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PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL ADAPTABILITY IN RURAL HONG KONG

Kuan Hsin-chi and Lau Siu-kai

In the last twenty years, the New Territories of Hong Kong, which are considered to be her rural hinterland, have been undergoing rapid and dramatic changes, they involve (a) the transformation of land-use patterns from agricultural to non-agricultural ones, (b) the displacement of settled and rural communities by dynamic and commercial/industrial communities, and (c) the substitution of the traditional ways of life by modern ones. Despite these fundamental changes, which have been accelerated by the planned actions of the Government, the political system of the New Territories has, surprisingly enough, remained unchanged until very recently. (This system was initially devised to maintain the status quo in the New Territories, and was characterized by the device of indirect rule typical of British colonial practice, except that extraction of local resources was an insignificant consideration here.) In the first decade of planned development (from mid-1950s to mid-1960s), the system was still able to cope with the problems thus generated, as its main task was only to smoothen the acquisition and clearance of land so that it can be released for development purposes. The expanding administrative apparatus and the resuscitated local leadership (which otherwise will remain more or less defunct) was instrumental both in forestalling possible collective action against planned development and in minimizing rural demands

directed to the Government.¹ In the last decade or so, however, the political structure was faced with a much more challenging task, namely, the building up of new and balanced communities in the New Territories, which is the ultimate target of the planned development. The New Territories Administration had to adapt itself to the task of co-operating with many central government departments in the management of an urbanizing New Territories, and most of these departments have, until recently, been involved in the area only marginally. The old administration which had proved effective in dealing with the rural inhabitants had to learn how to deal also with the new residents, who had already outnumbered the old ones due to recent in-migrations.² The problem was how to mobilize the new residents in an effort to build up the new communities, since they were not organized, which was due to a lack of community organizations in the first place. Existing rural organizations, which were elected by the original inhabitants and catering to their own interests, could not be expected to represent the new elements. In brief, a new configuration of political needs and forces has been generated by the process of development, which requires fresh thinking on the political system of the New Territories.

The Traditional Political Structure

The traditional political structure was designed primarily to cultivate harmonious relationship between the colonial regime and the rural people, and to afford the rural interests certain measures of

protection. It consisted of a system of District Officers whose main duty was the administration of land and a system of rural representation which championed the interests of the 'original inhabitants'.³

As soon as the British took over the New Territories, the New Territories Administration was established to govern that area. The backbone of the Administration was the District Officer system, which is a typical form of administration in a British colony. The essential characteristic of the system lay in the concentration of political power in the District Officer. Even though the power was only delegated to him by the Centre, the District Officer was expected to exercise it with wide discretion in the area under his administration. In 1907, there was one District Officer only. At present, there are 8 District Officers responsible for the following districts: Tai Po, Sha Tin, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung, Sai Kung, and Islands. Originally, a District Officer was in charge of all government activities in his district, ranging from the provision of assistance to needy people to acting as a magistrate in civil and criminal cases. He was therefore the local boss in his district. In the course of time, however, many executive functions of the District Officer had been taken over by the central Government departments. Most of the functions concerned were of a technical or specialized nature, such as judicial duties, land surveying and control of buildings other than village-type houses. They were otherwise taken over because they could best be undertaken on a Colony-wide basis, such as the police functions. The District Officer had finally turned out to be primarily a land authority,

concerned with the administration of land; and a political officer specializing in the promotion of communication and understanding between the Government and the rural populace.

The New Territories Administration with its District Officers has the benefits of advice provided by a system of rural representation. At present, the lowest tier of that system comprises 900 Village Representatives who are either elected or otherwise nominated from amongst the heads of households in 651 villages.⁴ Village Representatives are organized into 27 Rural Committees which are responsible for representing local public opinion, maintaining contact with the District Officer, arbitrating in clan and family disputes and promoting local welfare. The apex of the rural representation system is the Heung Yee Kuk, literally the 'Rural Consultative Council', which is an advisory body established by statute in 1958 to advise the Government on the well-being of the people of the New Territories. From a legal point of view, the Heung Yee Kuk advises the Government in affairs which would have consequences for all people of the New Territories; but, quite naturally, it has displayed a well-nigh exclusive concern with the impact of development programmes on the 'original inhabitants', particularly when these programmes affect their land and property. The Heung Yee Kuk's records of performance, reinforced by its restrictive system of election which bars the outsiders from being eligible to vote or to stand as candidates, has prevented the Heung Yee Kuk from developing itself into a truly representative body for all.⁵

The Challenges of Development

The New Territories comprise 88 per cent of Hong Kong's 1,045 square kilometres and are separated by the Kowloon foothills from urban Hong Kong. Before the late 1950s, the area was largely undisturbed and unaffected by the progress of the twentieth century. Private development had brought about some changes in the life of the New Territories, especially in those areas adjacent to the urban centres, such as Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin. However, these changes are immaterial when compared to the upheavals resulting from the planned efforts by the Government to develop the New Territories. The major aim of development has been to create, between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s, permanent and self-contained homes for two million people in the three new, carefully planned, towns: Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun, all of which are located in the New Territories. The operational concept of development is not just the building of dormitories for the overcrowded metropolitan residents, but the establishment of 'balanced communities' which would take care of their social and economic needs in situ. Measures are adopted to ensure a balanced development of public and private housing, job opportunities and community facilities, at the end of each stage of development, as well as upon full completion. Such a task is the largest of its kind in the world and constitutes one of the greatest challenges to the Hong Kong Government.

The process of development commences with planning and engineering feasibility studies. The implementation of the plan begins with the

acquisition and clearance of land, which is followed by site formation and the provision of roads, drainage, water, etc. Land then becomes available for the building of public estates and private housing, factories, commercial and community facilities, which are to be occupied or used upon completion by people coming mostly from outside the New Territories.

The physical aspects of the development process are the province of the New Territories Development Department set up under the Public Works Department and headed by a Director. Under the Director of the New Territories Development Department, the Project Manager of each new town is responsible for the progress of public works and charged with all detailed planning and construction assignments. He is assisted by a Works Progress Committee.

The Secretary for the New Territories and his District Officers are primarily responsible for the social-political aspects of the development process. They conducted prior consultation, if necessary, with affected or interested parties over the development plans, and negotiated with them on the surrender of land and the terms of compensation. Evicted villagers have to be resettled. Community organizations have to be promoted in the newly urbanized areas.

In the earlier phases of development, when land acquisition constituted the major political work, the structure of administration and consultation described above has demonstrated its remarkable effectiveness. As development moves towards a more mature stage, it is

no longer the problems of land acquisition, but rather the problems of building totally new communities that put the current political structure to the crucial test. In many parts of the New Territories, especially in the new towns, the old agricultural communities have virtually ceased to exist, owing to emigration and residential, commercial or industrial development. The once predominant population of the 'original inhabitants' has now become a virtual minority. How can the traditional political structure adapt itself to this new social reality? Let us first take a closer look at the needs and resources of the component elements of the new political configuration.

Development and the 'Original Inhabitants'

Development in the New Territories affects first of all the 'original inhabitants'. On the one hand, they are requested to give up their land, their houses and their traditional ways of life. On the other hand, development also brings new wealth to the 'original inhabitants'. Had they continued to be farmers in the absence of planned development, they would have remained living at a subsistence level, as it was the case in the early 1950s. With planned development, they are entitled to receive attractive compensations for the land acquisition, houses surrendered, crops given up, etc. What amounts to a sufficient compensation is of course a matter of contention. It remains true nevertheless that the value of the compensations actually paid out does exceed the proceeds that would be produced by continuing with farming the land.⁶ Moreover, as the value of land tends to appreciate

in the course of development, the value of compensations also appreciates. Therefore, there is generally speaking a positive balance of sacrifices and gains, which explains partly why the planned development of the New Territories since the late-1950s has not met with opposition in principle from the original inhabitants. As of today, what they prefer is no longer the preservation of the traditional ways of life, but material gains deriving from the planned development. The best known claims placed by the 'original inhabitants' on the government are concerned with matters of compensation for land surrendered and villages demolished. What they prefer and what the Government is reluctant to concede are, for instance, (a) the compensation of one house for each of the male inhabitants of a single household when its house has to be evicted, (b) the compensation of land resumed by land in situ instead of by land lying elsewhere, the rationale being that the New Territories are a leased area, whereas the other parts of Hong Kong are ceded and hence permanent territories of the Colony. Compensation of land acquisitioned by land is preferred to compensation by cash as the values of land appreciate at an extremely rapid rate, and hence the possession of land would bring in much more monetary profits than cash receipts which can only reap modest interest returns when deposited in the bank. With similar logic, compensation of land acquisitioned by letters of entitlement to future land exchange (the so-called Letter B) is preferred to compensation by cash as the former would also appreciate in value like the stocks of a successful real estate company.⁷

The less known but by no means less important need as perceived by the 'original inhabitants' refers to the preservation of their status as 'original inhabitants'. Ever since 1898, they have been treated as a special category of people in Hong Kong. Their customs have been respected by the Government as well as by the Court. Their 'plight' as caused by the planned development has been well taken by the Government. In return for their cooperation in facilitating the planned development, the Government has granted the 'original inhabitants' the following privileges:

1. Each male 'original inhabitant' and his male descendants are entitled, once in their life, to build a small village house (which is not subject to the buildings regulations generally applicable in Hong Kong) on private or Crown land within a village or within a radius of 300 feet around the boundary of the village. A small village house is by statutory definition a building not exceeding 700 square feet in area and 15 or 25 feet in height (in the latter case no structural reinforced concrete is used). An 'original inhabitant' may therefore make a profit by building in effect a villa, and without the obligation to submit its architectural designs or pay a license for construction. In case the house is being built on Crown land, they are granted a one-third discount on the market price of the premium payments required. Most important of all, this privilege is hereditary. In view of the chronic housing shortage in Hong Kong, which is to be exacerbated in the last couple of years, this is a very significant privilege.

2. Each village is entitled to be preserved. The Government has tried its best to resettle any village affected by development (if it is so desired by the villagers) to a place as adjacent as possible to the centre of the development areas.

For the maintenance and realization of these ascriptive privileges, the 'original inhabitants' are dependent on the system of village representation and on the Government. The system of village representation enables them to monopolize the right to gain legal administrative access to the Government and thus to have their interests represented in the decision-making circles of the Administration. Through this system, the representatives or elites of the original inhabitants are able to obtain prior knowledge about the development programmes, as well as policies and procedures of land acquisition and compensation, and to negotiate directly with the Government to promote the interests of their constituents. Evidence thus far accumulated has demonstrated unmistakably that these indigenous elites, as a result of so many years of political maneuverings, are extremely skillful in these respects.

The dependency of the 'original inhabitants' on the Government can be explained by the fact that it is the Government which has the ultimate control of the process of development and of the 'new wealth' and opportunities generated thereby. What this means is that it is the Government which decides on the construction works to be made, the location of the roads and factories, and the land to be acquisitioned (information about which has a determinant effect on land values), so

on and so forth. As this 'commonly sought-after' benefits are to be allocated or re-allocated by the Government, the goodwill of the Government toward the 'original inhabitants' has to be maintained. Turning to the other side of the coin, the Government is also very apprehensive of the upheavals and disturbances which might be aroused among the original inhabitants. It, moreover, is anxious to proceed in the scheduled speed set for the implementation of its development programmes, which could be slowed down should the rural leaders succeed in mobilizing the resistance of the 'original inhabitants'. In a sense, therefore, the Government is also dependent on the 'original inhabitants' and their elites, and it is intent on controlling the latter by means of selective dispensation of benefits and punishments to them so that both their private interests and their leadership positions can be seriously subverted if the Government deems it necessary to do so.

In the future, when most of the lands required for development has been resumed and the new urban centres have been fully established, the 'original inhabitants' will become an insignificant minority in the new towns and in the New Territories as a whole. Their needs and interests would still need to be taken care of, but probably not with the same amount of administrative attention and the same priority considerations as have been given them before. The system of rural representation, as of now, is losing its basis of representation, the population of the 'original inhabitants' having already dwindled to only 20% of the existent population in the New Territories,⁸ and this percentage will continue to plummet with time. Although the Heung Yee Kuk

has, rather belatedly, claimed to represent not only the 'original inhabitants' but also the newcomers, its claims has thus far not been substantiated by deeds. The right of election to the Kuk is, with the Tuen Mun and the Tai Po Rural Committees as the exceptions, still confined to the 'original inhabitants'.⁹ On the part of the new residents, they do not seem to regard the rural representation system as relevant to their own interests. In a move which might prove to have significant implications for the future, the Government has also begun to obtain advice from a broader spectrum of the people than what had been done previously. Reform of the system of local governance, needless to say, can no longer be delayed.

Development and the New Residents

After all, the New Territories and the new towns will be communities of the new residents and other parties having a bona fide interest there. These people are very different from the 'original inhabitants' in terms of composition, needs and political perceptions. While the latter belong to rather homogeneous groups based on family and clanship ties, the newcomers are highly heterogeneous, since they are coming from all walks of life and from every direction of the older urban centres. Accordingly, their needs are much more diversified than those of the 'original inhabitants', and many of these needs demand immediate attention.¹⁰ The newcomers usually need guidance and assistance related to settling down in their new residences, operating shops and factories in a new environment, commuting between the new residences and the older urban centres for

schooling or work (which they cannot give up, at least not in a transitional period). While the needs of the 'original inhabitants' are generated by the processes of development, the needs of the newcomers are not totally foreign to them, as they may also have to move around when they choose to migrate to the older urban centres in search of jobs and opportunities. There is a big difference, however. Their needs are catered to much more conveniently and adequately in the older urban centres, whereas there is an underprovision of public and community services in the emerging new towns to satisfy the rapidly growing needs. The general demand of the newcomers are therefore concentrated on upgrading the public and community facilities in their districts. Finally, the newcomers differ from the 'original inhabitants' in terms of political culture. Cognitively speaking, the political horizon of the 'original inhabitants' is narrower than that of the newcomers. The former are more conscious of their interests as a group and tend to identify strongly with the New Territories, which have been their native home for centuries; whereas the latter's political passions are much less intense, and their political identification is with Hong Kong as a whole, hence they espouse no strong sense of regionalism. In comparison with the 'original inhabitants', newcomers are less politically mobilized. The newcomers themselves have found no issues salient enough to justify the exertion of group political pressure on the Government, and existing organizations which can perform this function is practically nil. Contrariwise, the 'original inhabitants' have more stakes in the outcome of the development process, and they can more easily be mobilized by their representatives.

Without any established channels of communication, newcomers have to approach central Government departments individually for help. Inasmuch as their requests for help must be of a private nature, they usually would not be able to meet with favourable consideration from the Government which is busily preoccupied with overall policy and programme results and is already overburdened with larger-scale problems generated by the process of urbanization. The ineffectiveness of the newcomers' individualistic mode of interest articulation hence contrasts sharply with the efficaciousness of the organized mode of the 'original inhabitants', and the disparity of political power between the two parties is readily apparent. This situation cannot be remedied simply by referring the newcomers to the District Officer for assistance as he, after having been deprived of many essential executive functions in the previous decades, is not in a position to bend the thrust of the policies of the central departments which are increasingly making their influence felt in the New Territories. The critical problem now facing the Government is: how to ensure proper appreciation and satisfaction of local needs when planned development has to be monitored from the centre.

Development and the Governmental Machinery

The government machinery is the most significant player in the game of development. Quite naturally, the Government as a whole is concerned with the overall impact of development programmes on the general well-being of all citizens of Hong Kong. The development of the New Territories is primarily meant to de-popularize the over-crowded

urban centres, to provide more and better housing for the growing population and to provide the badly-needed land for commercial and industrial development. The pursuit of these general policy goals would inevitably pit the Government against the individuals and groups which are adversely affected in the process. Whenever such a situation of confrontation occurs, reconciliation of public and private interests is imperative, and it is the responsibility of the New Territories Administration to see to it that this arduous job is accomplished. The District Officers and their retinue of subordinates are expected to gauge local reactions to the development programmes, to solve problems arising from the processes of development, and to solicit the goodwill and understanding of the affected parties throughout all stages of the development process. Reconciliation of interests is crucial to the successful execution of planned development here because the Government is dependent on the acquiescence of the 'original inhabitants', on the one hand, for expediting the processes of land acquisition and clearance, and, on the other hand, on the newcomers for the building up of the new communities. In this triangular political game, nevertheless, the government is in an advantaged and dominant position for various reasons. First of all, it has the authority to prescribe the rules of the game and to structure the political arena to its own advantage, and this is attributable to the basically colonial underpinnings of the administrative system in Hong Kong. Second, it has the support of the majority of the Hong Kong populace, since the development of the New Territories is generally in their interest. Third, as has been mentioned before, it

has the ultimate control over the allocation and re-allocation of the 'commonly-coveted' benefits. Fourth, the affected parties -- namely, the 'original inhabitants' and the newcomers -- are, in the last analysis, privately pleased with the fruits which they have reaped from the development process, and they in general lack the determined will to wrench from the Government additional allotments of concessions (beyond what the Government is prepared to grant). Fifth, the elitist and non-ideological nature of politics in the New Territories, coupled with the fact that the elites themselves are far from united, makes permanent alignment of political forces impossible. In fact, it is the Government's ingenuity in manipulating the elites individually through selective dispensation of rewards and punishments that accounts a lot for the smoothness in the implementation of the development programmes. Sixth, the lack of adequate communication between the 'original inhabitants' and the newcomers prevents their formation of coalitions against the Government and allows the Government to deal with the two groups separately.¹¹

Although the Government is in an advantaged position, the management of local politics in the New Territories and the new towns is still no easy task. Traditionally, the New Territories Administration with its District Officers was designed to maintain the status quo in a rural setting. Beginning from some twenty years ago, it was called upon to adapt itself to the task of managing change. Today, a District Officer in the new towns is much less concerned about village structures, clan politics, agricultural production or fung shui (geomancy) than with

the concepts and procedures of town planning, engineering principles and works, the attitudes and practices of private developers, provision of urban services, and promotion of commerce and industry. As is typical of rapid development, no planning however detailed can avoid under-administration in one area or another, such as dust pollution, inadequate transportation, etc. Although these are transitional problems which are bound or planned to subside when the whole process of development is completed, they still need to be coped with in the meantime lest public indignation may result in uncontrollable resistance to the process of development. To deal with such problems, the emergence and magnitude of which may not have been foreseen, and the solution of which has not been devised, it is highly necessary to have a responsive machinery which is capable of making swift and interim arrangements. The District Officer as an administrative coordinator is handicapped by the fact that central departments are far from adequately represented in his District to assure quick and provisional response to the local problems. There thus exists a loophole in the local administrative system.

The Evolving Political Structure: Administrative Reforms

Far back in 1966, a Working Party on Local Administration was established to advise the Government on the possibility of establishing local administration in Hong Kong. In November of that year, the Working Party concluded its study by recommending the development of local authorities consisting of an administration and a Council. The administration would provide services or otherwise exercise responsibilities

geared to meet the needs of the localities, as distinct from the needs of the population of Hong Kong as a whole. The Council was to be partly elected and partly nominated, and would be vested with decision-making power with regard to matters transferred from the central to the local level. Tsuen Wan, the most developed part of the New Territories, was included in this scheme. For other less developed areas of the New Territories, the Working Party recommended the following special arrangements:

(a) The appointment of an Administrative Officer with overall responsibility for a 'development area', including responsibility for co-ordinating the preliminary master plan;

(b) As soon as practicable, the association with this Administrative Officer of an advisory committee, consisting of persons residing or having some other bona fide interest in the area. The composition of this committee should change from time to time, as the area developed;

(c) Subsequently, when the population had reached approximately 150,000, or as other circumstances dictated, this ad hoc working body (the Administrative Officer and advisory committee) should be transformed into a local authority, with an appropriate range of powers and functions.¹²

There was no consensus among the members of the Working Party on the development of local administration. Half of the membership held reservations to the recommendations of the Working Party. Although they

did not oppose the eventual establishment of an local administration with a partly elected council, they argued that time was simply not ripe for such a venture. Instead, it is thought essential to introduce interim steps which would prepare the citizens of Hong Kong for democratic local administration. They recommended, inter alia, a re-organization of Government departments on a district or regional basis and more opportunities for meritorious and willing citizens to participate in the affairs of their districts.

The Report of the Working Party met, as expected, with strong opposition from the Urban Council as well as the Heung Yee Kuk, which rightly perceived a grave danger to their survival. The Heung Yee Kuk promptly established a Committee for the Defense of the Integrity of the New Territories and a Study Group on the Political Structure of the New Territories. On the recommendations of the said Committee, Heung Yee Kuk mounted several campaigns to discredit the Report of the Working Party, including repeated warnings to the Government that the statutory status of the Heung Yee Kuk as the sole representative body of the New Territories should be respected. The Study Group produced in the subsequent ten years various positions for the Heung Yee Kuk,¹³ which can be summarized in chronological order together with the reactions from the Government as follows:-

(a) The Commissioner for the New Territories be upgraded and vested with 'full' authority to deal with all matters related to the New Territories, so as to eliminate the adverse effects caused by the penetration of central Government departments, and to safeguard the distinctive

interests of the people of the New Territories. The request was at first turned down by the Government which argued that as the New Territories had become an integral part of Hong Kong, a great deal of affairs had to be handled by professional departments, and that the interests of the people of the New Territories had been thus far sufficiently safeguarded by existing arrangements. Further pressures on the part of the Heung Yee Kuk, however, resulted in the upgrading of the Commissioner for the New Territories to the Secretary level in 1973, albeit with an authority not as 'full' as originally requested.

(b) Representatives from the 'original inhabitants' of the New Territories be appointed to the Executive and the Legislative Council of Hong Kong. The request was also turned down by the Government in the beginning, with the argument that unofficial members of the above two Councils were not appointed on any sectoral or factional basis. In 1977 however, Mr. Yeung Siu-cho, an 'original inhabitant' of the New Territories was appointed as unofficial member to the Legislative Council. In 1978, another 'original inhabitant', Mr. Wong Lam, was appointed to join the same rank.

(c) The political structure of the New Territories be fundamentally reformed to become an autonomous entity alongside the colonial structure of Hong Kong. A Political Board for the New Territories should be established as a law-making and policy-making body which was independent of the existing governmental structure of Hong Kong. Bills passed and policies decided by the Political Board should assume effect with the

assent of the Governor of Hong Kong. Members to the Political Board should be appointed partly by the Special Commissioner for the New Territories who was the chairman and partly by the Heung Yee Kuk. The Special Commissioner was responsible to the Governor of Hong Kong. Under the Special Commissioner, there was to be a departmental structure comprising the executive Sections for Economic Affairs, Security, Housing, Environment, Social Welfare, etc.

It can be expected that such a revolutionary proposal could hardly get approval from the Government, which replied in 1975 that it was unrealistic to administratively separate the developing New Territories from other areas of Hong Kong and that given limited resources, it was also wasteful to tear apart the administration of Hong Kong.

Although the Government of Hong Kong had neither accepted the recommendations of the Working Party concerning the establishment of democratic (i.e. electoral) local administration nor the request of the Heung Yee Kuk concerning the establishment of the Political Board for the New Territories, it did incrementally and with low profile follow some of the advices of the members of the Working Party. In the late 1960s, District Officers were entrusted with the overall responsibility for co-ordinating the processes of development in their Districts. In light of the earlier and more rapid development of Tsuen Wan, a Town Manager was appointed in early 1976 to oversee the implementation of the development programmes, with special responsibilities to promote new community organizations such as the Mutual Aid Committees and to develop community

relations. At the same time, a Town Centre Advisory Committee was appointed to give a broad spectrum of the people the opportunities to participate in development administration. Many other machineries of public participation were organized in the following months, such as the City Amenities and Recreational Committee. The experiments with public participation in Tsuen Wan turned out to be successful and thereafter became a model for the District Advisory Boards established in November 1977.

Another line of administrative reforms is represented by the regionalization of some governmental services. The Medical and Health Department started with regionalization in April 1977 with the aim to bring about a better appreciation of the needs of the localities through the provision of more readily accessible services. Success with regionalization of this department having been proven, the Government then decided to reorganize in April 1979 its provisions of social welfare services on a regional and district basis. During this period, other Government departments undertook to strengthen their presence in the New Territories by appointing commissioners or their equivalents for the whole area and officers for the regions and districts, though not with the wide authority and discretion required if regionalization were to be carried out.

Up to now, the administrative structure of the districts in the New Territories has not assumed their final shape, as it is crucial for the management of development to retain structural flexibility and to allow for innovative experiments. According to the present arrangements,

each District in the New Territories is headed by either a Town Manager (in Tsuen Wan only) or a District Officer, who is responsible, in close liaison with the project manager, for the overall coordination of the developmental processes, with special responsibility for developing the social-political fabric for the new community. The major Government departments -- Public Works, Education, Medical and Health, Transport, Housing Authority, Urban Services, Fire Services, Royal Hong Kong Police Force, Social Welfare and Labour -- are represented on a town management committee chaired by the Town Manager or the District Officer. Alongside the traditional system of rural representation, new consultative links are provided by the District Advisory Boards and by many other local branches of Colony-wide groups and organizations, such as the Salvation Army, Caritas, the YMCA, and various vocational associations, etc.

The District Advisory Boards and the New Local Politics

From the standpoints of both the 'original inhabitants' and the newcomers, the establishment of District Advisory Boards in the New Territories constitutes a drastic change in the political arena of the New Territories, even though both parties, in view of their many divergent interests, react to this political and administrative reform differently. For the outsiders, the District Advisory Board is an unqualified good, as it affords them the opportunity to participate in the decision-making organs in their own districts, and they have longed for this right for such a long time. To the 'original inhabitants', and especially to their

leaders, the District Advisory Board represents a devastating threat to their authority and privilege in the New Territories, and, in the final analysis, it subverts the rural leaders' claim to legitimate representative status for all the people in their districts. In the past, the Urban Council of Hong Kong had sought to extend its domain into the New Territories (and in the process would take over many of the functions of the Rural Committees and the Heung Yee Kuk), but the rural leaders had been able to counteract this attempted 'encroachments' with their political muscle. The District Advisory Boards, however, are beyond their means of resistance, and the history of the establishment of these Advisory Boards throughout the New Territories, which is surprisingly short in duration, demonstrates vividly the determination of the Government to bring about reforms in the local political and administrative structure in the New Territories, and the futility of the rural leaders in rendering opposition. The New Territories are ready for political change, and once change comes, it encounters no serious obstructions.

As soon as the Government made known its decision to extend the District Advisory Board system from Tsuen Wan (where it was established on an experimental basis in early 1976) to other Districts in the New Territories, an uproar from the rural leaders ensued. Their almost unanimous reaction to such a decision was one of a combination of anger, frustration, and fear. The District Advisory Boards, which were to be established in all Districts in November 1977, were not meant to be a representative assembly based on electoral principles, but rather a mirror of public opinions in a District, as well as a training ground for

future local élites. The future development of the District Advisory Boards, however, is still an open question. One thing, nevertheless, seems to be certain: the system of rural representation is bound to suffer in terms of influence. Although the Government had promised that affairs of the Rural Committees would not be interfered with and that such a principle of concession would be written into the terms of reference of the District Advisory Boards, it has turned out that there is no certainty that this principle will be strictly honoured. First of all, it is not written into the terms of reference of the District Advisory Boards. Second, decisions as to the allocation and utilization of the local public work funds, which come from Government coffers and are to be used for environmental and other kinds of improvements in the rural areas, are now put under the jurisdiction of the District Advisory Board, whereas in the past they were controlled by the District Officers in consultation with the Rural Committees. Third, there is a catch-all article in the terms of reference for the Boards which stipulates it to advise on matters affecting the well-being of the inhabitants of the District. Up to now, this clause has not been put to much use by the Boards, however, if deemed appropriate, it may be interpreted in the future to cover the 'rural' inhabitants. For the time being, there is no serious clash of interests between the rural and non-rural segments of the population in the new towns as represented in the District Advisory Boards. In case there were, it is unlikely that rural interests would have been unscrupulously suppressed since they are still heavily represented in the Boards, and this arrangement is prudently improvised

by the Government so that a transitional period is available to work things through. This District Advisory Boards are still operating with a low profile as they are still very young and inexperienced. The majority of the works done by the Boards are concentrated in the fields of cultural, recreational and sport services. Local public works are considered and recommended by the relevant sub-committee chaired by a rural leader whose views are generally respected by the other members of the Board.

Between the time when the proposal to extend the District Advisory Board system from Tsuen Wan to other districts was made by the Government in late 1976, and the time when the Boards were fully appointed in late 1977, it is interesting to find that the rural leaders, during this period of just a little bit more than a year, put up rancorous opposition to the proposal in the first several months, after which it was rapidly softened. In the initial period of stiff resistance, judging from the statements and public speeches made by some of the rural leaders, it is apparent that they were fully aware of the political implications of the proposed administrative reforms which would seriously undermine the legitimacy of their leadership in their localities. Among the reasons put forth against the setting up of the District Advisory Boards, those from the Tai Po Rural Committee are representative of the views of the New Territories' rural elites:

(a) The Advisory Boards had no mass basis and hence lacked representativeness.

(b) Many of the members in the Advisory Boards were the persons in charge of occupational associations, and their goals were to promote the interests of their associations, and not to serve the public at large.

(c) As the members of the Advisory Boards lacked both administrative experience and decision-making power, they would easily be turned into mere political ornaments.

(d) The District Advisory Board in Tsuen Wan had not proven to be effective.

(e) As the appointment of members to the Hong Kong Legislative Council was not based on their organizational affiliations, why should organizations in the New Territories be given representation in the Advisory Boards?

(f) Organizations in the past were only requested to participate in ceremonial and festival functions, and now they were compelled to participate in social affairs, it was doubtful whether they could make substantial contributions.

(g) District Advisory Boards might not necessarily be more useful than Rural Committees which they had displaced.

(h) Social organizations represented in the Boards might evince undesirable political colorations, while Rural Committees did not.

(i) Even after the status of the Heung Yee Kuk and the Rural Committees had been disparaged and they were denied respect by the Government, opposition and resistance to unfair land resumption or house

demolition would still be launched by the people in the New Territories. What would be different then would be that mediations and arbitrations previously done by rural organizations and leaders (who helped maintain peace and order) would be supplanted by collective actions on the part of the villagers.

(j) Some of the social organizations being co-opted by the Government were co-opted because they could replace the Rural Committees in performing the functions of throwing up artistic shows to enliven up the atmosphere in social and ceremonial occasions, and not because of their real contribution to public affairs.¹⁴

Behind the wordings of these reasons, it is not difficult to detect a mood of powerlessness among the rural leaders, who were only too aware of the political muscle which the Government was able to muster and the readiness of outsiders and their elites to enter into the political game. In a portrayal of the plight of rural organizations when the functions of the Advisory Boards were fully realized, the tone of the Penr Chau Rural Committee was acrimonious:

From now on we shall expect to see the Advisory Boards showing off their power and taking the initiative to strengthen the services delivered to the various Districts of the New Territories, particularly in the areas of welfare and recreation. These kinds of developments will possess the full repertory of colour, fragrance and flavour and are capable of intoxicating people

When this programme has advanced to another stage, the functions of the District Officers will be taken over by these Advisory Boards. At that time, the administrative and political system of the New Territories will be gradually modified through the Government's trick to replace the old system with the new system. As a consequence of pragmatic considerations, the people will be attracted to the Advisory

Boards, while the Heung Yee Kuk and the Rural Committees, which had formerly served as a bridge between the Government and the people, will be totally paralyzed and abandoned. From then on, the Government will be relieved from all constraints on its actions coming from the necessity to recognize the special status of the New Territories, and can do whatever it likes. These smug calculations of the Government is certainly very ingenious.¹⁵

Despite the impending threat, the Heung Yee Kuk and the Rural Committees were not able to put up effective opposition against the Government aside from verbal assaults, which were generally ignored by the general populace and easily brushed off by the Government. What was more devastating to the rural leaders was that there were internal dissensions among their rank. Even though on the whole a majority of the Rural Committees were in opposition, still a substantial number of them consented, though with some reservations, to the establishment of the District Advisory Boards, including Tuen Mun, Tai Po, Hang Hou and Sun Pat Heung; and among those expressing consent, some of them (like Tai Po and Hang Hou) had shifted to their present position of concurrence after a temporary period of opposition.¹⁶ Under a situation of internal disunity, the power of the Heung Yee Kuk vis-a-vis the Government was further weakened.

As the Government's stand could not be budged, the only avenue open to the rural leaders was to force concessions from it, and this the Kuk and the Rural Committees had actively done. What they wanted from the Government included: heavy representation of rural interests in the Advisory Boards, appointment of rural leaders to the vice-chairmanships of these Boards, the right of the Heung Yee Kuk to approve the decisions

made by the Boards, the right of the Kuk and the Rural Committees to decide together with the Government on the appointment of individuals to membership in the Boards, and the exclusion of the Boards from interfering in the affairs which were traditionally the concern of the rural organizations. As can be noted in our previous discussion, concessions had been granted, notably in the area of representation of rural interests in the Boards, to save the 'face' of the rural leaders. Nevertheless, in the future, it is apparent that they will gradually be withdrawn, as anticipated by many experienced observers.

The establishment of the District Advisory Boards is a major event in the recent history of the New Territories. What it signifies is not only a critical change in the political policy of the Government toward the area, but also a new phase in the relationship between the 'original inhabitants' and the outsiders. In the long-term, it is also significant in that it inaugurates a process of political development in the New Territories the ultimate destination of which is to set up in the area a political and administrative system which will bear a close resemblance to the system in the urban areas. From a global point of view, it is a process of political and administrative homogenization whereby former disparities between the regions in the Colony will be minimized, though not totally obliterated (as the special privileges attached to the status of 'original inhabitant' will still linger on).

In the new political context, the 'original inhabitants' and their leaders are driven into a defensive position, which forces them to decide afresh their relationship to the outsiders and their elites. Their former

attitudes of indifference, ignorance or downright rejection will no longer suffice, as in an urbanizing New Territories they have to co-operate in one way or another with the outsiders and to share in the facilities and services which are provided for common use. Besides, they constitute only a numerically insignificant minority in the new urban centres, and they have no way to seclude themselves from the political presence of their outsider neighbours. What will these new relationships be will constitute our major concern in the next section.

'Original Inhabitants' and Outsiders: Patterns of Relationships

As the phenomena under study are still in an embryonic state, and our observations are far from complete, we are able to offer here only some of our tentative findings. One thing for certain is that the new relationships between the 'original inhabitants' and the outsiders are developing in a variety of socio-political settings which differ in their historical background, the personalities and intentions of the key political leaders, economic and occupational structures, and the balance of power between the 'original inhabitants' and the outsiders. In this melange of factors, our opinion is that the personality and insight of the political elite are of crucial importance in structuring the new relationship between the two parties, given the political passivity of the general populace and the elitist nature of politics in the New Territories. Nonetheless, because of the smallness of the area, it is the basic similarity among the various districts in the New Territories rather than their differences that is salient upon a total analysis.

Consequently, the patternal differences we have detected should not be blown out of proportion and should be considered as only minor (though still important) differences in a context of basic similarity.

What is interesting to note is that the three major new towns in the New Territories -- Tsuen Wan, Sha Tin and Tuen Mun -- have displayed divergent patterns of relationship between the 'original inhabitants' and the outsiders. In the case of Tsuen Wan, which has been developing and industrializing since the 1950s, the economic power and cosmopolitan outlook of the outsiders (among which were many of the Shanghaiese entrepreneurs) in the past had created a situation which, structurally speaking, would put the 'original inhabitants' in an extremely disadvantaged position. As a matter of fact, conflict between outsiders and the 'original inhabitants' was rare, as the powerful presence of the former enabled them to totally ignore the latter. Between the two there had been no political issue which was hotly contested, and the onus was upon the 'original inhabitants' to adapt themselves to an environment which was beyond their control. On the other hand, the cosmopolitanism of the outsider elites had driven them to enter into politics at a Colony-wide level in their quest for Colony-wide political power and influence, the result of which was that they had deserted their home district and left a leadership vacuum there, which was only partially filled up by less talented outsider elites who were the responsible persons in the locally-based voluntary associations. In a situation wherein outsiders were not strongly organized against them, rural leaders in Tsuen Wan were given a breathing place, which, buttressed by their

monopolization of the official channels of representation to the Government, enabled them to perform very well in taking care of the interests of their constituents, and occasionally even extended their influence and patronage to some of the outsider groups.¹⁷ In recent years, however, as many incidents would illustrate, the significance and salience of the Tsuen Wan Rural Committee have been rapidly undermined. One of the reasons for this may be that the voluntary associations of the outsiders have matured and the outsider leaders are more experienced politically. Another reason, which is pretty apparent, is the policy pursued by the Government to administer Tsuen Wan as a full-blown city rather than as an 'urbanized village', one implication of which is to further downgrade the status of the Tsuen Wan Rural Committee in the eyes of the Government. Moreover, the setting up of mutual-aid committees in the high-rise residential buildings in the district, ostensibly to promote a sanitary and violence-free Tsuen Wan, practically has implanted a new layer of administrative bodies at the grass-root level, and hence indirectly strip the Rural Committee of many of its residual administrative functions.¹⁸ To consummate the whole process is the Tsuen Wan District Advisory Committee, which spells the doom of the Rural Committee.

If the case of Tsuen Wan is one characterized by outsiders dominating the scene with the 'original inhabitants' totally ignored and subsisting only in the niches, the case of Tuen Mun is one where the leaders of the 'original inhabitants' are actively seeking community-wide leadership by both wooing the outsiders and by granting the necessary concessions to them. As Tuen Mun is only a newly developed townshir, the

population of the outsiders is still relatively small.¹⁹ Moreover, most of the outsiders had moved in only in the last several years, and they lack both organization and established leadership. From a historical point of view, Tuen Mun had been a prosperous seaport in Southern China for several hundred years, and the residents there hence have a more cosmopolitan outlook and more experience in dealing with strangers. The policy of the Government to develop Tuen Mun into one of the important industrial centres in Hong Kong would mean that, like it or not, the 'original inhabitants' there will become an insignificant minority in less than ten years' time. Given all these relevant conditions, what we do find in Tuen Mun is that the elites of the 'original inhabitants' have demonstrated dynamic leadership both in defending their own interests and, more importantly, in upgrading themselves into legitimate leaders also of the outsiders. Needless to say, antagonisms between the leaders in both parties are there, but they only assume a subtle and latent form, and have not prevented them from cooperating with each other. This accommodative attitude on the part of the rural leaders might be partially explained by their foresight and by their need to seek the help of outsiders in developing their commercial undertakings. What is more important is that the structural situation in Tuen Mun has allowed the rural leaders a chance to assert themselves, and they have not failed to grasp the opportunities emerging. Thus, as previously noted, they opened the door of the Rural Committee to the outsiders, they also participated in the organizational activities of the outsiders and they are willing to lend their political influence to the outsiders in the defense and promotion of their interests. In short, the enlightened rural leaders in

Tuen Mun are able to free themselves from the ascriptive ties to their fellow villagers and are also capable of earning their support in the policy of accommodation with outsiders.

The pattern of relationship between the 'original inhabitants' and the outsiders in Sha Tin is far from clear, but our impression is that it falls somewhere between that of Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun. Like Tuen Mun, the Sha Tin New Town is still in its infancy period, hence the number of outsiders is relatively small, and the overwhelming majority of them are concentrated in a newly-built housing estate, which is geographically isolated from the villages in which the 'original inhabitants' numerical superiority has not yet been threatened.²⁰ The outsiders in the villages of Sha Tin and in its old market town are engaged mainly in commerce, vegetable and flower growing, and cottage types of industrial production, fields into which the 'original inhabitants' seldom venture. Consequently, there is no urgent need for the 'original inhabitants' to develop ties with the outsiders, and vice versa. During the last couple of years, when outsiders gradually moved in, rural leaders in Sha Tin still had not taken any initiative to legitimize their leadership positions among the newcomers, aside from the making of some verbal claims which did not amount to too much. One reason which can be attributed to this nonaction may be the lack of dynamic and forward-looking leadership in the district, though we are far from certain about this.

Anyhow, within the next decade, we expect to see that rural leaders, rural interests, and rural organizations be reduced to an

immaterial component in the political system of the New Territories. With the resettlement of many 'original inhabitants' in the new towns and in other urban centres, their sentiment of regionalism will gradually peter out, and they will live like their outsider counterparts in a homogenized political and social environment. Rural leaders, except for the few who are able to make it in the new political arena, will have to withdraw from playing the political game.

Discussion

In this paper, we are touching upon a very puzzling phenomenon: a supposedly anachronous colonial administrative system, when assigned the task of development management, has manifested a capability to adapt itself to the new needs, and, judging from the results, it seems to be doing quite well. What is even more surprising, however, is the fact that the adaptation process follows a direction of reducing the extent of popular participation and democratic decision-making in the area under study. In comparison with the village representation system in the past, it is an undeniable fact that the newly-installed District Advisory Board system is less 'democratic' inasmuch as it does not allow for elected representatives of the people and it leaves the ultimate decision-making power in the hands of the Government, which will no longer be encumbered by an elected body claiming to represent local interests.

In view of the fact that the constitutional structure of urban Hong Kong is one characterized by an administrative apparatus which is not

subject to control nor supervision by any elected representatives of the citizens, the old political system of the New Territories, though looking like a misplacement, can be explained by arguing that it is a historical legacy which suits aptly only a foregone political context. Needless to say, the Government would never be willing to extend the application of the electoral principle from the New Territories to urban Hong Kong, for fear that the constitutional setup of the Colony will then have to be drastically altered. The policy it consequently has adopted is to de-democratize and de-politicize the New Territories, so that once again the political game is under the direction of the Government.

One may query as to the causes of the adaptability of the political system in the New Territories. In structural terms, we would expect a political structure to display high levels of adaptability (a) when its institutional structure and its policy goals can be transformed with ease by the decision-makers in the centre; (b) when the process of transformation does not encounter insurmountable opposition; (c) when the process of transformation does not entail rapid mobilization of the masses whose interests are conflictual (otherwise the conflict-resolution capability of the system will be insufficient to prevent the occurrence of political instability); and (d) when the government's political legitimacy is maintained throughout the process of transformation. It is not difficult to see that all these conditions are there in the New Territories. The New Territories Administration, being a component part of the Hong Kong Government, is amenable to restructuring by the centre, though naturally many of the officials so affected may harbour some

displeasure at the loss of functions of their department. The Heung Yee Kuk and the Rural Committees, which are only in an advisory capacity and devoid of any executive power, have no statutory or constitutional means to determine their position in the political system, and are hence subject to the manipulation of the Government, which reserves the right to prescribe the rules of the game.

As the nature of development in the New Territories is service- or welfare-oriented, it is generally supported by the people of Hong Kong. Even the 'original inhabitants' and their leaders are, in principle at least, receptive to the development programmes. When they are in opposition, it is mostly concerned with the details of compensation, and can be conveniently dealt with by administrative means. The selective dispensation of benefits and punishments to the rural leaders by the Government serves to break apart any united front that might be formed among them, consequently, the possibility of the mobilization of the villagers against it is minimized.

The Government has thus far abstained from mobilizing the outsiders in the New Territories and using them as a political weapon against the 'original inhabitants' who happen to oppose the development programmes. In the first place, it is not necessary. In the second place, it is the last intention of the Government to instigate confrontations and conflicts. On their part, outsiders are lowly mobilizable due to a dearth of the necessary organization and leadership. Even the rural leaders will shy away from mobilizing their constituents as that would put their political career and other material benefits in jeopardy, these being controlled in the hands of the Government.

Throughout the process of development, the legitimacy of the Government in the eyes of the Hong Kong citizens has not been tarnished; on the contrary, it might even have increased. In addition to the general support rendered to the development programmes by the populace, the Government's actions to dismantle the privileged status of the 'original inhabitants' as a group also draw their applause, even though what the Government is adopting is a politically 'backward' policy.

One last word. As the case study of the New Territories has amply shown, planned social development need not necessarily be accompanied by political development. Under a certain set of conditions, planned social development might be implemented more effectively and smoothly in a de-politicized environment.

Notes

¹ For more details on the political and administrative functions of the resuscitated local leadership in the New Territories, see Kuan Hsin-chi and Lau Siu-kai, "Development and the Resuscitation of Rural Leadership in Hong Kong," (Social Research Centre Occasional Paper, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1978). The essence of this tactics lies in the Government's deliberate effort to strengthen the position of the rural leaders so that they can serve to smoothen the process of development in their localities.

² According to censuses, the population of the New Territories in selected years is:

1911	81,227
1921	83,163
1931	98,157
1961	409,945
1971	665,700
1976	938,440

The rapid increase in the population of the New Territories since the end of the Second World War is accounted for predominantly by immigration of persons from China and urban Hong Kong, notably from the latter. The out-migration of indigenous New Territories inhabitants to other countries further reduces the proportion of indigenous inhabitants in the area.

³ The original inhabitants are, according to Government policies and practices, those inhabitants and their descendants in the villages

recognized by the Government in 1898 when the New Territories were leased to Britain by China.

⁴ The village representation system gradually took shape only after the restoration of British rule in the New Territories in 1945. Before the Second World War, it was the village elders who served to mediate between the colonial government and the rural people. After the War, it was felt that the installment of a village representation system would facilitate the rise to political power of the younger village leaders who based their authority on ability and wealth, and who were prepared to challenge the political legitimacy of their elderly counterparts.

⁵ This general impression can be gleaned from the minutes of the meetings of the Kuk, in which scanty attention has so far been paid to matters which are related to the welfare of the outsiders in the New Territories.

⁶ When compared with the compensations meted out to outsider inhabitants in the New Territories and to inhabitants in urban Hong Kong who happen to be in similar situations, it is easy to see that the Government has already been surprisingly generous toward the original inhabitants. This generosity tends occasionally to draw both envy and jealousy from the general public in Hong Kong.

⁷ See Wah Kiu Yat Po, October 11, 1979. In the same piece of information, it is reported that in the New Territories, rich men with tens of million of dollars are numerous.

⁸ According to the estimate of the Chairman of the Kuk, Mr. Chan Yat-san, the population of the New Territories is 1.25 million, among which 250,000 are 'original inhabitants'. See Wah Kiu Yat Po, November 2, 1977.

⁹ Reluctance to admit outsiders into the Rural Committees is still prevalent among the 'original inhabitants'. A recent incident is that the Tsing Yi Rural Committee rejected the requests of the commercial and sports associations in the district to send representatives into the Committee, see Wah Kiu Yat Po, January 22, 1979. Tuen Mun Rural Committee seems to have adopted an exceptional policy in its relationship with outsiders, and gradually it has opened its door to them. For example, in its September 3, 1977 meeting, the members of the Committee decided to allow a newly established village (the Wo Ping Sun Chuen) consisting of outsiders to send its representatives to the Committee, though they were not given the right to vote in it (Wah Kiu Yat Po, September 4, 1977). In its July 2, 1979 meeting, the Committee decided to go one step further and made it a policy to have a variety of interests and parties represented in the Committee. And, in pursuance of this stated policy, the Committee also decided to revise its constitution to that effect (Wah Kiu Yat Po, July 3, 1979). In its meeting on September 4, 1979, the Tai Po Rural Committee also decided to open its door to outsiders (commercial associations, voluntary organizations and mutual aid committees), see Wah Kiu Yat Po, September 5, 1979.

10 Since the end of the Second World War, many immigrants from China have already begun to settle down in the New Territories. Some of them are industrialists and they set up factories and workshops in areas close to urban Hong Kong; the emergence of Tsuen Wan as an industrial town is a consequence of their efforts. Other immigrants are farmers (many of them specializing in vegetable production) and they acquire their farmland either by clearing up barren land or by renting it from the 'original inhabitants'. However, the number of outsiders settling down in the New Territories before mid-1960s was small compared to the influx of immigrants which took place beyond that date. Though the relationship between these earlier immigrants and their hosts had not been cordial, the magnitude of the problems thus generated was small, even though the outsiders tended to harbour serious grudges against the 'original inhabitants' who constituted a distinctly privileged caste in the area. The influx of immigrants into the New Territories as a consequence of planned development in the last decade or so is the real crucial force in changing the political configurations of the area.

11 In a study of politics in a village in the western part of the New Territories, it is found that the Government is even willing to bypass the legal formalities of the administrative system and to grant informal political recognition to organizations formed by outsiders. In the case under study, outsiders are able to make use of their economic associations for political purposes, and, in the eyes of the New Territories Administrations, the leaders in these nominally non-political associations are the bona fide political representatives of

the outsiders, who are thus largely relieved from the obligation to seek help from the leaders of the 'original inhabitants' (who supposedly are the legal representative of the whole village in which the outsiders constitute the majority of its inhabitants). See Chau Lam-yan, "Power Bifurcation in a Changing Chinese Village in Hong Kong," (M. Phil. thesis, Department of Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1979).

- 12 Report of the Working Party on Local Administration (Hong Kong: Government Press, 1966), p. 21.
- 13 See, for example, Striving for Justifiable Rights for the People of the New Territories, vols. I and II (vol. II in Chinese only) (The New Territories Heung Yee Kuk, 1964), and The New Territories Community of Hong Kong Under Colonial Administration (The New Territories Heung Yee Kuk, 1977).
- 14 Wah Kiu Yat Po, October 13, 1977.
- 15 Wah Kiu Yat Po, October 15, 1977.
- 16 Wah Kiu Yat Po, November 17, 1977.
- 17 See Graham E. Johnson, Natives, Migrants and Voluntary Associations in a Colonial Chinese Setting (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, 1971).
- 18 By early 1979, the number of mutual aid committees in Tsuen Wan had grown to about 400, and had a claimed total membership of 400,000, see

Wah Kiu Yat Po, February 26, 1979. According to the 1976 by-census, the population of Tsuen Wan New Town was 448,710.

19 The population of the Tuen Mun New Town in 1976 was 33,070.

20 According to a population survey conducted by the Sha Tin Rural Committee in 1977, there were 8,134 'original inhabitants' and 6,095 outsiders in the villages of the district. In addition, there were 14,229 inhabitants in the newly-built Lek Yuen Housing Estate, who were predominantly outsiders. For detailed information, see Wah Kiu Yat Po, May 5, 1977.