The Emergence of Radical Politics in Hong Kong: Causes and Impact

Joseph Yu-shek Cheng

Abstract

This article reviews the literature on the radicalization of politics in Hong Kong, with an emphasis on its causes and impact. Evidence on the deteriorating living standards and the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor has been substantial. People naturally blame the government under such circumstances. They have been especially angry with government policies favoring the business community, and the “greed” and corruption of the Donald Tsang and C. Y. Leung administrations. The consensus on the origins, characteristics, modes of operation, and so on of the new social movements is strong; and the same applies to the failure of the government to anticipate and absorb their challenges. Confidence in the maintenance of social stability remains high, but there is little optimism that the performance of the government will soon improve.

In the first year of the C. Y. Leung administration, Hong Kong people in general are very frustrated with the unsatisfactory performance of the

Joseph Yu-shek CHENG is Chair Professor of Political Science and Coordinator of the Contemporary China Research Project, City University of Hong Kong. He is the founding editor of the Hong Kong Journal of Social Sciences and The Journal of Comparative Asian Development. He has published widely on the political development in China and Hong Kong, Chinese foreign policy and local government in southern China. He has recently edited volumes on China: A New Stage of Development for An Emerging Superpower; and The Second Chief Executive of Hong Kong SAR: Evaluating the Tsang Years 2005 -2012. He is now serving as convener of Alliance for True Democracy.