# SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF NEW IMMIGRANTS FROM THE MAINLAND CHINA IN HONG KONG – A RESILIENCE APPROACH

LOU Vivian WQ[2] and CHAN Cecilia LW[1,2]

*Centre on Behavioral Health[1], Department of Social Work & Social Administration[2]*
*The University of Hong Kong*

## Introduction

Hong Kong is a city of immigrants, many of whom come from Mainland China. Over the past few decades, due to historical, socio-economic, and political reasons, the profile and composition of Chinese immigrants in the territory have altered dramatically. Before the 1970s, the majority of Chinese immigrants were illegal immigrants comprising mostly of single men in their twenties. In recent decades, however, most of the Chinese immigrants have been legal immigrants. They are predominantly dependents, mostly wives and children of Hong Kong residents, who have entered the territory to be reunited with their families (Lin & Liao, 1998; Home Affairs Department, 2003).

The fact that more than 90% of the legal immigrants are wives and children of Hong Kong residents is due to an increase in cross-border marriages between Hong Kong residents and Mainland Chinese. Cross-border marriages doubled from 8,000 in 1979 to more than 17,000 in 1998 (Chinese Civil Affairs Bureau, 1998). There are no comprehensive statistics on the profile of families comprising couples from Mainland China and Hong Kong. A glimpse of the profile of this kind of family may, however, be obtained from a government report entitled "Hong Kong Residents with Spouse/Children in the Mainland of China" prepared by the Census and Statistics Department in 1999. According to this report, 84,700 registered marriages comprised Hong Kong husbands and wives who were living in Mainland China, and 36% of these couples had children. The majority of the wives, 72.8% of those with children and 83.7% of those without children, were between 20 and 40 years old.

Migration implies that immigrants need to adjust to a new physical and psychological environment. New immigrants may encounter difficulties living in Hong Kong, such as poor housing, language problems, financial problems, and difficulty entering the job market (Home Affairs Department, 2003). Hence, new arrivals, particularly Mainland wives and children, are increasingly the target clients of social service agencies provided by the government and by non-government

organizations (Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 2003). In Hong Kong, there prevails a negative stereotyping of Mainland Chinese involved in cross-border marriages; particularly of Mainland women marrying Hong Kong men. They are either seen as ungrateful for the life they had on the Mainland or scheming to obtain "material benefits" in Hong Kong through the marriage (Guan, 1990; Veloo, 1995).

Since the economic recession of the late 1990s, Hong Kong has faced a huge budget deficit. As a result, the government has come under some pressure to cut public expenditure. New arrivals are often regarded by the community as a burden on the already overstretched public resources such as housing, healthcare, social services, and social welfare. The government has also developed a population policy to exclude adult new immigrants who have been in Hong Kong for less than seven years from medical, housing, and social security welfare (Task Force on Population Policy, 2003).

Much of the existing literature on new immigrants from Mainland China focuses on either the difficulties they face or the possible negative impacts on immigrant women and their families (HKISS, 1997; Lam & Mok, 2002; Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres, 1999; HKYWCA, 1998; Lai, 1997). Few studies have explored new immigrants' social integration – the social identity study carried out by Chan (2001, 2003) is one example. However, migration, whether in the form of internal movement within a country from one city to another, or movement from one country to another, has become more and more common due to globalization. It is worth, therefore, exploring the factors affecting the social integration of new immigrants, particularly from a resilience or strength point of view. The results of such an exploration could then help to improve social policy and service provision, and thus the quality of life of new immigrants could be enhanced.

This paper explores both the factors affecting the social integration of new immigrants from a resilience point of view, and the relationship between the social integration and the subjective well-being of new immigrants.

**Migration and Social Integration**

Social integration is a very important concept in classical sociology. Durkheim suggested that a cohesive society can facilitate the constant interchange of ideas and feelings between members, and act as a form of mutual support. Through a sense of social attachment, a person can find meaning in his/her life and "share in the collective energy and support their own when exhausted" (Durkheim, 1951). Ideally, in a socially integrated community, people from different backgrounds can come to tolerate and understand differences, and learn to respect each other.

Social integration is generally assumed to have a positive effect on the psychological well-being of people facing different kinds of adversity, including migration. This is true of Asian immigrants in the United States (Diwan & Jonnalagadda, 2001), Persian immigrants in Australia (Foroughi, Misajon, & Cummins, 2001), and migrants from the former Soviet Union in Israel (Kheimets & Epstein, 2001). As Berry and his colleagues (1988) argue, the mental health of new arrivals depends greatly on whether they can successfully integrate into the society and not become marginalized. From an empirical point of view, social integration is a multidimensional concept, but there is a lack of consensus on how exactly it should be conceptualized (Carling, 1992; Kennedy, 1989). It can be perceived both in terms of behavioral components, such as participating in social activities and being involved in social networks (Forrester-Jones & Grant, 1997), and cognitive components, such as a sense of community (Brissette, Cohen, & Seeman, 2000).

The process of migration increases the chances of becoming socially isolated and experiencing disadvantages of being socially integrated. First, establishing and maintaining a specific set of linkages among informal connections is one of the indicators of social integration at a behavioral level. However, connections to an informal social network in the hometown of the immigrants might be severed because of the large physical distance. Even though many Chinese new immigrants come from Guangdong province, which is quite near Hong Kong, day-to-day communication with members of their extended family and old friends is significantly harder to maintain. Given the unfavorable attitude of the public and the media in Hong Kong towards Mainland immigrants, it is not surprising that new immigrants from the Mainland experience a lack of social support after arrival (Hong Kong Women's Association, 1999) even though they have a great need for social support of both an instrumental and an emotional nature (Wong, 2001). Within a person's social network, interactions are frequent and a support function is often activated– the larger the size of the network, the greater the availability of social support (Gottlieb, 1981).

Second, new immigrants may lack the knowledge or other means to access community resources. Participating in ongoing activities within the community on a regular basis is regarded as a part of being socially integrated. Such activities could relate to daily life needs as well as access to community facilities and resources (Shadish & Bootzin, 1984). Since social services are not as well developed on the Mainland as they are in Hong Kong, new immigrants may have little knowledge about community resources and be hesitant to use formal support systems such as social services provided by non-government organizations and government departments (Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council, 1998; Wong, 2001). Due to the

difference in living standards between the Mainland and Hong Kong, new immigrants may find that their living standards are worse after they are reunited with their families in the territory. The 2001 Population Census (2001) showed that the median monthly domestic household income of persons from the Mainland who had resided in Hong Kong for less than seven years (NRs) was HK$12,050, significantly lower than that of the population of Hong Kong as a whole (HK$18,705). Their low social economic status and their lack of knowledge about community resources place them in a vulnerable position when it comes to participating in different social activities. Hence, it generally believed that the more an individual participates in society, the better socially integrated that individual is.

Finally, new immigrants have to make sense of who they are and create meaning out of their new social reality. Sonn (2002) argues that people's psychological processes are embedded in and inseparable from their physical and social context. Behavioral changes are much easier than changes in values and beliefs. The unwelcoming attitude of the general public of Hong Kong make the environment in which new immigrants have to build their sense of belonging to the community even more hostile (Chan 2001, 2003; Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres, 1999; Lou, 2000). If new arrivals can identify more with the host culture, they can become more integrated within society.

It is argued that despite adverse objective circumstances, humans have a remarkable ability to find new meaning in their reality and maintain normal levels of subjective well-being. Some of the factors that may contribute to adaptation are positive life orientation, active participation in social services, and general life satisfaction. Maintaining an optimistic attitude toward life has been argued to help new immigrants from the Mainland reconstruct their view of difficulties (Wong, 2002). Participating in social services provided by the local community has been found to help new immigrants increase their knowledge of the environment and equip them with adjustment skills, including language and job skills (Au, 1998; Chow & Ho, 1996; Lo, 1992). Feeling disappointed with life in general after migration has been found to have a negative effect on the well-being of new arrivals (Lou, Chan, & Chow, 2003). Therefore, it is hypothesized that these three factors would have positive correlations with the three indicators of social integration: social identity, social network, and social participation.

**Purpose**

This study investigates some of the factors that might contribute to the social integration of new immigrants from Mainland China, focusing on optimism, social service participation, and general life satisfaction. Three levels of social integration –

ntification with Hong Kong, having a social network, and social participation – are stressed. Previous literature has argued that the well-being of new immigrants depends greatly on whether they can successfully integrate into society and avoid becoming marginalized. Therefore, the relationship between social integration and subjective well-being is also explored.

**Method**

Sample. The respondents of the present study were recruited through a community-based social service centre located in the Sha Tin district, Hong Kong. The centre was sponsored by the Social Welfare Department of Hong Kong from February 2001 to serve new immigrants living in the Sha Tin, Wai, and Tin Shui Wai areas of Hong Kong who had been in the territory for less than one year. The centre adopted a one-stop service and a proactive approach, providing new immigrants with four types of service: job skills training, life skills training, counseling, and a networking service. The centre serves, on average, about 1,200 people every year. This study randomly selected about people from the center's membership lists for each of the years 2001, 2002, and 2003. A total of 354 new immigrants were invited to participate in the study. Of these, 285 accepted the invitation and were interviewed using standardized questionnaires from July to September 2003. The sample characteristics are shown in Table 1.

[insert Table 1 here]

The majority of the respondents were women (97.2%) and their mean age was 33. More than half of the respondents (56.5%) lived in public housing together with their spouse, children, and/or other family members. More than 80% of the respondents (75.6%) had received more than six years of formal education in the Mainland. About half of the respondents were living with their spouse and children, and the median household size was four. During the time of the interviews, more than half of the respondents were housewives with one child.

Measures. In addition to asking for personal information on sex (0 = female, 1 = male), age (in years), years of education (in years), marital status (1 = currently married, 0 = single/divorced/widowed/separated), and family income (multiple rses from self, parent, spouse, savings, in-laws, friends, other relatives, and CSSA), the questionnaire had five parts. The first part included a single question on the respondents' level of identification with Hong Kong, "How much do you perceive yourself as ong Kong person?", on a 10-point scale from "not at all = 0" to "100% = 10."

The extent of the respondents' peer social network was assessed by asking them: "How many friends do you have in your peer group?" The number of friends they

indicated was used for data analysis. This question was followed by a multiple choice question on support function that asked the respondents whether their friends could serve the following 10 functions: 1) encouraging a sense of self-worth; 2) encouraging a sense of belonging; 3) being helped to release negative emotions; 4) help them to release negative emotions; 5) being helped in daily tasks such as child care; 6) helping them in daily tasks; 7) being lent money when in need; 8) borrowing money; 9) consulting them before making a major decision; and 10) being consulted when they have a major decision to make. For each of the functions, the respondents could choose either "Yes = 1" or "No = 0." The sum of the scores from each category was regarded as indicating the level of support function from peers.

The respondents' level of social participation was assessed by asking them how frequently they were involved in 23 activities on a four-point scale: "Never = 0," "Seldom = 1," "Sometimes = 2," and "Often = 3." The 23 activities were: going to an apartment store, to the market, to the post office, to a hair salon, to a shopping mall, to a bank, to the library, and to the theatre, doing physical exercise, going on an organized trip, visiting the community centre, visiting neighbors, visiting friends, going for a walk, having Yum Cha, going to the canteen, riding public transport, visiting a place of worship, chatting with their children's parents, doing volunteer work, attending a self-help group, helping people from their hometown, and making suggestions to the government. The sum of all the scores was used for data analysis.

The respondents' level of social service participation was assessed by a single question, "How often do you get involved in activities provided by this centre?", on a 10-point scale from "not at all = 0" to "very actively participate = 10."

The respondents' level of optimism was assessed by the revised Life Orientation Scale (Scheier & Carver, 1985). This scale aims to measure dispositional optimism, and the revised Chinese version is composed of seven items on a four-point scale from "totally disagree" to "totally agree." The sum of the scale scores was used for data analysis.

The subjective well-being of the respondents was assessed by the Chinese Well-being Inventory, which was developed to assess four domains of well-being: the physical (16 items that they may have experienced over the previous four weeks), the social and functional (25 items over the previous seven days), the emotional (20 items over the previous seven days), and the spiritual (14 items). The respondents were asked to indicate whether they had certain symptoms, or had felt certain emotions, or agreed with a certain statement on a 10-point scale.

Data analyses. Descriptive analyses were used to examine the frequency distribution of the major constructs of the study: optimism, social service participation, social integration, and subjective well-being. The relationship between optimism,

social service participation, and social integration was explored using analysis of variance. A correlation coefficient was computed to explore the relationship between social integration and subjective well-being.

**Results**

The results of the present study are presented in four parts: optimism and social integration, social service participation and social integration, general life satisfaction and social integration, and social integration and subjective well-being.

Optimism and social integration. Within the theoretical range from 0 to 21, the mean score of the respondents was 12.5 with a standardized deviation of 2.12. About 70% of the respondents (71.6%) had a positive life orientation. It can be seen from Table 2 that the higher the level of optimism of the respondents, the higher their level of identification with Hong Kong, and the greater their degree of participation in social activities. Different level of optimism did not differ significantly in terms of friend network size and support function.

[insert Table 2 here]

Social service participation and social integration. It was found that the majority of the respondents (56.7%) participated in social services offered by the centre higher than the medium level. Job skills training (70.6%) and life skills training (56.7%) were the two most popular services among the respondents. Table 3 shows that the more the respondents participated in different services, the higher the level of social integration that they obtained, as indicated by their degree of identification with Hong Kong, the extent of their friendship network and the level of their support function, and their degree of social participation.

[insert Table 3 here]

General life satisfaction and social integration. The majority of the respondents (69.5%) were satisfied with their life in general after arriving in Hong Kong. Table 4 shows that the respondents' level of general life satisfaction was correlated with their level of identification with Hong Kong and their level of social participation. The higher their level of general life satisfaction, the higher were their levels of identification with Hong Kong and social participation.

[insert Table 4 here]

Social integration and subjective well-being. The correlation coefficients between social integration indicators and subjective well-being measures are shown in Table 5. It was found that social integration indicators were significantly correlated with subjective well-being measures, particularly in the areas of social and functional, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Respondents with a high level of identification with Hong Kong were more likely to enjoy a high level of social competence, positive

emotions, and spiritual well-being. The extent of their friendship network and the level of their support function were positively correlated with social competence and positive emotions. Moreover, a high level of social participation was correlated with fewer physical symptoms and negative emotions, a higher level of social competence, more positive emotions, and a higher level of spiritual well-being.

[insert Table 5 here]


**Discussion**

The present study identified three factors that were associated with the level of social integration of new immigrants from the Mainland. They were: their level of optimism in their daily life, the extent of their active participation in community-based services provided for new immigrants, and their level of general life satisfaction.

Respondents who had a positive life orientation were found to be more likely to have a high level of identification with Hong Kong and a high level of social participation. It was understandable that positive life orientation was a life strength for social integration at cognitive and behavioral level under stress. With an optimistic attitude toward life in general, no matter what kind of difficulties new arrivals might face after migration, they could perceive them as less harsh, or even see a curse as a blessing (Wong, 2002). The unfavorable attitude of the public and even discrimination could motivate them to adapt to the new environment.

Participating in social services provided by the post-migration service centre was found to have a positive impact on all three measures of social integration: identification with Hong Kong, establishing a peer network, and social participation. As Sonn (2002) argues, immigrant adaptation is a process of community making that involves the negotiating and integration of cultural systems and identities developed in one context to a new context, and the development of ties between the old and the new. From this perspective, being part of a group of the same ethnicity can function as a means of social support and protect new immigrants experiencing change and adversity. By participating in the social services provided for them, they can not only learn new information and skills, but also share stories and common symbols, which can facilitate their sense of community and act as the basis for cultural identity. Hence, joining in social services allows immigrants to build a primary community and thus is a major facilitator of the social integration process.

Being satisfied with life in general was found to have a positive impact on their level of identification with Hong Kong and their level of social participation. Life is a mixture of the positive and the negative. Though new immigrants might have difficulties with the language, their living environment, and educating their children,

they can enjoy support from their spouses and other family members, experience intimate relationships with their children, and feel positive about their future. Hence, it was to be expected that being generally satisfied with life would help immigrants establish a new identity and enhance their level of social participation.

Of course, these potential factors were explored among new immigrants in particular geographic circumstances in Hong Kong. For example they were predominantly women aged between 20 and 40, a significant number of them wanted to join the job market in Hong Kong, and a significant number of them were housewives.

It was expected that all three measures of social integration would have positive correlations with indicators of subjective well-being, as was the case. Because the migration process is so difficult, it is argued that new arrivals are more vulnerable to mental health problems (Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres, 1999). It was encouraging to find that social integration had a positive effect on the subjective well-being of the new immigrants. It is worth noting that different degrees of social integration had different influences on subjective well-being. Physical well-being was correlated with social integration at the behavioral level, social well-being and positive emotions were correlated with all levels of social integration, while negative emotions and spiritual well-being were correlated with the cognitive and behavioral level of social integration.

The results of the present study have two important implications for social services. First, social intervention for new immigrants should focus on resilience factors so as to enhance social integration. Promoting a positive life attitude, encouraging social service participation, and enhancing general life satisfaction should be the main targets. Social services that focus on difficulties and problems should consider developing a more proactive approach through which new immigrants can establish identification with Hong Kong, build a friendship network, and enhance their level of social participation. Second, from an ideological point of view, new immigrants are people with both strengths and weaknesses. Their potential ability could become resources with which they can adapt to the new environment. Hence, the development and implementation of population and welfare policies should consider both aspects rather than focus on only one side.

**Conclusion**

Whether the new immigrants from the Mainland could successfully integrate into Hong Kong society was dependent on three factors: their level of optimism, their level of participation in social services, and their level of general life satisfaction. New immigrants who successfully integrated into Hong Kong society were more likely to

have a high level of subjective well-being. The results suggest that a resilience approach should be developed to promote social integration in Hong Kong with the emphasis placed on helping immigrants to develop an optimistic attitude, encouraging them to participate in social services, and enhancing their general life satisfaction.

**References**

Au, A. W. C. (1998). Using case studies to explore how family service help in the adjustment and child care of newly arrived Mainland Chinese immigrant mothers in Hong Kong. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong.

Berry, J. W., Kim, U., & Boski, P. (1988). Psychological acculturation of immigrants. In Y. Y. Kim & W. B. Gudykunst (Eds.), Cross-cultural adaptation: Current approaches. International and intercultural communication annual Vol. 11 (pp.62-89). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Brissette, I., Cohen, S., & Seeman, T. E. (2000). Measuring social integration and social networks. In S. Cohen, L. G. Underwood, & B. H. Gottlieb (Eds.), Social support measurement and intervention: A guide for health and social scientists. New York: Oxford University Press.

Carling, P. J. (1992). Community integration of people with psychiatric disabilities. In J. W. Jacobson, S. N. Burchard, & P. J. Carling (Eds.), Community living for people with developmental and psychiatric disabilities. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Census and Statistics Department (1999). Hong Kong residents with spouse/children in the Mainland of China. Special Topics Report No. 22. Hong Kong: Government Printer.

Census and Statistics Department (2001). Population census 2001: Summary results. Hong Kong: The Author.

Chan, R. M. C. 陳茂釗 (2001)。本地居民與新來港人士跨文化觀感及接納感研究報告。 香港：香港社會服務聯會。.

Chan, R. M. C. 陳茂釗 (2003)。本地居民與新來港人士跨文化觀感及接納感研究報告。 香港：香港社會服務聯會。.

Chinese Civil Affairs Bureau (1998). Chinese civil affairs statistical yearbook 1998. Beijing: The Author.

Chow, N., & Ho, K. M. (1996). Social work with new arrivals. In I. Chi & S. K. Cheung (Eds.), Social work in Hong Kong (pp.115-121). Hong Kong: Hong Kong Social Workers' Association.

Diwan, S., & Jonnalagadda, S. S. (2001). Social integration and health among Asian Indian immigrants in the United States. Journal of Gerontological Social Work,

36(1-2), 45-62.

Durkheim, E. (1951). Suicide: A study of sociology. Translated by J. A. Spaulding and G. Simpson. e Press.

Foroughi, E., Misajon, R., & Cummins, R. A. (2001). The relationship between migration, social support, and social integration on quality of life. Behavior Change, 18(3), 156-167.

Forrester-Jones, R. V. E., & Grant, G. (1997). Social network, social support and well-being. In R. V. E. Forrester-Jones & G. Grant (Eds.), Resettlement from larger psychiatric hospital to small community dence. London: Avebury Ashgate Publishing.

Gottlieb, B. H. (1981). Social networks and social support. London: Sage Publications.

Guan, X. F. (1990). An exploratory study on intermarriages between Guangdong and Hong Kong residents. In S. X. Deng & G. A. Hu (Eds.), Economical development of Zhu Jiang Delta and Hong Kong (pp.186-196). Hong Kong: Hong Kong Baptist University.

HKISS 香港國際社會服務社 (1997) 內地來港新移民研究報告。香港： 香港國際社會服務社。.

Home Affairs Department (2003), http://www.info.gov.hk/had/major/arrivals/c_surveys.html.

Hong Kong Council of Social Service (2003), http://newarrivals.socialnet.org.hk/main.htm.

Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres 香港婦女中心協會 (1999) 新來港已婚婦女精神健康狀況研究調查。香港：香港婦女中心協會。.

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council 聖公會教區福利協會（1998）以文化共融為本的新移民服務模式。香港：聖公會教區福利協會。.

Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association (HKYWCA)香港基督教女青年會（1998）已婚新來港婦女的生活適應及需要調查報告書。香港：香港基督教女青年會。.

Kennedy, C. (1989). Community integration and well-being: Toward the goals of community care. Journal of Social Issues, 45, 65-77.

Kheimets, N. G., & Epstein, A. D. (2001). English as a central component of success in the professional and social integration of scientists from the former Soviet Union in Israel. Language in Society, 30(2), 187-215.

Lai, P. C. Y. (1997). An exploratory study on Chinese immigrant women in Hong Kong. In D. T. L. Shek, M. C. Lam, & C. F. Au (Eds.), Social work in Hong Kong: Reflections and challenges. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Lam, C. M., & Mok, B. H. 林靜雯, 莫邦豪 (2002) 新來港人士家庭工作計劃：服務檢討報告, 香港小童群益會，香港中文大學社會工作學系.

Lin, J., & Liao, B. 林潔珍、廖柏偉 (1998) 移民與香港經濟。香港：商務印書館。.

Lo, L. K. M. (1992). Helping the families of Chinese new immigrants in the early period of adaptation in Hong Kong: Application of life model. Unpublished Bachelor of Social Work Paper, Hong Kong: City Polytechnic of Hong Kong.

Lou, V. W. Q. (2000)「內地新來港婦女身份認同及應付問題策略」研究報告書。香港：基督教家庭服務中心.

Lou, V. W. Q., Chow, J. C., & Chan, C. L. W. (2003). Impact of expectation fulfillment on post-migration marital happiness among Mainland Chinese wives with Hong Kong husbands. Journal of Social Work Research and Evaluation: An International Publication (in press).

Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1985). Optimism, coping and health: Assessment and implications of generalized outcome expectancies. Health Psychology, 4(3), 219-247.

Shadish, W. R., & Bootzin, R. R. (1984). The social integration of psychiatric patients in nursing homes. The American Journal of Psychiatry, 141, 1203-1207.

Sonn, C. C. (2002). Immigrant adaptation: Understanding the process through sense of community. In A. T. Fisher, C. C. Sonn, & B. J. Bishop (Eds.), Psychological sense of community: Research, applications, and implications. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Task Force on Population Policy (2003). Report of the task force on population policy, http://www.info.gov.hk/info/population/eng/index.htm.

Veloo, B. M. (1995). Marital and material life for PRC wives. Window, 4(37), 12-13.

Wong, D. F. K. (2001). Differential functions and sources of social support of Mainland Chinese immigrants during resettlement in Hong Kong: A qualitative analysis. Journal of Social Work Research, 2(2), 319-332.

Wong, D. F. K. (2002). Stage-specific and culture-specific coping strategies used by Mainland Chinese immigrants during resettlement in Hong Kong: A qualitative analysis. Social Work in Health Care, 35(1-2), 479-499.

Ying, Y. W., Lee, P. A., Tsai, J. L., Lee, Y. J., & Tsang, M. (2001). Network composition, social integration and sense of coherence in Chinese American young adults. Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 3(3-4), 83-98.

**Acknowledgements**

Table 1 *Sample Characteristics*

|  |  | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sex |  |  |  |
|  | Male | 8 | 2.8 |
|  | Female | 277 | 97.2 |
| Age |  |  |  |
|  | 20 or below | 15 | 5.3 |
|  | 21-30 | 68 | 23.9 |
|  | 31-40 | 187 | 65.6 |
|  | 41 or above | 15 | 5.3 |
| Education |  |  |  |
|  | 6 years or below | 39 | 13.8 |
|  | 7-9 years | 113 | 39.9 |
|  | 10-12 years | 101 | 35.7 |
|  | Above 12 years | 63 | 10.6 |
| Type of Housing |  |  |  |
|  | Public housing | 161 | 56.5 |
|  | Home Ownership Scheme | 51 | 17.9 |
|  | Private housing | 40 | 14.0 |
|  | Other (including village) | 33 | 11.6 |
| Employment |  |  |  |
|  | Employed | 61 | 21.4 |
|  | Unemployed | 64 | 22.5 |
|  | Housewife | 160 | 56.1 |
| Marital Status |  |  |  |
|  | Currently married | 241 | 84.6 |
|  | Other (single/divorced/ separated/forsaken) | 44 | 15.4 |
| Period Having Been in Hong Kong |  |  |  |
|  | Less than 1 year | 121 | 42.5 |
|  | 1-2 years | 106 | 37.2 |
|  | More than 2 years | 58 | 20.4 |

Table 2 *Optimism and Social Integration*

| | Optimism | Mean (SD) | F |
|---|---|---|---|
| Identification with Hong Kong | Low | 4.02 (2.56) | 6.98** |
| | High | 4.91 (2.56) | |
| Friendship Network | Low | 2.68 (2.96) | 0.01 |
| | High | 2.72 (2.80) | |
| Friendship Support | Low | 4.38 (3.67) | 1.17 |
| | High | 4.89 (3.53) | |
| Social Participation | Low | 24.46 (8.98) | 10.84** |
| | High | 28.64 (9.90) | |

Note.    ** $p < .01$.

Table 3 *Social Service Participation and Social Integration*

| | Optimism | Mean (SD) | F |
|---|---|---|---|
| Identification with Hong Kong | Low | 3.96 (2.63) | 8.58** |
| | Medium | 5.04 (2.39) | |
| | High | 5.33 (2.44) | |
| Friendship Network | Low | 2.03 (2.22) | 10.00** |
| | Medium | 2.55 (2.31) | |
| | High | 2.70 (2.84) | |
| Friendship Support | Low | 3.98 (3.71) | 7.57** |
| | Medium | 4.69 (3.50) | |
| | High | 5.88 (3.12) | |
| Social Participation | Low | 23.60 (9.40) | 28.93** |
| | Medium | 26.96 (7.35) | |
| | High | 33.17 (9.46) | |

Note.    ** $p < .01$.

Table 4 *General Life Satisfaction and Social Integration*

|  | Optimism | Mean (SD) | F |
|---|---|---|---|
| Identification with Hong Kong | Low | 3.67 (2.48) | 18.10** |
|  | High | 5.07 (2.52) |  |
| Friendship Network | Low | 2.35 (2.48) | 1.89 |
|  | High | 2.86 (2.97) |  |
| Friendship Support | Low | 4.52 (3.56) | 0.47 |
|  | High | 4.84 (3.58) |  |
| Social Participation | Low | 24.40 (8.51) | 11.70** |
|  | High | 28.71 (10.07) |  |

Note.    ** $p < .01$.

Table 5 *Correlation Coefficients between Social Integration and Subjective Well-being*

| | Physical | Social | Emotional | | Spiritual |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | Negative | Positive | |
| Identification with Hong Kong | -.06 | .39** | -.20** | .23** | .28** |
| Friendship Network | -.06 | .17** | -.03 | .16** | .06 |
| Friendship Support | .01 | .06** | -.05 | .06** | .11 |
| Social Participation | -.14** | .50** | -.13* | .42** | .33** |

Note.  ** p < .01, * p < .05.