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The Administrative Absorption of Politics in Hong Kong, with Special Emphasis on the City District Officer Scheme

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THE ADMINISTRATIVE ABSORPTION OF POLITICS IN HONG KONG, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE CITY DISTRICT OFFICER SCHEME

by

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CONTENTS

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I. Hong Kong as a "Colonial City"

Hong Kong is one of the few Asian cities which have become rapidly urbanized and industrialized in recent decades. In the last twenty years, Hong Kong has been transformed from a British colonial entrepot to a city of world significance with a population of 4 million.

There is a growing literature arguing that Asian urbanization has distinct characteristics and thus differs from Western urbanization.[1] This difference is often believed to have resulted from the differing growth patterns of their seminal cities. Most students of the city use technology as the strategic variable to delineate types of cities, e.g., Sjoberg's industrial versus preindustrial city.[2] Indeed, the Western city differs in large measure from the Asian city in that the former resulted from technological-industrial expansion whilst the latter did not.[3] However, cities in both the West and the Orient have been multifunctional and there are very few contemporary cities so heavily committed to industrial activities that a great majority of the labour force is engaged in it.[4] Therefore, apart from technology, other variables, such as value and power, especially power, should be taken into account.[5] More often than not, the contemporary Asian cities are created and shaped primarily by power variables. As a matter of fact, Hong Kong, along with many other major Asian cities, has been the result of forgien domination or enterprise. They were created and shaped by the colonial powers

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for political and economic reasons; they did not grow out of an indigenous urban process. In this sense, Hong Kong is, using Redifeld and Singer's concept, a heterogenetic city[6] and it fits well into McGee's description of the so-called "colonial city".[7]

Hong Kong's urban characteristics cannot easily be described by Wirth-Redfield's rural-urban continuum theory concepts which grow out of the grand tradition of dichotomous social change.[8] The grand dichotomous conception of social change, despite its usefulness as a heuristic model, is primarily a useful typology, rather than a theory of social change.[9] Moreover, it is probably time-bound and culture-bound.[10] The concept of Asian urbanization, however, it seems to us, can hardly be applied to Hong Kong. In this paper, we are primarily concerned with the political implications of urbanization. In the West, urbanization has often been linked to democracy by political theorists. Max Weber, one of the pioneering students of the sociology of the city, holds that the city, as a political community, is a peculiarly western phenomenon and the source of the modern conception of "citizenship", which itself is the source of democracy.[11] Later, Harold Laski asserts that "organized democracy is the product of urban life."[12] Laski's view is again further elaborated by S.M. Lipset.[13] But, it should be a gross mistake to assume that what holds true of the historical relationship between urbanization and democracy is necessarily true in the cities of the Third World. The cities of the Third World, as Brigitte Berger states, are in a situation "that is congenial not to democracy but rather to political demagoguery, or to radical movement, and to the eruption of mob violence."[14] What makes the difference in the city political life between the Western societies and the Third World are many. But, the basic fact is that the rapid increase of population living in urban settlements in the Third World makes the city a field where the major socio-political transformation process takes place in a rather short period of time. Karl Deutsch has termed the process "social mobilization" which is "the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded and broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior."[15] It is our belief that the social mobilization process is certainly not confined to the Third World

city, but it is by definition more dramatically manifested in cities where people have sudden high exposure to aspects of modern life through demonstration of machinery, buildings, mass media, etc. The increased numbers of mobilized population tend to increase their demands for participation in the political system, leading to a phenomenon called "participation explosion".[16] But it should be emphatically noted that participation explosion does not necessarily lead to a participant society in which a high level of popular participation is organized and structured through political institutions, governmental and non-governmental. More often than not, social mobilization and participation explosion leads to political instability in the Third World resulting primarily from, using Hungtington's concept, the political gap between the rapid social and economic changes and the slow development of political institutions, which have dominated the scene throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[17] The political gap is wider in the city than in the countryside precisely because rapid social mobilization takes place in the city on the one hand, and on the other, non-governmental institutions are weak or undeveloped. As a consequence, it is small wonder that "the instability of the city -- the instability of coups, riots, and demonstrations -- is, in some measure, an inescapable characteristics of modernization."[18]

What has been said above is indeed a rather gloomly view of the political aspect of urbanization in the Third World. However, we are not ready to accept the view that the pattern of political development in the Asian cities and other cities in the developing countries is a "deviant" pattern of the Western model. In our view, the reason why Asian political urbanization does not fit the Western model can be explained in two equally valid ways: either it is the particularistic nature of the Asian political urbanization or it is simply the parochial nature of the Western model itself. The positive political role of cities in Asia can be better understood by viewing the city as a centre of change that has contributed to nation-building because urbanization serves to undermining primordial sentiments, loyalties, and identifications with subnational entities and thus helps to make the development of new and larger political communities possible.[19] Indeed, the Asian cities' political function must be understood in terms of the

relation between the part (city) and the whole (national societies). This however, cannot apply to the Hong Kong case. Hong Kong is a city-state: it is a total entity itself. And this makes Hong Kong a special variant of the Asian city, or the colonial city. What concerns us in this paper is the way Hong Kong's political system has coped with the problem of stability, and especially, in what way it has been coping with the challenge of political integration resulting from rapid urbanization in recent decades.

II. Participation, Synarchy, and Elite Integration

In large measure, Hong Kong is an urban polity relatively free from riots and political cleavages. It has achieved a kind of equilibrium in a very intricate political situation. It certainly has not experienced violence on the same scale as many cities in the Third World. It is the argument of this paper that the kind of equilibrium this colonial city has thus far achieved is largely due to a process which might be called the "administrative absorption of politics". By the administrative absorption of politics we mean a process by which the government coopts the political forces, often represented by elite groups, into an administrative decision-making body, thus achieving some level of elite consensus integration, and as a consequence, the governing authority is legitimized and a loosely integrated political community is established.

Hong Kong is not a democracy. The British colonial Government has never attempted to follow Western democratic models. It has from the very beginning tried to travel a unique political path of its own, it is well exemplified in the words of the former Governor, Sir David Trench, when he said:[20]

> There is no one brand of politics, or one line of policies, which is right for all places at all stages of development. And wherever you are and whenever you are there, you must select the best course of action for that time and place and that set of circumstances and these become your politics and your policies.

To characterized the unique brand of politics of Hong Kong is far from being a easy job. The most widely quoted concept of "government by discussion" is given by Professor Endacott. In Endacott's view:[21]

> An examination of the working of the Hong Kong constitution shows interested opinion is consulted continuously prior to any important government decision, ... and that on occassion... the general public at large is invited to express its views. Indeed, consultation as practiced by the Government is so extensive that the term "government by discussion" aptly describes one of its leading characteristics.

Professor Endacott's arguments certainly have some insight and validity. However, it is our view that conceptually and empirically the concept of "synarchy"[22] is the key to understanding the art of government and politics in Hong Kong. "Synarchy", to borrow the concept of J.K. Fairbank, implies a joint administration shared by both the British rulers and non-British, predominantly Chinese, leaders. The kernel of synarchy is a form of elite consensual government; it is a grass-tops approach to the problem of political integration. The British have consciously or unconsciously governed the colony with synarchical rule by allowing, though limited, non-British participation in the ruling group.

The synarchical rule has both formal and informal faces. Before proceeding to discuss the formal face of synarchy, it should be noted that the constitutional structure of Hong Kong's political system is in the typical colonial pattern. The British Crown is represented by a Governor who is "the single and supreme authority responsible to and representative of the Queen". The office of the Governor is the central feature of the Government of Hong Kong. The Governor is in a real sense the head of the Government. Strictly speaking, the Governor can govern the colony, if he wishes, with his own will without regard to what the people in the colony think. But, the Government does not seem to have an unlimited image of authority, it has tried to legitimize its authority not from the Crown but from the consent of the ruled by claiming to conform to democratic values, if not, to a democratic form of government. In the words of government itself, Hong Kong is supposed to be ruled by a "governing body that behaves in a way that the general body of members approves of."[23] It is under this normative "democratic" or consensual framework that the system of synarchy is practiced.

The formal face of synarchical rule can be analyzed through discussing the operation of the three Councils and the civil service system. On 5 April, 1843, Hong Kong was granted a Royal Charter which declared Hong Kong a separate Colony. Among other things, the Charter included a Legislative Council and an Executive Council. The Governor is advised by the Executive Council and is bound to legislate through the Legislative Council. These two Councils are not elected bodies; they are composed of both "official members" and "unofficial members". As of now, the total membership of the Executive Council is 14; six are "official members", of whom five are ex-officio members, eight are "unofficial members". The Legislative Council has 29 members in total, with 14 "official members", of whom four are ex-officio members, and 15 "unofficial members". And 15 out of the total 23 unofficial members are Chinese. All members, with the exception of ex-officio members, are appointed by the Queen or by the Governor on the instructions of the Secretary of State. Strictly speaking, the Executive Council is a consultative body and the Legislative Council is also powerless in terms of its ability to oppose the Government. In the last analysis, however, these two Councils are the top governmental organs through which the people from the community participate in the policy-making and management of public affairs in the Colony. The precise degree of unofficial members' influence in the Councils is difficult to assess, but, in large measure, as Endacott wrote: "On important issues, their opinion has obvious weight and their opposition is avoided", and "In deference to local Chinese opinion, Chinese custom is safeguarded and legislation concerning it is unlikely to be proposed except on the initiative of the Chinese unofficial members".[24] What concerns us is not only the question of whether the unofficial members have influence in the policy-making process, but also the question who are the unofficial members and whom do they represent. It is true to say that the great majority of the appointed unofficial members are men of caliber and that they are sensitive to the needs of the community as a whole. They have certainly performed a valuable boundary role between the Government and the top stratum of the society. But, the undeniable fact is that the appointed unofficial members were and still are established or emerging socio-economic elites who are order-prosperity minded and come from a very narrow sector of the population.

With a few exceptions, the majority of the Unofficial Members are men of wealth: among the Chinese Unofficial Members, prior to 1964, over 90% are sons of the "established rich" and are among the small circle of elite in the Chinese community, after the mid-60's, another category of person has been rising, they are the "new rich", representing the ever-increasing industrial forces. And among the non-Chinese Unofficial Members, about 75% are the chief executives or managing directors of commanding economic institutions.[25] It is worthwhile to note that in the very beginning of the Colony's history, the British ruling group seemed not too much concerned about the problem of Chinese participation. Although the two Councils were assembled as early as in 1844, the first Chinese, Ng Choy (or Dr. Wu Ting-fang) was admitted into the Legislative Council as late as February 1880, with the efforts of the then Governor, Sir John Pope Hennessy; who believed that since the Chinese outnumbered the foreigners in Hong Kong, they should be allowed a share in the management of public affairs.[26] And it took another 46 years to appoint Sir Shouson Chow to be the first Chinese member of the Executive Council in 1926. It seems to us that the concept or practice of administrative absorption of politics or synarchy is not out of grand design of any person, rather it grows out from a need to cope with legitimacy or integration crisis. In the words of a very informed Chinese on Hong Kong politics, the appointment of Sir Shouson Chow was not made simply on personal grounds, "it was evident that political considerations also came in, viz., to pacify anti-British sentiment in China and further encourage the loyalty of local Chinese towards Hong Kong".[27] Chinese participation in the two Councils has been steadily increased after World War II. This is clearly shown in the Legislative Council: the Chinese Unofficial Members were less than 50% between 1945-50, 62.5% from 1960-63, 70% from 1964-67, 77% from 1968-69, and 84% from 1970.[28] The steady increase of Chinese participation in the Councils is a reflection of the growing strength and vitality of Chinese community on the one hand, and the sensitive responsive capability of the Government to absorb the socio-economic leaders on the other. The British are not attempting to create a mass-consensual community; they are, however, attempting to create an elite-consensual polity. The normal pattern in

elite-consensus building is to coopt the men with a power base into the polity. According to a sociologist, "The British were forced to choose Chinese representatives from a restricted list of eligibles .... they (Chinese) were chosen only after they had worked themselves up through a Chinese system of influence and power, understood and accepted by the Government itself. Even before a Chinese reached the Legislative or Executive Council, he was vetted by his own community."[29]

Below the two above-mentioned Councils, there is a third Council, the Urban Council, which is another avenue for public expression in Hong Kong. The Urban Council is the only Government organ with a partially elected membership. Prior to April 1, 1973,* there were 26 members in the Council, of whom 6 were ex-officio members and 20 were unofficial members. Among these 20 unofficials, ten were appointed and the other ten were elected. Despite the fact that the Urban Council's elections is the only occasions for the general public to participate in the formal political process, it has never been attractive to the average person. In the first place, the Government does not care to see a "participation explosion" in this industrial colony; it has curtailed the world-wide mass political mobilization trend by excluding the majority of the population from the election process. Moreover, the Urban Council's power is limited; it is mainly concerned with public health as was its precursor, the Sanitary Board in 1884. The striking thing is that ever since the Urban Council elections were reinstituted in 1952, the rate of registration for election as compared to the total population has never exceeded 1%, and although up to 30-40% of those who register eventually turn up at

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* On October 13, 1971, a White Paper was tabled in the Legislative Council, and subsequently approved, outlining proposals for significant changes in the organization of the Urban Council which comes into effect on April 1, 1973. These include a certain degree of financial autonomy, the removal of all official members and an increase in the number of unofficial members. At present there are 24 members in the Council, all of whom are unofficial members. Among these 24 unofficials, 12 are appointed and the other twelve are elected.

the polls, only about 0.5% or less of the total population turn out to vote.[30] The poor turnout in voting is often deplored as lack of civic spirit and as an exhibition of political apathy. The reason for the lack of civic spirit and the presence of political apathy, it seems to us, could be only partly attributable to the traditional Chinese Confucian political culture which is more parochial-subject rather than participant in nature: the ordinary people are lacking an active self-orientation towards politics in Hong Kong.[31] The more basic reason for the low or non-participation, however, should be found in the political system of Hong Kong itself, that is, the Urban Council is an organ without teeth; it is perceived as involved in a "politics without power", "completely divorced from the dynamism of Hong Kong's economy".[32] It seems to us that Hong Kong Government is not of the belief that modern democratic politics has to be politics of mass participation. The foremost goal of the Government is to achieve a maximum level of political stability in order to foster economic growth. And the key to that goal is the administerization of politics, it is antithesis to politicization.

Bearing in mind the notion of the administerization of politics, we will be in a better position to understand the role of the government bureaucracy in Hong Kong. Insofar as Hong Kong's real, and day-to-day governing power is concerned, it lies in the hands of the civil service, headed by the Colonial Secretary who, under the direction of the Governor, carries on the general administration. At present, there are 40 Government Departments. The growth of the bureaucracy is phenomenal: there were just over 17,500 officers in 1949, it increased to 45,000 in 1959 and now to its present strength of over 84,500. The bureaucratic expansion, according to the Government, "reflects not only the continuing expansion of existing service, in line with the continuing expansion of the population, but also the development of new and more diverse services to meet the changing needs of the population.[33] The profileration of Departments is in short, primarily due to the pressures of urbanization. It is no exaggeration to say that Hong Kong, despite its claim of laissez faire philosophy, is in fact, an "Administrated city" governed by "departmentocracy", to borrow a term from Felser.[34]

Strictly speaking, there are no politicians in Hong Kong. Gabrial Almond has, expressing a functional view, distinguished four input functions of any political system: political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication.[35] Since there are so few political structures outside of government for the performance of these four input functions in Hong Kong the bureaucracy is of necessity to play a "political" role; and as a matter of fact, the old orthodoxy of the politics-administration dichotomy is purposively broken down in Hong Kong: the administrators, especially those at the top level, are encouraged to play the political role. A point should be noted here is that the Government is the largest employer in Hong Kong. By January 1972 there were 84,565 officers in total, of which 82,662 were local officers, and 1,903 were overseas officers.[36] The data indicate that one in every fifty of the total population was employed within the civil service. Because of this very fact, the bureaucracy has contributed a great deal to the stability of Hong Kong by serving as a mechanism, for assimilating the potential "discontented" into the governing machinery.[37] The government bureaucracy has been fairly open to the Chinese intellectuals, especially since the 50's. And it is in the area of administration that the synarchical rule has been mostly put into practice. From 1952 onward, the local officers which were predominatly Chinese have constituted about 95% - 97% of the total number of officers. However, the quantitative figures do not give us the whole picture; if we look at the qualitative side of the picture, a rather different conclusion will emerge. Although localization of government bureaucracy has been the publicly stated policy of the Government since 1946, it has proceeded slowly and very uneven. The pattern of localization is that the lower the categories of officers are, the faster is the localization, and the reverse is true. The obvious evidence is that in the Administrative Grade 64% were British, while only 36% were local officers in 1970, although as compared to 2.3% in 1950 and 16.27% in 1960 the progress cannot be ignored. On the other hand, in the Executive Grade 73.4% were local officers, while 26.6% were British. Insofar as the top rung of the bureaucracy is concerned, the Government is still dominated by British expatriates.[38] In a sense, Hong Kong's administration is a lopsided synarchy, with much Chinese "participation", but little "joint rule". Synarcy has never become full-fleged.

The discussion of synarchical rule cannot be completed without mentioning the informal face of it. Synarchical rule does not stop at the direct or formal cooption of political elements into administration; it also reflects indirect or informal cooption.

When the British took over Hong Kong from China in 1842, Hong Kong was a rural community without a great gentry. However, by the end of the 19th century a viable and rapidly developing community of Chinese had come into being. Owing to the ingenuity and great organizational ability of the Chinese merchant class, they were able to build up an autonomous power base outside the polity of the British Government. The wealthy Chinese have demonstrated extreme adaptative capacity in creating high-power associations of various kinds for the purposes of mutual assistance and self-advancement in a rapidly urbanized settlement under alien rule. The Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, the Po Leung Kuk and the Kai Fong are all indigenously developed. The key figures in these Chinese associations are civic-minded and men of achievement respected by their community. They had developed an informal system of power and influence parallel to the formal system of the British. These wealthy Chinese, like the traditional wealthy Chinese merchants in the last analysis, are not satisfied to remain only men of money outside of the polity, thus lacking official recognition. It is no exaggeration to say that their ultimate goal, with few exceptions, is entering officialdom formally or informally. The Hong Kong Government has never failed to appreciate the fact that these prominent Chinese could well perform a boundary role between the government and the community, as played by Chinese gentry in traditional society. The last thing the British want to see is Chinese leaders or other non-British develop powerful oppositional forces. In this connection, the British have wisely and successfully absorbed the Chinese leaders into the official political circle by either giving them formal membership in the Councils and in the bureaucracy or bestowing on them honors, e.g. Justice of the Peace, and involving them in more than 130 consultative and advisory committees at various Governmental levels. Here again we found that the great majority of unofficial Justices of the Peace among Chinese are successful men in the economic field.[39] The Chinese members of

consultative and advisory committees are also by and large men of achievement in business.[40] In addition, the recognition of the significant boundary role of the leaders of Chinese associations is well exemplified in the statement made by the Secretary for Chinese Affairs on 28 January 1968, as follows:[41]

> For over a century my own department has been developed with the primary objective of maintaining an effective, though by no means the sole, channel of communication between Government and the Chinese people who today form 99% of the population in Hong Kong. In this direction it has recently been specifically laid down in Government Regulations that, subject to obvious limitations, officers of the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs are not only to maintain, but also to improve, personal relationships and direct contacts with leading Chinese residents and with lawful Chinese societies, and traditional organizations in Hong Kong, so that they may effectively assess trends of Chinese public opinion, and assist in the presentation of official policies to the Chinese public.
>
> Working towards this end we in the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs have not only co-operated closely with the UMELCO and with the Ward Offices of the Urban Council, but also maintained close contact with a very large number of well-known Chinese traditional organizations, notably the Kai Fong, the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, the Po Leung Kuk, the Lok Sin Tong, and many others, and with hundreds of societies such as the district associations, the trade associations, the clansmen's associations and many others.

It is beyond doubt that the formal and informal administrative absorption of Chinese leaders of important associations is one of the major factors contributing to the stability of the urban community of Hong Kong. Mr. Lethbridge in his stimulating article on the Tung Wah Association says the following:[42]

> It seems to me that the relative stability of Hong Kong in the past one hundred years can only be explained by an analysis of a number of key associations, such as the Tung Wah, which give prominent Chinese a feeling that life was not all that bad under a colonial administration ... The Government - wisely - made no real attempt to curb the powers of the Tung Wah; indeed, it gave full backing to this institution and always acted so as to give it great face within the Colony. The formal system of control in Hong Kong was steadily complemented by an informal one. And this informal system is as significant sociologically as the formal. The existence of the Tung Wah and kindred associations helped, then, to make government by aliens possible.

III. The Integration Crisis and Its Response: The City District Officer Scheme

What we have said thus far should give us a fairly clear picture that the Hong Kong Government has, in large measure, skilfully used a unique synarchical rule, though lopsided, to absorb the socio-economic elites into a bureaucracy; it is a process of administrative absorption of politics, through which a relative stable and integrative political community is achieved. However, it is an elite-consensual political community of which its basic norms and values are fairly equally shared by the governmental and non-governmental elites. In some measure, the continuous stability of Hong Kong is secured through the willingness and ability of the British to timely change and enlarge the elite circle by coopting the ever-emerging leadership groups. The best example is shown in the Government's readiness to accept the industrial "new rich" into the Legislative Council since mid-60's; since from then onward industrial sector has become the backbone of the economy of this Colonial City.[43] But, it is our contention that the elite consensus or integration can work relatively well in a society in which the masses are remaining primarily in the apolitical strata, and it probably cannot work as well in a society which has undergone the process of social mobilization. As Deutsch writes: "In whatever country it occurs, social mobilization brings with it an expansion of the politically relevant strata of the population. These politically relevant strata are a broader group than the elite: they include all those persons who must be taken into account in politics ..... it does include increasingly the growing numbers of city dwellers, market farmers, users of money, wage earners, radio listeners and literates in town and country".[44] In other words, in a city which has been rapidly "baptized" by social mobilization, a mass-consensual, not elite-consensual, politics is a necessity. Hong Kong, it should be noted, is no longer just an economic city, but is increasingly a political city as well. And this fact was not fully recognized until the mid-1960's when two major riots occurred in 1966 and 1967. The 1966 riot lasted for several days, which resulted from a rise in the first-class fare for the ferry crossing the harbour between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. In 1967, a

series of uprisings against the colonial Government were triggered off, as it is widely perceived, by the Cultural Revolution in mainland China. The riots were contrclled and died out rather quickly. What is significant is that these episodes indicate that Hong Kong's equilibrium is rather precarious and there are underlying factors which are predisposed to stimuli for violent and mass behavior. After the 1966's riot, the Government realized the basic political structure of Hong Kong has been changed with the rising young generation entering into political strata. One Government report said:[45]

> "... it is debatable whether any traditional view (i.e. with regard to the relationship between Government and people) is accepted by certain sections of the local community, and in particular by the younger generation who form a significant proportion ... Moreover, a large number have received formal schooling ... It would be natural for this rising generation, equipped with education and impelled by new hopes and ideas, to tend to dissociate itself from any traditional viewpoint and to assimilate more modern ideas on the proper relationship between government and people."

And according to the finding of the Government, the cause for the 1966 riot was a "failure of communication" between the Government and people.[46] This finding admits in fact implicitly or explicitly that the structure of "government by discussion" which has succeeded in elite-to-elite communication has failed in providing a effective channel for elite-to-mass communication. In a way, Hong Kong current's problem is not as much the gap between the British and the non-British as the gap between the elite and the masses. The elite-integration problem is no more as serious as the elite-mass integration one. The riots were symptons of malintegration between the rulers and the ruled of this rapidly urbanized city.

It seems to us that it is quite legitimate to view the riots as a kind of communication crisis, or more accurately, integration crisis. The basic reason accountable for the communication or integration crisis can be found in the political structure. As we have said above, there are so few political structures performing the basic functions, such as interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication for the masses in Hong Kong.

At present there are only seven associations in total which are of a political nature. Four of them are registered as political parties: the Democratic Self-Government Party, the Hong Kong Socialist Democratic Party, the Labour Party of Hong Kong and the Liberal Democratic Party, but none of them are of any political significance. Three of them are registered as "clubs" and "associations": the United Nations Association of Hong Kong, the Reform Club of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Civic Association. Of the seven, only the Reform Club and the Civic Association which claim a membership of 30,400 and 10,000 respectively have dominated the Urban Council elections. But both of them are more concerned with social and economic reforms and are, by nature of their limited resources and organizational ability, hardly effective articulators or aggregators of the interests of the masses. In addition, at the bottom of this colonial city, there are seldom any strong grass-root associations which can perform a boundary role between the Government and the society. Although city life does not necessarily lead to a so-called mass society as many sociologists and political scientists would like us to believe, yet it is also questionable whether the view expressed by some other sociologists that although in the cities the old traditional social units, e.g. kinship, have been weakened, they are replaced by new voluntary associations filling the same role.[47] In our study on an industrial community of Hong Kong we found that on the one hand the large and secondary voluntary associations were rather underdeveloped, and on the other hand, primary-group-based social bonds were still fairly strong.[48] Moreover, we found that not only the rate of participation in voluntary associations was strinkingly low, a significant percentage of the membership were mere "paper membership". We are inclined to believe that there is a lack of viable associational structures of political interest articulation for the masses. Viewed thus, it is a small wonder that on the whole ordinary urban dwellers have the tendency to express their sentiments and demands through "anomic" political structures, i.e., riots, demonstrations, strikes, teach-in, sit-in, and sleep-in, etc. Indeed, this becomes increasingly a form of political participation in Hong Kong.[49]

The Government is obviously aware of this, and has certainly taken various actions trying to bridge the gap between the Government and the people at bottom levels. A journalist familiar with the colony has observed: "Following the outbreak of violence of 1967, Hong Kong officialdom ... became very responsive to press criticism. In this post-crisis period social services and the complicated problems of effective liaison between the rulers and ruled received more money and attention than before the disorders."[50] The problematic gap between the elite and the masses is not unique to Hong Kong; it is a very common problem among new nations. Edward Shils is probably the scholar who has given this problem most attention.[51] For Shils, the political integration of the new state depends primarily on the closing of the elite-mass gap, and he suggests that the gap be bridged by the dispersion of initiative. The solution suggested by Shils is, in short, political democracy.[52] In fact, in late 1966 the Working Party on Local Administration appointed by the Governor took a view similiar to Shils', by suggesting the creation of a strong Hong Kong Municipal Council. It in effect proposed a political democratic solution. However, the proposal was not being implemented by that time; instead, a City District Officer Scheme was instituted in April 1968 as a "stop gap" mechanism in lieu of local government.[53] Again, the City District Officer Scheme cannot be understood otherwise but as a mechanism for administrative absorption of politics at the grass-root level.

IV. The City District Officer Scheme: Its Structure and Functions

The Government's creation of the CDO Scheme is with an explicit purpose to stop the information gap between the Government and the people, or in our terms, to achieve the elite-mass integration. The Government seems to be aware of the fact that Hong Kong today is not only an economic city but also a political city. Therefore, it needs a new art of governing; it needs, most of all, a political machinery to cope with the ever-increasing politicized life of the urban dwellers, especially at the local level. It is here that we see the CDO Scheme carries a heavy political spirit, however, the CDO is not an independent political entity but rather a separate-out bureaucratic arm of the Public Civil Service in performing the boundary role between the polity and society. At this juncture, it is worth to mention that the Government's diagnosis of the riots of 1966 and 1967 seems to have a belief that the basic problem lies not in the colonial system as such, but lies in the metropolitan Government structure which is too big to manage, and too complex and bureaucratized to be intelligent to the ordinary people. Therefore, what the CDO Scheme tries to accomplish is to decentralize and to debureaucratize the metropolitan Government. The Hong Kong metropolitan Government, then, is divided into ten City District units.[54]

In the following pages, we shall describe and analyze how the CDO Scheme responds to the problems of centralization and bureaucratization of the Hong Kong metropolitan Government, and above all how it responds to the problem of the elite-mass gap.

A. The Ideology, Goals and Structure of the CDO Scheme:

1. The Ideology and Goals of the CDO Scheme:

The CDO Scheme was launched with great fanfare and publicity in mid 1968, immediately after the climax of the 1967 riots. A government-sponsored intensive image-building campaign was successfully carried out to sell to the public that the CDO Scheme is something which is genuinely of and for the people. The ideology of CDO Scheme is a "service ideology": service for

the Government; service for the community; and service for the individuals, which are stated in the Directive to City District Officers as follows:[55]

Service For Government:

"By developing the widest possible contacts with associations and individuals in your district, you should aim to supplement with personal explanation Government's output of information through the mass communication media.... Through your familiarity with the district and with the problems and needs of the people, you will be in a special position to advise on public opinion and local needs."

Service For the Community:

"One of your most important task is to arouse the interest of residents in the affairs of their district, to focus their attention on community problems and to encourage them to contribute constructively to their solution."

Service For Individuals:

"An equally important aspect of your work will lie in helping individuals with their problems."

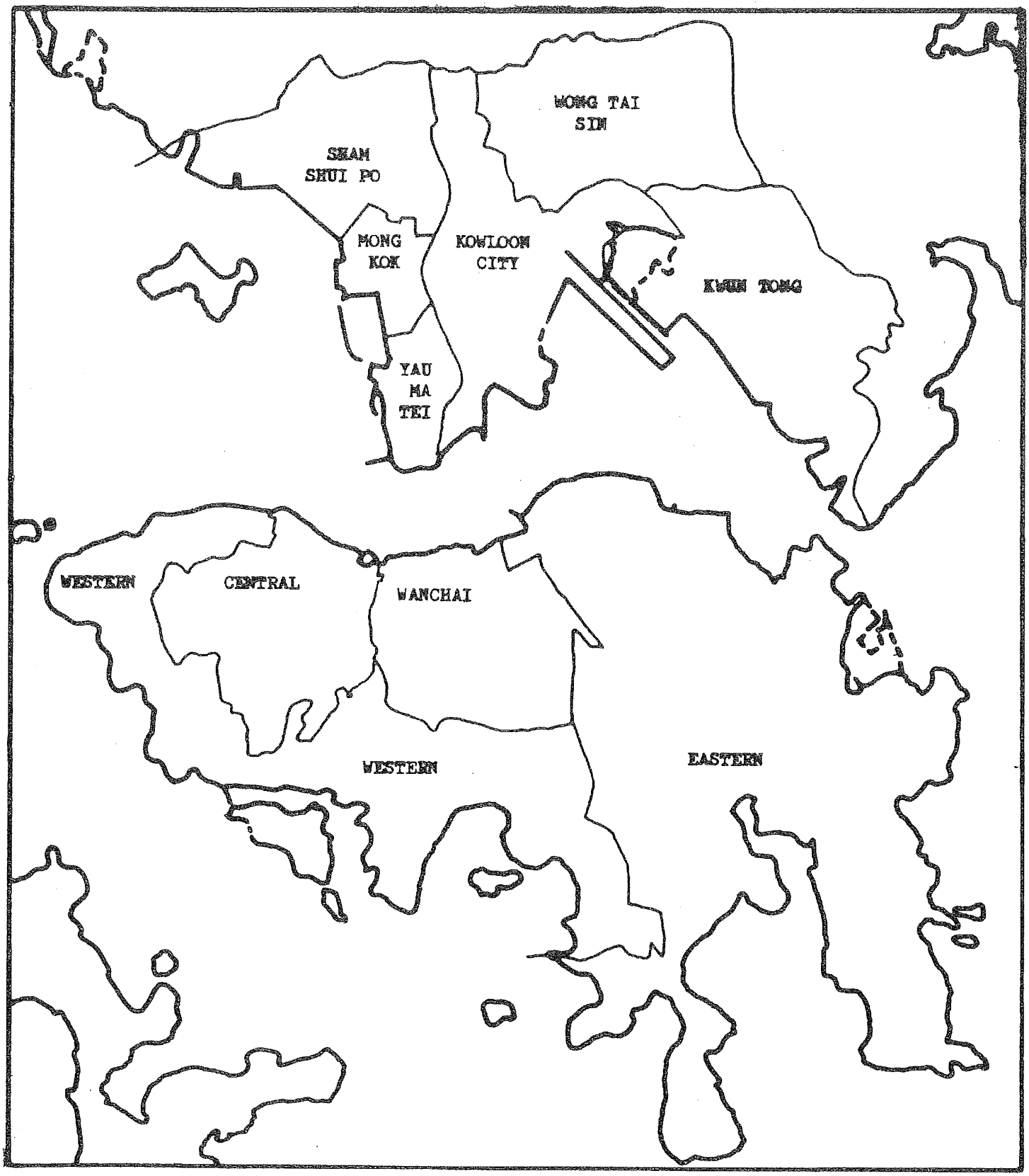
The explicit goals of the CDO Scheme are manysided: it is designed to be a political communication agent; to be a community organizer; to be a trouble-shooter for the people. To put it in more general terms, the CDO Scheme is aiming at counteracting the tendency of the metropolitan Government toward centralization and departmentalization. The establishment of the CDO Scheme is to make one person or one office which the residents could recognize as "the government" in their district. A succinct statement about the goal of the CDO Scheme can be found in the Directive to City District Officers:

"The purpose of the City District Officer Scheme is to provide the public with a local manifestation of the Government in your person."

2. The Structure of the CDO Scheme:

The CDO Scheme was approved by the Hong Kong Government in early 1968. It was decided that a total number of ten CDOs would be established in the whole metropolitan area. By the end of the same year five CDOs were established: Eastern, Western, Wanchai, Mong Kok, and Yau Ma Tei. The other five were subsequently opened by the end of 1969; they were Central, Kwuntong, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon City, and Wong Tai Sin. (See the District Map)

CITY DISTRICT OFFICE BOUNDARY



The CDO Scheme is under the general supervision of the Secretariat for Home Affairs. Up to 28th February, 1969 this Department was known as the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, the traditional function of which was to advice on all matters pertaining especially to the Chinese population, and generally to keep the Government in touch with Chinese opinion. Thus, it is logical to have this Department responsible for running the CDO Scheme, which is supposed to be the bridge between the Government and the people. Directly under the Secretary for Home Affairs are two deputies. One is in charge of the traditional duties of the former Secretariat for Chinese Affairs: newspaper registration, trust fund, liquor licensing, tenancy matters, etc. The other is responsible for the CDO Scheme. Under him are two City District Commissioners, one being responsible for the four CDOs on Hong Kong Island, and the other for the six CDOs in Kowloon.

The organization of the ten CDOs are the same. They are simple and less bureaucratic than any other Government organizations. The City District Officer is the head of the office. Under him are two sections: Internal and External, each headed by an Assistant City District Officer. The Internal Section deals mainly with administrative matters, and the External Section with field or "liaison" duties. The number of other staff varies with individual offices. There are usually five to eight Liaison Officers assigned to each office. One is invariably assigned to the Public Enquiry Counter, and a greater part of the rest to the External Section. There are two to four Liaison Assistants in each office to assist the LOs.

The CDO would be an Administrative Officer, while the ACDOs and LOs would be Executive Officers, and officers seconded from other departments. The idea of employing Administrative and Executive Officers for the CDOs is that it is not intended to create a special group of officers outside of or within the bureaucratic structure, rather it is "to aim in the long term to have officers in many Departments who have had some experience of CDO work". [56]

B. The CDO at Work in Kwun Tong Community

Now, we are going to examine how the CDO Scheme has actually performed at the district level: how the idea of the CDO Scheme has been transformed into action. We have selected Kwun Tong District for our study. Kwun Tong District, one of the ten City Districts of metropolitan Hong Kong, is one of the newest and most rapidly developed urban communities in Hong Kong.

In the following pages we will present an analytical and empirical account of CDO of Kwun Tong from the political and administrative perspectives. It is our view that the CDO of Kwun Tong is a multifunctional political structure as well as a personalized field administration.

1. CDO as a Multifunctional Political Structure:

CDO is not an ordinary functionally-specific administrative organization, rather, it is a multifunctional political structure. What are the functions of CDO at Kwun Tong District? Before answering this question it is advisable to take a look at what the CDO are actually doing in Kwun Tong. Hereunder were Kwun Tong CDO's activities for the three-month period: June, July and August of 1971.

Two instances involving town planning in which the office gave information and comments on the District's development;
Two instances involving provision of transport for residents in remote areas;
Three instances involving clearance of huts and hawkers;
One instance in which the office, with the help of young volunteers and Government organizations, built a playground for children;
One instance involving relief of typhoon victims;
Two instances of festival celebrations;
Three instances in which the office initiated or actively participated in youth recreational activities;
Four other instances in which the CDO assisted Kaifong and other voluntary associations to organize activities for youth and children;
Administration of the Fat Choy Special Aid Fund;
Two District Monthly Meetings;
Handling 256 "Individual and Family Cases" or cases of complaints, disputes, and requests for assistance;
Answering 13,578 enquiries at the Public Enquiry Counter;
Administering 952 statutory declarations.

The above-listed activities of CDO should give us a fairly clear picture how functionally-diffuse it is. It involves just about everything occurring to any local community; its functions range from political to very mundane affairs. Analytically we might classify CDO's political functions in more or less Almondian fashion as follows:

(i) Political Communication -- Intelligence Inputs:

As a boundary role between the polity and society, one of CDO's major functions is to facilitate the communication between the governors and the governed. One of the communication tasks of the CDO is to input intelligence about "public opinion" to the decision-makers in the government. The CDO is required to produce a report entitled "The Anatomy" of his District within six months of his appointment. In the "Anatomy" thorough information about the peculiarities of the social and economic structure of the district as well as the personalities is expected to be included.[57] The CDO is often asked by various Departments to give comments on and recommendations to intended actions, such as the Development Town Plan of Public Works Department. It is also often asked by other Government organizations to gather information on social needs for decision-making, for example, the CDO has conducted a "survey" on the needs of the ferry service on behalf of the UMELCO (Unofficial Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils).

The methods used to gather intelligence, besides "survey" conducting, are District Monthly Meeting, Study Group and "Town Talk".

District Monthly Meeting: CDO holds Monthly Meeting regularly which involves a fairly stable group of local leaders; leaders of Kaifong Associations, Multi-storey Building Associations (MSB), District Associations, business and industrial sector, etc.; the representatives of field agencies of Government Departments are also present. It is the primary mechanism of the CDO to collect opinions of local leaders on any issue concerning the Government and the public. From the minutes of the meetings we find that members present voice their opinion

on the procedure of reporting crime to the police, on the problem of improvement of recreational facilities in the district, etc. The idea of involving local leaders is in line with the philosophy of what was called "government by discussion". CDO is designed to extend the Government's consultation circle at the centre to a much wider circle at the peripheral and district level. Moreover, it seems to us that the Monthly Meeting has been used as a "formal cooptation mechanism", to gain the receptivity of Government policies by primarily the local leaders, thus legitimizing the CDO as the "Government in the District".

Study Group: The Study Group is another mechanism often used by the CDO to collect the people's opinion on specific topics. The Study Group is sort of an ad hoc nature. The people invited to discuss in the Study Group varies from one to another, depending on the nature of the topics discussed. The discussants include industrialists, school principals, hawkers, shop owners, taxi-drivers, factory workers, students and others. Sometimes the subjects discussed might include not only matters of specific nature but also matters of common concern as traffic problems, corruption, petty crimes, smoke from restaurants, clearance of refuse, Chinese as an official language, etc.

Town Talk: This mechanism is not officially stated in the CDO Scheme, yet, it is believed to be one of the most important channels to gather public opinion by CDO. It is hardly doubtful that the Monthly Meeting or the Study Group are in practice, if not in theory, geared primarily to reach local leaders rather than the ordinary men for consultation, thus reflecting more the upper-and-middle class orientations. The Town Talk is in a sense more orientated toward "men in the street". The CDO has no specific instruction on the identity or number of people to consult. As one respondent reported, comments were noted down from casual conversation with whomsoever they happened to talk to, on official or private terms. They might talk to a passenger in the bus or at a ferry. "Some"; "a few" or "several" would be the nearest descriptions to indicate the number of people contacted by each CDO officer. It emphasizes not the quantitative but the qualitative aspect of the opinion expressed

by the people. One high ranking CDO officer outside of Kwun Tong once said to us that the CDO was not so much interested in the systematic and quantitative opinion research as qualitatively what the "public" was thinking. The key word is the "people"; several officers interviewed repeatedly and separately asserted that the present "trend" was towards contacting the "men-in-the-street".

(ii) Interest Articulation and Aggregation:

The CDOs are public officers. They are, however, supposed to be political officers in the sense that they should articulate and aggregate the social needs of their own district. The CDO articulates and aggregates the demands made known to them through Monthly Meeting, Study Group and Town Talk by people from different walks of life. Besides, it also gives attention to the demands channelled through newspapers, and outside "requests". Moreover, interests are articulated and aggregated by CDO's self-initiative, based upon its own knowledge of the needs and attitudes of the residents of the community.

The interests articulated and aggregated by the CDO are both minor in nature and all-embracing. According to our findings in the period under analysis, the CDO made comments on multi-storey building car parks, cooked food stalls, hawker bazaars, a mini-bus station, a refuse collection center, and a clinic with regard to the Kowloon Bay Development Plan. These comments, often in explicit form of demands, are not known, however, to what extent have been taken care of by other Departments concerned. The CDO's interest articulation and aggregation are limited in the sense that it has only recommendation function.

It is the view of some critics that because the CDO is lacking executive power, therefore it is "useless". However, the CDO, though lacking executive power, if he feels strongly about some legitimate demands, can apply pressure on other Government Departments, and if necessary, can push the case up to higher levels. No Government Department, if rightly pressed by the CDO, can afford to ignore the demands without giving reasonable answers.

(iii) Grievance Redressing:

It has been expressedly denied by the Chairman of the Urban Council that CDOs are ombudsmen.[58] The CDO is certainly not an ombudsman in the original Scandinavian sense. One common attribute of the Scandinavian ombudsman system is its independence as an instrumental officer of the legislature.[59] The CDO is not. However, the public image of the CDO as an ombudsman is prevailing, and it is, furthermore, clearly stated in the Report of CDO Scheme that:[60]

> They are there to receive complaints, representations and personal problems arising from any Government activity. The fact that they have no statutory powers and no authority over technical departments means they can be given a latitude of influence and interest much wider than any ombudsman. It is thought that City District Officers can assist those suffering from a sense of grievance to present their cases coherently and, when necessary, to act as their advocate.

The CDO's grievance redressing activities can be classified into two major types: redressing of grievance for groups and that for the individuals. The first type arises out of events affecting a large number of people, such as clearance operation. This type of grievance redressing is relatively few; in the quarter under review, there were only two instances: one is Shun Lee Chuen Clearance in which villagers whose huts were due to be demolished demanded compensation from Government through the CDO; the other was the Typhoon Rose case in which the victims of Sam Ka Chuen demanded a reassessment of their suitability whose conditions had earlier been surveyed by the Resettlement Department but was not accepted by some victims. The individual cases were very large in number; in the same period it totalled 256. Of these, family disputes accounted for 152, housing 37, and traffic accidents and compensation 24. In all cases it was the clients who took their complaints to the CDO for assistance.

In the two group cases, the CDO referred to authoritative Departments for reconsideration, but were not favourably received because the Departments concerned thought their demands were not in compliance with Government policies. In this respect,

the CDO could do very little: but it did "explain" the Government policies to them in a more personal way. As for the individual cases, 204 out of 256 cases received were recorded to have been settled, although there is no detailed information available on how the cases were handled. In handling individual cases, the CDO acted as middleman between parties in disputes. When individual grievance arised from Government decision, the CDO could not reverse the original decision, but it had the "power" to bring the case to authoritative Departments for a second look. And the Departments concerned were supposed to inform the CDO of the outcome of such appeals and complaints. True, what the CDO could do often was "talking things over", and "giving advice". What they did was primarily to redress small grievances, to give the complainant a "fair hearing", a "human-to-human talk".

(iv) Political Communication -- Information Outputs:

The CDO has a special set-up called Public Enquiry Service Counter which is manned typically by an Executive Officer, a clerk and clerical assistants. The PES set-up is designed to get people familiarized with the Government bureaucracy. The Hong Kong metropolitan Government, like other big city governments, has become more and more technical, complicated and fragmented, the ordinary people are hardly intelligible enough to know about the intricacy of governmental operation. There exists unquestionably a kind of "information gap" between the Government and the people, which had been considered attributable to the riots of 1966 and 1967. The PES is apparently a useful mechanism to bridge this "information gap", and this is evinced in the enormous use by the people. The number of enquiries received per month by the CDO's PES counter has increased from 991 in September 1970 to 5,472 in April 1971. The enquiries may be simple or detailed; they cover a wide range of information concerning personal documents, land and housing, employment, taxes, duties and fees, family welfare, education, traffic, medical, and other miscellaneous things. It seems to us the PES counter is not merely some sort of neighbourhood advisory set-up; the counter staff are actually the Government's front line public relation men.

(v) Political Socialization and Recruitment:

Another important political function of the CDO may be called political socialization and recruitment. By political socialization it is meant the process by which the Government attitudes and values are inculcated into the individuals for the purpose of perpetuating or changing the political culture. The term political recruitment is used to refer to the institutional mechanism by which the individuals are brought into specific roles in the political system.

The CDO, in this regard, provides a framework for participation by "responsible" local sectors. Most of the CDO's efforts are geared to structuring the channels of participation for two major categories of people, the youth and the "local leaders". Different institutional mechanisms have been created to co-opt and socialize them in CDO-sponsored community activities. The Monthly Meeting is the most formal one. During the three months under analysis, other mechanisms and activities relating to socialization and recruitment were as follows:

1. Construction of a playground and jetty at Kowloon Bay: in this project student volunteers were mobilized by the CDO, with financial assistance from Lion's Club, the Resettlement Department and the Army.

2. Kwuntong Sports Association: It was initiated by the CDO and formed in June 1970 with the overt aim of promoting sports activities. The Association Committee is composed of 27 persons including prominent people from Kaifong, MSBs, sports clubs, schools and business firms. Posts of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and the Honorary Secretary are held by CDO staff "in their own personal capacity".

3. District Youth Recreation Coordinating Committee: The DYRCC is an ad hoc committee formed each year in each of the ten City Districts to coordinate and stimulate the organization of youth recreational activities. The committee is composed of CDO, the majority of the district's voluntary associations, schools and other Government Departments. The City District Officer is the Honorary Adviser to the Committee.

4. Hong Kong Festival Committee: The CDO is the Chairman to and initiator of the Committee formed by the "local leaders" of various voluntary associations.

5. Recreational Activities: The CDO helped two Kaifong Associations and the Kwun Tong Lion's Club to organize a leadership training course, a "swim-in-party", and a free film show for young people.

All these activities were apolitical in terms of their manifest functions; they were primarily recreational in nature. However, these activities were not sheer structuring of leisure time for the local leaders and the youth; it is aimed to channel the participation in a "right" way, to develop community-oriented civic consciousness, to transform the young people into "good citizens" and future community leaders, and, all in all, to create a political culture which is supportive of the political structure of Hong Kong, thus, contributing to the stability and maintenance of the prevailing political system.

2. CDO as a Personalized Field Administration

The CDO Scheme seems to us is not only a multi-functional political structure but also a special form of field administration. Administratively, two features of the CDO Scheme can be noted; one is that it is an unintegrated system of field administration in the city, the other is its personalization of bureaucracy. Further elaboration of these two features is given in the following pages.

(i) CDO as an Unintegrated System of City Field Administration

In the words of the author of the CDO Scheme, "It is not thought that such a scheme has been attempted in any modern city".[61] Is this claim justifiable? True enough, we know that the District Officer Scheme which in many ways is similiar to the CDO Scheme is an old political-administrative mechanism used in India, Burma, Nigeria, and the New Territories of Hong Kong.[62] From a comparative political-administrative perspective, the CDO can be viewed as a form of field administration. It is a form of field administration which involves minimum decentralization: The City District Officer has neither official control over the Government housekeeping functions, nor official responsibility for the various decisions made by other Departments in his district; he has no executive power. The distinct character the City District Officer has is that he is the key political agent in the district; he coordinates Government

actions in case of emergency and natural disaster.[63] He is the person who takes an unified overview of the Government operation in the whole community. In the statement of the Report on the CDO by the Secretary for Home Affairs, we read:[64]

> The problem that the City District Officer Scheme intended to tackle are likely to arise in any urban administration where specialization and economy may led to the fragmentation of the impact of Government activities at a local level. The aim is to superimpose on the functionally orientated executive department a geographically based advisory and co-ordinating organization in order to strengthen the ability of the Government to give eneryone a fair hearing and a fair share of the services which the community can afford.

In many significant aspects the CDO Scheme resembles the unintegrated Prefectoral system of Italy.[65] The major difference between the CDO Scheme of Hong Kong and the Italian Prefectoral system lies in the fact that the CDO Scheme is a form of field administration in the city. We might well say that the CDO Scheme is a city version of Italian-type unintegrated system of field administration. And precisely because the CDO Scheme is used in the context of city, and not in the context of national society, we feel that claim of novelty by the author is not unjustified.

(ii) CDO as a Personalized Bureaucracy

The activities of the CDO, as discussed above, are so diverse that it is difficult, as some critics point out, to understand the precise nature of its function. However, the major objectiwe is rather clear: "it is to make the Government more intelligible and more human and to enable the Government to have a better understanding of the wishes and aspirations of ordinary people".[66] The humanization of bureaucratic Government is undoubtedly the goal what the CDO has tried hard to achieve. As a matter of fact, the CDO's grievance redressing function, Public Enquiry Service operation are, among others, concrete ways in fusing the human touch into the organization. One thing merits to note is that the CDO structure, as described in the foregoing pages, is considerably simple and less bureaucratic. Moreover, the City District Officer is not a specialized bureaucrat; he is, like the Conservation Officer whom Peter Worsley describes, a "multiplex bureaucrat" at local level.[67]

As an amateur, the City District Officer is a generalist who presents himself to the public as a total personality; in other words, he personifies the Hong Kong Government in his district. It is well known phenomena that the complex and often technical character of urban problems had led inexorably to the multiplication and bureaucratization of government functions.[68] The ever-increasingly "bureaucratized" government has become more and more remote and alienated from the people and there is a growing cry for the humanization of government administration. The design of the CDO Scheme is obviously aiming at counteracting the trend towards bureaucratization, as is clearly reflected in the words of the author of the Scheme: [69]

> We have certainly started this scheme at a time when problems of communication and of the humanization of bureaucratic government are thrusting themselves before the reluctant public eye in many of the world's great cities.

C. An Evaluation of the CDO Scheme

We will not attempt here, an exhaustive analysis of the performance of the CDO in Kwun Tong as such, simply because lack of sufficient empirical data prohibits us from doing so. After all, the CDO Scheme is still very young, it would be too early and premature for us to give it a definitive assessment. However, based on a certain amount of empirical and impressionistic data we may venture a few general comments on its actual performance.

The CDO of Kwun Tong, under a yound, dynamic and developmental-minded leadership* has played a fairly successful boundary role between the Government and the society: as a multi-functional political structure, it has by and large provided institutional channels for political inputs and outputs. The most

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* Mr. Jack So, a graduate of Hong Kong University, majoring in economics and statistics took up the position two-and-a-half years ago. During our research period, Mr. So was open-minded enough to allow us to look into documents, except those classified as very confidential, and to talk with his staff collectively as well as individually. He is sympathetic toward and enthusiastic about social science research, and above all, he respects the independent role of researchers and has a good taste for objective assessment.

effective function of the CDO, it seems to us, is its political communication, especially the "information output" from the Government to people. The Public Enquiry Service, judging by its enormous volume of information transactions, has undoubtedly performed a vital role in transmiting and spreading knowledge of the aims and purposes of Government to the people at large; it has definitely helped to make the Government more intelligible and relevant to the people. The "information gap" or the bureaucratic wall, to use Professor William Robson's concept, between the governors and the governed has been substantially removed.[70] In sofar as the "intelligence inputs" is concerned, thr CDO, through Monthly Meeting, Study Group, Town Talk, and occasional survey, has not been as successful in its "information input" as in "information output". Despite its effort to reach people in the street, it has thus far not been very successful in penetrating the masses in a structured way. However, in large measure, the CDO has been fairly successful in securing the views and attitudes of local leaders towards Government's possible policies and actions before they are put into effect. In this respect, the CDO acts as a feedback mechanism for the Government to detect the acceptability of their actions; or as a political barometer for the Government to detect early symptoms of any public dissatisfaction. It is in this political communication function that the CDO has been referred to as the "Eyes and Ears" of the Government. Regarding the interest articulation and aggregation function of the CDO, it is often unrecognized or under-estimated. It is interesting to note that according to the Kaifong leaders of Kwun Tong, "Represent people's interest to Government" was ranked as the last among seven functions of the CDO.[71]

However, the CDOs' self-image is very different; they have a strong sense of mission that they are not only the "Eyes and Ears of the Government" but also the "Tongues of the people". Moreover, the CDO officers as well as many others outside of the CDO, are of the opinion that since Kwun Tong is a newly developed community, there is no "general leader" as such who can represent the whole community; and many leaders are self-imposed and most of them speak only for the interest of special sections while the general interest of the community is nobody's concern, especially the interest of those who are politically weak. Justifiable or not,

quite a few officers of the CDO sincerely think that the CDO is the only institution which fights for the interest of the general public. It is here we have found tension developed between the CDO and other local organizations, especially the Kaifongs, who claim their foremost function is to "represent people's interest to Government". Although the majority of Kaifong leaders said the relationship between Kaifong and the CDO is "complementary", yet, most of them also said the importance of Kaifong has been decreased since the CDO's establishment.[72]

Whatever the relationship between the CDO and other local organizations is, the CDO is involving the local leaders in consultation at Monthly Meeting and other mechanisms. But that is as far as the CDO is willing to go. The CDO is not ready to accept local leaders' view at their face value, and more often than not views of local leaders tend to fade into faint echoes. Probably because of this, quite a few local leaders were dismayed and frustrated, and more than one of them even went as far as to say: "The CDO was a waste of money .... The Monthly Meetings were 'a child's game'". At this juncture it is worthwhile to mention that local leaders and non-leaders alike often fail to appreciate the fact that the CDO has only recommendation power and that its recommendations need not by definition be accepted by other Government agencies or superiors. Although the CDOs can apply pressure on other Government agencies for its recommendations, and often they do; notwithstanding, there is genuine structural weakness of the CDO: a City District Officer normally spends only two to three years in the post, with the rest of his career spent in other Government Departments. He cannot afford to alienate himself from his home base; he cannot push too far or too hard, because he is after all a bureaucrat within the same bureaucratic structure. Despite this, in a community like Kwun Tong where, to quote an officer's words, there is no organized interest group as such, the CDO still provides by far the most effective institutional channel for interest articulation and aggregation. The grievance redressing function of the CDO is becoming gradually appreciated by the community. This function was the Kaifong's monopoly in the past, and is now gradually taken over by the CDO. As indicated above, the kind of grievance redressing the CDO did, was

often no more than just giving the complainant, a "human-to-human talk". Some critics point out that the CDO's power in this respect is limited in that it cannot reverse the original decision, in case the individual grievance arises from Government decision. However, in spite of the limited power the CDO has, it usually enables the individual to have "fair hearing" in a very personal way. The CDO is no dragon-slayer; he cannot afford to be. The significance of the "human touch" in the modern imperial bureaucracy cannot be underestimated.[73] True, the CDO's grievance redressing function, as any Ombudsman system, is no substitute for good administration itself. True also, grievance at local government level may be trivial. But, the small issues are of substantial importance to complaining citizens. As Agnus and Kaplan write: "They arise more frequently, and touch him closely. His attitude to government in general is largely shaped by his experience with local government".[74] We are inclined to believe that this function of the CDO has rendered good service for the poor and inarticulate ordinary man. As Wallace Mendelson has said: "Every culture provides at least reasonably well for those at the top of its social order. The crucial test is how it treats those at the bottom."[75] In no insignificant degree this function of the CDO has served as a "safety valve" for the release of people's imaginary or real grievances.

Talking about the last political function of the CDO: political socialization and recruitment, we must bear in mind that to generate a favourable and supportive attitude and behavior towards the Government was one of the basic reasons for the inception of the CDO Scheme. The CDO, as the political agent at the district level, is not aiming at political mobilization of the populace; in fact it is trying to depoliticize the political process. In short, the CDO Scheme is, to absorb politics with administrative methods at the local level. In this connection, we are not in a good position to say with certainty how successful it is. What we can say with some certainty is that the CDO has been fairly successful in absorbing and recruiting the most active political strata;

local leaders and youth by working with and through them in undertaking community-wide cultural and recreational activities. Through this kind of orderly participation, community consciousness or local identification has often been generated, a great deal of energy has been absorbed and channelled into non-political activities, and above all, social solidarity has been enhanced.

Now, let us talk briefly about the actual performance of the CDO as a personalized field administration. In the first place, the CDO can be viewed as an unintegrated system of city field administration. On the one hand, the City District Officer is the extended arm of the Department of the Secretariat for Home Affairs, on the other hand, he is the only person who has an unified overview of the Government in the whole district. The CDO touches on the problem of area and administration; it is "the fundamental problem of reconciling the parts and the whole, of introducing coherance into an age of specialization, of keeping in view the individual citizen on whom converge the multiple activities of government".[76] It seems to us that the CDO Scheme has squarely confronted the problem by diversifying the metropolitan Government into ten separate yet unified "little" governments. In the last analysis, it is an antithesis to the fragmented departmentocracy. The great majority of the local leaders have told us that the establishment of the CDO in Kwun Tong has made the Government more accessible to them, and compared to other Government Departments, the CDO has been by far the most accessible one. In fact, quite a few people have asked the CDO to convey their requests to other Government Departments.[77] Moreover, the CDO has been recognized, and to some extent, accepted by most of the local leaders and also by other Government officers, willy and nilly, as the representative institution of the Government in the community. In sofar as its coordinating role among Government Departments is concerned, the CDO takes it very seriously, and considers it one of his basic functions.[78] There is not enough data to permit us to say how well the coordinating function has been performed, but in situations of crisis and emergency, such as the landslide disaster of June 1972, the CDO had undisputably assumed a leading role in coordinating various Government agencies and mobilizing the local

organizations. The people in the CDO repeatedly told us that the lack of executive power is not an organizational liability, but an asset, because this frees them from involvment in detailed implementation, a function for which it does not have administrative capacity. Moreover, this will make them more impartial, thus strengtheningthem in handling frictions arising from coordinating collective operations among several Government Departments.

Secondly, the CDO appears to us as a personalized bureaucracy. And this is worth special attention. In Kwun Tong the City District Officer is a generalist; he represents the Government in person. As far as we understand, any citizen, local leader or ordinary person, if he wants to see the City District Officer, or other people in his Office, with any good reason, will have a chance to have a face-to-face talk with him. In fact, we found the most frequent channels used by the people in contacting the CDO concerning district affairs were telephone calls and personal visits, and the citizens were almost without exception courteously received by the City District Officer and his staff.[79] The CDO has conveyed an image to the public that the Government is not an abstract City Hall filled with impersonal faces; instead, the Government is composed of concrete human beings who can be contacted in their neighbourhood. We are of the belief that in a large metropolis like Hong Kong, the Government should not only present itself to the people in an intelligible way but that the bureaucracy should also be humanized. This complex urban community needs a Weberian bureaucracy, but the people need a non-Weberian one. The CDO Scheme seems to be moving to a right direction.

In conclusion, the evaluation of the CDO we have presented above is far from complete and certainly not free from bias. Our basically positive attitude towards the CDO of Kwun Tong might result less from our appreciation of the type of work done by them but rather from our interest in the spirit of the CDO Scheme as a political administrative mechanism designed to cope with the common problems of urban polity in big cities. However, how successful the CDO Scheme is as an administrative absorptive mechanism of politics at the local level will be discussed further in the conclusion of this paper.

V. Conclusion

In this paper we have pointed out that Hong Kong as a colonial city may share some features with other cities in the Third World, which also have been baptized by rapid urbanization. But, Hong Kong is unique in one basic sense that other cities in Asia or in other developing areas, with the exception of Singapore, part of the total national system, while Hong Kong is a totality in itself: Hong Kong is a city-state. The focus of this paper is on the political side of city life. We have argued that political life is not an epiphenomenon; it is not just the reflection of socio-economic structure. Politics has a life of its own, and politics should be treated as both a dependent and an independent variable, this is especially necessary in order to understand the cities in the so-called Third World. In the case of Hong Kong, we found that it's particular brand of politics shapes and is also shaped by the socio-economic structure of the society.

We have attempted to provide a conceptual framework to describe and analyze the nature of the political system of Hong Kong. Basically we are of the opinion that Hong Kong's political stability in the last hundred years could be accounted for primarily by the successful process of the administrative absorption politics. The administrative absorption of politics is a process through which the British governing elites coopt or assimilate the non-British socio-economic elites into the political-administrative decision-making bodies, thus, attaining an elite integration on the one hand and a legitimation of political authority on the other. We have witnessed a system of synarchy, though lopsided, or close to what Professor Endacott called "government by discussion" operated in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is not a democracy, but the Government does have a special brand of politics which is concerned with the opinion of the governed. However, the synarchy or "government by discussion" is only open to a rather small sector of the population: men of wealth, established or new. The ingenuity of the British governing elites is in their sophisticated response in timely enlarging and modifying the structure of ruling bodies by co-opting or assimilating emerging non-British socio-economic elites

into "we" groups at critical periods. Consequently, any strong counter-elite groups are prevented from being developed in the first place. In short, Hong Kong has been governed by an elite consensus in the last century or so. However, it is our contention that elite consensus or integration could constitute a sufficient condition for legitimacy of government only in a society in which the political stratum is rather small; but once a society is baptized by rapid urbanization, or more specifically, social mobilization, whereby the apolitical strata transform into politically relevant strata, then,it is not elite consensus or integration, but elite-mass consensus or integration which becomes necessary for a stable political system. Hong Kong has in the last two decades been undergone that exact process of social mobilization. Hong Kong today is no longer just an economic city but also a political city; more people, especially the young literates, demand ever-increasing participation in the political decision-making process. The riots of 1966 and 1967 exemplify the gap between the governing bodies and the masses. The basic problem of legitimacy in Hong Kong today lies not in elite disconsensus but in the elite-mass gap.

Hong Kong Government's response to the political crises of 1966 and 1967 was not more democracy, but the creation of the City District Officer Scheme, again, a special brand of politics. The explicit goal in the establishment of the CDO Scheme is to bridge the so-called "information gap" between the Government and the people, or to achieve an elite-mass consensus or integration. But, it seems to us that the CDO Scheme could be best understood as an extension of administrative absorption of politics at the local level. As discussed above, the CDO Scheme is in some measure a plausible administrative-political mechanism response to the problems facing the big cities: centralization and bureaucratization. The CDO in theory and to some extent in actuality has removed the bureaucratic wall between the Government and the people; has made the Government more intelligible to the governed; has humanized the impersonal bureaucracy and has mitigated the political alienation of the politically weak. It is no exaggeration to say that the CDO has performed a significant role in administratively

absorbing community politics through various mechanisms, such as Monthly Meeting, Study Group, and other formal or informal structures. One thing certain is that the CDO in Kwun Tong has tried very hard to bring the "government by discussion" to the district level. In a community like Kwun Tong where no strong voluntary associations are fully developed, the CDO does play a vital boundary role linking together the polity and the society.

But, it should be emphatically noted that despite the usefulness of the CDO Scheme at the district, especially as a communication facilitator, the CDO Scheme has its limited function as an administrative absorber of community politics, and this will become more evident when community life becomes progressively politicalized in scale. Some fundamental features of urban life in Hong Kong seem to be working in the direction that despite the artificial administrative-political boundaries defined by the CDO Scheme; no important socio-economic-political issue is confined to any District, that is to say, all important public issues tend to be escalated to a level which could only be solved at the centre of the political system of Hong Kong. The CDO Scheme is good at handling personal problems but not public issues. Not only the image but the actuality of limited power of the CDO has seemingly led people in the community to believe that big and sensitive issues could not afford to leave to the CDO, instead, they feel the only effective way is to march to the centre of powers, ultimately, of course, the Governor House which is the symbol of authority of the city state. The best case at hand was the Jordan Valley Hawker issue in March 1972 in which the CDO of Kwun Tong was considered by Hawker protestors not important enough to speak to, and they approached the Re-settlement Department first, then, to the Colonial Secretariat, and then finally to the Governor House. And this seems to be the pattern of "politics of escalation" in Hong Kong.

The last point we would like to make is that the Government's diagnostic statement which sees Hong Kong's current problem between the Government and the people as an "information gap" is at best a half-truth, another half-truth might be due to

imcompatibility of goals or interests between the elite and the masses. Politics is not just who knows what and how, but also who gets what and how. The CDO Scheme is effective in bridging the information gap which result from misunderstanding or misperception of the goals or interests between the rulers and the ruled, but it is too much to be expected to reconciliate the conflict out of incompatibility of goals or interests between the governors and the governed, therefore, it cannot be that useful as an administrative absorber of community politics as such. All in all, the CDO Scheme can be no substitute for sound and responsive government itself, and it certainly is no panacea for urban politics.

Hong Kong today is facing a new challenge of ~~policy~~ politics which arises basically from rapid urbanization. The kinds of issues and problems of this city-state have become increasingly a political nature. How Hong Kong can maintain a viable political system for years to come poses a question of the first order to the students of the art or the science of governing. The century-old practice of administrative absorption of politics which has contributed to the stability of the city-state up to the present cannot be free from being subjected to change either in form or in substance, or in both.

NOTES

1. See T.G. McGee, The Southeast Asian City (London, 1967); and D.J. Dwyer, (ed), The City as a Centre of Change in Asia (Hong Kong: H.K.U. Press, 1972)

2. Gideon Sjoberg, The Preindustrial City: Past and Present (Glencoe, 1960).

3. Bert Hoselitz, "Urbanization and Economic Growth", in Dwyer (ed), op. cit., p.10.

4. Norton Ginsburg, "Planning the Future of the Asian City", Dwyer (ed), ibid., p.271.

5. W.S. Sayre and N.W. Polsby have rightly said, "Nowadays, politics enters not only into the consequences of urbanization but also into its causes as well." See their article, "American Political Science and the Study of Urbanization", in Philip Hauser and Leo F. Schnore (eds), The Study of Urbanization (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), p.145.

6. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Roles of Cities", in Economic Development and Cultural Change 3 (1954-55): 53-73.

7. McGee, op.cit., Chapters 3 and 4.

8. Philip Hauser, "Observations on the Urban-Folk and Urban-Rural Dichotomies as Forms of Western Ethnocentrism"; and Oscar Lewis, "Further Observations on the Folk-Urban Continuum and Urbanization with Special Reference to Mexico City", both in Hauser and Schnore (eds), op.cit., pp.492-517.

9. This has been most critically examined by Robert A. Nisbet in his Social Change and History (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), especially chapters 6 and 8.

10. See Herbert J. Gans, "Urbanism and Suburbanism as Ways of Life: A Re-evaluation of Definition", in S.F. Fava (ed), Urbanism in World Perspective: A Reader (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), pp.63-81.

11. Max Weber, General Economic History, (Glencoe: Free Press, 1950), pp.315-318.

12. Harold Laski, "Democracy" in Encyclopedia of the Social Science, (New York: Macmillian, 1937), quoted in S.M. Lipset, Political Man (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, 1963), p.34.

13. Ibid., pp.34-38.

14. Brigitte Berger, Societies in Change, (New York: Basic Books, 1971), p.160.

15. Karl Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development", American Political Science Review, 55 (September 1961), pp.493-514.

16. G.A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), p.2.

17. S.P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p.4.

18. Ibid., P.77.

19. Aprodicio A. Laquian, "The Asian City and the Political Process", in Dwyer, op.cit., pp.41-55.

20. John Rear, "One Brand of Politics", in Keith Hopkins (ed), Hong Kong: The Industrial Colony, (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.55.

21. G.B. Endacott, Government and People in Hong Kong: 1841-1962, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1964), p.229.

22. John K. Fairbank, "Synarchy Under the Treaties", in John K. Fairbank (ed), Chinese Thought and Institutions, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp.163-203.

23. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs at a teach-in organized by the Current Affairs Committee of the Students' Union of the University of Hong Kong on 5 April, 1969. See Rear, op.cit., p.56.

24. Endacott, op.cit., p.231.

25. Data compiled from Hong Kong Who's Who (1970-73), Joseph Walker (ed).

26. T.C. Cheng, "Chinese Unofficial Members of the Legislative and Executive Councils in Hong Kong up to 1941," in Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch, 1971: 7-30

27. Ibid.

28. Data compiled by Mr. Stephen Tang.

29. H.J. Lethbridge, "Hong Kong Under Japanese Occupation: Changes in Social Structure", in I.C. Jarvie and J. Agassi, (eds) Hong Kong: A Society in Transition, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 82-83.

30. Aline K. Wong, "Political Apathy and the Political System in Hong Kong", United College Journal, 8 (1970-71): 1-20.

31. Ambrose Y.C. King, "The Political Culture of Kwun Tong: A Chinese Community in Hong Kong", a research paper. Social Research Centre, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, June 1972; and J.S. Hoadley, "'Hong Kong is the Lifeboat': Notes on Political Culture and Socialization", Journal of Oriental Studies, 8(No.1, January 1970): 206-218.

32. J.S. Hoadley, "Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese: Restraint and Rationality", paper prepared for the First New Zealand International Conference on Chinese Studies, Hamilton, New Zealand, May 17-20, 1972.

33. Hong Kong: Report for the Year 1972, (Hong Kong: Government Press, 1973), p.209.

34. J.W. Felser, Area and Administration, (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1964).

35. G.A. Almond, "Introduction: A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics", in G.A. Almond and James Coleman (eds), The Politics of the Developing Areas, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp.3-64.

36. Hong Kong: Report for the Year 1972, p.209

37. I owe this idea to Robert Michels, see his Political Parties, (New York: Collier Book, 1962), pp.188-202.

38. David Podmore, "Room at the Top", Far Eastern Economic Review, 65 (No. 29, 1969): 180-182.

39. Data compiled from Hong Kong Who's Who (1970-1973), Joseph Walker (ed).

40. Ibid.

41. Hong Kong Hansard 1968, p.15, quoted in Rear, op.cit., p.94.

42. H.J. Lethbridge, "A Chinese Association in Hong Kong: The Tung Wah" in Contributions to Asian Studies, 1 (1971): 184-158

43. Since 1964, the Chinese "established rich" (old families) has decreased its weight in the Legislative Council, while the Chinese "new rich" (industrial elite) has increased its weight rapidly. The percentage distribution of the Chinese "established rich" and "new rich" in the composition of the Unofficials of the Legislative Council from 1964 to 1971 are as follows:
For the "established rich": 66% in 1964, 41% in 1965, 46% in 1966-67, 38.5% in 1968-69, and 30.8% in 1970-71;
For the "new rich": 18.5% in 1964, 25% in 1965, 23% in 1966-67, 38.5% in 1968-69, and 53.7% in 1970-71.
(Data compiled by Mr. Stephen Tang).

44. Deutsch, op. cit.

45. Report of the Working Party on Local Administration, (Hong Kong: Government Press, 1966), pp.11-12.

46. Kowloon Disturbances 1966 - Report of the Commission of Inquiry, (Hong Kong: Government Press, 1967), pp.110-111.

47. A good discussion on these two lines of thinking can be found in Arnold M. Rose, The Power Structure, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), especially chapter 6.

48. On one of our Kwun Tong surveys based on 1065 samples in 1971, we found that more than 72% of the head of households had no affiliation whatsoever with any association, and only less than 3% had affiliation with clan association, 4.4% with district associations, 1.2% with Kai-fong, 4% with labour unions, 6.6% with religious bodies. On the other hand, the familistic orientation of Chinese residents was still strong: near 70% of the family still carried ancestral worship. The extended family relations were still significant: 19% of our respondents said that "most of his close friends are relatives of his or her family", 18.7% said "about half of them", and nearly 50% said "some of them". Kwun Tong Life Quality Study, Social Research Centre, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1971.

49. Consult J.S. Hoadley, "Political Participation of Hong Kong Chinese: Restraint and Rationality", op. cit.

50. Loren Fessler, "Hong Kong Revisited", American Universities Fieldstaff Reports, V.16, No. 6 (1969), p.13, quoted in ibid.

51. Edward Shils, "Political Development in the New States", Comparative Studies in Society and History, 2 (No.3, April 1960): 265-292; and 2 (No. 4, July 1960): 397-411.

52. A good discussion of elite-mass gap can be found in Claude Ake, A Theory of Political Integration, (Homewood, Ill: The Dorsey Press, 1967).

53. Wong, op. cit.

54. The 10 City District Offices are located in the urban areas of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and New Kowloon. The New Territories is under the New Territories Administration where they currently have 5 District Offices.

55. The City District Officer Scheme, hereafter referred to as CDOS. Report by the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, Hong Kong Government, 24 January, 1969, pp.12, 18, 21.

56. CDOS, p.5.

57. CDOS, p.27.

58. Official Proceedings, The Urban Council, Vol. XII (5 March 1969): 473-4.

59. See D.C. Rowat (ed), The Ombudsman, 2nd edition. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p.xxiv; and W. Gelhorn, When American Complain, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp.9-10.

60. CDOS, p.3.

61. Ibid.

62. The District Officer Scheme is well discussed and illustrated by Brian Smith. See his Field Administration, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).

63. CDOS, p.29.

64. CDOS, p.3.

65. For the Italian Prefectoral System, see: R.C. Fried, The Italian Prefects, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963); Smith, op. cit., chapter 4; and James Heaphy, "Spatial Aspects of Development Administration: A Review and Proposal", CAG Occasional Paper, American Society for Public Administration, June-July, 1965.

66. CDOS, p.34.

67. Peter Worsley, "Bureaucracy and Decolonialization: Democracy From the Top", in Irving Horowitz (ed), New Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp.370-390.

68. Philip Hauser, "Urbanization: An Overview", in Hauser and Schnore, op. cit., p.28.

69. CDOS, p.38

70. William Robson, The Governors and the Governed (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964) pp.35-36.

71. According to eight Kaifong leaders' view, the seven functions of the CDO were ranked in order of importance as follows: secure public support for Government; explain Government's policy to public; coordinate district's Government agencies; collect information on district for Government; redress public grievance; render service to district residents; and represent people's interest to Government.

72. In the views of Kaifong leaders of other districts, the establishment of the CDO Scheme has not undermined the importance of Kaifong in spite of the fact that part of Kaifong's work has been replaced by the CDO. They believe that Kaifongs as grass-root organizations are the embodiment of public opinion, therefore, Kaifongs cannot be replaced by the CDO Scheme. See Special Interview Series on the CDO Scheme, No.6, The Kung Sheung Daily News, December 16, 1972.

73. Walter Gelhorn, Ombudsman and Others: Citizens' Protectors in Nine Countries (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967).

74. W.H. Agnus and Milton Kaplan, "The Ombudsman and Local Government," in S.V. Anderson (ed), Ombudsman For American Government? (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p.135.

75. Wallace Mendelson, Discrimination (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p.1.

76. Felser, op. cit., p.122.

77. This seems to be also true to other CDOs in other districts. At least the CDO officers of Mong Kok District speak of this fact with pride. See Special Interview Series on the CDO Scheme, No.5, The Kung Sheung Daily News, December 13, 1972.

78. According to the former City District Commissioner of Kowloon, Mr. James So Yiu-cho, the CDO's future role will be primarily of two kinds: the role of a coordinator and reconciliator among Government Departments, and the role of community organizer and promotor. See Special Interview Series on the CDO Scheme, No.2, The Kung Sheung Daily News, December 10, 1972.

79. This kind of good mannerism held by the officers of the Kwun Tong CDO seems to be shared commonly by officers in other CDO districts. See Special Interview Series on the CDO Scheme, No.7, The Kung Sheung Daily News, December 18, 1972.