

Trace and explain the political participation of local Chinese in Hong Kong in the 20th century.

During the 20th century, the political participation of local Chinese in Hong Kong continued to increase. From the limited participation period (1900-1945) further improved to the expansion period (1945-1982), and finally entered the fully participated period (1982-2000) which eventually ended the British-led monopoly.

During the period of 1900-1945, there was limited political participation of local Chinese in Hong Kong. At that period, only a small number of local Chinese leaders participated in the 2 councils (Executive and Legislative Councils). Chinese associations also got limited function. In the two councils, most of the members of the two councils were British with only a small number of local Chinese leaders were appointed in the two councils. For example, Wei-Yuk was appointed as the non-official member in the Legislative Council in 1914. At the same period, there were at most 3 local Chinese being the Legislative Council member. Moreover, in the Executive Council, until 1926, Chow Shouson was appointed the first Chinese unofficial member of the Executive Council. These reflected that there was limited participation of local Chinese in the two councils. On the other hand, regarding Chinese associations, Chinese associations such as Po Leung Kuk and Tung Wah Groups of Hospitals only worked as social welfare with low political participation. The Heung Yee Kuk that established in 1926 was only advisory in nature without any power. Until the period of Japanese occupation, the Chinese associations such as the “Two Chinese Councils” were just assisting the Japanese government to rule Hong Kong with limited power. These can show that there was limited political participation of local Chinese in Hong Kong in this period.

British factor and local factor contributed to the limited political participation of local Chinese in Hong Kong. In terms of British factor, Britain ruled Hong Kong in the name of colonizer, there was a fear that giving out too much power to local Chinese would be an obstacle to British administration in Hong Kong. Hence, in the British Hong Kong government, all senior important posts, such as the Governor and senior officials were British. The Governor even had the power to appoint and veto the members of the Two Councils directly. There was a ruling of Hong Kong in central administration to ensure the British administration would not be affected by the local Chinese. At the same time, in terms of local factor, there were respectable local Chinese with wealth into the administration to help ruling Hong Kong. For example, Chow Shouson had an important role in the Gungzhou-Hong Kong General strike during

1925-1926 to mediate between the British Hong Kong Government and the Chinese Guangzhou Government. This made him appointed as the first Chinese unofficial member of the Executive Council in 1926.

The period of 1945-82 is the expansion period of political participation of local Chinese in Hong Kong. In this period, there was significant increase in local Chinese participation in politics. It can be seen in terms of the two councils, Urban Council and the civil servants. In terms of the two councils, the ratio of Chinese in the two councils increased rapidly. In 1974, there were 19 Chinese members in Executive Council and 23 Chinese members in the Legislative Council, which was half of the total number of members. Moreover, in terms of Urban Council, Ngan Shing-kwan was elected as the first Chinese member in the Urban Council. There was Chinese participation in the Urban Council. Furthermore, regarding civil servants, Paul Tsui Ka-cheung ended the monopoly of British being administrative officer in Hong Kong and he was the first Chinese administrative officer in 1948. Afterwards, the number of Chinese administrative officers increased to 23 in 1962, which was 15% of the total number of administrative officers. More and more Chinese could be administrative officers and took part in the ruling of Hong Kong. It can show that there was an increase in local Chinese participation in politics so it is an expansion period.

International factor and local factor contributed to the increase in local Chinese participation in politics. In terms of international factor, after the Second World War, there was a trend of decolonization when there was deterioration in British and French colonies and the colonies fought for independence. As the British Hong Kong Government was ruling Hong Kong as colonizer, the government need to appoint more local Chinese into the government in order to gain Hong Kong citizens support towards the government. For example, in the two councils, there was increase of Chinese members from 3 members in Executive Council and 5 members in Legislative Council to 11 members and 10 members respectively. This allowed more local Chinese to take part in Chinese politics. Moreover, in terms of local factor, due to the economic boom after the Second World War and the generalization of education, there were more middle class with more political sense and hoped to enter the government. For example, Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor joined the government in 1980 as an administrative officer. This made the importance of Chinese in government increased.

The period of 1982-2000 is the period that the local Chinese in Hong Kong fully participated in politics. Local Chinese in Hong Kong not only participated fully in terms of the two Councils, but also participated in district administration. At the same time,

there was also improvement in terms of civil servants. In terms of the two councils, more and more Chinese became the members of the Executive and Legislative Councils. In the election of the Legislative Council in 1995, the elected 60 council members were all Chinese. Moreover, in district politics, in the 1982 District Council election, people aged 21 or older and having resided in HK for 7 years or more got right to vote. It can be said that most of the local Chinese in Hong Kong got the right to vote and able to participate in district politics. At the same, the District Council members elected were mostly Chinese so the political participation of Chinese improved. Moreover, in terms of civil servants, there was mounting Chinese participation, such as Li Kwan-ha being the Commissioner of Police in 1989. More examples were Anson Chan Fang On Sang (first Chinese Chief Secretary in 1993) and Donald Tsang Yam Kuen (first Chinese Financial Secretary in 1995). After the reunification in 1997, all senior officials in the government were Chinese. Chinese got full control over Hong Kong's politics. It can show that this period is the period that the local Chinese in Hong Kong fully participated in politics

The Chinese factor contributed to the period that the local Chinese in Hong Kong fully participated in politics. Since Hong Kong was returning to China in 1997, Britain would like to avoid autocratic leadership in Hong Kong from China after the return. As a result, there was a massive reform towards a representative government. This included introducing election in Legislative Council in 1985. In 1995, all the appointed seats were abolished and all the 60 seats were formed by election. As a result, local Chinese not only received right to vote, there was also establishment of many political parties. For example, Martin Lee Chu-ming and Szeto Wah established “United Democrats of Hong Kong” to participate in Hong Kong politics by political parties. Furthermore, as the Joint Declaration stated the principle of “Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong”, the British Hong Kong government appointed Chinese to be senior posts of the government. Examples were Anson Chan Fang On Sang and Donald Tsang Yam Kuen. This facilitated the training of future government officials. Until the return of sovereignty, Chinese got full control over Hong Kong's politics and Tung Chee-hwa became the first Chief Executive in Hong Kong when all the senior government officials were Chinese. Local Chinese in Hong Kong fully participated in politics.

In conclusion, local Chinese in Hong Kong experienced from limited participation period (1900-1945) to expansion period (1945-1982) and towards the fully participated period (1982-2000). There was increased political participated and a fully and in-depth participation at the end.

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