non-residents, there was no statistically significant relationship by age as virtually everyone said Singapore has improved or stayed the same.
Figure 10: Perceptions of improvement or Worsening by Age, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore

Hong Kong

Residents

Non-residents

Shanghai

Residents

Non-residents

Singapore

Citizens and Residents

Non-residents

* The categories of "worse" and "much worse" were combined due to very few responses in the latter category.
** Age groups 50-59 and 60-65 were combined as there were very few non-residents aged 60-65.
*** No non-residents selected the "Much worse" category.
Singapore also had no significant relationship between perceptions of improvement and worsening and education or monthly household income.

However, in Shanghai, higher education was connected to perceptions of improvement (although post-graduates were more polarised), but in Hong Kong the opposite was true. A similar pattern existed for household income, whereby higher-income respondents in Shanghai were more likely to think their city has got better, but in Hong Kong they were more apt to say their city has got worse.

**Figure 11: Perceptions of Improvement or Worsening by Educational Attainment, Hong Kong and Shanghai**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Shanghai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary or Less</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational, Technical or Associate</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The categories "Worse" and "Much worse" were combined due to very few responses in the latter category.

**Figure 12: Perceptions of Improvement or Worsening by Monthly Household Income, Hong Kong and Shanghai**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Shanghai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;10,000 HKD</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-19,999 HKD</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000-29,999 HKD</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000-49,999 HKD</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000+ HKD</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The categories "Better" and "Much better" were combined due to very few responses in the latter category.

"Don’t know" responses excluded.
Aspirations to Stay or Move Away

**If you could freely choose to live anywhere in the world, would you stay or move away?**

Respondents were asked whether given a free choice, they would choose to stay in their city or move away. This question was worded aspirationally so that respondents would answer based on their desire rather than practical constraints. However, when comparing across cities, extra care should be taken because the populations being compared are different in wealth, education and international exposure. The cities being compared are also different in important ways. Singapore is a city-state with a strong national identity, while Shanghai is a wealthy first-tier city within a much broader national setting. Hong Kong has a very different history as a former British colony and a node for mass immigration and emigration.

The survey found that only 55 per cent of Hong Kong respondents would ideally want to stay, compared to 81 per cent of Shanghai respondents and 74 per cent of Singapore respondents.

**Figure 13: Aspirations to Stay or Move Away, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore**

As a proxy measure of international exposure, respondents were asked the question below.

**Figure 14: Do you currently have any parents, children, brothers, sisters, or spouses living abroad?**

At 42 per cent Singapore clearly had the highest proportion of respondents with close relatives overseas, due to its large population of foreign origin. When only citizens were included, the figure dropped to 24 per cent, comparable to Hong Kong. For Shanghai, the figure was only 7 per cent.

As Table 2 overleaf shows, having relatives abroad had no correlation with whether or not respondents want to stay or move away in any of the three cities.
Table 2: Prefer to Stay or Move Way by Relatives Abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Shanghai</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to Stay</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to Move Away</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Don’t know” and “refuse” responses excluded.

However, the desire to stay or move away was strongly associated with perceptions of whether the city has got better or worse over time. As Figure 15 shows, the association was strong in Singapore and Hong Kong and weaker in Shanghai. In all three cities, 90 per cent or more respondents who said their city has become much better wished to stay. Among respondents who thought their city has become much worse, only a quarter to a fifth wanted to stay in Singapore and Hong Kong, respectively, but two-thirds still wanted to stay in Shanghai. This implies that in Shanghai, factors besides perceptions of liveability influence the desire to leave or stay more than in Singapore or Hong Kong.

Figure 15: Percentage of Respondents Who Wish to Stay by Perceptions of their City Becoming Better or Worse Over Time
In your view, is [city] a good place for children to grow up or not? In your view, is [city] a good place for retirees to live or not?

In Shanghai and Singapore, huge majorities—83 per cent and 87 per cent respectively—said their city was a good or very good place for children to grow up. In contrast, only 32 per cent of Hong Kong respondents said the same.

On the question of retirement, while Hong Kong respondents were still the most negative, with 61 per cent saying that Hong Kong was not a good place for retirees, significant minorities in Shanghai (37 per cent) and Singapore (39 per cent) also said their cities were not good for retirees.

Interestingly though, in Hong Kong, retirees themselves were significantly more positive than average, with 59 per cent of them saying Hong Kong was a good place to retire. Further investigation is warranted into how

Figure 16: Perceptions of Hong Kong Shanghai and Singapore as a Good Place for Children to Grow Up

Figure 17: Perceptions of Hong Kong Shanghai and Singapore as a Good Place for Retirees
much this positive perception was due specifically to their experience of retirement, and how much of it was related to older respondents’ more positive outlook in general. As noted in previous sections, 60-65-year-olds gave themselves somewhat higher life evaluation scores and were less likely to think that Hong Kong had worsened as a place to live.

It was also found that perceptions of whether cities were good for children were strongly correlated with whether people thought their cities had got better or worse, especially in Hong Kong. Perceptions about whether cities were good for retirees were also linked to perceptions of improvement or worsening, especially in Hong Kong and Singapore. In general, the association was not as strong with retirees as with children, except for in Singapore.


Worry About Poverty and Supporting Your Family

How worried are you about poverty in [city]?
How worried are you about being able to provide for you and your family’s daily needs?

Figure 20: Worry About Poverty and Supporting Your Family, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore

The two questions above focused on perceptions of economic struggle from different angles. The first, about poverty, focuses on sociopolitical perceptions of the city, while the second focuses on personal worry. Again, Hong Kong showed a different response pattern to the other two cities.

In Hong Kong, generalised worry about poverty ("very worried" and "very worried") far exceeded respondents' worries about supporting their own families. While 68 per cent were worried or very worried about poverty, only 48 per cent were worried or very worried about supporting their own families.

In Shanghai and Singapore, however, personal worry exceeded sociopolitical worry: 35 per cent in Shanghai and 53 per cent in Singapore expressed worry about supporting their families, but only 28 per cent and 47 per cent respectively were worried about poverty.

Data Access Enquiries

As part of Civic Exchange’s commitment to promoting public policy research and civic engagement, the Asian Urban-Wellbeing Indicators database, on which this report is based, will be made available to the public. For data access enquiries, please contact Civic Exchange at info@civic-exchange.org.