Political Culture and Policy Making in British Hong Kong, c. 1970-80

Florence Mok

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Abstract

This thesis examines state-society relations in the long 1970s, a pivotal period for Hong Kong. Using under-exploited archival evidence, it overcomes the limitations in the existing literature written mainly by political scientists and sociologists, which is primarily theoretically driven and relies on published sources. It explores how a reformist colonial administration investigated changing political culture of the Chinese society, and how political activism and shifting public opinions impacted on policy making. It analyses five case studies: the Chinese as the official language movement, the anti-corruption campaign, the campaign against telephone rate increases, the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School disputes and immigration from mainland China. It shows how the colonial administration possessed organizational capacity to monitor the movement of opinion direction in the society closely through covert opinion polling exercises, *Town Talk* and *MOOD*. These constructed 'public opinions' were circulated and discussed among high ranked civil servants, including the Governor and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. They affected policy formulation. Hong Kong people had extremely limited democratic rights but the public was involved in the policy making process. The thesis also highlights how 'public opinion' was a construction. Political cultures in Hong Kong varied in accordance with class and age, and changed in significant ways, with Chinese communities demonstrating increased readiness to engage in political movements and discourses.

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Preface

My pursuit of history can be traced back to 1999. Everything started eighteen years ago when I was nine. I went to a book store and purchased my first history book. This book changed the rest of my life. I still remember my first time reading history. The heroes, the wars and the revolutions. I was like a time traveller experiencing all these historical events. Reading between the lines, the feeling was indescribable. The unexplainable contentedness, sorrow and pain: 'as if a hand had come out and taken yours'. Since then, I have aspired to become a historian.

Along the way, I have been extremely fortunate to meet numerous history mentors, who have inspired and enlightened me, and encouraged me to take the way I have taken.

When I was in elementary school, there was Hilda Yam. While other teachers taught rigidly according to the Chinese education curriculum, she was different. I always enjoyed her classes. She told us about the two World Wars and how Germany rose to power. She taught us Lu Xun and poems of Song and Tang dynasties.

When I was in secondary school, there was Rosaline Kwong. She was my history teacher. I was a typical adolescent who was dissatisfied with everything in the world. I still remember the time when she taught the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Noticing I was upset, disappointed and puzzled, she spent an hour talking to me after the lesson. She was the first person to tell me that history did not always have the answers we looked for.

When I was in Eastbourne, I was taught by two history teachers, Jonathan Miller and Richard Bunce. They had very different personalities. Miller was the serious one. He always guided students patiently and systematically. The Stuart history confused me. From the English Civil War in 1642 to Charles I's regicide and the establishment of Cromwell's Protectorate: Why did everything return to the way it was in 1649? Maybe this is the powerlessness of history: things changed but things still stayed the way they were. Bunce was the complete opposite of Miller. He loved teasing me because I always looked way too serious. The memories of me chasing after him in the dining hall because I had a question on the American Civil War is still in the back of my mind. (The more I chased, the more he ran!) I will always remember his American history class, Lincoln's House Divided Speech and how he made us memorize all the states in the United States.

When I was in Durham, I was supervised by Alex Barber. His intelligence and quick wittedness always reminded me of my own inadequacies as a historian. And his seminars were always interesting. I still love seventeenth century British history: a vibrant field which indeed 'turned the history upside down'. And I can never forget my first time handling an original manuscript.

Going to York to study my PhD degree is probably one of the best decisions I have made in my life. Special thanks must go to David Clayton, who has been a perfect mentor in the past three and a half years. David is definitely the best supervisor a PhD student could possibly ask for: always patient, supportive and enthusiastic. He taught me the art of being a historian. He reminded me of the importance of history in this time of turbulence. When I was in doubt,

he was always there to back me up, offering insightful advice and support. I can never forget the three-hour marathon-like meeting we had in the Brotherton Library before submitting my spin-off article to *China Information.* Without his encouragement, none of this would have been possible. It has been a great pleasure and honour being your student, David. Thank you for having so much trust in me. I will always be deeply indebted to you for your tremendous support; academic and pastoral. I would also like to thank Jon Howlett, Oleg Besnech and Stevi Jackson for their invaluable guidance. I gained so much from every Thesis Advisory Panel meeting, which has been truly thought-provoking. Special thanks too to Ma Ngok, who hosted me during the Global Scholarship Programme for Research Excellence in Chinese University of Hong Kong. Big thanks also goes to academics who were willing to sacrifice their valuable time and offer me advice, including John Carroll, Agnes Ku, Lam Wai-man, Lui Tai-lok, Michael Ng, Ray Yep and John Wong.

In the past eighteen years, my parents have never questioned the path I have taken and offered unconditional support. I can always imagine the difficulty of explaining to others why your daughter was a history PhD student in a commercial world like Hong Kong. Thank you for everything. I would also like to thank the following friends for their academic and emotional support: Alvin Au, Grace Cao, Jessica Chan, Matthew Chin, Yiyun Ding, Sally Ho, Charlie Hung, Llewellyn James, April Kwan, Kenneth Lam, Vivian Ng, Rachael Treharne and Florence Tsui.

After eighteen years, this long journey has reached an important milestone. I will never forget the obligations of being a historian. And I will always be the same Florence, who believes that being a historian can make a tiny difference to this world. Thank you for gradually turning the dream of this nine-year old girl into reality.

Florence Mok January, 2019

Declaration

I declared that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

***Part of Chapter I has been published as 'Public Opinion Polls and Covert Colonialism in British Hong Kong' in *China Information*, 33:1 (2018), in print in March 2019.**

Introduction

In today's Hong Kong, there is a growing sense of nostalgia for the late colonial period, particularly among the young generation and anti-China activists.[1] They view Beijing's interference in politics, education and media as an encroachment on Hong Kong's autonomy, as guaranteed under the British rule. Yau Wai-ching, the former Legislative Councillor who faced disqualification due to her political agenda, described the colonial regime as 'relatively enlightened' and argued that China was undermining a 'well-developed political and constitutional framework' 'step by step'.[2] Andy Chan Ho-tin, the convenor of the Hong Kong National Party described the last two decades post-handover as 'a period of regression rather than progress': 'The situation is so dire that we dare say Hong Kong never experienced such horrid colonialism until 1997'.[3] The blue flag of colonial Hong Kong, inscribing the Union Jack with the coat of arms of the colony, was repeatedly waved by radical localists in anti-China demonstrations, advocating the Special Administrative Region's secession from mainland China. The picture of colonialism painted by these young activists has raised an important question: Do the Hong Kong public have an accurate historical understanding of state-society relations in British Hong Kong?

These recent statements about British colonialism are an expression of serious discontent towards China's political intervention in Hong Kong. They are subjective statements used to support activists' political stances. To mitigate against the misuse of history, it is essential to

[1] Gary Cheung, 'Beijing Finds Hong Kongers' Nostalgia for Colonial Era Hard to Fathom', *South China Morning Post*, 1 October 2012.
[2] Yau Wai-ching, 'Democracy's Demise in Hong Kong', *New York Times*, 16 September 2018.
[3] Jeff Lam and Alvin Lum, 'Hong Kong Separatist Party Leader Andy Chan Ho-tin Calls China ''A Threat to All Free Peoples in the World'' in Fiery Foreign Correspondents' Club Speech', *South China Morning Post*, 14 August 2018.

have a thorough understanding of the relationship between the colonial state and the Chinese communities in Hong Kong under British rule. This thesis responds to this agenda by undertaking the first comprehensive archive-based study to explore the relationship between political culture and policy making in the long 1970s. The overarching research question is: How did state-society relations evolve in the period before the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984? The thesis tackles this question by asking two inter-related questions: What strategies were employed by popular social movements, and do they reveal a shift in mass political culture?[4] In this thesis, political culture is defined as political attitudes and political orientations. It mainly examines the attitudes of Hong Kong Chinese towards the colonial government, their ideas about rights and entitlement, and sense of political advocacy. In particular, it investigates what form of political actions were considered acceptable by contemporaries. How did the bureaucratic perceptions of 'public opinions' influence the colonial government's ruling strategies?

By focusing on these questions, this thesis hopes to contribute to a new understanding of the role played by social movements in policy changes and shifting political culture in Hong Kong. Using under-exploited archival records in the Public Record Office in Hong Kong and the National Archives in Kew, it offers a new perspective of state-society relations in British Hong Kong, which is lacking in the existing work of political scientists and sociologists. Like

[4] According to Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, level of political participations and attitudes towards politics varies in different political cultures. There are three types of political cultures which could be categorized as 1) parochial 2) subject and 3) participant. 1) The parochial political culture can be used to describe societies where there are no or minimal specialized political roles and expectations of changes initiated by the political system. People often do not have knowledge and interest in politics. They may be aware of the presence of a central political regime but their feelings towards the political structure are often uncertain or negative. 2) The subject political culture refers to societies in which people are aware of politics and political phenomenon. Yet, their orientations to engage in politics ('input objects') 'approach zero'. Due to their heavy subjection to decisions made by the central government, they are hence, 'subjects'. 3) The participant political culture is one in which members of the society 'tend to be explicitly oriented' to both the political and administrative structure and process. In other words, they engage in politics actively and are able to exert their influence on the government. See Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 17-18.

revisionist social science and historical literature, the thesis rejects the concept of Hong Kong as a 'laissez-faire' state. It brings together the disjointed revisionist research on the colonial state and Chinese communities in Hong Kong. It contributes to the emergent scholarship on the comparative study of late colonialism. To many, Hong Kong was a peculiar case: 'both a political anachronism and a financial anomaly'.[5] On the one hand, the colony was a highly developed centre of finance and industry; on the other hand, the colonial administrative system seemed conservative: a representative electoral system was absent and there was no prospect for democracy or independence. The changing state-society relations in Hong Kong can be used to identify similarities and differences in experiences of decolonization in the British Empire, setting up a transnational comparative framework for further studies.

This thesis consists of six chapters, which include:

1) Constructing 'Public Opinions' through *Town Talk* and *MOOD*

2) The Chinese as the Official Language Movement

3) The Anti-Corruption Movement

4) The Campaign against Telephone Rate Increases

5) The Campaign to Reopen the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School

6) The Changing Immigration Discourse and Policy

The first chapter explains how the colonial state solicited public opinions and how they influenced ruling strategies. The other five chapters are case studies, which are major events of political participation which stimulated heated public discussions in the long 1970s.

Based on five case studies, Chapters 2-6 above, this thesis argues that activists employed

[5] Susan Strange, *Sterling and British Policy: A Political Study of an International Currency in Decline* (New York, 1971), p. 112.

collaborative strategies to mobilize the public in the 1970s. Activists often resorted to informal means, such as petitions, signature campaigns and setting up ad hoc organizations, to pull resources, rally support from external parties and pressurize the colonial government to introduce changes. Direct confrontation was rare. Activists deployed ideological and instrumental reasoning. The thesis will evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies.

This thesis also explores how the reformist state monitored political activism and shifting popular sentiments. It uses archival sources to detail for the first time sophisticated covert polling, *Town Talk* and *MOOD*. Through this monitoring, City District Officers gathered and provided intelligence on political activism and opinions of people of different social classes and age groups to high ranked colonial bureaucrats. This thesis demonstrates how constructed 'public opinions' and intelligence on political activism fed into the policy making process, alongside other factors such as London's interests and relationship with China.

Finally, this thesis reveals to what extent Hong Kong society was homogenous, sharing a uniform set of political attitudes and orientations. It investigates how, affected by reforms implemented by the increasingly responsive colonial state, mass media and education, the general political culture shifted: did people express their concerns more willingly without hiding their identities and increasingly accept the need for political activities? It also assesses to what extent political culture differed in accordance with social class and age. It tests five positions on social differentiation. First, emphasizing their social statuses, the upper middle classes disapproved of illegal and informal political engagement. Second, the middle class was inclined to be politically indifferent, and tended to be pro status-quo. Third, despite their capacity for political mobilizations, the working class was primarily driven by instrumentalism, hence, reluctant to engage in political activism unless their stakes were

affected. Four, the adult members of the society valued political stability and were reserved towards political activism, in particular those of direct confrontation. Influenced by traditional Chinese values, the middle aged and elderly groups did not support informal popular political engagement. Five, the young generation was divided. While many refused to engage in social movements, many at the higher education viewed expressing grievances through informal political participation as their rights.

1970s: A Period of Transformation

The 1970s was a pivotal but under-explored period of Hong Kong history. Politically, the colonial government's ruling strategies changed drastically. The British had clearly learnt the vulnerability of Hong Kong in the Star Ferry riots in 1966 and the leftist riots in 1967.[6] Before the 1970s, the Urban Council was the only political institution with democratically elected members. The Council's franchise was still very much restricted after its inconsiderable expansion in 1965. The absence of an effective communication channel, 'a gap' between the colonial government and the people, was first identified by the Commission of Inquiry after protests against increases in ferry fare turned into civil unrest in 1966. Senior civil servants soon acknowledged that the existing law and order was 'unsustainable' and

[6] The Star Ferry riots took place in April 1966. Before the Cross-Habour Tunnel was built in 1972, the Star Ferry was an important transport used by people to travel between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. In 1965, the colonial government announced that the Star Ferry Company had applied for a fare increase of between 50% and 100%. The Transport Advisory Committee approved the increase in March 1966. A protest initiated by So Sau-chung and Lo Kei took place in early April 1966 but was suppressed by the colonial government. Subsequently, the peaceful demonstrations turned into a violent riot, in which vehicles were burnt and shops were looted. A person died in the riots with many injured. More than 1,800 people were arrested. In 1967, demonstrations broke out in May due to labour disputes in shipping, taxi, textile, cement and artificial flower companies. Pro-Beijing trade unions were involved. The demonstrations soon developed into violent riots between pro-Beijing leftists and the Hong Kong government. Bombs were placed in various locations. The turmoil did not subside until October. 51 people were killed and 832 people were injured. More than 4,900 people were arrested. See Robert Bickers and Ray Yep (eds.), *May Days in Hong Kong: Riot and Emergency in 1967* (Hong Kong, 2009).

sought 'new forms of legitimation'.[7] The 1967 riots represented another 'legitimacy question' to the colonial state when an industrial dispute rapidly developed into a colony-wide disturbance .[8] As David Trench recognized,

> Hong Kong socially, politically and economically is pre-eminently a community that depends on confidence... A loss of confidence could only too easily be generated by the successful exploitation of social and administrative problems by the Communists or an erosion of our export markets by overseas interest.[9]

As the introduction of a democratic electoral system was unfeasible, the City District Officer Scheme was implemented to restore confidence, enhance legitimacy and improve communications in 1968. It was multi-functional. The City District Office was 'a communication agent, a community organizer and a trouble-shooter for the people'.[10] On the one hand, it facilitated communications between the government and the Hong Kong Chinese and explained policies to the public; on the other hand, it addressed people's grievances and fed 'public opinions' to the policy makers in the bureaucracy. In 1971, the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs was renamed as the Home Affairs Department, which signified 'the end of the colonial phase and the beginning of, albeit still technically colonial, ''home'' rule'.[11]

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[7] Ian Scott, 'Bridging the Gap: Hong Kong Senior Civil Servants and the 1966 Riots', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 45:1 (2016), pp. 132-3, 138 and 144.
[8] Lawrence Cheuk-yin Wong, 'The 1967 Riots: A Legitimacy Crisis?', in Robert Bickers and Ray Yep (eds), May Day*s in Hong Kong: Riot and Emergency in 1967* (Hong Kong, 2009), p. 46.
[9] FCO 40/292, David Trench to Michael Stewart, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 23 April 1970; also quoted in Ray Yep and Tai-lok Lui, 'Revisiting the Golden Era of MacLehose and the Dynamics of Social Reforms', *China Information*, 24:3 (2010), p. 252.
[10] Ambrose Y. King, 'Administrative Absorption of Politics in Hong Kong: Emphasis on the Grass Roots Level', in Ambrose Y. King and Rance P. K. Lee (eds), *Social Life and Development in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1981), p. 138.
[11] Stephen Ortmann, *Politics and Change in Singapore and Hong Kong: Containing Contention* (London, New York, 2010), p. 40.

State-society relations underwent further changes during the reign of Murray MacLehose, who understood that instilling a sense of belonging among the Hong Kong Chinese was the key to the enhancement of the colonial government's legitimacy :

> Like any other government this one must govern by consent and must do so without the aid of the electoral system. If that consent is to be retained, not only must legitimate demands be satisfied, but the population must be convinced that such satisfaction is genuinely the object of government. The need is not for administrative action producing physical results; there is also a need to secure the active confidence of the population. We cannot aim at national loyalty, but civic pride might be a useful substitute.[12]

Under MacLehose, the colonial government became increasingly responsive to popular demands. A series of legislative and institutional changes were introduced, including the legalization of Chinese as the official language of Hong Kong, the enactment of the 'Touch Base' policy and the formation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), all of which will be discussed using newly available archival evidence.

Socially, a number of long-term reforms were implemented. The Ten-Year Housing Programme provided accommodation for approximately 1.8 million people. Free primary education was introduced. Social welfare services, public assistance, transport, labour legislation as well as the medical and health system were also expanded.[13] The long 1970s

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[12] FCO 40/329, Murray MacLehose to Sir Leslie Monson, Wilford, Morgan and Laird, 16 October 1971; also quoted in Yep and Lui, 'Revising the Golden Era', p. 253.
[13] John Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 2007), p. 161; Chi-kwan Mark, 'Crisis or Opportunity', in Priscilla Roberts and Odd Arne Westad (eds), *China, Hong Kong and the Long 1970s: Global Perspective* (Basingstoke, 2017), p. 264;

also witnessed a surge in political mobilizations. There seemed to be a shift in political culture, particularly among the post-war baby boomers, who started to develop a sense of belonging to Hong Kong.[14] They were not afraid to express their discontent and engage in social movements. The emergence of these young activists and the increased responsiveness of the colonial state led to a 'new political and social climate', which encouraged discussions of current affairs in public domain.[15] Besides, both legal and illegal immigration from China continued to be an important issue, placing pressure on the colony's housing and welfare system, and creating tensions between locals and mainland Chinese. It is possible that a Hong Kong identity was constructed in opposition to a mainland Chinese identity.

Economically, with a modern banking system, strong international trade networks and an abundant supply of relatively cheap labour, Hong Kong experienced economic take-off in the 1970s. There was rapid growth in the financial sector. Hong Kong's Gross Domestic Product had increased by 117 per cent during the period from 1968 to 1973.[16] The index of real wages increased from 100 in 1964 to 184 in 1982.[17] The middle class in Hong Kong subsequently rose materially and culturally. Throughout this period, Hong Kong served as the most important gateway for Communist China to trade with the outside world and generate foreign exchange.[18] Economic discrepancies between Hong Kong and China became more visible. Relations between Hong Kong Chinese and their relatives in mainland experienced changes due to the shifting economic statuses. For instance, it was conventional for Hong Kong Chinese to send remittances to their relatives in China as the latter were relatively poor and

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[14] Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (London, 2004), pp. 180-8; Steve Tsang, *Government and Politics: A Documentary History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1995), p. 248; Carroll, *A Concise History*, p. 167-76; Tai-lok Lui and Stephen W. K. Chiu, 'Social Movements and Public Discourse on Politics', in Tak-wing Ngo (ed.), *Hong Kong's History: State and Society Under Colonial Rule* (Hong Kong, 2002), p. 105.
[15] Ibid., p. 106.
[16] Carroll, *A Concise History*, p. 168.
[17] Norman Miners, *The Government and Politics of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1975), p. 34.
[18] Priscilla Roberts, 'Introduction', in Roberts and Westad (eds), *China, Hong Kong and the Long 1970s*, p. 17.

needed foreign currencies.

The 1970s was also a significant period for the future constitutional settlement of Hong Kong due to the changing developments in Britain and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Facing relative economic decline, accelerated decolonization and a Communist government unlikely to agree to the continuation of British administration beyond 1997, colonial bureaucrats were aware that the British rule in Hong Kong was challenging. Geographically, the colony was militarily indefensible. The attitudes of the PRC also suggested that the colony's sovereignty was simply non-negotiable. As MacLehose had pointed out, it was therefore vital for the British to 'work out policies in Hong Kong concisely designed to prolong confidence and so gain all possible time for conditions to emerge in China in which a favourable negotiation would be possible'.[19] It was foreseeable that 'a maximum degree of economic progress and tranquillity in the colony, and international respect for it' would be the strongest bargaining chips for Britain in the future Sino-British negotiations, which was anticipated to take place in the mid-1980s.[20] Nevertheless, the tension between Britain and Hong Kong increased in this period. Public confidence towards the British government fell due to the devaluation of Sterling in 1967. More restrictive quotas were imposed on textile exports from Hong Kong to Britain, as Hong Kong's tariff free access to British markets was untenable once Britain had become a member of the European Economic Community.

To prepare for future negotiations with China, the colonial government had to alter its ruling strategies and relationship with its people. The 1970s was also a period of changes for China: the admission to the United Nations, the Cultural Revolution, the failed coup of Lin Biao, the

[19] FCO 40/329, MacLehose to Monson, Wilford, Morgan and Laird, 16 October 1971; also quoted in Yep and Lui, 'Revising the Golden Era', p. 253.
[20] FCO 40/704, 'Planning Paper on Hong Kong', (date not specified) 1976 p. 11; also quoted in Yep and Lui, 'Revising the Golden Era', p. 256.

death of Mao Zedong, and the rise and fall of the Gang of Four. These changes in context did not only affect how the colonial government dealt with Hong Kong-China and Britain-China relations, it also influenced views of ordinary Hong Kong Chinese towards their motherland and the Chinese Communist Party. As the 1967 riots had demonstrated, situation in China directly affected Hong Kong's development. Chinese nationalism and social discontent in the colony could be easily exploited by communists and turned into political turmoil. In the early 1970s, there was a rise in patriotic and anti-colonial movements in Hong Kong, such as the Chinese as the official language campaign and the Diaoyu Islands movement. Political instability in China also led to an influx of Chinese immigrants from the mainland to Hong Kong, imposing tremendous strains on the colony's resources. Under these circumstances, the colonial state constantly faced a tricky task: how to adjust administrative strategies and implement reforms which could enhance its credibility and legitimacy without adversely affecting Sino-British relations.

The 1970s was an era of instability and uncertainty. It was also the precursors for political and social changes in the 1980s and beyond. An exploration of the relationship between political culture and policy making in the 1970s is necessary to understand reforms and responses initiated by the colonial state and changing Anglo-Chinese relations, leading to the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984. Although scholars have recently refuted the notion of a 'minimally-integrated social-political system' and pointed out that considerable social conflicts had broken out in the post-war period, there remains a paucity of detailed archive-based studies on how social movements were organized and how the public and the state responded to political activism.[21]

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[21] The concept of 'minimally-integrated social-political system' was coined by Lau Siu-kai in *Society and Politics in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1982). Revisionists, such as Tak-wing Ngo, Ma Ngok and Lam Wai-man, had refuted this erroneous view of state-society relations in the 2000s. The development of the historiography will be analysed in the following section.

The rest of the thesis addresses the dynamics between political culture and policy making in a pivotal period in Hong Kong using standard historical methods. The next section of the introduction analyses the historiography of Hong Kong and explains more precisely how the research questions of this thesis emerged. The second section explains the approach and methodology used in this thesis. The last explains the selection of case studies and outlines the structure of this thesis.

The Historiography of Hong Kong

A Minimally-Integrated Social-Political System

The first wave of the history of Hong Kong was typically written from the perspective of the colonial state, focusing in particular on political changes introduced by the successive colonial governments over time. Geoffrey Robley Sayer, for example, examined changes implemented by different Governors, drawing on his own geographical knowledge and personal experience of living in Hong Kong as a cadet officer and the Director of Education. Eleven out of fourteen chapters of his book were dedicated to detail each Governor's backgrounds, personalities, thoughts and policies, from Sir Hercules Robinson in 1862 to Sir Henry May in 1919.[22] An almost identical approach was adopted by Winifred Wood.[23] 'Society', was rarely mentioned in these accounts. Sayer merely indicated that there was 'a steady development in the relations of the government with Chinese community'.[24] As Christopher Munn has pointed out, historians like Sayer treated 'the colony almost entirely as

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[22] G. R. Sayer, *Hong Kong 1862-1919* (Hong Kong, 1975).
[23] W. A. Wood, *A Brief History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1940).
[24] Sayer, *Hong Kong 1862-1919*, pp. 127-8. The only records Sayer had about the Chinese society were formal political developments that incorporated Chinese elites into the administration, initiated by the colonial state. For example, Chinese 'Peace Officers' were selected, to be replaced by the 'Registrar-General' in 1857 and the first Chinese unofficial member was appointed in Legislative Council by Governor Hennessy in 1881 etc.

a European enterprises and of pushing the Chinese on the island quite out of the picture'.[25] A deeper understanding of state-society relations in Hong Kong was missing.

A similar approach was adopted by George Endacott, who mainly examined economic and social conditions under different Governors, constitutional changes and the development of representative government in Hong Kong. Still writing from a Western colonial perspective, Endacott de-emphasized the role played by the Chinese society in the construction of Hong Kong. He argued that the colony was a 'barren rock' before the arrival of the British: 'history of Hong Kong really begins with the coming of the British in 1841, which arose out of the trade between the merchants of Western Europe and China'. Hong Kong only consisted of a few small villages and was 'sparsely populated' up until the nineteenth century.[26] Endacott's work also highlighted that Hong Kong was a special colony due to the adoption of a non-interventionist philosophy of rule:

> The colony of Hong Kong was long regarded as different from other colonies, as a phenomenon unique even in the many-sided story of British overseas expansion. The dispatches to and from the Colonial Office abound with references to its special character and there was some doubt if it could be regarded as a colony at all.[27]

The colonial state in Hong Kong was portrayed as 'a minimum of government' in the style of 'Benthamite laissez-faire', with Chinese communities having a limited impact on policy formation and the state having a weak relationship with social groups.[28]

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[25] Christopher Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880* (Richmond, Surrey, 2001), p. 6.
[26] G. Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1964), pp. 3-4.
[27] Endacott, 'Preface', in *Government and People in Hong Kong, 1841-1962: A Constitutional History* (Hong Kong, 1964), v.
[28] Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong*, p. 121.

This historical tradition arose for a number of reasons. Firstly, the British officials had been promoting the rhetoric of Hong Kong as a unique colony with limited state interventions for years. For example, Lord Stanley once said 'methods of proceeding unknown in other British colonies, must be followed in Hong Kong' and Governor Sir Hercules Robinson similarly asserted that 'Hong Kong is totally unlike any other British dependency and its position is in many respects so grotesquely anomalous'.[29] Secondly, official documents at district level were extremely limited during their time of writing. After the end of the Second World War, the Urban Council had no elected members. High politics was the focus of research. Little attention was given to the Chinese society, leading to an extremely imbalanced and fragmentary understanding of state-society relations in Hong Kong.

In the 1970s, intrigued by the absence of political mobilizations in post-industrialized Hong Kong, social scientists started addressing the political culture of the Chinese communities, using ahistorical methods. In Western models, rapid urbanization was often linked to increased political instability and political participation. For instance, Harold Laski held that 'organized democracy is the product of urban life; it is therefore natural that it should have made its first effective appearance in the intense political activity of the Greek city-states'.[30] Max Weber believed that urbanization had a profound effect on culture and was closely related to the rise of the notion of 'citizenship'.[31] Karl Deutsch believed that social movements often happened in places which had experienced modernization. Taking many developing countries in Asia as examples, the increased number of 'city dwellers, markets farmers, users of money, wages earners, radio listeners and literates' post-modernization

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[29] CO 129/2, Letter from Lord Stanley to Sir Henry Pottinger, 3 June 1848; *Hong Kong Annual Report 1859*; they were quoted in Endacott, 'Preface' in *Government and People*, v.
[30] H. Laski, 'Democracy', in *The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 5 (New York, 1937), p. 78.
[31] M. Weber, *General Economic History* (Glencoe, 1950), pp. 315-8.

added ‘pressures for transformation of political practices and institution’.[32] Samuel Huntington concluded that political violence and instability was more likely to happen in less developed countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America as ‘rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics’ were often accompanied by ‘slow development of political institutions’.[33] Most existing theories suggested that urbanization and modernization would inevitably lead to changes in culture and lifestyles, and hence increase social inequalities and the likelihood of the outbreak of social conflicts and political disturbances.

Newly industrialized Hong Kong challenged this anticipated pattern. Compared to other modernizing societies, the political situation in the British colony was stable. There was no sustained civic advocacy for constitutional reforms. The level of political participation of Hong Kong Chinese in formal politics remained extremely low. Norman Miners, for example, observed that ‘not only have violent outbursts been rare, but the urban workers showed and still show little inclination to protest or organize in legally permitted ways to improve their lot’.[34] Ambrose King similarly noted that the British colony was ‘an urban polity relatively free from riots and political cleavages’.[35] His study of Kwun Tong, a working class residential area, suggested that ‘the majority’s orientations towards the (political) system, the input object and the self as an active role are extremely low’. Half of his interviewees were entirely ‘apolitical’: they had no knowledge of and concern in politics at all.[36] J. S. Hoadley noticed the presence of a ‘discrepancy between potential and actual Chinese political participation’. In 1966, eligible voters in the Urban Council election

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[32] K. W. Deutsch, ‘Social Mobilization and Political Development’, *The American Political Science Review*, 55:3 (1961), pp. 493, 498.
[33] S. P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, 1969), pp. 4-5.
[34] Miners, *The Government and Politics*, p. 32.
[35] Ambrose Y. King, ‘Administrative Absorption of Politics in Hong Kong: Emphasis on the Grass Roots Level’, *Asian Survey*, 15:5 (1975), p. 424.
[36] Ambrose Y. King, ‘The Political Culture of Kwun Tong: A Chinese Community in Hong Kong’, *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 5:1 (1977), pp. 134 and 136. ‘Input Object’ refers to organizations or individuals that channel demands from the society to the polity, such as political parties and politicians.

numbered between 250,000 and 300,000. Nonetheless, the voter registration rate remained extremely low throughout the 1970s. Only 12 to 15 per cent of the eligible population registered to vote in the Urban Council elections by 1971. In the 1977 election, only 37,778 of them registered. The voter turnover rate was decreasing: 39 per cent in 1967, 24 per cent in 1969 and 26.7 per cent in 1971.[37] In this light, a number of sociologists and political scientists started examining Hong Kong's political culture to explain this 'unusual' pattern of development.

According to these scholars, the colony's political stability was attributable to a general lack of interest in political participation. In the words of Ronald Inglehart, 'different societies are characterized to very different degrees by specific syndrome of political culture attitudes'. These cultural differences are often 'enduring' and have 'major political consequences', affecting people's political attitudes and orientations.[38] The political culture in Hong Kong could be best described by the term 'political apathy'.[39] Theoretically, the apathetic attitudes were formed due to a number of reasons. Firstly, political upheavals led to the formation of a 'refugee mentality' among the Hong Kong Chinese in the post-war period. Many believed they were only sojourners and considered Hong Kong to be 'a lifeboat' in the sea of China. Coming to the colony to seek security and stability, many avoided getting involved in politics and conflicts, and were primarily driven by instrumentalism.[40] Secondly, Confucian values also constituted political conservatism among Hong Kong Chinese. According to the schooling in Confucian classics, the ideal relationship between government and people was

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[37] J. S. Hoadley, 'Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese: Patterns and Trends', *Asian Survey*, 13:6 (Jun., 1973), pp. 605, 601 and 612.
[38] R. Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton, 1990), p. 15.
[39] According to Miners, Hong Kong Chinese were 'completely apathetic to the business of government and showed no desire to participate in any form of political activity', in *The Government and Politics*, p. 32; Similarly, King argued that the low voter turnover rate in colonial Hong Kong was 'an exhibition of political apathy', in 'Administrative Absorption of Politics', p. 427.
[40] Ibid., p. 34; J. S. Hoadley, 'Hong Kong is the Lifeboat: Notes on Political Culture and Socialization', *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 8 (1970), pp. 210-1.

‘analogous to that which should exist between parents and children, or between a shepherd and his flock’.[41] Under this ethos, ordinary people were not involved in policy formation. The harmony of the society was stressed and social conflicts were condemned. According to the sociologists, these values created ‘a deep-rooted anti-political attitude among the people’.[42] Confucian theories also neglected the formation and structure of the ruling institutions. Instead, they stressed the importance of the moral character of administrators.[43] Paternalistic rulers were expected and deferred to.

Thirdly, despite the absence of democracy, the colonial state had gained public recognition through its practice of administrative co-option. By recruiting Chinese elites into the administrative system, the colonial government gained legitimacy by becoming what Endacott called a ‘government by discussion’, in which extensive public consultation would take place before implementation of any important government decisions; or in King’s words, a ‘synarchy’, which was ‘a joint administration shared by both the British rulers and non-British, predominantly Chinese leaders’.[44] Chinese figures of wealth were appointed either by the Queen or the Governor into the Executive and Legislative Councils as unofficial members. Their opinions were always consulted on important decisions related to Chinese customs.[45] The practice of co-option could be found outside the public administrative domain. According to Miners, consulting the pressure groups was ‘the traditional way in which British administrators conduct(ed) their businesses’.[46] Before any government policies were announced, pressure groups were first to be contacted privately. On the one hand, their

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[41] Hoadley, ‘Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese’, p. 613.
[42] Lau Siu-kai and Kuan Hsin-chi, *The Ethos of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong, 1988), p. 70; Hoadley, ‘Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese’, pp. 612-3; Miners, *The Government and Politics*, p. 35.
[43] King, ‘The Political Culture of Kwun Tong’, p. 137.
[44] Endacott, *Government and People*, p. 229; King, ‘Administrative Absorption of Politics’, p. 425.
[45] Endacott, *Government and People*, p. 231.
[46] Table 8 in ibid., p. 186.

representatives could express their views towards these government proposals and explain any difficulties that may involve in implementing the policies; on the other hand, the colonial state could avoid undesirable consequences and public responses towards the policies. Through working with pressure groups, 'the interests of the people were virtually represented on these committees'.[47] The legitimacy of the colonial government was therefore enhanced, minimizing the possibility of public resistance. The Urban Council was also set up after the Second World War to increase public participation. The first Urban Council unofficial member's election took place in 1952 and the number of unofficial members increased from two in 1952 to fifteen in 1983.[48] Councillors were typically members of the elite; and the franchise was extremely limited. The limited franchise for the Urban Council, the practice of administrative co-option and the pressure groups system favoured the men of wealth and sectional interests. This system was subject to reform during the period of study in this thesis.

The City District Officer Scheme, introduced under the supervision of the Secretary for Home Affairs in 1968, represented the colonial government's attempt to incorporate grassroots opinions into the administrative system. By the end of 1969, there were ten City District Officers. Their duties ranged from 'commenting on the district's development planning' and 'organizing festival celebrations' to 'handling individual and family cases' and 'answering public enquiries'. City District Officers met with ordinary residents and local leaders, and reported back to the Secretariat for Home Affairs and relevant departments.[49] This 'administrative absorption of politics' provided channels for ordinary Hong Kong Chinese to express their opinions in policy formation despite the absence of a democratic political system. As a result, the communication gap between the public and the government

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[47] Ibid., pp. 188-9.
[48] Miners, *The Government and Politics*, p. 156.
[49] King, 'Administrative Absorption of Politics', pp. 431-4.

had been narrowed. During a period of rising affluence, most Hong Kong Chinese were satisfied with the status-quo. They did not demand constitutional reforms.[50]

Lastly, the low level of political participation could be attributed to the non-democratic design of Hong Kong's political structure. The Urban Council, the only administrative body which had elected members before 1985, was in essence an advisory body without executive power. The Council was only 'given general power to provide facilities for recreation, culture, and sports; to sponsor and promote theatrical and musical performances; and to conduct literary, artistic and sporting competitions and displays'. It could not perform other functions without the Governor's permission and had little financial autonomy before 1973. Not only did it have 'no jurisdiction over their (Councillors') salaries or conditions of service', its annual financial report had to be sent to the Colonial Secretariat. Many eligible Hong Kong Chinese did not waste their time and energy to engage in formal politics. It is also worth noting that its electoral franchise was only opened to people who were qualified by income, education, or professions. Not until 1983 did the franchise expand to include all residents aged over twenty-one and had lived in Hong Kong for at least seven years.[51] All these factors were given by sociologists to generalize Hong Kong's political culture theoretically, supporting the false notion that there were limited interactions between the Chinese communities and the colonial state.

In the 1980s, sociologist Lau Siu-kai described a laissez-faire state and a politically apathetic Chinese society. According to Lau, social conflicts were rare in the colony. Under typical circumstances, it was strenuous to mobilize Hong Kong Chinese to engage in 'a sustained,

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[50] Hoadley, 'Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese', p. 613; Miners, *The Government and Politics*, pp. 34-5.
[51] The functions and powers of the Urban Council can be found in ibid., pp. 155-63.

high-cost political movement'. Although social conflicts and violence occurred in 1956, 1966 and 1967, their scale was relatively small or moderate. Lau believed this phenomenon could be explained by the 'minimally-integrated social-political system'. In Hong Kong, there were limited links between the 'autonomous bureaucratic polity' and the 'atomistic Chinese society'. The colonial state dominated the political sector and was largely free from interference by social and economic forces. It did not pursue any kind of activism to intrude unnecessarily into the Chinese communities. It also lacked 'organizational penetration' into the Chinese society. The only linkages between it and the Chinese society were some Chinese elites, intermediate organizations and state-sponsored schemes such as the City District Officer Scheme, the mechanisms of which were weak.[52] The underlying social ethos was 'utilitarianistic familism'. Even in a hyper urban-industrial setting, familial interests remained the primary consideration among most Hong Kong Chinese, placed above communal interests. This resulted in the absence of public spirit and low public morality, and subsequently low level of political participation in Hong Kong.[53] The term 'political aloofness' was used by Lau to describe this phenomenon.[54] Within these familial groups, economic interdependence and mutual assistance were emphasized. In other words, the Chinese households in the colony relied on familial networks and were capable of self-regulating. Many only expected the colonial government to provide stability and did not require the state to intervene and deliver equity.[55] Due to limited contacts, politics only took place at the boundary between the state and society, and was often 'not highly institutionalized in formal or legal sense'.[56]

[52] Lau, *Society and Politics*, pp. 2, 14-20, 122 and 157.
[53] Ibid., pp. 68-85; Lau Siu-kai, 'Chinese Familism in an Urban-Industrial Setting: The Case of Hong Kong', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 43:4 (1981), pp. 978-86.
[54] Lau, *Society and Politics*, p. 102.
[55] Lau, 'Chinese Familism in an Urban-Industrial Setting', p. 988.
[56] Lau, *Society and Politics*, p. 19.

This portrayal was erroneous. Firstly, 'political stability' does not necessarily equate to the complete absence of political activism. Throughout the history of Hong Kong, the colony witnessed a number of political and social mobilizations, indicating a considerable degree of political participation among the Chinese population. In the pre-Pacific War period, various political and social conflicts took place, ranging from popular insurrection during the Sino-British Wars to Anti-Japanese boycott and riots in 1908.[57] Informal popular political participation was prevalent post-1946. In spite of its insignificant scale, the Star Ferry riots in 1966 signified the emergence of anti-colonial sentiments among some Hong Kong Chinese. The 1956 and 1967 riots were due to the on-going Chinese Civil War, inspired by the Kuomintang and the PRC. Adhering to the strict definition of political participation, these sociologists neglected these activities: only formal and lawful political activities, such as participating in Urban Council elections and being members of mainstream political clubs, were considered to be political participation. However, a broader definition of political activism was not widely accepted amongst historians. Even when studying a mature democracy, such as post-1945 Britain with large mass political parties, it is essential 'to expand the concept of politics into that of political culture': 'familiar components of ''the political''–party, elections, government, policy– are vital, but should not be privileged'.[58] Popular politics involved writing open letters to the authorities, organizing a boycott, signing a petition, joining a protest, engaging in discussions via newspapers. In the 1970s, there was a surge in such mass political participation in Hong Kong, as will be detailed in this thesis.

Secondly, it is equally important to note that at times, 'political culture might not be very

[57] The Sino-British Wars also known as the 'Opium Wars'. The First Opium War took place during the period from 1839-1842 and the Second Opium War took place between 1956 and 1860. Tsai Jung-fang, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842-1913* (New York, 1993).
[58] Lawrence Black, *Redefining British Politics: Culture, Consumerism and Participation. 1945-70* (London, 2010), p. 3.

political, measured in conventional terms'.[59] Social movements rarely addressed a monolithic agenda. As Matthew Hilton has noted, 'individual material advantage is only one consideration of being a consumer and that for much of our recent history movements of consumers have appeared, which draw collectively on these wider motivations'.[60] For instance, protests against increased prices of telephone rentals in Hong Kong in 1975, which will be examined in Chapter 4, should be viewed as a sort of 'politics of consumerism'. As by making complaints against the increased utility price, activists were also protesting against the lack of government regulation over the utility sector. Such activism was not apolitical. Little attention was paid to these informal social movements and consumer activism by the first generation of sociologists. Hoadley did mention the language movement but only considered how it influenced formal political engagement in Urban Council elections.[61] Despite his acknowledgement of the changing political structure and increased political activism among the young generation in post-1966 riots Hong Kong, King failed to examine these unorthodox political activities initiated by the new force.[62] To fully understand the political culture in Hong Kong, this thesis expands the traditional definition of political participation. It investigates the public discourse and a number of social movements that took place in the 1970s.

These studies were ahistorical. Contemporary context was neglected due to the over-reliance of these sociologists on social science theories and data generated by interviews. For

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[59] Ibid., p. 3.
[60] Hilton pointed out that consumer movements could also be driven by ideological, moral and political concerns: 'In certain instances, they have been driven by the hunger in their stomachs. On occasion, they have been motivated by politics, especially when goods have come to hold symbolic meanings for wider ideological struggles. And at times, their focus has not been on the plight of consumers, but on the conditions endured by workers', in Matthew Hilton, *Prosperity for All: Consumer Activism in an Era of Globalization* (Ithaca, 2009), pp. 1-2.
[61] Hoadley did briefly mention the presence of unorthodox political activities in Hong Kong since the 1956 riots, such as letter-writing, organizations of petitions and debates, in 'Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese', pp. 607-8.
[62] King, 'Administrative Absorption of Politics', p. 430.

example, Lau acknowledged that state-society relations in his work were conceptualized in 'an ideal typical way' in order to 'bring out the crucial features in the phenomena'. His adoption of a 'basically theoretical approach' inevitably had led to the omission of 'many historical and empirical details'.[63] The representativeness of the collected data is also questionable due to the limited sampling size. It is certain that the political attitudes of the 1065 residents and 402 local leaders King sampled in Kwun Tong and the opinions of the university students Hoadley collected did not represent the entire Chinese population in the British colony. Some of Lau's data was as well based on a small-scale project conducted by a group of final year sociology students. These statistics lacked representativeness. King's selection of Kwun Tong as a case study is also problematic. Kwun Tong was strategically chosen by the colonial government to be developed as a main industrial district in 1954. Public housing was subsequently built, and the demography of the district mainly comprised low-income residents, industrial workers and apprentices, whose education level was likely to be low. As King himself had recognized, demographic variables, in particular education, income and occupation, were crucial factors that determined political attitudes and orientations. These poor methodological constructions resulted in partial and inaccurate knowledge of Hong Kong's political culture.

In addition, the ways these sociologists set up their questions and interpreted their data were problematic. Firstly, the level of political participation at Councils and mainstream political bodies does not necessarily reflect the level of political participation of the Chinese society. Political engagement could be expressed in forms of unlawful and informal political activities. Secondly, the adoption of a simple dichotomy between Chinese and non-Chinese

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[63] Lau, *Society and Politics*, p. 21.

Urban Councillors caused inherited deficiencies in Hoadley's data.[64] One should not assume that similar political orientations were shared among all Chinese Councillors; and the political agenda of these Chinese officials was not necessarily different from, or even antagonistic to that of the non-Chinese Councillors. Alternative factors influenced the level of participation were not investigated. For example, what propositions were put forward may have affected the reactions of these Councillors. It is a gross over-simplification to argue that the relative low level of political engagement indicates 'political apathy' and a complete absence of 'Chinese liberalism'. Inactivity in the Council could stand for different meanings, depending on context. Given that the appointed Councillors still outnumbered the elected Chinese members in this period, silence could be interpreted as powerlessness, neutrality or even disagreement. Lastly, the low level of formal political participation among ordinary Hong Kong Chinese could be attributed to the general belief that the Urban Council only possessed limited power and could not effectively influence the policy making process.[65] In essence, the Chinese officials and population were not politically indifferent or ignoring politics completely; instead, it was rationality that led them to engage less. The term 'political apathy' therefore can never rightly describe the phenomenon of low level of formal political participation.

Lau's methods must be challenged. The fact that more than half of Lau's respondents stated that they 'would not approve behaviour of those people, who, in safeguarding their family interests, engage in social conflict with others, thus resulting in social unrest', already suggested that many still believed that the provision of public good was important despite

[64] Table 2 in Hoadley, 'Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese', p. 612.
[65] J. Rear, 'One Brand of Politics', in K. Hopkins (ed.), *Hong Kong: The Industrial Colony* (Hong Kong, 1971), p. 111; Hoadley, 'Hong Kong is the Lifeboat', pp. 206-18; King, 'Administrative Absorption of Politics', p. 427.

their familial concerns.[66] Many of the questions set by Lau were also suggestive, focusing on personal and financial needs. The findings may have been different if these questions, instead, focused on public needs, such as education and housing. His claim that 'social classes as structural forces in shaping interpersonal relationships and political actions are relatively insignificant in Hong Kong' deserves further investigation.[67] Respondents holding diverse views about class does not necessarily indicate that Hong Kong Chinese lacked social class consciousness and social class did not affect their political orientations. By dismissing the importance of class, the complexity created by the existence of familial members from multiple classes was left unexplored. Lau's approach overlooked 'class differences within the Chinese community', misinterpreting the Hong Kong Chinese as a homogenous and amorphous social entity.[68]

Similarly, many of King's data can be interpreted differently. In his case study of Kwun Tong, King concluded that the percentage of people that could be labelled as 'attentive public' in Hong Kong was 'considerably low' as about 50 per cent of his respondents never followed accounts of public and government affairs.[69] Nonetheless, instead of being politically apathetic, a number of alternative factors could explain this finding. Long working hours, language barriers and poor dissemination of news could account for this. King's claim that the 18.6 per cent of interviewees who provided 'no answer' when being asked about their feeling of freedom in talking politics with anyone were either being 'ignorant' or 'having no orientation toward the input object or toward the self as political actor' is equally problematic and subjective.[70] They may still have political discursive exchange with people. By

[66] Lau, 'Chinese Familism in an Urban-Industrial Setting', p. 980.
[67] Lau, *Society and Politics*, p. 98.
[68] B. K. P. Leung, *Perspectives on Hong Kong Society* (Oxford and New York, 1996), p. 26.
[69] King, 'The Political Culture of Kwun Tong', pp. 126-7.
[70] Ibid., p. 129.

impulsively arguing that the 63.4 per cent of his respondents who were 'undecided' whether improving the district's living condition was the responsibility of the government or that of the ordinary citizens, were 'either ignorant of or of no orientation' towards policy making process, King may have misinterpreted the responses.[71] Most people would have answered 'undecided' given the absence of a clear definition for the phrase 'improving the district's living condition'. The respondents could be dutiful citizens who looked after the environment and cleanliness of the district; however, they could be powerless if improving the living condition meant better urban planning and an increase in the provision of public housing.

Lastly, the influence of Confucianism alone was insufficient to explain the low level of formal political participation in Hong Kong. As David Faure has argued, the impact of these 'traditional values' on Hong Kong's political culture had been overstated: 'Confucianism no more dictates the evolution of the economy or the evolution of politics in Hong Kong or anywhere else in East Asia than Christianity may be said to be the driving force of such in Europe and America'.[72] Other contextual factors were underestimated. Colonialism before the 1970s, for instance, had a strong impact on the colony's political culture. As a historical actor himself, Faure recalled that colonialism 'kept Hong Kong people away from discussions of first principles' and subsequently led to 'a sense of resignation'. This colonial mentality set 'the limits' of political participation. Although the colonial government became increasingly open in the 1970s, many Hong Kong Chinese still observed these 'limits', which they believed should not be pushed.[73] The failure to take historical context into consideration constitutes the major weaknesses of this literature written by the first wave of sociologists to investigate political culture during the 1970s and early 1980s.

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[71] Ibid., p. 132.
[72] David Faure, *Colonialism and the Hong Kong Mentality* (Hong Kong, 2003), p. 2.
[73] Ibid., pp. 85-6.

Revisionism

In spite of the limitations, the concept of a 'minimally-integrated social-political system' continued to dominate the scholarship prior to the 1990s. External observers and expatriates purported the idea of a 'highly insulated state', which adopted an indirect role, combining economic laissez-faire and political non-intervention.[74] The claim of political stability and the ethos of political passivity were also rarely contested. In his book in 1989, Ian Scott, for instance asserted that the public of Hong Kong was largely 'politically unaware' before Sino-British negotiations took place in 1982. After the Sino-British Joint Declaration was agreed in 1984, it was argued that Hong Kong people remained apathetic.[75] Scott however offered a new understanding of state-society relations in regard to class, which was previously omitted by sociologists. It represents the first revisionist understanding of Hong Kong's political culture, with a stress on the impact of crisis management by the state. Scott pointed out that the colonial government's approach in handling the changing economic and social structure played an important role in Hong Kong's general political stability. Although political turmoil often emerged when economic and social structures evolved, 'discontent at social or economic conditions is seldom sufficient by itself to make people riot'.[76] Political crises only occurred when the colonial state lacked capability to absorb the discontent by incorporating dissidents into the administrative system. In other words, political stability could still be maintained through political institutionalizations. In Hong Kong, rapid industrialization in the post-war period gave rise to a working class, which was an unstable political force. Hong

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[74] Alvin Rabushka, *Hong Kong: A Study of Economic Freedom* (Chicago, 1979), pp. 2-6; Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman, *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement* (Harmondsworth, 1980), pp. 36, 54-5; Stephen Haggard, *Pathways from Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrializing Countries* (Ithaca, 1990), pp. 116 and 123.
[75] Ian Scott, *Political Change and the Crisis of Legitimacy in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1989), p. 329.
[76] Ibid., p. 84.

Kong's political, economic and social system had created 'a grey industrial world', in which working hours were intolerably long, working condition was inhumane and opportunities for upward social mobility were limited.[77] As the 1956 and 1967 riots had demonstrated, the workers were unable to express their dissatisfaction with the closed political system. According to Scott, the 1966 riots took place mainly because of the economic and social conditions of the colony, which were closely related to Hong Kong's political and class structure.[78] Despite Scott's assertion that both the newly-emerged working class and middle class were the 'unstable political forces' in the colony, he did not discuss the characteristics of political attitudes specified to these groups. Furthermore, the role played by students and intellectuals, who did not fit into these occupational categories, was not interrogated. They were important political actors from the 1960s. The relationship between social classes and political culture remained underexplored.

> By not relating values to class and institutional position, ideational approaches ignore the coercive forces and interests which maintain and enforce conformity to established norms…Altered technologies, economic opportunities, or new patterns of association and organization (were also ignored).[79]

The idea that class dynamic had a deterministic effect on political culture was a dominant intellectual discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, as the above quote alludes to. As the previous section illustrated, the prevailing view amongst commentators on Hong Kong affairs was that class did not explain how state and society were evolving in Hong Kong. This view was

[77] Ibid., p. 89.
[78] Ibid., p. 92.
[79] Daniel Levine, 'Issues in the Study of Culture and Politics: A View from Latin America', *Publius,* 4:2 (1974), pp. 79-80; also quote in R. Formisano, 'The Concept of Political Culture', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 31:3 (2001), pp. 400-1.

subject to more profound revisionism in the 1990s. Lau's assertion about class attracted criticism from Tai-lok Lui and Thomas Wong, who argued that the society of Hong Kong should not be treated as 'some amorphous entity'.[80] Their research divided the Chinese communities into seven different classes, based upon occupations.[81] Findings from surveys suggested that class-consciousness did exist among Hong Kong Chinese.[82] People of the lower classes tended to share similarities with Lau's model: placing heavy reliance on familial networks when seeking jobs and solving financial difficulties. However, contrary to Lau's claim, the social members of higher classes were inclined to look for solutions in the market, for example borrowing money from a bank and hiring domestic workers.[83] Quoting the words of Lui and Wong, 'instead of having a uniform, across-the-board accommodative mechanism, familistic-network in character, depoliticizing in effect, there are in fact different class based mechanisms at work'.[84] Lui and Wong agreed with Scott that the relatively low social mobility of manual workers also contributed 'a source for social instability', which could be noted from the disturbances in 1956, 1966 and 1967.[85] Nonetheless, they pointed out that in other times, they were relatively moderate and non-militant. This was primarily due to their endorsement of traditional Chinese values, which resulted in their political conservatism and passivity.[86] Their belief that plenty of opportunities were available in the colony also

[80] Thomas Wong and Tai-lok Lui, *From One Brand of Politics to One Brand of Political Culture* (Hong Kong: Occasional Paper 10, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, 1992), p. 2.
[81] Occupations were divided into seven classes, including 1) high ranked administrators and professionals, 2) low ranked administrators and professionals, 3) other non-manual workers, 4) artisans and small proprietors, 5) low ranked technicians and supervisors of manual workers, 6) skilled manual workers and 7) semi or unskilled manual workers, in ibid., p. 30.
[82] According to the data of Wong and Lui, 79 per cent of their interviewees felt that they belonged to a class, in ibid., p. 26.
[83] Ibid., pp. 30-5.
[84] Ibid., p. 40.
[85] Thomas Wong and Tai-lok Lui, *Reinstating Class: A Structural and Developmental Study of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Occasional Paper 10, Hong Kong Social Sciences Research Centre and Department of Sociology, 1992), p. 62.
[86] J. England, *Industrial Relations and Law in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1989), Chapter 4; H. Turner, *The Last Colony: But Whose? A Study of the Labour Movement, Labour Market and Labour Relations in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, 1980), Chapters 2 and 4; B. K. L. Leung, 'Political Process and Industrial Strikes and the Labour Movement in Hong Kong, 1946-1989', *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 29:2 (1991), pp. 172-206.

overrode their pessimism about personal advancement and 'spared the danger of personal strain and discontent'.[87]

Benjamin Leung pointed out that the scale and frequency of industrial actions taken by the working class were determined by 'the strength of labour organizations and the development of major political events locally and in mainland China'. In the early post-war period, trade unions were affiliated either to the PRC or Taiwan. Workers were therefore only mobilized by politics of the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party.[88] The level of industrial actions was relatively high during the period from 1946 to 1949 as the Chinese Engineers' Institute was able to create cohesions among labour, making effective mobilization of workers possible.[89] The leadership of the Chinese Engineers' Institute was replaced by politically-orientated trade unions which were established in the late 1940s. However, during the period from 1950 to 1959, the level of industrial strikes remained low as trade unions focused on providing welfare benefits to workers and recruiting more members, especially from the expanding textile and plastic good industries, to join their unions. Lacking the financial and ideological support from big trade unions, industrial strikes in the 1950s were minimal. [90] The level of labour movement only increased in 1967, when rising cost of living coincided with the outbreak of Cultural Revolution in China.[91] After 1967, the working class was stabilized due to China's improved relation with the West and adoption of the peaceful co-existence policy.[92] These studies did bring 'social structure' back to 'the discussion of politics and political stability'.[93] Nonetheless, this revisionism was based upon data collected

[87] Thomas Wong, 'Personal Experience and Social Ideology: Thematization and Theorization in Social Indicators Studies', in Lau Siu-kai (ed.), *Indicators of Social Development: Hong Kong 1990* (Hong Kong, 1992), p. 33.
[88] Leung, 'Political Process and Industrial Strikes and the Labour Movement', p. 202.
[89] Ibid., pp. 178-9, 203.
[90] Ibid., pp. 182-4.
[91] Ibid., pp. 189-90.
[92] Ibid., p. 203; Leung, *Perspectives on Hong Kong Society,* p. 44.
[93] Wong and Lui, *From One Brand of Politics*, pp. 21-2.

from surveys and interviews. The relationship between class-consciousness and political orientations was not subject to analysis using archival sources of trade unions and government agencies. Activism was also narrowly defined as engagement in industrial or working class politics.

Many questions were left unanswered: What were the attitudes of other social classes towards politics? Were they susceptible to political mobilizations in circumstances when demands could not be met through markets and familial networks? How did factors, such as age, influence the political culture of these groups? How did engagement with the colonial state affect social movements? These were some of the questions addressed by revisionist social scientists.

Since the 1990s, revisionists have contested the notion of a 'minimally-integrated social-political system' and convincingly argued that it misrepresented the state-society relations in Hong Kong. There were two strands in this literature: one analysing colonial statecraft and the other examining political culture in the Chinese society. Scholars working on the colonial state argued that the existing literature had grossly simplified the complex nature of British colonialism in Hong Kong.[94] In reality, the colonial state was far from 'a politically neutral state', which 'disengaged itself from societal affairs'. Its reach in the Chinese society was 'far more penetrating' and the state-society relations were 'far more complicated'.[95] Varied ruling strategies were adopted in different circumstances. The synoptic view that emerged was that state-society relations in Hong Kong were 'complex and contingent upon particular

[94] Tak-wing Ngo, 'Colonialism in Hong Kong Revisited', in Tak-wing Ngo (ed.), *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule* (London, 1999), p. 2.
[95] Ibid., p. 3.

situations'.[96] Sometimes, the ruling elites acted benevolently. Sometimes, they merely rewarded their followers. Sometimes, they were repressive. Through the deliberate creation of 'social cleavages' and the collaborations with various social groups, ranging from elites and businessmen to marginalized workers and activists, the colonial state could 'exercise leverage and manoeuvre events into the desired directions'.[97] Law Wing Sang labelled this network of relations as 'Collaborative Colonialism'.[98]

In order to weaken the influence of the Yuen Long faction, the anti-development camp in Heung Yee Kuk, a new constitution was passed by the colonial state in 1955, which almost doubled the size of the Tsuen Wan faction.[99] The constitution, however was revised under the pursuit of the Yuen Long camp in 1957, leading to intensified tensions between the two groups. Far from non-interference, the colonial government on the one hand, sent the District Commissioner to secretly approach the Tsuen Wan camp and discuss the formation of the Council for Rural Administration, marginalizing the Yuen Long faction; on the other hand, declared the Kuk illegal when it failed to register under the Societies Ordinance. During the chaos, the state introduced the Heung Yee Kuk Bill in late 1957 without discussions, restoring the 1955 constitution. The pro-development faction dominated the Kuk, which smoothened the implementation of development plans in the New Territories.[100] The exclusion of rural rivals demonstrated the colonial state could be manipulative and oppressive.[101]

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[96] David Clayton, 'From Laissez-faire to ''Positive Non-interventionism'': The Colonial State in Hong Kong Studies', *Social Transformations in Chinese Societies*, 9:1 (2013), p. 2.
[97] Ngo, 'Colonialism in Hong Kong', p. 5.
[98] Law Wing Sang, *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong, 2009), Chapter 2.
[99] Heung Yee Kuk was a statutory advisory body formed in 1959, representing interests of people in villages and market towns in the New Territories. It consisted of 27 Rural Committees, representing approximately 651 villages.
[100] Stephen W. K. Chiu and Ho-fung Hung, 'State Building and Rural Stability', in Tak-wing Ngo (ed.), *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule* (London, 1999), pp. 82-4.
[101] Clayton, 'From Laissez-faire to ''Positive Non-interventionism''', p. 2.

In the early post-war era, the colonial government intervened to protect the vulnerable 'infant industries' in Hong Kong. For instance, the colonial administration interfered the cotton market during the raw materials shortage. It also restricted the importation of cheap Japanese textiles to the colony under the Sterling Area's exchange controls.[102] During the period from the 1960s to the 1970s, the state even provided some subsidies, especially with respect to the cost of essential commodities, housing and food. The rents of small businesses that were cleared from the resettlement areas and relocated in multi-storey buildings were subsidized by the Housing Authority. To keep the cost of labour low, HK$149 was provided as public housing subsidies to manufacturing workers, which was equivalent to approximately 70 per cent of their monthly wage. In 1973, the state subsidies to a working class household reached about 50.2 per cent of its average wage. In private housing market, the state also implemented rent control, restricting the increase of rent to 21 per cent or less in two years' time.[103] The Vegetable Marketing Organization monopolized vegetables wholesale market and there was a 'Rice Control Scheme'.[104] The state aimed to keep prices low. It also sought to protect local agriculture and food production. The colonial state restricted the volume of import of food from China to only 43 per cent between 1954 to 1963, and 50 per cent between 1964 to 1980.[105]

Like other British colonies, there were 'severe controls on freedom of expression' in Hong

[102] Leo F. Goodstadt, *Uneasy Partners: The Conflict between Public Interest and Private Profit in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 2005), p. 120.
[103] Manuel Castells, Lee Goh and Yin-wang Kwok (eds.), *The Shek Kip Mei Syndrome: Economic Development and Public Housing in Hong Kong and Singapore* (London, 1990), pp. 79-80, 114-5.
[104] Stephen W. K. Chiu and Ho-fung Hung, *The Colonial State and Rural Protests in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1997), p. 32; Jonathan R. Schiffer, 'State Policy and Economic Growth: A Note on the Hong Kong Model', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 15:2 (1991), pp. 184-6.
[105] Ma Ngok, 'Eclectic Corporatism and State Interventions in Post-colonial Hong Kong', in Stephen W. K. Chiu and Siu-lun Wong (eds), *Repositioning the Hong Kong Government: Social Foundations and Political Challenges* (Hong Kong, 2012), p. 66.

Kong.[106] The newspapers in the colony were 'continuously and systematically monitored and pervasively censored through the collaborative efforts of executive actions, legislative provisions and judicial decisions'.[107] Before 1951, only the Governor could exercise censorship power during the state of emergency. The colonial government's power of censorship was substantially strengthened in 1951 after the introduction of the Control of Publications Ordinances, which allowed the state to suspend newspapers in peace time provided that they may disturb public order and provoke strong popular sentiments.[108] Similar rules were applied to films due to the worries that they could become 'an ideological weapon' in the context of Cold War.[109] Since 1950, the colonial state 'severely' regulated the film industry and tightened censorship regulations. Films which exacerbated political rivalries and provoked feelings of racial or national hostility were subject to censorship as they were 'dangerous to the security of the colony'.[110] The freedom to protest in public and form organizations was also curtailed by statutory controls throughout the post-war period, indicating that the colonial government was aware that it had to keep an eye on social unrests.[111] In addition, the colonial state intervened in education by tailoring a depoliticized school curriculum.[112] The colonial state used the curriculum to shape the 'abstract' Chinese identity of the young generation. Taking the subject Chinese history as an example, to prevent the spread of communist and nationalist ideologies in Hong Kong, the colonial government only used the work of classically trained and conservative scholars in the syllabus. Contemporary political issues were not touched upon. A 'depoliticized, sanitized

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[106] Goodstadt, *Uneasy Partners*, p. 79.
[107] Michael Ng, 'When Silence Speaks: Press Censorship and Rule of Law in British Hong Kong, 1850s-1940s', *Law & Literature* 29:3 (2017), p. 425.
[108] Ibid., p. 452.
[109] Kenny K. K. Ng, 'Inhibition vs. Exhibition: Political Censorship of Chinese and Foreign Cinemas in Postwar Hong Kong', *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 2:1 (2008), p. 24.
[110] Ibid., p. 26.
[111] Goodstadt, *Uneasy Partners*, p. 79.
[112] Edward Vickers, *In Search of an Identity: The Politics of History as a School Subject in Hong Kong, 1960s-2002* (New York, 2003), p. 42.

version of Chineseness, quarantined from the modern world' was promoted.[113] Consequently, students related Chineseness to 'neither contemporary China nor the local Hong Kong landscape'.[114] As Ma Ngok has argued, 'the mutual non-intervention between polity and society was overstated'.[115] The impact of these constructed 'public opinions' had on policy making is under-investigated.

The strongest revisionist challenge came from efforts by historians and social scientists to reconstruct social movements, with particular stress given to the disturbances of 1966 and 1967. These were viewed as 'a watershed in Hong Kong's political history'.[116] Before the mid-1960s, Hong Kong's political discourse was largely influenced by Communist China and Kuomintang Taiwan. There was little concern over local politics. Nevertheless, the sojourner mentality ended when Hong Kong Chinese gradually turned into a settled population due to the tightening of border control between Hong Kong and China in the 1950s. The strong contrast between 'the lawless horror in the near-totalitarian political system' of China and the stability and capitalist system offered by the colonial government also favoured the formation of a new political culture in Hong Kong.[117] After the outbreak of the Star Ferry riots in 1966, political culture shifted among the young generation, who were locally born and had no experience with the Chinese Communist regime. The disturbance led them to 'reflect their life and their role in the local society, and voice their views in a significant way for the first time'.[118] The 'firm and carefully calibrated responses' to suppress the rioters also helped the colonial state to 'win over public support', leading many Chinese in Hong Kong began to

[113] Ibid., p. 228.
[114] Bernard H. Luk, 'Chinese Culture in the Hong Kong Curriculum: Heritage and Colonialism', *Comparative Education Review*, 35:4 (1991), p. 668.
[115] Ma Ngok, *Political Development in Hong Kong: State, Political Society and Civil Society* (Hong Kong, 2007), p. 25.
[116] Scott, *Political Change*, p. 81.
[117] Tsang, *A Modern History*, pp. 180-2.
[118] Tsang, *Government and Politics*, p. 248.

identify the colonial government as ‘their government’.[119] Steve Tsang argued that the emergence of this ‘distinctly local political culture’ indicated that the ‘apathy’ described by Lau was ‘not all pervasive’: ordinary Hong Kong Chinese did engage in political activities, especially those focused on the improvement of their living conditions. Tak-lok Lui and Stephen Chiu similarly observed ‘a change of popular mind’, especially among the young generation, in the mid-1960s. The riots in 1966 and 1967 signified the beginning of a new era, in which politics was localized and no longer dominated by affairs of China and Taiwan. Identity politics faded away and political demands were now ‘spontaneous, issue-driven and non-ideological’. This ‘new political and social climate’ encouraged discussions about political affairs in public discourse.[120] The emergence of political consciousness and increased social movements showed that Hong Kong Chinese, especially the young generation, were far from politically apathetic.

Scholars have also investigated state-led reforms of the 1970s, the focus of this thesis. John Carroll argued that reformism enhanced the government’s credibility and fostered a sense of belonging among the locals.[121] This occurred during a period of rapid economic development, which enabled Hong Kong people to travel abroad and compare their homeland with other cities. Increased economic affluence led to the rise of a local popular culture, such as local television programmes, movies and music. As Benedict Anderson pointed out, mass media helped the creation of an ‘imagined community’: although people in a community may not necessarily know each other in real life, they usually had similar interests or identify themselves as part of the place due to their access to mass media, which subsequently created

[119] Tsang, *A Modern History*, pp. 188-90.
[120] Lui and Chiu, ‘Social Movements’, pp. 105-6.
[121] Carroll, *A Concise History*, pp. 172-6.

a common public discourse.[122] In Hong Kong, mass media shaped 'collective memories' and refigured 'popular imagination membership in the Chinese nation-state', facilitating the formation of a distinctive local identity. In many local movies and programmes, 'the cultural differences between Hong Kongers and mainland Chinese' were emphasized.[123] As a result, the notion that 'Hong Kong was politically and culturally separated from China' was reinforced.[124] Influenced by the local popular culture, many Hong Kong Chinese 'became proud of Hong Kong's hybrid status: its blend of Chinese and Western culture and its emphasis on both traditional Chinese values such as family and education and on modern Western values, such as economic freedom and the rule of law'. Increased economic and cultural interchanges between Hong Kong and China further 'showed Hong Kong people how different Hong Kong was from the mainland'. Many Hong Kong Chinese now considered themselves to be 'a special, even different kind of Chinese' and started believing that 'they could be culturally Chinese without accepting the PRC regime'. As John Carroll has observed, the emergence of this local consciousness led many activists in Hong Kong to start making more demands to the colonial government in the 1970s.[125] The Cultural Revolution in China, the anti-Vietnam war movement and student unrests worldwide also constituted to this 'change of mood', especially in higher education institutions after the mid-1960s. Decolonization in Hong Kong was further speeded up after the Suez Crisis in 1956. The British economy was weakened, making the maintenance of a costly Colonial Office to closely supervise the administration of the colony impossible.[126] All these factors facilitated a change in Hong Kong's political culture in the 1970s.

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[122] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983).
[123] Eric Kit-wai Ma, 'Reinventing Hong Kong: Memory, Identity and Television', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 1:3 (1998), pp. 329 and 332.
[124] Eric Kit-wai Ma, *Culture, Politics and Television in Hong Kong* (London, 1999), p. 17.
[125] Carroll, *A Concise History*, pp. 169-70.
[126] Faure, *Colonialism and the Hong Kong Mentality*, pp. 1-4 and 57.

Published in 2004, Lam Wai-man's research is the most accomplished work of revisionism. Lam's work consisted of thirteen case studies, which examined thirteen different social movements that took place in Hong Kong during the period from 1949 to 1979. Unlike surveys, this historical multiple-case interpretative approach took political and social context into consideration. Lam expanded the formerly narrow definition of political participation to include unlawful and informal activities, such as protests, signature campaigns, petitions and discursive discussions. Through examining the scale, intensity and publicity of these campaigns, Lam pointed out that political mobilizations were never absent in Hong Kong. Hong Kong Chinese were far from politically indifferent. Lau's claim that the Chinese society lacked the 'will and ability' to challenge the colonial state therefore was unjustified.[127] She also revised the claims made by Lui and Chiu about the pragmatism of protests.[128] Lam pointed out that these political mobilizations conveyed different ideologies, ranging from nationalism and anti-colonialism to the concept of universal human rights and gender equality. Although the culture of de-politicization continued to exist due to people's previous experience as refugees and the influence of the Cold War, it did not stop political activism. The cultural indifference to politics made cooperation between political parties difficult and led to divisions within activists, and hence, constricted the movements in terms of their scale and level of radicalness. The tensions between political activism and the culture of de-politicization gave rise to the middle ground: 'gradualism and reformism within a framework of stability and prosperity', which in turn benefited the colonial government.

[127] Lam Wai-man, *Understanding the Political Culture of Hong Kong: The Paradox of Activism and Depoliticization* (New York, 2004), pp. 47-52 and 181.
[128] Lui and Chiu, 'Social Movements', p. 108.

Activists adopted 'a reformist attitude towards social changes': they 'rarely called into question its (the colonial state's) legitimacy and right to rule'.[129]

Like much of the revisionism to date, Lam relied on published sources, newspapers to construct new statistical series of protests, and government published reports and student newsletters to present case evidence. She did not use the standard historical source, state records. State records potentially show how the colonial government perceived these social movements and whether this public opinion had channelled to the policy making process. They also allow investigations into alternative factors, most notably the impact of imperial dynamic, the role played by state agencies in London. As Ray Yep has rightly reminded us, 'the exchange between the colonial administration of Hong Kong and the British sovereignty before 1997, and the interaction between the national government and its subordinate units in China since 1949' can and will always 'serve as a good basis for evaluating the interaction between the HKSAR and the Central People's Government after 1997'.[130] This thesis also critiques Lam's measure of activism. The frequency of an event and the number of editorials appeared on newspapers did not reflect public opinions, for or against the movement.

By confining her sources to two newspapers, *Ming Pao* and *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, diverse opinions and attitudes in other newspapers were neglected. If discursive debates were, as Lam argued, 'in themselves political acts and represent(ed) a particular important and relevant mode of (political) participation', discursive discussions in other newspapers must be examined.[131] A newspaper's viewpoint does not always represent that of its readers.

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[129] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, pp. 184-5, 211-30.
[130] Ray Yep, 'Understanding the Autonomy of Hong Kong: Looking Beyond Formal Institutions', in Ray Yep (ed.), *Negotiating Autonomy in Greater China: Hong Kong and Its Sovereignty Before and After 1997* (Copenhagen, 2013), p. 7.
[131] Ibid., p. 41.

However, even if *Ming Pao and Wah Kiu Yat Po* did represent the views of their readers, their circulation figures suggested that they only constituted a small amount of total readership, as shown in Table 1 below.[132] *Ming Pao* and *Wah Kiu Yat Po* only accounted for 12.25 per cent and 6.97 per cent of all Chinese newspapers sold each day in Hong Kong. Lam may be concerned that other less 'neutral' newspapers may have presented biased views to readers. However, this 'disinformation' itself is also a sort of information, which can give us a glimpse of the prevailing and oppositional mood. This thesis addresses these deficiencies by examining strategies and rhetoric employed by the activists, the public receptions of these campaigns.

Table 1: Estimated Circulation Figures of Main Newspapers by December 1971

Names of Chinese Daily Newspapers	Estimated Daily Circulation Figure
Wah Kiu Yat Po	68,300
Sing Tao Man Pao	60,000
Kung Sheung Daily News	60,000
Hong Kong Times	40,000
Tin Tin Yat Po	40,000
Express /Fai Po	116,000
Ming Pao	120,000
Sing Tao Yat Pao	230,000
Hong Kong Daily News	55,000
Wen Wei Pao	10,000
Ta Kung Pao	10,000
Ching Po	75,000
Hong Kong Commercial Daily	75,000
Ting Fung Yat Po	10,000

[132] HKRS 70-7-76-2, Public Relations Department, Government Information Services, 'Estimated Circulation Figures of Main Newspapers by December 1971'. Newspapers with a smaller figure of daily circulation were not included.

Afternoon News	10,000
Total	979,300

Source: HKRS 70-7-76-2, Public Relations Department, Government Information Services, 'Estimated Circulation Figures of Main Newspapers by December 1971', December 1971.

Approach and Methodology

The significance of this research lies in the richness of the unexplored primary sources. Most existing research was carried out by political scientists, sociologists, linguists and anthropologists. This thesis is timely and important. It is the first to use the comprehensive archival sources to explore political culture and public policy making in this crucial period of Hong Kong. Departing from the existing methodologies and focus, it provides a longer perspective using historical discipline, aiming at bridging the gap between the past and present. This thesis questions: How did unorthodox mass political activities interact with the bureaucracy and alter existing political establishments and order? How did political attitudes of Hong Kong Chinese of different social classes and age groups shift over time?

An inductive method was employed in the thesis. Evidence was obtained from archives in both Hong Kong and London. The state records in the Hong Kong Public Record Office and the National Archives in Kew include secret internal correspondence between senior officials in Hong Kong and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, intelligence gathered by the Commissions of Inquiry and the Home Affairs Department, observations made and public opinion polls conducted by City District Officers, speeches delivered by department heads and politicians, minutes of meetings of different departments and Councils, published government reports, and Chinese press reviews conducted by the state. The combined use of state records from both 'central' and 'district' government bodies provides new perspectives on state building and social mobilization.

These state records did not only capture officials' mindsets. They also include open letters and petitions written by activists and organizations. Many of these documents were confidential and only released to the public domain recently. These under-exploited records provide a novel understanding of how social movements were organized and how the state responded to political activism. They capture social change and can be used to examine the development of associational life, a manifestation of 'political activism'. The way officials and activists described social movements in private correspondences and petitions illustrates participants' political orientations and how activists and organizations were mobilized. Secret intelligence gathered by different committees and departments offers information about activists' motivations and their political attitudes. City District Officers' surveys and observations record how ordinary Hong Kong Chinese viewed political activism, which can be used to analyse political culture of different groups in the colony. State published reports and speeches delivered by senior civil servants reveal rhetoric employed by the colonial government to justify its stance and encounter political activism, which can be compared to official lines adopted in private internal records. Minutes of departmental meetings and correspondence between the Governor and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office evaluate contemporary mood and explain reasons behind administrative, legislative and institutional changes.

Apart from the colonial state's perspective, unofficial records, such as newspapers, pamphlets and student newsletters, have also been collected and consulted. This research is not confined to a few Chinese newspapers. Both Chinese and English newspapers have been used as sources. Newspaper rhetoric has been studied for certain key moments in time, notably when social movements took place and political and social changes were debated in both public

and private domains. The mass media played a significant role in constructing the collective sense of Hong Kong community. It is also important to note that they were consumer products and used by elites to appeal for popular support. Some of the campaigns, such as the *China Mail* anti-corruption campaign, were centred on the media. Newspapers constitute a valuable source, indicating changing popular sentiments in the Hong Kong society.

This thesis argues that collaborative strategies were primarily employed by activists in social movements to mobilize the masses. Activists set up ad hoc groups to pull resources of different political and social groups together to exert pressure on the colonial government, These groups included the All Hong Kong Working Party to Promote Chinese as Official Language in the Chinese as the official language movement in 1970, the Christian Industrial Committee coalition in the campaign against the telephone rate increase in 1975 and the All Hong Kong Committee to Strive to Reopen the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee School in the Golden Jubilee incident in 1978. Rather than confronting the colonial state directly, these coalitions and activists expressed their grievances and solicited public support through informal channels. Petitions, signature campaigns, surveys, public opinion polls and open letters were methods commonly used to exert pressure on the colonial state. For ordinary Hong Kong Chinese, discursive debates on newspapers and anonymous petitions were important channels to raise concerns and influence politics. Rallying support from external parties, such as MPs, officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, international organizations and the press was also prevalent due to the possession of limited resources. Direct confrontations, such as demonstrations and sit-ins, were not absent in colonial Hong Kong. Nonetheless, these measures often required more resources and were not endorsed by the public. They were therefore less popular and used only by the young generation in the 1970s.

This thesis differentiates between ideological and instrumental motivations. Pragmatic concerns, such as the 'livelihood' of the public, people's 'confidence' and the colony's 'order and stability' were almost coined in all social movements by the political actors. This rhetoric was indeed effective, especially after the leftist-inspired riots in 1967. As both the Chinese society and the colonial government understood that disturbances could break out if public confidence was lacking and grievances were not handled properly. Ideologies, such as cultural nationalism, anti-colonialism, racial equality and social justice were commonly found in students' slogans and petitions. Nonetheless, they were less appealing to other age groups and social classes. This rhetoric was employed by activists to peacefully 'coerce' the colonial state to give concessions. As the protest against the telephone rate increase has demonstrated, terrorism was extremely rare but not non-existent in Hong Kong. Radicals threatened the initiation of widespread riots and the use of violence when the colonial state neglected public opinions. They however, only represented a small number of marginal groups. In other words, radical and violent rhetoric was seldom adopted.

This thesis also argues that political activism and shifting popular sentiments played an important role in administrative, legislative and institutional changes in Hong Kong in the 1970s. The reformist colonial state had developed an increasingly scientific and sophisticated polling exercise, *Town Talk* before 1975 and *MOOD* after 1975, to assess and understand changing public opinions in the Chinese society. Case studies in this thesis suggest that emerging social movements successfully pressurized the colonial government to act in response to shifting popular sentiments. The procedure normally started with the supply of intelligence on social movements and public opinions by local organizations, such as the City District Officers and the Home Affairs Department, to senior officials. Preliminary advice

was given by these civil servants who observed the community closely. If the event attracted considerable attention from the public, a Special Committee or a Commission of Inquiry was set up to investigate the issue. After which, the public was invited to take part in consultation. This was usually followed by the publication of reports explaining the Committee's findings to the society. Lastly, the colonial state determined whether a new administrative approach was to be adopted based on these special reports. During this policy making process, nonetheless, a number of factors may outweigh popular sentiments in the colony as a decisive factor to determine whether legislative and institutional changes should be implemented. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, popular demands were not granted if London's interests were jeopardized. The anti-corruption campaigns did lead to the formation of the ICAC in 1974, but the extradition of Peter Godber from Britain to Hong Kong was unfeasible due to London's resistance to amending the Fugitive Offenders Act. The Home Office was concerned that the retrospective change would lay both the British and colonial governments open to criticism and affect other dependent territories in the British Empire. The colonial state's decision was also influenced by practicality. In Chapter 4, despite public opposition to any increase of telephone rate, the Legislative Council enabled the Hong Kong Telephone Company to increase telephone rental by 30 per cent in February 1975. The decision was made before the Commission of Inquiry completed its investigation since it was the only solution to prevent the company from going into bankruptcy. As Chapter 6 demonstrates, diplomatic concerns also delayed the implementation of the new immigration policy in 1980. For fear it might endanger the relations with the PRC, London was reluctant to end the Touch Base policy despite the Governor's constant pursuit.

Lastly, this thesis argues that political culture in Hong Kong differed in accordance with social classes and age groups. One must acknowledge that people belong to the same social

class or age group do not always share similar political attitudes. Difference could be attributed to a number of factors which have not been examined in this thesis, such as personal experience, level of education and gender due to the absence of relevant archival records. Although the heterogeneity within each social class and age group should not be understated, the state records provide an overall sketch of varied political culture in Hong Kong. The upper class was in general reluctant to engage in political activism. They despised informal means of political participation as they believed that these activities were undignified and undermined political stability. The middle class on the whole was indifferent to informal political engagement. Many were pro-establishment and politically conservative, advocating caution in the changing state-society relations. The working class and the grassroots level were mainly driven by instrumentalism, leading them to keep themselves distant from political activism. They were unaware of the implications of an increasingly responsive reformist colonial state, and were not interested in how Hong Kong was governed as long as their livelihoods were unaffected. Their capacity for political mobilizations however, should not be neglected. As Chapter 4 shows, they formed groups effectively and participated in political lobbies when their social and economic interests were jeopardized. The adult members in the society mostly believed that political activism should be checked as it might go out of hand, threatening the order and stability of the colony. They held a reserved attitude towards student activism, which adopted the strategies of direct confrontation. The middle aged and elderly groups were influenced by traditional Chinese values. They largely disapproved of popular informal political engagement. The young generation was largely divided. Some students were reluctant to take part in social movements**.** Yet, those at the higher education tended to consider informal political participation to be an appropriate way to express themselves. Relative radical strategies, such as demonstrations and sit-ins, were adopted to pursue their ends. In general, the young generation held a less favourable view of

the colonial state than their seniors.

The general political culture in Hong Kong had shifted in the long 1970s. In the early 1970s, the political culture was relatively conservative. People avoided direct involvement in social movements. Even in discursive debates on newspapers, many chose not to disclose their identities. Students were often considered radical despite the absence of direct confrontation. By the mid-1970s, influenced by reforms implemented by the colonial state, mass media and increased education, people became increasingly eager to raise their concerns and express their discontent with the colonial government. Moderate informal political channels, such as sending petitions and organizing signature campaigns were gradually accepted. In the aftermath of the 1967 riots, political activism which directly confronted the colonial regime, such as demonstrations and sit-ins, nonetheless was still not widely acknowledged, indicating some degree of political conservatism. The frequent coining of rhetoric, such as 'stability and order', 'trouble-makers' and repeated associations of radicals with the leftists suggested that the traumatic experience in 1967 was still haunting many Hong Kong Chinese.

Despite their merits, the partiality and limitations of the sources must be acknowledged. The author's understanding of state-society relations in Hong Kong was primarily derived from state records which are available in the public domain. Nevertheless, some of these records are fragmentary. Documents involving politicians and individuals that are still alive are not released. Files containing sensitive content which may influence the present relationship between Britain and China are still being retained. Some incriminating archival records had either been destroyed on the eve of decolonization or are being kept in the Migrated Archives to prevent disclosure. The unavailability of some of these sources constitutes an imperfect analysis of state-society relations in the 1970s. The use of oral history is also ruled out in this

thesis as priority is given to the examination of under-exploited state records, which are more accessible. Developing a sophisticated methodology to source historical actors and conduct oral interviews is also beyond the scope of this PhD.

<u>The Structure of the Thesis</u>

Chapter 1 demonstrates that the reformist colonial government invested considerable resources and manpower polling a representative sample of people. Since 1968, the bureaucracy had started collecting and analysing public opinions regularly through *Town Talk*, a secretive mechanism which was only known to senior officials. This later evolved into *MOOD*, a more systematic and scientific opinion poll in 1975. This chapter shows how methodologies and sampling methods of *Town Talk* and *MOOD* were refined by the colonial regime in the 1970s to enhance the representativeness of its constructed 'public opinion'. It also reveals how this data was distributed to policy makers, which demonstrates that the masses did participate in policy formulation but were made *structurally invisible* by the state.[133] The thesis then uses five case studies as empirical examples to deconstruct state-society relations in colonial Hong Kong in the 1970s: how intelligence collected through *Town Talk* and *MOOD* fed back into the policy making process, and how political activism and public discourse influenced the colonial state's ruling strategies.

The selection of these case studies were based on five criteria. First, they have to be significant and controversial issues which can be used to reveal the main tensions in state-

[133] The term *structurally invisible* is in italics because the MOOD unit technically was not wholly invisible. High ranked officers were aware of its presence. However, far from being a tangible department with its own separate and visible structure, MOOD was embedded in the CDO programme. Its operation relied on staff of the ten City District Offices. Although high ranked officers were fully aware of *MOOD* which was embedded in the CDO programme, its presence was concealed from the public. Hence, it was *structurally invisible.*

society relations in Hong Kong in the 1970s. All the cases increased political activism and/or involved intensive discursive exchanges at all levels of society. Second, these case studies do not only include positive responses from the government, but also negative responses. Examination therefore can be made to identify the pattern: under what circumstances was it more likely for social movement and public opinion to exert pressure on the colonial government and successfully influence its policies. Third, these events and issues covered most of the 1970s and so allow assessment of the shifting political culture and ruling strategies. Fourth, these campaigns are either inadequately covered by the existing scholarship, or at least have some aspects which are under-investigated. And finally, there are abundant state records about these case studies are available in both archives in London and Hong Kong. Popular reactions towards these events and government's responses can therefore be assessed using data derived from underexploited archival sources complemented by published sources.

These case studies are arranged in chronological order as event that took place first often had knock-on effects on those happened afterwards. For example, language requirements were lowered after the language movement in 1970, allowing more Chinese speaking people to serve in the colonial bureaucracy, including the ICAC which formed in 1974. The proposed increase in telephone rate in 1975 and the Golden Jubilee incident in 1978 quickly became heated issues as it was believed corrupt practices were involved, which many Hong Kong Chinese considered unacceptable after the formation of the ICAC in 1974. Reading the case studies chronologically also enables direct comparison of state-society relations in different stages: the early, the mid and the late 1970s.

In each case study, the changing public discourse and the organization of political activism are analysed. Through which, political culture of different social and age groups can be understood. The colonial state's responses to shifting popular sentiments and social movements are then investigated so that the relationship between public opinion and administrative, legislative and institutional changes can be comprehended.

Chapter 2 details the Chinese as the official language movement in 1970 which has not been covered by existing literature using archival sources. The campaign was significant. The legalization of Chinese as the official language of Hong Kong removed the communication barrier between the colonial regime and the Chinese society. The stake of the Hong Kong Chinese in politics was also drastically enhanced as more Hong Kong Chinese could now serve in the colonial government. The movement was substantial. It was endorsed by people of different groups and contained a broad spectrum of public opinions, ranging from cultural nationalism to instrumentalism.

Chapter 3 explores the relationship between a number of anti-corruption campaigns and the formation of the ICAC, the most important institutional change in British Hong Kong in the 1970s. The ICAC was largely successful in restoring public confidence in the colonial government. It also played an important role in changing Hong Kong's political culture. People started to identify themselves when reporting cases of corruption. Their fear towards officialdom also had been greatly reduced. Corruption had been a serious problem in the colony since the post-war period. Institutional reforms however were unfeasible before the 1970s due to strong resistance from London. The shifting popular sentiments and political activism in the colony in 1973 attracted considerable attention from international media and MPs. This created an impetus for the colonial government to renegotiate institutional changes

to eradicate corruption in Hong Kong.

Chapter 4 examines how telephone rates were regulated in Hong Kong and how this influenced consumer movements, and vice versa. In late 1974, it was rumoured that the monopolized Hong Kong Telephone Company would increase telephone rates by 70 per cent. It soon sparked off colony-wide protests of unprecedented scale, in which activists adopted both collaborative and confrontational strategies. The movement was significant since there was an anti-colonial agenda behind the protests against rising prices. Poor regulation was condemned and the state's intervention was demanded. It also indicates changing political culture. Hong Kong Chinese, including those at the grassroots level, demonstrated considerable skills to mobilize support when their interests were at stake.

Chapter 5 documents the Golden Jubilee incident in 1978, which reveals young activists' remarkable capacity for organization, effective communication with post-secondary students and MPs in London. The colonial state encountered political activism of teachers and students by setting up a Committee of Inquiry. The shifting opinions monitored by the colonial government however suggested that political culture in Hong Kong was divided: the grassroots groups, middle aged and elderly households largely disapproved of confrontational political activism initiated by the educated young generation.

Chapter 6 explores the changing immigration policy in Hong Kong in the 1970s. It was set as the last case study due to its different nature. First, it covers the entire 1970s rather than a short period of time. Second, rather than political activism, discursive debates were explored. It explains how public opinions and other factors, such as international publicity and the Sino-British relations, affected the immigration policy of British Hong Kong in the long

1970s. The scale of illegal immigration from China strained the colony's limited housing stock and its under-developed welfare and education system since the 1960s. The shifting international and popular discourses regrading immigration influenced how the colonial government managed this 'problem' through implementing a 'new' immigration policy. The exclusionist immigration policy of the colonial state facilitated increased discriminations towards and stereotypes of mainland Chinese. Mainland Chinese illegal immigrants were often being referred as inferior due to perceived cultural differences, lack of language proficiency and skills, and absence of working ethics. The heightened hostility towards Chinese immigrants influenced how Hong Kong Chinese identified with the colony and led many of them to engage in intensive discursive debates, demanding reforms and prioritization of their access to economic resources and social services. The shifting popular sentiments, along with the constraints in land and resources imposed tremendous pressure on the colonial government, driving which to affirm necessity of new immigration controls to London in 1974 and 1980 respectively.

I. Constructing 'Public Opinions' through *Town Talk* and *MOOD*

According to Lau's concept of 'minimally-integrated social-political system', the links between the 'autonomous bureaucratic polity' and the 'atomistic Chinese society' were extremely limited. The colonial state had no 'organizational penetration' into the Chinese communities and Chinese households were politically apathetic, reliant on familial networks and self-regulating. As a result, 'boundary maintenance' was sustained. Politics only took place at the boundary between the colonial government and the Chinese communities. These political interactions were largely 'not highly institutionalized in formal or legal sense'. In other words, political institutions which allowed non-bureaucratic outsiders to exercise political power were absent.[1]

As the introduction has demonstrated, Lau's position was ahistorical, theoretical and using mainly a non-representative set of interview data, failing to examine the relationship between the colonial state and Chinese communities in Hong Kong 'in a particular structural-historical context'.[2] Although revisionists had refuted this erroneous view of state-society relations, political communications are under-explored. The City District Officer Scheme, which was introduced in 1968 to bridge the communication gap between the colonial state and the Chinese communities, has not been subject of close historical examination. For example, the work of Steve Tsang, John Carroll and Ian Scott only provided a short institutional history of the scheme, focusing on the background in which it was established and its key functions.[3] King's 'Administrative Absorption of Politics in Hong Kong: Emphasis on the Grass Roots Level' contained the most detailed account about the scheme. Nonetheless, the article was

[1] Lau, *Society and Politics,* pp. 13-21, 121 and 157-9.
[2] Ibid., pp. 21 and 157.
[3] Tsang, *A Modern History*, p. 190; Carroll, *A Concise History*, p. 159; Scott, *Political Change*, pp. 107-10.

published in 1975. Relying on published sources and few oral interviews, his understanding of the scheme was impressionistic.[4] This existing literature neglects to discuss how the colonial state constructed and monitored 'public opinions' using *Town Talk* and *Movement of Opinion Direction* (*MOOD*), a state-funded public opinion polling, not officially included in the scheme. The *Town Talk* and *MOOD* files have only recently been released to the public domain, enabling historians to investigate the mechanism used by the colonial state to solicit public opinions at local level.

Using archival evidence, this chapter addresses how the reformist colonial state in Hong Kong monitored and solicited changing popular sentiments through covert polling exercises. It examines *Town Talk* and *MOOD*, two bureaucratic instruments, introduced by the colonial state after the leftist riots to monitor shifting public opinions under the coordination of the Home Affairs Department and the City District Offices. *Town Talk* reports were first produced in 1968. In 1975, advanced methodologies were adopted to collect public opinions at district level. *Town Talk* was then given a new name: *MOOD*. This chapter details the changing methodologies the bureaucrats adopted to enhance the credibility of this data throughout the 1970s. It also explains how these constructed 'public opinions' were channelled back to the policy making process. By demonstrating that these constructed opinions influenced the state's administrative strategies, this chapter argues that the 'public' was involved in the policy making process through *Town Talk* and *MOOD*. Also, unlike Lau's beliefs, *Town Talk* and *MOOD* indicate that political interactions between state and the society were formally institutionalized. Although the presence of the polling exercises was concealed from the public and therefore people may be taking part in policy formulation unconsciously, high ranked officials were fully aware of *Town Talk* and *MOOD*,

[4] King, 'Administrative Absorption of Politics'.

which were embedded in the City District Officer programme. *Talk Town* and *MOOD* supplied officials with information on strategies and rhetoric employed by activists to mobilize the mass in social movements. Containing substantial amounts of valuable data about ordinary Hong Kong Chinese in a rich qualitative manner, it also provides analysis of the impact of class and age on political culture in Hong Kong. These reports, alongside confidential state correspondences and newspapers, will be used in the five case studies in this thesis as primary sources, to deconstruct political culture in accordance to social classes and age groups. The five case studies also investigate how these constructed 'public opinions' were channelled into the policy making process and influenced ruling strategies in Hong Kong in the 1970s. This chapter provides a foundation for this later analysis.

<u>Post-hoc Official Conceptualization of Public Opinions through *Town Talk*</u>

Before the 1960s, the colonial government in Hong Kong was jointly administered by expatriates and Chinese elites. Bureaucrats often consulted Chinese elites and advisory boards before policies' implementation. They did not consult the public directly. The Secretary of Chinese Affairs was the main channel of communication between the colonial state and the Chinese communities. Rule of indirect: regular contacts with Chinese traditional societies and organizations, such as kaifong associations[5], rather than direct from ordinary Chinese residents, were used to obtain intelligence on changing popular sentiments.[6] Upon the collection of opinions, weekly departmental meetings were held in the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs. The Secretary of Chinese Affairs then reported verbally at the Government House every Friday.[7] In the New Territories, District Officers took a similar role. They

[5] The term 'kaifong' refers to people living in the same neighbourhood.
[6] Lau, *Society and Politics,* p. 133.
[7] HK 413-1-2, 'The Preparation and Significance of Town Talk', *Town Talk*, 15 April 1969, p. 1.

served as the link between the colonial state and rural villagers in their areas: on the one hand, District Officers informed the government of the local leaders' opinions; on the other hand, they explained government's development plans and policies to the public.[8] The Government Information Services was also responsible for monitoring public opinions indirectly. While controlling the dissemination of news and shaping public opinions through supplying newspapers with a *Daily Information Bulletin*, the department monitored the press closely to evaluate shifting popular sentiments.[9] The official conceptualization of public opinions generated by these indirect devices were not representative, more a reflection of views of Chinese social elites and community leaders. The voices of ordinary Chinese people remained unheard.

The Urban Council was the only institution which possessed both executive power and democratically elected members. Nonetheless, only two of ten were elected Councillors and its franchise remained extremely limited. There were few channels for the public to raise their grievances. The colonial state was reluctant to introduce a relatively democratic political system as senior civil servants believed that a centralized administration was more efficient. They were also concerned that an increasingly democratic local government would lead the Chinese government to believe that Hong Kong was moving towards independence.[10] This contributed to a sense of 'alienation', that was felt strongly by many people during the 1960s and beyond.[11] The Star Ferry riots in 1966 were attributed to social discontent in the colony.[12] A communication gap between the state and the Chinese society was identified by the Commission of Inquiry. Opinion polls were not conducted on a regular basis at this point.

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[8] Tsang, *Government and Politics*, pp. 39-40.
[9] Ma, *Political Development in Hong Kong*, p. 165.
[10] Scott, 'Bridging the Gap', p. 138.
[11] Tai-lok Lui, *那似曾相識的七十年代* (*The Old-so Familiar 1970s*), (Hong Kong, 2012), p. 56.
[12] Tsang, *A Modern History*, p. 189.

Public opinions were only gauged on ad hoc basis in response to the riots by the Commission of Inquiry, the Secretary of Chinese Affairs and the police force.[13] The 1967 riots indicated the colonial government's legitimacy was challenged and reforms were necessary .[14] To improve political communication between the state and Chinese society, the City District Officer Scheme was introduced in 1968, widening channels of political participation without democratization or delegation of further executive power to the Urban Council.[15] The government departed from its previous ruling strategies. The scheme was 'a multifunctional political structure'. Ten City District Offices were set up to provide policy makers with intelligence about public opinions, to explain the state's policies, to answer public enquiries and to manage district affairs. This reform sought to incorporate the lower strata of the society into the administrative authority. City District Officers observed the people in their everyday lives and surveyed them collectively via District Monthly Meetings and Study Groups, new devices 'geared primarily to reach local leaders'; *Town Talk*, a new confidential official publication, was oriented towards ordinary people.[16]

Since the introduction of the City District Officer Scheme in 1968, City District Officers were required to organize the opinions they heard and gathered into weekly written reports, the circulation of which were restricted only to department heads and high ranked government officials. These confidential reports known as *Town Talk* captured the weekly talk of the town, the qualitative aspect of opinions. Being 'one of the most important channels for soliciting public opinions', *Town Talk* aimed to 'detect any strong current of public feeling' and solicit views of 'man in the street' from 'different walks of life' in urban areas.[17]

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[13] Scott, 'Bridging the Gap', pp. 132-7.
[14] Scott, *Political Change*, p. 124; Wong, 'The 1967 Riots: A Legitimacy Crisis?', p. 46.
[15] Scott, 'Bridging the Gap', p. 144; Lui, *那似曾相識的七十年代*, p. 21.
[16] King, 'Administrative Absorption of Politics', pp. 433-4.
[17] 'The Preparation and Significance of Town Talk', p. 3.

It excluded the opinions of the bureaucrats, instead they recorded what they heard in public places and on social occasions, both private and public. Public opinions were gathered primarily by observing and having casual conversations with ordinary people.

To acquire accurate understanding of shifting public opinions, the colonial state invested a substantial amount of time and manpower in the preparation of *Town Talk. Town Talk* was prepared mainly by Liaison Assistants, Liaison Officers and City District Officers. In 1969, there were as many as 100 reporting officers spread over the urban areas in Hong Kong. These officers were responsible for collecting opinions independently from these ten city districts. City District Officers also attended routine staff meetings with field staff in different departments, such as the Tenancy Inquiry Bureau and the Resettlement Department, to gather the comments they picked up, which were as well included in the report.[18] Apart from Liaison Officers and City District Officers, *Town Talk* was prepared by 'all officers in the department'. In other words, senior officers and clerical staff in the Home Affairs Department also made contributions. At this early stage, according to the Secretary for Home Affairs, *Town Talk* was only a 'by product', which either arose in casual conversations and meetings with individuals or was overheard.[19] The comments City District Officers solicited were not always necessarily sensitive. Sometimes they were 'almost random' in the weeks 'when nothing much seems to catch the public interest and imagination'.[20] Staff normally did not ask for views on any particular topic but only reported what they overheard. However, on request, special assessments on public reactions on various matters could be carried out.[21]

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[18] Ibid., p. 4.
[19] HKRS 413-1-2, D. R. Holmes, 'The Preparation of Town Talk: A Guidance Note', 11 October 1969, p. 1.
[20] 'The Preparation and Significance of Town Talk', p. 2.
[21] HKRS 413-1-2, Secretariat for Home Affairs, 'The Preparation and Significance of Town Talk', 27 November 1969, p. 4.

Who did *Town Talk* observe or interview? To enhance the diversity and representativeness of the opinions collected, the importance of not relying on the same people was repeatedly emphasized in *Town Talk*: 'strangers are a good source and you should acquire the trick of striking up acquaintance around the district'. The opinion poll primarily targeted the Chinese population. The 'wealthier non-government, non-Chinese people' were considered to be contacts that were 'not good'. To avoid natural bias, City District Officers tried not to interview excessive people of the same social status. There were also clear definitions of different social groups. For example, 'middle class' meant households whose monthly expenditure was approximately $500.[22]

To effectively understand the opinions of different social classes, the Home Affairs Department continued to expand its contact list. Initially, the Secretary for Home Affairs defined 'public opinion' as 'a majority opinion of adults'. In 1969, the contacts which the City District Officers had were still very limited. They were mostly 'more public spirited middle class men, older students, housewives, the white collar class and well-to-do-men whose English proficiency was limited'. Understanding the constraints, the Home Affairs Department increased contacts with grassroots members, such as factory workers, hawkers and poorer people. To measure the extent of a comment, the officials had to provide general descriptions of the respondents, including social class, occupation or industry and geographical area, such as educated middle class and textile worker.[23] The continual expansion of *Town Talk*'s contact list to include increased interviewees of different social classes and age groups indicates the colonial state's determination to obtain a representative sample of public opinions. Nonetheless, there was also no clear guidance on the number of

[22] Ibid., pp. 2 and 4.
[23] Holmes, 'The Preparation of Town Talk: A Guidance Note', pp. 1-2.

people they should interview or talk to: this was not ‘a statistically justifiable sample of expressions of public opinions’.[24] As a result, terms such as ‘majority’, i.e. exceeding 50 per cent, were used with caution.[25] *Town Talk* was not robust.

Although *Town Talk* was not statistically representative, its emphasis on qualitative data analysis allowed officials to obtain a richer and more in-depth understanding of interviewees’ attitudes and feelings. To ensure that data collected was free from official bias, officers were instructed to follow certain techniques. Firstly, it was advised that comments ‘should arise without prompting’. As to do so would ‘colour what you hear’. When questioning the respondents, staff were instructed to frame the questions ‘in a neutral way’. For example, instead of asking one ‘don’t you think it is wonderful the government has decided to do away with concubines?’, one should frame the question as ‘have you heard of the proposed new law? Do you think it is any good? Will it work?’. During the course of contacts, if serious misconceptions were encountered, City District Officers were obliged to ‘correct them on the spot if possible’. Alternatively, follow-up actions, such as explaining the proposals, passing words to relevant departments, should be planned and recorded in the report.[26] This was to prevent unintended repercussions similar to the 1967 riots which might be stemmed from misunderstandings and miscommunications between the colonial state and the Chinese society.

After gathering opinions from different respondents, meetings were held to finalize the report, which then reached the policy makers. Either the City District Officers held an informal meeting during which staff reported on what they heard in the past one week or the

[24] Secretariat for Home Affairs, ‘The Preparation and Significance of Town Talk’, p. 2.; Holmes, ‘The Preparation of Town Talk: A Guidance Note’, p. 2.
[25] Ibid., p. 2.
[26] Ibid., pp. 1-3.

Liaison Officer collected all the comments in the offices. City District Officers then decided what to include in *Town Talk* and were responsible for the summarizing and editing the report. It was advised that in particular, topics which people talked about 'outside personal affairs' or had some connection with the governing of Hong Kong should be included. Unexpected views and serious misunderstandings among the public should also be recorded. A meeting specifically on *Town Talk* was subsequently held between the City District Officers, City District Commissioners and the Deputy Secretary of Home Affairs to compare and cross-check the findings. City District Commissioners and Deputy Secretary of Home Affairs then weaved these solicited comments into narratives: 'coherent if possible but incoherent if this is necessary to reflect confusion'. These comments should be followed by a 'fairly long or thoughtful reflection' on the subject. After the report was finalized, it was disseminated only to high ranked officials. The Governor would 'take time to read it' and 'often discuss it with head of departments', who were also recipients of *Town Talk*.[27] Being classified as 'restricted', the existence of *Town Talk* was concealed from the public: 'we do not particularly want it to become publicly known that such a preparation is produced'.[28] It was the responsibilities of the head of departments to ensure that the report did not 'get into hands of junior officers'.[29] *Talk Town* fed into the policy making process without the public knowing.

The relatively unsystematic and unscientific nature of *Town Talk* attracted criticisms from bureaucrats, who questioned the report's credibility. As early as in 1969, the Home Affairs Department recognized that the selection of contacts was 'often not methodical' although it was also claimed that it was 'unlikely' that any subject that was widely talked about would be

[27] Ibid., p. 3.
[28] 'The Preparation and Significance of Town Talk', p. 3.
[29] Holmes, 'The Preparation of Town Talk: A Guidance Note', p. 4.

missed.[30] By 1972, there were accusations both within and outside the Home Affairs Department arguing that the way opinions were solicited in *Town Talk* was 'mostly unsystematic' and comments were largely 'impressionistic and without statistical support'. Some officers still defended its methodologies. For instance, Stephen Y. S. Ho, the City District Officer of Central argued that it was intentional that *Town Talk* was collected 'in an unscientific manner quite different from a statistical research'. The usefulness of the opinion poll relied on the fact that it was 'an album of human expressions manifested through personal contact and human relations'. Nevertheless, it was also agreed that after four years since the first *Town Talk* was published, the Home Affairs Department should address its limitations. Was it capturing views from different sectors of the community, beyond the reach of City District Officers? Why were the views from youth and students 'comparatively rare'? Why were so many insights not incorporated in the reports? Why were they so imprecise, with references to the opinions of 'several housewives' or 'a few kaifongs'?[31]

To improve the quality of *Town Talk*, the state refined its surveying methodology. To ensure that only important matters were included in the reports, the staff focused on 'hot topics' of the week, as decided by individual City District Officers. The Assistant City District Officers acted as the coordinator of *Town Talk* in different districts. The department also continued to expand its contact list and seek more contacts from various sources. As people of different social classes had different mentalities and reactions on the same issue. Hoping to enhance the representativeness of the opinions they gathered, the Home Affairs Department considered a number of recommendations. Rather than merely reporting what they had overheard randomly, 'a more positive method' was needed and City District Office staff were

[30] Secretariat for Home Affairs, 'The Preparation and Significance of Town Talk', 27 November 1969, p. 3.
[31] HKRS 489-4-25, 'Town Talk', Memo from Stephen Y. S. Ho to C.D.C (HK), 27 January 1972, pp. 1-2.

asked to approach different sectors in the community for opinions. Nonetheless, this recommendation was rejected as *Town Talk* should not be collected explicitly. Another suggestion that public opinions should be collected by counter staff was also turned down due to existing heavy workload.[32] With limited resources, the present method of collecting *Town Talk* remained unchanged despite the expansion of contact list. *Town Talk* remained a weekly survey to capture the 'immediate reaction of the public on controversial issues'.[33] The failure to introduce significant methodological changes led many bureaucrats continue to question the reliability of the report's findings.

To strengthen the authoritativeness of *Town Talk*, the Home Affairs Department and the City District Officers experimented with new version in February 1975. The new *Town Talk* written report was divided into five sections. The first section was 'popping points', which consisted of main issues of public concern that high ranked civil servants needed to be informed, such as increase in telephone charges, corruption and unemployment. The second section outlined popular misconceptions on the state's policies and actions the Home Affairs Department should take to correct them. The third section contained immediate reactions to 'hot issues'. The fourth section included rumours which could be formerly found in 'Small Talk'. The last section assessed how public opinions were influenced by television, radio and the press. To avoid ambiguity and offer a perspective on social stratification, *Town Talk* indicated the type of persons holding the views reported. Respondents were classified in the following groupings in accordance to their age, social class, education level, type of residence, gender and occupation. (See Table 2.) Staff also ranked insights using one to four stars, ranging from a small minority to the majority. In terms of procedure, the City District

[32] Ibid.
[33] HKRS 413-1-2, Note of meeting held on 5 December 74 and 11 December 74 at Wan Chai City District Office to discuss ways and means of improving the quality of *Town Talk*, pp. 1-2.

Officers now chaired the District Town Talk meetings and reported to the Deputy Director of Home Affairs on every Tuesday afternoon. During each week's meeting, City District Officers also indicated whether the comments they reported were solicited by the staff or simply overheard.[34]

Table 2: Classifications of Social Stratifications Adopted in *Town Talk* in Early 1975

Types	Classifications			
A. Age	Young (A1)	Middle Aged (A2)	Old (A3)	
B. Social Class	Lower Class (B1)	Middle Class (B2)	Upper Class (B3)	
C. Educational Level	Primary Education (C1)	Secondary Education (C2)	Post-secondary Education (C3)	
D. Type of Residence	Group A Estate (D1)	Group B Estate (D2)	Squatters (D3)	Others (D4)
E. Gender	Male (E1)	Female (E2)		
F. Occupation	Blue Collar (F1)	White Collar (F2)	Professionals (F3)	

Source: HKRS 413-1-2, 'Town Talk', Memo from A. K. Chui to C.D.O.s, 5 February 1975, p. 2.

From 1968 to 1975, the *Town Talk* exercise was the main device the colonial state adopted to improve political communications and gauge shifting public sentiments in the Chinese communities directly. To solicit a representative sample of public opinions, the colonial government invested a considerable amount of manpower and time on *Town Talk*. Prior to 1970, there were more than 100 staff engaged in the exercise, which was a weekly practice. These polling exercises were not conducted explicitly in the public and the reports derived from them were highly restrictive. Only high ranked officials who were involved in the policy making process had access to them. This created a false impression that the public was

[34] HKRS 413-1-2, 'Town Talk', Memo from A. K. Chui to C.D.O.s, 5 February 1975, pp. 1-3.

not involved in the policy formulation process. Nonetheless, as later chapters will demonstrate, these constructed 'public opinions' had a direct impact on the colonial state's ruling strategies.

A selective qualitative survey, *Town Talk,* enabled officials to have an improved understanding of shifting popular attitudes and sentiments. High ranked civil servants considered this information before introducing administrative, legislative and institutional changes in Hong Kong. The fact that the Home Affairs Department continued to introduce methodological advancements to the exercise also suggests the report's value to colonial bureaucrats. The next section explains why *MOOD* replaced *Town Talk*, and how the colonial state improved *MOOD* in the second half of the 1970s.

From *Town Talk* to *MOOD*

The fact that there were no clear guidelines in the late 1960s and early 1970s on who the City District Officers should interview resulted in interviewees being consulted spontaneously and repeatedly. This put the report's authoritativeness in question. As Augustine Kam Chui, the Deputy Director of the Home Affairs Department, noted:

> The major criticism of *Town Talk* over years has been that it was unsystematic and had no statistical basis. This will always be the case but its credibility can be increased very considerably if the staff involved each contact a predetermined number of people every week to ensure that the coverage is as widely extended as feasible.[35]

[35] HKRS 394-27-9, 'Town Talk, Memo from A. K. Chui to all C.D.O.', 24 February 1975, p. 2.

In this context, *MOOD*, a successor of *Town Talk*, was introduced in March 1975. It intended to be a 'more authoritative and therefore influential' public opinion poll to replace *Town Talk*.[36] *MOOD* was a confidential report generated by the Home Affairs Department, the main purpose of which was 'to draw attention to subjects which are currently or potentially of public concern, and to assess public reactions, attitudes and feelings in appropriate instances'.[37] Nonetheless, *MOOD* focused on a number of aspects *Town Talk* did not pay attention to. *MOOD* placed its priority on collecting opinions that were not from analysis of the media. It examined the impact of the press on public opinions, public misconceptions and voices of 'the less articulated classes' who 'cannot get their views heard and have therefore suffered in silence'. Controversial topics and anti-government activities were investigated, as well the opinions of civil servants who disagreed with state policies. *MOOD* was important for colonial bureaucrats. It was stated clearly that *MOOD* was given 'the first priority over all other work' as it was 'read by the Governor and his policy advisers every week, and was referenced during policy making'.[38] Due to the sensitivity of the intelligence gathered, the reports similarly only circulated among senior officials.[39] Heads of departments were reminded to store their *MOOD* reports 'securely all the time'.[40] Its highly restrictive nature also suggests *MOOD* findings were acknowledged and handled carefully.

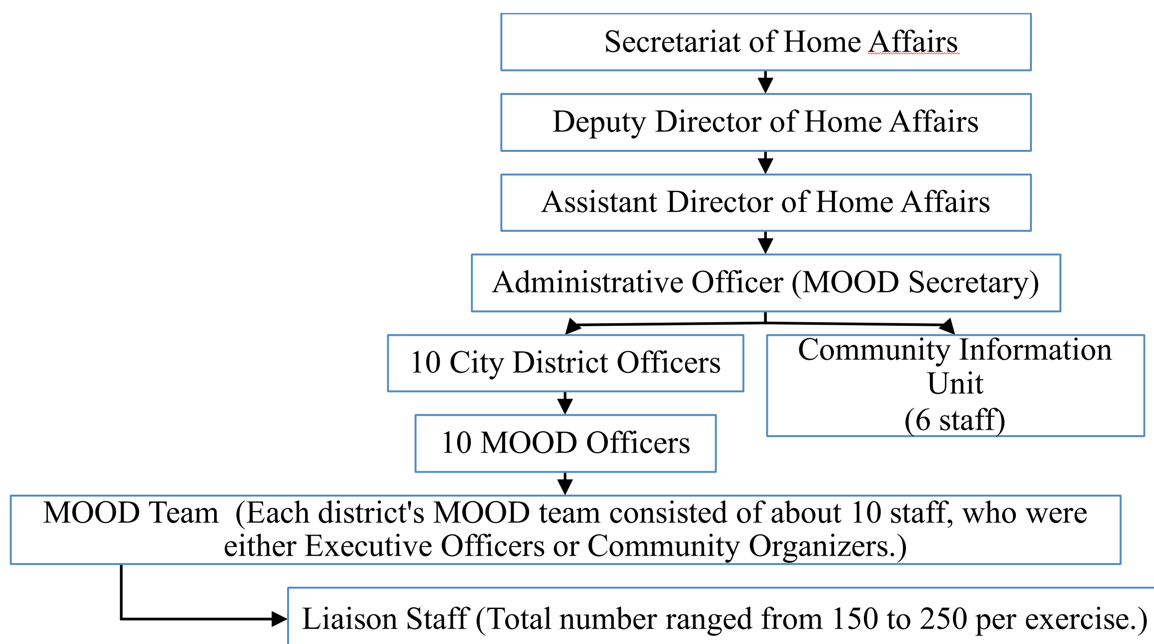
As the existing polling exercise was 'not comparable with that of a professional public opinion survey', which reduced accuracy, the administration sought to improve the methodologies of *MOOD*. Opinion polling was evidently valuable to bureaucrats. The

[36] Ibid., p. 1.
[37] HKRS 925-1-1, 'MOOD: Movement of Opinion Direction', 13 March 1975, p. 1.
[38] 'Town Talk, Memo from Chui to all C.D.O.', pp. 1 and 3.
[39] The circulation rate of MOOD varied throughout the 1970s, ranging from 153 to 167 copies. They were only sent to policy makers and high ranked officials, usually the secretaries and heads of each department, such as the Chief Secretary, the Secretary of Local Intelligence Committee and the Director of Information Service. For the full distribution list, see Table A in Appendix.
[40] 'MOOD: Movement of Opinion Direction', p. 2.

colonial state made investment to improve this source of intelligence throughout the 1970s. Compared to *Town Talk*, archival evidence suggests that *MOOD* was a sizable unit with a clear chain of accountability. The total staff involved increased from 100 in *Town Talk* to about 280 to 380 in *MOOD*. (See Table 3.) Records also reveal that the Home Affairs Department was systematic in observing and soliciting public opinions. Unlike *Town Talk, MOOD* was no longer a by-product derived from random conversations. A sophisticated and systematic polling scheme was developed to solicit public opinions. City District Officers were no longer at discretion to choose the subject of investigation. Instead, the topic of each exercise was selected by the Deputy Director of the Home Affairs Department. *MOOD* covered issues that were of the interest of both the public and the government. During the period from March 1975 to June 1976, the government used *MOOD* to examine public attitudes towards a number of ad hoc issues, including public reactions to the Labour Relations Bill, the proposed increase in public transport charges, school fees and electricity prices. The colonial government also displayed a clear interest in general political attitudes and identities. Each *MOOD* exercise began with the debriefing given by the Deputy Director at the Home Affairs Department Headquarter after the subject was selected. Policy papers were provided to ensure MOOD Officers, who were nominated by City District Officers, had 'an intelligent and accurate understanding of the subject (topic)'. Similar documents were disseminated to the Community Information Unit in the Home Affairs Department, which consisted of six experienced liaison civil servants. During each meeting, the City District Officers were given a topic and the number of respondents required. On the next day, every City District Officer, assisted by his or her MOOD Officer, held a meeting to explain and discuss the subject with the district MOOD team. To reach the grassroots level, the MOOD staff then created samples using data supplied by Mutual Aid Committees and kaifong associations, under the liaison of community leaders. Each monitor had a fifty person contact

list, of which every week, one-third of the people were removed from the list and replaced by new contacts. In special occasions, the City District Officers could add the contacts back to the list and use them more than once.[41] On the other hand, the Community Information Unit monitored comments made by the mass media which attempted to determine the sentiments of groups and areas that were potentially sensitive, such as coolies and hawkers in some circumstances. It also conducted random sampling through telephone calls, using the data provided by the Census and Statistics Department.[42] Unlike *Town Talk*, the Home Affairs

Table 3: Chain of Command in MOOD's Operation in 1977



(It is estimated that total number of staff engaged in MOOD exercises ranged from 280 to 380.)

[41] 'Town Talk, Memo from Chui to all C.D.O.', pp. 1-3.
[42] HKRS 394-27-9, Extract from minutes from Governor's Committee, 21 March 1975.

Department now regulated the sampling size in each opinion polling exercise. Each *MOOD* drew data from approximately 2,500 people.[43] *MOOD* also advised its staff to be indirect and pay close attention to their interviewing techniques. This avoided giving the impression of surveillance and could 'take the respondents off their guards'.[44] When the reports were returned, the City District Officers convened a meeting in which findings were checked, discussed, analysed, and compiled in note form. They had to provide details of the respondents, including age group, class, educational background, type of residence, gender and occupation. A final *MOOD* meeting, attended by all *MOOD* Officers, the Deputy Director and the Assistant Director, was then held at the Home Affairs Department Headquarter. During the meeting, feedback collected from all districts were examined as a whole and compared with data obtained by the Community Information Unit.[45] An editor analysed findings to produce one *MOOD* report for circulation. In 1975, *MOOD* was printed on every Thursday for circulation on Friday.[46] In 1977, to allow sufficient time for thorough investigation, *MOOD* became a bi-weekly report.[47]

By 1977, there were between 150 to 250 monitors. They were either full-time Executive Officers or part-time Community Organizers working outside office hours. The Home Affairs Department built up a regularly updated contact list of about 10,000 people.[48] This cohort was selected by the Home Affairs Department staff as they were known to be 'responsive and

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[43] 'MOOD: Movement of Opinion Direction', p. 1; The estimated total population of Hong Kong was 4,045,300 and 4,402,990 in 1971 and 1976 respectively according to the government censuses. 2500 was about 0.0618 per cent and 0.0568 per cent of the estimated total population in 1971 and 1976. See Hong Kong Census and Statistic Department, *Hong Kong Population and Housing Census: 1971 Main Report* (Hong Kong, 1972), p. 9 and Hong Kong Census and Statistic Department, *Hong Kong 1981 Census Main Report: Analysis* (Hong Kong, 1982), p. 15.
[44] HKRS 394-27-9, 'Needle Point, Session on MOOD', minutes of Home Affairs Department meeting held on 21 July 1975, 28 July 1975, p. 2.
[45] HKRS 925-1-1, 'Information Paper for Recipients of MOOD: How MOOD is Produced?', *MOOD*, 5 May 1977, p. 4.
[46] 'MOOD: Movement of Opinion Direction', p. 1.
[47] 'Information Paper for Recipients of MOOD', p. 4.
[48] Ibid., pp. 1-3.

well-informed about life and problems in their respective social sectors' and 'ready to offer information, views and suggestions on public issues'. This was not a random representative sample derived from population census data. The list was regularly revised to ensure constant turnover. Less useful old contacts were removed and new contacts were added, increasing the total number of respondents progressively. It was claimed to 'cover a wide cross-section of occupation groups, stratified in respect of age (15-24, 25-44, 45 and above) and educational background (primary and below, secondary, post-secondary and above)'.[49] About 300 to 400 people were selected from the list for each *MOOD* issue. Apart from interviewing people on the contact list, the Home Affairs Department staff spoke to people in the community. The number of these incidental samples varied in different districts. They ranged from 2,000 to 3,000 in total. In normal circumstances, no respondent was interviewed more than once in less than four months. As the Chief Secretary and the Secretary for Administration imposed the duties of assessing and predicting public reactions towards proposed and existing policies, on request, the Home Affairs Department was now obliged to report opinion trends on specific topics to relevant department directly.[50] Apart from the normal contacts, a random sample of 20,000 households was selected by the Census and Statistic Department and passed to the City District Office staff. This was to ensure that regular and reliable new contacts spreading across the full spectrum of social strata in different urban areas were added. Home visits were made to these households by the officials, who were responsible for establishing an informal rapport on public affairs.[51]

As with *Town Talk, MOOD* was a research project concerned with collecting qualitative information and public sentiments. It adopted an informal interviewing system modelled

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[49] HKRS 394-27-9, Memo from Christine Chow to Lam Chow-lo, enclosed in MOOD Review Paper, 6 January 1977, p. 2.
[50] 'Information Paper for Recipients of MOOD', pp. 1-2.
[51] Memo from Chow to Lam, pp. 2-3.

input on the Osaka Feedback Scheme and the Japanese Monitor System for National Policy.[52] Nonetheless, unlike *Town Talk*, each report had tailor-made topics and targeted groups. Tests and pilot surveys were carried out in advance, such as checking the sample coverage and anticipating non-response rate. This was done to determine the method used in soliciting views, for example, whether through observations, sending out questionnaires or interviews.[53] If it was in the format of interviews, 'informal' techniques were employed. Questions were not standardized. Staff could tailor the wordings and alter orders of the questions which they believed were appropriate for the contacts. Such unstructured approach, it was judged, succeeded 'better than set questions in getting to the heart of the respondent's opinion'.[54]

Nevertheless, by 1977, bureaucrats were questioning the credibility of *MOOD*. The Commissioner of Census and Statistics, for example, pointed out that '*MOOD* method has areas where it can be improved', such as the choice of samples and statisticians' conduct.[55] As better-informed respondents were still contacted frequently, reports did not 'truly reflect the attitudes and thinking of an average citizen or a man in the street'.[56] In no way was *MOOD* a representative sample. Another criticism of *MOOD* was that it could be biased. Officials used *MOOD* as 'an axe of their own to grind'.[57] City District Officers' and monitors' personal opinions distorted public attitudes. People also may have acted reservedly, knowing the approaching person was a civil servant.

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[52] 'Information Paper for Recipients of MOOD', p. 1. There is no additional information on these methods in the Hong Kong archives or in the public domain.
[53] Memo from Chow to Lam, p. 5.
[54] Formal and informal interviewing, content extracted from Claus Moser and Graham Kalton, *Survey Methods in Social Investigation*, (London, 1971), in memo from Chow to Lam, annex A.
[55] HKRS 394-27-9, D. S. Whitelegge to A. K. Chui, 6 April 1977.
[56] HKRS 394-27-9, 'Some Observations on MOOD Methodology', 7 May 1979, p. 1.
[57] Whitelegge to Chui.

To further improve the methodology of *MOOD*, it was recommended that a departmental representative should attend discussions if that report was requested by a particular department. As the current *MOOD* only covered Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, the presence of the staff of the New Territories Administration, such as the District Officer of Tsuen Wan, was useful. Not only could they learn the contacting techniques, but information from New Territories could also be gathered and used for comparisons. On important topics, such as Green Papers on constitutional development, the department used 'more scientific methods' to check public views regularly.[58] To enhance the report's credibility, three-quarters of the contacts in each issue of *MOOD* became incidental casual respondents. The established contact lists in different districts were now renewed and the categorical breakdowns, such as age and occupation of respondents, were sent to the Census and Statistics Department.[59] These new arrangements were made possibly because City District Officers and monitors still approached better-informed, responsive respondents repeatedly, affecting the representativeness of *MOOD*. These changes also lowered the risks that officials carried out fewer interviews than *MOOD* required them to.

Even by 1979, the Home Affairs Department was reluctant to change the sampling method, as it would have involved 'extra work', and was thus impractical given 'limited resources'.[60] *MOOD* was instead issued on a monthly basis, allowing more time for fieldworks.[61] It was not until April 1980 that the Home Affairs Department switched to a quota sampling method. The selection of contacts in terms of their gender, age and occupation was now in proportion to the number and distribution of the overall population in the area. The most updated general

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[58] HKRS 394-27-9, Home Affairs Department, 'Note of a Meeting to Discuss Possible Improvement on MOOD Methodology held on 11.5.79 at 2.30 p.m.', 15 May 1979.
[59] HKRS 394-27-9, Home Affairs Department, 'Note of a Discussion on Improvement on the MOOD Methodology held on 17.5.79 at 3.00 p.m.', 21 May 1979.
[60] 'Some Observations on MOOD Methodology', p. 1.
[61] Ibid., p. 3.

population breakdown in terms of gender, age and occupation was supplied by the Census and Statistics Department every three months. This new method was probably adopted because of the changing geographical distributions of Hong Kong's population. According to the government census in 1971, 25 per cent of the total population lived in Hong Kong Island, 18 per cent in Kowloon, 37 per cent in New Kowloon and 17 per cent in the New Territories. By 1981, the distribution had changed, with a large increase in the New Territories: 24 per cent of the total population lived in Hong Kong Island, 16 per cent in Kowloon, 33 per cent in New Kowloon and 26 per cent in the New Territories.[62] This sampling by district reduced the cost and time used in travelling to other districts, and City District Officers had better understanding of the areas and neighbourhoods in their own districts. The new methodology reduced the sampling size from 2,500 to 993. These 993 respondents now included people in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung.[63]

Apart from quota sampling method, random sampling method was also adopted in household interviews in 1980 on an experimental basis. In every *MOOD* exercise, household members of selected living quarters in one district were randomly interviewed. The selection of the 300 living quarters was based on a sample frame provided by the Census and Statistics Department, using systematic random techniques. All household members aged 15 and above in the chosen quarters were interviewed. Besides, the questionnaire approach was adopted. Questions were set out including the alternative of answers. The exact same questions were now asked and were in the same order. The answers provided by the respondents were subsequently coded. Coding sheets were then processed using manual data processing method and table formats compiled. This enabled the analysis of responses and reactions on a

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[62] *Hong Kong 1981 Census Main Report,* p. 63.
[63] HKRS 471-3-2, 'MOOD Methodology, MOOD', 10 April 1980.

‘strictly scientific basis’.[64]

In the second half of the 1970s, the government invested to improve the methodologies, hence the reliability of the polling exercise, indicating the value of *MOOD* to the bureaucracy. The Home Affairs Department introduced *MOOD* to replace *Town Talk* in 1975. Compared to *Town Talk*, *MOOD* was way more organized and scientific. In terms of content, *MOOD* examined more different aspects than its predecessor. This included comments made by the press, how they influenced popular sentiments and the opinions of the lower strata of the society. The theme of each report also became more focused. Rather than recording everything officials overheard, only topics that were significant for both the public and the bureaucrats were selected and investigated. Statistically, respondents were sourced from increased different channels, including the Census and Statistics Department. To enhance the report’s representativeness, incidental contacts were increased and the sampling size was largely expanded. By the end of the 1970s, quota sampling method and random sampling method were introduced to ensure that high ranked officials had detailed understanding of shifting opinions of different age groups and social classes in each district. While statistical techniques had been improved, *MOOD* preserved *Town Talk*’s essence, drawing on the local intelligence of City District Officers.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how the colonial bureaucracy in Hong Kong invested resources and manpower, polling a representative sample of public opinions covertly in the long 1970s. To close the communication gap with Chinese people, the colonial government

[64] HKRS 394-27-9, Alice Lai, ‘Notes on MOOD Methodology’, 12 September 1980, p. 2.

regularly collected and closely monitored the shifting public opinions. Throughout the long 1970s, the state's opinion poll evolved from the by-product *Town Talk* to the systematic prototype of *MOOD* in a scientific manner. When *Town Talk* was first introduced in 1968, it primarily recorded what officials overheard and the random conversations they had with Chinese residents in different districts. The report was not statistically robust. It was based on a small sample that was self-selected using existing contacts between bureaucrats and ordinary people: it was capturing those people willing to discuss their sentiments. These people were consulted repeatedly. Techniques changed dramatically over time. The contact list of the Home Affairs Department was renewed regularly with the addition of new contacts of different social classes and age groups. Indirect interviewing techniques were adopted by officials in interviews to ensure that opinions they gathered were free from bureaucratic bias. To further enhance the representativeness of the exercise, the state refined the methodologies of the exercise and introduced *MOOD* in 1975.

Rather than recording what officials heard in the public, *MOOD* examined significant issues and events that were of interest to both the Chinese communities and the high ranked bureaucrats. In particular, it focused on the opinions of the less articulated social classes and the impact of press on public opinions. *MOOD* was more scientific. The contact list was widened and incidental contacts were increased to enhance representativeness. The sampling size of each exercise, which was not specified in *Town Talk*, increased to 2,500 in 1975. Areas covered also rose from merely ten City Districts to the New Territories. By 1980, the quota sampling method and random sampling method were adopted. Compared to devices used by the colonial state to monitor public attitudes before 1967, both *Town Talk* and *MOOD* were more organized and scientific.

Town Talk and *MOOD* were important direct mechanisms by which ordinary Chinese people were consulted on government policy. They contrast with older indirect methods, by which colonial state worked through social elites who in theory represented their communities. These constructed 'public opinions' were new, and could be used to deconstruct political culture in accordance with social classes and age groups.

Although it remains difficult for historians to determine exactly how this information was used and surviving records are partial, piecemeal evidence in archives suggests both *Town Talk* and *MOOD* were read by high ranked officials and fed into the policy making process. These sensitive 'public opinions' circulated restrictively within senior policy makers, including the Governor and his policy advisers, and were referenced in policy formulation, as noted in subsequent chapters. Nevertheless, both polling exercises were not included in the official programmes of the Home Affair Department and the City District Officer Scheme, their existence was concealed from the public. In other words, the public influenced the colonial state's ruling strategies implicitly. The following five chapters, namely the Chinese as the official language movement, the anti-corruption campaign, the campaign against the telephone rate increase, the Golden Jubilee incident and the changing immigration policy, demonstrate how these constructed 'public opinions' had influenced the colonial state's ruling strategies in the 1970s. Along with newspapers and other state records, *Town Talk* and *MOOD* provide valuable information on strategies and rhetoric employed by activists to mobilize the masses and achieve their political agenda in each specific context.

II. The Chinese as the Official Language Movement

In 1974, the Chinese language was recognized as the official language of Hong Kong under the Official Languages Bill. The Official Languages Bill was the result of a prolonged struggle led by a large number of organizations, student bodies and individual activists. The language movement was the largest social movement during the long 1970s, and is investigated for the first time in this thesis using newly available archival sources, complemented by published primary sources, notably newspapers and student newsletters.

Demand to make Chinese the official language of Hong Kong can be traced back to the mid-1960s, the beginning of a new era, when a new political culture and Hong Kong identity started to emerge. It was a time when the Chinese population of Hong Kong gradually turned into 'a settled one' and the sojourner mentality dissipated.[1] In particular, the young generation, who were locally born and had no experience with the PRC started to reflect on their life and their role in Hong Kong, and express their grievances, as in the 1966 Star Ferry riots.[2] Popular mood further shifted after the 1967 riots. The post-war baby boomers rethought their relations with colonialism.[3] This context, along with rapid economic development, increased economic and cultural exchange between Hong Kong and China, and the colonial government's effort to build credibility and respond to public demands, facilitated the rise of a 'distinctly local political culture'.[4] With the introduction of the City District Officer Scheme in 1968, political communications between the bureaucracy and the grassroots public improved.[5] The public increasingly involved themselves in current affairs

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[1] Tsang, *A Modern History*, pp. 180-1.
[2] Tsang, *Government and Politics*, p. 248.
[3] Lui and Chiu, 'Social Movements', p. 105.
[4] Tsang, *A Modern History*, p. 223; Carroll, *A Concise History*, p. 167.
[5] Leung, *Perspective on Hong Kong Society*, p. 163; Tsang, *Government and Politics*, pp. 216-9.

and politics. Due to a wider cultural shift and bureaucratic reform, political discourse became 'spontaneous' and 'issue-driven'.[6]

Despite the importance of the language movement and its potentially strong effects on local political culture, the campaign has not been covered in depth by existing literature. J. S. Hoadley merely used the campaign to demonstrate that the Chinese population mobilized on a temporary basis. He argued that the slow increase in the number of voters registered and consistently low voter turnover rate in elections from the late 1960s to 1970s indicated that the level of political participation of Hong Kong Chinese remained low.[7] When looking at the aftermath of the 1967 riots, Ian Scott has also mentioned the development of the language movement, but did not explain its significance.[8] Lam Wai-man devoted eleven pages in her chapter, 'Rediscovering Politics: Hong Kong in the 1960s', to examine the development of the language campaign and how it impacted on Hong Kong's political culture.[9] For Lam, the campaign possessed 'numerous political meanings': that the Hong Kong society was 'moving away from its past'; that local identity was starting to emerge; that the members of the young generation were searching for political allegiance and had become active political actors. Lam argued practical demands and ideological concerns were mutually reinforcing and a culture of depoliticization persisted.[10]

The existing literature has not explored the strategies and rhetoric employed by the activists. This chapter therefore uses a wide range of sources collected from the Public Record Office in Hong Kong and the National Archives in London to answer the following questions: What

[6] Lui and Chiu, 'Social Movements', p. 105.
[7] Hoadley, 'Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese', pp. 608-12.
[8] Scott, *Political Change*, pp. 110-3.
[9] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, pp. 125-36.
[10] Ibid., pp. 134-5.

motivated the participants to engage in the movement? Did the movement suggest a general shift in political culture? And what role did political activism play in the legalization of Chinese as the official language in 1974?

Shifted Public Sentiments in the 1960s

Since the early 1960s, there had been discussions about the status of Chinese language in public discourses. Hong Kong and Kowloon Joint Kaifong Association Research Council had advocated the equality of use for both Chinese and English since 1963. As neighbourhood organizations which provided charitable works and welfare services, such as relief, job referrals, financial aids, medical services and free education, kaifong associations served as one of the main informal channels of communications between the colonial government and the Chinese communities. They represented the interests of the Chinese communities to the authorities, and publicized and explained the governmental policies to the public.[11] Kaifong leaders mostly worked in the tertiary sector, whose 'outward appearances', 'living styles' and 'outlook' showed 'very little sign of having been ''westernized'''.[12] In the late 1960s, about 67 per cent of kaifong leaders were born in China. 60 per cent of them had lived in China up to twenty years old. 98 per cent of them came from southern China, mainly the Canton region. In terms of education level, most of these kaifong leaders were middle-aged men with high school or better education. Only 13 per cent of them possessed university degrees. The education level of these leaders indicated that their level of English was not high. Most of them (67 per cent) did not speak English at all. Only 15 per cent of them used English names. Among those who were not born in Hong Kong, only very few (24 per cent) of them had

[11] Lau, *Society and Politics*, pp. 131-2; Aline K. Wong, 'Chinese Community Leadership in a Colonial Setting: The Hong Kong Neighbourhood Associations', *Asian Survey*, 12:7 (1972), pp. 590-1.
[12] Ibid., pp. 596-7.

sought naturalization. With the decline of kaifong associations in the 1960s due to their inability to recruit young leaders, government officials were 'increasingly reluctant' to treat kaifong leaders as 'spokesmen of Chinese society'.[13] Therefore, the request of kaifong leaders for wider use of Chinese language in governmental affairs could be interpreted as instrumentalism, an ambition to maintain and raise their personal status.

Another advisory body, Heung Yee Kuk, which was a rural advisory council established to advise government's administration in the New Territories in 1926, also demanded Chinese to be legalized as an official language. On 28 September 1967, the Executive Committee of the Kuk unanimously supported the proposal of its former Chairman, Chan Yat-sun. According to Chan, villagers often received communications from the government in English and had to seek assistance. By making Chinese the official language, the communication barrier between the colonial state and the villagers in the New Territories could be lowered.[14]

Since 1964, the language issue started capturing the attention of Urban Councillors. In a meeting of the Urban Council in October 1964, Brook Bernacchi, a lawyer and an elected Urban Councillor, proposed that the status of official language should be granted to the Chinese language.[15] He argued by making arrangements to enable bilingual proceedings and establish simultaneous translations in the Council, the communication barrier between the government and the people could be overcome. As an elected member of the Council and the founder of the Reform Club, which advocated political reform, the setting up of democratically elected colonial institutions, Bernacchi believed that more Chinese speaking people could serve the colonial administration if Chinese became the official language. In

[13] Lau, *Society and Politics*, p. 133.
[14] HKRS 70-3-26-3, 'Chinese as an Official Language', *South China Morning Post*, 29 September 1967.
[15] Hong Kong Government Printer, *Hong Kong Urban Council, Official Record of Proceedings,* (Hong Kong, October 1964), pp. 306-13.

1965, another elected Urban Councillor, Henry Hung-lick Hu demanded equality between English and Chinese languages. As the Vice-Chairman of the Reform Club, Hu believed that by making Chinese the official language of Hong Kong, some unfair government measures could be eliminated: 'A sense of equality and true social justice among the inhabitants of this colony' could be promoted. To pursue language equality, Hu argued that a Chinese translation should be attached in all documents of the Urban Council and of the Urban Services Department in a public meeting of the Council in August 1965. In October, Hu put forward a motion at the Urban Council. For 'the betterment of Hong Kong as a whole and for achieving the fundamental fairness of its inhabitants', the colonial government should resolve the language problem by introducing a system to ensure that all Chinese correspondence would be responded to in Chinese. The motion was carried with eighteen votes for, nil against and five abstentions.[16] In December 1966, another Urban Councillor, Elsie Elliot similarly called for the legalization of Chinese as the official language at the Urban Council Annual Conventional Debate: 'The government of Hong Kong must regard all permanent inhabitants of Hong Kong as citizens, with citizen rights, by respecting the language of the over 90 per cent majority, which should be introduced either as the official language or as equal with English'.[17]

The status of Chinese as a bureaucratic language triggered a simultaneous discussion by student organizations. In December 1964, the Current Affairs Committee of the Hong Kong University Students' Union Council issued a press statement on behalf of its members, persuading the government to enhance the official status of the Chinese language. These

[16] Information about and quotes of Henry Hu are acquired from Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, Henry Hu, 'The Language Issue from a Councillor's Point of View', *CU Student*, 2:7, 15 October 1970.

[17] HKRS70-3-26-2, Extract from the speech by Elsie Elliot at the Urban Council Annual Conventional Debate, 1 December 1966.

students argued that it was 'imperative' for both English and Chinese languages to be given 'an equal place'. An unfair language policy may be misinterpreted as 'the colonial government's indifference to promoting Chinese culture as a kind of suppression of native culture and language'.[18] In February 1965, the language issue captured increased attentions from students when a dispute over the language of instruction emerged in a student forum held in the University of Hong Kong. Subsequently, many students requested another meeting to secure reforms. More than 500 students attended this meeting, held in April 1965. It was agreed that both Chinese and English could be used as the languages of instruction in any future meetings.[19]

In 1967, a three-year Chinese-English Dictionary project was announced by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the first university in the colony to adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction. To promote Chinese Studies and provide a basic reference work which was similar to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* in English, Dr. Lin Yutang, a philology expert and writer, was responsible personally for translating Chinese phrases into idiomatic English.[20] Since the publication of Robert Henry Matthews's *Chinese English Dictionary* in 1931, 'significant changes and revolutionary discoveries have taken place in the fields of humanities, art, social sciences, politics, science and technology'. The project was therefore timely. It provided the general public with 'a more adequate and up-to-date reference work'.[21] These developments further stimulated discussions over the status of the Chinese language.

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[18] HKRS 70-3-26-2, 'Do Not Suppress Chinese Language, Students Urge', *South China Morning Post*, 3 December 1964.
[19] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, p. 126.
[20] HKRS 70-3-26-, 'Chinese University's Dictionary Project', *South China Morning Post*, 31 January 1967; Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, *University Bulletin*, 3:7, February 1967, p. 4.
[21] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, *University Bulletin*, 9:3, December 1972, pp. 2-3. According to the *University Bulletin* issued by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Lin's dictionary contained 45,000 entries of words, phrases and idioms. It also 'has many distinctive features which make it outstanding and different from its predecessors'. For instance, instead of providing only the meaning of a single character,

In the student newsletter of the University of Hong Kong, *Undergrad,* students argued that the leftist riots broke out mainly due to the presence of communication barrier between the colonial state and the Chinese communities. To improve political communications and strengthen people's sense of belonging to Hong Kong, Chinese should be legalized as the official language of the colony.[22] In December 1967, *Undergrad* conducted a survey. The result suggested that majority of the undergraduates in the University of Hong Kong favoured Chinese to be legalized as an official language: 60 per cent of the interviewed students supported the notion that Chinese should be made the official language of Hong Kong; and 74 percent believed that the general status of Hong Kong Chinese would be greatly enhanced if the government granted Chinese language the official status.[23] In May 1968, *Undergrad* criticized the absence of a concrete governmental proposal which granted the Chinese and English languages equal legal status. Students expressed their discontent about the colonial state's lack of plans to solve technical problems in the implementation of wider use of Chinese in administration, such as translation services and employment of interpreters. They urged the setting up of a Language Committee to investigate the impact of making Chinese an official language on the existing political and educational system. The government should, they argued, implement language reforms gradually.[24]

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the dictionary illustrates the meaning and the use of each word, which was mostly formed by two or more characters. The variants in Chinese characters were fully indicated. A built-in tonal system, which was called 'the Guoyu Romanized System', was used to differentiate words. To locate the lead characters easily, Lin invented the Instant Index System. The appendices of the dictionary also provided information of daily use, such as weights, measures, numerals, chemical elements and dynasties.

[22] Hong Kong University, Special Collection, '中文應與英文共列為官方語言', *Undergrad*, no. 14, 1 November 1967, p. 1.

[23] HKRS 70-3-26-2, P. Mak, 'Students Want Chinese Made Official', *Hong Kong Standard*, 17 December 1967.

[24] Hong Kong University, Special Collection, '請即成立「中文為官方語言」調查委員會', *Undergrad*, no. 9, 1 May 1968, p. 4.

In late October 1967, the university students' first joint publication argued that the colonial state should legalize Chinese as an official language since the majority of the Chinese population in Hong Kong did not speak English but Chinese: 'With Chinese as an official language, we can rightly make use of those otherwise left out to enhance efficiency'.[25] In January 1968, due to the students' increased interest, seven post-secondary institutions organized a seminar on the language issue at Chung Chi College in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The seminar concluded that the use of Chinese as an additional official language would help to improve the effectiveness of the administration by removing the communication barrier between the bureaucracy and the Chinese population.[26] The fact that demands of political elites and students were linked to a perceived failure of political communication, which alluded to as the cause of the 1967 riots, laid the foundation for a wider movement in 1970.

Political Activism and Increased Press Coverage

To arouse attention from the British government, Urban Councillor, Denny Huang Mong-hwa, sent a letter to a British newspaper on 4 June 1969, demanding a 'wholly local, internal, self-governing administration' in the colony.[27] In late 1969, to make Chinese the official language and seek educational reforms, Huang set up the Society to Promote Chinese Education. The Society was 'supported by a number of leading persons in education circle, notably heads of private secondary Chinese schools having close connections with Taiwan'. According to *Town Talk*, after the formation of the Society, the language issue 'had been given intermittent publicity in the leading Chinese press, particularly *Wah Kiu* and *Kung*

[25] HKRS 70-3-26-2, P. Mak, 'Make Chinese Official: Students', *Hong Kong Standard*, 31 October 1967.
[26] HKRS 70-3-26-2, '崇基研討會昨發表公報：中文列為官方語言裨益市民有助施政', *Hong Kong Times*, 23 January, 1968.
[27] P. Moss, *No Babylon: A Hong Kong Scrapbook* (Lincoln, 2006), p. 247.

Sheung'.[28] In 1970, the movement gained momentum. Previously uncoordinated and unconnected organizations and bodies now joined together to form ad hoc coalitions, fighting for the official status of the Chinese language. Three prominent organizations started to campaign for the official status of the Chinese language actively after student publications and organizations organized a seminar in the Chinese YMCA in June 1970: the All Hong Kong Working Party to Promote Chinese as Official Language (WPCOL), the Federation for the Promotion of Chinese as an Official Language in Hong Kong, the operational group of which was the Campaign for Chinese as an Official Language (CCOL) and the Hong Kong Federation of Students (HKFS).

In 1970, the All Hong Kong Working Party to Promote Chinese as Official Language was formed. It comprised of nineteen bodies, which included the Chinese Civil Servants Association, the Heung Yee Kuk, the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong and four student unions.[29] Its individual supporters included kaifong members and academic figures in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Denny Huang was elected as the Chairman of the organization. As the Urban Councillor during the period from 1967 to 1986, Huang was publicly known as a critic of the colonial government. During his service, he requested the colonial state to introduce elections in the Legislative and Executive Councils. The organization's agenda mainly focused on promoting equality between Chinese and English languages. In the early 1970s, many ordinary citizens in Hong Kong still encountered 'language discrimination': for example, the *Tiger Standard* noted that 'colonialism still pervades the atmosphere in this city to such a degree that it is almost mandatory for a Chinese

[28] HKRS455-4-4, 'Special Supplement on the Use of Chinese as an Official Language', *Town Talk*, 27 August 1970, p. 1.
[29] The Chinese Manufactures' Association represented most of the small-scale factories and was critical of the colonial government's commercial, industrial and social policies. See David Clayton, 'From ''Free'' to ''Fair'' Trade: The Evolution of Labour Laws in Colonial Hong Kong', *Journal of imperial and Commonwealth History*, 35:2 (2007), p. 271.

to speak English in order to receive decent service from these (bureaucratic) organizations'.[30] In a report written by James So, the City District Officer of Wong Tai Sin, many respondents shared similar experiences: 'Whenever they have any dealings with government under existing arrangements, they feel inferior if they do not know English and are not able to write in English to government'. They believed that a correspondence to the colonial government written in English 'would be dealt with more expeditiously and favourably than one written in Chinese'.[31] According to David Baird, such 'language discrimination' was not atypical:

> Unable to obtain satisfaction from the complaints department of a public utility, a Chinese rang off, then called again, this time speaking in English instead of Cantonese. Immediately, the haughty attitudes of the official he addressed switched to one of deference and helpfulness…Although 98 per cent of the population (in Hong Kong) is Chinese, English is the official language and many Chinese use it daily for reasons that vary from commercial necessity to snobbishness.[32]

By legalizing Chinese as an official language used in the Legislative and Urban Councils, the WPCOL believed that discriminations towards people who did not speak English could be reduced. By making a Chinese version for all official communications and documents available, information could also be transmitted from the bureaucracy to the Chinese communities without any barriers. The Chinese population could have better understanding of the government policies. Activists also predicted that language reform would lead more Chinese people to get directly involved in bureaucratic politics.

[30] HKRS 70-3-26-2, 'Resolution', *Tiger Standard*, 1 January 1967.
[31] HKRS 455-4-4, James Y. C. So, 'Report on Chinese as an Official Language', (date not specified) August 1970, p. 2.
[32] D. Baird, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, vol. 35, 27 August 1970.

Both the Campaign for Chinese as an Official Language and the Hong Kong Federation of Students were student bodies. The CCOL consisted of eleven student bodies. The HKFS represented nine post-secondary colleges, including Baptist College, Northcote Teachers Training College, New Asia College, Technical College, Sir Robert Black Teachers Training College, Chung Chi College, United College, Lingnan College and the University of Hong Kong. These student activists believed that Chinese school graduates would have better career prospects if official status was granted to the Chinese language. Racial equality could also be achieved if English competency was no longer the only standard requirement for appointment to most administrative posts. As students of Raimondi College had pointed out in their publication, if the language policy was revised, non-English educated Chinese with great capability could enjoy equal opportunity their counterparts had. They could be elected as members of Urban Council and serve the public.[33]

In mid-1970, activism increased. A signature campaign was initiated by the WPCOL under the supervision of Huang. During the first weekend of December 1970, more than 30,000 signatures were collected in Wong Tai Sin.[34] By March 1971, the Chinese language campaign said to have collected 330,000 signatures.[35] As the activists adopted a door-to-door strategy and started their signature campaigns in Wong Tai Sin, where a large number of resettlement blocks were located, they were able to collect a substantial amount of signatures within a short period of time from the people in the lower strata the society.[36] However, according to the Chairman of the Wong Tai Sin Kaifong Welfare Association, some people

[33] HKRS 488-3-36, 'Weekly Progress Report: Chinese as an Official Language', 23 November 1970, memo from C.D.O. (Central) to C.D.C. (Hong Kong), pp. 1-2.
[34] HKRS 488-3-36, Extracted from minutes of C.D.C. (Kowloon)'s meeting with the Kowloon C.D.O.s, 16 December 1970.
[35] HKRS 285-1-1, '促進中文運動 據稱遭阻難 仍有卅三萬人簽字', *Nam Wah Man Po*, 1 March, 1971.
[36] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Chinese as an Official Language: Assessment of Public Reaction for the Week Ending 8 December', memo from C.D.O. (Kowloon City) to C.D.C. (Kowloon), 8 December 1970, p. 1.

gave their signatures only because 'they did not want to be pestered by the campaigners'.[37] A signature on a piece of paper did not necessarily convey compelling support. The number of signatures was not a reliable indicator of the level of popular support for the movement. Meanwhile, the CCOL gave the government a deadline until 29 August 1970 to issue a definite statement in response to the language issue. For propaganda purpose, the CCOL also produced some yellow-fisted T-shirts for sale, on which the Chinese as an official language slogan was stamped. Handbills were subsequently distributed to the public. In September 1970, the Chairman of the CCOL, Lam Hung-chow announced that plans had been made to boycott classes if government continued to neglect the language issue. Lam publicly 'urged students to do something more meaningful than just attending classes'.[38] Almost at the same time, 30,000 copies of language pamphlets were printed and distributed by the HKFS. They also planned to carry out a survey to ascertain public views on the language issue in ten city districts and five districts in the New Territories.

The campaign was not a unitary movement with one goal. Apart from instrumental concerns and personal interests, ideological motivations, including the pursuit of localization and democratization, the notion of racial equality and cultural nationalism played an important role in determining people's positions in the campaign. Whenever activists found possible and saw it fit, they were willing to inhabit various ideas and exploit the mass for their own benefits. To appeal for the support from the bulk of the population, they often avoided overt political overtones in their activities and slogans. Moreover, 'acquiescence, transience, fear of China, satisfaction, conservatism, rationality and reluctance to share power' constituted the tendency of avoiding political participation, particularly among the middle-aged and elderly

[37] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Chinese as an Official Language, Weekly Progress Report (9.12.70-15.12.70)', memo from C.D.O. (Wong Tai Sin) to C.D.C. (Kowloon), 15 December 1970.
[38] HKRS 455-4-4, Notes on open forum organized by student union of H.K.U. at the City Hall, 19 September 1970, p. 1.

groups of Hong Kong Chinese.[39] To respond to the complex situation, the campaigners never limited themselves to nationalistic doctrines and political ideologies. This flexibility was particular important given the influence of communism on local political life.

Many Hong Kong Chinese of the older generation fled to Hong Kong as refugees to escape from political chaos initiated by the Chinese Communist government, such as the Great Leap Forward, the Hundred Flowers Movement and the Cultural Revolution. The 'indiscriminate bombing campaign' in the 1967 riots by the leftists further added weight to this view.[40] Knowing that many Hong Kong Chinese were sceptical towards the Chinese Communist Party, all three organizations suspended their activities on the Chinese National Day, 1 October 1971, to avoid association with the Chinese Communist Party. Rhetoric employed in slogans was also intentionally apolitical to make the language campaign more welcoming and less alarming to the public. The Hong Kong University Student Union's poster, for instance, used the slogan, 'Justice, Hearts of Public, a People, Her Dignity'.[41] The meaning behind the term 'official language' was vague and rarely defined. Another pamphlet issued by the students also did not mention constitutional reform. Instead, it focused on racial equality and appealed to the cultural aspect of the movement: 'There is four million Chinese population in Hong Kong, and Chinese has not been used for a hundred years. Why? Culture and tradition of five thousand years has been forgone; Why cannot Chinese use Chinese?'[42] These tactics depoliticized the campaign, which was presented as a technical issue, to improve political communications, not to change policies or institute democracy.

[39] Hoadley, 'Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese', p. 614.
[40] Tsang, *A Modern History*, p. 187.
[41] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Chinese as Official Language', memo from S. H. A. to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 7 September 1970.
[42] HKRS 488-3-36, The extract is found in the lyrics of the Chinese Official Language Song. The song could be found on the poster produced by the HKFS with the title '中文必須成為法定語文' ('Chinese Must be Made the Official Language), (date not specified).

As the majority of the language activists were educated social elites, such as students and Urban Councillors, they were particularly aware of the approaches they used to pursue their ends and how it would affect their professional reputations. To avoid being labelled as radicals and isolating support from the masses, the activists presented themselves as orderly citizens who complied with the law. They resorted to moderate and legitimate means: inter alia, Huang's petition sent to the United Nations, open letters issued by the HKFS, and forums, public opinion polls and signature campaigns organized by organizations jointly. These tactics engaged the public in their campaign through opinion polls and signature campaigns. Demands were presented as the public will. For example, in the position paper, James Chui, the Chairman of the HKFS Language Action Committee made the following statement: 'Though the political set-up of Hong Kong is not a democracy, it has proved in the past not too unwilling to take note of public opinion. The popular desire of making Chinese an official language should be heeded'.[43] In his letter to Anthony Royle, a British MP, Chui pointed out the sharp contrast between the approaches adopted by the police force and the student activists. He stressed that, on the one hand, 'only peaceful means, such as public polls, forums and signature campaigns etc., were employed' by the students; however, on the other hand, the Hong Kong police force and Urban Council were 'mishandling' a 'peaceful demonstration'.[44] The disparity captured the attention of the public. People tended to sympathize with the activists.

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[43] FCO 40/341, Hong Kong Federation of Students, *Position Paper of the Hong Kong Federation of Students on the Matter of Recognition of Chinese as an Official Language of Hong Kong Presented to the Government Chinese Language Committee on the 16th July, 1971*, 16 July 1971, p. 1.
[44] FCO 40/341, Letter from James Chui, Hong Kong Federation of Students to Anthony Royle, 22 July 1971, pp. 2-3.

Nevertheless, the student activists were not as moderate as they portrayed themselves in public. In Chui's letter to Royle, the student representative first hinted that the movement was powerful in numbers: it was not only supported by the majority in Hong Kong, but also a number of overseas Chinese student associations and international bodies. For example, the National Union of Students of the United Kingdom alone consisted of 500,000 members. He threatened to escalate actions, which would affect the public order, if the colonial government failed to respond to their demands:

> Reluctance of the Hong Kong government to take swift and decisive actions to heed public desire will convince the public, in particular students, that peaceful means through negotiations, are ineffective in the promotion of social justice. Undoubtedly such loss in confidence in the authorities is detrimental to the interest of the community at large and will only invite troubles to all parties concerned.[45]

Similar language could be found in the HKFS's letter to F. K. Li, the Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs:

> Significantly the Chinese language campaign marks the participation of the younger generation of Chinese in Hong Kong (with the active support of overseas Chinese students) local affairs. Any further delay of the government will only lead to a loss of confidence in the authorities and will only invite troubles to all parties concerned. I hope you would agree that an enlightened and liberal attitude of the Hong Kong and

[45] Ibid., p. 2.

British government is essential in the promotion of the wellbeing of the community at large.[46]

The radicalness of the student activists can also be seen when the student activists tried to draft their own legislation. The fourth report of the Chinese Language Committee was issued in July 1971, in which the Committee recommended that the government to consider declaring that both Chinese and English 'Fat Ting U Man' (official languages). However, it came to the students' concern that the Committee 'has failed to recommend government how Chinese and English should be declared official languages'. The status and usage of the Chinese language were not guaranteed unless formal legislation was enacted. Being impatient at the slow progress made by the government to implement the new language policy, the Legal Sub-committee of the Chinese Language Study Committee of the HKFS decided to draft their own legislation, presented to Anthony Royle, J. Sweetman, the Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs, Sir Kenneth Ping-fan Fung and P. C. Woo, Unofficial Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils. The proposition, which was divided into four parts, provided a schedule for implementation. According to the HKFS, the new language policy should be carried out in four stages. 'The more important ordinances and subsidiary legislation affecting the general public' should be first translated into Chinese. Laws 'affecting the general public, are nevertheless of comparatively lesser importance' should be translated into Chinese at stage two. And the translation of the ordinances that 'affecting special sections of the public' and 'of limited interest' should be scheduled into the third and fourth stages.[47] Despite their repeated reiteration that the draft was 'merely an example, open to alternation after due consultation', along with their language of coercion employed in their

[46] FCO 30/341, Letter from James Chui, Hong Kong Federation of Students to F. K. Li, 30 August 1971, p. 2.
[47] FCO 40/341, Hong Kong Federation of Students, *Position Paper of the Hong Kong Federation of Students on the Matter of Legislative Declaration of Chinese as an Official Language of Hong Kong*, (date not specified) July 1971, pp. 3-4.

letters, this move could be interpreted as radically subverting the existing policy and system.[48] According to the constitution, the Legislative Council was the only institution that possessed the power of enacting and amending laws and ordinances. Throughout the campaign, on the one hand, language activists portrayed themselves as orderly moderates by adopting the tactics of depoliticization and resorting to legitimate means to mobilize public opinions; on the other hand, they employed coercive language and subverted the authority of the Legislative Council by proposing a new draft of legislation. These strategies reinforced each other, pressurizing the colonial government effectively.

The activists' depoliticized strategy successfully captured the attention of the press. The *Chinese Press Review* made the following observation:

> Since the beginnings of July 1970, there have been intermittent reports in the Chinese press in connection with making Chinese another official language in Hong Kong. Out of the sixteen major non-Communist Chinese papers, eleven gave editorial comments on this issue. All of them endorsed the principle that Chinese must be made an official language alongside English. Though some of them realized that there are technical difficulties involved in the process, they claimed that government should surmount them instead of using them as excuses. [49]

Over the next month, newspaper coverage increased. In late September 1970, the *Chinese Press Review* recorded that reports about the language movement 'appear(ed) in Chinese non-Communist press almost daily'. The newspapers did not only cover information of and

[48] Ibid., p. 2.
[49] HKRS 285-1-1, Public Relations Division, Government Information Services, *Chinese Press Review: Chinese as an Official Language*, 11 August 1970, p. 1.

action taken by organizations, student bodies and individuals, they also published editorial comments on the language campaign. All sixteen major non-Communist Chinese papers 'agreed that in principle Chinese should also be made an official language in Hong Kong'.[50] The rhetoric employed in newspapers indicated that the campaign was received positively. *Wah Kiu Yat Po* suggested that wider use of Chinese language by the colonial administration was 'constructive' as it would help to 'build up trust and mutual reliance between the government and the public'.[51] The *Hong Kong Standard* described the campaign as a 'language crusade'.[52] Historically, the term 'crusade' was often used to refer to 'the holy war' which was undertaken according to 'the will of God' from the eleventh century to the thirteen century, liberating the suppressed Christians in the East. It therefore carried the connotation of justice, suggesting that the cause of the language movement was legitimate. The choice of the term 'crusade' implied that the rights of Hong Kong Chinese were suppressed by the colonial bureaucrats.

Government's Reponses and Public Reception

The colonial government was aware of increased interest in the language issue. During the meeting of the Legislative Council on 28 February 1968, for example, the Governor, David Trench said that the colonial government would start 'considering further, as we have done with some success for many years, ways and means of giving our two main languages here, Chinese and English, as near equality of use and status as it is practically possible to do'.[53] Trench reassured the public that Chinese would continue to be used as a medium of ordinary

[50] HKRS 285-1-1, Public Relations Division, Government Information Services, *Chinese Press Review: Chinese as an Official Language Part III*, 23 September 1970, p. 1.
[51] HKRS 285-1-1, '本港新聞:港政府外籍官員最好能對民眾暢所欲言 通曉中國語文 藉此與民眾建立同情與信賴之良好關係 對中文成為法定語文一事亦有極大幫助', *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, 18 October 1970.
[52] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Dr Huang to Report Today on his Language Crusade', *Hong Kong Standard*, 25 April 1971.
[53] Hong Kong Government Printer, *Official Report of Proceedings* (Hong Kong, February 1968), p. 50.

communication for official purposes. However, there were practical difficulties if laws had to be written in Chinese. Moving towards a bilingual society was 'a process' required 'taking numerous small and specific steps, not of making one sweeping gesture'. Therefore, the colonial government needed time to 'iron out the practical difficulties of using both languages, without creating confusion, in as many selected circumstances as possible'.[54]

After Trench's speech, on 30 March 1968, circulars about the official use of Chinese language were issued to the heads of all departments by A. T. Clark, the Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary. In the circular, Clark suggested that although many departments had already adopted the practice of writing letters in Chinese or sending Chinese translations with formal replies, 'the effect that one or two offices do not reply to Chinese letters in Chinese, and still issue important printed or cyclostyled notices, warning or advices to humble people' continued to attract public criticisms. Clark sent the department instructions on the subject to these high ranked bureaucrats and ordered them to make 'suitable arrangements' within one month.[55] Besides, a report was written by C. K. K. Wong, both the Assistant Secretary and the City District Officer of Sham Shui Po, to assess to what extent had Chinese been used in government departments and the inadequacies so far. Wong uncovered that although a number of departments had already adopted the practice of using Chinese more widely in correspondences, they have misplaced the emphasis on 'translation':

> The assumption there is that translated texts will read just as easily as the English original. Unfortunately, this assumption is wrong. Between English and Chinese, the linguistic differences are immense and their modes of presentation of ideas are not

[54] Ibid., pp. 50-1.
[55] HKRS 1443-1-13, A. T. Clark, Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary, 'Official Use of Chinese Language', 30 March 1968, p. 2.

easy to reconcile. I myself find that, in an alarming proportion of translated letters and notices, much of the original subtlety in putting across an idea is lost in the course of translation.[56]

The current translators did not possess enough special subject knowledge to provide accurate and precise interpretations of letters and notices. Instead of translating the English documents and letters into Chinese literally, Wong recommended that all official publications which affected the Chinese communities should be rewritten in Chinese.[57] Other City District Officers responded to Wong's paper. Despite the internal investigations and communications, no official language reform had been introduced in the late 1960s.

In 1970, the language issue revived. The fact that information related to the movement could be found in almost all newspapers reflected 'the public's increasing interest in the development of this issue'.[58] The increased press coverage on the language movement influenced public opinions. *Town Talk* stated that at a public forum, 'an unanimous stand' was taken by the secondary and post-secondary student bodies that 'Chinese must be made an official language in Hong Kong and be given equal status'.[59] In response to the society's increasing interest in the language issue and the pressure exerted by these organizations, the colonial government announced that a Chinese Language Committee was to be set up on 18 September 1970. The Committee was responsible for examining the use of the Chinese language in administration, legislation and education. It was consisted of five members, including T. L. Yang, a District Judge, T. C. Lai, who was from the Department of Extra-

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[56] HKRS 1443-1-13, C. K. K. Wong, *Report on the Use of Chinese by Government as a Medium of Communication*, 31 July 1968, pp. 3-4.
[57] Ibid., p. 5.
[58] HKRS 285-1-1, Public Relations Division, Government Information Services, *Chinese Press Review: Press Response to the Second Report of Chinese Language Committee*, (date no specified) May 1971, p.1.
[59] 'Special Supplement on the Use of Chinese as an Official Language', p. 1.

Mural Studies in the Chinese University of Hong Kong, G. M. B. Salmon, who represented the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, M. A. B. Steveson, the Deputy Director of Government Information Services and F. K. Li, the Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs. In order to assess the public feelings on the language policy and the movement, the City District Officers were required to produce a weekly situation report and forward that to the City District Commissioners.[60] These 'special arrangements' were made with the City District Officers 'to see, on behalf of the (Chinese Language) Committee, members of the public who wish to make known their opinion on this matter'.[61] The City District Officers then conveyed these views to the Language Committee. They were also responsible for submitting another bi-weekly report to the Committee, which was a collection of specific examples of cases that an English letter or document should be accompanied by a Chinese translation.

The formation of the Chinese Language Committee was received by the majority of the public positively. According to the City District Officer of Wan Chai, although some people suspected that the formation of the Committee 'was only a tactical move calculated to silence the critics without intending to do anything', most people 'welcomed government's proposal to set up a committee to study the issue'.[62] Some press welcomed the setting up of a formal Language Committee. *Hong Kong Times*, for instance, believed the setting up of the Committee was 'a positive step' taken by the colonial state in response to the public opinions. *Wah Kiu Man Po* also suggested that 'this move taken by the government shows it pays heed to public opinion'. [63]

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[60] HKRS 488-3-36, Minutes of C.D.C.'s meeting with Kowloon C.D.O.s held at C.D.C.(Kowloon)'s Office on 23 September 1970, p. 2.
[61] HKRS 488-3-36. Telegram from D.S.H.A. to C.D.C.s and C.D.O.s, 26 October 1970.
[62] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Chinese as Official Language: Report for the Week Ending 10.10.70', memo from C.D.O. (Wai Chai) to C.D.C. (Hong Kong), 19 October 1970, p. 1.
[63] *Chinese Press Review: Chinese as an Official Language: Part III* , p. 3.

However, activists were dissatisfied with the government's arrangement. Denny Huang condemned the government-appointed Committee as an unrepresentative bureaucratic 'farce', in which four of five members were connected with the colonial state: 'The Committee was not what people want because it did not include in its terms of reference the study of Chinese being made an official language'.[64] To express his discontent, Huang claimed that he would ignore the Committee and would not submit any representation to it. The Chairman of the Hong Kong University Students' Union, John Ng similarly argued that the Language Committee only represented 'to a great extent the point of view of government rather than that of a cross section of the society'.[65] To protest against the lack of representativeness of the Committee's membership, the language leaders announced that they would boycott the Committee in October 1970.

According to a report written by the Kowloon City District Commissioner, David Lai, the cause of the language movement was widely supported by the public:

> There is widespread endorsement and sympathy with this agitation among the public…For the average person the need for better communication with government is still felt despite the actions taken by government so far in using Chinese as an alternative medium of communication. There is a widespread feeling that the use of Chinese by government departments so far has not been as widespread and certainly not as effective as Colonial Secretary has suggested in his speech in Legislative Council.[66]

[64] HKRS 70-3-26-21, P. Mak, 'Language Leader to Boycott Committee', *Hong Kong Standard*, 23 October 1970.
[65] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Language Committee ''Leans on Govt Side''', *South China Morning Post*, 22 October 1970.
[66] HKRS 488-3-6, 'Chinese as an Official Language: Initial Report on Public Feelings by Kowloon C.D.O.s', memo from C.D.C. (Kowloon) to S.H.A., 26 August 1970, p. 1.

The majority of the population believed that to improve political communication between the colonial state and the Chinese society, 'Chinese should be made an official language'. Many held that 'unless Chinese was made an official language, users of English would still be given preferential treatment'.[67]

These shifting popular sentiments influenced the colonial state's ruling strategies. However, instead of appointing some 'representative' members to the Language Committee, the colonial state attempted to weaken the movement by communicating with the public through City District Officers. The City District Officers were instructed to brief their staff of official line of thinking before they started talking to the general public. They should explain to the public that the language issue was 'more complicated than it appears to be' and point out that the government 'has been making genuine effort to meet the need of non-English speaking people'. They were also told to 'act systematically and discreetly' to 'isolate the support for the movement, particularly for Denny Huang's group'. For example, in their conversations with their contacts, they should hint that Huang's enthusiasm was associated with his seeking re-election to the Urban Council in April 1971.[68] In 1971, the Chinese Language Committee examined the intelligence supplied by City District Officers closely and produced the first report in February. The Committee took public opinions into consideration and advised that simultaneous interpretation in English and Cantonese should be provided in any open meeting of the Legislative and Urban Councils. Similar facilities should also be introduced in boards and committees with members who did not speak English.[69]

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[67] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Chinese as Official Language: Report for the Week Ending 10.10.70', memo from C.D.O. (Wai Chai) to C.D.C. (Hong Kong), 19 October 1970, p. 1.
[68] HKRS 488-3-36, Minutes of C.D.C.'s meeting with Kowloon C.D.O.s held at C.D.C.(K)'s Office, 23 September 1970, p. 1.
[69] HKRS 285-1-1, Government Information Services, 'First Report of the Chinese Language Committee Recommends Simultaneous Interpretation', *Daily Information Bulletin*, 28 February 1971, pp. 1-2.

Reactions to the first language report were mixed. Urban Councillors, D. J. R. Blaker and Elsie Elliott both welcomed the introduction of simultaneous interpretation in the Councils, considered that to be the first stage of enabling more Chinese to participate in political affairs. Chinese language newspapers were also supportive. *Sing Tao Man Pao* suggested that if the recommendations of the Committee were to be carried out, the status of the Chinese language would be enhanced substantially. They were also confident that the Governor would consider the advice offered by the Committee seriously.[70] *Wah Kiu Yat Po* believed that all the suggestions of the Committee were 'reasonable' and 'realistic'. They were 'happy to note the alacrity with which the Committee has tackled its job'.[71] Nevertheless, some press and activists held a completely opposite view. *Hong Kong Daily News*, for instance, expressed its disappointment:

> It is disappointing that having spent so much time, energy and material resources, the Chinese Language Committee has come up only with the recommendations that simultaneous interpretation facilities should be provided in open meetings of the Legislative and Urban Council and that government should start training simultaneous interpreters. Still, this is better than nothing. Undeniably, there is a feeling that the appointment by the government of the Chinese Language Committee is a delaying tactic.[72]

Huang was 'disappointed' that the Committee made no mention of making Chinese the official language in its report. The Chairman of the HKFS, James Chui said that he was 'not

[70] HKRS 285-1-1, Public Relations Division, Government Information Services, *Chinese Press Review: Press Response to the First Report of the Chinese Language Committee*, 4 March 1971, pp. 1-2.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., p. 1.

very happy with the report'. To Chui, the Committee was relying on 'a delaying tactic' and the recommendations were only a 'small success' in the whole language campaign.[73]
The Committee submitted the second report on 28 April, in which it responded to the activists' demands. It recommended the colonial government to give Chinese and English 'equality of use and status as far as practically possible'. A senior officer should be appointed 'to keep a constant check on government's performance' in the use of Chinese in official business. The government should 'pool existing facilities for the translation of technical terms to stimulate further translation and to provide all departments with official glossaries'.[74]

The second report was received favourably by *Tin Tin Yat Po*:

> We applaud the Committee for its recommendation that instruction giving effect to bilingualism in forms, letters, public notices, etc. should be incorporated in General Regulations to provide the sanction of disciplinary proceedings when the instructions are not complied with. We believe that the Committee is sincere in raising this proposal, and that government will accept it. The new recommendation is to lay down a fixed rule for all government officers concerned. What a wonderful thing to do.[75]

Wah Kiu Man Po also pointed out that 'people from all walks of life fully endorse the ''equality of status'' of Chinese in government documents to the public'.[76] Even the HKFS

[73] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Mixed Views on Language Report', *South China Morning Post*, 2 March 1970.
[74] Hong Kong Government Printer, *The Second Report of the Chinese Language Committee: Oral and Written Communication between Government and the Public*, (Hong Kong, April, 1971)
[75] The article of *Tin Tin Yat Po* mentioned was published on 1 May 1971, recorded in *Chinese Press Review: Press Response to the Second Report of the Chinese Language Committee*, p. 1.
[76] '官方對民眾文件中文英文並重 各方力表贊', *Wah Kiu Man Po*, 30 April 1970, recorded in *Chinese Press Review: Press Response to the Second Report of the Chinese Language Committee*, p. 6.

supported the second report 'whole-heartedly' despite their suggestion that the government should show more sincerity and speed up dealing with the language issue.[77] However, the report was criticized by Urban Councillor, Henry Hu, who asserted that 'the current language campaign would not have been necessary if government had followed its declared policy on ''near equality of use and status'' for both Chinese and English'.[78] On 29 April 1971, *Truth Daily* criticized the Committee's recommendation that 'in case of dispute, the English version should prevail'. According to *Truth Daily*, if the English version was serving as the basis, it implied that the Chinese version was less important. Consequently, the public would not attach much value to the Chinese version and this was 'certainly a heavy blow on the status of the Chinese language'.[79]

In face of the negative responses, the Governor announced in May that recommendations made in the first report of the Committee were accepted. The third report, which mainly dealt with the use of the Chinese language in courts, was published by the Committee in late June. The Committee recommended that all bills and ordinances should be published in both languages in the future. Present legislation should be translated into Chinese in stages. In lower courts, oral proceedings should be conducted in both Cantonese and English. However, the Committee also suggested that 'equal status does not necessarily imply equal use in every single instance': 'Status denotes the rank of one language in relation to another, whereas use concerns communication'. In higher courts, the existing system should be preserved and courts records should continue to be kept in English.[80]

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[77] Ibid., p. 3.
[78] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Language Drive Could Have Been Avoided', *South China Morning Post*, 30 April 1970.
[79] *Chinese Press Review: Press Response to the Second Report of the Chinese Language Committee*, p. 2.
[80] Hong Kong Government Printer, *The Third Report of the Chinese Committee: Court Proceedings and the Language of the Law*, (Hong Kong, June 1971), p. 6.

At this point, the public interest towards the language issue subsided. The inconsistency of the Committee statements and the third report however provoked a bitter response from the student activists. To express their discontent, a report was submitted by ten law students of the University of Hong Kong to the Legal Sub-Committee of the Chinese Language Committee. On 16 July 1971, the HKFS issued a position paper and forwarded it to the Committee to reiterate their demand of making Chinese the official language of Hong Kong:

> The Hong Kong Federation of Students wholeheartedly agrees with the Legal Sub-Committee of the Chinese Language Committee 'equal status does not necessarily imply equal use in every single instance. Status denotes language in relation to another, whereas use concerns communication' (Section A: Paragraph 8 of the 3rd Report of the Chinese Language Committee). However, in sharp contradiction to the above statement, the Chinese Language Committee has stated time and time again that it is working on the principle of giving 'as near equality in status and usage to the Chinese language as English'. We strongly dissent from this. We believe status, which is a matter of respect, should be absolutely equal, whereas in the light of practicability, and technical difficulties, it may very well be true that Chinese cannot attain the same level of usage as English, but this is no hindrance to giving both languages equality in status.… We strongly advocate that legislation to be enacted to the effect of declaring both Chinese and English official languages of Hong Kong, equal in status, with the usage of Chinese language defined in specific areas.[81]

[81] *Position Paper of the Hong Kong Federation of Students on the Matter of Recognition of Chinese as an Official Language of Hong Kong Presented to the Government Chinese Language Committee on the 16th July, 1971*, pp. 2-3.

On 22 July 1971, the HKFS sent a letter using similar language to Anthony Royle, who was now the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. They argued that it was ‘the popular desire of all sectors of all community that Chinese language be recognized officially as equal in the status to the English language’. The HKFS accused the Committee of adopting ‘a delaying tactic’ and did not make any concrete recommendations of making Chinese the official language of Hong Kong in spite of nine months’ investigation.[82]

On 26 July 1971, the Committee finished and published the fourth and final report, in which they recommended the colonial government to train a class of specialist translators, who should be administrated by a central authority, instead of the Central Grades Division at the moment. The Direction of Education should also examine how the standard of both languages could be improved in secondary schools. They also recommended the government to consider ‘promulgating a firm policy, in a suitable manner, that Chinese and English are ‘‘Fat Ting U Man’’, that is to say, official languages’.[83]

In spite of the Committee’s recommendation, there were little signs indicating that the government was going to enact a legislation to make Chinese as an official language of Hong Kong immediately in 1971. To exert more pressure on the colonial government, the HKFS escalated their action. On 30 August 1971, the HKFS wrote to both the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, F. K. Li and Anthony Royle to reaffirm their demand of enacting a new legislation to declare both Chinese and English the official languages of Hong Kong. Being impatient at the slow progress, the students ‘decided to draft their own legislation making

[82] Letter from Chui to Royle, p. 2.
[83] Hong Kong Government Printer, *The Fourth (and Final) Report of the Chinese Language Committee: General Translation and Interpretation Services, Hong Kong’s Educational System, Chinese as an Official* Language, (Hong Kong, July 1971), p. 9.

Chinese an official language in Hong Kong'.[84] The law members from the HKFS had prepared a detailed legal document 'telling the government how it should declare an official language'.[85] The draft, passed to the Secretariat for Home Affairs, was discussed in the meeting held between the Home Affairs Department and the student representatives in September. On 10 September, 30,000 copies of language pamphlets were printed and distributed by the students to advocate a legislative declaration of Chinese as an official language. An open letter was then issued to the Unofficial Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils (UMELCO) on 14 September, which subsequently led to a meeting between the UMELCO and the HKFS on 17 September. Besides, the HKFS sought support from student bodies and figures of political importance outside Hong Kong. For example, they approached the National Union of Students in London, which later agreed 'to give full support to your campaign, and will take all the actions you request on this matter'.[86] James Johnson, a Labour Party MP, raised the language issue in the House of Commons in late November 1971. An open letter was sent to the new Governor, Murray MacLehose on 1 December to 'urge him to remove government red-tape' on the language issue.[87]

In response, on 15 December 1971, the Colonial Secretary, Hugh Norman-Walker reiterated that the Language Committee's first report, which dealt with the use of Chinese at meetings of the Legislative and Urban Councils, had been accepted by the Governor. Norman-Walker also stated that the Governor would soon approve the second report, which would then be passed to the Financial Committee of Legislative Council. The third report, which contained many controversial recommendations, would be submitted to the Executive Council after it

[84] FCO 40/341, 'Students Step up the Pressure on Language', *Hong Kong Standard*, 11 September 1971.
[85] FCO 40/341, 'Students in Language Bid', *Hong Kong Standard*, 17 September 1971.
[86] FCO 40/341, Letter from Richard Molienux, Manager of the International Policy Group within the National Union of Students to James Chui, 22 September 1971.
[87] FCO 40/341, 'Sir Murray in Student Language Row', *Hong Kong Standard*, 1 December 1971.

had been considered by the Chief Justice, the Attorney General and the departments concerned. The extent to which the recommendations in the fourth report would be adopted depended upon the decisions made on the other three reports. Although the colonial state was unable to give a definite date, the new simultaneous interpretation system should be in full operation by mid-1972.[88]

The punctual response of the government was well-received by the public. The focus of the political discourse shifted away from the language movement to other more important topics, such as the Diaoyu Islands movement. As a result, the language movement became less prominent. Nonetheless, London was also aware of the tensions over the language issue in Hong Kong:

> During the past twelve months the Chinese language issue has been the subject of representations from various quarters and in November and December it was the subject of Parliamentary Questions by Mr. James Johnson and Mr. James Sillars to which Mr Royle replied on 16 November and 7 December.[89]

Copies of the Committee's reports were sent to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in late 1971.[90] In the course of the next three years, the colonial administration trained translators and promoted the wider use of Chinese in administration. A new division, the Development, Training and Research Division, set up in April 1973, improved translation standards.[91] To ensure that government's declared intention of using Chinese as widely as possible in

[88] FCO 40/341, Government Information Services, 'Simultaneous Interpretation Facilities for Council Meetings: New System Expected to be Fully Operational by Mid-1972', *Daily Information Bulletin*, 15 December 1971.
[89] FCO 40/341, Telegram from E. O. Laird to L. Monson, 1 December 1971.
[90] FCO 40/341, 'Parliamentary Question by Mr. Johnson', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1 December 1971.
[91] FCO 40/536, 'New Chinese Authority Announced', *Registry Records*, 11 January 1974, p. 3.

different departments and official business, the Chinese Language Branch was set up. The Director of Home Affairs had been appointed as the Chinese Language Authority in January 1974. In February 1974, the prolonged struggle of the language activists finally paid off. The Official Languages Bill passed its final reading in the Legislative Council.[92] The language requirement for the Urban Council membership was revised in late 1974. People who only spoke Cantonese and were able to read and write Chinese were eligible to serve the Urban Council.[93] Both Chinese and English now possessed equal status and enjoyed equality of use. Although some ordinances and bills were still enacted in English, Chinese terms were used, and Chinese translations of the bills were published. In Magistrates' Courts, Juvenile Courts, Labour Tribunals, Tenancy Tribunals and any inquiry by coroner, judiciary proceedings were henceforth 'conducted in either the English language or the Chinese language as the court thinks fit'.[94]

The language movement had demonstrated that mass political activism could influence policy formation. These activists organized informal political activities, such as signature campaigns and opinion polls, to mobilize the masses. They successfully captured the attention of the press and the public. Public opinions shifted, favouring legalization of Chinese as the official language of Hong Kong. In response, the colonial state set up the Chinese Language Committee. To understand shifting popular sentiments, City District Officers were instructed to solicit public opinions on a weekly basis on behalf of the Committee. These constructed 'public opinions' were taken into consideration by the Committee in drafting four reports. These processes reveal that the reformist colonial administration became increasingly

[92] FCO 40/536, 'Language Bill Passed: Call for Further Improvement in Standard of Chinese', *Registry Records*, 13 February 1974, p. 3.
[93] FCO 40/536, 'Language Requirement for URBCO Membership to be Revised', *Registry Records*, 26 July 1974, p. 7.
[94] HKRS 70-6-249-2, Hong Kong Government Printer, *Legal Supplement No.3 to the Hong Kong Government Gazette* (Hong Kong, January 1974), pp. C3-4.

responsive to popular demands. It also shows that Hong Kong's political culture was changing, which will be discussed in the following section.

Political Culture in Hong Kong

Through observing the attitudes and motivations of participants who engaged in the language movement, we can reveal what encouraged people to engage in the campaign, and make inferences about Hong Kong's political culture in the early 1970s. This section shows that despite having the common goal of promoting wider use of the Chinese language in official communications, the language campaign was far from monolithic, with supporters holding a range of beliefs.

The young generation was politically conscious and ideologically driven. To many students, the language campaign was a movement through which self-determination could be pursued. Since the late 1960s, political awareness increased, particularly among the students of higher education. They were critical of the colonial administration, and advocated increased political participation as a citizen's obligation. For instance, the editor of *Undergrad* criticized the current educational system as failing to address fully civil education and politics, resulting in the absence of public political consciousness. To become a true intellectual young person with self-consciousness, the editor urged the young generation to acquire better understandings of the existing social and political problems.[95] In another article titled 'From Apathy to Inertia' in *Undergrad*, published in May 1968, the author criticized that university students, saying that they were 'supposed to have more understanding on the nature of these

[95] Hong Kong University, Special Collection, '中學教育應重視政治知識', *Undergrad*, no. 1, 1 January 1968, p. 6.

voting rights than other youths in Hong Kong'. They were however not fulfilling their civic responsibilities. The author argued that holding press conference was insufficient and advocated students to be more politically active. The HKFS and the student unions 'should take up a leading role in pushing students to participate in social affairs'.[96] An editorial in the student newsletter of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, *CU Student*, also encouraged students to take up 'intellectual responsibility' and provide solutions to improve the condition of the colony: 'We students have a dual role as learners about problems and their various solutions, and as intellectual who identify problems and suggest new solution'.[97]

Influenced by the social climate of increased political awareness, the young generation, in particular the university students, viewed participation in the language movement as a civic duty. They believed that only by granting the Chinese language the official status would Chinese-speaking people take up appointed or elected positions in the colonial administration. According to *Undergrad*, the campaign had 'very profound implications'. The movement was interpreted by 'a sector of' participants as 'the beginning of popular political movements in Hong Kong'. It was viewed as 'the first step towards democratization and decolonization of this community': 'We must all understand that ultimately we are actually bargaining for the power of the people of Hong Kong to decide their own affairs'. The student press also stressed that it was crucial for students to develop this perspective:

> It is high time that we should join together to discuss the role of the campaign and whole context of political reforms in Hong Kong...The campaigners for the Chinese language movement should not be afraid to pronounce their long-term ideals to

[96] Hong Kong University, Special Collection, 'From Apathy to Inertia', *Undergrad*, no. 10, 16 May 1968, p. 4.
[97] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, 'Editorial: Intellectual Responsibility', *CU Student*, 2:11, 15 February 1971, p. 1.

reform the political system of Hong Kong.[98]

Student motivations reveal a shifting political culture. These post-war baby boomers held a less favourable view of the colonial state than traditional elites. They also considered engagement in politics to be an obligation.

Similar political attitudes were found among some educated elites. For example, the organizer of the campaign, Denny Huang was well-known as a critic of the colonial administration. Huang criticized the Committee's suggestion as having 'very little effect' as it did not provide grounds for non-English speaking people to become Councillors. Like the student activists, Huang was politically motivated. He admitted that the ultimate goal of the movement was to see people who spoke only Cantonese become Councillors, 'a real step forward' to 'make Chinese feel they had a real stake in the Councils'. The WPCOL was pragmatic but the ultimate agenda of Huang and student activists was to empower the Chinese population and increase their participation in public affairs.[99]

Some students were by contrast motivated by nationalism. Their political allegiance towards the PRC could be observed from the rhetoric they employed in the movement. In late 1970, Denny Huang and some student committee members had a 'very hot discussion' on whether Chinese in Hong Kong should be called 'Hua Ren' (華人, ethnically Chinese) or 'Zhongguo Ren' (中國人, which had multiple meanings, could be used to refer to people associated with China, either by reason of ancestry, nationality, citizenship, heredity, place of residence, or

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[98] Hong Kong University, Special Collection, 'Language and Politics', *Undergrad*, no.15, 16 October 1970, p. 4; also quoted in 'Language Committee ''Leans on Govt Side''', S*outh China Morning Post*, 22 October 1970.
[99] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Chinese for Equal Status', in *Hong Kong Standard*, 2 March 1971.

other affiliations) in the campaign. The Chinese in Hong Kong were 'Zhongguo Ren'.[100] Although the term 'Hua Ren' was not adopted mainly because of activists' deliberate attempt to exclude Chinese who were British subjects by birth or naturalization in their movement, the choice of word definitely reflected some students' political orientation towards the mainland China in the 1970s. In a HKFS language pamphlet, the theme of nationalism was adopted: 'The era when Chinese are second-rate people is gone; we are no longer people being pushed around; Chinese people in Hong Kong have risen to roar at any unreasonable things.' Most importantly, it was stressed that Hong Kong was 'an integral part of Chinese territory'. The pamphlet was soon denounced by the Secretariat for Home Affairs, which argued that its content was 'un-factual'. Activists were therefore asked to cross out this sentence along with a few others.[101] Positive attitudes towards China was attributable to the belief that China would be more liberal and open in the near future. Students' optimism could be observed in an editorial called 'Hong Kong is Ours' in *CU Student*:

> After going through the disturbances, most people feel at heart that Hong Kong lacks a sense of security. Some even note that it will only be a little over twenty years before Kowloon is returned to China and by that time people will have to live under communist rule. Therefore, some people try their best to leave Hong Kong and even congratulate themselves on their 'far-sightedness' in making the move... Actually those people who worry too far into the future and as a result lose faith in Hong Kong are troubling themselves without a sound cause. Apart from the possibility that many changes may occur in twenty years' time in this ever-changing world, even if Hong Kong is returned back to China, we will only be as a matter of course moving from a

[100] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Chinese as an Official Language Weekly Progress Report', memo from C.D.O. (Kwun Tong) to C.D.C. (Kowloon), 3 November 1970.
[101] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Students Strike out Sentences from Language Handbill', *Hong Kong Standard*, 10 September 1971.

colony back to our mother country– and instead of being colonial subjects, we will become masters of this piece of land. Unless a person is forgetful of his ancestry, or else he will never be ashamed of returning to his mother country…The political situation viewed objectively has shown this to be the best course. But in twenty years' time even if the ruling authority in China remains unchanged, its internal organizations will most certainly have undergone changes. According to the observation of sociologists, a forecast into the future of capitalism and communism is that as the former is gradually moving towards the Left while the latter towards the Right, someday the two will finally meet at a mid-point and the two systems will be merged into one.[102]

Throughout the movement, unlike the middle-aged and elderly groups who held a negative attitude towards China, some student activists repeatedly identified themselves as Chinese politically. They showed no hesitation to reveal to the public that they were campaigning for a national course. Although that does not necessarily suggest they were leftists and allegiant to the Communist regime in China, the majority of students definitely held a positive attitude towards the Chinese Communist regime. In essence, although the aim of the language movement was to introduce language reforms in administration, legislation and education in Hong Kong, the campaign itself was inseparable from Chinese nationalism.

The language movement had a cultural dimension: in this sense it was not 'non-ideological', merely 'issue-driven'. As the City District Officer in Eastern District, M. Leung had observed, unlike any other political agitation for constitutional reforms, the language

[102] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, '香港是我們的', *CU Student*, 2:6, 15 September 1970, p. 1.; translated version enclosed in HKRS 285-1-1.

campaign was 'one with a cultural appeal'.[103] Participants did not treat the language campaign only as a political movement. A substantial amount of supporters of the campaign were driven by cultural nationalism: enthusiasm to promote Chinese culture, enhance the status of Chinese language and achieve racial equality. The theme of promoting Chinese culture was adopted by the HKFS in their position paper:

> The cultural heritage of the Chinese civilization has a history of over 4,000 years. It is a great asset to the whole community. Preservation and development of the Chinese culture would be greatly facilitated and encouraged by giving Chinese an official status.[104]

In his report in mid-1970, Wong Tai Sin City District Officer, James So stated that student bodies were 'motivated by a sense of national pride': 'Since Hong Kong is inhabited by over 98 per cent Chinese, the Chinese language should take equal place with the English language'.[105] According to So, most students were 'in favour of the movement' and their reaction to it was 'filled with emotion'. These students considered it 'an insult to the Chinese community in Hong Kong' for not being able to use Chinese language in the colonial administration.[106] An editorial in *CU Student* described the Chinese language as 'the language of history', and the campaign as 'a call of an ethnic group': 'One can ignore the voice of an individual, one can ignore the voice of an organization, but the voice of an ethnic group could never be unheard'. The author advocated ethnic equality: 'When two ethnic

[103] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Chinese as an Official Language', memo from C.D.O. (Eastern) to D.S.H.A., 20 October 1970, p. 2.
[104] *Position Paper of the Hong Kong Federation of Students on the Matter of Recognition of Chinese as an Official Language of Hong Kong Presented to the Government Chinese Language Committee on the 16th July, 1971*, p. 1.
[105] So, 'Report on Chinese as an Official Language', p. 1.
[106] Ibid., p. 2.

groups live in one place, if they were treated unequally, surely there would not be any long-lasting peace and tranquillity'.[107]

The claims made by the Chairman of the To Promote Chinese as an Official Language Committee of Hong Kong Baptist College Student Union, Dominic Shui, supported So's assessment. Shui suggested that their organization was 'campaigning for a national cause', 'a succession' of the May Fourth movement. Similar to the language movement, the May Fourth movement was initiated by the youths, intellectuals and students. It was a nationalist movement that took place in 1919 after the allied powers secretly agreed to accept Japan's position in Shandong during the Versailles Peace Conference. In response to the unfair agreement, students organized protests in Beijing. To strengthen China's national power, Confucian values, such as the classical relationships between the emperor and his ministers, and fathers and sons, were denounced. Efforts were also made to promote vernacular language in order to allow highly educated intellectuals from institutions to communicate with ordinary people.[108] 1969 was the Jubilee of the movement. Throughout the year of 1969, the details and impacts of the May Fourth movement were widely covered by student newsletters and magazines. The *Undergrad* even published a 'May Fourth Special Edition' on 4 May 1969, in which all articles and editorials were about the movement. Students were influenced by the ideas of the May Fourth and saw a parallel between it and the current language movement in 1970. The May Fourth movement symbolized the criticism against traditional ideas and the existing system. By coining the term 'May Fourth movement', the

[107] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection '民族的呼喚', *CU Student*, 2:8, 15 November 1970, p. 1.

[108] Henrietta Harrison, *China: Inventing the Nation* (London, 2001), pp. 172-4.

student activists showed that they upheld the 'sacred duty to arouse Chinese community to respect the Chinese culture'.[109]

Western educated elites in an Asian society were inclined to find the concept of nationalism appealing when they challenged the status quo. After the 1967 riots, there was an 'identity-crisis'. These intellectual youths, as a result, were 'vulnerable to political ideologies which (could) offer them new identities'. As the notion of nationalism placed cultural identity at the centre of its concern, the young generation could construct a new political identity from concept of nationalism. On the one hand, nationalism legitimated their claims to political self-determination; on the other hand, the concept allowed them to refer to their indigenous identity. Within this new identity, the student activists and elites could 'play the leading role directing the right for independence'. In the case of Hong Kong, instead of independence, self-determination and local autonomy were pursued. Local culture could also be recreated.[110] According to John Breuilly, an influential theorist, nationalism should exclude political movements which demand independence on the basis of universal principles.[111] Nonetheless, the language campaign justified their demand by appealing to universal human rights. For instance, in the position paper issued by the HKFS in 1971, language of universalism was adopted by students to justify their claims:

> The Chinese population in Hong Kong, apart from being the overwhelming majority of 98 per cent of the total population, also contributes the most towards the growth and prosperity of Hong Kong...Social and political equality are basic human rights in

[109] HKRS 488-3-36, A. Bennett (C.D.O. of Kowloon City), 'Weekly Progress Report: Use of Chinese as an Official Language', 29 October 1970. The definition of 'Chinese culture' here was ambiguous as the representatives did not elaborate what they meant by that explicitly in details. It was likely that the student representatives were referring to the linguistic tradition of Chinese language.
[110] John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester, 1982), pp. 28-9.
[111] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

> a society. It is a gesture of respect to make the language of an ethnic group an official language. The demand to make Chinese language an official language is a political right that should not be denied then.[112]

The difficulty to separate the elements of universalism from nationalist movements was recognized by Breuilly: 'In all ways, the universalist theme of human rights and political self-determination are inextricably linked with nationalist themes of cultural identity in modern colonialism'.[113] In this movement, the claims to self-determination were grounded upon an appeal to universal human rights. The language movement in Hong Kong merged hopes for self-determination, cultural nationalism and calls on universalism.

The demands of the movement were consequently paradoxical. On the one hand, activists demanded the enhancement of the status of their native language as the official language; on the other hand, many participants still viewed the Chinese language as inferior to the English language. In a letter to the editor of the *Truth Daily*, a supporter of the campaign recommended that if legal or technical difficulties, such as confusion at courts, and cost and time involved in training interpretators and translating all the documents from English into Chinese, were anticipated in replying to letters using Chinese language, the colonial government's reply should be sent with English translation. In any cases of dispute, 'the English version should prevail'.[114] The suggestion of using the English clauses as 'the basis' of the Chinese version indicated that the notion of English being a more appropriate language to be used in formal occasions was still deeply rooted in many people's mind. A

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[112] *Position Paper of the Hong Kong Federation of Students on the Matter of Recognition of Chinese as an Official Language*, p. 1.
[113] Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, pp. 7 and 9.
[114] Editorial in *Truth Daily*, 29 April 1971, recorded in *Chinese Press Review: Press Response to the Second Report of Chinese Committee,* p. 2.

contemptuous attitude towards Chinese language was fairly common in the early 1970s. Prejudice that English-written correspondence should be given preferential treatment and the status Chinese language was inferior when compared to that of English 'existed not only in the mind of many government officials but also the general public'.[115] The fact that a number of the supporters still showed degrees of contempt towards the Chinese language sub-consciously suggested that we should not take the rhetoric employed in the slogans literally at its face value.

Nonetheless, some students did engage in the movement because of non-ideological concerns: their future career prospects. Both the City District Commissioner of Kowloon and the City District Officer of Wong Tai Sin observed that student activists mostly came from schools and universities using Chinese as the medium of instruction. David Lai made the following comment in his report:

> The hard-core of the agitation lies in the Federation of Hong Kong Catholic Students and the College Students Association of Hong Kong. Membership of these two organizations consists largely of Chinese University students and post-secondary college students. These students feel that they are being discriminated against in terms of job opportunities and they see the adoption of Chinese as an official language as a means to improve their prospects (at present the only job they could get in government is to be teachers).[116]

James So made similar observations:

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[115] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Special Issue, Chinese as an Official Language', 26 November 1970.
[116] HKRS 455-4-4, Draft memo from C.D.C. (Kowloon) to Hon. S.H.A., (date not specified) 1970, pp. 1-2.

> The two student bodies, (the Federation of Hong Kong Catholic Students and the College Students Association of Hong Kong) on the other hand, are joining in the bandwagon for selfish aims. Both these student bodies are mainly composed of students from three colleges of the Chinese University and other colleges like Chu Hoi and Baptist College whose English standard is, generally speaking, not as good as students from Hong Kong University. Hence graduates from these colleges are not able to compete on a par with graduates from H.K.U. for jobs. They therefore consider if Chinese could be made official languages they would stand a much better chance in competing with H.K.U. graduates for jobs.[117]

The political culture within the young generation was far from uniform. Secondary school students were reluctant to politicize the campaign. Most of the secondary school students who participated in a seminar on the language issue held in Ying Wah College on 17 November 1970 were 'scared to associate themselves too closely with any of the campaign promoters, and therefore, made no reference to any of the three organizations throughout the seminar'.[118] Political culture within the young generation divided between those in secondary and tertiary education.

Denny Huang's declaration of his decision of running for the next Urban Council election further fractured the movement. Some post-secondary students expressed their disappointment by calling Huang a 'hypocrite' and asserted that he only started the movement with a 'self-seeking purpose'.[119] There was also information suggesting that Huang 'may be connected with Taiwan' and was helping Taiwan to intensify her influence in

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[117] So, 'Report on Chinese as an Official Language', p. 1.
[118] HKRS 1443-1-13, Memo from C.D.O. (Mong Kok) to C.D.C. (Kowloon), 19 November 1970.
[119] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Chinese as an Official Language, Weekly Progress Report (30.12.70-5.1.71), memo from C.D.O. (Wong Tai Sin) to C.D.C.(Kowloon), 1 January 1971, p. 1.

Hong Kong, although no source of financial support could be traced.[120] Student representatives felt that Huang wanted to dominate the movement.[121] Many gradually withdrew, 'fed up' that the campaign representatives never consulted them and had never informed them how their donations were spent.[122]

As the editor of *Wah Kiu Yat Po* pointed out, instead of serving any political purpose, many people engaged due to pragmatism. They wanted Chinese to be used in their workplace. Also, the Chinese language was 'fluent, classical and beautiful', and therefore should receive the 'dignity' that it deserved. They were probably reluctant to politicize the movement.[123] This tendency was particularly prevalent among the middle aged and elderly groups, and could be explained by 'the tradition of paternalism in Chinese politics, and the refugee experience'.[124] In Chinese culture, the relationship between the government and people should be 'analogous to that which should exist between parents and children or between a shepherd and his flock'.[125] In other words, subjects should have absolute obedience and show respect to the authorities. Such traditional concept definitely had led many becoming reluctant to get involved in any issue related to politics. Secondly, to many Hong Kong Chinese, the colony was a 'life boat' in the chaotic 'sea' of China. To avoid being drawn into political turmoil, many 'naturally don't want to rock it (the life boat)'.[126]

[120] Huang visited Taiwan frequently and was a member of Kiangsu-Chekiang Native Association. See 'Special Supplement on the Use of Chinese as an Official Language', *Town Talk*, pp. 6-7 and 9.
[121] HKRS 1443-1-13, 'Chinese as Official Language Weekly Progress Report', memo from C.D.O. (Kwun Tong) to C.D.C. (Kowloon), 1 December 1970.
[122] HKRS 1443-1-13, 'Weekly Progress Report (11-17 November, 1970)', memo from C.D.O. (Wong Tai Sin) to C.D.C.(Kowloon), 17 November 1970, p. 1.
[123] HKRS 285-1-1, '再論爭取中文法定地位運動', *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, 12 October 1970; '爭取中文合法化不是政治運動', *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, 23 October 1970.
[124] Hoadley, 'Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese', p. 613.
[125] Ibid., Hong Kong Government Printer, *Report of the Working Party of Local Administration* (Hong Kong, November 1966), p. 11.
[126] Hoadley, 'Hong Kong is the Life-boat', p. 60.

For the older generation, their engagement in the language movement was driven often by instrumental and pragmatic concerns. For example, for non-English speaking middle-aged community leaders, such as the kaifong leaders, their involvement in the language campaign was clearly neither politically nor culturally driven, but 'dictated by considerations of personal status that were somehow impeded by their insufficient English and the inferior position of Chinese language in official usage'.[127] Grassroots groups also tended to participate in the language campaign because of pragmatic concerns:

> For the average person the need for better communication with government is still felt despite the actions taken by government so far in using Chinese as an alternative medium of communication. There is a widespread feeling that the use of Chinese by government departments so far has not been as widespread and certainly not as effective as C.S. has suggested in his speech in Legco.[128]

By the early 1970s, some governmental documents and letters were only available in English. As the Colonial Secretariat had pointed out in January 1971, many documents were still found either without a Chinese version or with one but were never used.[129] For example, in the Inland Revenue Department, the following forms and letters were only written in English: letter requesting members of public to make a salary tax return, appointment card for the public, notice for recovery of tax, salaries tax, notice of assessment and demand for tax.[130] This practice had brought serious inconvenience to the Chinese people who did not read English. It also caused a number of people coming to City District Offices requesting their

[127] 'Special Supplement on the Use of Chinese as an Official Language', *Town Talk*, p. 4.
[128] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Chinese as an Official Language: Initial Report on Public Feelings by Kowloon C.D.O.s', draft memo from C.D.C. (Kowloon) to Hon. S.H.A., (date not specified) 1970, p. 1.
[129] HKRS 1443-1-13, Memo from Colonial Secretariat to Hon. Secretary for Home Affairs, 25 January 1971.
[130] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Weekly Progress Report: Use of Chinese as an Official Language', memo from C.D.O. (Sham Shui Po) to C.D.C.s (Hong Kong and Kowloon), 6 October 1970, p. 3.

staff to translate and explain the content.[131] For the older generation and the grassroots groups, defence of local political autonomy and culture was not their concern. They engaged as the wider use of Chinese language would be convenient.

Participants disagreed on tactics and timing. For some activists, the declaration of Chinese as the official language was 'tantamount to putting the cart before the horse' and had neglected 'the feasibility and practicability of employing Chinese as a lingua franca in every sector of the administration'.[132] Many also questioned the meaning of 'official' and the necessity of making Chinese an official language. The middle and upper classes, in particular, found the campaigners' tactics, such as organizing class boycotts and sending petition to the authorities, radical. They claimed that they 'favoured a milder and patient approach'. For instance, C. P. So, the Chairman of a multi-storey building in Tsim Sha Tsui, did support the idea that Chinese language should be used widely, but did not take side with the students and involved in the campaign physically as he found it 'unnecessary'. He believed that the formation of the Language Committee had showed that the colonial government 'was already making a hard attempt to widen the use of Chinese'.[133] Industrials and businessmen were relatively 'indifferent' to the issue. Many professionals were also reluctant to engage in the movement. The City District Officer of Kowloon City interviewed two anonymous company executives regarding their views towards the language campaign. Both suggested that 'they did not mind signing' for the movement but 'did not want to be too much involved' and put down their addresses.[134] Civil servants also criticized the active involvement of Tsin Sai-nin, the

[131] HKRS 488-3-36, 'Official Forms Printed in English Only', memo from Commissioner for Resettlement to Secretariat for Home Affairs, 18 December 1970.
[132] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Moving towards a Bi-lingual Society', *South China Morning Post*, 2 March 1971.
[133] HKRS 488-3-36, 'A Supplement to Town Talk Ending 17.11.70: Chinese as an Official Language', memo from C.D.O. (Yau Ma Tei) to C.D.C. (Kowloon), 17 November 1970, p. 2.
[134] HKRS 455-4-4, 'Chinese as an Official Language: Assessment of Public Reaction for the Week Ending 16/12/1970', memo from C.D.O. (Kowloon City) to C.D.C. (Kowloon), 16 December 1970.

Chairman of the Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants Association in the movement. They believed that his cooperation with the All Working Party would 'give the impression that all members of Chinese Civil Servants supported the campaign', which 'in fact is far from truth'.[135] Diverging opinions suggested that divisions did exist among the supporters . The political culture in Hong Kong was far from uniform. The middle and upper classes despised 'radical' informal political activities and were reluctant to engage in the movement directly. Compared to most of the students, they were relatively politically conservative.

Most of the working class and lower-income groups were either disinterested in the language issue or simply avoided getting involved. By late 1970, most people interviewed by the staff of City District Office confessed that 'they had not bothered to acquaint themselves with the issue'.[136] In his assessment of public reaction to the language issue in October 1970, the Kowloon City District Officer made the following comment: 'During the last week, although my staff made a special effort to elicit opinions on this use, our contacts did not seem to be very interested'.[137] The City District Officer of Wong Tai Sin, James So, similarly pointed out that 'generally speaking, this movement fails to arouse much interest among people in the district'. [138] By contrast some workers were openly hostile. For example, Huang received a letter of death threat from 'a group of workers', who clearly believed Huang's All Working Party did not represent all workers and did not want to be involved in the movement. They asked Huang not to 'do something which has nothing to do with the masses' and 'sacrifice the public' for himself. Accusation was also made against Huang of 'using the workers as

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[135] HKRS 1443-1-13,'Chinese as an Official Language, Weekly Progress Report (25.11.70-1.12-70), memo from C.D.O. (Wong Tai Sin) to C.D.C. (Kowloon), 1 December 1970.
[136] 'Special Supplement on the Use of Chinese as an Official Language', *Town Talk*, p. 5.
[137] HKRS 455-4-4, C.D.O. (Kowloon City), 'Chinese as an Official Language: Assessment of Public Reaction for the Week Ending 20 October', 20 October 1970.
[138] So, 'Report on Chinese as an Official Language', p. 1.

tools' to pursue his own political ambition.[139] *Town Talk* also suggested that there was 'a general sense of apathy and indifference' towards the language movement 'amongst the working class and the lower and lower middle income groups' that they have contacted.[140] Nonetheless, other factory workers and apprentices in Kowloon City expressed that they 'would support the campaign heartily because they did not know English'.[141] This indicates that sweeping conclusions cannot be always made about the relationship between political attitudes and social classes.

One divisive issue was 'nationalism', which aroused suspicion of the working class inclined to the Chinese Communist Party in China. In a letter to the editor of the *South China Morning Post*, a reader described the language movement as a 'ballyhoo' and called the organizers of this 'trouble-making campaign' 'rats' who were receiving support from the leftists and plotting against the colonial government.[142] A reader named C. G. Koo wrote to the *South China Morning Post* and made the following comment:

> As I said before this adoption of Cantonese as the official Chinese language is the most expedient but a very short-sighted policy. Let's face it, the days of Hong Kong as a British colony is bound to be numbered. At such time, most of the Hong Kong Chinese will be part of either Chinese People's Republic or the Republic of China, some will be dispersed overseas. Whenever they go, 'Kuo Yu' will be the main means of dialogue and teaching in Chinese. Therefore, as a long term view, 'Kuo Yu' should be taught early and well for the sake of the younger generation even if the present

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[139] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Dr Huang Receives Threat', *South China Morning Post*, 22 October 1970.
[140] 'Special Supplement on the Use of Chinese as an Official Language', *Town Talk,* p. 5.
[141] HKRS 285-1-1, '中文教育與法定語文', *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, 5 October, 1970; 'Why Change', *South China Morning Post*, 25 September 1970.
[142] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Too Much Ballyhoo', *South China Morning Post*, 29 September 1970.

> generation rejects it. Everyone has a right to speak their own dialect, but in choosing an official language, one needs wisdom and foresight.[143]

A reader of *China Mail* shared similar stance and criticized the campaign as an emotional issue that wasted the time and money of the government:

> As may have expected its (the Language Committee) first recommendations were for simultaneous translations in the Urban and Legislative Council… Presumably the translators will be given copies of the few speeches made and will not have to contend with any of the parry and thrust of debate. For this relatively simple job the pay scale recommend goes up to a staggering $5,223. If nothing else, it's certainly an incentive to be bilingual. It is also an indication of just how much the cost of this nothing-more-than-emotional issue is going to cost. Anyway, its supporters will surely be able to find the remedy from the surpluses that have been building up in the budgets each year…No matter whether you support Beijing or Taipei, the language must be Mandarin. To say Cantonese should be official is like saying that the Yorkshire dialect should be the language of England, the Kentucky drawl the language of America or Breton the language of France. This report should be marked one out of ten. Try again.[144]

The City District Officer of Central, Ng Chak-Lam also observed that the movement had waned: 'Some heat has apparently been taken out of this issue, and I doubt if it is still worthwhile to compile a weekly report'.[145] Jack So, the City District Officer of Kwun Tong

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[143] HKRS 285-1-1, 'Childish', *South China Morning Post*, 6 October 1970.
[144] HKRS 285-1-1, 'One out of 10, Try Again', *China Mail*, 2 March 1971.
[145] 'Weekly Progress Report: Chinese as Official Language', memo from C.D.O. (Central) to C.D.C. (Hong Kong), 23 November 1970, p. 2.

pointed out that ‘people in the district are no longer interested in the issue’. As a result, his staffs were ‘unable to collect any prompted comments of significance’.[146] In a meeting of the Kowloon City District Council in December 1970, most City District Officers reported that there was no special activity launched by the student activists in the past two weeks.[147] As the government’s response was well received by the public. Student activities seemed to have died down. People who joined the campaign because of pragmatism gradually showed less interest to the campaign. By the end of March in 1971, the heat of the language campaign has gone. The Deputy Secretary of Home Affairs, F.K. Li therefore ordered that the bi-weekly returns made by the City District Officers were no longer required and could be discontinued.[148]

Conclusion

The language movement shows that a reformist colonial administration was responsive to shifting popular sentiments. In response to a coalition demanding legal status of Chinese language, the colonial government set up the Chinese Language Committee to investigate the issue. To help the bureaucrats to better understand the changing public opinions, City District Officers produced *Town Talk* every week, which was disseminated to high ranked policy makers. Besides, they also gathered diverse views of different social classes and age groups on a weekly basis on behalf of the Committee. The colonial government accepted the Committee’s recommendations, and understood the importance of respecting and responding to public opinions. Simultaneous translation was provided in Urban and Legislative Councils

[146] HKRS 1443-1-13, ‘Chinese as an Official Language, Weekly Progress Report 16.12.70-22.12.70’, memo from C.D.O. (Kwun Tong) to C.D.C.(Kowloon), 22 December 1970.
[147] HKRS 455-4-4, Extracted from the minutes of C.D.C.(Kowloon)’s meeting with Kowloon C.D.O.s, 30 December 1970.
[148] HKRS 1443-1-13, ‘Use of Chinese in Official Business’, memo from D.S.H.A. to all C.D.O.s, 31 March 1971.

meetings. Interpretators were recruited and trained. In 1974, Chinese language finally gained the official status.

As the Legislative Councillor, Hilton Cheong-Leen had said during the second reading of the Official Languages Bill, 'In the years to come, the Official Languages Bill would be seen to have done much to reaffirm the cultural dignity and pride of the Chinese residents of Hong Kong.'[149] In hindsight, the later generations attributed the pursuit of the equality and the promotion of Chinese culture as the main cause of the movement. Archival evidence shows that the language movement was far from monolithic with a fixed agenda. In no way was the movement 'non-ideological'. The quests for political self-determination, cultural nationalism, racial equality, career prospects, social status and even more convenience in every day's life were all equally important in driving the movement. Ideological and instrumental concerns intertwined.

A distinctive Hong Kong identity, which was built upon the differences between the colony and the mainland China, had not taken full shape in the early 1970s. Activists consistently appealed to both cultural and political nationalism to justify their resistance to the colonial government's language policy. Although language activists and movement supporters often only identified themselves as Chinese culturally and rarely made direct associations with the Chinese Communist regime, optimism towards Hong Kong's return to China and the future development of the PRC was expressed. In essence, although the aim of the language movement was to introduce language reforms in administration, legislation and education in Hong Kong, the campaign was inseparable from Chinese nationalism.

[149] Hong Kong Government Printer, *Hong Kong Legislative Council, Official Report of Proceedings* (Hong Kong, February 1974), pp. 454-5.

The language movement demonstrated that Hong Kong had many political cultures. The young generation, which was often portrayed by scholars as politically active, was far more divided. University students and elites, who were both ideologically and instrumentally motivated, engaged in social movements vigorously. They were critical of the colonial administration and politically conscious. They also perceived informal political engagement as their rights and appropriate means to express their grievances. The secondary students, however, held a more cautious attitude towards political activism. The middle-aged and elderly groups were relatively indifferent to politics. Many of them joined the movement solely due to instrumental concerns. In general, the upper and middle classes showed concern towards the language issue. They however, displayed contempt towards informal political activities and considered them ‘radical’. Many were reluctant to participate in the movement. The working class and grassroots groups were predominantly indifferent. Some expressed concerns over political activism due to their fear towards officialdom and political instability.

The passage of the Official Languages Bill removed the language barrier between the bureaucracy and the public, and increased the stake of the Chinese population of Hong Kong in politics. More Chinese speaking people could now serve the government. These changes paved the way for increased political activism and a more open political culture in the mid and late 1970s. These changes are discussed next.

III. The Anti-Corruption Movement

By the 1960s, bureaucratic corruption was systematically operating in various governmental departments, and for the colonial government, it aroused from Chinese culture, built on social 'relationships' instead of 'laws and regulations', exacerbated by language barrier between the colonial administration and various Chinese communities.[1] After the 1966 Star Ferry riots and the 1967 riots, the colonial state increasingly responded to popular demands in order to enhance legitimacy and close the 'communication gap' between itself and the Chinese communities. As Chapter 2 has demonstrated, the language policy was perceived as a pre-requisite for improved colonial rule. Another major reform was the formation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1974, 'one of the most important developments in Hong Kong since 1945'.[2] The ICAC 'generated invaluable political dividends for British rule', enhancing the credibility of the colonial state.[3] It symbolized the emergence of a 'local political culture', creating an impression that Hong Kong was more civilized than other Asian countries, including China, where corruption remained entrenched.[4]

The ICAC has become a subject of recent revisionism, which had placed stress on incremental shifts, rather than changes brought about by the creation of the ICAC. Mark Hampton has explored British legal and political culture, how it adapted and transmitted to the context of Hong Kong.[5] Observing the transforming anti-corruption measures from the

[1] Ray Yep, *靜默革命:香港廉政百年共業* (*Silent Revolution: 100 Years of Development of Hong Kong in Anti-Corruption*), (Hong Kong, 2014), pp. 7-8..
[2] Ray Yep, 'The Crusade against Corruption in Hong Kong in the 1970s: Governor MacLehose as a Zealous Reformer or Reluctant Hero?', *China Information* 27:2 (2013), p. 198.
[3] Goodstadt, *Uneasy Partner*, p. 156; also quoted in Carroll, *A Concise History*, p. 175.
[4] Tsang, *A Modern History,* p. 276.
[5] Mark Hampton, 'British Legal Culture and Colonial Governance: The Attack on Corruption in Hong Kong, 1968-1974', *Britain and the World*, 5:2 (2012), p. 239.

Prevention of Bribery Ordinance 1968 to the setting up of the ICAC, he argued that the implementation of anti-corruption measures in colonial Hong Kong was due to the incompatibility between political corruption and 'British ideas of good government'.[6] British legal norms, in particular, the Fugitive Offenders Act, however served as an obstacle to eradicate corruption in Hong Kong, as will be detailed later.[7] Ray Yep has emphasized decades of cumulative efforts made by Governors ruling before Murray MacLehose, including Robert Brown Black and David Trench. Reforms pushed by these former Governors in the context of escalating tensions between Hong Kong community and London in the 1960s and 1970s, such as the passage of the Prevention of Bribery Bill in 1970, paved the way for the setting up of the ICAC.[8] Lam Wai-man has provided a brief account of student-led anti-corruption movement after the escape of Peter Godber, the Deputy District Police Commander of Kowloon, in 1973.[9] In June, Godber was put on the watch list after evidence indicating that he possessed a huge amount of unexplained wealth. His disappearance in Hong Kong resulted in public criticisms. Students subsequently initiated an anti-corruption movement. Lam examined how students mobilized the public. She pointed out that the campaign received 'extensive' publicity and the scale of participation was 'considerable'.[10] It demonstrated the 'political sophistication of the young political forces'.[11]

These scholars have not considered fully how anti-corruption movements facilitated the formation of the ICAC and how general political culture was affected by the formation of the ICAC. Although Hampton asserted that the setting up of the ICAC 'was the culmination of anti-corruption campaigns emerging from Hong Kong's Chinese grassroots during a period

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[6] Ibid., p. 224; Mark Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-97* (Manchester, 2015), pp. 145-59.
[7] Hampton, 'British Legal Culture', p. 224.
[8] Yep, 'The Crusade against Corruption', pp. 197-221.
[9] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, pp. 156-63.
[10] Ibid., pp. 161-2.
[11] Ibid., p. 163.

of political crisis', he did not examine the public discourse of anti-corruption closely.[12] He researched the roles of Elsie Elliott and Alan Ellis but did not detail the networks of these activists. Yep focused on how changing dynamics between the British government and the colonial government led to anti-corruption reforms in 1974. He only noted 'growing local frustrations' among the Chinese communities.[13] Lam failed to analyse non-student-led anti-corruption movements, and relied on published sources, such as student magazines and newspapers. She also failed to elaborate relations between these student movements and the implementation of new anti-corruption measures. We have a fragmentary understanding of the anti-corruption movement, which operated by and large, initiated by a newspaper, student activists and individual campaigners, and supported by the wider public.

Using under-exploited archival evidence on corruption from the National Archives in London and the Public Record Office in Hong Kong, complemented by Elsie Elliott's manuscripts held at the Baptist University Library, Hong Kong, this chapter provides the first comprehensive study of anti-corruption social movements. This analysis shows that anti-corruption reforms were implemented after the emergence of various social movements, suggesting that the legislative and institutional changes were responses to shifting public sentiments, and state records show that the colonial administration was actively investigating changing popular opinions. The surviving data is fragmentary but supports the overall thesis that shifting public opinions influenced policy making.

The chapter divides into the following sections. The first investigates various anti-corruption campaigns, including the *China Mail*'s opinion poll campaign, the student-led anti-corruption

[12] Hampton, 'British Legal Culture', p. 238.
[13] Yep, 'The Crusade against Corruption', p. 205.

movements and campaigns started by individuals, notably Elsie Elliot, James Johnson and Alan Ellis. It examines the connections between these campaigns and activists, the strategies they employed to mobilize the mass and the shifting popular sentiments towards corruption. The second analyses confidential correspondences between Hong Kong and London to reveal the relationship between social movements and policy formulation, explaining why activism led to the formation of the ICAC instead of the appointment of an external inquiry in 1974. The third studies the public reactions towards the Commission throughout the 1970s and how political culture in Hong Kong shifted due to its activities.

Increased Press Coverage and Shifted Public Sentiments

Serious corruption existed in Hong Kong in different governmental departments since the post-war period. Taking the Commerce and Industry Department as an example, it was commonly known that officers welcomed gifts at Chinese seasonal festivals and businessmen viewed this as 'an accepted practice'.[14] During the Korean War, the embargo imposed by the United States on China created opportunities for corruption. Many officials actively assisted big companies to import and export a large quantity of 'strategic goods' to the mainland.[15] These corrupt inspectors were mainly expatriates, notably Portuguese and Eurasians.[16] By 1962, a report by the Anti-Corruption Branch of Hong Kong police estimated that 90 per cent to 95 per cent of the Inspectorate (about 200 officers) were or had been corrupt.[17] Prior to the 1970s, measures to prosecute corruption were insufficient and ineffective. The Misdemeanours Punishments Ordinance enacted in 1898 was the first corruption-related

[14] HKRS 163-1-2838, 'Corruption in Preventive Service: Commerce & Industry Department', enclosed in memo from H. W. E. Heath, Commissioner of Police to Colonial Secretary, 27 July 1962, p. 2.
[15] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid., p. 19

legislation. Any public servant who received bribe or person who offered bribes was liable to two-year of imprisonment and a fine not exceeding $500. Nonetheless, a department which dealt with corruption specifically did not emerge until 1948 when the Anti-Corruption and Narcotics Branch was formed. In 1948, the Prevention of Corruption Ordinance was enacted, outlining that when an accused person who was in possession of pecuniary resources disproportionate to his source of income but failed to explain the wealth, magistrates would take this into consideration and accept this as the evidence of corruption.[18] However, corruption investigations were still carried out by the police force, which was most notoriously known for corrupt practices. In spite of the introduction of Prevention of Bribery Ordinance in 1970, which outlined that officials were liable to dismissal if they were unable to provide a satisfactory account to explain why they were living beyond their salaries, bureaucratic corruption continued to exist. For example, people paid the License Unit of the Transport Department an illegal fee of $200 as 'commission' or 'tea money' during the process of application in order to obtain a taxi license without a garage paper. Similar collection of 'water', 'tea money', 'black money', 'ghost money' or 'fix up fee' could be found in numerous other departments, such as the Public Works Department and the Resettlement Department.[19]

By 1970, scandals of corruption within the police force were widespread, from police officers collecting 'protection fees' from gamblers and triads, to them receiving promotion fees within the Police Department. The public was dissatisfied with the police force. As Elsie Elliott had pointed out, 'this deep mistrust of the existing machinery is colony-wide' in the

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[18] Yep, *靜默革命:香港廉政百年共業*, p. 197.
[19] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Corruption in the Government', *Chinese Press Review*, no. 218, 8-14 March 1973.

early 1970s.[20] Discussions of corruption increased during the enactment of the Prevention of Bribery Bill. *Town Talk* made the following observation:

> This, again, is a subject which has attracted widespread attention. There seems no doubt that the consensus of opinion among a wide variety of people is that the proposed measures seem likely to be more effective than the existing legislation, though some people wondered whether they would be really effective against big racketeers.[21]

Most people believed that the Anti-Corruption Branch should be detached from the police force:

> The most widespread comment relates to the fact that the Anti-Corruption Branch of the police force will continue to be responsible for taking action against alleged offenders. People just do not seem to think that the Anti-Corruption Branch can give the legislation the full effect that government, and the public desire.[22]

By November 1969, 'the most widespread comment continued to be the effect that the Anti-Corruption Branch should not locate in the police but independent'.[23] The Bill also increased press coverage of corruption. Many newspapers criticized the colonial administration's attitude to corruption. *Hong Kong Standard* regarded corruption in the colony as 'the way of life in Hong Kong' and a 'social cancer', which was 'too deep rooted to be up-rooted and too rewarding to be stamped out'. The 'laissez-faire devil-may-care attitude' and the current 'permissive system' were blamed for the widespread of corruption.[24] *China Mail* even

[20] MSS.13 7-6, letter from Elsie Elliott to Murray MacLehose, 29 March 1972.
[21] HKRS 286-1-8, 'Prevention of Bribery Bill', *Town Talk*, 31 July 1969, p. 1.
[22] Ibid.
[23] HKRS 286-1-9, 'Prevention of Bribery Bill', *Town Talk*, 5 November 1970, p. 1.
[24] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Is Corruption A Way of Life?', *Hong Kong Standard*, 8 February 1973.

asserted that one ‘would have to be deaf, dumb and blind not to realise corruption is rampant in Hong Kong’.[25] The colonial state was increasingly criticized for its ‘ostrich-like attitude’ towards corruption.[26] Chinese press, such as *Kung Sheung Daily News*, *Kung Sheung Evening News* and *Hong Kong Times* similarly complained that past records suggested that the colonial government’s attempts to eradicate corruption were inefficient. Instead of catching ‘tigers’, only ‘small fry’ was caught.[27] The escalation of popular discontent could be observed by Tom Pendry, the Labour MP , who found ‘a great deal of anti-British feeling’ in the colony when he visited Hong Kong in 1973.[28]

The situation was made worse in 1973, when Peter Godber, the former Chief Police Superintendent was able to flee to the United Kingdom in June although he was under investigation and failed to explain his wealth of $4.3 million. Within two months, another Police Superintendent Ernest Hunt was charged due to corruption. These episodes led to increased public concern over police corruption. Anti-corruption campaigns were initiated by journalists, student organizations and individual activists. The press started calling for the separation of the Anti-Corruption Branch from the police force. *Sing Tao Man Pao* and *Hong Kong Standard* both reported that majority of people believed that the branch should be independent.[29] By October 1973, *South China Morning Post* recorded how social attitudes were changing:

> From silent, resentful tolerance of corruption and big boys who get away with it, the mood of the people has changed to an indignant and censorious outcry against both

[25] HKRS 70-6-339-1, ‘What You Think About Corruption’, *China Mail*, 26 March 1973.
[26] HKRS 70-6-339-1, Rodney Tasker, ‘Ostriches Ignore Corruption’, *China Mail*, 13 November 1973.
[27] ‘Corruption in the Government’, *Chinese Press Review*.
[28] HKRS 70-6-340-2, ‘Extract from the Debate on the Address of the House of Commons on Wednesday, 31 October 1973’, HKGIS, 8 November 1973, p. 4.
[29] HKRS 70-6-339-1, ‘議員及市民多認為反貪污部門獨立 工作效率提高’, *Sing Tao Man Pao*, 14 July 1973 and ‘Public Wants Separate Anti-Corruption Office’, *Hong Kong Standard*, 30 July 1973.

those who accept bribes and the administration who allows them to abuse the norms of society with such profligacy and contumely.[30]

Eradicating corruption was declared 'the unanimous demand of all citizens in Hong Kong'.[31] As the next section reveals this shift in public sentiments had numerous components, which need to be analysed separately.

Political Activism

a) China Mail Campaign

China Mail started protesting against corruption in 1970, before the escape of Peter Godber. The circulation figure of *China Mail* was approximately 21,300 copies in 1970. With an estimated readership of 76,000 in 1971, it was the 'most widely-read afternoon English language newspaper in Hong Kong'.[32] Its audience comprised young people (30,000 aged between 20-34) and educated readers. The majority were bilingual (58,000), students (32,000), professional (16,000) and clerical (11,000).[33] 71 per cent (54,000) of its readers were male. Its campaign called for the intervention of the Scotland Yard, to set up an independent public inquiry into corruption. The newspaper disclosed the seriousness of corruption within the bureaucracy. Citizens' experiences of being exploited by the police were regularly published. Practical and ideological concerns reinforced each other. Readers engaged for instrumental reasons: 'I work in the off-course gambling organization. I can say that if we do not pay, there is no chance of doing business.'[34] Social injustice was a motivator:

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[30] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Corruption: Beware of Falling Overboard', *South China Morning Post*, 12 October 1973.
[31] HKRS 70-6-339-1, '應擴大反貪污權力', *Kung Sheung Evening News*, 12 October 1973.
[32] HKRS 70-7-76-2, 'Mail Memo', *China Mail*, 30 August 1972.
[33] Ibid.
[34] 'What You Think About Corruption'.

> Corruption in Hong Kong has become unofficially legalized. I feel that corruption is inseparable from the social structure and its judiciary system…. What's more, I wonder if you have heard of the Rent Collectors. They make more money than the Governor.[35]

There was sympathy for the exploited poor:

> I saw a police constable asking an old newspaper seller for laisee (red pockets) recently.…The old man, who looks weak and poor, sells only a few papers in front of a café in Matauwei Road. I do not think he can support himself. I did not know how much he had given the PC. But I wonder how much he could pay.[36]

To enhance the credibility of its claims and appeal for public support, *China Mail* published first-hand accounts of policemen:

> I am just an ordinary policeman. I have been working in the force for over fifteen years but I must say I have achieved nothing. I only passed my promotion exam last year. I saw in the *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* that your newspaper has started an anti-corruption campaign so I would like to take this chance to speak out my grievances. The outsiders' belief is right that there is corruption in the police force. But do you know that senior officers are more corrupt? They squeeze money from their subordinates…. You can never guess how much a detective sergeant Class I had to give his superior. Now I tell you, it was about $100,000. In every division, there were three to seven chief detectives. Yet, still there were people who were willing to pay such a large sum of money to get their job. Why? Do you know that a detective

[35] 'Richer Get Richer, Poor Get Poorer'.
[36] HKRS 415-2-1, 'PC Asked Seller for Laisee', *China Mail*, 9 February 1970.

> superintendent got more than $100,000 a month? He was very much better off than the Governor. Inside the force, there is only one promotion chance for everyone in a year. But if you want to become a detective constable, you have to pay $3,000-$5,000, and if a DPC wants to be promoted to a DSGT, he has to pay, according to the present system, $30,000 to $50,000. You will have to devote all your time in raising the money when you receive the order to go to the Police Training School for CID training. If you fail to get the required sum, your beautiful dreams of the future will be shattered.[37]

In March 1973, the newspaper escalated its campaign. It set up a hot-line for its readers so that they could report corrupt practices without providing their names and information. Opinion polls were also carried out to collect readers' views towards corruption and reforms, and replies were published, before being sent to the Governor, Murray MacLehose.

The campaign captured further elite attention and galvanized the young generation. The editor believed that the campaign had 'destroyed at least one myth about the Hong Kong', that people 'don't care about graft'. More than 800 replies were received by 26 March 1973, less than a month after the campaign began. These replies were perceived to be representative of public opinions, strengthening the claim that these voices should be listened by the colonial government: they were 'from all walks of life', including doctors, lawyers, housewives and even policemen.[38] And the number reached more than 1,000 by early April 1973.[39] The poll results in March suggested that the public had 'no confidence in the police, the fire services and of the government': 97 per cent of respondents believed there was corruption in the police force, 95 per cent argued that there was corrupt practices in the fire

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[37] 'What You Think About Corruption'.
[38] Ibid.
[39] 'Richer Get Richer, Poor Get Poorer'.

services; 94 per cent was convinced that there was corruption in the government. 95 per cent demanded an inquiry to be ordered, with 85 per cent hoping that inquiry would be in public. In terms of the appointment of the investigators, *China Mail* claimed that only approximately 16 per cent want a combination of Hong Kong and English investigators, 20 per cent believed that the inquiry should be carried out by local investigators. The majority (57 per cent) expressed their demands of having English investigations.[40]

The campaign attracted mixed responses. Some readers were pessimistic: 'I compliment you on your attempt to do something, but I fear that you will be beaten by the Establishment. Good luck and keep trying.'[41] Some readers believed that the investigation should be carried out by students instead of the Metropolitan Police.[42] Most published comments supported that idea that the Anti-Corruption Branch must be divorced from the police force.[43] 'Make it Independent' even became the headline on 6 June.[44] While the orientation of the press was supported by Sir Ivo Rigby, the Chief Justice of Hong Kong, some disagreed and argued that 'Hong Kong's affairs and legislation, and Hong Kong's problem should be solved by and in Hong Kong'. The 'Godber incident' should not 'be the precedent of Britain interfering in Hong Kong's domestic politics'.[45] P. C. Woo, the Unofficial Member of Executive and Legislative Councils similarly asserted that corruption in Hong Kong should be dealt with at a local government level by locals.[46]

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[40] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Corruption: You Don't Trust Police', *China Mail*, 12 March 1973.
[41] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Graft Prove: Keep It Up', *China Mail*, 20 March 1973.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'China Mail Opinion: Make It Independent', *China Mail*, 6 June 1973.
[45] HKRS 70-6-339-1, '香港人辦香港事', *Tin Tin Yat Po*, 25 September 1973.
[46] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Hong Kong Must Act on Its Own Over Graft', *Hong Kong Standard*, 24 September 1973.

China Mail's campaign was influential and important because it provided an independent source of information for MPs in London and raised awareness about corruption in Hong Kong. The campaign gained good publicity in Britain and James Johnson, for example praised the *Mail*'s efforts: 'This kind of thing (corruption) concerns me a great deal. The *China Mail* is doing a fine job in campaigning corruption. I think an official inquiry is the only way to deal with it.'[47] Johnson submitted a parliamentary question to the Foreign Secretary using similar wordings that were found in *China Mail*: 'If he is aware of the widespread anxiety amongst the public in Hong Kong regarding corruption in the police force, fire services and government departments, and if he will institute an inquiry?'[48] On 28 March, Johnson and a group of retired Hong Kong civil servants started a campaign in London to pressurize the Whitehall to set up an inquiry into allegations of corruption within Hong Kong's civil service. The *China Mail* campaign was also reported by *The Guardian.* [49] In April, Johnson, along with two other Labour MPs, Kenneth Marks and Daniel Jones, announced their plans to visit the colony to investigate corruption through *China Mail.*[50]

On 20 September 1973, *China Mail* published a petition to the Governor. The paper mentioned the 1967 riots and implied that political stability would be affected if corruption was not addressed in new ways. The Godber incident made this campaign timely and gave it a strong resonance:

> …Hong Kong today is living through its great crisis of confidence since the bloody days and nights of 1967…. This atmosphere of cynicism and distrust, if allowed to continue, will destroy the confidence of Hong Kong to tackle the very real problem

[47] HKRS 70-6-339-1, John Sparey and Rodney Tasker, 'Question in Parliament: Hong Kong Corruption, MP Seeks Probe', *China Mail*, 23 March 1973.
[48] Ibid.
[49] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'MP alleges Hong Kong Police Graft', *The Guardian*, 28 March 1973.
[50] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'MPs to Prove Corruption', *China Mail*, 11 April 1973.

> that face the colony in an increasing competitive world.…Today, because of Peter Godber, the standing and reputation of Hong Kong police –unjustly-perhaps– has never been lower in public esteem. The one bad apple, it is argued, must have polluted half the barrel.[51]

The newspaper then recommended institutional reforms and the appointment of Jack Cater, the Secretary of Home Affairs to investigate corruption:

> The only organization empowered to separate truth from rumour in these allegations is the Anti-Corruption Branch. And that, because it is controlled by the police, is seen by the public– again unjustly perhaps– as a prejudiced court. So it is essential in the interests of justice and the wellbeing of Hong Kong that the Anti-Corruption Branch should be re-established in a way that will inspire total confidence in its work. The first move must be the appointment at its head of a man of unimpeachable integrity and wide experience of life in Hong Kong. A man who is known and trusted by the public and who is impervious to intimidation. Does such a man exist in Hong Kong today? It is now being widely suggested that there does. He is Mr. Jack Cater.[52]

The *China Mail* campaign was however limited as it was restricted to its elite bilingual audience, and lasted for a relatively short period of time, from 1973 to mid-1974. The campaign continued to pay attention to corruption after the ICAC was formed in February 1974. For example, in March, the paper criticized that some people could not reach ICAC through its hot line.[53] The paper also reported the changing relationship between the ICAC

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[51] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'A Letter to the Governor', *China Mail*, 20 September 1973.
[52] Ibid.
[53] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'Corruption Hotline a Dead End', *China Mail*, 19 March 1974.

and the police force.[54] Nonetheless, the campaign ended in August 1974 due to the closure of the newspaper itself. The paper had been 'losing money for some time' despite 'changes of format and editorial staff' in 1973.[55] The campaign was still significant. It demonstrated increased engagement in the political discourse among the young generation and elites, who paid close attention to the issue of corruption. The campaign was also influential as it informed both the MPs in London and other press in Hong Kong. For example, the interview of Charles Sutcliffe, the Commissioner of Police with *China Mail* was 'picked up' by 'a number of Chinese newspapers'.[56]

Influenced by newspaper campaigning led by *China Mail*, the public was mobilized, and it became evident that most people who engaged in the debate regarding anti-corruption measures favoured the separation of the Anti-Corruption Branch from the police. According to *Town Talk*, there were 'reports from four district on public feelings on the question of whether the Anti-Corruption Branch should be separated from the Police, all of which were in favour of such (a) move'.[57] From her contacts with the public, Helen Lai, the Yau Mai Tei City District Officer, asserted that the majority of the population believed that the creation of an independent establishment was necessary: 'The general public thinks that there should be some kind of a watch-dog over the entire government and perhaps especially over the police'.[58]

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[54] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'Opinion: An Ugly Ultimatum', *China Mail*, 31 May 1974; 'Opinion: The Only Answer to Blackmail', *China Mail*, 6 June 1974.
[55] FCO 40/549, 'Closure of the China Mail', telegram from D. L. S. Coombe to K. Chesterman, 23 August 1974.
[56] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Corruption in the Government', *Chinese Press Review*, no. 281, 8-14 March 1973.
[57] HKRS 286-1-11, 'Corruption and Anti-Corruption', *Town Talk*, 19 July 1973, p. 2.
[58] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Public Wants Separate Anti-Corruption Office', *Hong Kong Standard*, 30 July 1973.

b) Student Movements

Students were discontent over the way the colonial government handled corruption. Chinese University of Hong Kong students for example considered the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance enacted in 1970 'unacceptable', as it had 'apparently violate(d) certain rights customarily granted people under British rule'. They were the sceptical about the notion that evidence from unknown sources could be used and the law's potential negative impacts on innocent people:

> …even if anonymous evidence can be considered valid in a court of law – a questionable item in itself, it is dubious rights of the government to deprive a man of his inalienable innocence only to protect one who may be a misinformer…. when the definition of corruption is so broad as to include, for example, acceptance of entertainment from a business associate likely to want to win a favour. The possibility does exist that an innocent man may have all his family's accounts investigated, perhaps because of a recent dinner party. Here the law is so broad that citizens are totally dependent on the intelligence and integrity of the court's individual interpretation of justice, and have little guaranteed protection under the law. [59]

Most importantly, the students believed that the Anti-Corruption Branch should be separated from the police force: 'For one thing, the police, primary target of graft accusations are still the authority used to investigate corruption cases. If so, they will not be so dependably vigilant against their self-interests'.[60]

[59] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, 'The Anti-Graft Bill', *CU Student*, 2:8, 15 November 1970.
[60] Ibid.

The Godber case in particular captured the attention of university students. In the summer of 1973, the HKFS, along with about 1,200 post-secondary students started a signature campaign to pursue Godber's extradition. Apart from uprooting the problem of corruption in the colony, there were a number of ideological factors which mobilized students to engage in the movement. The pursuit of social justice was one. Many university students aimed at exposing the misdeeds of the colonial state and establishing a just social system.[61] Students presented the anti-corruption movement as endorsed by Hong Kong people:

> Corruption is serious in various departments in the colonial government, which threatened the lives of four million citizens in Hong Kong. We promote the anti-corruption movement based on the interest of the entire society. The aim was to request the colonial government to face the problem of corruption. Therefore, the movement is just, and is the unanimous will of all residents in Hong Kong.[62]

Students were anti-colonial in outlook. For example, students at the Chinese University attributed the problem of corruption to the unjust nature of colonialism:

> When we look at the Godber incident, we should not look at the surface of the problems but analyse why and how it happened, in order to bring out the 'new problem'. Understanding the nature of this event would deepen the understanding of our society: A society like this, with the system of colonialism, is a system designed for rulers.[63]

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[61] Hong Kong Federation of Students, *香港學生運動回顧* (Hong Kong, 1983), p. 78.
[62] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, *反貪污運動特刊: 中大學生會聲明* (*CU Student: Anti-Corruption Campaign Special Edition*), 25 October 1973.
[63] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, '香港政府不敢正視葛柏事件', *CU Student*, 5:4, 15 April 1973.

The HKFS also adopted an anti-colonial slogan: ‘Anti-Capitalism, Anti-Colonialism and Anti-Imperialism’.[64] Some participants even compared the movement to Sun Yat-sen’s revolution to overthrow the Qing Dynasty.[65] Others later joined the campaign as they believed the state had violated the freedom of speech. On 12 July, the colonial government announced the possibility of suing three local newspapers for ‘disclosing identity of the persons being investigated’. The Federation condemned this move as an ‘irritating measure of attempted suppression of the freedom of speech in the colony’, which they had to protect against.[66] These different ideologies added weight to students’ claim that institutional reforms were necessary to eradicate corruption in Hong Kong.

Despite different motives, most students believed that the escape of Godber demonstrated that senior officials were involved in corruption. In order to press for the extradition of Godber and the order of a public inquiry, they petitioned both the Prime Minister, Edward Heath and the opposition leader in the English Parliament, Harold Wilson. The HKFS expressed anger in response to the British government’s reluctance to extradite Godber:

> The general public in Hong Kong are indignant over the escape of Godber. It is no answer to the question ‘why isn’t Godber brought back to Hong Kong’ to say that ‘because the UK law says that he is not returnable under the UK law’. This may well be a good answer to the question ‘why should Godber be protected by the UK law?’ Is it because the UK endorses the conduct and behaviour of Godber? Is it because the UK considers herself to be under a moral obligation to protect Godber? Or is it

[64] *香港學生運動回顧*, p. 74.
[65] Ibid., p. 76.
[66] HKRS 70-6-339-1, ‘Civic Association Calls for Independent Anti-Corruption Branch’, *South China Morning Post*, 20 July 1973.

> because the UK government is minded to 'accord to the colony an imperial brush off'?[67]

Student representatives demanded the British government amend the Fugitive Offenders Act enacted in 1967, which outlined that an offence was only extraditable if it was also an offence in the British laws. Apart from petitioning, students also organized a signature campaign. The signature campaign portrayed the student-led anti-corruption movement as a mass movement and hence legitimated their demands of extraditing Godber. The campaign was later joined by twelve other student organizations and developed into the Thirteen Anti-Corruption Group in August 1973, including the 70's Biweekly Group.[68] The 70's Biweekly Group was known for its connections with left wing bodies in Britain. To strengthen the movement, student activists rallied for external support. In August 1973, the Group and local student bodies agreed to cooperate with six leftist students' and workers' unions in England, namely International Marxist Group, Fourth International, International Socialists, Labour Party Young Socialists, Social Labour League and Solidarity, to press for the extradition of Godber.[69]

To appeal for public support, the HKFS organized public forums and put up posters across the colony. The satirical poster portrayed Godber as a man who was 'podgy' because of 'high-ranking office and excellent living environment', with the hobby of 'collecting $500 notes'. It described him of having the speciality of being 'able to move in and out freely under supervision' due to his 'extraordinary friendship with world's big financial bosses'.[70]

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[67] FCO 40/453, Letter from Fung Tze Cheong, Acting President of the Hong Kong Federation of Student to Edward Heath, 17 August 1973.
[68] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, p. 159.
[69] FCO 40/453, 'Godber Case', telegram from Hugh Norman-Walker to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 24 August 1973.
[70] FCO 40/453, Poster enclosed in telegram from M. J. Macoun to Andrew Stuart, Hong Kong and Indian Ocean Department, 23 August 1973.

The Federation eventually collected 50,000 signatures.[71] The ineffectiveness of the existing ant-corruption measures also led student organizations to plan setting up an anti-corruption force of its own to 'fight corruption its own way'.[72] This could be interpreted as a radical plan to subvert the authority of the existing Anti-Corruption Branch. Students intended to equip the squad with 'spy-eye cameras' in order to collect evidence on corruption. However, instead of sending the evidence to the Anti-Corruption Branch, they would disclose their findings to the public through mass media.[73] Nonetheless, the plan was not executed, possibly due to a lack of funding. Compared to the *China Mail* campaign, the student anti-corruption signature campaign was of a much bigger scale, targeting supporters of all social classes and age groups. Rather than appealing merely to bilingual elites, posters and pamphlets printed in Chinese could be easily understood by the general public. Public forums were also organized to educate and mobilize the public.

Nonetheless, compared to the campaign of *China Mail*, the student movement's influence was confined to Hong Kong. According to *Town Talk*, it 'produced mixed reactions': 'Those in favour said that the campaign was more meaningful than Senkaku issue while others commented that the students had no right to display misleading posters as if Godber was already a convicted criminal'.[74] The adult members of the society were inclined to be pro-status quo and held a politically conservative attitude towards propaganda used by the students. They argued that the design of the posters 'damaged the image of the police to quite a large extent'. For example, area committee members believed that the colonial state 'should control the design of handbills and posters more strictly'. A headmaster also pointed out that

[71] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, p. 159.
[72] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Students to Form Anti-Graft Force', *South China Morning Post*, 30 October 1973.
[73] Ibid.
[74] HKRS 286-1-11, 'Continuing Interest on Corruption', *Town Talk*, 16 August 1973, p. 1.

the government was 'far too patient' in handling post-secondary school students.[75] The general public also 'did not believe the students efforts would bear fruits'.[76] Different responses were recorded towards the signature campaign in various districts. For instance, in Western District, 'the general public were generous in giving their signatures in support'.[77] Yet in Kwun Tong, 'many sensible people' which were of the middle-aged and elderly groups, including some kaifong leaders, teachers and headmasters, did not 'approve the signature drive' organized by the students and felt that 'the government was already trying its best to extradite Mr Godber back to the colony'.[78] In Mong Kok, many parents showed little interest to the signature campaign and expressed their hopes that students 'would not stir up any trouble regarding the issue'.[79] Political conservatism persisted among middle-aged and elderly groups in Hong Kong, before the formation of the ICAC.

Student organizations demonstrated. The HKFS held three 'Bring Godber Back' rallies, with the last one held in Morse Park, a venue which was not listed as an approved site by the colonial state. According to the Colonial Secretary, Hugh Norman-Walker, 'there has been some backing for the proposed demonstrations among students, especially the Hong Kong Federation of Students'.[80] However, the student demonstration failed to appeal to the general public. Norman-Walker anticipated that the demonstration would be poorly attended: 'We are nevertheless not expecting any mass support: the preliminary police estimate is that there may be up to 500 involved in the Victoria Park meeting.'[81] Although the meeting was 'better

[75] HKRS 413-1-6, 'Town Talk for the Week 29.8.73- 4.9.73', *Town Talk*, 4 September 1973, p. 1.
[76] 'Continuing Interest on Corruption', p. 1.
[77] HKRS 413-1-5, 'Town Talk for the Week Ending 20.8.73', *Town Talk*, 23 August 1973, p. 1.
[78] HKRS 413-1-6, 'Town Talk for the Week 8.8.71- 14.8.73', *Town Talk*, 16 August 1973, p. 1.
[79] HKRS 413-1-7, 'Town Talk for the Week 14.8.73 to 20.8.73', *Town Talk*, 23 August 1973, p. 2.
[80] FCO 40/453, 'Godber Case', telegram from Hugh Norman-Walker to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 24 August 1973.
[81] Ibid.

attended', the general atmosphere was 'unexciting'.[82]

According to *Town Talk*, sympathizers believed the rallies were 'held for a good cause'. Young leaders were praised for the 'sensible and orderly manner' they had when organizing the rally in Victoria Park. Only 'a few people' found the slogan 'Is it true that an anti-corruption rally is a crime whilst corruption itself is not a crime' appealing.[83] The general response was indifferent due to the absence of adequate publicity and people's reluctance to take part in any rallies.[84] Views towards the Morse Park demonstration were more 'divided'. While 'the overwhelming majority' considered students' interest in corruption 'a healthy sign', they believed that demonstrating was 'unreasonable'.[85] Many 'adult members' argued that students 'should have cooperated by holding rally where it was permitted'.[86] Well-educated people within the upper and middle classes, such as teachers and white-collared workers, 'strongly criticized the students who insisted in organizing the anti-Godber rally at Morse Park'.[87] The 'older people' were 'critical of the organizers' as they worried that holding a mass gathering close to former resettlement estates might spark off riots. They also expressed concerns over the possibility that 'young people had become so radical and restless' and might 'get out of hand', which could be 'a threat to the social stability and good order of Hong Kong'.[88] A few contacts even stated that the government should 'consider taking action against the organizers for holding an illegal rally'.[89]

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[82] FCO 40/453, 'Godber Case', telegram from Hugh Norman-Walker to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 28 August 1973.
[83] HKRS 286-1-11, Anti-Corruption Rally', *Town Talk*, 6 September 1973, p.1.
[84] HKRS 286-1-11, 'Government's Determination to Fight Corruption Welcomed', *Town Talk*, 20 September 1973, p. 1.
[85] Anti-Corruption Rally', *Town Talk*, 6 September 1973, p. 1.
[86] HKRS 286-1-11, 'Corruption Issues Kept Alive by Rally Summonses', *Town Talk*, 13 September 1973, p. 1.
[87] 'Town Talk for the Week 29.8.73- 4.9.73', p. 1.
[88] 'Anti-Godber Rally', *Town Talk*, 6 September 1973, p. 1.
[89] Ibid., p. 1.

Different age groups had contrasting outlooks. The middle-aged and elderly groups evidently valued political stability. The young generation, by contrast, endorsed political activism. In general, they 'approved of the rally' and considered that to be 'the most popular way' to 'express themselves'. Some university students even pointed out that Morse Park should be included in the list of approved mass rally sites as the site near Hung Hom Ferry Pier was 'no longer usable'.[90]

The signature campaign was received more positively. The older generation viewed political activism 'with dislike and concern', worried that 'social order and discipline will inevitably be undermined'. The upper class in general considered political engagement 'undignified and unbecoming of their status'.[91] As a respondent pointed out most people would not engage in social movements; but they 'render(ed) their moral support to the students in their rally against corruption'.[92] The student movement gradually waned in late 1973.

c) Individual Campaigners

Elsie Elliott, who had been anti-corruption pioneering crusader in Hong Kong since the 1960s, continued her campaign in the 1970s. Elliott was known as 'one of the colony's longest campaigners against corruption'.[93] As an Urban Councillor, she started pursuing the establishment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry from the 1960s. She believed the police force was corrupt and the existing anti-corruption devices were ineffectual. From time to time, she wrote to Governors, MPs and officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to

[90] HKRS 286-1-11, 'Anti-Godber Rally', *Town Talk*, 30 August 1973, p. 1.
[91] HKRS 394-26-12, '1975 in Retrospect: Part II', *MOOD*, 8 January 1976, p. 2.
[92] HKRS 413-1-4, 'Town Talk for the Week Ending 18.8.73', *Town Talk*, 20 September 1973, p. 1.
[93] HKRS 70-6-339-1, Jackie Leishman, 'Colony to Have Hive of Corruption Watchdogs', *The Guardian*, 11 October 1973.

campaign against corruption in different sectors and press for an institutional change. She even visited London in 1966, but failed to convince the Labour government to set up a Royal Commission to report on the problem. Elliott was liable to 'publish anything she received'.[94] She had good connections with a number of newspapers, including the *China Mail*, the *Hong Kong Standard*, the *South China Morning Post* and the *Star*, and requested them to investigate cases.[95] Her demands were too radical for politicians in London in the 1960s. For instance, Nigel Fisher, an MP in the House of Commons described Elliott as 'a very irrational person of somewhat extreme views' despite the fact that there was 'no doubt some corruption does exist in Hong Kong.'[96]

Elliott's strategy was to portray herself as representative of ordinary Chinese citizens whose voices were unheard. For example, in a petition to MacLehose, she argued that 'public opinion is growing against corruption as more young people are educated'.[97] In 1973, she tactically exploited the Godber incident and employed the rhetoric of 'law and order' to justify her cause:

> As to Godber, he has bought a lot of suffering to a lot of Chinese families, and should not be allowed to use his privilege position as an Englishman to get away with it. The Chinese people cannot be expected to respect law and order if Godber is allowed to escape.[98]

[94] FCO 40/544, Letter from A. C. Stuart to Mr. Rushford, 21 January 1974.
[95] MSS. 13 6-12, for example, Elliott admitted that she had been trying to get *China Mail* to investigate the case of forged cheque, in which a woman was blackmailed by a policeman, Lau Hong Leung and a triad member, letter from Elsie Elliott to Speary, 9 March 1973.
[96] FCO 40/120, Letter from Nigel Fisher (MP) to Malcolm Shepherd, Commonwealth Office, 22 April 1968.
[97] MSS.13 7-6, letter from Elsie Elliott to Murray MacLehose, 10 March 1972.
[98] FCO 40/451, Letter from Elsie Elliott to Anthony Royle, 24 June 1973.

Similar rhetoric is found in her petitions and open letters: ‘One can only conclude that the injustices in the recent amnesty and the continual use of tainted witnesses against those under indictment, as well as the failure of all channels of communication between the upper and lower ranks, pose a threat to public law and order.’[99] She also implied that turmoil would break out if the government failed to strengthen anti-corruption measures and extradite Godber: ‘(I) am forced to the conclusion that governments understand only revolution, rioting, strikes and disturbances: until these occur, they conveniently shut their eyes: the more’s the pity.’[100] As a public figure, her letters received attention and policy makers replied to her.

In contrast to the *China Mail*’s campaign, Elliott’s movement was supported by ordinary people whose grievances could not be addressed through formal political channels. A citizen for example, expressed his respect to Elliott in his letter:

> We should thank you for the good and valuable service you have rendered to the public of Hong Kong. I personally admire your courage, justice and untiring effort to fight for right and justice for the welfare of the public and I can earnestly say you are the best Urban Councillor I have ever known.[101]

With widespread distrust in the police force, Elliott was a conduit for personal appeals for redress. As she noted: ‘people want to report crime, and often report it to me’.[102] Hong Kong Chinese sent their complaints to Elliott, who forwarded their letters to high ranked civil

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[99] FCO 40/1022, Elsie Elliott, ‘Open Letter to the Hong Kong Government and Interested British MPs’, (date not specified) 1978.
[100] FCO 40/544, Letter from Elsie Elliott to Mr Stewart, 7 January 1974.
[101] MSS.13 6-11, Letter from ‘A Resident’ to Elsie Elliott, 6 November 1971.
[102] MSS.13 6-11, Letter from Elsie Elliott to Charles Sutcliffe, 31 March 1972.

servants and relevant departments in the colonial state and the London government. For fear of victimization, many of these complaints were anonymous.[103] This indicates that although fear towards officialdom continued to exist among the grassroots groups, they would report to trust-worthy civil servants when their interests were at stake: they were less passive.

As noted above, Elliott's personal network enabled her to take this campaign outside the colony, and she wanted to use this campaign to open wide ranging critique of colonial governance. As such, she maintained a good relationship with a number of MPs. When she was being accused of having given $5,000 to encourage demonstrators to take part in Star Ferry riots in 1966, she was as well supported by House of Lords from the Opposition Deputy Leader, Lord Shepherd and his Labour party colleague, Lord Brockway, who pleaded to clear her name. In the 1970s, she worked particularly close with James Johnson to press for an anti-corruption institutional change and the introduction of limited democracy in Hong Kong. She often passed information in Hong Kong to Johnson through letters.[104] Elliott and Johnson both believed that the fundamental problem causing corruption was absence of democracy in the colony:

> It is an appalling scandal that the government possess not one elected member, either in Legislative Council or at a higher level, to go on the Executive Council….it is impossible for the people to have their grievances deal with, or even considered adequately, unless there are some members who plea their cause and put their case in public in the Legislative Council.[105]

[103] FCO 40/120, Letter from 'A Supporter of Good Law and Order' to Elsie Elliott, 28 June 1968, enclosed in letter to Nigel Fisher, 5 July 1968.
[104] For example, MSS.13 6-12, letter from Elsie Elliott to James Johnson, 17 April 1974.
[105] HKRS 70-6-340-2, Extract from 'The Debate on the Address in the House of Commons on Wednesday, 31 October 1973', 8 November 1973, p. 4.

Johnson was a prominent figure in the campaign against corruption in Hong Kong. In 1967, he argued that the appointment of a Royal Commission of Enquiry was necessary to address corruption in the colony. He also proposed that members of the Commission should be led by 'a man of unquestioned integrity'. In other words, a person who was not 'directly connected with Hong Kong'. Members should include an MP from each of the three parties (Conservative, Labour and Liberal) and people with wide experience of working in the police, for example the Inspector General of Colonial Police.[106] From time to time, he pressed for changes during parliamentary discussions.[107] To allow Parliamentarians in London to better understand the situation in Hong Kong, he compared corruption and crimes in Hong Kong to Switzerland: 'Bodies, human beings, gold, narcotics and so on are smuggled between the colony and the mainland. It seems to be like an oriental Switzerland.'[108] Johnson also initiated meetings with the staff in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in order to urge the British government to strengthen anti-corruption measures in Hong Kong.[109] To wipe out corruption, he argued that the introduction of limited democracy in the colony was necessary.

As with press and student campaigns, Elliott's cause received more attention from the press and the public due to the escape of Godber. The *Star*, for example, published Elliott's lengthy editorials and comments about corruption in 1974.[110] *Star* also explicitly showed its endorsement to Elliott by suggesting that including Elliott as one of the Anti-Corruption Commission's four advisory committees was 'a step in the right direction', 'one of the most

[106] FCO 40/453, 'Call on Mr Amery by Mr James Johnson, MP, 3.00 pm', 9 August 1973, p. 2.
[107] FCO 40/451, Parliamentary Question, Written Answer, 28 March 1973, p. 339-40; HKRS 70/6/340/2, Extract from 'Debate on the Address in the House of Commons on Wednesday, 31 October 1973'.
[108] Ibid.
[109] FCO 40/453, Letter from R. B. Crowson to M. R. Guest, 8 August 1973.
[110] For example, 'As I See with Elsie Elliott', *Star*, 28 January 1974 and Elsie Elliott, 'I Want the Whole System Cracked', *Star*, 28 August 1974 etc.

welcome moves': she had in 'abundance what our official graft-fighters have yet to earn. And that is public trust…never has her honesty, integrity or sincerity been questioned. And those qualities are what our Anti-Corruption Commission vitally need.'[111] Apart from approaching local newspapers, Elliott shared corruption stories with newspapers in the United Kingdom. For example, in late 1973, she gave *The Guardian* information about corruption within the police force and explained how that 'amounted to a widespread system of alternate taxation'.[112]

As Hampton has noted, Elliott was in close contact with Alan Ellis, who was a former police officer in the colony. In 1963, Ellis was dismissed on the grounds of his temperamental unsuitability. He believed that his discharge was related to corruption and maladministration within the police force. Since then, he had petitioned the press and the British government to urge the investigation of the termination of his probationary appointment. In November 1973, when it was rumoured that there might be a plot against Elliott, Ellis wrote to Anthony Royle, the Under-Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He supported Elliott publicly, noting: 'She is a dear, courageous, sincere and sometimes dotty friend of mine. Dotty, I say, because in her relentless pursuit of truth and justice from the cancer of administration corruption, she does things which you and I might never at least without great self-thought do.'[113] Like Johnson and Elliott, Ellis supported the setting up of an externally-appointed Commission of Inquiry and was critical of the franchise of the Legislative Council. Royle had written to Ellis to reaffirm his decision not to intervene in his case in April 1972. As Royle did not consider a further inquiry was necessary: the action taken in respect of the case of

[111] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'What the Star Thinks: A Step in the Right Direction', *Star*, 25 February 1974.
[112] HKRS 70-6-339-1, Jackie Leisham, 'Colony to Hive Off Corruption Watchdog', *The Guardian*, 11 October 1973.
[113] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Anti-Elsie Plot Afoot, Says Former Policeman', *Hong Kong Standard*, 27 November 1973.

Ellis was proper and his claims were unsubstantiated. Despite Royle's earlier reply, Ellis continued writing to different newspapers to press for reforms. For example, he emphasized the seriousness of corruption in Hong Kong and shared his story of dismissal with *China Mail* and *The Guardian* to draw the attention of audience in Hong Kong and Britain to corruption in the colony.[114] He also wrote to politicians in the British government, including MPs Johnson and Enoch Powell, Anthony Royle and Andrew Stewart, claiming that his inquiry of 1963 had had many defects. In his letters, Ellis often invoked the danger of the deterioration of the principle of the rule of law: '…you will know that it is most undesirable for any civil servant, of whatever rank, to feel confident that he is above the rule of law and the system of public accountability upon which the constitution of this country relies.'[115] He similarly warned the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that if no stringent anti-corruption measures were introduced, riots may break out. He stated that:

> …unless the FCO comes up with a solution soon there may be quite peaceful demonstration which could develop into civil disturbances, all hinged on Godber. It is my opinion that the FCO may have days rather than weeks during which to find a solution and avoid possible disturbances.[116]

His campaign led the Hong Kong and Indian Ocean Department to request the Overseas Police Adviser to re-investigate his case in April 1973: 'In order to get rid of Mr Ellis, the minister said he would ask you to look through the papers'.[117] However, the Foreign Office concluded that 'the action taken in respect of Mr Ellis was not only proper but within the discretion of the Commissioner of Police in respect of probationary officer'. The allegations

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[114] FCO 40/451, 'Corruption in Hong Kong, B.C.C.', Letter from Alan Ellis to Anthony Royle, *China Mail*, 1 April 1973; HKRS 70/6/339/1, 'MP Alleges Hong Kong Police graft', *The Guardian*, 28 March 1973.
[115] 'Corruption in Hong Kong, B.C.C.', Ellis to Royle, p. 2.
[116] FCO 40/453, Letter from Alan Ellis to A. C. Stuart, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 20 August 1973.
[117] FCO 40/451, 'Mr Alan Ellis', telegram from R. B. Crowson to M. J. Macoun, 5 April 1973.

of maladministration and corruption of senior officers in the police force were therefore 'totally unsubstantiated'.[118] Ellis continued his campaign after April 1973: 'Mr Ellis has contacts in the press, and several newspapers have recently mentioned his campaign for such an enquiry'.[119] He wrote to Royle again to assert that 'an externally-appointed judicial inquiry is the best way to examine the matter (corruption) long term' even after the announcement of the formation of the ICAC.[120]

Many civic organizations and local leaders echoed individual campaigners and urged the colonial administration to implement legislative and institutional changes. Edmund Chow, the Secretary of the Civil Association, said he was 'shocked' that the report did not recommend an outright separation: 'This should have been his first recommendation'.[121] Wu Shing-sheun, the Chairman of the Hung Hom Kaifong Association. similarly voiced his concern: he was 'very disappointed' that the report did not suggest setting up of an independent Commission.[122] As *Town Talk* reported confidentially, 'virtually all our contacts expressed disappointment and dismay because there was no definite proposal to set up an independent anti-corruption organization'.[123]

Unlike the *China Mail* 's campaign and the student-led anti-corruption movement, the campaign initiated by these individual activists did not stop in 1974. In 1975, Elliott expressed her disappointment with ICAC's first year performance: 'The Commission is costing Hong Kong too much money and puts too few people in jail for too short a term'.[124]

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[118] FCO 40/451, 'Mr Alan Ellis-Ex-Probationary Inspector of Police, Hong Kong', telegram from M. J. Macoun to R. B. Crowson, 9 April 1973.
[119] FCO 40/453, letter from R. B. Crowson to M. R. Guest, 8 August 1973.
[120] FCO 40/457, letter from Alan Ellis to Anthony Royle, 7 December 1973.
[121] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'What the People of Hong Kong Have to Say', *China Mail*, 12 October 1973.
[122] What the People of Hong Kong Have to Say'.
[123] HKRS 286-1-11, 'Blair-Kerr Report', *Town Talk*, 18 October 1973, p. 1.
[124] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'Worth Every Dollar Spent', *South China Morning Post*, (date not specified) February 1975.

She continued to ask for a Royal Commission. Elliott's claim was supported by Urban Councillor, Tsin Sai-nin and a former police inspector, Alan Ellis.[125] She continued to write to newspapers or was interviewed by journalists, including those from the *South China Morning Post* and *Times*, taking these opportunities to raise ongoing concerns of corruption, and criticizing the ICAC. She called the ICAC 'little more than a cosmetic exercise' which only had arrested 'a lot of small fry, but none of the high-ups'.[126] She also argued that people who were 'less fortunate' could not afford lawyers nor had anyone to make their case known to public. Therefore, they were unlikely to be able to prove themselves innocent under the new anti-corruption legislation.[127] Elliott cooperated with Johnson after the formation of the ICAC. For instance, she wrote to him and to *Daily Express* in early 1975 to complain that 'the new so-called ''independent'' Commission Against Corruption was not independent'; noting that no charges could be laid without the permission of Attorney General's Office. Elliott's claim regarding malpractices in the Legal Department was forwarded to the Secretary of State by Johnson. Johnson also supported Elliott's campaign by making use of newspapers. For example, he appeared in several interviews on Independent Television and London Broadcasting in February 1975. After the police unrest in 1977, Elliott wrote an open letter to the Hong Kong government and British MPs to urge the formation of a Royal Commission: 'With deep-rooted corruption such as existed in Yau Ma Tei fruit market, it is most unlikely that the ICAC, even with the best intentions, has been able to get to the root of the matter by listening to tainted witness(es)'.

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[125] HKRS 70-6-339-2, 'Elsie's No.1 Aim: Beat Corruption! Move for Independent Probe Gains Support', *Star*, 24 January 1975.
[126] HKRS 376-8-23, 'Hong Kong Reformer Critical of Anti-Corruption Efforts', *South China Morning Post*, 30 December 1976.
[127] HKRS 70-6-344-1, Elsie Elliott, 'Poor Who Have to Prove Their Innocence', *South China Morning Post*, 27 August 1975.

Throughout the period Elliott, supported by her network of personal contacts in Hong Kong and London, argued that the current practices and amnesty 'posed a threat to law and public order'.[128] By the end of the 1970s, the campaign had however lost its earlier intensity. According to a *MOOD* report in 1977, there was 'little support' for Elliott's accusation that the state was an 'inhumane, oppressive administration' despite the existence of 'a certain degree of suspicion and distrust'.[129] By 1978, Elliott's view 'represented in the press as very much a minority view'.[130] This suggests the ICAC had altered public perceptions: people believed that corruption was being controlled. The chapter now considers these campaigns from the colonial government's perspective.

Government's Responses

The ICAC

As Yep has rightly argued, the creation of ICAC was a cumulative process which could date back to the 1960s.[131] In 1960, the Governor, Robert Brown Black had accepted the recommendation that an expert should be appointed to review the organization and operation of the Branch. Initially, the Committee suggested the appointment of 'a highly qualified expert on anti-corruption procedures from Scotland Yard or some other suitable source to take on the task'.[132] This British government was disinterested:

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[128] FCO 40/1022, Elsie Elliott, Open Letter to the Hong Kong Government and Interested British MPs, (date not specified) 1978.
[129] HKRS 925-1-1, 'An Assessment of the Government's Current Image and a Study of Community Aspirations', 9 February 1977, p. 1.
[130] FCO 40/1023, Telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 8 April 1978.
[131] Yep, 'The Crusade against Corruption', p. 198.
[132] HKRS 163-1-2505, 'Adviser for the Anti-Corruption Branch', letter from Robert Brown Black to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 19 October 1960.

> We have been considering this enquiry in consultation with the Home Office, and I am afraid that the result is not very encouraging. The advice which we have received from them is that it is very doubtful whether there is any United Kingdom police officer who has the experience of investigating corruption to the extent that would be demanded by the assignment you suggest. No police force in the United Kingdom, even including the Metropolitan Police, has specially trained officers for this sort of anti-corruption work.[133]

The idea was dropped. Instead a Special Working Party to review the organization and operation of the Branch was set up in 1961.

In 1962, locals started advocating the separation of the Anti-Corruption Branch from the police force:

> There was a strong feeling among those who were heard by the Working Party on Public Cooperation that the Anti-Corruption Branch should not be a part of the police force. It was stated that the public are reluctant to complain to the police of whom they are afraid of and there was danger in using police staff in the branch because they can put the techniques and knowledge which they acquire to bad use when, as frequently happens, they are posted to other branches of the force. We consider a further justification for this view is that nearly 50 per cent of all complaints about corruption concern the police force itself.[134]

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[133] HKRS 163-1-2505, Letter from W. I. J. Wallace to Robert Brown Black, 20 December 1960.
[134] HKRS 163-1-2505, 'Chapter VI: The Anti-Corruption Branch', enclosed in 'Sixth Report of the Advisory Committee on Corruption', memo from A. P. Richardson, Colonial Secretary to H. W. E. Heath, Commissioner of Police, 18 January 1962, p. 23.

The Secretary of Chinese Affairs agreed that 'on principle', there should be a separation. Nonetheless, 'in view of administrative difficulties', it was agreed that the Branch should remain with the police force. It was believed that an institutional separation would be a 'tantamount to implying that the police is not capable of becoming faithful'.[135] Besides, the Advisory Committee was aware of the danger that 'civilians permanently employed in such work would themselves become corrupted'. Effective measures to deal with these non-police officers were lacking. In the end, they 'reluctantly' argued that 'the Anti-Corruption Branch must continue to be staffed by serving members of the police force and must remain under the authority of the Commissioner of Police'.[136] In April 1962, to increase the efficiency of the Branch, two additional Senior Inspectors, two more Inspectors and five other Corporals were appointed.

The call for an independent organization to investigate police corruption persisted throughout the 1960s. In 1969, the news that corruption and protection rackets existed in the mini-bus business attracted attention. *Town Talk* recorded that there was 'widespread support for the idea that corruption allegations should be investigated by an organization separate from the police and for tougher legislation'.[137] The amendment of the Prevention of Bribery Bill dominated the public discourse in the colony in 1970: most people believed that 'the Anti-Corruption Branch should not locate in the police but independent or semi-independent'.[138] However, social discontent only escalated after activists and the press exploited the Godber incident in 1973.

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[135] HKRS 163-1-2505, 'Anti-Corruption', memo from P. M. M. Sedgwick, Secretary for Chinese Affairs to A. P. Richardson, Colonial Secretary, 7 February 1962.
[136] 'Chapter VI: The Anti-Corruption Branch', p. 23.
[137] HKRS 286-1-8, 'Corruption', *Town Talk*, 30 January 1969, p. 1.
[138] HKRS 286-1-9, 'Prevention of Bribery Bill', *Town Talk*, 5 November 1970, p. 1.

The Godber case ‘revived the demand for the Anti-Corruption Branch to be taken away from the police force and made an independent body’.[139] The event, according to the Governor, was ‘a subject of raucous criticisms of both (the) informed and uninformed’.[140] The British government did not only face pressure from Hong Kong residents, but also those of its own country. Student movements, the campaigning of *China Mail* and MPs in the House of Commons in 1973 put pressure on the British government to intervene. British newspapers started to report news about corruption in Hong Kong. *The Times* for example argued that unless Hong Kong’s corruption problem and trade of drugs can be eliminated, Britain’s reputation must suffer.[141] The *Sunday Times* argued that Hong Kong corrupt police should be blamed for their failure to stop the flow of drugs.[142] *The Guardian* closely reported any development of cases of corruption, from MP’s questions and Elliott’s speeches, to the stories of former police officers, such as those of Ellis and Iqbal Hussain Khan.[143] *The Guardian* even interviewed a former policemen in Hong Kong, who revealed ‘how pervasive police corruption is and the compromises which even an honest policeman is forced to accept in order to survive’. Corruption penetrated in every single corner of the colony and it had ‘acquired its own cosy jargon’. It was certainly not exclusively a Chinese culture: ‘To British inspectors, bribers and corrupt retainers are ‘‘squeeze’’; to the Chinese rank and files and officers they are ‘‘squeeze’; to the Pakistanis, they are ‘‘curry’’.’[144]

[139] HKRS 286-1-11, ‘The Godber Case Grabs Headlines’, *Town Talk*, 21 June 1973, p. 1.
[140] FCO 40/451, ‘Escape of Chief Superintendent Godber’, telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 13 June 1973.
[141] The Report of *The Times* on 23 September 1973 was translated to Chinese in ‘星期日泰晤士報撰文 抨擊香港貪污問題 呼籲來一次大肅清’, *Express*, 24 September 1973.
[142] FCO 40/453, Paul Eddy and Richard Hughes, ‘Drugs, Brothels, Bribery and a British Colony’s Police Force’, *Sunday Times*, 30 July 1973.
[143] HKRS 70-6-339-1, ‘MP Alleges Hong Kong Police Graft’, *The Guardian*, 28 March 1973; Jackie Leishman, ‘Colony to Hive Off Corruption Watchdogs’, *The Guardian*, 11 October 1973 and FCO 40/457, Martin Wollacott, ‘Britain Cannot Send Back Hong Kong Policeman’, *The Guardian*, 24 November 1973.
[144] HKRS 70-6-339-1, ‘Putting the Squeeze on Curry and Water’, *The Guardian*, 12 October 1973.

Due to the extensive coverage of corruption in the press in both Hong Kong and Britain after the escape of Godber, in mid-1973, a number of petitions from individuals in Britain were received by the British government. For example, a group of 'complainants' petitioned the Minister of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and asked the state to have 'direct immediate investigation into serious malpractices' in Hong Kong in order to avoid 'funny incidents' like 'Watergate'.[145] A person named T. P. Carter from Wiltshire also expressed his disturbance after reading a report on the escape of Godber from the *Sunday Times.* He claimed that he was 'completely at a loss to understand' why the British government was unwilling to instigate a Royal Commission.[146] Robert Moore, a lecturer in the University of Aberdeen, even argued that refusal of the amendment of the Fugitive Offenders Act to extradite Godber was racist.[147] These petitions concerned the British government, creating opportunities to discuss the necessity of creating an independent Anti-Corruption Branch.

Shifting public attitudes in Hong Kong and Britain played an important role in the formation of the new Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). The Governor's decision to set up an enquiry to review the legislative and administrative measures for the prevention of corruption in the public service and investigate the escape of Godber was influenced by the changing public sentiments:

> But the man's escape has caused great disquiet. So far as I have been able to establish the facts surrounding his escape, while these highlight various legal problems, they indicate that there were considerable difficulties that inhibited the police from doing anything effective to prevent his departure. However, as you can imagine, this is hard

[145] FCO 40/451, Letter from 'Complainants' to Minister of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 24 June 1973.
[146] FCO 40/453, Letter from T. P. Carter to Alex Douglas-Home, 31 July 1973.
[147] FCO 40/457, Letter from Robert Moore (Department of Sociology, University of Aberdeen) to the editor of *The Guardian*, 24 November 1973.

for the public and press to accept, if stated by police or the government.…I have therefore, with the agreement of the Executive Council, set up an enquiry under the Commission of Enquiry Ordinance to report on the facts.[148]

On 13 June, a one-man Commission of Inquiry to investigate corruption and the escape of Godber was set up, led by Justice Alastair Blair-Kerr. As David Ford, the Director of Information Services Department, suggested, the appointment of Blair-Kerr to be the Commissioner was 'a conscious decision' to 'bring the whole problem out into the open' in response to the rising public discontent.[149] In response to lack of public confidence in the police force, instead of a Police Officer, Blair-Kerr, a Senior Puisne Judge was appointed to be the investigator. To show that the colonial administration respected public opinions, it was announced in July 1973 that public views on whether or not the Branch should be divorced from the police force were invited. This move was welcomed by the general public.[150] The two Blair-Kerr reports were then published in the public domain. As there was 'considerable public interest in this report', the government was just 'in a position to publish it as soon as possible'.[151] The Foreign and Commonwealth Office also agreed increased administrative transparency in this inquiry would 'allay public suspicion that senior officials helped Godber to leave the country'.[152] A press release was also issued at the time of the report's publication announcing the acceptance of its recommendations to 'reassure the public about the vigour and sincerity of police action on corruption'.[153]

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[148] FCO 40/451, 'Escape of Chief Superintendent Godber', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 13 June 1973.
[149] HKRS 70-6-340-2, 'The Not So Quiet Revolution', D. Ford's Speech to Rotary Club, 12 March 1975, p. 3.
[150] HKRS 286-1-1, 'Corruption and Anti-Corruption', *Town Talk*, 19 July 1973, p. 2.
[151] FCO 40/453, 'Second Blair-Kerr Report on Corruption', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 27 September 1973.
[152] FCO 40/452, 'Report on Godber Case', telegram from Douglas-Home to Murray MacLehose, 13 July 1973.
[153] FCO 40/452, 'Parliamentary Question on the Godber Case', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 19 July 1973.

In terms of institutional changes, the British government was clearly aware of the 'good deal of pressure building for an UK appointed enquiry' in the colony. M. J. Macoun, the Overseas Police Adviser supported the initial appointment of an external Commission of Enquiry to investigate corruption within the police force. As that would be 'more desirable and effective' and could indicate the British government's determination 'to accept its responsibility as the administrating authority' of a colony.[154] Nevertheless, officials were aware of the potential public responses predicted by *Town Talk* that the setting up an external enquiry would be 'a major blow to Hong Kong's amour propre'. And that could also be seen as the British government's lack of confidence in the colonial state's ability to settle its own affairs. MacLehose was also 'totally opposed to an outside enquiry'.[155] The idea was therefore dropped in August 1973.[156]

On the other hand, the Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home, had made it clear he was 'inclined to the former course (separation)' as 'it would command greater public confidence'.[157] The detachment of the Branch from the police force 'would have sufficient immediate cosmetic effect to hold opinion in Hong Kong and also the House of Commons'.[158] Taking public opinions into account, MacLehose endorsed an independent branch:

[154] FCO 40/453, 'Alleged Corruption in Hong Kong Police', telegram from M. J. Macoun to R. B. Crowson, Hong Kong and Indian Ocean Department, 8 August 1973, p. 1.
[155] FCO 40/453, 'Mr Royle's Talk with Sir Murray MacLehose', telegram from M. R. J Guest to R. B. Crowson, 19 August 1973.
[156] FCO 40/453, Letter to M. R. Guest from R. B. Crowson, 9 August 1973, p. 2.
[157] FCO 40/453, Letter from Murray MacLehose to John Prendergast, 9 August 1973.
[158] FCO 40/455, 'Parliamentary Question', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 15 October 1973.

> Clearly the public would have more confidence in a unit that was entirely independent, and separation from any department of the government, including the police. We have therefore decided, on the advice of the Executive Council to set up a separate Anti-Corruption Commission under a civilian Commissioner.[159]

The ICAC was designed to be a 'civilian organization' with few police elements in which and giving preference to local candidates rather than expatriates.[160] The revised language policy had allowed more Hong Kong Chinese who did not read English to work as civil servants. These private correspondences between high ranked officials reveal that shifting popular sentiments played an important role in leading to the independence of the Anti-Corruption Branch.

Driven by shifting public sentiments, the ICAC was formed in February 1974, and consisted of three departments: the Corruption Prevention Department, the Operations Department and the Community Relations Department. It was headed by Jack Cater. John Prendergast, the former Director of the Special Branch, became the Director of Operations. To close the previous operational loopholes, the Commissioner now possessed more power compared to any of his predecessors. He was only responsible to the Governor. He was empowered to appoint officers and terminate any appointment without assigning reasons. He could also investigate suspected offences under the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance and examine practices in any government departments and public bodies. Most importantly, a number of new advisory bodies were set up within the ICAC in response to public opinions, in which members of the public would be represented. For example, the Advisory Council on Corruption was set up to make recommendations to the ICAC on corruption matters. A

[159] Ibid.
[160] FCO 40/558, 'Staffing of the ICAC', letter from J. Cater to A. C. Stuart, 26 February 1974, p. 1.

Citizen Advisory Committee on Community Relations was also formed, representing the community and was responsible for advising on the work of Community Relations Department.[161]

Despite the implementation of numerous anti-corruption reforms since 1960, the Anti-Corruption Branch was not separated from the police force until 1974. Previous attempts made by different Governors to press for an institutional reform were unsuccessful. Reform coincided with the agitation of social movements on this issue. These movements, newspapers and activists exploited the Godber incident. Public opinions were mobilized in the colony, and this must have put pressure on the Governor to renegotiate with the British government for an independent Commission. In England, questions were raised by anti-corruption activists in parliamentary discussions. Corruption in Hong Kong was widely covered in various newspapers, making it much more difficult for the British government to avoid intervening, to put pressure on the Governor to institute reforms. Archival evidence demonstrates that the colonial administration had been monitoring shifting public opinions closely, which were then fed back to the policy making process. Changing political culture eased institutional reform, the establishment of the ICAC in 1974.

Public Reception of the ICAC's Formation

Reform was welcomed. *Town Talk* stated that the 'government's decision to separate anti-corruption work from the police and the appointment of Mr. Jack Cater to lead the fight against graft won almost universal approval'.[162] According to the *Chinese Press Review,*

[161] FCO 40/558, Government Information Services, 'New Council to Set Up to Advise on Ways to Fight Graft: Public Widely Represented on New Committees', 30 January 1974.
[162] HKRS 286-1-11, 'Decisions on Anti-Corruption Applauded', *Town Talk*, 25 October 1973, p. 1.

among the editorials which had commented on the second report of the Blair-Kerr Commission of Inquiry, 'most of them were satisfied with it as a whole'.[163] The *Chinese Press Review* later revealed that 'the majority of the papers showed faith in the new Commissioner and leader Mr. J. Cater'[164]. However, there were also negative responses. For instance, Elliott argued that the Commission was only 'arrested a lot of small fry, but none of the high-ups, and has made virtually no in road into the syndicates which control corruption.'[165]

The unique power that ICAC possessed led to a growing concern over the abuse of its new authority. *Star* was worried that the new ICAC might become a 'second police force'. The new 'powerful armoury (of) legal weapons for ''Cater raiders''' was 'almost unprecedented in Hong Kong's legal history'.[166] The Reform Club expressed similar concerns over the possibility that the Commission would turn into a 'secret police'.[167] *South China Morning Post* urged the colonial administration to 'control the revolution': 'it is essential that the government remains vigilant and keeps more than a fatherly eye on this rapidly growing youngster, the ICAC Revolutions, even quiet ones, can get out of hand.'[168]

When the Arms and Ammunition Order passed in 1975 permitting ICAC officers to carry weapons in the course of duty, the public became extremely concerned about the 'excessive' power that the Commission possessed. Many contemporaries deemed the legislation 'unnecessary' and failed to understand the decision. The fact that ICAC was not a military

[163] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Second Report of the Blair-Kerr Commission of Inquiry', *Chinese Press Review*, 11-17 October 1973.
[164] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'Independent Commission Against Corruption Bill 1974', *Chinese Press Review*, 13-20 February 1974, p. 1.
[165] HKRS 376-8-23, 'Hong Kong Reformer Critical of Anti-Corruption Efforts', *The Times*, 30 December 1976.
[166] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'Cater's Raiders Get More Teeth: Second Police Force', *Star*, 16 March 1974.
[167] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'Reform Club Warns of ICAC as Secret Police', *Hong Kong Standard*, 27 October 1975.
[168] HKRS 70-6-339-2, 'Controlling the Revolution', *South China Morning Post*, 15 May 1975.

organization and administrative staff received no special training irritated the public.[169] The speech made by Hilton Cheong-Leen, a Legislative Councillor in 1976, captured the public's fear: 'I would at the same time seek to remind the Commissioner that continuous vigilance and caution is at all times necessary to ensure that the powers given under the amended bill will not be abused.' Lo Tak-shing, another Legislative Councillor regarded new legislative reforms as 'quite exceptional and unprecedented'.[170] Contemporaries referred the Commission as 'another Frankenstein'.[171] In response to criticisms in the public domain, the administration set up an ICAC Complaints Committee in December 1977 to monitor and review the handling of any complaints against the ICAC, identify any faults in ICAC procedures which led or might lead to complaints and make recommendations to the Governor regarding the practice of ICAC when considered necessary.[172]

The Extradition of Godber

It was as widely believed that Godber was able to escape because he was a British subject, protected by other senior officials in the colony and the British government. According to *Town Talk*, 'many people urged that Godber be brought back for a fair trial and 'did not understand why this could not be done'.[173] People felt that the colonial state 'should settle the Godber case expeditiously so to prevent trouble and disorder arising from increased resentment from all walks of life'.[174] To restore public confidence, MacLehose negotiated with London to return Godber for trial. However, the Fugitive Offenders Act enacted in 1967

[169] HKRS 70-6-344-1, '廉署調查員應否配槍?', *Sing Tao Man Pao*, 22 March 1975; '廉政人員武裝化', *Hong Kong Times*, 24 March 1975.
[170] HKRS 70-8-2168, Draft speech by the Hon. Lo Tak-shing, Legislative Council, Independent Commission Against Corruption (Amendment) Bill and the Prevention of Bribery (Amendment) Bill, 10 March 1976.
[171] HKRS 70-8-2173, Extract from an interview between Jack Cater, Brian Tisdall, Robert Ho and Michael Harrison, 'Corruption: The Crunch Years' (an RTHK Production), 3 June 1976.
[172] FCO 40/1022, 'Independent Commission Against Corruption Complaints Committee', memo from R. G. B. Bridge to heads of departments, 20 December 1977.
[173] 'The Godber Case Grabs Headline', *Town Talk*, p. 1.
[174] HKRS 286-1-11, 'Corruption Issues Kept Alive by Rally Summonses', *Talk Town*, 13 September 1973, p. 1.

created obstacles to the extradition as it outlined that return was only possible when the offence concerned constituted an offence to the law in both countries under the double criminality rule. Godber's failure to explain his 4.3 million wealth was not a crime in British laws. He could not be returned. Aware of popular sentiments on this issue, MacLehose repeatedly pressed for the amendment of the Fugitive Offenders Acts to return Godber:

> We consider it essential that the Fugitive Offenders Act be amended to allow for the extradition to Hong Kong of any person charged in Hong Kong with an offence carrying a maximum twelve months' imprisonment or more.…If the Fugitive Offenders Act is amended, it is highly desirable that the Amendment is made retrospective as to catch Godber. The public in Hong Kong will be deeply disappointed by an amendment which does not do so.[175]

In October, aware of the escalating public discontent, MacLehose reiterated to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that 'a decision that the law could not be amended to catch Godber would be received with disappointment and anger here'.[176] Andrew Stuart from the Hong Kong and Indian Ocean Department agreed: '…it is not a question of changing the law to catch one man, but of the case of Mr. Godber illuminating an illogicality in the law which might now be changed on general grounds.'[177] This was a legislative loophole. The British government had the ultimate control over the legislation of its dependent territories. MPs, such as Johnson, supported the amendment of the Fugitive Offenders Act. Nevertheless, the Attorney-General was 'most reluctant to consider an amendment'. He expressed strong opposition as he believed changing the law just to deal with a single case 'tended to produce

[175] FCO 40/453, 'Second Blair-Kerr Report on Corruption', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 27 September 1973.
[176] FCO 40/455, 'Blair-Kerr Report', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 15 October 1973.
[177] FCO 40/453, Telegram from A. C. Stuart to E. Youde, 27 September 1973, p. 2.

‘‘bad law’’’.[178] Besides, if the ultimate goal was to extradite Godber, it would be necessary to change the law retrospectively. Godber would certainly ‘get the wind’ of the legislative proposal and attempt to leave the country.[179] The Home Office concluded it was ‘not at the present convinced that it would be desirable or politically easy’ to withdraw the double criminality rule.[180]

Shifting public opinions did not lead to changes in the Fugitive Offenders Act. In November 1973, the Home Office ruled that the amendment of the Act would only ‘lay the government open to criticism’ and it ‘did not consider that a strong enough case had been presented by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’ to persuade the Home Secretary to make an amendment.[181] The Chief Whip argued that the introduction of such retrospective changes would attract ‘considerable opposition in the House of Commons’.[182] In early October 1973, Royle decided to drop the idea of amending the Fugitive Offenders Act. This suggests that public opinions could not pressurize the British government to implement legislative changes, especially when the Crown’s reputation would be compromised and the change was applied to more than one single territory.

In 1974, Godber returned to the colony because Ernest Hunt, another corrupt police superintendent, provided evidence of Godber’s corruption as a witness.[183] Some questioned the wisdom of spending substantial time and money in pursuing the case against Godber.[184]

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[178] FCO 40/453, Letter from M. R. J. Guest to A. C. Stuart, 3 October 1973.
[179] Ibid.
[180] FCO 40/457, Letter from F. Graham-Harrison, Home Office to Ducan Watson, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 25 November 1973.
[181] FCO 40/457, ‘Note of a Meeting held at the Home Office on 27 November 1973 to Discuss the Implications of the Double Criminality Rule in the Fugitive Offenders Act 1957, in Relation to Offences Committed in Hong Kong’, pp. 2 and 4.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.
[184] HKRS 286-1-12, ‘ICAC’, *Town Talk*, 17 October 1974, p. 4.

Nonetheless, news of Godber's arrest in Britain came as 'a happy surprise to many people'.[185] Numerous community leaders 'warmly applauded the ICAC effort'. According to *MOOD*, the Godber affairs played an important role in restoring public confidence in the colonial state as 'the unrelenting efforts' of the Commission had 'left people in doubt' to realise that 'the government means business'. It impressed those who formerly speculated the creation of the ICAC was 'window dressing' or 'pouring old wine into new bottles'.[186] This case impacted on local political culture.

Political Culture

The setting up of the ICAC had a huge impact on Hong Kong's political culture. With the introduction of new anti-corruption measures, increased education and the influence of mass media, public engagement in politics increased. After the formation of the Commission, people were less reluctant to report corruption. Their fear towards officialdom was greatly reduced. This changing political attitude formed a strong contrast with the political culture in the early 1970s. Prior to the setting up of the ICAC, political culture in Hong Kong was relatively conservative. The public in general was either reluctant to engage in social movements or unwilling to disclose their identities when they were involved. Such reservation in politics could be observed when people reported cases of corruption and shared their views on newspapers anonymously. Campaigns, such as the *China Mail* one, emphasized that when dialling their hot lines, people were not obliged to give their names.[187] The speech made by the HKFS revealed similar fear towards officialdom: 'members of the public will be more than willing to talk about grievances providing government has shown its

[185] HKRS 286-1-12, 'The Return of Godber', *Town Talk*, 2 May 1974, p. 1.
[186] HKRS 925-1-1, 'Changes in Public Attitude towards the Hong Kong Government', *MOOD*, 18 September 1975, p. 3.
[187] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Fight Graft: Dial the Mail's Hot-line', *China Mail*, 7 March 1973.

sincerity to guarantee the villains will be properly handled'.[188] As the previous section indicated, before the formation of the ICAC, political conservatism persisted. The middle-aged and elderly groups, who largely disapproved of direct political confrontations, believing that such activism would undermine political stability. The upper and middle classes were pro-status quo and largely held a contemptuous attitude towards informal political activities. They avoided engaging in social movements. Grassroots groups moreover displayed cautious attitudes towards officialdom and distanced themselves from participatory politics. People of these social classes and age groups mostly believed that 'tackling the evils and inequalities in corrupt Hong Kong' was 'rocking the boat', indicating political conservatism.[189]

State records reveal this political conservatism prevailed when people handled the issue of corruption. For example, in June 1973, the response to Blair-Kerr's appeal for information from the public 'has been comparatively poor'. Blair-Kerr therefore had to reiterate that 'the appeal was still open' through mass media. To reduce people's concern about criticizing the colonial administration, he repeatedly stressed that witnesses and people who offered evidence could be heard 'in chambers with complete confidentially' instead of public court.[190] Prior to the formation of the ICAC, the only politically active group seemed to be the young generation, mainly the students and young workers. As an article in *CU Student* suggested:

> …the anti-corruption campaign has demonstrated a good phenomenon, which is the unity between students and workers. The youth organizations that initiated this movement were not only student parities but also included many groups consisted of

[188] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'Now Students Support Anti-Graft Campaign', *China Mail*, 14 July 1973.
[189] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'What The Star Thinks: Rocking the Hong Kong Boat', *Star*, 2 August 1973.
[190] HKRS 70-6-339-3, Telegram from D. A. Richardson, Secretary of the Commission of Inquiry to Director of Information Services Department, 12 July 1973.

young workers. These young workers that were enthusiastic about social problems showed good leadership and positive social consciousness in the movement.[191]

Similar calls to the public had to be made by Jack Cater after the ICAC formed. He advocated the 'man in the street' to be more active in providing information as 'it is at this level that corruption begins, from a dollar to two dollars'.[192] In October 1974, MacLehose also publicly commented that there would be no 'real victory' unless there were changes of attitudes throughout the community.[193]

The political culture gradually shifted after the formation of the ICAC. According to *MOOD*, with publication of the Blair-Kerr reports, the extradition of Godber and the setting up of the ICAC, many people felt that the government was 'prepared to take a fair and honest attitude about its own failings and shortcomings'. The colonial government was 'not afraid of washing dirty linen in public'.[194] These moves 'have gradually built up public confidence in the government's open minded attitude and sincere interest in public reactions'.[195] The public was now 'in no doubt' that the colonial state was 'fully determined to suppress corruption' and had 'no hesitation in tackling offenders no matter how important or prominent'.[196] Compared to the 1950s, the public was now 'much more prone to take issue with the government over what they consider unjust official action'.[197] Due to the state's efforts in publicizing and explaining its policies through mass media and extended personal contact,

[191] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, '社論:反貪污運動的展望', *CU Student*, 5:8, 15 December 1973.
[192] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'Cater Calls for Support from Man in the Street', *Hong Kong Standard*, 14 February 1974.
[193] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'Supports Grows for ICAC', *South China Morning Post*, 17 October 1974.
[194] 'Changes in Public Attitude towards the Hong Kong Government', p. 3.
[195] Ibid., p. 2.
[196] HKRS 394-26-12, '1975 in Retrospect, Part I', *MOOD*, 31 December 1975, p. 4.
[197] 'Changes in Public Attitude towards the Hong Kong Government', p. 2.

people were more inclined to believe that ‘public criticism and the pressure of public opinion can produce results’. As the colonial administration had become increasingly ‘sensitive and responsive’.[198] This phenomenon was particularly obvious among the ‘young intelligentsia’.[199]

The number of complaints reflected increased popular involvement in eradicating corruption since the creation of the ICAC. During the period from 15 February to 31 December 1974, the ICAC received 3,189 complaints.[200] And during the twelve months before June 1975, over 7,000 reports were made with 3,408 concerned with corruption.[201] By June 1975, the ICAC received ten complaints per day on average.[202] However, it is important to note that most of these complaints were anonymous, and the public ‘maintained a rather sceptical attitude’ towards the Commission.[203] Of the 3,189 complaints taken in the first ten months, only 1,063 reports contained adequate information to become actual cases on which full investigations were launched. The relatively low persecution rate could be attributed to ‘the reluctance or refusal of witnesses to provide the necessary evidence to substantiate complaints of corruption’. According to Prendergast, some of the anonymous reports had provided sufficient information about corruption. Yet, it was impossible to return to the complainants for further details, and hence investigations could not be launched.[204] Table 4 revealed that almost half of complaints received by the Commission in the first fifteen months were made anonymously. To some extent, the high percentage of anonymous

[198] Ibid., p. 2.
[199] Ibid.
[200] HKRS 70-6-340-2, Summary of *First ICAC Annual Report: A Year of Development and Consolidation*, 11 May 1975, p. 1.
[201] HKRS 70-6-340-2, Answer made by David Ennals, Minister of State Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to question asked by Victor Goodhew, MP in Written Answer in House of Commons, 6 August 1975.
[202] HKRS 70-6-340-3, *ICAC Bulletin*, 3 June 1975.
[203] HKRS 70-8-2168, ‘The Social Impact of ICAC’, speech made by L. K. Ding at the meeting of Kowloon North Lion’s Club, 15 March 1977.
[204] Summary of *First ICAC Annual Report*, pp. 1-2.

complaints shows people's persistent fear towards officialdom and their lack of confidence in the ICAC.

Table 4: Complaints Made to the ICAC

	Jun 1975	May 1975	Feb 1974-May 1975
Anonymous	187	192	3,148
Non-anonymous	81	83	1,553

Source: HKRS 70-6-340-3, *ICAC Bulletin*, 2 June 1975.

Middle aged and elderly groups showed 'fatalism inherited from traditional attitudes formed by experience under successive Chinese governments'. They rarely sought to question 'the wrongs of officialdom, or to contest its actions'.[205] The perception that politics was dangerous could be found in a number of Cantonese proverbs, such as 'officials have two mouths' (a traditional saying which means that authorities could always find excuse to justify their decisions), 'the poor should never attempt to fight the wealthy, or the wealthy to fight the officialdom' and 'the governor of a prefecture can commit arson with impurity, but the people are not even allowed to light their lamps'.[206] It was also commonly thought that despite public consultation, the colonial administration would 'in the end take a decision rejecting some of the suggestions or recommendations from there'.[207] People viewed the ICAC with 'resentment and fear' due to its image as 'an all-powerful Gestapo' although such comments had been 'much less frequent'.[208] As the rate of anonymous reports remained high and there were concerns that 'malicious' complaints were made if complainants did not have to disclose their identities, the Commission eventually was forced to announce in January

[205] 'Changes in Public Attitude towards the Hong Kong Government', p. 5.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.
[208] '1975 in Retrospect, Part 1', p. 4.

1976 that no action would be taken upon anonymous reports unless some forms of corroboration was available.[209]

Mass media played an important role in the increase of political awareness and popular involvement in reporting corruption. According to professional market research findings, by 1976, over 90 per cent of the households in Hong Kong owned or had access to television sets.[210] *MOOD* stated that 'the interest and attention of television views on public affairs programmes appeared to have enhanced'.[211] Many high-income and middle-income families even owned more than one set. The convenient hire-purchase terms also enabled low-income families to rent second-hand and cheap TV sets.[212] The diffusion of television technology allowed people of different social classes to have the access to both state and non-state-funded TV programmes, which played an important role in the shift of general political culture. To educate the public about corruption and encourage them to identify themselves while reporting cases, the ICAC produced a television drama named 'Quiet Revolution' in mid-1976. All three television companies in Hong Kong, despite differences in approach, techniques and style, also produced programmes aiming at 'exposure of social injustice, airing public grievances and criticism of unsatisfactory social system, government policies or service'.[213] Commercial Television, for instance, produced a five-minute critical commentary named 'Sound Off' on current affairs in the evening of weekdays. The show criticized 'the establishment' by 'ruthless exposure of misdeeds, maladministration or inhumanity of government', including cases of corruption. It also acted as the spokesman of 'the oppressed

[209] HKRS 70-8-2168, Government Information Services, 'Attention News Editors', 27 January 1976.
[210] HKRS 925-1-1, 'The Impact of Television: Pt II: Entertainment Programmes', *MOOD*, 17 June 1976, p. 1.
[211] HKRS 925-1-1, 'The Impact of Television Pt I- Public Affairs Programmes by Commercial Stations', *MOOD*, 9 June 1976, p. 1.
[212] 'The Impact of Television: Pt II: Entertainment Programmes', p. 1.
[213] 'The Impact of Television Pt I- Public Affairs Programmes by Commercial Stations', p. 1.

and inarticulate victims suffering in silence'.[214] Selected victims were interviewed. The show had 'a respectably high view rating' and possessed many grassroots viewers who were informed and encouraged to participate in the political public discourse. Rediffusion Television also produced a weekly thirty-minute current affairs programme named 'Life in Hong Kong', exploring different social problems including corruption, which 'obviously attracted a certain amount of attention'.[215] 'Focus' produced by Television Broadcast Limited also claimed to 'give moral and public pressure support' for the 'down-trodden underdog' who were poor, oppressed or victimized. Although the credibility of reports in these shows were questionable, they successfully raised awareness of social injustice and political misdeeds in the colony. *MOOD* reported that criticized topics often received extensive publicity and 'tended to become common subjects of dinner table or tea house conversations'.[216]

Influenced by mass media and the changing reporting policy, the public was now more willing to identify themselves while reporting cases of corruption. Popular political attitudes shifted gradually:

> Members of the public are increasing coming to the Commission's local offices not only to report corrupt but also to seek advice, to give information about non-corruption criminal offences and even to lodge general complaints about rudeness, inefficiency or maladministration, as if with an all-purpose 'ombudsman'.[217]

[214] Ibid, p. 2.
[215] Ibid, pp. 3-4.
[216] Ibid., p. 1.
[217] HKRS 70-8-2168, 'Summary of ICAC Annual Report', 10 August 1976, p. 6.

In the first six months of 1977, 901 identifiable corruption complaints were received in total.[218] By mid-1977, it was estimated the percentage of identifiable complaints and people who reported corruption in person increased. (See Table 5 and 6.) 20 per cent of the corruption complaints were made in person, compared to 6 per cent in 1975 and 18 per cent in 1976.[219] However, the average reporting rate of five to six cases per day was still lower than the average figure of ten reports per case in 1974. Also, since it was now impossible to make complaints about corruption anonymously, these figures may not accurately represent a drastic shift in Hong Kong's political culture. As *MOOD* has suggested, by 1977, many in the grassroots level remained silent and were 'not aware of the services available due to 'simple ignorance, shyness or reluctance to approach government'.[220]

Table 5: Percentage of Identifiable Complaints Made to the ICAC

Year	Percentage
1974	35%
1975	39%
1976	47%
First half of 1977	51%

Source: 'Summary of ICAC Annual Report', 2 August 1976, p. 3.

Table 6: Percentage of Corruption Reports Made in Person

Year	Percentage
1975	6%
1976	18%
1977	20%

Source: ibid.

[218] HKRS 70-8-2168, Government Information Service, 'Attention News Editors', 23 July 1977.
[219] HKRS 70-8-2168, 'Summary of ICAC Annual Report', 2 August 1976, p. 3.
[220] 'An Assessment of the Government's Current Image and a Study of Community Aspirations', p. 5.

Although the percentage of non-anonymous reports had increased, the total and average monthly number of reports the ICAC received had both dropped. It decreased significantly especially after 1977. (See Tables 7 and 8.) This may be related to the partial amnesty granted to the police force in late 1977. Prior to the creation of the ICAC, the Commissioner of Police, Charles Sutcliffe publicly asserted that he got the impression that the force was often being targeted by the press and 'somebody' would 'not be satisfied until there is a scandal'.[221] After the ICAC was formed, the unease within the police force grew. Some police launched a campaign against ICAC officers in late May 1974. They complained about the 'harassing' and 'wild accusations' they had to face.[222] The Colonial Secretary, Deny Roberts initially ruled out the possibility of granting a general amnesty in regard to corruption offences committed before the formation of ICAC: 'It would be totally wrong, and indeed a dereliction from the duty imposed by the law on the Commissioner, for the Commission to refuse to investigate past corruption where this emerged.'[223] However, tensions escalated in January 1977. A number of 'incidents of confrontations' emerged between the Commission's officials and police officers on duty in the street.[224] By October, Brian Slevin recognized that 'the strain that these (ICAC) investigations have placed not only on individuals but throughout the force'.[225] With the police riot, an amnesty was granted on 5

[221] HKRS 70-6-339-1, 'You Are Preening Me from Getting Recruits: Police Chief Slams Press on Graft Stories', *Hong Kong Standard*, 24 March 1973.
[222] HKRS 70-6-344-1, 'ICAC under Attack from Our Police', *Hong Kong Standard*, 31 May 1974.
[223] HKRS 70-6-344-1, Peter Lock and Kenneth Ko, 'Full Amnesty for Graft Ruled Out', *South China Morning Post*, 4 April 1975.
[224] HKRS 908-1-43, 'Relations with ICAC', memo by C. L. Scobell, 18 January 1977.
[225] HKRS 908-1-43, 'Investigation of Allegations of Corruption', memo by R. T. M. Henry, 27 October 1977.

November 1977.[226] As a result, eighty-three investigations had to be dropped.[227] The amnesty was regarded as a severe blow to the morale and efficiency of the ICAC by the public, mainly due to the impression that the Commission became less active. As MacLehose had pointed out, 'since the ''partial amnesty'' on 5 November last year, the question in many minds has been whether things would slip back into the bad old ways'.[228]

Table 7: Number of Reports Received by ICAC

Reports received	Jan-Jun 1976	Jan-Jun 1977	Jan-Jun 1978
For ICAC consideration(total)	1367 (38.5%)	901 (29.8%)	575 (21.9%)
(monthly average)	227.8	150.2	95.8
Referred to government/departments/public bodies/others (total)	2185 (61.5%)	2125 (70.2%)	2054 (78.1%)
(monthly average)	364	354	312.3

Source: FCO 40/1023, 'Comparative Statistics for the First Six Months of the Years: 1976, 1977, 1978', p. 1.

Table 8: Modes of Reports for ICAC Consideration

Reports received	Jan-Jun 1976	Jan-Jun 1977	Jan-Jun 1978
Anonymous	723 (52.9)	459 (50.9)	227 (48.2)
Non-anonymous	644 (47.1)	442 (49.1)	298 (51.8)
In person	247	159	139
By telephone	179	144	85
By letter	94	55	15
Referred by government departments	124	104	59

[226] The formation of the ICAC created anxiety among the police force. The relationship between officials of the ICAC and the police force was hostile. Many police complained that the investigation procedures were unfair. On 27 October 1977, a mass meeting was held, participated by 3,000 police officers. A petition was also signed by 11,000 of the 17,400 members of the force. A mutiny soon took place, with the police demanding an amnesty. The ICAC however, continued to investigate cases. In September, 228 police officers were arrested. In November, tensions escalated and the atmosphere became increasingly militant. To bring the situation under control, a partial amnesty was granted on 5 November, making 1 January 1977 the 'cut-off date': investigations in corrupt crimes before this date were dropped and police that were involved would not be prosecuted. See Yep, 'The Crusade against Corruption', pp. 212-3.
[227] FCO 40/1022, 'ICAC and Amnesty', telegram from C. R. Staff to Quantrill, Thompson and Stewart, 9 January 1978.
[228] FCO 40/1023, 'The ICAC', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 6 October 1978.

Source: ibid.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, apart from reporting to the Anti-Corruption Bureau directly, the most common way used by ordinary people to address their grievances in corruption was through petitions. This suggests a lack of trust in the Anti-Corruption Branch. Letters of complaint received by anti-corruption activists were mostly either anonymous or full names were not given. People did not want to reveal their names because they did not want to get themselves 'involved into troubles' and believed in doing so, 'authority might take revenge'.[229] For example, a person did not disclose his name but called himself 'a supporter of good law and order', wrote to Elliott in 1968. Elliott believed such practice 'indicates he fears victimization'.[230] The complainant argued that 'the local people think the government and all the lawyers are in collusion' and urged the state to 'take strongest action quickly to weed out these corrupt evil lawyers and their minions'. The letter was not neglected but then passed to the MP Nigel Fisher in a week's time.[231] It was also prevalent for people to write to the press anonymously, raising concerns on corruption.[232] This practice effectively protected the identities of the victims and raised concern of the issue in public domain. Believing grievances would not be addressed by authorities in the colony, many wrote to politicians and royalty in the United Kingdom directly, both anonymously and non-anonymously. For example, a resident named Lee Yuk Tak petitioned Edward Heath, the Prime Minister, directly in 1973, hoping to persecute an alleged corrupt ex-policeman.[233]

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[229] Letter from 'A Resident' to Elsie Elliott, 6 November 1971; MSS.13 6-11, Letter from Leung P.S. to Elsie Elliott, 18 September 1973.
[230] FCO 40/120, Letter from Elsie Elliott to Nigel Fisher, 5 July 1968.
[231] FCO 40/120, Petition from 'A Supporter of Good Law and Order' to Elsie Elliott, 28 June 1968, pp. 2-3, enclosed in ibid.
[232] FCO 40/451, For example, 'Retired Potato Hawker' petitioned editors of various newspapers, 16 June 1972.
[233] FCO 40/451, Letter from Lee Yuk Tai to Edward Heath, 16 June 1973.

Although these cases were not neglected by the British authorities, they were often sent back to Hong Kong for investigation.

This petitioning culture did not cease after the formation of the ICAC.[234] An anonymous person for example, sent a petition to James Callaghan, the Foreign Secretary, complaining that 'all people in Hong Kong, especially the poor, are wondering what sort of government we are having'.[235] Contrary to the British image of 'integrity and fair-play', 'the majority (95 per cent) of the British officers are crooks'.[236] He demanded resignation of the chief Commissioner of Police and the dismissals of the remaining corrupt police officers.[237] Numerous similar petitions continued to be received by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office after the mid-1970s. Instead of forwarding his complaint against the police and judges to the ICAC, a persona named Pun Ting Chau, for instance, petitioned various staff in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Parliamentarians and the Governor.[238] Such petitioning culture still existed in the late 1970s.[239] Elliott continued to receive a high number of petitions and anonymous letters complaining against corruption.[240] To some extent, this indicates the persistence of political conservatism and the absence of confidence in the ICAC.

The Home Affairs Department conducted a *MOOD* opinion poll in 1980, assessing the public impression on the Commission six years after its establishment. The Commission itself was well known by the public: 'All respondents knew of the existence of the ICAC and its general

[234] FCO 40/644, 'Corruption at All Levels in Hong Kong', anonymous letter to James Callaghan, 18 January 1975.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.
[238] FCO 40/647, Letter from Pun Ting Chau to Murray MacLehose, 20 September 1975; 'An Open Appeal for Justice', letter from Pun Ting Chau to R. Goronwy-Roberts, 25 September 1975; Same letter also sent to A. C. Stuart, C. V. Peterson, D. K. Timms, P. J. E. Male and D. Ennals.
[239] For example, FCO 40/828, 'An Illegal Judgement Without Trial', letter from F. M. Tung to Elizabeth II, 29 July 1977; letter from Cheung Chok-kap to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 7 October 1977.
[240] For example, MSS. 13 7-3, Letter from 'Conspiracy for Justice' to Elsie Elliott, 30 June 1977.

aims.'[241] The ICAC hot line- 266366 was also commonly known by the community.[242] The institutional change restored people's confidence in the colonial regime and was considered to be 'generally successful', except in the private sector.[243] Most respondents appreciated the extensiveness and effectiveness of the Commission's publicity and believed that it would handle all the complaints 'promptly and thoroughly'.[244] They felt that it 'has done a good job in building up a respectable community image and so far successful efforts had been made towards long term aim of inculcating, amongst the general public, a healthy attitude towards corruption'.[245] The report indicated a gradual change in the general political culture as it stated that there was 'a readiness' of the public to report corruption, with many young people in particular being enthusiastic about joining the ICAC.[246] People now would go to the Commission to seek advice, to give information about non-corruption criminal offences and even to lodge general complaints about inefficacy or maladministration, showing increased political engagement and reduced fear towards politics.

Nonetheless, *MOOD* also revealed the persistence of political conservatism in the colony:

> There was still a certain social stigma which discouraged direct involvement with or working in the ICAC. Less-educated housewives, for example, had said they would not like their children to work in the Commission. Some young people were also hesitant partly because they believed that their friends might keep them at arms' length or at least with some suspicion.[247]

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[241] HKRS 471-3-2, Home Affairs Department, 'Public Impressions of the Independent Commission Against Corruption', *MOOD*, 4 March 1980, p. 1.
[242] Ibid, p. 3.
[243] Ibid., p. 5.
[244] Ibid., p. 2.
[245] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[246] Ibid., p. 5.
[247] Ibid.

It was also indicated that work still had to be done to 'correct' the attitude of members of the grassroots level towards corruption.[248] Most importantly, despite the expression of 'readiness', 'the majority of the respondents did not have any direct contact with the Commission and its staff'.[249] This could be explained by the fact that the public, except for the students, who learned about the structure and duties of the ICAC through their Economic and Public Affairs syllabus, generally had superficial and 'sketchy' knowledge about the Commission and how it investigated corruption.[250] The fear towards officialdom still existed, which could be observed when respondents from various social groups still held the notion that ICAC officials would abuse suspects by arresting them in early mornings or late evenings and having 'long hours of interrogation in very cold-air conditioned rooms'.[251]

Conclusion

Activists called for either the separation of the Anti-Corruption Branch from the police force or the appointment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry. These demands were initially ignored by the British government. The creation of the ICAC was only made possible in 1973, when press, student organizations and activists exploited the escape of Peter Godber from Hong Kong to Britain and mobilized public opinion. *China Mail*'s campaign to set up a hot-line and conduct a survey successfully drew the attention of the public in Hong Kong, in particular its young intellectual readers. It also captured the attention of other newspapers and MPs, leading to further protest orchestrated by James Johnson and former civil servants in London. Signature campaigns and demonstrations organized by student organizations led by the HKFS also received positive responses from the young generation; although some adult

[248] Ibid., p. 4.
[249] Ibid., p. 2.
[250] Ibid., p. 3.
[251] Ibid.

members of the society continued to criticize their political activism, denouncing it as a threat to political and social stability. Campaigners, notably Elliott, Johnson and Ellis, worked closely with each other and made good use of their connections with politicians and mass media to pursue their cause.

These activists sought democratic reform and social justice. To pressurize the colonial government to introduce new anti-corruption measures, they made good use of the press, publicizing stories of corruption in the colonial bureaucracy. They presented the movement as endorsed by the majority of Hong Kong and noted that inaction risked social unrest. Anti-corruption dominated the public discourse. The extensive coverage in newspapers and televisions in both Hong Kong and Britain led to increased petitions being sent to authorities in London. However, except the students, none of these activists organized demonstrations and adopted tactics of direct confrontation. The middle aged and elderly groups within the middle and upper classes were politically conservative.

Although the formation of ICAC and strengthening of anti-corruption legislation in the colony undoubtedly were outcomes of accumulated efforts made by successive Governors and activists since the 1960s, archival records suggest that the emergence of anti-corruption campaigns and the shift of public opinions after the escape of Godber were inseparable. From the appointment of Blair-Kerr and the separation of the Branch from the police force, to the civilian composition of the Commission and the creation of the ICAC Complaints Committee: these were all direct responses to popular demands. Nonetheless, public sentiments did not always influence policy making. Despite public discontent over the escape of Godber, the Home Office refused to amend the Fugitive Offenders Act to extradite the corrupt police officer.

The ICAC restored public confidence in the colonial state. With increased political transparency, education, state propaganda and the influence of mass media, political culture shifted. People were more eager to engage in politics and express their grievances. There were increased reports of crimes and corruption. However, positivism was shattered in 1977 by the issue of a partial amnesty to the police force. The fact that many continued to petition either activists or the authorities in London, instead of reporting to the Commission, also indicates the Commission had not fully gained the trust from the Chinese population. By 1980, despite the fact that the Commission’s success was acknowledged, many people, in particular the grassroots level and the less educated class were reluctant to work in the ICAC, revealing the persistence of political conservatism among these groups in colonial Hong Kong.

IV. The Campaign against Telephone Rate Increases

In the mid-1970s, the general political culture in Hong Kong was shifting gradually. The legalization of Chinese lowered communication barriers between the colonial state and the Chinese communities. Chinese population's stake in colonial administration was also enhanced with the revised language requirements in appointments of civil servants. The setting up of the ICAC and the successful extradition of Godber restored public confidence in a reformist government. The colonial administration was facing up its shortcomings and becoming more responsive to public opinions. Distrust and resentment of officialdom was falling, in particular among the educated young generation. Despite persistent political conservatism in certain classes and age groups, people in general expected the government to become more effective and were willing to report corrupt practices. Intolerance towards corruption is explored in this case study, a campaign against telephone rate increases in 1975.

The Hong Kong Telephone Company reported a profit of HK$ 70 million in 1973, but it gained approval from the Advisory Committee on Telephone Services to increase rentals in early 1974. In August 1974, the company was planning to apply for a further rental increase, in response to cash shortages. It was however widely suspected that business practices were corrupt. Anti-corruption campaigning had focused on bureaucratic corruption. The campaign on telephone charge had a different target, and was the largest scale movement of consumer activism in Hong Kong in the 1970s.

Despite the scale and significance of the protest, the campaign has not been studied closely. Lam Wai-man's work provided an account of how different organizations, such as the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee, kaifong associations and chambers of commerce,

collaborated and formed coalitions to protest against rate increases. Nonetheless, she has not examined the strategies and rhetoric employed by these activists and assessed their effectiveness using robust methods. Lam also failed to assess how the campaign was perceived by different social classes and age groups.[1] Reliant solely on published materials, such as newspapers and published state reports, she pointed out that 'the general public reaction' was 'one of complete outrage'.[2] This chapter uses archival sources to investigate how the colonial administration perceived and reacted to the campaign. It highlights the shifting popular sentiments of different social classes and age groups towards the event, and how district organizations and political coalitions protested.

Increased Press Coverage and Shifted Public Sentiments

The Hong Kong Telephone Company was a public utility company, granted a fifty-year monopoly in 1925. In 1951, the task of supervising the company was delegated to the Postmaster-General. Its dividends and levels of return were not subject to legal control, but when proposing rental increase, it had to seek approval from the Legislative Council.[3] The company's performance was often poor. Customers had to wait for a long period of time before getting their telephone lines installed. To improve its quality of services and prevent further mismanagement, an advisory body, the Advisory Committee on Telephone Services was set up in 1964.

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[1] Lam tried to quantify the public reactions by examining the 'amount' of public responses the movement triggered: 'The campaign generated a wide range of actions: at least eighteen letters to the government, twenty-six press conferences, four surveys, ten public meetings and three closed-door meetings.', in *Understanding the Political Culture*, p. 170.
[2] Ibid., p. 166.
[3] Ibid., p. 109.

In August 1973, the company requested an increase in the telephone rate, the first time in ten years. The increase came into effect in January 1974, raising the existing rentals for business lines by 17 percent and residential lines by 19 per cent, respectively. As a result, the telephone rates for business lines rose from $350 to $410 per annum. For residential lines, the rentals increased from $235 to $280 per annum.[4] According to *Town Talk*, reactions to the increase were 'mixed'. Some housewives believed that the increase was 'too great'. Many white collar workers, such as office executives in Central and businessmen in Sham Shui Po and Mong Kok, did not mind the increase given that the company promised to improve its services. The general public mostly believed that rising telephone charges were 'inevitable' due to the increased cost of living.[5] The increase in early 1974 was not opposed.

According to the report by the Advisory Committee on Telephone Services in 1972, Hong Kong Telephone Company's expansion plans were 'too conservative'. They only followed 'proven demand rather than assessing demand and meeting it as it arises'. The culminate waiting list has reached 38,271 by the end of 1972, compared with 31,177 in 1971.[6] Unless it altered its existing policy, the number of people waiting for telephone lines would not fall, an indicator that its performance had not improved. Table 9 reveals the disparity between demand and supply of telephone lines. Although the installation rate increased from 72.58 per cent in 1972 to 92.32 per cent in 1975, the company still failed to meet the demand. The *Star* recorded the public dissatisfaction about the company's service: 'Our phones are cheap….Nonetheless, the waiting list is a barometer of the basic conflict of interest – and it is going up.'[7] To improve its service, the company invested in new technologies and planned an

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[4] HKRS 618-1-567, 'HK Telephone to Seek Another Rise in Rental Charges', *South China Morning Post*, 26 August 1974.
[5] HKRS 286-1-12, 'Increase in Telephone Charges', *Town Talk*, 17 January 1974, p. 2.
[6] HKRS 70-7-472-2, 'Report of Telephone Services Advisory Committee', *Daily Information Bulletin*, 13 June 1973.
[7] HKRS 70-7-472-2, 'Cheap but Too Slow!', *Star*, 16 June 1973.

expansion programme. In May 1974, for example, the existing microwave system was extended from Hong Kong to Kwai Chung and Yuen Long to Kwai Chung after the introduction of Pulse Code Modulation. Outside Japan, the Hong Kong Telephone Company was the second company to use the system, which was considered by the company to be 'most up-to-date and advanced techniques presently available'.[8] This microwave system improved transmission performance and also provided increased capacity for telephone channels. It also ensured that each telephone call was secret and no overhearing would occur between phone calls.

Table 9: Applications Received and Lines Installed by the Hong Kong Telephone Company

Year	Application received	Lines installed	Installations as percentage of application
1972	163,537	118,708	72.58%
1973	168,775	140,063	82.99%
1974	125,068	113,890	91.06%
1975	115,236	107,536	93.32%
Total	572,616	480,197	83.86%

Source: HKRS 276-7-197, Telephone Service Statistics, November 1976.

In August 1974, to finance its capital expansion programme, the Hong Kong Telephone Company sought approval from the Legislative Council for a 60 per cent increase in telephone charges. The company argued that compared to many other countries, Hong Kong's telephone rates were low. While Hong Kong residential and business subscribers were paying $280 and $410 per annum, the charges were $434 and $829 in Malaysia and $489 and $734 in Singapore. The difference in rentals was even greater in European countries. For instance, the rates were $651 and $1026 in Belgium and $810 and $1,140 in

[8] HKRS 276-8-351, 'Extension of Hong Kong Telephone Microwave Network', New Release, 15 May 1975, pp. 1-2.

France.[9] From the perspective of the Telephone Company, the proposed increase therefore could be justified. Nonetheless, these figures ignored differences in international costs of living and did not deflate rates by prevailing income levels.

The capital expansion programme moreover coincided with economic downturn. The growth rate of annual Gross Domestic Product fell from 14 per cent in 1973 to about 2.5 per cent in 1974 and 1975. The index of real daily wage for industrial workers dropped from 159 in 1973 to 141 in 1974 and 137 in 1975. Unemployment rose.[10] Lam argued that 'the government kept the public in the dark until mid-January 1975' about the situation, and that 'territory-wide outrage' was triggered in 1975.[11] As early as in August 1974, however, there were rumours about the price changes. According to *Town Talk*, the proposed increase was 'vociferously opposed in all the districts'. For example, residents in Wan Chai and Yau Mai Tei condemned the increase as 'unreasonable', especially as the company netted a $70 million profit in the previous year.[12] People complained about poor service. There were requests for interventions by the Consumer Council, which was set up in 1974 to enhance consumer welfare.[13] According to Y. K. Kan, the Chairman of the Consumer Council, the Council received 'a large number of complaints' about the proposed increase in telephone charges even though the Council had already issued a public statement suggesting they would not look into the matter.[14]

[9] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Inflation Puts up Phone Rental Charges', *South China Morning Post*, 25 September 1974.
[10] B. K. P. Leung, 'Social Movement as Cognitive Praxis: The Case of the Student Movement and Labor Movement in Hong Kong', in *East Asian Social Movements: Power, Protest and Change in a Dynamic Region* (New York, 2010), p. 360.
[11] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, p. 164.
[12] HKRS 286-1-12, 'Increase in Telephone Charges', *Town Talk*, 29 August 1974, p. 1.
[13] Ibid.
[14] HKRS 276-8-137, letter from Y. K. Kan to Colonial Secretary, 16 September 1974.

In September, reactions to the proposed increased remained ‘strong and unfavourable’.[15] The Director of the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee, Raymond Fung, indicated to the press that his organization, which consisted of fifty-two groups, including kaifongs, churches and students, would take ‘drastic measures’ to prevent the telephone rates from being raised.[16] Business groups also petitioned the colonial government. The New Territories General Chamber of Commerce, for example, wrote to the Secretary for the New Territories to express grievances over the rate increases. The group believed that the increase would cause ‘an ill effect’ on the economy. It also asserted that a public utility company should not be ‘earning excessive profit’.[17] The Sha Tin of Commerce also complained to the District Officer of Sha Tin, arguing that increase in telephone rate would ‘accelerate inflation’ and ‘add the difficulties of the public’.[18] Heung Yee Kuk expressed similar concerns.[19] In December, the Universal Consumers Association publicly condemned the company’s move to seek rental increases, and announced that it would make an ‘all-out effort’ to protest against the increase.[20] By late 1974, therefore, the proposed increase had received considerable attention from a range of different groups and organizations.

The proposed increase in telephone rates was widely reported and criticized by newspapers. *South China Morning Post* for instance argued that the increase was ‘an extremely irresponsible move’ which ‘completely ignored the current economic difficulties of the colony and the sentiment’.[21] During the week from 17 to 22 December, six newspapers

[15] HKRS 286-1-12, ‘Telephone Charges’, *Town Talk*, 19 September 1974, p. 2.
[16] HKRS 681-1-567, ‘All-out Bid to Block Higher Phone Rates’, *Hong Kong Standard*, 13 September 1974.
[17] HKRS 276-8-137, Letter from Tang Tung-kwong to Yu Sau-leung, (date not specified) October 1974.
[18] HKRS 276-8-137, Letter from Lau Ping-wah to Sha Tin City Officer, 2 October 1974.
[19] HKRS 276-8-137, Letter from Heung Yee Kuk to Secretary for the New Territories, 1 November 1974.
[20] HKRS 618-1-567, ‘Move to Increase Telephone Rates Lashed’, *South China Morning Post*, 21 December 1974.
[21] HKRS 618-1-567, ‘Telephone Rate Rise Unwise, Ill-timed’, *South China Morning Post*, 25 September 1974.

showed ‘strong objection’ to the rumoured fee increase.[22] News coverage increased and the topic was covered in seventeen editorials in the last week of December.[23] Most of the editorials criticized the proposal. The communist leaning *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* argued that it was ‘unreasonable’ for the Telephone Company to seek another rate increase after its charges had increased the previous year. It also believed that such increase would lead to ‘chain reactions’ during the economic recession.[24] *Fai Po* asserted that the increase was ‘most unfair’ given the $70 millions profit made by the Telephone Company in 1974.[25] *Wah Kiu Yat Po* suggested that that the Telephone Company should be nationalized to stop it from profiteering.[26]

The adverse newspaper comments shaped public opinions and led to increased tensions between the company and its customers. According to *Town Talk,* there were ‘mounting tensions’ over the proposed telephone charge increases in early January: ‘City District Officers received strong protests from every sector of the population’.[27] The main problem was the company’s revision of its rate in early 1974. Another increase in such a short period of time seemed unjustifiable. From the public’s perspective, the company was making profits, $70 million in 1973. The public did not realize the company had committed into buying cables and other equipment for expansion, which amounted to millions of dollars. It was difficult for the public to understand why this increase was necessary. The argument related to a simple one of public versus private interest: during a time of inflation and rising unemployment, as a public utility company, the interest of the whole community should be

[22] HKRS 618-1-567, ‘Increase in Telephone Charges’, *Chinese Press Review*, no. 310, 17-22 December 1974, p. 1.
[23] HKRS 618-1-567, ‘Increase in Telephone Charges’, *Chinese Press Review*, no. 312, 30 Dec 1974- 7 January 1975, p. 1.
[24] Ibid., p. 3.
[25] Ibid., p. 4.
[26] Ibid., p. 6.
[27] HKRS 286-1-14, ‘Mounting Tensions Over Telephone Increase’, *Town Talk*, 9 January 1975, p. 1.

placed above profiteering. Many suspected that the poor financial situation was the result of mismanagement and corruption within the company. *Town Talk* revealed that there was an 'unanimous view' that capital for expansion should be raised from shareholders, instead of consumers.[28] The absence of an effective regulatory system to monitor the operation of the Hong Kong Telephone Company also led the colonial government to become a target. Middle-aged kaifong and community leaders started pressing for a government statement on the proposed increase.[29] Some even radically suggested that the Telephone Company should be nationalized.[30]

The widespread public reaction was due to the rate of take up of telephones. Table 10 reveals the increase of the number of direct line from 1967 to 1975. The number of direct lines nearly tripled in less than ten years, from 7.2 per 100 population in 1967 to 19.1 in 1975.[31] In other words, about a quarter of the population had everyday access to telephones. Those without lines used the telephones of their friends and families. By December 1974, there were 803,144 working lines in Hong Kong in total.[32]

Table 10: Telephone Take-up Rate in Hong Kong (Direct Lines)

Year	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Lines/ 100	7.24	8.67	10.08	11.46	13.91	15.88	17.70	18.48	19.11
Station/ 100	9.13	10.74	12.44	14.14	17.02	19.38	21.65	22.75	23.60
Population	3,877,700	3,971,500	4,039,700	4,127,800	4,064,400	4,103,500	4,219,300	4,345,200	4,389,900

Source: HKRS 276-7-407, 'Hong Kong Telephone Co. Ltd: Statistical Review', attached in 'Statistical Review', from I. Cowley, Forecasting, Directory and Marketing Department, to General Manager, Assistant G. M. Administration, Mr. Gaut, Chief Account, Manager of the

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., p. 2.
[31] HKRS 70-7-472-2, 'Seventeenth Periodical Report for the Period from 1st Jan to 31st Dec 1974', Advisory Committee on Telephone Services, 28 July 1975, p. 7.
[32] Ibid., appendix E.

Engineering Branch, Manager, Operations, Heads of Divisions and Heads of Departments, 25 February 1976.

Tensions escalated after F. L. Walker, the general manager of the Telephone Company announced that the company had applied for a 70 per cent increase in telephone rate on 10 January 1975.[33] This led to extensive media coverage. In the second week of January, twenty newspaper editorials opposed the increase.[34] *Sing Tao Yat Pao* and *Kung Sheung Daily* both described the proposed rate of increase as 'shocking'.[35] *Sing Tao Yat Pao and Nam Wah Man Po* even cited the Star Ferry riots in 1966 to warn the colonial government of the potential 'vicious chain reaction' which may be caused by the increase.[36] *Wah Kiu Yat Po, Oriental Daily* and *Hong Kong Commercial Daily* insisted that no increase should be allowed by the government.[37] Leftist newspapers expressed disapproval to the proposed rise of charge. *Wen Wei Pao* suggested that as a public utility company which had close connection with the livelihood of people, such frequent increase in rate was unacceptable.[38] *Ta Kung Pao* asserted that it was 'too much' for the company to ask for a 70 per cent increase given its profit and the recent charge revision.[39]

Influenced by press opposition, the proposed telephone rate 'polarized' the government and the public.[40] According to A. F. Neoh, the City Distirct Commissioner of Kowloon, the public was 'resentful' that the Telephone Company had applied for a high percentage of

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[33] HKRS 276-8-351, 'Hong Kong Telephone Company's Application for Rental Increase Statement by F. L. Walker, General Manager', New Release, 10 January 1975.
[34] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Telephone Company's Application for Charges Increase', *Chinese Press Review*, no. 313, 7-14 January 1975, p. 1.
[35] Ibid., p. 3.
[36] Ibid., p. 4.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., p. 3.
[39] Ibid.
[40] HKRS 394-27-11, 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh, City District Commission (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 13 January 1975, p. 1.

increase during a time when living standards were not rising.[41] As the City District Commissioner of Kowloon has pointed out, public discontent escalated: 'Community pressure are rapidly building. In the past two weeks, C.D.O. have been feeling tensions in almost all their dealing with the public. At every point of contact, government stand accused.'[42] On Hong Kong Island, it was also observed that a large number of local organizations had 'reacted rather strongly' to the proposed rate increase. Many considered the reasons for the increase 'unjustified' and 'unacceptable'.[43] The campaign was strengthening, against a backdrop of economic problems and stimulated by adverse newspaper coverage of the company's proposal.

In mid-January, *Town Talk* reported that the issue 'continued to dominate public attention'.[44] 'Some quarters' felt that an increase of about 20 per cent was reasonable and believed that any higher increase would only create an impression that the government was 'favouring the Telephone Company regardless of public interest'.[45] Residents of the grassroots level in public housing estates complained that a 70 per cent increase would increase the rental to a level that was higher than their housing rent.[46] Housewives and factory managers considered whether to cut telephone lines, a de facto boycott of services. Those who possessed more than one line, such as shop tenants and firm operators expressed great anger, claiming that they would cut down the number of lines to the minimum if the increase was approved.[47]

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[41] Ibid.
[42] HKRS 394-27-11, 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. K. Neoh, City District Commissioner (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 8 January 1975, p. 1.
[43] HKRS 394-27-11, 'Situation Report on Items of Special Current Interest', memo from S. T. Tam, City District Commissioner (Hong Kong) to E. P. Ho, Director of Home Affairs, 9 January 1975, p. 1.
[44] HKRS 286-1-14, 'Pressure for Government Line on Telephone Increases', *Town Talk*, 16 January 1975, p. 1.
[45] *Town Talk* did not specify the location of these residential quarters, in ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

In late January, clarifications were made through the mass media by the company that the increase was necessary to prevent its bankruptcy. The company launched a counter publicity campaign to justify its price increases. It argued that, as it had ploughed most of its profits to the expansion programme, it needed additional revenue to cover costs. However, this argument was not widely accepted. People demanded the publication of financial statements.[48] Most residents in both Kowloon and Hong Kong opposed the proposed increase, and backed a planned mass rally.[49] Yet, this was not the consensual position: many residents also believed that an increase up to 20 per cent was acceptable in spite of the consensus that the company's service had to be improved.[50]

Political Culture

The protest against telephone rate increases took a variety of forms that reveals the shifting political culture of the time, and highlights how campaigners were motivated by instrumental reasoning and by ideologies. As *Town Talk* has revealed, many believed the proposed increased was simply unjust: '…there was still a persistent belief that the Telephone Company was making an excessive profit and that the proposed increases were unjustified'.[51] Similar attitudes towards the event could be observed in the newspaper coverage. For example, a reader named C. H. Ho wrote to *South China Morning Post* arguing that the increase was unjust: 'Undeniably, the Hong Kong Telephone Company is one of the monopolies which are making huge profits every year. It has no reason to raise telephone

[48] HKRS 286-1-14, 'Increase in Telephone Charges', *Town Talk*, 23 January 1975, p. 2.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., p. 3.
[51] Ibid., p. 2.

charges twice within a very short time.'[52] Many people joined the campaign because they were provoked by the concept of fairness:

> Why must the consumer pay for mismanagement in a company? The deficit arising is due to poor management planning and having worked themselves into a hole, Mr Walker expects the consumer to bale the company out by paying higher chargers…The Telephone Company is passing the buck for their management mistakes to the consumer.[53]

Others got involved in the campaign due to their dissatisfaction in the company's lack of administrative and financial transparency:

> Up till now, the public is kept in total darkness. We are not given any consistent explanation as to why the increase is needed. Mr Walker, by his action, or lack of it, obviously does not feel responsible for the public. I can understand why gentlemen should want to appeal to the elitist minority already in the power structures. But the day when major decisions affecting the public can be made without reference to the people is crumbling, even in colonial Hong Kong. If Mr Walker thinks he can get away with it simply labelling critics as irresponsible, he has yet much to learn.[54]

Sing Tao Yat Pao similarly recorded that the public believed that examination on the increase of the telephone rentals should be made public.[55] These comments found on *Town Talk* and published in the newspapers reveal instrumental and ideological concerns.

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[52] HKRS 618-1-567, C. H. Ho, 'Boycott Campaign Proposed', *South China Morning Post*, 9 September 1974.
[53] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Subscriber', 'The Consumer Should Not Be Penalized', *South China Morning Post*, 29 January 1975.
[54] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Public Has A Right to Know', *South China Morning Post*, 14 January 1975.
[55] HKRS 618-1-567, '電話加費應公開審查', *Sing Tao Yat Pao*, 3 January 1975.

Rather than participating in the rally, many people chose to write to the newspaper editors to express their grievances, indicating political conservatism. A subscriber, for instance, wrote to *South China Morning Post* anonymously after the government announced that a 30 per cent increase was approved on 22 January 1975. He made a recommendation that the company should break into a number of units in different districts through subsidiary franchise if it could not operate effectively as a single unit.[56] Another reader of *South China Morning Post* complained to the press that it was 'unjustifiable' for the government to approve a 30 per cent increase in telephone rate before the completion of investigation by the Committee of Inquiry.[57]

Nonetheless, there were some who were concerned that this incident could escalate, especially after Walker reiterated that most local people were unable to understand the Telephone Company's accounts even if they were publicized. The impact of the riots of 1966 and 1967 had left a strong impression on people, making them fearful of social unrest. As *Town Talk* pointed out:

> Quite a number of people were apprehensive over the possibility of a repeated circumstances and tensions which resulted in the Star Ferry riots several years ago. They felt that the telephone increase affected practically everyone in Hong Kong and any opposition was likely to be supported by the majority of the population.[58]

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[56] 'The Consumer Should Not Be Penalized'.
[57] HKRS 618-1-567, K. F. Leung, 'Why Raise Charges Before Inquiry', *South China Morning Post*, 30 January 1975.
[58] 'Mounting Tensions Over Telephone Increase', p. 2.

Tsz Wan Shan estate dwellers informed the City District Officer that 'they were afraid that disturbances might break out if the government was to take the Telephone Company's side and disregard public feeling'.[59]

As *Town Talk* has pointed out, in 'more vehement circles', there was an explicit threat to resort to violence against the colonial state, including the use of bombs if the government ignored public opposition to the rate rises.[60] Posters included inflammatory slogans, such as 'Hang P. C. Woo', were placed in prominent locations, such as Waterloo Road and Pui Ching Road in Kowloon. This was a threat to use violence against the Chairman of the Telephone Advisory Committee because the Committee declared the proposed increase reasonable and Woo asked residents who could not afford to pay the rental to share telephone lines.[61] Graffiti art also included the slogans 'Hang Haddon Cave' and 'Hang P.C. Woo'. These were highly visual displays of protest. Artists daubed their remarks in red characters in various places of Kowloon. Although the Kowloon City District Commissioner believed that these visual protests may have been the work of a 'lunatic fringe', he also acknowledged that these extreme forms of protest indicated that 'public resentment' was 'deep'.[62] City District Officers also listened into and recorded spontaneous comments from the public, such as 'If telephone charges were increased as much as it had been rumoured, it would not be unjust, if the fate conveyed by these characters were to begall the two gentlemen in question'.[63] The form of the protest is revealing, indicating that the political culture in Hong Kong was not monolithically conservative. Radical means to voice grievances were sought when people's

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[59] 'Increase in Telephone Charges', p. 2.
[60] 'Pressure for Government Line on Telephone Increase', p. 1.
[61] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Hang P. C. Woo Posters Appeared in Kowloon', *Tin Wong Evening News*, 9 January 1975.
[62] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 20 January 1975, p.1
[63] Ibid.

economic interest and livelihood were threatened.

On a district level, the situation was tense. kaifong associations and Mutual Aid Committees, which represented a large number of middle-aged and elderly groups planned their actions to express discontent over the proposal. They also joined the collective lobbies.[64] For example, Wong Tai Sin kaifongs met in early January to work out strategies to exert pressure on the colonial government. Choi Hung Mutual Aid Committee declared publicly that it opposed to the proposed increase.[65] The Hong Kong and Kowloon Joint Kaifong Research Council also petitioned the Legislative Council on 11 January, arguing that any increases in telephone rate would 'create a chain reaction and lead to disturbances similar to the one that followed the Star Ferry fare increase several years ago'.[66] Many kaifongs and community organizations in Mong Kok, Shum Shui Po, Kwun Tong and the Western District by contrast decided to wait for the government to announce its stand before taking any further actions.[67] By mid-January, many kaifong groups kept pressing the City District Officers in their areas for an official stance on the matter as they felt that the government 'had remained doggedly silent'.[68] Some had already taken action in form of signature campaigns, such as the Choi Hung Mutual Aid Committee. These grassroots organizations started to liaise with voluntary agencies such as Caritas and the Society for Community Organization, which had become 'generally interested in the issue'.[69] According to the Kowloon City District Commissioner, there was now a growing tendency for the Mutual Aid Committees to 'confederate into united fronts' in

[64] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. K. Neoh, City District Commissioner (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 8 January 1975, p. 3.
[65] Ibid.
[66] HKRS 618-1-566, Letter from Yan Chi Kit, Hong Kong and Kowloon Joint Kaifong Research Council to Members of the Legislative Council, 11 January 1975.
[67] 'Mounting Tensions Over Telephone Increase', p. 1.
[68] HKRS 286-1-14, 'Pressure for Government Line on Telephone Increases', *Town Talk*, 16 January 1975, p. 2.
[69] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. K. Neoh, City District Commissioner (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 13 January 1975, p. 3.

opposition to the telephone rate increase.[70] It was predicted that the formation of broad alliance would 'offer fertile ground for consolidation of power for the more opportunistic' and there was little the government could do to prevent it.[71] In late January, the Choi Hung Mutual Aid Committee handed in a petition with 1,000 signatures to the Universal Consumers' Association. The Tai Hang Tung Society for Community Organization also put on banners in the estate to protest against the proposed increase.[72] This demonstrated that the middle-aged and elderly groups could also be mobilized when their interests were threatened.

Resettlement estates formed their own lobbies. The Lei Cheng Uk Resettlement Estate Commercial and Industrial General Association, for example, petitioned the UMELCO, noting that the proposed increase was 'unanimously opposed' by their association. It submitted the public opinions in its district, which suggested that approval to the rise would only 'accelerate social unease and bring about undesirable chain reactions'.[73] The Hong Kong and Kowloon and New Territories Manufacturing and Commercial Association started a signature campaign in Tsz Wan Shan, although it was that the campaign 'has not been very effective'.[74] Residents in Ngau Tau Kok also petitioned the UMELCO, urging the government not to disregard public opinions:

> There was the occurrence of protesting posters against the increase of telephone rental. Though such move was rather irritating, that was the reaction of the citizens. It is a proper procedure of the government not to make any decision blindly in the

[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 20 January 1975, p. 4.
[73] HKRS 618-1-566, Letter from Lei Cheng Uk Resettlement Estate Commercial and Industrial General Association to UMELCO, 3 January 1975.
[74] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 20 January 1975, p. 3.

> matter and the public opinions should not be disregarded. It should be realized that 'a small defect will gradually spoil the whole'….At present, the social economy is in an unfavourable condition and many of the citizens are unable to make both ends meet.…The government should be sympathetic with the citizens.[75]

The colonial administration was aware of the escalating social discontent. Officials predicted that 'it will not be long before the other, less formalized but influenced groups' to follow.[76] This was proven correct. In late January, a resettlement estate shop owner's lobby escalated its action. The group represented twenty-three estates but the impetus of which came from Ngau Tau Kok and Jordan Valley Estates. They submitted a petition at the Colonial Secretariat, protesting against the telephone charge increase. Government officials believed that if the colonial administration did not respond, these organizations would escalate action, mobilizing a signature campaign.[77] In February, ten representatives were sent by the Tai Wo Hau Resettlement Estate to meet with Oswald Cheung and Harry Fung, unofficial members of the Legislative Council, to voice their opposition on behalf of 3,000 telephone subscribers in the area. They reiterated publicly that they opposed to any kind of increase and would cut the telephone lines if necessary.[78] Social movements were actively seeking governmental intervention when their interests were at stake.

On 6 February, the Legislative Council unanimously approved the Telephone (Amendment) Bill which enabled the company to increase the telephone rental by 30 per cent. Public opinions, however, appeared to have been influenced by negative comments made by the

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[75] HKRS 618-1-566, Letter from residents of District 9, Fuk Tak Village, Ngau Tau Kok to UMELCO, 17 January 1975.
[76] 'Telephone Charge Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh, City District Commission (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 13 January 1975, p. 2.
[77] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 20 January 1975, p. 3.
[78] HKRS 618-1-567, 'LegCo Men to Get Phone Petition', *South China Morning Post*, 3 February 1975.

mass media.[79] Many housewives and residents started to criticize the increase, mainly because they believed that the capital for expansion programme should be paid by shareholders instead of consumers, and no decision should be made before the Commission of Inquiry finished its investigation.[80] However, in February, the campaign subsided, with ‘a cooling down of public vehemence’, a contrast to ‘the emotional outbursts’ that had followed the announcement of the purposed 70 per cent increase a month earlier. The following observation was recorded in *Town Talk*:

> In almost all the districts, the general feeling was that the increase was inevitable and although certain kaifong groups still pledged support to anti-increase campaigns, they added they were not keen about taking drastic action. Leaders in the anti-rent increase movement in group A and B housing estates said that they would rather save their energy for more effective action over proposed rent increases for shops in housing estates.[81]

To assess shifting popular sentiments, the Home Affairs Department instructed the City District Officers to conduct an opinion poll. The City District Officers in Hong Kong interviewed 824 people to assess public reactions on the increase. 46 per cent believed the increase was acceptable and 19 per cent had no comments. Only 35 percent thought the decision was unacceptable. This result was impressionistic as there was no previous survey data to compare this finding with. Nonetheless, most City District Officers believed that the survey suggested ‘the emotion of general public has subsided to a large extent’.[82] As

[79] HKRS 618-1-567, ‘Shift in Public Reaction towards Telephone Increase’, *Town Talk*, 6 February 1975, p. 1.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] HKRS 394-27-11, ‘Assessment of Public Reaction on the 30% Increase of Telephone Charges’, memo from S. T. Tam, City District Commissioner (Hong Kong) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 6 February 1975.

Legislative Councillor Oswald Cheung had suggested, 'even a clever housewife cannot cook a meal without rice'.[83] By this point, although some popular misconceptions on the financial situation of the company remained, the public had started understanding why the increase was necessary. As *Town Talk* had pointed out, 'the television programmes and government press features certainly succeeded to a certain extent in explaining the issue'.[84] The 'middle class segments', such as some building contractors and businessmen even became sympathetic for the financial difficulties the Telephone Company was experiencing.[85] According to *Town Talk*, the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry also helped to ease tensions:

> It was noticed that all districts that following the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry, public vehemence on this issue had cooled down considerably and over the Chinese New Year, very few comments on the issues were heard, the public generally welcomed the choice of members of the Commission, especially Sir Alastair Blair-Kerr as the Chairman.[86]

The campaign soon lost its momentum and waned from late February 1975.

The section demonstrates that the proposed increase in telephone rental attracted universal attention from Hong Kong Chinese of different social classes and age groups. Participants were motivated not only by the instrumental concerns, but also ideologies such as justice and fairness. They also anticipated increased transparency in the company's administration. This section also reveals a shifting political culture in Hong Kong among the middle-aged and elderly groups, as well as the grassroots groups. Unlike previous campaigns, the middle-aged

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[83] HKRS 618-1-567, 'A Decision We Must Accept', *South China Morning Post*, 6 February 1975.
[84] HKRS 286-1-14, 'Grudging Acceptance of Telephone Increase', *Town Talk*, 30 January 1975, p. 2.
[85] 'Shift in Public Reaction towards Telephone Increase', p. 1.
[86] HKRS 286-1-14, 'Increase in Telephone Charges', *Town Talk*, 20 February 1975, p. 5.

and elderly groups, such as the kaifong leaders, were less reluctant to engage in the campaign. They were not afraid to express their grievances when their interests were at stake. While some activists considered cutting their telephone lines to boycott the Telephone Company, others took the initiative to organize signature campaigns and petitions. People at the grassroots level, such as residents in resettlements estate also engaged in consumer activism in this case because their livelihoods were directly affected. Their rhetoric was radical, in extremist, inciting violence in the slogan 'Hang P. C. Woo'. These were outliers. The memories of the Star Ferry riots in 1966 were fresh. People were genuinely concerned that the campaign might cause colony-wide social unrest, which they opposed. Direct confrontations did not occur. Political culture was on the whole liberal, advocating change via established political channels of communication.

Political Activism

To protest against the proposed increases in telephone rate, organizations collaborated informally and formed three coalitions. The primary lobby group was the Christian Industrial Committee, headed by Raymond Fung, which was considered by the colonial state to be 'by far the largest political lobby' and 'the most successful'.[87] Formed in 1966, with an interest in labour welfare policy and industrial safety, the Committee was influential, connecting more than 350 separate organizations, including kaifong associations, clansmen association and many voluntary agencies.[88] It was driven by instrumental concerns and employed moderate language to exert pressure on the colonial government, requesting explanations of rate

[87] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. K. Neoh, City District Commissioner (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 8 January 1975, p. 2; Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. K. Neoh, City District Commissioner (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 13 January 1975, p. 2.
[88] HKRS 394-27-11, 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 20 January 1975, p. 3.

increases. Believing the increase would have a drastic impact on people's livelihood, it petitioned the UMELCO, from September 1974. It argued, for example:

> Our organization feels that the proposed increase is detrimental to Hong Kong's worsening economic life, as a community and as families. Therefore we are writing to the Consumer Council to ask for an investigation, to you for your support, and to other community groups for a concerted effort.[89]

It then requested an appointment formally with P. C. Woo, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Telephone Services.[90] Under the chairmanship of L. K. Ding, an Urban Councillor, the organization was in close contact with a number of kaifong federal bodies, which involved influential figures in both Research Council and the Kaifong Advancement Association. To coerce the Telephone Company to withdraw its proposed increase, Ding publicly compared the campaign against telephone rate increase to the 1966 riots:

> It's the timing; the proposal for an increase in rates has come at a time when people are troubled enough by unemployment and so on. We should try to avoid the rebellion of 1966 when we had a massive scale riot over a nickel increase. This time it's not a nickel but hundreds of dollars.[91]

The Committee deployed the example of the 1966 riots to put pressure on the Telephone Company and the colonial government. It was argued that disturbances would follow if public opinions were neglected and concessions were refused. There were also plans to rally for external support from Labour Parliamentarians in London.[92] Together with some

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[89] HKRS 618-1-566, Letter from L. K. Ding to UMELCO, 10 September 1974.
[90] HKRS 276-8-137, Letter from Raymond Fung, Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee to P. C. Woo, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Telephone Services, 25 September 1974.
[91] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Appeal to Oppose Telephone Rate Rise', *Hong Kong Standard*, 19 September 1974.
[92] HKRS 618-1-567, 'MP Aid to Fight Phone Increases Sought', *South China Morning Post*, 31 December 1974.

influential figures in multi-storey building groups, such as Lee Wan Yuen, Wong Hoi, Wong Ping Ho and Wong Cham, Ding used their influence and requested an interview with the Secretary of Home Affairs in January 1975, which was aware of by the press and kaifongs in most districts.[93] The Committee's success of mobilizing a large number of organizations within a short period of time shows its organizational capacity, built on an expansive social network.

A secondary lobby group was the Universal Consumers' Association, an organization headed by Urban Councillor, Edmund Chow and William Shum, a civic candidate running for the coming Urban Council election. The Association aimed to 'reveal profiteering in wholesale and retail outlets, to work against product inferiority, to censor over-exaggerated advertisement, to press for more sources of supply of consumer goods and to fight against price ragging by franchise or monopoly'.[94] Most of the executive members of the organization were middle-class professionals, such as lawyers, accountants and architects. The Association was supported by more than forty supporting associations and district committees, ranging from kaifong associations to business cooperates in different districts. Organizations included, for example, Civic Association Hung Hom District, Hong Kong and Kowloon Mutual Aid Association, Kwai Chung Kaifong Association, the Reform Club, the Incorporated Owners of Pak Lee building and Daily Growth Investment Company.[95] Since December 1974, the Association had expressed discontent over the proposed increase through the press to mobilize public opinions.[96] On 10 January 1975, Chow held a public

[93] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. K. Neoh, City District Commissioner (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 8 January 1975, p. 2.
[94] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, 'Consumerism, Free Competition and Public Policy', *CU Student*, 3:1 15 January 1975.
[95] HKRS 618-1-566, 'Universal Consumers Association Supporting Association & District Committees', (date not specified).
[96] 'Move to Increase Telephone Rates Lashed'.

meeting at the Hong Kong University Students Alumni Association in Edinburgh House, which was attended many kaifong leaders. According to a report by the Central City District Officer, the meeting was 'jam-packed with people overflowing into the corridor'.[97] It was attended mainly by 'middle-aged' men of secondary school education. Most of them were 'quite established'. Only four to five participants were female.[98] The meeting agreed to petition the Telephone Company and start a signature campaign. Another meeting was to be scheduled if the petition letter and signature campaign failed to produce any effect. In the petition to the Telephone Company, the Association argued that no rental increase should be approved and urged the company to publicize its accounts:

> It was a shock to the consumers to know that your company is applying for permission to increase the telephone charge by about 70 per cent. Although you maintained that the financial situation of your company was something confidential between your company and the government, we feel that the consumers are entitled to know as they will be directly affected if your proposed increase is approved. If you believe that your application for increase is not profit motivated, would it be possible if you could forward to us for our perusal and discussion a copy of the relevant statement of account of your company in support of your application submitted to the Telephone Advisory Committee?[99]

The signature campaign subsequently started on 15 January, when 1,000 forms, each catering for ten persons, were issued to commercial organizations, industrial groups, schools and

[97] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh, City District Commission (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 13 January 1975, p. 2.
[98] HKRS 394-27-11, 'A Report on the Meeting of the Universal Consumers' Association Held on 10 January at the HKU Alumni Association Premises', memo from Angus Miu Wah-On, City District Officer (Central) to City District Commissioner (Hong Kong), 11 January 1975, p. 1.
[99] HKRS 276-8-137, Letter from William Shum to Manager of the Hong Kong Telephone Company, 13 January 1975.

kaifong associations. The campaign was backed by the public; 643 out of the 1,000 forms were returned by 31 January. The forms carried 5,250 signatures, presenting forty-three organizations and seventy-five schools. 4,777 people, approximately 91 per cent of the signatories expressed their objection to charge increase of any degree.[100] Compared to the Christian Industrial Committee, the Universal Consumers' Association initially adopted a tougher attitude. It 'unanimously' refused to give concession to 'even 1 per cent increase in rates'.[101] The City District Commissioner argued that the group 'present(ed) a grave stumbling block for any peaceful negotiation'.[102] It was unsympathetic to the government and believed that if there were any riots, it was 'entirely the working of the government'.[103] However, by mid-January, their position had shifted, due to its survey of popular attitudes. Rather than adhering to the 'no concession' position, the organization surveyed the public to assess their views on the percentage of rate increase. In the questionnaire, six answers (20 per cent, 30 per cent, 40 per cent, 50 per cent, 60 per cent and 70 per cent) were provided. No increase was not an option.[104] In early February, to put pressure on the government, the Association sent the poll result to the UMELCO. The active engagement of the ordinarily pro-status quo and politically indifferent middle class in the campaign through the Universal Consumers' Association suggests that they could be mobilized against the colonial state when their interests were affected. However, the Universal Consumers' Association received less support when compared to the Christian Industrial Committee as it was 'obviously bent on the issue' to pull votes for the upcoming election.[105]

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[100] HKRS 618-1-566, Letter from William Shum to the UMLECO, 3 February 1975.
[101] 'A Report on the Meeting of the Universal Consumers' Association Held on 10 January at the HKU Alumni Association Premises', p. 3.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] HKRS 394-27-11, 'Situation Report on Items of Special Current Interest: Proposed increase in Telephone Charges', memo from S.T. Tam, City District Commissioner (Hong Kong) to Director of Home Affairs, 16 January 1975, p. 1.
[105] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 20 January 1975, p. 2.

A further organization, the well-established Reform Club, also joined the rate increase protest. Yeung Li Yin and two other Reform Club candidates started a signature campaign. Forms were sent out to banks on behalf of Yeung to appeal for support.[106] To campaign effectively and exert pressure on the colonial government, in February, the Reform Club set up an ad-hoc sub-committee which consisted of members such as Yeung, Messrs Napoleon Ng, Poon Tai Leung, Sung Pui. The sub-committee carried out a public opinion survey on the proposed rise in telephone charges. It issued 30,000 poll forms and distributed to the public. At the end, 21,940 of the respondents were against the increase, with only sixty-nine of them supporting the proposed revision.[107] The Club submitted the results to the UMELCO. Nonetheless, the Reform Club campaign received less publicity than those organized by the Christian Industrial Committee and the Universal Consumers' Association. It was only briefly mentioned in Yeung's speech at the inauguration ceremony of the executive committee on 17 January. According to Kowloon City District Commissioner, its signature campaign was 'rather ineffective', similarly because of its underlying political motive of appealing for public support in the forthcoming election.[108]

A few other civic bodies took an interest in the protest. In early January, the Chinese Manufacturers' Association, which was set up in 1934 representing its member in various sectors of industry and trade, sent a letter to the Colonial Secretary, Deny Roberts and the Chairman of the Telephone Advisory Committee, P. C. Woo, warning that any rise in

[106] Ibid., p. 3.
[107] HKRS 618-1-566, Letter from Brook Bernacchi to P. W. Primrose, Administrative Secretary of UMELCO, 3 February 1975.
[108] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 20 January 1975, p. 3.

telephone rentals may 'touch off social discontent and further inflation'.[109] It described the proposed increase as 'untimely in the light of the present economic situations' and argued that it was 'wrong' to make subscribers finance the company's expansion programme. It was also 'beyond understanding' that the company could not operate in spite of the rental increase in 1974 and the 'sizeable net profit' of $70 million.[110] In late January, after the government approved a 30 per cent increase in telephone rates, the Chinese Manufactures' Association formed a new federal pressure group with twenty-two other industrial, commercial and civic organizations, including the most influential trade association, the Hong Kong Chinese General Chamber of Commerce; the Kowloon Chamber of Commerce, the kaifong federal bodies and the Kowloon Multi-storey Buildings General Association also were associated with this pressure group. This led to a jointly issued press statement 30 January, to protest against the 'unwise' increase and to demand that the Telephone Company's accounts to be made public.[111]

By late January, the main lobbies had coalesced. Two distinct categories emerged. These three groups were liberal and tended to believe in solving the issue through the adoption of 'collaborative strategy', such as meetings and petitions. Some student organizations, however, believed that the matter could only be settled by 'conflicts', such as demonstrations, sit-ins and other direct actions.[112] In mid-January, the City District Commissioner of Kowloon had already observed that the young leftists would take advantage of the telephone rate issue to discredit the colonial state: 'New Left and student groups are known to be

[109] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh, City District Commission (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 13 January 1975.
[110] HKRS 618-1-567, 'CMA Opposes Telephone Fee Increase', *South China Morning Post*, 9 January 1975.
[111] HKRS 394-27-11, 'Telephone Charges Increases Recent Development: Report No.2 on Public Reaction', memo from A. K. Chui to Financial Secretary, Secretary for Home Affairs, Secretary for Economic Services and Director of Special Branch, 3 February 1975, p. 1.
[112] Ibid., p. 2.

actively planning protest action. The telephone charges issue is precisely an issue which the radical new left groups have been waiting for and there is no doubt that it will be exploited to the full.'[113] The Hong Kong Youth and Students Association, which was headed by Siu Kai-chung, probably lined up student radicals such as Daily Combat and 70s Bi-Weekly Groups and maintained a close connection with left wing secondary schools, the editors of the student publication called *Student Go* and community groups in Ngau Tau Kok Estate.[114] On 16 January, the Association sent a petition letter to the Governor, in which the student activists presented themselves as orderly citizens who often sided with the colonial state but expressed concerns over the unjust increase:

> The Hong Kong administration has weathered crisis after crisis. On each occasion we were the first to voice our support of the government and advised heated and heady young people against anti-government demonstrations…. However, this time the Hong Kong Telephone Company is applying for a 70 per cent increase in charges less than a year since the last increase. The Hong Kong public is shocked. We are of opinion that the grounds whereon the Telephone Company rests its application are inadequate. If the increase come through, other public utilities would follow suit, aggravating inflation and miserable economic situation. [115]

Nonetheless, beneath this moderate public image, they warned the government of the potential consequence of the rate increase: 'Civil disturbances, could do neither government nor governed any good'.[116] To avoid being viewed as 'trouble-makers', they claimed that

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[113] Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh, City District Commission (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 13 January 1975, p. 3.
[114] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 20 January 1975, p. 4.
[115] HKRS 394-27-11, Letter from Hong Kong Youth and Student's Association to Murray MacLehose, 16 January 1975, p. 1.
[116] Ibid.

their stance had always been 'to abstain from unhappy incidents'. They also informed the Governor that they had already contacted the police force and Home Affairs Department to ensure that their rally was held smoothly.[117]

Although the government announced that a 30 per cent instead of a 70 per cent increase was approved on 22 January, the Hong Kong Youth and Students Association did not cease to protest. On 26 January, the Association held a mass rally in Kowloon Park. It started with 100 members of the Association marching from the main gate of to park to the allocated site. During the rally, students expressed their anti-colonial agenda. The Association's Chairman, Sui Kai-chung, accused the colonial government of being 'capitalists exploiting the common people' and demanded the state to give the public a full explanation as to why 30 per cent rate increase was allowed. They also urged the government to abolish the Telephone Advisory Committee. Instead, these bodies should be replaced by elected members and members from the public. The rally was attended by 2,000 people including Urban Councillors Denny Huang and Elsie Elliott. Civic leaders from the three other lobbies, for example, Edmund Chow and L. K. Ding from the Christian Industrial Committee, Raymond Fung and William Shum from the Universal Consumers' Association and Cecilia Yeung from the Reform Club, also participated in the rally.[118]

This episode led to a clash between Councillors and the colonial government and thus had the potential to open up issues about the relationship between Hong Kong representative organizations and the executives. Significantly, Elliott advocated unofficial Legislative Councillors resign in protest if the colonial government insisted on granting 30 per cent

[117] Ibid.
[118] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Phone Rates Protest Rally Draws 2,000', *South China Morning Post*, 27 January 1975.

increase in telephone charges.[119] However, according to the assessment carried out by A. K. Chui, the Director of Home Affairs, the reaction to the rally was 'very mild and helpfully indifferent'.[120] *Town Talk* also reported that public reaction towards the rally appeared to 'lack enthusiasm'.[121] Some residents believed that the small number of student participants was due to the fact that the rally was held during exam periods.[122] It could also be attributed to the political indifference of the public, which prevented many from engaging in protests that directly confronted the government. By late January, it was evident that the campaign had not been effective. As 'public emotion cooled down significantly'.[123] These public reactions disappointed student activists: '…the extremist groups were talking loosely about organizing another rally because these critics were dissatisfied or disappointed with the lack of impact from the first one'.[124] Apart from the Youth and Students Association, the more 'moderate' HKFS also launched a signature campaign and a sit-in against the Telephone Company in making any increase of the telephone rate, jobbery of officials and merchants, and the profiteering of public utilities. The signature campaign was held at Ferry Wharves and in San Po Kong in late January.[125] On 5 February, the HKFS organized a sit-in jointly with the Hong Kong University Students' Union and Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students outside the Legislative Council chamber, to protest against telephone rate increase and against public utility profiteering. The sit-in was a joint action between ultra-leftist and moderate student groups. About 150 people were assembled. The signature forms containing 60,000 signatures were hung up. To express their discontent over the 30 per cent rate

[119] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Elsie Says LegCo People Should All Resign as a Protest', *Star*, 27 January 1975.
[120] 'Telephone Charges Increases Recent Development: Report No.2 on Public Reaction', memo from A. K. Chui to Financial Secretary, Secretary for Home Affairs, Secretary for Economic Services and Director of Special Branch, 3 February 1975, p. 1.
[121] 'Grudging Acceptance of Telephone Increase', p. 2.
[122] Ibid.
[123] 'Telephone Charges Increases Recent Development: Report No.2 on Public Reaction', p. 1.
[124] Ibid.
[125] HKTS 618-1-567, 'Students to Hold Signature Campaign against the Increase of Telephone Rental', *Highnoon News*, 31 January 1975.

increase, students made bonfires out of the signature forms they collected.[126] Even such symbolic behaviour did not receive support from the public. The demonstration indicated that the young generation, which often held an anti-colonial agenda, endorsed political activism and believed that it was their right to raise their demands through social movements.

On the whole, student bodies and organizations in the educational sector protested in a relatively moderate manner. The College Student Association of Hong Kong, for example, issued an open letter to the Chairman of Consumer Council on 23 January, urging the government to put an end to the monopoly of the Telephone Company as 'the company's own claim of insufficient present services clearly indicate an acute ''shortage of supply'''.[127] Some secondary schools and universities also supported this campaign. On 29 January, for example, forty-two representatives from a number of secondary schools and universities distributed pamphlets to the public at the Star Ferry concourse. They also submitted an open letter to the Administrative Secretary of UMELCO, urging the Councillors to give full consideration to the matter and inform the public regarding their stance.[128] The Hong Kong Teachers Association issued a public statement to urge the government to carry out a thorough investigation in the financial condition of the Telephone Company in case of the presence of any inappropriate corrupt practices.[129] These were moderate protests, in a liberal tradition, requesting improved information and state regulation.

[126] HKRS 394-27-11, 'A Situation Report on Students Sit-in Outside Main Entrance of Colonial Secretariat on 5 February 1975 from 1:45 pm to 4:05 pm', memo from Angus Miu Wah-on, City District Officer (Central) to City District Commissioner (Hong Kong), 6 February 1975.
[127] HKRS 276-8-137, Open letter from Ho Chun Yan, the President of the College Student Association of Hong Kong to Consumer Council, 23 January 1975.
[128] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Student to Submit Open Letter to UMELCO Councillors against the Increase of Telephone Rental', *Sing Tao Man Pao*, 29 January 1975.
[129] HKRS 618-1-567, 'New Extracts of 3.2.75', 3 February 1975.

The campaign against telephone rate increases demonstrates that associations of different backgrounds collaborated and formed coalitions. Despite the employment of different strategies, all activists and participants expected the colonial government to intervene and regulate the telephone rate. One can observe that the upper and middle classes flexibly adjusted their attitudes towards informal political activities when their interests were threatened. Although the campaign was very much led by middle and upper class opinion leaders, residents at the grassroots level also demonstrated a capacity for political mobilization. Rather than remaining 'politically quiescent', kaifongs on a district level and residents in resettlement estates formed groups and joined political lobbies. These groups often exerted pressure on the government through informal moderate measures, such as sending petitions and organizing signature campaigns. Compared to other social classes and age groups, students and the young generation who were critics of the colonial government, employed more radical strategies, such as organizing demonstrations and sit-ins, to confront the colonial state directly.

The political culture in Hong Kong was not monolithic. Yet, in events like this where public interests were vastly affected, even groups with different political attitudes and orientations collaborated informally and formally in alliances in the pursuit of a common goal.

<u>Government's Responses and Public Reception</u>

Since the Telephone Company announced its application to increase the telephone rate, the colonial government had been monitoring shifting popular sentiments. The Hong Kong City District Commissioner instructed the City District Officers of Western District, Eastern District, Central and Wan Chai on 6 January to 'pay special attention to how the public reacts

to the proposed telephone rate increase' and plan strategies to ease tensions.[130] These public opinion assessments impacted on the colonial state's ruling strategies as they were passed to the Colonial Secretariat to inform decision making.[131] The City District Commissioner of both Hong Kong and Kowloon were asked to provide the Secretariat of Home Affairs with the latest report on public reactions, including main points that had caused public outcry. The Hong Kong Special Branch was also required to put forward comments. These reports were discussed during the Governor's Committee meeting on 10 January.[132] There was considerable pressure on the administration to address the 'extremely emotive attitude of the public' and 'defuse the issue', and it initially decided to encourage public debate and then to depoliticize the issue by setting up a special commission or a sub-committee for the Telephone Advisory Committee to investigate the legal status of the company.[133]

In early January, the colonial government was 'under fire' as its passive stance had 'created the impression that it is prepared to side with the company', and disregard the interests of consumers.[134] In response, the Kowloon City District Commissioner recommended the state to take a public standing on the issue as soon as possible by announcing that a decision had not been made and the interest of consumers were considered in the government's decision making process. They also suggested that a public statement should be made to clarify that the responsibility to explain the company's financial accounts lay on the company itself, rather than the government.[135] During their engagements with the public, City District Officers were also instructed to take a similar line. Observations of City District Officers

[130] HKRS 394-27-11, 'Telephone Rate Increase', memo from Peter Ng, City District Commissioner (Hong Kong) to City District Officers (Western, Eastern, Central and Wan Chai), 6 January 1975.
[131] Ibid.
[132] HKRS 394-27-11, Extract of minutes from Directorate meeting, 7 January 1975.
[133] HKRS 394-27-11, Extract of minutes from HAIG meeting, 6 January 1975.
[134] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. K. Neoh, City District Commissioner (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 8 January 1975, p. 1.
[135] Ibid.

indicated the possibility of bankruptcy had little credibility in the public eyes, especially after the company has declared a profit of $70 million in 1974. The fact that the company was a monopoly also led the public to expect the government to investigate all other possible ways to finance its capital expansion programme before approving the rate increase.[136]

The telephone rate increase continued to be given 'top priority' in the City District Offices in early 1975.[137] City District Officers observed that suspicion that corruption existed in the company prevailed. The public believed that the financial difficulties of the company could be attributed to 'serious errors in forecasting the demand and the need of telephone service' as this Forecast Section was not managed by professional expertise. This led the company to invest a substantial amount of capital in purchasing equipment and cables.[138] In view of this situation, the City District Officers pointed out that the government was in a 'dilemma':

> If the government does not agree to the proposal of the Telephone Company, then it will result in mass unemployment for which the government will be held responsible. If the government agrees to the Telephone Company's proposal and gives the company entirely what it wants then there will be tremendous pressures from all sectors of society, and the consequences of which can be very frightening.[139]

To ease tensions and prevent the company from going into bankruptcy, they recommended that government to consider the company's proposal 'very carefully'. Their source also suggested that an increase between 25 per cent to 30 per cent may be set as 'a tolerable limit'

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[136] Ibid., p. 2.
[137] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. K. Neoh, City District Commissioner (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 8 January 1975, p. 3
[138] HKRS 394-27-11, 'A Brief Report on the Latest Situation within the Telephone Company', (date not specified), p. 1.
[139] Ibid.

for the year of 1975.[140] If the company could survive the financial difficulties this year, 'it would be much better to increase their rates next year'.[141]

These high level deliberations were kept secret from the public, but action was becoming urgently needed, as noted by lower level bureaucrats. In face of a community 'united against the telephone increases', the Kowloon City District Commissioner pointed out that 'too much delay would only enable attitudes to firm up and radicals to exploit the situation still further'.[142] He proposed two strategies. The first was to take a public stand on the issue as soon as possible. The government should state clearly that it would 'weight the consumers interest against the case of the company' and 'take all possible steps to listen to public opinions on the issue'.[143] The second was to ensure that the issue had a 'gestation' so that both the cases of the public and the company could be 'seen in a rational perspective'.[144] The City District Officers believed that 'the best way of taking the heat off the situation' was to enlarge the Advisory Committee with members from civic organizations. They also recommended that the public should be invited to share their views on the issue with the Committees. Once these consultative processes had been conducted, they advised that the Committees' recommendations to be 'published and 'debated' in the Legislative Council.[145] This would have been a significant reform of policy making.

City District Officers' recommendations were being taken into consideration by the colonial government. On 9 January, the Secretariat of Home Affairs assured the City District Officers

[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] 'Telephone Charges Increase', memo from A. F. Neoh, City District Commission (Kowloon) to Deputy Director of Home Affairs, 13 January 1975, p.3.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid., p. 4.
[145] Ibid.

that no decision would be made before the receipt of recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Telephone Services. The government planned to give ‘a detailed explanation and justification to the public on the decision taken’. A press statement was also issued on the same day by Denis Bray’s office, which it hoped would have ‘calming effect on public feeling’.[146]

On 13 January, there reforms were discussed between the Governor, the Colonial Secretary, the Secretary of Home Affairs, the Director of Information Services, the Director of the Special Branch and the political advisors at the Government House. A number of departments had been keeping a close eye on the telephone rate issue, and also fed into decision making at this point. The Special Branch reported that the issue ‘was not one for high-level consideration among local communists’ and the Kuomintang elements in the colony followed the ‘policy of avoiding direct confrontation’ although some participated individually in the protest.[147] Nonetheless, it was reported that ‘the real threat’ was from ‘the neutral groups’, notably the ‘New Left’, some Urban Councillors and shop tenants. And the shop tenants, who would be seriously affected by the rental increase were ‘potentially the most dangerous’. The issue had become an ‘emotive’ issue and thus the public reaction was ‘potentially strong’.[148] Although the Universal Consumers’ Association was not considered to be a threat, it had gained ‘a good degree of public support’ and was likely to become ‘the focal point of the organized protest’.[149] As the government ‘had so far not prepared itself for

[146] HKRS 276-8-137, ‘Telephone Rate Increase’, memo from A.K. Chui, Director of Home Affairs to Secretary of Economic Services, 9 January 1975.
[147] HKRS 394-27-11, ‘Telephone Charges’, record of a meeting held at Government House on Monday, 13 January 1975, p. 1.
[148] Ibid., p. 1.
[149] Ibid.

facing a public outcry', a remedy was required 'to prevent the situation from getting out of hand'.[150]

The outcome of these deliberations was government approval of an increase as high as the public could bear to ensure the continued operation of the Telephone Company. The government expressed its dissatisfaction with the Hong Kong Telephone Company's financial situation and recognized that the approved increase may not be sufficient in the long run. It also announced of the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, which consisted of a judge, a public accountant, 'a member of the public' and a government official.[151] To follow up the issue, the Governor requested the department heads presented to give any further thoughts on the matter 'urgently' and reach agreement over an action plan with the Colonial Secretary. The Secretary of Home Affairs and the Director of Information Service were also instructed to draft plans of a publicity campaign to ease tensions.[152] The radical option of consulting fully with the public and then orchestrating a debate in the Legislative Council was not pursued.

The Home Affairs Department continued to monitor shifting public opinions on the issue after the meeting. On 17 January, the Secretary of Home Affairs reported to the Governor that that 'people were very cross' as they disliked monopolies, the proposed percentage of increase and the proximity of this application of the last round. There was 'potential for strong public reaction'.[153] Therefore, it was recommended that the government should 'cultivate the stabilizing forces that exist' within the majority of the activists who were willing to discuss. To reduce discontent, the colonial government had to be seen to take

[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid., p. 2.
[152] Ibid.
[153] HKRS 276-8-137, Extract of minutes from Governor's Committee meeting, 17 January 1975, p. 2.

public opinions into consideration. Kowloon City District Officers were instructed to encourage people in their districts to share their views. Nonetheless, it was stressed that 'one cannot maintain credibility for too long' and the government was urged to take a public stand as soon as possible. Suggestion was made that the full examinations should be carried out to reassure the political lobbies that their views would be considered and any decision in the change in telephone rate would be made public.[154]

In a final settlement, announced on 22 January, the government set up a Commission of Inquiry, that would investigate the company's management structure, debts, liabilities, profitability and plans for future. It was also announced that the government would only approve a 30 per cent increase in telephone rentals and waive the company's royalties for 1974 and 1975. In return for the government's help, the company was asked to issue no dividends to its shareholders and accept a government appointed director in its board.[155] Some of the proposals made by City District Officers were adopted.

The settlement was criticized. People believed that 30 per cent was 'still too high' and 'unjustified'.[156] The setting up of the Commission of Inquiry did not win popular support. People viewed it as 'a plot to mollify public emotions' and did not understand the logic of settling up the Commission now that a rate had been agreed. A minority supported the formation of the Commission, as 'a good move'.[157] There were few comments made regarding the appointment of director in the company's board and the arrangement regarding dividends. The public simply did not see the benefits.[158] The public 'at large' was

[154] Ibid.
[155] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Govt Orders Inquiry into Telephone Co', *South China Morning Post*, 23 January 1975.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid., p. 2.
[158] Ibid.

‘aggrieved’. According to the City District Office staff in Kowloon, ‘much frustration abounded’ and their respondents were ‘mostly highly charged with emotions’.[159] The government’s image suffered ‘another new low’ as the increase ‘served another grave blow’ to it. Public confidence in the colonial administration was ‘weakened’.[160]

To accurately assess public reactions on the increase, a random survey was conducted by City District Officers in Hong Kong on 23 January. 1,376 people were interviewed. 92 per cent disagreed with the 30 per cent increase. Among those who were against the increase, 23 per cent insisted that no increase at all should be made. 34 per cent believed that 5 to 10 per cent was appropriate. 7 per cent thought an increase of 11 to 15 per cent was appropriate. And 12 per cent suggested that an increase of 16 to 20 per cent could be accepted. Only 2 per cent supported an increase of 21 to 25 per cent.[161] Newspapers were also ‘hostile’.[162] *Fai Po* for example, reported that ‘reaction from the public is still strong’ and pointed out that the increase was ‘absolutely unreasonable’.[163] The headline of *Hong Kong Times* also described the 30 per cent increase as ‘a move against public opinion’.[164] Both *Sing Tao Yat Pao* and *Kung Sheung Daily News* quoted Denny Huang’s words and criticized that the government had not taken the potential chain reactions which the increase would have into consideration.[165] *Sing Tao Yat Pao* also argued that the increase should not be made before the completion of the investigation conducted by the Commission of Inquiry.[166] In view of the negative comments made by the newspapers, the Governor instructed that ‘more should

[159] Ibid., p. 3.
[160] Ibid.
[161] HKRS 394-27-11, ‘Assessment of Public Opinion on the 30% Increase of Telephone Charges’, enclosed in memo from S. T. Tam, City District Commissioner (Hong Kong) to Director of Home Affairs, 24 January 1975.
[162] HKRS 276-8-137, ‘Telephone Charges’, extract of minutes from Governor’s Committee, 24 January 1975.
[163] HKRS 276-7-893, ‘Announcement of Increase in Telephone Charges’, Public Relations Division, 23 January 1975, p. 1.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] HKRS 276-7-893, ‘電話費准加三成 滿城反對嘆聲’, *Sing Tao Yat Pao*, 24 January 1975.

be done to put down government's package across the press and to impress upon editors in the danger of giving too much weight to irresponsible criticism'.[167]

By the end of January, despite the unpopularity of the 30 per cent rate increase, the campaign lost momentum. According to the City District Commissioner of Hong Kong: 'there are indications that the storm is gradually settling for the time being in the sense that the degree of hostility is subsiding.'[168] It was believed that if the decision on the percentage of increase could be postponed until the findings of the Commission of Inquiry were made available, the public would find it 'more palatable'.[169] Similar findings were reported in *Town Talk*. It was true that some were still concerned that the government was 'playing a game of numbers and arrived at his decision by mere haggling'.[170] Nonetheless, there was on the whole 'a very grudging acceptance' in the Chinese communities.[171] Kaifong associations in Sham Shui Po for example, indicated that they were less inclined to join any protest actions planned in the future.[172] By early February, the public had 'by large accepted without query that the Telephone Company is in a very difficult financial situation'.[173] They were now prepared to contribute to enable the continual operation of the company. They were also convinced that the government had 'tried its best in finding the fairest and cheapest way so that burden falls in the right places'.[174] The issue was now merely 'one of a challenges to our public relations efforts' rather than 'a serious threat to our social order' despite the fact that people were still 'in an unhappy mood about these bad times' and there was still concerns that the issue may

[167] 'Telephone Charges', extract of minutes from Governor's Committee, 24 January 1975.
[168] HKRS 394-27-11, 'Telephone Charge Increases', memo from Peter Ng, City District Commissioner (Hong Kong) to Deputy of Director of Home Affairs, 30 January 1975, p. 1.
[169] Ibid.
[170] 'Grudging Acceptance of Telephone Increase', *Town Talk*, 30 January 1975, p. 1.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] 'Telephone Charge Increase Recent Development: Report No. 2 on Public Reaction', p. 3.
[174] Ibid.

turn into civil disorder.[175] The Director of Home Affairs noted that 'the people are very much on the government's side'.[176] The government concluded that it must respond to dissent by improving the flow of information from itself to the people. It must try 'hardest to convince them that government is very much on their side as well', presenting data and facts were of 'paramount importance'. Government decisions must be communicated, including a refusal to make the accounts of the company public.[177]

The dispute had not led to a reform of modes of political communication. Once tensions had eased, the Legislative Council approved unanimously a 30 per cent increase in telephone rate. On 8 February, the composition of the Committee of Inquiry was also announced. The Committee was consisted of Alastair Blair-Kerr; Gordon MacWhinnie, the Chairman of the Hong Kong Society of Accountant; John Soong, the Chairman and Managing Director of Mobil Oil in Hong Kong; C. P. Hung, the President of Chinese Manufacturers Association; L .K. Ding, the Chairman of the Christian Industrial Committee, the largest lobby in the campaign; and Lydia Dunn, the Director of Swire and Maclaine.[178] The Committee was dominated by business and professional elites.

The colonial government closely monitored shifting public opinions. City District Officers were particularly active, making daily observations based on contacts with the 'man in the street'. The Home Affairs Department, the Division of Information Services and the Special Branch also checked political activism and popular responses towards the issue constantly. Reports and recommendations were passed to the Governor and advisory committees. Shifting public sentiments shaped the government responses. Only 30 per cent of increase

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[175] Ibid., p. 2.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.
[178] HKRS 618-1-567, 'Blair-Kerr to Head Probe', *Hong Kong Standard*, 8 February 1975.

was approved. Informal consultation with the public, publicity campaigns and the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry were devised to respond to and weaken the campaign. A reformist colonial administration was increasingly responsive to public opinions as it was being reshaped by subtle shifts in political culture. However, these social and political process did not create the conditions for more profound institutional reform.

Conclusion

Compared to many other issues, such as increase in public housing rents, the increase in telephone rate was regarded by the Governor as 'potentially explosive', as people of all social classes and age groups were affected.[179] And the proposed rate increase generated 'colony-wide protest'. At least ninty-three organizations of different sectors and backgrounds took part.[180] Individuals of different social classes, including kaifongs and residents at grassroots level, community leaders, Urban Councillors, clansmen, businessmen, workers, teachers and students were motivated by both instrumental and ideological concerns. Many boycotted the Telephone Company, the main mechanism of protest which put pressure on the colonial government to limit or scrap the rate increase. This reveals how the political culture was shifting, with civic organizations mobilizing and actively lobbying the government. Even the upper and middle classes, who often disapproved of political activism, joined the campaign and used informal political activities to express their grievances. In this instance, their material interests were threatened.

[179] HKRS 394-27-11, Extract of minutes from Governor's Committee meeting, 17 January 1975.
[180] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, p. 167.

Different methods were used to put pressure on the Telephone Company and the colonial government. Learning from previous campaigns, moderate informal political channels, such as sending petitions, organizing signature campaigns and writing to newspaper editors, were predominantly used. These forms of political communication were fundamentally liberal but underpinning this civil action was a collective memory of 'civil disturbance' of the 1960s. In addition, but on the margins, radical groups and radicalized individuals organizing rallies and sit-ins to confront the colonial state directly. There were different political cultures, with the young generation more radical in outlook and in practice. Nonetheless, these student activists were also aware that most Hong Kong Chinese were relatively conservative and did not want institutions reformed. To appeal for public support, students presented themselves as orderly citizens who complied with laws during the rallies. Regardless of differences in methods adopted, the anti-telephone rate increase campaign shows that the Hong Kong Chinese were willing to voice their opposition and expected the colonial government to intervene and regulate whenever their material interests were threatened.

The colonial government monitored social attitudes during the protest movements. Shifting popular sentiments were observed by City District Officers, using mechanism such as situation reports and *Town Talk*. Departments, such as City District Offices, the Home Affairs Department, the Division of Information Service and the Special Branch were all involved monitoring public opinions, checking political activism and comprising special reports for the Governor and his Committee. By collecting intelligence on popular attitudes, the colonial government improved its decision-making capacity and sought to demonstrate that it was responding rationally to the protest. Official responses of the City District Officers were tailored and the public was consulted to alleviate general grievances. This weakened the campaign. A Commission of Inquiry was also set up.

These social and political processes had a moderate effect: the increase was set at 30 per cent, lower than 55 per cent that was advised by the Telephone Advisory Committee. This outcome was also however symbolically important: it showed that a reformist colonial administration was responsive to shifting public opinions, and thus had the potential to further encourage the development of civil society, newspapers and social movements mobilizing on specific issues.

V. The Campaign to Reopen the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School

The Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School dispute, which lasted from February 1977 to July 1978, was 'one of the most significant political acts' in the 1970s due to its scale and intensity.[1] After a decade of political turmoil in China, Hong Kong people increasingly identified themselves with the colony.[2] The legitimacy of the colonial state had also been enhanced by the implementation of reforms responding to popular demands, including legalizing Chinese as the official language of Hong Kong and setting up the ICAC, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Nonetheless, the colonial government still faced challenges in the late 1970s. People engaged in informal and formal activities to press for political and social changes. With the establishment of the ICAC, the public began to believe that the colonial government was willing to face up to its shortcomings. The young generation, in particular, became increasingly critical of the colonial administration. They were intolerant of any corruption. To express their grievances, they were willing to take direct actions. The Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School dispute was the most commonly known example which involved student activism.

In early 1977, teachers found evidence of the financial mismanagement at the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School. It led to a student campaign that captured the attention of the press and the public, and which presented a positive image of the school. Even so, the Education Department ordered its closure. The campaign allows historians to evaluate the organizational capacity of young people. It involved sit-ins, signature campaigns, demonstrations and petitions. Young people were in the 'political centre' in the campaign and

[1] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, p. 172.
[2] Christine Loh, *Underground Front: The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 2010), p. 99.

that 'society was divided' over the protest. For example, around 100 priests and sisters disapproved of the student activism and stated their support for the Education Department. Some newspapers also critiqued the campaign, arguing that students were being manipulated by radicalized teachers. As Lam Wai-man highlighted, the campaign raised concerns that radical political activism could undermine political stability.[3] The event occurred only ten years after the riots of 1967. This chapter reinvestigates this activism, exploring the impact of class and age.[4] It also uses policy files in Hong Kong and London to establish to what extent political activism influenced the colonial administration's ruling strategies.

Shifted Sentiments within the Teachers and Students

The Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School was a Catholic government-aided college opened in September 1973. In the 1970s, most schools in Hong Kong were academically orientated as success in examinations was the main way that young people gained access to well-paid employment, and for a select elite, university education.[5] The colonial administration controlled the curriculums of schools to counter the spread of Communist influence, with the study of contemporary China not in the main included. Political topics were confined to 'a description of the structure and functions of government departments'. [6] Contrary to most schools in Hong Kong, which placed an emphasis on maintaining disciplines and on examination performance, the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School experimented using a 'new' approach in education.[7] The school deemphasized examination results. Instead it stressed the importance of 'discussions,

[3] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, pp. 177-8.
[4] Ibid., p. 180.
[5] Paul Morris and Anthony Sweeting, 'Education and Politics: The Case of Hong Kong from an Historical Perspective', *Oxford Review of Education*, 17:3 (1991), p. 258.
[6] Ibid.
[7] FCO 40/1002, 'Summary of Event', Education Acting Group, (date not specified) 1978, p. 1

dialogue, mutual assistance, respect' and adopted a 'questioning approach' in learning,[8] Students were exposed to matters of public affairs and debated social justices, and were trained to become responsible citizens. The school's innovative teaching style gained the approval from the School of Education of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, which selected the school for demonstrations for its students, from 1973 to 1976.[9]

In the beginning of 1977, a number of teachers approached the principal, Sister Leung, about financial malpractices of the school and overcharging of student fees. These teachers suspected the school administration was corrupt. Leung had recruited a number of teachers with 'Trotskyite views' and left the running of the school to one of them. She was also allegedly engaged in these fraudulent activities.[10] Teachers at the school reported Leung to the ICAC in February for financial mismanagement. Yet, no action was taken as the teachers refused to allow the ICAC to refer their allegations to the Education Department.[11] In the spring of 1977, a Trotskyite teacher tried to blackmail Leung into letting his group to take control of the school. Leung refused and resigned. The management committee was informed about her financial malpractices. The incident was then referred to the Education Department, which sent an audit team to inspect the school and reform its administration. The allegations of financial mismanagement coupled with reforms caused mass demonstrations and a two-day sit-ins involving both teachers and pupils in June 1977.

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[8] Ibid.; The academic and apolitical orientation was strong in the education system in Hong Kong up until the early 1980s, see Morris and Sweeting, 'Education and Politics'.
[9] 'Summary of Event', p. 1.
[10] FCO 40/1002, 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 12 May 1978.
[11] FCO 40/1002, 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 31 May 1978.

This initial campaign led the Director of Education to send warning letters to the thirty-five teachers involved. Half of these teachers, led by Chan Chung Ling, demanded the withdrawal of these letters of complaint. With Sister Leung convicted in February 1978, they erroneously claimed that they were held responsible for revealing the financial mismanagement of the school and hence were being victimized. They had actually reported these activities to the Education Department three days after the audit team was sent to the school and ten days after the school's management committee had informed the Director of Education regarding the possibility of financial mismanagement.[12] As a result, the warning letters were not withdrawn.

A new principal, Hilda Kwan, was appointed in September. Kwan took a firm stand. She dissolved the student union and suspended all activities. Many affected students were dissatisfied: 'Since the dissolution of the student union, the activities that were organized by it can no longer be held. And since some ordinary activities have been cancelled from the school calendar, such as Speech Day, Drama Day, we lack normal activities.'[13] Kwan also attempted to segregate the new students and teachers from the old ones by holding two assemblies daily: one for Form One students and one for students of Form Two and above.[14] The school however gave no public explanation for the financial mismanagement to the students. Students came to believe therefore that the school's administration was 'on the one hand, avoiding its responsibility; on the other hand, persecuting the teachers unreasonably'.[15] Discontentment increased. The school had poorly handled the allegations of institutional

[12] 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 12 May 1978.
[13] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, '金禧學生週記一束', *金禧事件發展特刊* (*CU Student: Golden Jubilee Incident Special Edition*), 4 November 1977.
[14] Summary of Event', p. 2.
[15] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, '金禧事件交代', *金禧事件發展特刊* (*CU Student: Golden Jubilee Incident Special Edition*), 4 November 1977.

maladministration. A student tried to mobilize her peers and expressed her discontent over the school's unjust arrangement in *CU Student*:

> Just people! Don't fall. Or else the weak people walking in the dark will lose their only guiding light. Just people! Don't leave us. I am afraid I will lose my rationality because of this. Just people! We will respect and love you forever…. If you imprison the truth, bury it under the ground, it will grow endlessly, and explosive power will accumulate. One day it will explode and override all obstacles.[16]

In April 1978, a new supervisor, Sister Lorraine Turcotte, sent out thirteen warning letters to the teachers involved. As this new initiative was interpreted as an attempt to dismiss these teachers, protests escalated. This led to four student representatives being suspended for two weeks and four others were warned that they had infringed the 'personal freedom' of the principal. Students also alleged that they had been assaulted by non-academic staff. Student discontentment escalated:

> On 1 May 1978, a morning with nice weather, students attended lessons like they did usually. The parents of three students were called one after another to see the principal. After that, their daughters were also being called to see the principal. They were being suspended for two weeks! Simply because they once represented the students to demand the school to investigate the school bag-searching incident; they were also engaged in actions 'seizing' the principal, vice-principal and other teachers, 'disrupting' the normal order of the school. Parents found the way the school penalized their children unreasonable and demanded the school to explain these

[16] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, '與金禧同學的一席話', *金禧事件發展特刊* (*CU Student: Golden Jubilee Incident Special Edition*), 4 November 1977.

> ambiguous statements and withdraw the penalty… but they did not receive a reasonable reply…. We are angry, we hate that the school penalized the students unreasonably! (We hate that the school) ignored the demands of the parents! (We hate that the school) neglected the reasonable enquiries of the students![17]

On 4 May, parents approached the Chairman of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, Szeto Wah, for assistance. Szeto attempted to contact the principal, the Education Department, the ICAC and the Catholic Board of Education to 'ease the situation'. This was to no avail. Szeto, nonetheless, received a reprimand from the Education Department for his involvement in the incident.[18] The chain of events was controversial as students believed they were being treated unfairly by a high-handed principal. Teachers were also being viewed as victims in the disclosure of the school's fraudulent financial malpractices. The issuing of reprimand, in particular was contested as an infringement of union rights.

Political Activism and Increased Press Coverage

On 5 May, the Education Department issued a statement asserting that it had complete confidence in Kwan and sanctioned her to maintain discipline in the school. The government's endorsement led 440 students, eighteen teachers and twenty parents to march to Government House to petition the Governor. On 6 May, they marched to the Caritas centre, next to the Bishop's residence, and requested to see the Bishop. About twenty students camped outside his residence; several of them and their parents, and sixteen teachers stayed outside the residence for two nights. About 300 students participated in the sit-in.

[17] Chinese University of Hong Kong, Special Collection, '校方剝奪了我們的權益有幾多?我數之不盡!', *CU Student*, 10:2, 14 June 1978.
[18] FCO 40/1002, 'Union Chief Gets Reprimand', *South China Morning Post*, 16 May 1978.

They accused Kwan of being a fascist and the school of being corrupt.[19] They demanded the immediate resignation of Kwan, the resumption of classes of suspended students and the withdrawal of warning letters. They also requested that the government investigate the complaints from students that they were assaulted and their school bags were searched.[20] The sit-ins and demonstrations had made it impossible for any normal school work to continue. As MacLehose noted, there was 'a danger of trouble escalating' and the organization of the school might collapse under strain.

On 14 May, the Director of Education therefore ordered the closure of the school.[21] It was announced that a new secondary school would be set up in September under the same principal and supervisor. New terms were included in the teachers' contracts. They were prohibited from engaging in political activities. Permission had to be obtained from the principal before anyone could put up posters and assemble after school. The use of school premises without permission was prohibited. The school management committee also reserved the right to dismiss any employees who failed to observe the new terms.[22] As a result, the sixteen teachers involved in sit-ins were unable to extend their contracts. The teachers complained to the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union. An ad hoc coalition formed to engage in activism in support of the teachers: this include the All Hong Kong Committee to Strive to Reopen the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School, which consisted of a range of representative social groups, including students organizations, educational bodies, religious groups and labour organizations.[23]

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[19] 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 12 May 1978.
[20] FCO 40/1002, 'Call for Principal to Resign', *South China Morning Post*, 10 May 1978.
[21] 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 12 May 1978.
[22] FCO 40/1002, 'Precious Blood Secondary School Dispute', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 28 June 1978.
[23] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, pp. 176 and 178.

The incident was widely reported in newspapers. According to 'Opinions' in the *Chinese Press Review*, public opinions were divided on the government handling of the issue: 'at least eight papers came out in support of the Education Department's decision, but an equal number of papers disagreed with or had reservations about the move'.[24] *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, for instance, described the state' decision as 'wise'[25]. Both *Sing Tao Yat Pao* and *Hong Kong Times* endorsed the government's measures, stating that would 'win public support'.[26] *The Hong Kong Daily News* argued that the school's closure was the only way of 'ending the trouble quickly'.[27] Other newspapers were critical. *Tin Tin Yat Po* captured the discontent of some parties involved: 'Students feel aggrieved. Teachers say it is revenge. And parents demand explanation.'[28] It condemned the decision made by the Education Department as 'undemocratic', 'bureaucratic', 'abrupt', 'high-handed'. Closing the school was a typical example of 'colonialism' and the 'final judgement rules that the Education Department is guilty'.[29] The leftist press, *Wen Wei Pao* and *Ta Kung Pao*, condemned the decision to close the school. *Wen Wai Pao* argued that the state's move would only aggravate the situation and *Ta Kung Pao* believed that students' and parents' interest should be given 'the greatest weight'.[30] Community leader, L. K. Ding, accused the colonial government of showing 'the ugly aspects of colonialism'.[31]

In response to the school's closure, the Chairman of the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, Szeto Wah petitioned the Governor on 16 May. He justified the reopening of the

[24] HKRS 70-8-1207, 'Opinions', *Chinese Press Review*, no. 69, 10-16 May 1978, p. 1.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] HKRS 70-8-1207, '學生表示沉痛 教師指為報復 家長要求解釋', *Tin Tin Yat Po*, 15 May 1978.
[29] HKRS 70-8-1207, '蓋棺論功過 教署是罪人', *Tin Tin Yat Po*, 16 May 1978.
[30] 'Opinions', *Chinese Press Review*, no. 69, 10-16 May 1978, p. 2.
[31] FCO 40/1002, 'Government Picks Up Tempo', *Hong Kong Standard*. 16 May 1978.

school by arguing that the closure was against public interest: ‘And the whole of Hong Kong was startled. The consequence that this decision may lead to will make people worry all more’.[32] He also requested the formation of a special committee, consisted of John Wu, the Roman Catholic Bishop, Peter Cheung, the Vice Chairman of Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, Father Thomas Kwan and Father John Tong, to carry out an ‘in-depth fact-finding survey’ to settle the affairs fully.[33] Decisions regarding the alteration of the name and sponsoring organization of the school, the retention of the principal and renewal of contracts with the teachers, could not be made before the committee had finished its investigations.[34] The representatives of teachers, students and parents also petitioned Colvyn Haye, the Acting Director of Education. They claimed that the Education Department had only listened to an ‘one-sided report’ of the school authorities before issuing the statement, evidence of ‘prejudice and rashness’. The closure neglected ‘the suggestion made by the public’. They protested that the ‘high-handed policy’ was against the wish of parents, students, teachers and demanded the reopening of the school.[35] To enlist public support, Szeto made use of the press and warned the public the arbitrary implication behind the incident. The rhetoric of ‘law and order’ was invoked: ‘Closing the school is a rude move and is worrisome; if the policy is to continue the community will be a state of disorder.’[36]

The campaign captured the public’s attention. Newspaper coverage of the dispute expanded. According to ‘Opinions’, the incident ‘continued to be a major talking point in the Chinese press and attracted no fewer than ten editorials’.[37] Although some newspapers were

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[32] FCO 40/1002, Letter from Szeto Wah to Murray MacLehose, 16 May 1978, p. 1.
[33] Ibid., p. 2.
[34] Ibid.
[35] FCO 40/1003, Letter from ‘Representative of Teachers, Parents and Students’ to Colvyn Haye, 19 May 1978.
[36] HKRS 70-8-1207, ‘教協會長司徒華心所謂危談金禧 封校粗暴令人心憂 此風一長天下大亂’, *Sing Tao Yat Pao*, 15 May 1978.
[37] HKRS 70-8-1207, ‘Opinions’, *Chinese Press Review*, no. 72, 31 May- 6 June 1978, p. 1.

sympathetic, most reports disapproved of the campaign, an indication of political conservatism. *Hong Kong Daily News* for example felt that the 'major error' was the boycott of classes initiated by teachers and students.[38] *Sing Tao Yat Pao* said that the campaign had developed into a social issue, which would 'adversely affect social stability': 'Anyone concerned with the security of Hong Kong is worried about the situation because Hong Kong is in a delicate position and any small trouble will bring undesirable effects.'[39]

One of the reasons behind this negative publicity was a perceived association with the leftists. In May 1977, a pro-Taiwan newspaper, *Wan Ren Jih Pao* already implicated that it was the left-wing teachers who blackmailed the principal.[40] By 1978, many newspapers suggested that the teachers were politically motivated. Some teachers were believed to have Trotskyite backgrounds. For example, Wai Wing-kwong, one of the teachers involved, was the President of Grantham College of Education Student Union from 1972 to 1973, when the Union was controlled by the pro-Chinese Communist Fraction. Back in 1972, Wai was convicted of unlawful assembly.[41] *South China Morning Post* also pointed out that the campaign was backed by leftist organizations, including Marxists Revolutionary League, the Progressive Students and October Review.[42] The potential connection between the campaign and on-going sedition by leftists was also highlighted by a range of mainstream Chinese language newspapers. *Sing Tao Yat Pao* suggested that 'the issue is soon to blow up into a social campaign which smacks of a ''mass struggle'''. The choice of the term 'mass struggle' associated the movement with the leftists, as this was a concept referred to Maoist strategies of political mobilization. Maoism adhered to a 'mass line' agenda, in which populism was

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[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., p. 2.
[40] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, p. 172.
[41] FCO 40/1002, 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 26 June 1978.
[42] FCO 40/1002, 'HKU Chief to Lead Inquiry', *South China Morning Post*, 17 May 1978.

emphasized. It was believed that the masses, including the rural peasants, embodied 'great social activism'. Revolutions could only be successful by mobilizing the peasant mass.[43] *Kung Sheung Evening News* condemned the 'group of subversive elements' who were with 'ulterior motives' and 'waiting for the opportunities to disturb our social order to achieve their own ends'.[44] Some newspapers even compared the campaign with the 1967 leftist riots. *Oriental Daily* reported a home-made bomb was found in the street:

> Looking back at 1967 when uncountable genuine and fake 'home-made bombs' were found, the consequence were casualties, disturbances of people's daily life and an economic recession…. The using of 'home-made bombs' is not the right way to solve the problem. It will only result in the loss of lives or the problem of one school becoming the problem of the society as a whole.[45]

The Express similarly made this connection:

> There are 'bad elements' in our midst exploiting innocent children.…This is a terrible fact which has appeared more than once in Hong Kong, the most obvious being the riots of 1967. These bad elements are in fact demagogues and these school children are easily taken by their sweet lies and inflammatory talks and become their tools.[46]

This coverage linking the dispute with leftist activism deterred people from supporting action, a conservative legacy of 1967.

The public's fear of disorder and political conservatism was also reflected in Sister Lorraine's public announcements. Her rhetoric revealed the society's emphasis on discipline and order:

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[43] 'Opinions', *Chinese Press Review*, no. 72, 31 May- 6 June 1978, p. 1; Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic* (New York, 1977), pp. 41-5.
[44] HKRS 70-8-1208, '陰謀者悄悄等候機會', *Kung Sheung Evening News*, 29 May 1978.
[45] HKRS 70-8-1208, '請收起土製菠蘿', *Oriental Daily*, 17 May 1978.
[46] HKRS 70-8-1208, '當心,不要做別人的犧牲品!', *Express*, 19 May 1978.

> Discipline is fundamental in the homes, schools and institutions which constitute civilized societies. If we sacrifice (it), we lose everything. There are ways and ways of complaining about alleged injustices. Sit-ins, marches, intimidation and abuse are not the right ways. The methods adopted by some teachers have disrupted one unhappy school, but the firm action of the authorities in closing the school rather than tolerate continued demonstrations of contempt for law, order and discipline there, must be supported by all right thinking people.[47]

She appealed for public support by suggesting that the Education Department's decision to close the school was the right decision. Her speech reveals that radical political activism was not mainstream.

How did newspaper coverage influence public opinions? According to MacLehose, 'there has not been much public sympathy for the sixteen teachers' and it appeared that most criticisms against the school's closure derived from sympathy for the pupils whose education has been disrupted'.[48] This view was particularly common among middle-aged and elderly groups, who showed 'strong misgiving and distrust towards the government in China' and remained 'the stronghold of anti-communist sentiments and convictions'.[49] Even the petition letter drafted by the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union acknowledged that 'the public at large and most sections of the press in Hong Kong we have met only with indifference, insult'.[50] The Hong Kong Subsidized Secondary Schools Council for example, supported the closure of the school and believed that the Education Department had 'acted responsibly'.

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[47] FCO 40/1002, Extract from Government Information Services, 21 May 1987.
[48] 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 31 May 1978.
[49] HKRS 471-3-1, 'Current Attitudes of the Hong Kong Public towards China', *MOOD*, 23 October 1978, p. 3.
[50] FCO 40/1002, 'The Parent-Teacher-Pupil Committee for the Reopening of the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee School', letter from the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union to Gorowny-Roberts, 30 June 1978.

The Council asserted that the campaign initiated by teachers and students had 'badly disrupted' the school's function and therefore it should not remain open.[51] The Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China also issued a press release and endorsed the closure. It described the government's decision to close the school as a 'prompt action' which was 'justifiable'. It disapproved of activism by students and appealed to the public to consider 'discipline as a prerequisite' for the operation of any schools in Hong Kong.[52]

Nonetheless, the campaign successful solicited substantial support from some post-secondary students. About 370 post-secondary students, who were either Catholics or former pupils of Catholic schools, signed an open letter, demanding Bishop Wu to request the Education Department to reopen the school. These students intended to expand the publicity of the campaign by sending a petition to Pope Paul VI.[53] The Leimukshui Caritas Centre also handed in a petition to the Bishop, urging him to consider the matter seriously. The petition was signed by more than 100 of its young members.[54] To press for the reopening of the school, Golden Jubilee pupils wore red-arm bands inscribing the slogan 'Return the Golden Jubilee to Us', gathered at the cathedral on the same day. The pupils were soon joined by more than 100 parents and 200 post-secondary students. They then issued a joint statement, revealing that they had formed an action committee to campaign for the reopening of the school. The statement also claimed that they would continue having marathon sit-ins (two teachers at a time) and soliciting support from other organizations.[55] Some post-secondary students from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong University and the

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[51] HKRS 70-8-1204, 'Press Release on the Closure of the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee School', by Hong Kong Subsidized Secondary Schools Council, 22 May 1978.
[52] HKRS 70-8-1204, 'The C.C.C. Express Concern', by Peter Wong, General Secretary of the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China, 22 May 1978.
[53] 'HKU Chief to Lead Inquiry'.
[54] FCO 40/1002, 'School Girls ''Enter'' College', *South China Morning Post*, 23 May 1978.
[55] Ibid.

Hong Kong Polytechnic University also showed support to the movement by offering free tutorials to the affected students. About 200 of them volunteered to act as tutors. The Hong Kong Federation of Students was involved in coordinating the tutorials. The 400 students from the Golden Jubilee School were divided into nineteen groups, each led by a group of post-secondary students who had just finished their final exams. The tutorials started on 23 May.[56]

The campaign was endorsed by staff in higher education. On 23 May, 205 staff and teachers from the University of Hong Kong issued a signed statement, expressing opposition to the Education Department's decision.[57] A joint statement urging the Education Department to investigate the matter before any interventions was signed by twenty-seven people.[58] A group of staff from the Chinese University of Hong Kong made use of newspapers to air their grievances and obtain popular support. They claimed that they were 'astounded' by the Education Department's decision, which demonstrated that 'the true democracy is still beyond the reach of the people in Hong Kong':

> School discipline might have been violated. But a school is not a military organization where discipline and order have the highest priority.…Students are taught to distinguish between right and wrong, think independently and have a sense of justice…If students are ignored, any sensible communication will be broken. Mutual suspicion and dislike will dominate.[59]

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[56] FCO 40/1002, David Chan, 'Temporary Tutors Offer Help to Students', *Hong Kong Standard*, 23 May 1978.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] FCO 40/1002, 'Government Must Review Decision on School', by 'Staff Members of the Chinese University of Hong Kong', *South China Morning Post*, 20 May 1978.

By suspending the operation of the school, the colonial administration disregarded the feelings and grievances of the students, teachers and parents.[60] Apart from lecturers, twenty-four priests in Hong Kong issued a statement to express their 'deepest regrets'. They publicly endorsed the petition made by Szeto Wah and disapproved of the decision made by the Education Department, describing it as 'a judgement without trial for the sixteen teachers'. They also argued such 'injustice' should not be accepted by the Catholic Church.[61] In July, the campaign reached its climax. Thirty students from the Polytechnic and Baptist College escalated their action by starting a hunger strike outside the Bishop's Office, protesting against the school's closure.[62] The action was condemned by some newspapers. *Kung Sheung Evening News* for instance argued that the hunger strikes 'make one feel that they have gone from reasoning to exerting pressure through threats'.[63] On 9 July, a demonstration was held and was attended by 4,000 people. Four days later, a signature campaign was organized. 30,000 signatures were soon collected, indicating the scale of the movement was considerable.[64]

Understanding the 'weak bargaining position' and possessing limited resources for mass mobilization, as Lui and Chiu pointed out, activists often rallied support of a third party to exert pressure on the colonial government.[65] The Golden Jubilee dispute was no exception. To press for the resumption of the school, activists attempted to obtain support in Britain. A pressure group, the Education Action Group, first petitioned MP, Janet Fookes, informing her the 'very shocking and unreasonable event' and persuading her to intervene in this 'arbitrary'

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[60] Ibid.
[61] 'HKU Chief to Lead Inquiry'.
[62] HKRS 457-3-140, 'School Sympathizers Begin Hunger Strike', *Hong Kong Standard*, 8 July 1978.
[63] 'Opinions', *Chinese Press Review*, 5-11 July 1978.
[64] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, pp. 177-8.
[65] Tai-Lok Lui and Stephen W. K. Chiu, *The Dynamics of Social Movements in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 2010), p. 8.

and 'gross injustice'. They portrayed the closure of the Golden Jubilee School as 'high-hand authoritarian attitude and action' which was widely condemned by community leaders, groups and organizations.[66] This petition led Fookes to write to David Owen, the Foreign Secretary, on 3 June. On behalf of the students, parents and teachers, the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union also petitioned Gorowny-Roberts, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and MPs, including Frank Hooley and Tony Benn, pressing for the reopening of the school. To enlist support, the organization similarly claimed that the action taken by the Education Department was 'high handed, groundless and unjust', especially given that the sit-ins were 'peaceful'.[67] Although sit-ins and hunger strikes initiated by the students and teachers were not endorsed by the public, the rhetoric the Professional Teachers' Union employed strategically portrayed the school's closure as against interests of the public:

> The high-handed measure of the Education Department has shocked the citizens of Hong Kong and the reluctance of the government to listen to the public opinions has prompted into parents teachers and students to decision to make representation to the members of Parliament in England despite the heavy expenses.[68]

In June, Wai wing-kwong and Fan May-yung, two of the teachers involved in the incident, visited London for two weeks to air their grievances to MPs.

The campaign attracted the attention of British MPs, in particular the Labour MP, Robert Perry, who asked eight questions regarding the Golden Jubilee incident during parliamentary discussion on 28 June 1978. In the meeting of the Labour Party International Executive

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[66] FCO 40/1002, Letter from Anthony Ha, Education Action Group to Janet Fookes, 24 May 1978, pp. 1-2.
[67] 'The Parent-Teacher-Pupil Committee for the Reopening of the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee School', p. 1.
[68] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

Committee, Joan Lestor, raised the subject of the Golden Jubilee dispute.[69] After some discussions, the Committee agreed to express concern and asked the Secretary of State for the provision of facts. They pressed David Owen, the Foreign Secretary for the publication of all the details of financial irregularities and ensure no teachers and teachers were victimized. [70] On 20 July, the two teachers met with a group of Labour MPs, including Parry, James Johnson, James Lamond, Martin Flannery and Dennis Canavan. The activists seemed to have captured the sympathy of these MPs, who 'were mostly impressed with them and thought they had been treated shabbily'.[71] The campaign also received support from the Catholic Institute for International Relations, which believed the closure of the school and the dismissal of the teachers was 'a blatant injustice'.[72] These foreign support put further pressure on the colonial government to respond to the campaign.

Apart from students and teachers of the school, a number of educational and religious organizations participated in the campaign, and they employed a wide-range of strategies: organizing demonstrations and sit-ins, signature campaigns, sending petitions and issuing public joint statements. To justify their demands, activists often presented the action taken by the colonial administration as unjust and against the public will. The rhetoric of 'law and order' was repeatedly invoked by activists who emphasized the potential negative consequence the arbitrary closure had on the society's order. To exert pressure on the colonial state effectively, activists also solicited support from Labour MPs in London. The campaign also captured the attention of the public, and in particular, from people in the

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[69] FCO 40/1002, 'Labour Party NEC International Committee: The Golden Jubilee School, Hong Kong', telegram from David Stephan to Robin McLaren, 11 July 1978.
[70] FCO 40/1002, Letter from Jenny Little, Labour Party to David Owen, 18 July 1978.
[71] FCO 40/1002, 'Precious Blood School-Meeting with MPs', telegram from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Murray MacLehose, 20 July 1978.
[72] FCO 40/1002, Letter from Eileen Sudworth, the Catholic Institute for International Relations to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 14 July 1978.

educational sector. This shows the increasingly sophisticated organizational and networking skills of the young activists. Nonetheless, the campaign still met with opposition. Many newspapers disapproved of the student activism and compared the campaign with the 1967 riots, hinting that the activists were associated with violent leftists.

Government's Responses

The colonial government assessed the potential public responses before making the decision to close the school:

> We expect the closure order to lead to some further demonstrations and a considerable amount of publicity in the press. The Professional Teachers' Union may complain that the sixteen are being unfairly treated. Some other schools may join in. But we doubt if support for the sixteen will be widespread, both because exams are now on and because their cause in itself will not be seen by many as worthy to support.[73]

To avoid similar events from reoccurring, the Executive Council advised the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry. Dr. Rayson Huang, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, a Legislative Councillor and a member of the Board of Education became the Chairman.

After the school's closure, the colonial administration continued to monitor shifting public opinions and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office used *MOOD* to assess responses to the campaign in Hong Kong. Most importantly, the content found in the telegram sent by MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 31 May 1978 resembled closely to

[73] Ibid.

the *MOOD* report which was published a week ago. On 24 May, *MOOD* described the mixed opinions found in the society:

> Overall public reaction was still very mixed, different people taking different sides according to their own education background, convictions and basic attitudes. The government's publicity efforts to redress the balance during the next few days were successful to some extent in enabling the public to see the situation in better perspective…. Unfortunately, this message came rather late and the more critical sectors of the public were inclined to be incredulous…. There was still not much support for the sixteen teachers. Only radical students, free thinkers and critics of the government sympathized with them. However, there was much more sympathy towards the displaced students whose schooling had been thus disrupted...Secondary and post-secondary students, were inclined to criticize the closure of the school as suppressive and Draconian action.[74]

Similar records were found in the Governor's telegram:

> Vocal opinion is split fairly down the middle between those supporting and those opposing the government's action. Much of the criticism is directed at the closure itself and appears to have derived from sympathy for the pupils whose education has been disrupted…. There has not been much public sympathy for the sixteen teachers who claimed to have been victimized for revealing financial mismanagement of the school…. Nevertheless, the revelation of this earlier complaint has understandably

[74] 'The Golden Jubilee Controversy', p. 5.

> caused confusion and some damage to the Education Department and government's credibility. Some people have clearly found it difficult to believe the true situation.[75]

The assessment by *MOOD* revealed that the secondary and post-secondary students were 'particularly sensitive and resentful to any government measure which appeared to them to be high-handed or dictatorial'.[76] In encountering the tutorial classes organized by radical post-secondary students, the non-interventionist approach was deliberately taken by the Education Department as it was believed that 'to do so (intervene) would have brought post-secondary students directly into the arena'.[77] It instead offered to place Golden Jubilee students in other schools.

The major intervention involved setting up of a Committee of Inquiry. This was created to ensure that 'decisions would be taken on an intelligent understanding of community aspirations and sensitivities' and respond to the call for 'more opportunities for public consultation'.[78] A 'public invitation' was issued to invite citizens to share their views on the incident.[79] Goronwy Roberts, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, was aware of the public confusion regarding the incident, as revealed in *MOOD*. To reduce 'prevailing tension and distrust', he recommended the Director of Education to 'make public his findings of the financial mismanagement' of the school and make clarifications regarding the school's closure and its change of sponsorship.[80]

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[75] 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 31 May 1978.
[76] 'The Golden Jubilee Controversy', p. 5.
[77] 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 31 May 1978.
[78] 'The Golden Jubilee Controversy', p. 5.
[79] 'Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 31 May 1978.
[80] FCO 40/1002, 'M.I.P.T', telegram from G. Roberts to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 7 July 1978.

The report of the Inquiry was soon published on 14 July. Public opinions influenced how the government responded to the incident.

According to *MOOD*, the incident posed a debate about 'whether Hong Kong's education system aimed to produce such radical thinking graduates as teachers'.[81] There were also worries that conflicts and danger would emerge if 'radical graduates like the Chan group were to be employed by institutions whose management and leadership belong to a conservative school'.[82] These concerns were central to investigations. On 5 October 1978, it was announced in the Executive Council that 'proposals to strengthen the Education Department will be put forward shortly'.[83] There would be 'extensive consultation'.[84] In the final report issued, the Committee of Inquiry urged the Education Department to 'examine whether it has sufficient capabilities in responding to grievances'. As the aided schools were not directly responsible for the colonial government, the Education Department was the statutory authority which was in charge of the operation of the sector. It was therefore crucial for the department to 'handle grievances at all levels' appropriately so that officials could understand 'the grassroots level, attitudes and feelings of the community they serve(d)'. By reviewing the department's capabilities, it could 'maintain the credibility of the government and the community's confidence in it'.[85] This strongly suggests that the government's perceptions of public opinions fed into the policy making process.

The colonial administration did not only monitor changing popular sentiments in Hong Kong,

[81] 'The Golden Jubilee Controversy', p. 6.
[82] Ibid.
[83] FCO 40/1002, 'Final Report of the Committee of Enquiry of the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School', Memorandum for Executive Council, 5 October 1978, p. 7.
[84] Ibid.
[85] FCO 40/1003, Rayson Huang and Maisie Wong, 'Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School: Final Report', Committee of Inquiry, 31 October 1978, p. 33.

but also in Britain. The Hong Kong and General Department closely observed the situation in the United Kingdom and ruled that 'there has been no Parliamentary, press or public interest in the disturbances'.[86] Despite the lack of interest in Britain, William Quantrill pointed out that the financial mismanagement and the fact that the school's administrators 'were trying to take a more enlightened and progressive approach to education', 'could 'attract attention here', and hence 'win them more sympathy than they probably deserved'. He therefore suggested that they should 'keep ourselves informed'.[87] The publicity of the campaign expanded to Britain in mid-1978 when the teachers petitioned the MPs and visited London. When the teachers, with the support of the Labour MPs, requested to meet with the Minister of State in London, the Hong Kong and General Department assessed potential public responses:

> A blunt refusal to receive the teachers at all would however appear discourteous, and might attract criticism from the MPs and trade unionists who have interested themselves in this case. I therefore recommend that the teachers should be offered a meeting with officials as an alternative to one with the Minister of State.[88]

At the end, Robin McLaren met with two teachers.

Although it was observed that the situation was 'beginning to quieten down' and 'press coverage is getting less extensive' in late May, the colonial government continued to monitor popular sentiments. With the support of the Labour MPs, the activists pressurized the colonial state to make concessions. In July, the Committee of Inquiry recommended establishing an additional new school, Ng Yuk School alongside the St. Teresa Secondary School (formerly

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[86] FCO 40/1002, 'Trouble at the Precious Blood Secondary School', telegram from M. J. Upton to Q. Quantrill and R. McLaren, 2 June 1978.
[87] FCO 40/1002, Note by W. Quantrill, 2 June 1978.
[88] FCO 40/1002, 'Hong Kong: Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School', telegram from R. J. T McLaren to Murray MacLehose, 3 July 1978.

Golden Jubilee Secondary School) to 'accommodate those who do not accept the arrangements announced by the supervisor'.[89] And parents and students were at liberty to enroll with either institution. In order to ease discontent among the teachers, the Committee of Inquiry advised that invitations of teacher post applications should be sent to those who were not offered a contract extension in St. Teresa Secondary School.[90] Before the Committee of Inquiry published the final report, the Executive Council assessed the public's potential response:

> There was considerable interest in Huang Committee's Interim Report, but the opening of classes in the new Ng Yuk School, one of its principal recommendations, in the event give rise to little publicity, and there has been little press or public interest since then. It is considered that the Final Report is likely to be acceptable to the public at large, who would see it as satisfactory end to an issue which might have had more serious repercussions on the community had it not been handled judiciously and expeditiously.[91]

This indicates that public opinions were taken into consideration in the policy making process. Foreseeing the unlikelihood of public disquiet, the final report was soon translated into Chinese on 4 September and published in the public domain on 31 October.

The publication of the Final Report 'was widely reported by all dailies'.[92] All Chinese newspapers, except *Hong Kong Times*, mentioned the report. The report stated that the decision to close the school should not be made by Education Department alone, but by the

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[89] 'M.I.P.T'.
[90] Ibid.
[91] 'Final Report of the Committee of Enquiry of the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School'.
[92] HKRS 457-3-141, *Chinese Press Summary*, 1 November 1978.

Governor-in Council. The report was widely welcomed by the press. *Ming Pao*, for example, described the investigation as 'impartial' and 'unbiased' and praised the 'reasonable recommendations', which could set an example in dealing with other disputes in the future.[93] *Sing Tao Yat Pao* believed that the recommendations could prevent similar events from recurring.[94] *Kung Sheung Evening News* called the report 'a piece of marvelous work' and said 'the public was satisfied' with it.[95] Even Urban Councillor Elsie Elliott publicly asserted that the proposals in the report were good, given that they were implemented by the colonial administration.[96]

This section reveals how the public opinions influenced colonial government in handling the Golden Jubilee disputes. Ever since the emergence of the campaign, the state monitored shifting popular attitudes towards the incident. These public opinions, which were collected through the covert formal institution *MOOD* and the supervision of mass media, were subsequently fed back to high ranked civil servants, directly influencing the state's ruling strategies. This demonstrates that on the one hand, the government possessed organizational means to understand the changing sentiments of the Chinese communities; on the other hand, far from being atomistic, the Hong Kong Chinese, in particular the young generation, did not hesitate to voice their grievances, expecting the colonial state to respond to their demands.

Political Culture

As Lam has pointed out, 'as more actions took place, divisions in the society regarding the

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[93] HKRS 457-3-141, Extract from *Chinese Press Review*, 2 November 1978, p. 1.
[94] Ibid, p. 2.
[95] HKRS 70-8-1206, 'Final Report on the Golden Jubilee Affairs', *Chinese Press Review*, 1-7 November 1978.
[96] HKRS 457-3-141, Extract from *Chinese Press Summary*, 2 November 1978, p. 1.

dispute became increasingly explicit'.[97] On the one hand, there was political activism initiated by the teachers and students, supported by the youth; on the other hand, 'the culture of depoliticization' prevailed.[98] It remains unclear whether social class and age had an important effect on the dispute. This section investigates the social composition of the protest using newspapers and official opinion polls.

Initially, the public 'at large did not pay much attention to the dispute'.[99] It was when the sit-ins at Caritas took place, that the public engaged with the incident. The public in general was 'confused and bewildered by conflicting reports, accusations and recriminations from both sides'.[100] Before the closure of the school, the demonstrations and sit-ins already attracted 'widespread criticism', particularly from parents, headmasters, middle class and community leaders, against the teachers for organizing the sit-ins, which they described as 'an undesirable and dangerous method of airing grievances by junior students'.[101] The adult members of the society were politically conservative and inclined to view the teachers as 'trouble-makers' and 'rabble-rousers', who exploited the teenage students.[102] *MOOD* suggested that there was 'not much support for the sixteen teachers', especially after the school's closure and the appointment of the Committee of Inquiry.[103] Only 'radical students', 'free thinkers' and 'critics of the government' were sympathetic to their cause.[104]

These negative reactions were as reflected in both Chinese and English language newspapers. *South China Morning Post* repeatedly denounced student activism. It labelled the two-day sit-

[97] Lam, *Understanding the Political Culture*, p. 176.
[98] Ibid.
[99] 'The Golden Jubilee Controversy', p. 1.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid., p. 2.
[103] Ibid., p. 4.
[104] Ibid.

in as ‘extreme’ and described it using the term ‘militarism’. It asserted that ‘the last thing Hong Kong wants is a wave of student militancy over real or imagined grievances at schools’.[105] Both *Kung Sheung Daily News* and *The Hong Kong Times* similarly condemned the ‘trouble-makers’ who had ‘stirred up the students’.[106] It claimed that the dissenting teachers were ‘politically motivated’ whose aim was to ‘destroy the free society in Hong Kong’.[107] The *Hong Kong Daily News* argued that the demonstrations and sit-ins led by the teachers ‘run counter to the education system and the basic principles which the community cherished’.[108] *Sing Tao Man Pao* also believed that teachers should not offer any encouragement to students to participate or organize political activities.[109] Teachers’ and students’ reluctance to redress the their grievances through formal channels ‘failed to win public support’ and showed their case ‘in a bad light’.[110] This view was particularly prevalent among middle-aged and elderly householders, who mostly supported the decision made by the Education Department.[111]

Most people regardless of age were unwilling to take a side in the campaign. This was because they were confused about the chronological development of the event. This was partly due to the fact that the event was not fully recovered by media: ‘the further friction and confrontation in the school that afternoon was not clearly reported and consequently not known by public’.[112] Most importantly, the communities in general ‘were anxious to avoid ‘‘rocking the boat’’’.[113] Most people disapproved of any action that might create political or

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[105] HKRS 70-8-1208, ‘A Firm ‘‘No’’ to School Militants’, *South China Morning Post*, 11 May 1978; FCO 40/1002, ‘Discouraging School Sit-ins’, *South China Morning Post*, 19 June 1978.
[106] HKRS 70-8-1207, ‘Opinions’, *Chinese Press Review*, no. 69, 10-16 May 1978, p. 1.
[107] HKRS 70-8-1207, ‘學生及家長同感焦慮 躭心未來學業問題 指攪事者應負全責’, *Kung Sheung Daily News*, 15 May 1978; ‘Opinions’, *Chinese Press Review*, no. 22, 15-21 June 1978, p. 2.
[108] ‘Opinions’, *Chinese Press Review*, no. 69, 10-16 May 1978, p. 1
[109] HKRS 70-8-1208, ‘保持良好學風’, *Sing Tao Man Pao*, 20 June 1977.
[110] ‘The Golden Jubilee Controversy’, p. 1.
[111] Ibid., p. 5.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

social tensions: 'Harmony and stability of society were considered to be of paramount importance'.[114] Direct confrontations, such as sit-ins and hunger strikes, were considered to be 'radical actions' which 'could never get the support from the mass'.[115] Political conservatism continued to prevail among many in the colony, especially when the event did not directly affect most people's lives.

Besides, the campaign itself failed to enlist public sympathy probably because the propagation of causes such as 'injustice', 'democracy' and 'anti-colonialism' were not particularly appealing to the general public. As *MOOD* has pointed out earlier, lower income groups, especially blue collar workers, were only concerned with their 'workaday livelihood and problems affecting their family'.[116] They rarely worried or cared about other issues.[117] These grassroots groups remained 'largely indifferent' to how Hong Kong was governed provided that they were not affected.[118] In 1975, *MOOD* also had found that there was 'no general public aspiration or pressure for constitutional reform': 'Majority attitudes indicate a lack of enthusiasm about elections'.[119] The middle class either was 'indifferent' or advocated 'caution'.[120] Many also doubted if a limited representative government would 'really make much different'.[121] Rhetoric such as 'democracy' and 'anti-colonialism' therefore did not generate substantial support from the local people, who might consider the closure of the school as irrelevant to their daily livelihood.

By the late 1970s, the political culture of the young generation and social elites was however

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[114] Ibid.
[115] FCO 40/1003, Letter from D. C. Bray to P. Leung, 24 July 1978.
[116] HKRS 925-1-1, 'Public Attitude towards Living in Hong Kong', *MOOD*, 25 September 1975, p. 5.
[117] Ibid.
[118] HKRS 925-1-1, '1975 in Retrospect: Part II', *MOOD*, 8 January 1976, p. 4.
[119] HK9S 925-1-1, 'Dr. L. K. Ding's Proposals for Constitutional Reform: Reaction Unenthusiastic', *MOOD*, 20 March 1975.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

changing. As *MOOD* pointed out, attitudes towards the event 'varied considerably according to age and education background'.[122] During the early period, the teachers successfully lobbied some support from some post-secondary student. A state opinion poll earlier in 1975 had pointed out students and youth tended to hold significant different and unfavourable views of the colonial government than their elders.[123] Their 'idealistic outlook on life' led many of them being 'intolerant of a paternalistic type of government', 'distrustful of compromise' and 'impatient in their wait for an egalitarian government'.[124] In 1975, it was predicted by *MOOD* that their pursuit of increased social consciousness and political participation would only continue to rise.[125] Despite the merits of the colonial administration's consultation policy, the young generation still became 'more aggressive and presumptuous'.[126] In the Golden Jubilee dispute, these post-secondary student leaders suspected Kwan of being 'reactionary and disciplinarian, and deliberately vindictive and suppressive against the Chan group'.[127] They urged the Education Department to carry out a detailed investigation before declaring its support for the new principal. Apart from secondary students, *MOOD* also suggested that post-secondary students and the younger generation tended to criticize the closure of the school as 'suppressive'.[128] They were 'sensitive' and 'resentful' to any state responses which appeared to them as 'high-handed' and 'dictatorial'.[129] Despite their disapproval of political activism, the established middle-aged bourgeoisie also did not support the government's measure. They believed that such 'strong line' policy would only threaten social order.[130] The Committee of Inquiry's Final Report attributed this political activism, particularly among the young generation, to

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[122] 'The Golden Jubilee Controversy', p. 5.
[123] HKRS 925-1-1, 'Changes in Public Attitude towards the Hong Kong Government', 18 September 1975.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] 'The Golden Jubilee Controversy', p. 2.
[128] Ibid., p. 5.
[129] Ibid., p. 5.
[130] Ibid.

increased education: 'In a progressing community like Hong Kong, with steadily rising level of education, there is inevitable trend of rising expectations and increasing social awareness.'[131] This was particularly true as the schooling in Hong Kong was moving towards the direction of 'mass access' in the 1970s. Universal primary education was achieved in 1971, followed by the implementation of three-year compulsory government funded education in secondary schools in 1978.[132] The emergence of an educated 'large middle class' parents in the 1970s also made schools increasingly difficult to meet their high expectations.[133]

This section has demonstrated that the political culture in Hong Kong was far from monolithic. Different attitudes were held by people in different social classes and age groups. The educated young generation and social elites, including students, post-secondary students and young teachers, were at the 'political centre'. They were motivated by ideological concerns, such as social justice, democracy and anti-colonialism, and mostly held an intolerant attitude towards the colonial government. Most middle-aged and elderly people were politically conservative, worried about political stability. Some grassroots groups were indifferent, considering the campaign as irrelevant to their lives. Middle aged and elderly householders also accused dissenting teachers and students of being trouble-makers. In this case however conservatism aroused from a perception reinforced by the press that the campaign was due to leftist activism.

Conclusion

[131] 'Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School: Final Report', p. 33.
[132] Anthony Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong, 1941 to 2001: Visions and Revisions* (Hong Kong, 2004), p. 237.
[133] Paul Morris, *Hong Kong School Curriculum: Development, Issues and Policies* (Hong Kong, 1996), p. 148.

The Golden Jubilee incident was 'an eye-opener' for the public, in particular those with a conservative mindset.[134] In order to obtain attention from senior civil servants, the teachers and students exposed an example of 'corruption' to the public by the organization of sits-in and hunger strikes, and by attracting media coverage. During the campaign, the activists displayed remarkable capacity for organization. The networking capacity of activists gave them an effective way of communicating with post-secondary students, educational and religious organizations, and even MPs in London. They were able therefore to organize large-scale sit-ins. Their campaigning pressurized the colonial government to set up a Committee of Inquiry, and to monitor public opinions closely.

The campaign shows how the political culture of the educated young generation was changing. These students engaged in different forms of political acts and gained support from their peers and the politicians. Despite considerable support from the post-secondary students and educational sector, the campaign failed to enlist support from the general public. Middle aged and elderly householders, particularly those within the middle classes, disapproved of political activism and considered students and teachers involved to be 'rabble rousers', who posed a threat to the political stability of Hong Kong. Grassroots groups were largely indifferent. Political conservatism was still prevalent, in part because with respect to this particular issue the 1967 riots cast a shadow on the society. Moreover, concepts such as 'injustice', 'democracy' and 'anti-colonialism' propagated by the activists were probably unappealing to many people concerned primarily with their livelihood, lacking enthusiasm to engage in debates about how the state was governing a colonial society.

[134] 'The Golden Jubilee Controversy', p. 6.

VI. The Changing Immigration Discourse and Policy

> A small integrated community with resources appropriate to its size surely has a right to protection against an inundation of strangers. This is an internationally accepted principle, and Hong Kong's own pre-war and more recent history has shown that it can and must be applied when the situation becomes threatening — or when the government wakes up to its responsibilities to its established citizens. Why was the situation ever allowed to develop into the vast problem that now faces the government? Was it assumed that up to one million immigrants could be assimilated to an acceptable degree and in reasonable time?[1]

The piece was written in 1956 by Chief Secretary, Claude Burgess. In June 1979, it was re-quoted by David Ford, the Secretary for Information, in a speech, 'The Price of Freedom'. By then, the statement possessed a new meaning. To justify the new immigration policy, Ford employed Burgess's statement but deliberately omitted the answer provided by Burgess to the questions in 1956:

> The answer to these questions may fall oddly on modern ears. The immigrants were admitted on humanitarian grounds alone and the problems to which they would give rise if they did not return or emigrate elsewhere were deliberately accepted. The first influx fled from the shattered economy and threat of famine which followed the Pacific War. The people who followed in the second influx voted with their feet against the new régime which was established when the Nationalists withdrew to Formosa. In either case the immigrants sought in Hong Kong something sufficiently

[1] Hong Kong Government Printer, 'Chapter 1: Review- A Problem of People', in *Hong Kong Annual Report, 1956* (Hong Kong, February 1957).

> important to themselves to necessitate the abandonment of their homes, the severance of family ties and the renunciation of traditional allegiances. No one will ever know what it cost them to abandon the land on which their ancestors had made their living. They were not denied what they sought, and Hong Kong accepted the burden which they brought with them in the name of humanity rather than because it had any special standing in the matter other than the accident of contiguity.[2]

Ford argued that Burgess's statement was 'as relevant today as it was twenty-three years ago'. The situation was different however in the 1970s because illegal immigration was 'unacceptably high' and the present rate of immigration would yield at least one and a half million people in three years. The central problem for Ford was that the increase would hinder the government's Ten-Year Housing Programme planned in 1972. Ford noted that this plan was 'ambitious'. It aimed to rehouse 1.8 million people.[3] Ford's statement highlighted that immigration from China was a major problem for the colonial government and one that affected its relationship with Hong Kong people. This chapter examines the relationship between the changing public discourse on immigration and the colonial state's immigration policy. Illegal immigration became a serious issue in Hong Kong from the late 1960s because it strained the colony's housing stock, and welfare and education systems.

Agnes Ku has argued that the colonial government's shift from 'a policy of tolerant acceptance' to exclusionary immigration practices– such as the introduction of 'Hong Kong belonger' as an immigration category, the deprivation of illegals' rights to apply for identity cards and the ending of the 'Touch Base' policy– had 'unintentionally' invoked 'a set of

[2] Ibid.
[3] HKRS 70-8-2093, D. Ford, 'Talk by Secretary for Information to the Y's Men's Club: The Price of Freedom', 7 June 1979, pp. 1-4.

inclusionary and exclusionary mechanisms', which transformed the refugee mentality of Hong Kong Chinese and gave rise to new political culture in the 1970s.[4] This aligns with the consensus that Hong Kong's political, cultural and economic separation from the mainland Chinese gave rise to the Hong Kong identity, a new political culture in the 1970s.[5]

The public's attitude towards migrants had shifted since the 1940s and 1950s, the first wave of post-war migration. Nonetheless, historical work on the 1970s is highly limited so this link between immigration public policy and identity formation had not been proven. The political culture of Hong Kong was certainly changing during the 1970s, as previous chapters have demonstrated, but how did a reformist polity set a new policy towards immigration from China, and how did this relate to shifting public opinions? The chapter explores these dynamic effects by reconstructing unofficial discourse regarding immigration and linking this cultural analysis with policy changes. It argues that the relationship between popular discourse and policy was dynamic in the sense that new policy measures affected popular attitudes in the early 1970s and after the mid-1970s, the relationship changed. These shifting relationships were further complicated by the changing state of international relations: new Hong Kong immigration policies were controversial in Taiwan and the PRC. They were used by the Nationalists to undermine Communist China.

This chapter consists of five sections. The first outlines changes of immigration policy, details the scale of immigration and explains its impact on the development of housing programme and social services, a technocratic issue but one with political consequences in an

[4] Agnes S. M. Ku, 'Immigration Policies, Discourse, and the Politics of Local Belonging in Hong Kong (1950-1980)', *Modern China*, 30:3 (2004), p. 327.
[5] Elizabeth Sinn, *Culture and Society in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1995); Tsang, *Government and Politics*, pp. 246-8; Carroll, *A Concise History*, pp. 170-3; Eric Kit-wai Ma and A. Y. H. Fung, 'Negotiating Local and National Identifications: Hong Kong Identity Surveys 1996-2006', *Asian Journal of Communication*, 17:2 (2007), p. 173; Lui and Chiu, 'Social Movements', p. 110.

era when public policy was debated more fully by the public. The second section explores mass immigration from China from a diplomatic perspective, how China and Hong Kong reached an agreement on a 'Touch Base' policy, which repatriated all illegal immigrants who were apprehended in the frontier area. The third section examines the immigration discourse, focusing on press sentiment and traces along with policy shifts, how it changed over time and affected people's political orientations and attitudes towards Chinese immigrants. The fourth section investigates how popular attitudes towards immigration changed and affected interactions between ordinary people and the colonial administration. The last section analyses the abandonment of the 'Touch Base' policy, and the negotiations between China and Britain regarding a new policy governing how illegal immigrants were repatriated.

Managing 'the Problem of People'

In the early 1950s, as Chi-kwan Mark has pointed out, a 'lenient approach' was adopted by the colonial government in handling immigrants. From May 1950, there was a quota system which restricted the number of entry from China to be equal to that of leaving Hong Kong, but this policy was 'not strictly enforced'.[6] The colonial administration had limited internal funds for resettlement programmes, and piecemeal funding from the Nationalists, the United States and the United Nations were insufficient for a comprehensive set of measures to support refugees. Seeking more financial support from Taiwan and the United States also risked entangling Hong Kong into the Cold War politics.[7]

[6] Chi-kwan Mark, 'The ''Problem of People'': British Colonials, Cold War Powers, and the Chinese Refugees in Hong Kong, 1949-62', *Modern Asian Studies*, 41:6 (2007), p. 1148.
[7] Ibid., pp. 1151, 1153-8.

Colonial policy changed from 1956. Realizing the 'permanent nature' of inward immigration, the colonial government labelled mainland immigrants as 'illegal immigrants' instead of 'refugees' and identified their influx as a 'problem of people' of serious economic, social and political implications.[8] The colonial government believed the ultimate solution to 'the problem of people' was to turn 'potential trouble-makers into responsible residents' by 'local integration'.[9] This would restore people's confidence after the 1956 riots. Rapid industrialization, which relied on low cost labour, provided abundant job opportunities for immigrants. It also generated higher revenues for the government and allowed it to expand social services in line with population growth.

In 1962, Hong Kong experienced another influx of Chinese immigrants due to the Great Leap Forward which caused famine across China. In response to the 'exodus', the Hong Kong government applied a 'turning back doctrine': illegal immigrants were to be returned once they crossed the border.[10] From 1962 to 1967, the government allowed, under a quota system, fifty legal immigrants to enter Hong Kong per day. It repatriated the rest. This policy was abandoned in 1967 'as a consequence of the trouble caused by the Cultural Revolution', when clashes and violence broke out repeatedly on the border.[11]

By the 1970s, the 'local integration' policy became impracticable due to the scale of immigration from China. The number of illegal immigrants increased at an unprecedented rate, as shown in Table 11 below. The annual figure of illegal immigrants increased from less than 8,000 during the period from 1968 to 1970 to 18,000 in 1973. These figures did not include illegal immigrants that had successfully reached the urban area. It was estimated that

[8] Ibid., pp. 1148-51
[9] Ibid., pp. 1164-5.
[10] Ibid., p. 1174.
[11] FCO 21/1273, 'Immigration into Hong Kong', telegram from R. M. Evans to E. Youde, 30 April 1974.

‘for every one caught, two entered undetected’ and ‘the actual number of illegal immigrants from China might be anything from two times to three times the number detected by the police’.[12] The number of legal immigrants increased from under 2,000 to nearly 74,000, as shown in Table 12.[13] And it was estimated that about 56,000, 75 per cent of the total, would ‘settle permanently’ in the colony.[14]

Table 11: Annual Figure of Illegal Immigrants Entering Hong Kong from China, 1968-1973

Year	Annual figure of illegal immigrants entering Hong Kong from China
1968-1970	<8,000
1971	10,500
1972	17,000
1973	18,000

Source: FCO 21/1273, ‘Illegal immigration from China’, telegram from A. E. Donald, Colonial Secretariat to W. G. Ehrman, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 14 August 1974.

Table 12: Annual Figure of Legal Immigrants Entering Hong Kong from China, 1967-1973

Year	Annual figure of legal immigrants entering Hong Kong from China
1967-1970	<1800
1971	3,000
1972	20,000
1973	74,000

Source: FCO 21/1273, ‘Immigration from China into Hong Kong’, by the Far Eastern Department, 30 April 1974, pp. 1-2.

Immigration compounded already critical problems with overcrowding and congestion. In 1974, the population density in some parts of Kowloon was ‘ten times that of Tokyo’. Hong

[12] FCO 21/1273, ‘Illegal immigration from China’, telegram from A. E. Donald, Colonial Secretariat to W. G. Ehrman, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 14 August 1974.
[13] FCO 21/1273, ‘Immigration from China into Hong Kong’, by the Far Eastern Department, 30 April 1974, pp. 1-2.
[14] FCO 21/1273, ‘Immigration from China into Hong Kong’, by the Far Eastern Department, 30 April 1974, p. 3.

Kong only had limited resources and 404 square miles, most of which were 'steep, rugged mountain areas unsuitable both for agriculture and building'. The welfare system and housing were both under extreme pressure.[15] Job opportunities and relative high level of economic development were the primary pull factors for migrants. As James Callaghan, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, pointed out, 'in many cases the motive has been as much one of economic self-interest as a well-founded fear of political persecution'.[16] Many came to what they perceived as a 'paradise', 'with the hope of enjoying better living'.[17] The chaotic political situation and harsh lives in China also served as push factors, pushing people to escape to Hong Kong. The Cultural Revolution and difficult lives in communes in particular pushed many youngsters to the colony. The anti-Lin and anti-Confucius campaigns after the failure of Lin Piao, the former Chinese Defence Minister, to overthrow Mao in 1971 caused even more upheavals in mainland, escalating the problem of illegal immigration. Communist government may even have deliberately granted permits to Lin's former supporters who were reluctant to stay in China and wished to emigrate to join their overseas relatives.[18] The relative low quality of life in China, such as 'the day-to-day life of the commune', which was 'physically demanding and materially unrewarding', continued to push many to escape to Hong Kong illegally.[19]

As Ford acknowledged, the scale of new immigration created a real problem for the colonial government, at a time when it was trying to increase per capita spending on social infrastructure, on housing in particular. It was estimated that an additional $300 million

[15] FCO 21/1417, Telegram from P. J. E. Male to Terence Garvey, British Embassy in Moscow, 7 January 1975.
[16] FCO 21/1417, Letter from M. Ennals, Secretary General of Amnesty international to J. Callaghan, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 8 January 1975.
[17] FCO 21/1274, *Hong Kong Press Report*, 4-11 December 1974, p. 4.
[18] HKRS 70-6-856-1, 'Lin's Plot May Have a Hand in It', *China Mail,* 9 November 1973.
[19] HKRS 70-6-856-1, Extract from an interview with an illegal immigrant, 'No High Jinks Behind the Hay-ricks: Peter Steward Talks to a China Refugee', *Hong Kong Standard*, 1 July 1973.

would have to be spent on housing, medical facilities and education due to the influx of population from China.[20] It was difficult for the colonial government to house all these migrants under the existing housing programmes. As Table 13 shows, the government increased access to social housing but at a rate only marginally higher than the rate of immigration.

Table 13: Number of People Being Housed by the Colonial Government in Public Housing, 1970-1974

Year	Number of people
1970	30,000
1971	89,000
1972	104,000
1973	91,000
1974	53,000
Total	367,000

Source: FCO 21/1418, Telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 18 March 1975.

The 'Touch Base' policy reduced the number of illegal immigrants from 7,105 in 1974 to only 583 in the first half of 1975.[21] In a long run, however, it failed to stop the influx of immigrants from China. The number of both legal and illegal immigrants continued to rise. The daily average figure of legal immigration remained high. As Table 14 shows, in 1978, the average number of legal immigrants entered Hong Kong from China per day increased from 92 in January to 149 in April. The number of illegals was also showing a sharp increase, as shown in Table 15 which sets out statistics for the first quarter of 1978. The number of

[20] HKRS 70-6-856-1, K. Sinclair, 'Refugee on a Big Strain on Our Resources', *South China Morning Post*, 19 November 1974.
[21] FCO 21/1420, 'Illegal Immigrants from China and Macao- July 1975', memo from D. C. Readman, Director of Immigration to Secretary for Security, 13 August 1975, p. 2.

illegals arrested in April 1978 was the 'highest arrest figure since repatriation commenced on 30 November 1974'.[22]

Table 14: Legal Immigration from China to Hong Kong in 1978

Month/1978	Average per day
January	92
February	97
March	114
April	149

Source: FCO 40/1005, 'Entrants from China and Macao', memo by A. J. Carter, Director of Immigration, 3 February and 8 April 1978.

Table 15: Number of Illegal Immigrants Being Arrested in 1978

Month/1978	Number of illegals being arrested
January	197
February	199
March	165
April	308

Source: FCO 40/1005, 'Entrants from China and Macao', memo by A. J. Carter, the Director of Immigration, 4 March and May, 1978.

Throughout the late 1970s, additional measures were introduced to cope with the high level of immigration from China, such as the setting up of a Ship Searching Unit, the amendment of legislation to grant police the authority to arrest illegals who had stayed in Hong Kong for two years, the implementation of a new immigration bill to prosecute people aiding illegals and increased fines and imprisonment. Nevertheless, the number of illegals did not drop.

[22] FCO 40/1005, 'Entrants from China and Macao', memo by A. J. Carter, Director of Immigration, 4 March and 4 May 1978.

During the 'peak time' in June 1979, the figure of illegals reached an average of 625 a day.[23] Up until October 1979, 57,000 illegals were arrested.[24] The level of immigration was unacceptably high. Press coverage on immigration increased and popular sentiments shifted, which forced Hong Kong to negotiate with China, ending the 'Touch Base' policy in October 1980.

Negotiating the 'Touch Base' Policy

With the end of the economic embargo imposed by the United States and the admission into the United Nations in 1971, China's relation with the West improved. Britain and the colonial government had to deal with immigration into Hong Kong carefully through negotiations with the PRC. A number of factors created obstacles to reaching a mutual agreement on Hong Kong's immigration control. Firstly, immigration from China to Hong Kong had always been loosely regulated due to the tradition of free movement of people. To effectively reduce immigration, China first had to agree to cooperate and reduce the number of legal permits issued to its people. Besides, Hong Kong had to ensure China would accept any illegal immigrants being sent back. Secondly, the differences in two legislative and judiciary systems also hindered the repatriation process. Hong Kong could not just send back a particular group of illegal immigrants requested by China. It had to develop a standard measure that complied with colonial laws. Thirdly, immigration policies enacted and implemented by the colonial government had to have the backing of the British government, which might put the interests of improved Sino-British relations before those of Hong Kong. Fourthly, to reduce the risk of international criticism, it was essential for Britain to adopt a

[23] FCO 40/1116, 'The Threat to Hong Kong', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 9 October 1979.
[24] HKRS 70-8-2093, Reply by the Secretary for Security to a Question by the Hon. R. H. Lobo in the Legislative Council, 17 October 1979.

consistent liberal humanitarian policy on immigrants, especially political refugees, and check if the returnees would face harsh punishment. The complexities made swift resolution unfeasible.

Before the early 1970s, there were no formal modalities on how illegal immigrants from China should be returned. The difficulties of handling these Chinese illegal immigrants can be summarized by a passage written by the Governor, MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1974:

> Poon of NCNA (New China News Agency) called on the Assistant Political Adviser on 15 February to seek, on instructions from the 'Kwangtung (Guangdong) Authorities', the return to China of fifty-eight persons who entered Hong Kong illegally on 20 September last year by Stooolen (Stolen) Junk…. In reply George said that this approach came very long after the event. Even if, as Poon has alleged, they had been detained at the time of their arrival, the people would long since been released and perhaps admitted for residence here. The matter would have to be dealt with according to the law which, as Poon would know, was complicated.[25]

In short, there was neither agreement nor coordination between China and Hong Kong. The Guangdong Authorities often requested the return of a particular groups of illegal immigrants after they entered Hong Kong for a long period of time. It was extremely difficult to arrest them when many of them already gained residence and settled in the colony. Also, rather than

[25] FCO 21/1273, Telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 15 February 1974.

acting upon all illegal movements, Guangdong only pursued cases that were related to groups of criminals who had offended Chinese laws and endangered the safety of Chinese waters, often without a formal request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing and specifying the charges against these people. Uncertainty regarding legal process compounded returning illegal immigrants to China. There were three categories of illegal immigrants which the colonial government had to handle differently. The first was refugees who were alleged to have committed crimes within China. In these cases, the Chinese Extradition Ordinance applied. The second category was refugees that were alleged to have committed crimes in the act of escaping, such as hi-jacking a junk to enter the colony. There were different considerations in this category. If the escapes were justified, the means of escape would as well be justifiable. However, it was also possible that extradition was involved. The last category was refugees who committed no crimes but entered Hong Kong using their own means.[26] It was therefore essential for the colonial administration to distinguish between these illegal immigrants and lay down modalities of returns before any appropriate measures were taken.

The increase in the scale of immigration combined with critical press coverage of the issue drove the colonial government to consider tightening immigration controls. The normalization of Sino-British relations allowed negotiations with China to take place in November 1973. On 27 November, it was agreed that legal immigrants should be kept to seventy-five a day. Nevertheless, the daily flow of immigrants seemed to have exceeded this level.[27] Regular meetings between Political Advisers of Hong Kong and representatives of

[26] FCO 21/1273, 'Immigrants from China to Hong Kong', telegram from A. C. Stuart, Hong Kong and Indian Ocean Department to P. M. Kelly, 4 March 1974.
[27] HKRS 70-6-856-1, R. Peiris, 'Compromise on China Immigrants: London Agreeable to 75 Migrants a Day', *Hong Kong Standard*, 27 November 1973; S. Chan 'Refugees Hit by Ransom Racket', *Hong Kong Standard*, 3 December 1973; 'Immigrant Flow from China up Again', *Hong Kong Standard*, 26 January 1974; 'China's

the New China News Agency were set up in February 1974. The strategy was simple: first to reach an agreement with China on legal immigration before any discussions of the return of illegal immigrants. The aim was to keep the number of legal immigration down to about fifty a day, which was viewed at the time as the maximum which Hong Kong could absorb.[28] In a telegram to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the British Foreign Secretary, Alec Douglas-Home stated that he would be 'grateful' if Political Advisers 'would confine yourself to probing the latest Chinese position on legal immigration' and 'would not volunteer anything about illegal immigration'.[29] MacLehose, who preferred 'not to mention this intention to return illegals until Hong Kong introduced a control on legal immigration', agreed.[30] This decision was made because of the legal complexity involved in returning illegal immigrants and the scale of the problem. By making arbitrary decisions, the Governor was concerned that it 'would expose ourselves (the colonial government) to charges of corruption'.[31] The colonial government entered the talk wanting to reduce both legal and illegal immigrants without compromising the improved relations with China and the British government's sovereignty, and arousing negative opinions in both the colony and Britain.[32]

From the viewpoint of China, there were a number of reasons that a tighter control on illegal emigration was desirable. Illegal immigrants were 'very seldom refugees'. Instead, they were mostly 'young people from town who dislike having been sent to work on farms or others who prefer the comparative ease of Hong Kong'.[33] Therefore, the absence of effective

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Legal Immigrant Influx Doubled', *Hong Kong Standard*, 27 January 1974; 'China Intake Remains 100', *China Mail*, 1 April 1974.

[28] FCO 21/1273, Telegraph from E. Youde to R. M. Evans, 21 February 1974; 'Immigration into Hong Kong', telegram from R. M. Evans to E. Youde, 30 April 1974.

[29] FCO 21/1273, Telegram from Alec Douglas-Home to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1 March 1974.

[30] 'Immigrants from China to Hong Kong', telegram from Stuart to Kelly, 4 March 1974, p. 1.

[31] FCO 21/1273, 'Immigration into Hong Kong', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1 April 1974.

[32] FCO 21/1273, 'Immigration from China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 8 March 1974.

[33] Ibid.

controls over illegal emigration would adversely affect the 'Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement' initiated by the Chinese Communist regime and cause an impact on the order the communes. It would also reduce the size of the labour workforce and subsequently the country's productivity. There were inflationary conditions in China in 1974, and this led to a 'great increase in Chinese prices – notably foodstuff' and 'contributed to the savage increase in the local cost of living'.[34] This was push factor which motivated mainland Chinese to escape to Hong Kong, causing a rise in illegal emigration from China. Through taking control over illegal emigrations, China could also discourage Hong Kong's representations.

From the perspective of the colonial government, it was essential to 'separate the questions of immigration control and the extradition of wanted criminals'. Yet, the Chinese government often refused to comply with the requirements of the Extradition Ordinance and sent witnesses to Hong Kong when requesting the return of some criminals back to China.[35] During a meeting in Shenzhen, for example, NCNA representatives expressed that there were no difficulties for the Hong Kong authorities to return illegal immigrants caught at the frontier back in 1961 and 1962. The Political Advisor of Hong Kong believed that what the Chinese government wanted was to 'return to the pre-67 situation' in which there was a quota of fifty legal immigrants a day and the colonial government returned all illegals detected at the borders.[36] However, since 1968, the regular control at the border had been lifted and the colonial government had also taken a line that illegals who were alleged to have engaged in criminal activities should be viewed as 'a matter of extradition to face trial rather than of

[34] FCO 21/1273, telegram from A. E. Donald, Colonial Secretariat to A. C. Stuart, Hong Kong and Indian Ocean Department, 17 May, 1974.
[35] 'Immigration into Hong Kong', telegram from R. M. Evans, Far Eastern Department to E. Youde, 30 April 1974.
[36] 'Immigration from China', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 8 March 1974.

illegal entry'.[37] Despite the desire to return to the pre-67 situation, Chinese officials 'made (it) clear that they would object to the reinstitution of controls by Hong Kong on legal immigration on the pre-1967 pattern', as 'this would interfere with the ''traditional rights of access of Chinese to Hong Kong'''.[38] In this context, the decision on the repatriation of illegals became the bargaining chip for Hong Kong at the Sino-Hong Kong negotiations. MacLehose even suggested that Hong Kong 'could progressively ignore illegals if the Chinese did not respond over legals'.[39] In other words, Hong Kong would not be prepared to return illegals unless China agreed to lower the number of legal immigrants.

On 3 May 1974, Goronwy-Roberts granted approval to the Governor to start discussion with the NCNA 'the practical arrangement' of returning illegal immigrants.[40] Alan Donald, Hong Kong's Political Adviser, stressed the importance of establishing some general rules before taking action in individual cases.[41] On 27 August, the Political Adviser met the Director of Shenzhen Foreign Affairs Bureau to discuss modalities of returning illegal immigrants. Donald questioned if China would receive all illegals sent by Hong Kong and emphasized the need for 'speed, smoothness and good judgement' when discussing practical methods for return.[42] During the meeting, the 'Chinese attitude was generally one of reasonableness'.[43] Representatives of NCNA welcomed an effective approach of returning illegals. When it came to the discussions of returning criminals, there were 'however some disposition'.[44] In response, Donald pointed out that the legal systems of Britain and China were 'historically

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[37] FCO 21/1273, 'Immigrants from China to Hong Kong', telegram from A. C. Stuart to Kelly, 4 March 1974.
[38] 'Immigration into Hong Kong', telegram from Evans to Youde, 30 April 1974.
[39] 'Immigration into Hong Kong', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1 April 1974.
[40] FCO 21/1273, 'The Return of Illegal Immigrants to China', by the Far Eastern Department, 14 June 1974, p. 1.
[41] FCO 21/1273, 'Illegal Immigration from China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 27 June 1974.
[42] FCO 21/1273, Telegram from Roberts to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 28 August 1974.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

different'.[45]

During the negotiations, there were multiples concerns within the colonial government. The Executive Council had given its approval to the idea of sending back illegals who were arrested before reaching the urban area according to the pre-1967 practice in November 1973. Nonetheless, the Acting Governor wished to consult the Council again in mid-1974, to obtain their views, particularly on the potential undesirable responses which may be created by revising the immigration policy.[46] There were also concerns over possible international repercussions stirred up by international amnesty organizations. To avoid undesirable responses, MacLehose believed it was essential to distinguish Chinese immigrants from other illegals from third world countries, particularly Vietnam.[47] Britain's political development was another 'complicating factor'.[48] If an agreement was not reached and implemented before a new British government was elected (there was a General Election due in 1974), the new government have had to review the revision of Hong Kong's immigration policy. If the negotiations were postponed and changes were made by the new British government, the colonial government may have faced 'accusations of bad faith' from China.[49] The fact that the subject was already an agenda in the Executive Council, it was difficult for the Governor to further postpone the discussion.

The colonial government had assessed the potential public responses before the introduction of the 'Touch Base' policy. In the early 1970s, although the society was still sympathetic towards illegal immigrants, there were increased concerns over how population growth was

[45] Ibid.
[46] FCO 21/1273, 'Illegal Immigrants to Hong Kong from China', telegram from A. C. Stuart to Male, 30 August 1974.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

straining social services. As MacLehose had pointed out, 'though people here would dislike a return to pre-67 practice, they are sufficiently disturbed by recent numbers (to) accept it'.[50] Lord Goronwy-Roberts, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs also believed that the majority of the public would acknowledge the need to take the pressure off from housing and social services. It was expected that only immediate relatives of immigrants would be 'more vocal'. It was predicted that the majority would be 'silent'.[51] The Executive Council also anticipated that although the repatriation policy would not be popular, people would understand it was necessary and accept it.[52] Nevertheless, due the prevalence of the sympathetic attitude, it was expected sometimes 'publicity given to a case would prevent us (the colonial government) from sending an illegal back'. The implementation of the 'Touch Base' policy would also be sharply criticized by Nationalist organizations, Christian groups and some expatriate newspapers in Hong Kong.[53]

On 22 October, Gorowny-Roberts agreed that a final agreement should be sought with the Chinese over the return of illegals on the basis of the meeting in Shenzhen on 27 August.[54] On 12 November, a final agreement was reached between Hong Kong and the NCNA: the colonial government 'in principle' would not allow illegal immigrants from China to either enter or stay in Hong Kong. The word 'in principle' was deliberately added in order to allow more flexibility for the colonial government, especially over cases of genuine hardship and people that were already absorbed into the community.[55] Hong Kong would start to return illegal immigrants from 30 November. The Guangdong provincial government would receive

[50] 'Immigration from China', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 8 March 1974.
[51] FCO 21/1273, 'Illegal Immigrants to Hong Kong from China', telegram from A. C. Stuart, Hong Kong and Indian Ocean Department to Lord Goronwy Roberts, 30 August 1974.
[52] FCO 21/1273, 'Immigration from China', memorandum for the Executive Council, 10 September 1974, p. 6.
[53] Ibid., pp. 5-6.
[54] FCO 21/1273, 'Chinese Immigrants', telegram from James Callaghan to Murray MacLehose, 22 October 1974.
[55] 'Illegal Immigrants from China', MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 14 November 1974.

them according to the agreed procedures.[56] Under the 'Touch Base' policy, all illegal immigrants who were apprehended in the frontier area would be repatriated. However, to avoid public disturbance and unpleasant repercussions, those who had 'touched base' (reached the urban area) were allowed to stay. To minimize possible negative responses, officials were given instructions to repeatedly state that the arrangements were only a revival of policies before 1967, and merely aimed to put a halt to the enormous increase in illegal entries. It was also emphasized that every single case was examined individually and people suffering from 'genuine hardship' were exempted from repatriation.[57]

Government officials played an important role in shaping the view that illegal Chinese immigrants were external threats to Hong Kong. The colonial administration continued the policy adopted since 1956, labelling them as 'illegal immigrants' instead of 'refugees'. In June 1974, Bill Collard, the Director of Immigration publicly described Chinese immigrants as unwanted elements who imposed strain on the colony's welfare system:

> We don't want and we don't need these people (Chinese immigrants); they're no good to us and they can't go anywhere else because the country from which they originated many years ago simply don't want them back…. It's very expensive business because all these people have to get accommodated and this means we've got to build more schools, hospitals and houses…. Obviously, very few of these people are going to bring any benefit to us because a lot of them are old people and a lot of them are kids who are uneducated.[58]

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[56] FCO 21/1273, 'Illegal Immigration from China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 19 November 1974.
[57] FCO 21/1273, 'Return of Illegal immigrants to China', telegram from A. C. Glasworthy to D. March, 28 November 1974.
[58] HKRS 70-6-856-1, 'Refugees: A ''Crisis Level'' Warning', *Hong Kong Standard*, 1 June 1974.

After the implementation of the 'Touch Base' policy, police reports were issued regularly to further strengthen the negative image of Chinese immigrants. K. K. Pui, the Assistant Immigration Officer, for example, explicitly expressed in a speech to the Lion Club that there were 'undesirables', such as 'swindlers, drug traffickers, racketeers, subversive elements and criminals' among those who entered Hong Kong: 'the illicit activities of these people constitute an immediate threat to law and order, and it is critical importance they should be chased out of our city as soon as possible'.[59] The association between criminals and Chinese young illegals was still reinforced by officials in the 1980s. The Deputy Director of Criminal Investigation, Li Kwan-ha, for example stated that 'illegal immigrants are responsible for some 10 per cent of crime in Hong Kong' in April 1981. According to Li's statistics, 'they have been found responsible for 35 to 45 per cent of major crimes such as bank robberies, goldsmith shop attacks and cases involving firearms'.[60]

The capacity for Chinese immigrants to be identified as refugees in Hong Kong had been greatly reduced by the introduction of the 'Touch Base' policy and the associated rhetoric employed by the colonial state. Rather than being considered to be 'refugees', Chinese immigrants fell into two categories: legal or illegal. The latter was now being portrayed as unruly criminals who bypassed legal procedures to enter the colony and therefore should face repatriation. Along with shifting newspaper reporting, the public's perceptions of Chinese immigrants changed in the mid-1970s, paving the way for increased demands for a tighter immigration policy in the late 1970s. The following section examines how the immigration discourse within newspapers shifted.

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[59] HKRS 70-8-2097, 'Immigration Fight to Keep Hong Kong Clean', *South China Morning Post*, 9 September 1976.
[60]HKRS 70-8-2094, 'Police Report no. 4', Police Public Relations Wing, *Daily Information Bulletin*, 30 April 1981.

Increased Press Coverage

In the early 1970s, newspapers were increasingly concerned about the 'exodus' from China. *South China Morning Post* made the following observation and comment:

> A feeling of widespread concern verging on serious disquiet has been aroused by reports of the disturbingly large influx of people from the Chinese mainland…. There is no hope of many, if any, of them leaving. Hong Kong, in other words, is the end of the line….Cooperation is needed by both sides in settling this, and it is to be hoped that this human flow is stopped as soon as possible.[61]

Similar sentiment was captured by the *Star*: 'the mystery surrounding the sudden upsurge in the number of immigrants from China deepened today'.[62] Ma Man-fei, the Secretary of the United Nations Association in Hong Kong even accused China of 'using Hong Kong as a litter bin': 'Hong Kong has always been a litter bin, right on China's doorstep. Anyone they don't want they just dump here'.[63]

The press typically portrayed the influx of illegal immigrants from China as a problem which had serious economic, social and cultural implications. *South China Morning Post* held that Chinese illegal immigrants were 'illiterate, unskilled, unemployed, elderly or a combination of all four', who threw a heavy burden on the social welfare resources of the colony.[64] It also

[61] HKRS 70-6-856-1, 'The Influx from China', *South China Morning Post*, 7 November 1973.
[62] HKRS 70-6-856-1, 'Refugee Mystery Deepens', *Star*, 9 November 1973.
[63] HKRS 70-6-856-1, 'Peking is using Hong Kong as a Litter Bin, Says Ma', *Hong Kong Standard*, 11 November 1973.
[64] HKRS 70-6-856-1, K. Ko, 'China Exodus a Burden on Hong Kong Resources', *South China Morning Post*, 7 November 1973.

described mainland illegal immigrants as ‘unassimilable and useless mouths’ and stressed that they could hardly integrate due to cultural differences.[65] *Sing Tao Yat Pao* similarly argued that legal immigrants from China were mainly people with a ‘lack of labouring ability’ and who were ‘viewed by the Communist Party as unfit’ that ‘may not be able to make any contribution’ to China. It argued that illegal immigrants were mainly young people, who lacked ‘suitable survival skills’ and ‘left because they could not tolerate the torture and difficulties’.[66] Less frequently, newspapers implied that Chinese immigrants were criminals. For example, the *Hong Kong Standard* claimed that ‘a number of well-planned holdups in recent years were carried out from China’ and ‘the problem of refugees-turned-bandits has already aroused the attention of the government’.[67]

The newspapers brought the absence of immigration control by the colonial government to the public’s attention. For example, the *China Mail* labelled the current influx of Chinese immigrants as an ‘immigration crisis’ and denounced the colonial state for installing ‘an effective wall of silence’.[68] When the ‘Touch Base’ policy was introduced in 1974, the subject was ‘given prominence in most local papers’. According to a survey of local press, apart from the right-wing pro-Nationalist papers, ‘all editorial comment has been understanding and favourable to the Hong Kong government’s case’. A press report in early December 1974 suggested that newspapers had ‘unanimously approved of the repatriation move’.[69] *Wah Kiu Yat Po* agreed that the repatriation policy was ‘the only way to maintain the stability of the public of Hong Kong’ and ‘the local government is left with no choice’.[70] *Tin Tin Yat Po* expressed sympathy for the illegal immigrants but ‘saw no point in objecting

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[65] HKRS 70-6-856-1, ‘Useless Mouths’, *South China Morning Post*, 11 November 1973.
[66] HKRS 70-6-856-1, ‘香港的大陸難民與移民’, *Sing Tao Yat Pao,* 8 November 1973.
[67] HKRS 70-6-856-1, ‘China Refugees Turn to Planned Robberies’, *Hong Kong Standard*, 2 July 1973.
[68] HKRS 70-6-856-1, ‘The Wall of Silence’, *China Mail*, 9 November 1973.
[69] FCO 21/1274, *Hong Kong Press Report*, 4-11 December 1974, p. 1.
[70] Ibid., p. 3.

the move'.[71] *Fai Po* also supported the 'new' policy: 'In face of the present economic recession, price inflation and rise of unemployment, we can no longer accept non-ceasing flow of illegal immigrants'.[72]

Nevertheless, the immigration discourse was not wholly anti-immigrant. From the early 1970s to the mid-1970s, some editorials and reports were sympathetic towards illegal immigrants. For instance, *Wah Kiu Yat Po* regarded the move as 'inhumane'.[73] *Kung Sheung Daily News* held that 'the refugees had provided considerable capital, technical skills and manpower for the industrial development of Hong Kong' and stressed that 'they would not have risked their lives to flee' if they 'had not been desperate'.[74] *Far Eastern Economic Review* even denounced the repatriation policy:

> Something rather nasty is happening to Hong Kong…. I refer of course to the despicable decision to begin sending illegal refugees back to China. The process of betrayal began with the familiar smoke-screen of official leaks to the local press…. But the argument that the 'illegals' impose a strain on Hong Kong's resources does not bear a moment's examination. They are mostly young and fit, in their late teens or their twenties, and many have proved their fitness by crossing the border area or swimming across the bays between Hong Kong and China. Further, under Hong Kong regulations, they do not qualify for either public housing or public assistance until they have been in Hong Kong for a minimum of five years.[75]

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., p. 4.
[75] FCO 21/1274, D. Davies, 'Traveller's Tales', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 December 1974.

These opinions were not mainstream but reveal that some newspapers held sympathetic stance to illegal Chinese immigrants by the end of 1974.

As the scale of illegal immigration became public knowledge, the calls for a tighter immigration policy dominated the news discourse. The *Express* argued that only by strengthening the repatriation policy, could Hong Kong's order be maintained.[76] In 1978, according to 'Opinions', most Chinese language newspapers 'expressed concern over the problem of illegal immigration to Hong Kong'. For example, in November 1978, *Tin Tin Yat Po* argued that, although 'Hong Kong should in principle not turn back those seek political asylum here', it was 'common knowledge that Hong Kong is a small place and it would fall apart if it was forced to accept a large number of political refugees'. *Kung Sheung Evening News* also pointed out that 'Hong Kong has already been placed in a difficult position by the influx of Vietnamese refugees from all directions'. Therefore, 'it will not be able to cope with the situation if China continues to let refugees it has already accepted come here in large numbers'.[77] In 1979, there were increased criticisms against the colonial government's lack of determination to put an end to the influx on both Chinese and English newspapers. According to *South China Morning Post*, there was 'increasing dismay and growing concern' over the influx of people from both China and Vietnam, both 'legal and 'illegal' and 'a growing sense of helplessness in official reactions as the daily figures mount'.[78] *Ming Pao*, during the week from 23 to 29 May 1979, devoted four editorials to the subject. It argued that the government's attitude was 'one of submission and resignation, lacking in both courage

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[76] HKRS 70-8-2097, '加強執行遞解條例 確保本港社會治安', *Express*, 9 September 1976.
[77] HKRS 70-8-2097, Extracts of the articles of *Tin Tin Yat Po*, 15 November 1978 and *Kung Sheung Evening News*, 16 November 1978 were recorded in 'Opinions: A Weekly Summary of Chinese Editorials', *Chinese Press Review*, 15-21 November 1978.
[78] HKRS 70-8-2103, 'Time to Turn the Tide of People', *South China Morning Post*, 23 February 1979.

and determination'.[79] Similar views were expressed by the *Express*: 'We think now is the decisive moment to act and stop the influx of all types of immigrants. We can no longer afford to be soft-hearted'.[80] The illegal immigrants also proved to be burdens of the colony. *Hong Kong Times* pointed out that cost of repatriating illegal immigrants back to mainland was high: 'the total sum of expenses reached $36,080.2' from January to April 1979. 'Generous taxpayers' ironically became 'hosts' of these illegals.[81] According to the *Star*, 'the call is growing for the government to change its policy on illegal immigrant problem' as 'the current policy obviously is not working'.[82] In February 1980, the *South China Morning Post* urged the colonial government to review its policy on illegal immigrants:

> How could we strengthen our policy? Well, from now on, we could refuse to issue identity cards and set the police the task of catching them in the urban jungle and sending for trials those found harbouring them. But a pre-condition to that would be a law compelling everybody to carry his or her identity card everywhere he or she goes.[83]

The Sun even called the influx 'an invasion' and said 'it must stop'.[84]

From the mid-1970s, newspapers stereotyped Chinese illegal immigrants as criminals. This

[79] HKRS 70-8-2103, Extract from *Ming Pao*, 23 May 1979. It was recorded in 'Opinions: A Weekly Summary of Chinese Editorials', *Chinese Press Review*, 23-29 May 1979, p. 1.
[80] Extract from *Express,* 25 May 1979, ibid., p. 2.
[81] HKRS 70-8-2103, '港納稅人慷慨天天請客 難胞逃港被捕遣回 每人日耗港幣廿元 今年四個月伙食廿三萬六千元', *Hong Kong Times,* 10 May 1979.
[82] HKRS 70-8-2104, 'No Haven for Illegals', *Star*, 28 March 1980.
[83] HKRS 70-8-2104, G. Jenkins, 'Time to Review Policy in Illegal Immigration', *South China Morning Post*, 11 February 1980.
[84] HKRS 70-8-2104, 'The Invasion Must Stop', *The Sun*, 2 October 1980.

relationship between Chinese illegal immigrants and bad elements was established in *Hong Kong Standard* in 1976:

> Criminals responsible for many Hong Kong's big payroll holdups and expertly planned robberies are believed to be illegal immigrants from mainland China. Police sources reported that the illegals have banded together in a loose association called the Big Circle. Detectives described the Big Circle members having expertise, organization and professionalism. They said that the illegal immigrants are tougher than ordinary street criminals….Two of the Hong Kong's most wanted criminals who were involved in the $7.2 million Great Tunnel Robbery on 5 August last year are believed to be 'Dai Luk Chais (mainlanders)' or members of the circle.[85]

In 1978, an editor of *Kung Sheung Daily News* suggested that many young Chinese illegal immigrants 'still inherited the bad traditions of communism, which shaped their cruel personality'. He claimed that many of these illegal immigrants 'would use measures, such as struggles, revenges and looting' to achieve their goals, especially those that were 'laid back' and 'do(did) not want to find a decent job'. These former Red Guards 'would be happy to see destruction of the social order, history, culture and ethnics under the name of ''revolutions'''.[86] *Kung Sheung Evening News* similarly pointed out that teenage illegal immigrants from China did not always have the ability to adapt and integrate into the society of Hong Kong. False expectation 'may stimulate them and provoke them to walk towards the ''evil path'''. These 'black-market residents', the editor believed, were 'a major hidden

[85] HKRS 70-8-2097, A. Roddick, 'Chinese Militia-trained Robbers Band Together in a Big Circle', *Hong Kong Standard*, 17 December 1976.
[86] HKRS 70-8-2097, '逃海外紅衛兵多成問題青年', *Kung Sheung Daily News*, 4 May 1978.

trouble in Hong Kong'.[87] *Sing Tao Yat Pao* and *Hong Kong Standard* also portrayed young Chinese illegals as criminals who 'wanted returns without efforts' and committed crimes with 'no remorse'.[88] Apart from the 'Big Circle Gang', other degradative discriminatory terms, such as 'Green Card Holders' and 'Ar Chan' were commonly inflicted by newspapers to describe Chinese illegal immigrants, differentiating them from the Hong Kong Chinese.[89]

While the society was gradually turning anti-immigrant, the pro-Taiwan press and rightists continued to portrayed illegals as victims and denounced the Chinese Communist regime:

> Under the tyranny of Mao's gang, people who risked their life to come to Hong Kong have never stopped, especially the Mao's gang again used 'investigating anti-revolutionaries' as an excuse to carry out a massacre on its people lately. People cannot tolerate it and therefore risk their life to escape.[90]

Both *Kung Sheung Daily News* and *Hong Kong Times* repeatedly used the term 'compatriots' to label these Chinese illegal immigrants.[91] An editor, Yu Tin advocated acceptance and tolerance in *Hong Kong Times*. In one article, he denounced the repatriation policy as inhumane: 'In a civilised society, there is natural differentiation between human and other creatures'. He then questioned 'whether human or other animals are under protection'. in this

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[87] HKRS 70-8-2103, '偷渡客成香港心腹大患', *Kung Sheung Evening News*, 18 June 1979.
[88] HKRS 70-8-2106, 'Jail for II Who Had No Remorse', *Hong Kong Standard*, 8 July 1981; '偷渡來港後竟不甘捱窮 大陸青年械劫傷人 兩罪判入獄五年半', *Sing Tao Yat Pao*, 8 July 1981.
[89] HKRS 70-8-2105, '綠印者衣錦還鄉 引起警方密切注視 疑屬專門打劫金舖大圈仔份子', *Express*, 18 January 1981; HKRS 70-8-2106, '阿燦劫金行五十萬 四人入獄九至十年', *Hong Kong Commercial Daily*, 28 October 1981; HKRS 70-8-2106, '三綠印客被控藏槍意圖行劫', *Kung Sheung Daily News*, 4 November 1981.
[90] HKRS 70-8-2097, '毛幫又屠殺香港魚民', *Hong Kong Times*, 4 June 1976.
[91] HKRS 70-8-2097, '但願人權尚在人間!冒死逃港卅餘難胞 全被捕獲面臨厄運', *Kung Sheung Daily News,* 29 December 1977; HKRS 70-8-2097, '七名男女難胞 昨晚摸黑逃港 不幸被白宮�branch警崗發覺 山腳截獲等待遣解厄運', *Hong Kong Times*, 26 April 1978; HKRS 70-8-2103, '難胞胞逃港創新紀錄 較前年增加四倍半', *Hong Kong Times*, 8 January 1979.

'highly civilized' society. Illegal immigrants sometimes faced arbitrations that even animals would not need to face under the existing practice in Hong Kong.[92] This propaganda, however only represented the opinion of small minority. Since the 1970s, the increased press coverage triggered public discussions on the existing immigration policy. The negative image of Chinese illegal immigrants constructed by newspapers since mid-1970s also influenced public sentiments towards Chinese immigrants, as discussed in the following section.

<u>Shifted Public Sentiments and Political Culture</u>

By the mid-1970s, many community leaders advocated a tighter immigration policy. The Chairman of Kowloon City Kaifong Association, Lui Fook-hong, for example, believed that 'both governments should be taking steps to stop them from coming in'. Chan Ling-fong, the Chairman of Kennedy Town Kaifong Association also urged the colonial government to do 'something about this and give the situation top priority because it will upset our social plans'. As an Urban Councillor, Henry Hu believed the current policy should be revised: 'I would favour a move to stop these immigrants coming in, we cannot absorb many people in such a short time'.[93] In the mid-1970s, public attitude shifted as a result of hostile comments made by public figures due to the negative image of Chinese illegal immigrants constructed by the press and an increasingly crowded living environment. According to *MOOD*, during the 1950s, the general public in Hong Kong was sympathetic towards the Chinese immigrants and considered the immigration policy 'good' and 'humane'. Immigrants from China were often being viewed as 'refugees seeking political asylum', whose attempt to move to Hong Kong would risk being 'harshly punished by the C.P.G'.[94]

[92] HKRS 70-8-2097, 于田, '今恩足以及禽獸…', *Hong Kong Times*, 23 September 1977.
[93] HKRS 70-6-856-1, 'Stop the Refugees- Community Leaders', *China Mail*, 9 November 1973.
[94] HKRS 925-1-1, 'Public Attitude Gradually Turning Anti-immigrant', *MOOD*, 9 October 1975, p. 1.

The mid-1970s was a turning point. Attitude towards Chinese immigrants changed. Although the large scale immigration from China had 'not aroused widespread of anxiety or strong feelings', there was hostility towards Chinese immigrants among people of different classes and age groups.[95] It was mainly due to the perception that the influx of mainland population to Hong Kong could be 'an impediment to the fulfilment of long-term social service projects'.[96] The perceived increasing difference between the locals and mainland Chinese in culture and experience further aggravated the anti-Chinese immigration problem. In the 1950s, locals believed that Chinese immigrants were able to adapt easily as they all had similar background and were brought up in China before the Chinese Communists seized power. Contrastingly, the young generation who grew up in China under the Chinese Communist regime encountered enormous difficulties in adapting. Not only were 'their upbringing in present day China in many ways incompatible with the ways of life in Hong Kong', many young Chinese immigrants' work ethic was questioned. According to *MOOD*, in 1975, many young Chinese immigrants were convinced that they could enjoy an easy life after they moved to Hong Kong. Many employers found these young immigrants 'unsatisfactory' and complained that they were 'lazy, unwilling to work too hard, difficult to manage or discipline, and quite ready to cause trouble'. Many Hong Kong Chinese held contemptuous attitudes towards Chinese immigrants. They believed that growing up in an environment which had a different set of legal system and hoping to seek instant benefit, these Chinese illegal immigrants were 'prone to commit crime'.[97] The public's perceptions of Chinese illegal immigrants assembled their negative characteristics found in official rhetoric

[95] Ibid., p. 5.
[96] Ibid., p. 1.
[97] Ibid., p. 2.

and newspapers in the early and mid-1970s, demonstrating the influence of the latter on the former.

As the majority of the society expressed their hope to protect the local interests, the 'Touch Base' policy had 'on the whole been tacitly accepted by the community'.[98] Although a number of posters appeared in Kowloon and Hong Kong Island on 1 December 1974, protesting against the introduction of 'Touch Base' policy, they were 'the work of right-wing elements' and soon 'removed by the police'.[99] According to the Governor's reassessment on 3 December, 'so far the public reaction has been calm' and accepted the revised immigration policy.[100] The 'new' immigration policy also received support from a number community leaders and politicians, including Urban Councillors and representatives of kaifong associations. For example, Denny Huang endorsed the 'Touch Base' policy: 'We must face the fact that we are experiencing a population explosion. If the influx of refugees from China was allowed to continue, local residents would suffer, particularly in housing and jobs.' Elsie Elliott agreed it was a difficult decision which should be implemented: 'So many of our people are unemployed. We can't let the refugees accept jobs with less wages, leaving our own people unemployed.'[101] Another Urban Councillor, Peter C. K. Chan also showed support to the reversion of the immigration policy:

> Hong Kong's resources are limited, and as an elected Urban Councillor, my first responsibility is towards the people of Hong Kong. In view of the present economic

[98] Ibid., p. 2.
[99] FCO 21/1273, 'Illegal immigrants: Local Press Reaction', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2 December 1974.
[100] FCO 21/1273, telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 3 December 1974.
[101] FCO 21/1417, K. Sinclair, 'China Refugees will be Sent Back', *South China Morning Post*, 30 November 1974.

> situation, we have already reached saturation point as regards population and cannot accept the burdens of illegal immigrants from other countries. I therefore support the government's decision as a temporary measure. When our economy begins to get going again, perhaps the situation can be reviewed.[102]

The President of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Joint Kaifong Research Council, Yan Chi Kit also believed that 'the government had no other choice' as it had 'carried the burden long enough'.[103]

Press sentiments and comments made by officials and community leaders further influenced public opinions. A government's survey in 1979 revealed that the public was increasingly anti-immigrant when compared to 1975. In this period, the scale of immigration to Hong Kong grew as migrations from China were coupled by the influx of Vietnamese refugees in 1975. According to *MOOD*, there was considerably anxiety:

> Respondents were spontaneous and frank. They were worried about the vast numbers arriving daily and the correspondingly few refugees/immigrants leaving for resettlement elsewhere. Everyone was concerned about the social and economic consequences; working class people in particular strongly held the view that Hong Kong people should come first and that government should ensure that 'outsiders', be they ethnic Chinese refugees from Vietnam or immigrants from China, did not disrupt their livelihood, and the housing, medical and educational programme.[104]

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] HKRS 925-1-1, 'Public Reactions towards Vietnamese Refugees and Chinese Immigrants', *MOOD*, 28 June 1979, p. 1.

Despite their sympathy for immigrants and refugees who only fled to Hong Kong due to political persecution, most Hong Kong Chinese believed that ‘Hong Kong had no responsibility, let alone the resources, to accommodate the refugees even most of them were ethnic Chinese’.[105]

By 1980, majority in Hong Kong believed that no identity cards should be issued to illegals and called for putting an end to the ‘Touch Base’ policy. *Express* carried out a random poll interviewing 1,000 people. Eight out of ten ‘felt that the government should deport illegal immigrants who had successfully made into the urban areas’. When being asked why they favoured an end to the ‘Touch Base’ policy, 67 per cent of respondents believed that ‘the influx had strained social and transportation services’, 31 per cent felt that the exodus from mainland ‘would cause greater overcrowding’ and 30 per cent believed they had worsened the problem of employment.[106] In a poll conducted in an open forum in Victoria Peak on 22 September 1980, 185 people supported a deportation policy. Only eight people opposed it.[107] This suggests a shifted attitude towards Chinese immigrants in the late 1970s, influenced by the press and official rhetoric. In October 1980, MacLehose reported that ‘pressure from public opinion for the government to deal with the problem is growing’.[108]

Hong Kong residents did not treat all immigrants indiscriminately. *MOOD* captured locals’ different attitudes towards immigrants from China, Vietnam and Southeast Asia. They perceived illegal immigrants from Southeast Asia as ‘resourceful people who were able to

[105] Ibid., p. 2.
[106] The result of the poll survey was quoted in HKRS 70-8-2104, M. Lee, ‘Fed Up with Poor Relations: There is Increasing Pressure for an End to the Touch Base Rule for Illegal Chinese Immigrants’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 March 1980, p. 22.
[107] HKRS 70-8-2104, ‘Majority Supports Deportation Policy’, *South China Morning Post*, 22 September 1980.
[108] FCO 40/1203, ‘Immigration’, telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 7 October 1980.

buy their way here'.[109] They were therefore unlikely to rely on Hong Kong's public social services. In contrast to their antagonism towards the Chinese immigrants, a proportion of Hong Kong Chinese welcomed these Southeast Asian immigrants to settle in Hong Kong, believing that they could invest in the colony and boost the local economy. Coming from 'free (non-communist) societies', many locals believed that when compared to the mainland immigrants, the Southeast Asians 'should have few problems in adapting themselves to life in Hong Kong'.[110] In the *MOOD* survey conducted in 1979, most respondents believed that the Chinese immigration 'had even more serious implications' than that the influx of Vietnamese refugees as 'the (Chinese) immigrants were here to stay'.[111] There was a 'strong resentment against others (mainland immigrants), especially the young men and women who supposedly came here for a more leisurely life or material gains'. Many mainland Chinese could enjoy overseas remittances from their relatives in Hong Kong since a more open market was developed in China in the early 1970s. Subsequently, many families in China had lost their incentive to work as wages were low.

The conventional view was that illegal Chinese immigrants were responsible for crimes, such as the Hang Seng Bank robbery.[112] This impression coincided with the negative image of Chinese illegal immigrants constructed by the press. As the bitterness towards the Chinese immigrants intensified, there was increased criticism of the colonial government. Many condemned the inconsistent policies of the government and expected a firmer stand to be taken. Stricter and harsher anti-immigration measures should be implemented. For instance, some *MOOD* respondents recommended that Chinese visitors who entered with travel documents should not be given extension to stay and given permanent resident statuses.

[109] 'Public Reactions towards Vietnamese Refugees and Chinese Immigrants', p. 3.
[110] Ibid., p. 4.
[111] Ibid., p. 5.
[112] Ibid, pp. 4 and 6.

There should also be more actions against immigrants who had arrived Hong Kong illegally. Some even suggested that 'boats arriving in the future should be towed away'.[113]

Despite the tighter immigration control advocated by the general public, 'anti-immigrant' attitudes were constantly shifting. Under some special circumstances, people believed it was acceptable to grant illegal immigrants permission to stay. Mass media often played an important role in shaping this humanitarian sentiment. The case of Chan Kwan-fong in early 1977 was one of the exceptional cases that received publicity and triggered attitude shifts. Chan's husband was a citizen of Hong Kong. They had been separated for years as Chan's two attempts to enter the colony both failed and she was subsequently repatriated to China. In March 1977, Chan tried to enter Hong Kong again but was apprehended for the third time. Being uncertain about what punishment Chan would face upon her return, her husband, Lee Man-hung, started a campaign to obtain public support for Chan's permanent stay in Hong Kong. Their story was widely reported. At the end, Chan was allowed to stay. 'Opinions' captured the shifted public sentiments:

> The non-Communist press welcomed the decision to allow a woman illegal immigrant, Chan Kwan-fong to stay here and be reunited with her husband. The general consensus was that while there was a need to stop illegal immigrants from entering Hong Kong, humanitarian grounds must be given due consideration in individual cases.[114]

[113] Ibid., p. 2.
[114] HKRS 70-8-2097, 'Opinions: Chinese Press Summaries', *Chinese Press Review*, 9-15 March 1977.

For example, an editorial in *Oriental Daily* believed that ‘the government should refuse illegal immigrants permission to stay here’ in order ‘to prevent a population explosion’ but it ‘should examine every case very carefully and make an appropriate decision based on its merits’.[115] *Express* also praised the colonial government for dealing with Chan’s case ‘sensibly and reasonably’: ‘We believe humanitarian grounds should be taken into consideration when drafting and enforcing laws. If we adhere strictly to the law when dealing with Chan’s case and similar cases in the future, we will be making big mistake.’[116] The editor of *Hong Kong Daily News* similarly claimed that ‘the government has made a correct decision in allowing Chan Kwan-fong to stay here’.[117] The case of Chan Kwan-fong demonstrated that the anti-immigrant attitudes of Hong Kong Chinese were not static. In special context, humanitarian grounds were invoked and Hong Kong Chinese could be mobilized, supporting Chinese illegal immigrants to stay.

This period witnessed a shift of attitude towards mainland Chinese immigrants. A call for a tighter immigration policy emerged in the mid-1970s. Despite the absence of political mobilization and direct confrontation, such as demonstrations and sit-ins, there was a new critical discourse about immigrants and this intensified the pressure for policy changes. Since the mid-1970s, Chinese immigrants were being increasingly considered by the public to be inferior, not only when compared to local Hong Kong Chinese, but also newcomers from Southeast Asia, primarily due to their perceived lack of language proficiency and economic skills, cultural differences and their association with illicit activities. Nevertheless, the flexible nature of attitudes towards immigrants should be acknowledged. As Chan’s case has showed, Hong Kong Chinese were able to adjust their positions on immigration issue

[115] Extract of *Oriental Daily*, 13 March 1977 in ibid.
[116] Extract from ‘合情合理的決定:談港府處理陳桂芳事’, *Express*, 13 March 1977 in ibid.
[117] Ibid.

strategically, in response to context. The escalating anti-immigrant sentiments should be attributed not only to the increasingly overcrowded living environment and strained social services in Hong Kong, but also to the construction of negative images of mainland Chinese immigrants by the press and due to the rhetoric employed by the government officials. The prejudicial rhetoric adopted by the officials to justify the increasingly exclusionist immigration policy and the shifting press sentiments in the early 1970s influenced the perception of Chinese illegal immigrants among Hong Kong Chinese. Holding a negative view towards illegal immigration, Hong Kong Chinese of different social classes and age groups increasingly engaged in a critical immigration discourse after the mid-1970s. Even the working class, which often distanced themselves from the political discourse, expressed their discontent towards the colonial state's immigration policy. This changing public opinion influenced policy changes, ending the 'Touch Base' policy in 1980.

Government's Responses

Initially, the 'Touch Base' policy reduced the number of illegal immigrants.[118] There were increased warnings against illegal emigration in China. According to intelligence sources, in mid-December 1974, 'leading cadres of all production teams in Pao-an County received via production brigades a commune directive that in all mass meetings, regardless of the main topic, verbal warnings against attempting to escape to Hong Kong should be issued'.[119] People were warned that the Hong Kong government had sought an agreement with China to the immediate repatriation of all illegal immigrants and they would all be returned. Nonetheless, in a long run, this Chinese policy failed to solve illegal immigration.

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[118] FCO 21/1420, 'Illegal Immigrants from China and Macao- July 1975', memo from D. C. Readman, Director of Immigration to Secretary for Security, 13 August 1975, p. 2.
[119] FCO 21/1417, Extract from the Hong Kong Police Special Branch Report, enclosed in telegram from K. M. Draycott to B. H. Dinwiddy, 28 January 1975.

Due to the increased anti-immigrant sentiment, more measures were introduced to detect illegal entries both in China and Hong Kong in 1976. For example, a Ship Searching Unit was set up within the Immigration Department in early 1976 which inspected more than 250 vessels entering Hong Kong a month.[120] On the Chinese side, smugglers were given life sentences by the Chinese authorities.[121] In June 1976, new legislative amendment was proposed to allow the police to prosecute illegal immigrants who had stayed in Hong Kong for two years. Most newspapers supported the change. *South China Morning Post* for example, described the bill as 'designed to plug a loophole in the Immigration Ordinance'.[122] In July 1976, the bill became law. It empowered the Immigration Department to arrest and remove illegals within a period of three years from the time they have overstayed or entered Hong Kong. In June 1977, a new immigration bill was introduced to prosecute people aiding illegals. Before 1977, to fine and imprison aiders, evidence had to be provided at court to demonstrate the person they assisted was of illegal status, which hindered the process. This act solved the problem by allowing certificates issued by the Director of Immigration to be used as an evidence in court proceedings.[123]

Yet, these new measures failed to put a halt to the influx. In May 1978, MacLehose was aware of the public's increasingly hostile attitudes towards Chinese illegals. He expressed to London that the colonial administration was 'becoming increasingly concerned about the number of legal immigrants arriving from China'. The Governor instructed Political Advisers to raise concerns to the Director of the NCNA again. MacLehose, however, believed that the

[120] HKRS 70-8-2097, 'L. Siu, Daily Search for Illegal immigrants', *South China Morning Post*, 5 January 1976; '三月來不斷檢查抵埗貨輪 港府展開特別行動 嚴厲搜捕台偷渡客', *Sing Tao Yat Pao*, 19 January 1976.
[121] HKRS 70-8-2097, 'Top Fishing Industry Man Gets ''Life'' in China', *Star*, 6 April 1976.
[122] HKRS 70-8-2097, 'Bill Plugs Immigration Loophole', *South China Morning Post*, 2 June 1976.
[123] FCO 40/811, 'Memorandum for Executive Council: Immigration (Amendment) Bill 1977', 30 May 1977.

Chinese could only help solving part of the problem by issuing exit permits to those who had valid documentations for onward travel. MacLehose's main concern was with the 'overall numbers', which should be brought down to fifty a day at maximum. Therefore, he proposed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office the re-imposition of unilateral immigration control at the border. However, that was only regarded as the 'ultimate weapon' which should be used if China refused to act on the immigration problem. [124] Nevertheless, the Far Eastern Department and the Hong Kong and General Department both believed that 'the possibility of controls should not be mentioned' at this stage. Given 'the present state of our relations with the Chinese over Hong Kong', it was unnecessary to 'resort to threats of counter-measures in order to induce them to be cooperative'.[125] In the meeting between Political Adviser and the NCNA in May 1978, Chui Yi, the Deputy Director of NCNA agreed to report the views expressed by D. C. Wilson to the relevant departments in China.[126]

By the end of 1978, the 'problem of people' had escalated. The cumulative figure of legal arrivals from 1 January 1978 to 12 December 1978 totalled 64,770. What worsened the situation from the perspective of those perceived higher immigration as a 'problem' was that among these legal immigrants, 61,916 did not have onwards visas, which meant that the majority of them were unable to travel further and would therefore stay in Hong Kong

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[124] FCO 40/1005, 'Legal Immigration from China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 4 May 1978. A quota system of 'four-ins, five outs' was first introduced by the colonial government at the border in 1950 due to the influx of immigrants after the establishment of the communist regime in China. China was not consulted. The system lapsed in 1952 due to the Chinese imposition of a system of entry and exit permits for Guangdong Province. However, due to increased immigration, the quota system was reintroduced in 1955. It was changed to 'one-in, one-out'. The system operated until 1967 when Cultural Revolution broke out. It ceased mainly because of the fear that officers may be abducted at the border. See FCO 40/1005, 'The ''Quota'' and Legal Immigration from China', by Security Branch, Government Secretariat, 18 May 1978, pp. 2-4, attached in 'Legal Immigration from China to Hong Kong', telegram from I. C. Or to J. Thompson, Hong Kong and General Department, 31 May 1978.

[125] FCO 40/1005, 'Legal Immigration from China', telegram from W. E. Quantrill, Hong Kong and General Department to Murray MacLehose, 5 May 1978.

[126] FCO 40/1005, 'Record of Meeting in the Political Adviser's Office on May 1978', 9 May 1978, p. 2.

permanently.[127] The imposition of unilateral border control on the Hong Kong side was once again brought to the agenda. However, D. T. Owen, the Director of Immigration, pointed out that imposing border control on the Hong Kong side 'would present major political difficulties and could only be considered as a last resort'. He believed that it should be made clear that Hong Kong would prefer China to control the flow, and stated that the colonial government would be forced to introduce unilateral control if the number did not reduce to an acceptable level.[128] China's opposition to the re-imposition of border control was principled: Hong Kong was 'a Chinese territory temporarily under British administration', and not a 'British territory'. Any quota system and border control, therefore, was viewed as a violation of 'traditional right for Chinese nationals to enter Hong Kong'. And China, of course, 'have never officially recognized the legality of any systems of quota for entry of Chinese nationals into ''Chinese territory'''.[129]

On 15 December 1978, Percy Cradock, the British Ambassador to China, met the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, Zhang Wenjin in Beijing. Cradock expressed concerns and hoped that the Chinese government would not issue any exit permits before valid visas for onward travel were acquired. Chang recognized immigration as 'an important and serious matter' and agreed that 'something would have to be done to solve the immediate problem'.[130] The Ambassador also suggested that Hong Kong should return people who overstayed the period stated in their Chinese short-term exit or re-entry documents. This approach however was 'not practical', according to MacLehose:

[127] FCO 40/1007, 'Immigration from China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 13 December 1978.
[128] FCO 40/1007, 'Immigration from China', telegram from D. T. Owen, Director of Immigration to the Hong Kong Government and Office, 11 December 1978.
[129] 'The ''Quota'' and Legal Immigration from China', p. 6.
[130] FCO 40/1007, 'Immigration from China', telegram from P. Cradock to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 16 December 1978.

> If we attempted to return the thousands who overstay, they would simply destroy their Chinese travel documents and either go underground or claim to be treated as illegal immigrants who had 'reached based'. We would then face the same dilemma as in dealing with illegal immigrants who 'reached based' in the urban areas, i.e. arresting them from the midst of their relatives and in crowded areas is virtually impossible; and the alternative of denying them legal documents to say is equally unpalatable since it would create a substratum of people outside the law who would be vulnerable to all sort of pressure.[131]

The NCNA agreed. Alternative measures had to be sought. In January 1979, three changes were proposed and approved in the Executive Council: the distinction between immigrants from Guangdong and elsewhere in China should be abolished; the initial stay of all legal arrivals from China should be limited to twelve months; the initial stay of all illegals should be restricted to three months.[132] It was expected that these new practices would be 'welcomed by the public', especially by those who considered the previous colonial immigration policy illogic.[133] Although these changes would not completely solve the 'problem of people', they would at least cause those who stay some inconvenience and expenses'.[134]

While being received positively by the general public in Hong Kong, the new policy attracted criticisms from China. *Wen Wei Pao* denounced the Immigration Department for changing its

[131] FCO 40/1007, 'Immigration into Hong Kong', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 29 December 1978.
[132] Before 1979, Guangdong province residents were allowed to stay in Hong Kong 'unconditionally', 'regardless of the purpose or purposed length of stay' while immigrants from other parts of China would be given twelve months. Illegals who had registered for an identity card would also be given a stay of twelve months. FCO 40/1007, 'Memorandum for Executive Council: Immigration from China', 2 January 1979, p. 1.
[133] Ibid.
[134] 'Immigration into Hong Kong', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 29 December 1978.

policy for two times within three months and argued that the new measures 'resulted in the disappointment or anxiety of so many people'.[135] *Ta Kung Pao* argued that 'compatriots in China and people of Hong Kong are related in flesh and blood'. The new policy 'would naturally bring about problems and difficulties to people concerned'.[136] These 'unpopular' measures however, did not put an end to the immigration problem.

From the viewpoint of the Governor, the situation was extremely alarming: 'We cannot allow this situation to continue. The present rate would be the equivalent of over 100,000 a year for legal immigrants alone. With illegal immigration also running at a high level we could face a yearly total of 140-150,000'.[137] The rapid increase in illegal immigrants entering Hong Kong from China could be attributed to the relaxation in internal Chinese security. People were now being able to move more freely than previously inside the country. In addition, the collapse of the back-to-the countryside movement also led hundreds of thousands of exiled young people returning to cities where unemployment was running as high as 50 per cent. Natural disasters, such as floods in Huizhou also played an important role in the rise of illegal immigrants in 1979. MacLehose pressed the British government for policy changes, arguing it was 'inevitable' to impose unilateral control.[138] Cradock agreed that warning should be given to China.[139] In March 1979, the situation became so serious that MacLehose requested naval reinforcement.[140] The Political Advisor then met the representatives of NCNA to follow up the discussions. As expected, the NCNA suggested that 'the Chinese government

[135] FCO 40/1114, 'Immigration Policies Should be Humane and Reasonable', *Wen Wei Pao*, 19 March 1979.
[136] FCO 40/1114, 'Restrictions Unreasonable', *Ta Kung Pao*, 21 March 1979.
[137] 'Immigration into Hong Kong', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 29 December 1978.
[138] FCO 40/1114, 'Immigration from China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 16 February 1979.
[139] FCO 40/1114, 'Immigration from China', telegram from P. Cradock to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 17 February 1979.
[140] FCO 40/1114, 'Naval Reinforcement', telegram from MacLeose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 10 March 1979.

would find it very difficult to accept an imposed quota in view of the traditional free movement between China and Hong Kong'. The meeting ended in a 'friendly' atmosphere but 'the NCNA gave no signs of a favourable response to the various ideas put to them'.[141]

Public opinions in Hong Kong shaped negotiations between MacLehose and the Foreign Office in London. In May 1979, as public discontent escalated, the Governor wrote to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, proposing to inform the Chinese that an unilateral quota system would be re-imposed on legal immigrants:

> We are now facing a potentially explosive mixture of immigration problems which I think requires early actions...and NCNA say the numbers will continue to drop. But they are still more than treble our target of 1,550 a month. NCNA persistently defer the discussions we have asked for because they have not yet authority for 'concrete measures'…. The public are becoming profoundly disturbed by these mounting Chinese and Vietnamese figures. They feel that they are being shot with both barrels…. The fact that H.M.G. should even hesitate (and I have some personal sympathy) emphasized to the public here the hard fact that Hong Kong cannot expect much from others in solving her immigration problem in the short term. There is therefore strong demand that the Hong Kong government should act in some way, and this demand will grow fast. [142]

However, the proposition put forward by MacLehose was opposed by both Cradock and Carrington, who believed that emphasis should be placed on illegal problem instead as

[141] FCO 40/1114, 'Immigration from China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 9 March 1979.
[142] FCO 40/1115, 'Immigration', from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 25 May 1979.

‘unilateral measures by Hong Kong to stem the legal flow would increase rather decrease pressure of illegals’.[143] In response to Hong Kong’s request to lower the number of illegals, Shenzhen started an anti-illegal emigration campaign in June 1979. Banners were put up and new policies against illegals were also broadcasted by radio in Guangzhou.[144]

Yet, illegals increased again in the second half of 1979. Numerous potential emigrants ‘were waiting for the dust (new anti-illegal emigration campaign) to settle before making an attempt to get away’.[145] The lack of universal measure and central coordination of the anti-illegal emigration campaign, which was first initiated by China in October 1977, also contributed to the increased number. For example, Zhongshan and Panyu Counties installed ‘stringent anti-escape measures’. The militia in Zhongshan in particular, was ‘exercising a high level of vigilance’ and had set up a number of sentry posts.[146] However, in some areas, border controls were loosely regulated. An illegal from Shekou Commune suggested that the militia near Shekou was ‘not active in arresting escapees but merely patrol the roads’.[147] The People’s Liberation Army soldiers patrolled counties in different ways. Some were patrolling with dogs, but some, such as soldiers in Shatou and Baishizhou were without dogs, which made them easier to elude.[148] Severe weather conditions also hindered border checks. An illegal immigrant from Longgang Commune pointed out that ‘many Commune members succeeded in reaching Hong Kong whenever storm condition prevailed’.[149] Gathering intelligence from both successful and unsuccessful escapees, illegal emigrants would avoid

[143] FCO 40/1115, ‘Immigration from China’, telegram from Cradock to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 28 May 1979; ‘Immigration’, telegram from Carrington to Murray MacLehose, 28 May 1979.
[144] FCO 40/1115, ‘Illegal Immigration from China’, telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 11 July 1979.
[145] FCO 40/1116, ‘The Threat to Hong Kong’, telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 9 October 1979.
[146] HKRS 908-1-82 ‘Implementation of Illegal Emigration Controls in China’, memo from J. M. Shannon, Director of Special Branch for Commissioner of Police to Secretary for Security, 24 October 1980, p. 5.
[147] Ibid., p. 2.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid., p. 4.

routes that were heavily patrolled. Fines and punishments also varied in different counties. For example, the Sai Heung Commune had taken no special anti-escape measures. Before July 1980, illegal emigrants who were arrested would face detention for fifteen days in the Reception Station. Even after July, they were only asked to pay a fine of RMB 35 and surrender a rice coupon. Penalties were not strictly enforced in a busy farming period when communes needed more manpower.[150] However, in Chashan Commune, escapees had to face both detention and fines. Their heads would also be shaved and they had to labour without pay for fifteen to twenty days.[151] Due to the lack of universal measure and the absence of close supervision of the implementation of anti-emigration measures, the problem of illegal immigration from China to Hong Kong persisted.

In September 1979, the lack of effectiveness of China's measures drove MacLehose to press London to reconsider the re-imposition of unilateral controls on legal immigration. He also proposed to separate immigrants without onward travel documents from other travellers at the border. [152] The plan, however, was put on hold because of the visit of Hua Guofeng to London in October 1979. The Foreign Office wanted to see 'what Hua and his party say in London' before taking any further steps.[153]

Alongside negotiations with China, a series of legislative amendments were passed in 1979 in hope of solving 'the problem of people'. For example, fines and penalty against smugglers were increased in both the Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Ordinance and the Shipping and

[150] Ibid., pp. 5-6.
[151] Ibid., p. 6.
[152] FCO 40/1116, 'Immigration from China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 4 September 1979.
[153] FCO 40/1116, 'Immigration from China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 18 October 1979.

Port Control Ordinance, which passed in January 1979.[154] The Immigration Ordinance was amended in May 1979 , removing restrictions on both the detention period of illegals and the size of vessels in offences, empowering the Royal Hong Kong Regiment and the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force in arresting illegals, and altering definitions of 'Immigration Assistant' to include other newly created ranks in the Immigration Department'.[155]

Despite all these new measures, the spread of rumours encouraged emigration to Hong Kong illegally, leading to fluctuations of influx rate in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The rumour that the People's Liberation Army would replace the People's Policeman after Shenzhen became a Special Economic Zone led numerous people to attempt to enter Hong Kong in late 1980.[156] Throughout the early 1980s, the rumours of amnesty stemmed from the Royal Wedding in 1981 and the agreement of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984 motivated many to attempt escaping and believe they would be granted permission to stay.[157] Rumours of the spread of natural disasters also occasionally led to influx of illegals from a few particular counties. Believing there would be an earthquake, a large number of people from Haifeng and Lufeng Counties fled to Hong Kong by vessels to seek shelter in March 1981.[158] The influx of illegals could as well be attributed to the increased number of smugglers who sought profit by offering boats to assist escapees.

In response to the rising public pressure, on 16 April 1980, Lewis Davies, the Secretary for

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[154] FCO 40/1118, Hong Kong Government Printer, *Legal Supplement No.1 to the Hong Kong Government Gazette Extraordinary*, (Hong Kong, January 1979).
[155] FCO 40/1118, 'Memorandum for Executive Council, Immigration (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 1979', 31 May 1979, p. 1.
[156] 'Implementation of Illegal Emigration Controls in China', memo from J. M. Shannon, Director of Special Branch for Commissioner of Police to Secretary for Security, 21 November 1980, p. 1.
[157] HKRS 70-8-2106, 'II Amnesty Rumours Denied', in 'Opinions', *Chinese Press Review*, 22-28 July 1981; HKRS 70-9-588, 'Illegals Keep Pouring In', *South China Morning Post*, 28 March 1984; HKRS 70-9-588, A. Chan, 'More Illegals Floating in on Amnesty Rumours', *South China Morning Post*, 20 September 1984.
[158] HKRS 70-8-2094 'Attention NWS Editors: Tuesday 31 March 1981', *Daily Information Bulletin*, 31 March 1981.

Security announced that the repatriation policy was 'under review'. In June, the representatives of the NCNA expressed their 'concern about this problem' and accepted that 'in Hong Kong the concern was even greater'.[159] In July, the public sentiments further escalated, forcing MacLehose to contact the Hong Kong and General Department again to press for policy changes. According to R. D. Clift,

> Sir Murray MacLehose told me on the telephone that he is thinking of recommending that the contingency plans for the return to China of illegal immigrants who have 'got to base' should be activated in the second half of August. He is concerned that the figures remained high; that Hong Kong will be affected by recession this autumn and that there may be some unemployment; and that public pressure for action is growing. He does not see any prospects of an improvement on the Chinese side until the new steps are taken.[160]

The number of illegal immigrants had been rising since early 1980. The total number of illegal immigrants being returned reached 31,380 during the period from 1 January to late June. The daily average number of illegals repatriated also increased from 248 in mid-June to 282 in late June. (See Table 16.) The Foreign and Commonwealth Office believed that time should be given for representations to take effect in Beijing on this 'delicate political issue'.[161] Nonetheless, in July, driven by increased public criticism and public expenditure, MacLehose continued to press for London's approval in revising Hong Kong's immigration policies:

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[159] FCO 40/1202, 'Illegal Immigration from China', extract from the record of meeting with NCNA, 10 June 1980.
[160] FCO 40/1202, 'Governor of Hong Kong: Illegal Immigration from China', telegram from R. D. Clift to Blaker, 2 July 1980.
[161] FCO 40/1202, 'Governor of Hong Kong: Illegal Immigration from China', telegram from E. Youde to R. D. Clift, 4 July 1980.

> There are a number of factors which led me to modify this view…. (4) This means we could face a population increase this year from immigration alone, of at least 125,000 (excluding Vietnamese). This is on top of an increase of at least 180,000 last year. We cannot go absorbing population at this rate without very serious consequences for our wages, social services, and, ultimately, political stability. A new factor is that this is now realized by the public, because the steady accumulation of numbers has passed the point at which immigrants can be invisibly absorbed. Squatter areas are growing. The illegal immigrants are a noticeable and unruly element, and fellow feeling for them has evaporated. (5) The certainty of international recession, which inevitably will hit Hong Kong is also a major new factor which worsens this prospect. Because of (4) and (5) above, public opinion has noticeably happened months, and there is increasing criticism in and outside the media of government's failure to act to change the 'reached base' policy. This criticism will grow as recession abroad affects the working population here.[162]

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office recognized 'the increased pressures over the last two months' but proposed that the policy should not be implemented before the Secretary of State visited Beijing in early October.[163] To persuade the British government to accept the proposal as soon as possible, MacLehose stressed that 'opinion in Hong Kong was strongly in favour of the measures' in July.[164]

[162] FCO 40/1202, 'Illegal Immigration', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and the Commonwealth Office, 8 July 1980.
[163] FCO 40/1202, 'Illegal Immigration', from Carrington to Hong Kong, 16 July 1980.
[164] FCO 40/1202, 'illegal Immigration from China to Hong Kong', discussion between Mr Blaker and the Governor of Hong Kong, 14 July 1980.

Table 16: Statistics of Illegal Immigrants Repatriated in 1980

	17-23 June	10-16 June	Cumulative since 1 Jan 1980
Illegal repatriated	1,977	1,739	31,360
Daily average	282	248	187

Source: FCO 40/1202, 'Immigration from China', telegram from MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 24 June 1980.

In September 1980, a new policy which set that an identity card must be carried when travelling to the New Territories. However, the calls for ending the 'Touch Base' policy were not muted by the introduction of the new law. In late September, MacLehose put pressure on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office again, arguing the immigration issue 'cannot wait'.[165] On 1 October 1980, a meeting was held between Peter Carrington, the Secretary of State of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Chinese Foreign Minister. Carrington pointed out to Huang Hua that 'the situation was so serious that Hong Kong was planning to send back to China those who were successful in reaching the urban areas and had previously allowed to stay' and China's cooperate would be needed.[166] When MacLehose met Huang two days later, he explained to him that changes in border control were necessary. To deal with illegal immigration effectively, Hong Kong would soon declare that it was illegal for illegal immigrants to take up jobs in the colony and they would send back all illegals even

[165] FCO 40/1202, 'Cancellation of Secretary of State's Visit to China', telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 29 September 1980.
[166] FCO 40/1203, 'Record of a Conversation between the Secretary of State and the Chinese Foreign Minister at 1 Carlton Gardens on Tuesday 1 October 1980 at 2.30 pm', by the Far Eastern Department, 6 October 1980, p. 1.

they ‘reached base’.[167] The Chinese side was in general cooperative. As Guo Jie, the Deputy Director of Western European Department, had pointed out, the Chinese authorities had attempted to but could not solve the illegal immigration problem. Therefore, they ‘appreciated the efforts on the British side and all necessary measures would have Chinese support’. To avoid another wave of influx of illegals, the new measure was deliberately kept in secret.[168] On 8 October, the Hong Kong and General Department and Far Eastern Department both agreed that London should authorize MacLehose to enact new laws to end the ‘Touch Base’ policy and should be ‘given discretion to implement the scheme without further reference to Ministers’.[169] Two days later, the Governor visited Canton. It was finally announced on 21 October that the ‘Touch Base’ policy would end on 27 October after a three-day grace period was given to illegals to register. Identity cards were no longer given to immigrants, causing them unable to seek employment and public welfare. During the grace period, 6,952 illegals came forward for registration. And 4,068, which was about 59 per cent of them were allowed to remain in Hong Kong.[170]

This section demonstrates that shifting sentiments towards Chinese illegal immigrants since the mid-1970s played an important role in ending the ‘Touch Base’ policy in October 1980. The Governor was aware of the intensified immigration discourse in the colony, and this encouraged him to repeatedly put pressure on the British government. Britain however prioritized relationships with China which led to difficult negotiations that shaped changes to immigration policy.

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[167] FCO 40/1203, ‘Immigration’, telegram from Murray MacLehose to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 3 October 1980.
[168] FCO 40/1203, ‘Immigration’, telegram from P. Cradock to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 16 October 1980.
[169] FCO 40/1203, ‘Hong Kong: Illegal immigration from China’, telegram from R. D. Clift to Mr Donald, 8 October 1980.
[170] HKRS 70-8-2094, ‘Reply by Secretary for Security to a Question by Dr. Rayson Huang in Legislative Council’, *Daily Information Bulletin*, 13 May 1981.

Conclusion

Throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s, the influx of immigrants from China resulted in public discussions regarding the colonial government's immigration policy. Far from being apathetic, Hong Kong Chinese of all social classes and age groups were engaged in an issue that indirectly affected their daily lives. The mid-1970s was a turning point, when attitudes towards mainland Chinese immigrants shifted. Mainland Chinese immigrants were stereotyped. They were refered as 'inferior' due to the perceived cultural differences, lack of language proficiency and skills, and absence of working ethics. Nevertheless, public attitudes varied, with some invoking humanitarian concerns to pressurize the colonial government to grant residence to a particular group of illegal immigrants.

Shifting public opinions encouraged the colonial administration to change its immigration policy. The colonial government departed from 'local integration', the approach adopted in the 1950s when immigration was controlled at the border. The 'Touch Base' policy was introduced. Public opinions influenced the attempts by MacLehose to negotiate with the British government. The problem was that the Foreign Office prioritized its relationship with China. Policy changes had long term effects. The end of the 'Touch Base' policy and new immigration measures strengthened the boundary between Hong Kong Chinese and mainland Chinese. This reinforced the emergent 'Hong Kong political identity', influencing the colony's political culture in the 1980s. The new policy separated Hong Kong Chinese from mainland immigrants politically and highlighted cultural differences. It laid the foundation for the emergence of political definition of 'Hong Kong permanent resident' in the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984 and Basic Law in 1990.

Conclusion

Using under-explored evidence derived from archives in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom, this thesis constructs political culture and policy making in British Hong Kong in the long 1970s, bringing the hitherto disjointed research on 'state' and 'society' together. It uncovers changes to state-society relations: how the colonial government improved political communications with the Chinese society and how political activism and shifting public opinions influenced the policy making process. After the Star Ferry riots in 1966 and the leftist-inspired riots in 1967, the colonial government sought to enhance its legitimacy to prevent further political turmoil. Political stability in the colony was crucial for future Sino-British negotiations regarding the future of Hong Kong which eventually commenced in the late 1970s. Democratic reform was perceived to be unfeasible as it would jeopardize Sino-British relations. In order to instil a sense of belonging among the Hong Kong Chinese, the colonial government changed its ruling strategies. It became increasingly responsive to public opinions. As revisionists, such as Ma Ngok and Lam Wai-man, have rightly pointed out, the colony was far from a 'minimally-integrated social-political system'. The colonial government and the Chinese society interacted frequently. The thesis similarly dismisses Lau's concept and contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating that the colonial bureaucracy had both the desire and administrative capacity to reach into the Chinese society; and the Hong Kong Chinese demonstrated increased readiness and organizational capacity to engage in informal political activities that sought to influence policy making.

The five case studies have proved that *Town Talk* and *MOOD* were important mechanisms for the colonial state to understand shifting popular sentiments. This thesis argues that since the riots, the colonial government invested substantial resources to improve political communications between itself and the Chinese population. It reveals that instead of gauging

public opinions indirectly through Chinese elites and advisory bodies, a reformist colonial administration developed a polling exercise. This began in 1968, covertly embedded in the City District Officer Scheme. During the period from 1968 to 1975, *Town Talk* was adopted as the main official device to assess shifting sentiments of different age groups, social classes and occupations. When it first started, the weekly exercise involved more than 100 staff, who were responsible for carrying out qualitative surveys. To enhance the diversity of the data collected, the Home Affairs Department expanded the contact list. Officers were also instructed to follow specific indirect interviewing techniques to ensure that opinions solicited were free from excessive bias. In the second half of the 1970s, the colonial administration invested increased manpower and experimented with new methodologies adopted in the polling exercise. This highlights its urge to develop a reliable and effective institutional mechanism to obtain better understandings of popular sentiments. This investment in collecting intelligence centred on the movement of opinion direction.

In 1975, *MOOD* was introduced to replace *Town Talk*. The *MOOD* unit was large: its staff tripled that of *Town Talk*. The theme of each report became more focused. It also employed more scientific and sophisticated surveying methodologies. While the qualitative nature of the exercise was preserved, the Home Affairs Department continued to expand its contact list and started regulating the sample size. Incidental contacts were increased. The area covered expanded from urban areas to rural areas, including not only Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, but also the New Territories. By the late 1970s, quota sampling method and random sampling method were adopted. This thesis argues that the *Town Talk* and *MOOD* mechanisms were crucial in colonial statecraft in Hong Kong in the 1970s. These constructed 'public opinions' were analysed and written up as a report circulated restrictively among high ranked civil servants, including the Governor and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, as

highlighted in Table A in the appendix. In short, the colonial government became increasingly responsive to popular opinions.

The thesis points out that whenever political activism emerged, City District Officers in different districts were required to monitor activities of the activists and changing public opinions closely. These situation reports provided further intelligence for colonial bureaucrats, aiding policy making. The presence of an institutionalized covert polling exercise affirms the colonial government's desire and organizational capacity to comprehend shifting sentiments of the Chinese society, dismissing the concepts of 'laissez-faire' and a 'minimally-integrated social-political system'.

During the long 1970s, the general political culture of the Chinese society experienced changes, observed as increased political activism. In the early 1970s, the general political culture in Hong Kong was relatively conservative. This thesis asserts that most people were reluctant to disclose their identities in discursive debates via newspapers and petitions. They avoided engaging in social movements. This thesis argues that nonetheless, by the mid-1970s, the political attitudes of many Hong Kong Chinese had changed. As *MOOD* noted, 'the statutory proclamation of Chinese as official language and the establishment of the ICAC have gradually built up public confidence in the government's open minded attitude and sincere interest in public reactions'.[1] The legalization of Chinese as the official language in 1974 improved political communications and enhanced the stake of Hong Kong Chinese in politics by introducing simultaneous interpretation in the Councils and amending the language requirement for working in the government. The setting of the ICAC in 1974

[1] HKRS 925-1-1, 'Changes in Public Attitude towards the Hong Kong Government', *MOOD*, 18 September 1975, p. 2.

showed that the public was determined to work with the colonial government in eliminating corruption. With increased political transparency, supported by colonial propaganda and mass education, hostility and apprehensiveness towards officialdom reduced. People were more willing to report crimes and corruption, showing a rising readiness to raise their concerns and engage in public affairs. Hong Kong people were now 'believing that the incompetent, corrupt, or unfair officer should not, and will not get away with his wrong doings, in the face of public exposures'.[2] They increasingly stood up for their own rights and were willing to express their grievances publicly.[3] In 1975, *MOOD* observed that this general shift:

> The government greatly intensified its efforts in publicizing and explaining its policies, achievements and difficulties, through increasingly powerful mass media and widely extended personal contact. It encouraged public discussion on major policies and current issues.... More frequent appearances on the ground by the Governor, top-level civil servants and prominent unofficials to study problems in the field and discuss them with ordinary people all helped to bridge the proverbial gap between the government and the people. As a result, public knowledge, interest and involvement in current affairs increased considerably at all levels of society. Many more people now feel confident to approach the government not only for help and advice, but also to offer suggestion and criticisms. The traditional fear of authority or officialdom reflected in the adage that one should 'keep away from officialdom when alive and from hell after death' has been greatly reduced. Today, the humblest labour or hawker has no inhibitions about going to the City District Officers, or even to Government House if and when his interest is at stake.[4]

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[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., pp. 1-2.

Social classes and age groups mobilized to participate in social movements and public discourse across a range of issues, and were especially active if their material wellbeing was perceived to under threat (as in the case of immigration) and actually under threat (as with the case of telephone rate increases). The diversity of participants strongly suggests that a new form of political activism was pervasive and thus significant. It had longer term repercussions on colonial governance and social change as the case studies have indicated. In no way was the Chinese society in Hong Kong politically aloof.

Due to changing political cultures, collaborative and overt strategies used in a range of social movements were gradually accepted as appropriate means to express grievances. The five case studies reveal common mass mobilization strategies. To pull resources together, activists set up ad hoc coalitions. This thesis argues that most groups did not confront the colonial state directly. Instead, they expressed their grievances through informal channels, such as petitions, signature campaigns, open letters and surveys. Activists employed ideological and instrumental rhetoric, such as 'people's livelihood', 'public interest', 'political stability' and 'law and order'. It also reveals that the use of abstract ideas, such as democracy, nationalism and anti-colonialism, were relatively less appealing; except amongst students. Activists requested concessions and warned that administrative intransigence would cause political disturbances and lead to economic decline. There were extremists, who, for example, made death threats to politicians through letters and posters. Nevertheless, they were on the margins of society, and had limited political impact. As the collaborative strategies were considered rational and widely endorsed by the public, the use of them were more likely to put pressure on the colonial government successfully.

This thesis also shows that a degree of political conservatism persisted. This could be

observed from the fact that direct confrontation, such as sit-ins and demonstrations, was still not widely endorsed by Chinese people. These informal political activities were only organized and joined mostly by social elites, especially by the young generation at the higher education. This may have been a legacy of the leftist riots of 1967. Many contemporaries considered direct confrontation radical and expressed their worries of 'rocking the boat'. The rhetoric of 'law and order' was repeatedly coined, emphasizing that these direct actions would undermine the colony's political stability and lead to the outbreak of chaos. Activists who confronted the colonial government were deemed as 'trouble-makers' and 'rabble-rousers'. This could be observed in the relatively poor attendance of the anti-corruption demonstrations in the anti-corruption campaign. The Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School dispute was another notable example where teachers and students lost the support of the public due to their 'radical' sit-ins and hunger strikes. Some newspapers even associated the teachers and students involved in this disputes with leftists who attempted to subvert the colony's law and order in 1967.

The diverse attitudes towards political activism suggest the political culture in Hong Kong society was far from monolithic. Political culture varied in accordance with class and age. *MOOD* reports in 1975 and 1977 closely summarized the political attitudes and orientations of different social classes, which attune to their responses and involvement in the five case studies. In general, both the upper and middle classes opposed political activism:

> Our successful upper and middle classes are staunch supporters of the status quo. They have identified themselves with the establishment. Many even have become British subjects by naturalization and taken out Hong Kong passports.[5]

[5] HKRS 925-1-1, 'Public Attitude towards Living in Hong Kong', *MOOD*, 25 September 1975, p. 1.

The upper class considered participating in informal political activities incompatible with their status:

> Influential and wealthy social groups view such (informal political) activities with dislike and concern. They are well capable of looking after their own interests in some way or other and consider a march to the Government House undignified and unbecoming of their status. They are also apprehensive that should this style of agitation continue to gain momentum, social order and discipline will be undermined. They hope that the government will stand firm and not give concessions in the face of such pressure because of the danger of encouraging more groups to follow suit.[6]

The middle class also tended to be pro-status quo:

> Another group in support of the status quo and social order and becoming more important 'politically' in the broad sense are those with established careers and sufficiently substantial vested interests in Hong Kong. They are by no means as wealthy or influential as the magnate entrepreneurs mentioned above, but they have by and large succeeded in going some way up the social ladder, often through hard work and persevering effort, and do not wish to lost that position.[7]

They were politically informed but some were still conservative:

> The Hong Kong middle class are intelligent, articulate, resourceful and much informed than the low-income group…. Being aware of the government's liberal and enlightened policies of 'open government', they are encouraged to take much more

[6] HKRS 394-26-12, '1975 in retrospect: Part II', *MOOD*, 8 January 1976, p. 2.
[7] 'Public Attitudes towards Living in Hong Kong', p. 5.

> critical and aggressive stance against the authorities, particularly over decisions they dislike…. The more traditional types among them, especially those without the benefit of a modern education, are still less forceful than their younger generation…. It would be misleading to suggest that all the agitation was due entirely to disenchantment or dissatisfaction. Part of it, at least must have been inspired by the belief that the current government welcomes constructive criticisms…. Despite these occasional feelings of disaffection, uneasiness and anxiety described above, the Hong Kong middle class are still, by and large, the strongest supporters of the status quo. Their attachment and support vary to some extent in direct proportion to their own success here. [8]

This thesis demonstrates that diversity shaped activism across the five case studies. In the Chinese as the official language movement many middle and upper classes showed concern regarding the colonial government's language policy but despised 'radical' political actions, such as class boycotts and petitions. Similarly, while supporting the cause of the anti-corruption campaign, they were critical of students' organization of rallies, particularly the demonstration at Morse Park, which was not included in the list of approved sites. In contrast, the working class was on the whole less politically informed, and primarily driven by instrumentalism:

> What matters most to blue-collar workers is good take-home pay, which gives them a better standard of living and more material comforts. They are less enthusiastic about long-term benefits…. Families at the lower end of the scale are not very well-

[8] HKRS 925-1-1, 'An Assessment of the Government's Current Image and a Student of Community Aspirations, Part II', *MOOD*, 13 April 1977, p. 3.

> informed, often silent. Sometimes families eligible to receive various forms of aid are still not aware of the allowances and service available.

Nonetheless, the working class showed no hesitation to engage in political activism when their interests were threatened. As the campaign against telephone rate increases demonstrated, grassroots groups in public housing and resettlement estates were capable of forming their own lobbies when their livelihood was affected directly. This affirms the heterogeneity of political culture in Hong Kong.

Political culture also differed in accordance with age. While middle-aged and elderly members of the society were politically conservative, the young generation, particularly those at the higher education, had a completely different political outlook:

> Even discounting radical elements and those with political affiliations, students and youths generally hold significantly different, and largely less favourable view of the government than their elders…. Their idealistic outlook on life results in their distrustful of compromise and impatient in their wait for an egalitarian society. Although on the whole, the younger generation in Hong Kong is much less revolutionist than their counterparts in many other countries, their move towards greater social consciousness and their demand for greater participation in the evolution of society will certainly continue to increase.[9]

Direct confrontation, the more 'radical' approach, was often only adopted by the young generation to exert pressure on the colonial government. Nevertheless, the young generation

[9] 'Changes in Public Attitude towards the Hong Kong Government', p. 7.

was also divided, notably between those in secondary and tertiary education. As the Chinese as the official language movement has shown, students in secondary schools sometimes were more reluctant to engage in political activism. This suggests that political culture was heterogeneous, varying in accordance with age group.

Lastly, this thesis reveals administrative, legislative and institutional changes were influenced by political activism and government perceptions of how public opinions were shifting. Unlike in the 1960s, the colonial government did not only solicit public opinions indirectly through Chinese leaders and elites, they consulted the public directly. In the 1970s, when discursive debate of an issue intensified or a social movement emerged, various administrative agencies, such as the City District Offices and the Hong Kong Special Branch, were instructed to monitor shifting press sentiments, activists' activities and changing public opinions. The City District Officers, in particular, attempted to capture attitudes of different social classes and age groups in various districts. They also offered strategies and provided practical advice, helping to resolve social tensions. The intelligence solicited were analysed into situation reports, circulated and discussed among senior civil servants who were involved in the policy making process. To demonstrate that the colonial administration was responsive to public opinions, in all case studies that involved political activism, either a Special Committee or a Commission of Inquiry was set up, investigating the issue and consulting the public. In the Chinese as the official language movement, the colonial government set up a Chinese Language Committee swiftly in September 1970. To encounter widespread discontent over the escape of Peter Godber, a Commission of Inquiry was set up in June 1973. Similarly, a Commission of Inquiry was set up in January 1975, enquiring into the financial situation of the Hong Kong Telephone Company. A Committee of Inquiry was also set up in the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee dispute in 1978. Members were carefully

chosen. In most cases, the Committee consisted of people of diverse backgrounds, included politicians, social elites, businessmen and community leaders. Alastair Blair-Kerr's selection to head the Commission of Inquiry investigating corruption was a response to the public's distrust of the police force. Findings from these committees and commissions were published. Based upon the situation reports from City District Officers and the Special Branch, and using information uncovered by the ad hoc bodies, the colonial administration altered policy, via, in most cases, close liaison with the British government.

This thesis also demonstrates the circumstances under which activists and the Chinese society were more likely to succeed in exerting pressure on the colonial government. The case studies suggest that the following three conditions often enhanced the likelihood of the public to press for administrative, legislation and institutional changes successfully. First, if the movement involved people of different age groups and social classes, and was on a large scale, the colonial government would normally set up a Commission of Inquiry and respond to public opinions to avoid undesirable repercussions. Second, the colonial state was more likely to get the permission from London to introduce changes if those changes were only confined to Hong Kong, instead of affecting other dependent territories. Third, interventions by British and colonial governments were shaped by perceptions of how the reputation of the British government internationally was being influenced by events and social processes in Hong Kong. To put it another way, if the requested changes had impacts beyond the colony, such as affecting legislation in other dependent territories, and if diplomatic relations between the British government and other countries might be adversely affected by the reform of colonial governance in Hong Kong, political activism did not necessarily lead to changes to colonial policy.

To reiterate, the wider interest of the British government and the state of Sino-British relations outweighed the importance of shifting popular sentiments in the policy making process. With respect to the anti-corruption campaign, for instance, the Home Office was opposed to retrospective legislative changes and believed any precedent would affect other dependent territories in the British Empire. There was no attempt therefore to amend the Fugitive Offenders Act. The British government's concerns over Sino-British relations delayed the implementation of immigration control in 1980. Similarly, if the situation involved practical issues which could not be solved by the colonial government, popular demands were not followed. For example, in the case of the campaign against the telephone rate increases, the Legislative Council did not introduce a bill to cap rate increases; the colonial administration was concerned that the company would go bankrupt if rates did not increase. Nevertheless, the colonial administration's new appreciation of the attitudes and wants of Hong Kong people did alter Hong Kong-London relations.

The thesis also asserts that official perceptions of popular opinion influenced how the Governor engaged with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office regarding institutional changes. Hong Kong and London did not always agree. While the colonial administration paid close attention to the needs of the Chinese communities, the British government was concerned primarily with domestic interests and the Sino-British relations. Interests rarely aligned. In such instances, the Governor used new evidence of political activism and changing public opinions to justify reform. As Chapter 3 has shown, although the creation of an independent Anti-Corruption Branch separating from the police force was debated as early as in the 1960s, both the colonial and British governments did not endorse the notion of an institutional change until a number of anti-corruption campaigns emerged and press coverage reporting corruption increased. When London was reluctant to introduce unilateral border

control, the colonial government drew on evidence regarding popular discourse of immigration. MacLehose's repeatedly informed the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of widespread of public discontent over the existing immigration policy, which had failed to stop influx of illegal Chinese immigrants. In late 1980, he finally persuaded the London government to approve the new immigration legislation, ending the 'Touch Base' policy. In these cases, changing political culture altered policy.

Appendix

Table A: *MOOD* Distribution List in 1980

Department and officer	Number of copies
Agriculture and Fisheries Department –Director of Agriculture and Fisheries	 1
British Forces –Commander British Forces –Gurkha Field Force –Joint Service Intelligence Section –Captain in-charge, Her Majesty's Ship Tamar	 1 1 1 1
Civil Aid Services –Chief Staff Officer	 1
Census and Statistics Department –Commissioner for Census and Statistics	 1
Consumer Council –Executive Director, Consumer Council	 1
Education Department –Director of Education –Music Administrator, Education Department	 1 1
Fire Service Department –Director of Fire Services	 1
Government House –His Excellency the Governor –Private Secretary, Government House	 1 1
Government Secretariat –Chief Secretary –Financial Secretary –Secretary for Civil Services –Secretary for Economic Services –Secretary for the Environment –Secretary for Home Affairs –Secretary for Housing –Secretary for Information –Secretary for Monetary Affairs –Secretary for Security –Secretary for Social Services –Deputy Financial Secretary –Director of Administration and Management Service –Assistant Director (Councils), Councils Branch –Deputy Clerk of Councils, Councils Branch –Political Adviser –Assistant Political Adviser	 1 1 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 3 2 3 30 (for Unofficial Members of Executive and Legislative Councils) 1 1

–Secretary, Local Intelligence Committee –Commander Royal Air Force –Commander Officer, Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) –Officer Commanding 10 Intelligence and Security Company –G. Operations Division, Headquarters British Force –Joint Services, Public Relations Section, Victoria Barracks –Security Liaison Officer, Headquarters British Force –Commissioner for Narcotics, Narcotics Division, Security Branch	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Housing Department –Director of Housing	 1
Immigration Department –Director of Immigration	 1
Independent Commission Against Corruption –Commissioner Against Corruption	 1
Information Services Department –Director of Information Services	 1
Inland Revenue Department –Commissioner of Inland Revenue	 1
Judiciary –Chief Justice	 1
Labour Department –Commissioner of Labour	 2
Legal Aid Department —Director of Legal Aid	 1
Legal Department –Attorney General	 1
Marine Department –Director of Marine	 1
Medical and Health Department –Director of Medical and Health Service	 1
New Territories Administration –Secretary for New Territories	 12
Post Office –Postmaster General	 1
Public Services Commissions –Chairman, Public Services Commission	 1
Public Works Department –Director of Public Works	 1
Radio Television Hong Kong –Director of Broadcasting	 1
Rating and Valuation Department –Commissioner of Rating and Valuation	 1

Royal Hong Kong Police Force –Commissioner of Police (Personal) –Deputy Commissioner of Police Administration –Deputy Commissioner of Police Operations –Director of Operations –Director of Special Branch –Director of Criminal Investigation –Chief Staff Officer (Traffic) –Director of Public Relations –Chief Staff Officer (Staff Relations) –Exercise Director District Police Commander –Divisional Superintendent (Eastern) –Divisional Superintendent (Wan Chai) –Divisional Superintendent (Central) –Divisional Superintendent (Western) –Divisional Superintendent (Traffic) Hong Kong Island –Divisional Superintendent (Yau Ma Tei) –Divisional Superintendent (Mong Kok) –Divisional Superintendent (Sham Shui Po) –Divisional Superintendent (Kowloon City) –Divisional Superintendent (Wong Tai Sin) –Divisional Superintendent (Kwun Tong) –Divisional Superintendent (Airport) –Divisional Superintendent (Traffic) Kowloon –Divisional Superintendent (Yuen Long) –Divisional Superintendent (Tsuen Wan) –Divisional Superintendent (Sha Tin) –Divisional Superintendent (Kwai Chung) –Divisional Superintendent (Traffic) New Territories –Divisional Superintendent, Marine (Harbour) –Divisional Superintendent, Marine (Sectors) –Divisional Superintendent, Marine (Islands)	 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Royal Observatory –Director of Royal Observatory	 1
Social Welfare Department –Director of Social Welfare	 1
Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority –Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing	 1

Trade Industry and Customs Department –Director of Trade Industry and Customs	 1
Transport Department –Commissioner for Transport	 1
Treasury –Director of Accounting Services	 1
Unofficial Members of the executive and Legislative Councils Office –Administrative Secretary	 1
Urban Services Department –Director of Urban Services	 1
Overseas –Hong Kong Commissioner, Hong Kong Government Office, London –Hong Kong and General Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office	 1 1
Departmental Distribution –Director of Home Affairs –Deputy Director of Home Affairs –Assistant Directors –Administrative Officers –City District Commissioner (Hong Kong) –City District Commissioner (Kowloon East) –City District Commissioner (Kowloon West) –City District Officer (Central) –City District Officer (Western) –City District Officer (Wan Chai) –City District Officer (Eastern) –City District Officer (Sham Shui Po) –City District Officer (Mong Kok) –City District Officer (Kowloon City) –City District Officer (Kwun Tong) –City District Officer (Wong Tai Sin) –City District Officer (Yau Ma Tei)	 1 1 3 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
TOTAL	167 copies

Source from HKRS 394-26-13, 'MOOD Distribution List', (date not specified) 1980, pp. 1-9.

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