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香港地理學會

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Contributions to the Hong Kong Geographer are welcome. Please send your manuscripts to the editors via the following address:

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NOTE:

Part I of the Hong Kong Geographer will report the activities of the HKGA and hopefully to inform members of other activities related to geography in Hong Kong sponsored by other institutions. Part II of the Hong Kong Geographer will include short feature articles for general readers. These features do not reflect the views of the Hong Kong Geographical Association. The contributors are solely responsible for their papers.



## PART I ACTIVITIES

1. A one day field course in Sai Kung Peninsula has been arranged jointly with the Education Department for members who are now teaching senior forms on 15 January, 1983, Saturday. 20 places are available and booking will be accepted on first come first basis. Interested member shall write to Dr. Chu, Geog. Dept., The Chinese University of Hong Kong or Mr. Chan Pui Kai, Geog. Dept., The Northcote Teachers Training College, Hong Kong.
2. On 20th November, 1982, Saturday, Dr. Sit agrees to lead a half-day field trip on "Hong Kong Industrial Landscape". Members who like to participate the field trip please meet at 9:30 a.m. at Tai Kok Tsui Ferry Pier. Notes and maps will be supplied.
3. On 19th February, 1983, the programme of the third Geography Day of the Hong Kong Geog. Association has tentatively been decided, including 4 public speeches: Dr. V. Sit "Hong Kong's Population Characteristics as reflected in the 1981 Census"; Dr. C.L. So on some aspects of physical geography of Hong Kong (topic to be decided); Dr. S.I. Hsu "Extreme climate in Hong Kong" and Dr. L. Cho on the energy problems of Hong Kong (topic to be decided). All these lectures will be hosted by the Geography Department of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Members and their friends are welcome.

## PART II FEATURES

### The Study of the Industrial Geography of Hong Kong

Dr. V.F.S. Sit  
University of Hong Kong

#### I. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the basic themes and statistics related to the industrial geography of Hong Kong. It aims to gauge the significance of Hong Kong's industry in the regional system in Asia and to outline the spatial and other characteristics of local manufacturing. The presentation is based mainly on tables and maps, with a few interpretative statements on the facts and figures so presented.

#### II. Hong Kong is an important industrial centre in Asia

Although Hong Kong is a small place in Asia, both in terms of population and territory, it is nevertheless not insignificant as a centre for manufacturing. Its industrial production is larger than Singapore, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (Table 1). If the per capita values of manufactured goods are compared, Hong Kong is more industrialised than other Asian countries except Singapore and Japan (Table 1).

#### III. Export Orientation

Hong Kong's manufacturing is orientated towards world markets. About 80% of the manufactured products of Hong Kong are exported. This is mainly because (a) Hong Kong lacks a large domestic market, (b) it lacks raw materials and fuel such that the final products have to be exported to pay for the imports of these items, (c) Hong Kong needs to earn foreign currency to pay for its imported food and other daily necessities for feeding and maintaining its population. So Hong Kong earns much of its living as a processing centre for international markets.

Table 2 shows the distribution of the markets of Hong



Table 1

Value of Manufacturing Production in Selected Asian Countries, 1979

Country	Million (US\$)	Per Capita (US\$)
Hong Kong	4,484	897
Indonesia	5,236	35
South Korea	20,295	534
Malaysia	8,282	637
Philippines	9,145	190
Singapore	2,324	1,162
Thailand	7,176	156
Taiwan	13,719	807
India	27,867	43
Bangladesh	1,140	13
Pakistan	3,743	48
Sri Lanka	578	39
China	105,651	109
Japan	463,452	3,995

Table 2

Hong Kong's Domestic Exports (f.o.b.) by Major Trading Partners/  
Commodity, 1978

Destination	HK\$ Million	%
United States	15,125	37.1
Germany, Federal Republic	4,426	10.9
Britain	3,871	9.5
Japan	1,856	4.6
Australia	1,494	3.7
Canada	1,271	3.1
Singapore	1,104	2.7
Netherlands	937	2.3
Switzerland & Liechtenstein	683	1.7
Nigeria	581	1.4
Others	9,364	23.0
	40,712	100.0

Source: Hong Kong Annual Report 1979, H.K. Government Printer, p. 254.

Kong manufactures. They are dominated by a few advanced countries, e.g. U.S.A., Germany and U.K.

#### IV. Light Manufacturing

Both the local manufacturing employment and the type of manufactured goods exported (Tables 3 and 4) can illustrate the fact that Hong Kong is a centre of light manufacturing. It produces light consumer goods such as garments, toys and electronics and watches. These items require raw materials that are light in weight. Their finished products are also light in weight. These qualities fit in with Hong Kong's supplying and marketing requirements. (Try to explain why?) Besides, these industries are labour-intensive. They therefore provide much opportunity for local employment and hence be able to make use the only major resource - labour.

#### V. Small Industry

Light manufacturing can often be handled by small specialized firms. Thus Hong Kong's another industrial characteristic is the predominance of small manufacturing establishments. As can be seen in Table 5, very small firms of 0-19 persons accounted for 70% of the number of industrial establishments. Small firms of less than 50 workers accounted for 92%. There were only 47 establishments with an employment size of 1,000 and more workers.

#### VI. Expensive Industrial Land

There were about 900 gross hectares of industrial land in 1981. Thus for each gross hectare of industrial land, there were about 1,000 workers. This shows that Hong Kong's factories require very little space. Or, in reverse, Hong Kong's industrial land is much more expensive than many other countries. Indeed, Hong Kong industries have adopted the space limitation by developing vertically. The majority of the local industries are housed in multi-storey industrial buildings. Each factory occupy a floor or less than a floor. This is another unique feature in our industrial landscape. Thus our major industrial

Table 3

Hong Kong's Manufacturing Establishments and Employments by Industry,  
December, 1978

Industry	No. of manuf. est.	I	No. of persons engaged	I
Food products, beverages and tobacco	1,209	2.9	20,765	2.5
Textiles	3,734	9.1	98,607	12.1
Wearing apparel	9,456	22.9	271,318	33.2
Leather and leather products	146	0.4	2,184	0.3
Footwear	444	1.1	5,106	0.6
Wood and wood products, including furniture	2,756	6.7	17,516	2.1
Paper and paper products	1,133	2.8	10,049	1.2
Printing, publishing and allied industries	2,292	5.5	23,936	2.9
Chemicals, chemical, petroleum and coal products	529	1.3	6,430	0.8
Rubber products	407	1.0	6,198	0.8
Plastic products	4,515	10.9	86,512	10.6
Non-metallic mineral products	359	0.9	4,579	0.6
Basic metal industries	344	0.8	4,439	0.5
Fabricated metal products	7,357	17.8	80,106	9.8
Machinery, except electrical	1,478	3.6	12,910	1.6
Electrical machinery, apparatus, appliances and supplies	1,576	3.8	97,962	12.0
Transport equipment	318	0.8	13,482	1.7
Professional and scientific equipment	662	1.6	26,786	3.3
Other manufacturing industries	2,525	6.1	27,798	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,240</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>816,683</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Employment and Earnings Statistics Section, Census & Statistics Department, Hong Kong. Manufacturing Establishments and Employment by Industry/Size/Location, December, 1978.

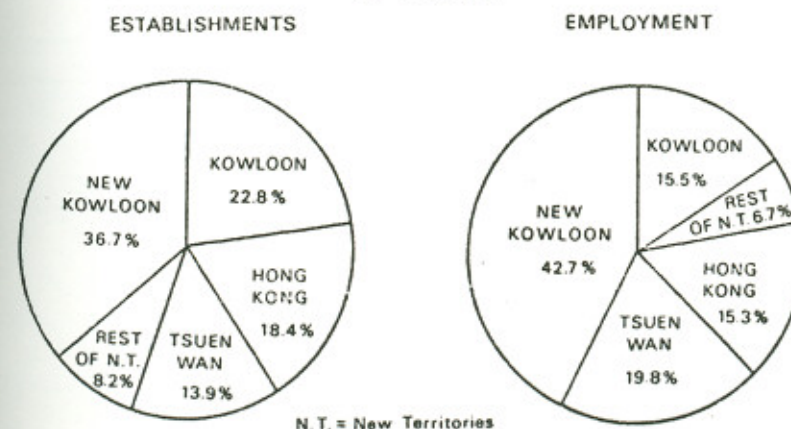
Table 4

## Major Items of Hong Kong's Export, 1978

Major Items	Value (HK\$ mil.)	% Share
Apparels & clothing accessories	15,709	38.6
Textiles	2,869	7.0
Electronics	6,446	15.8
Plastic Products (incl. Plastic toys)	4,326	10.6
Toys & games	2,348	8.2
Watches and clocks	2,734	6.7
Metal products	1,124	2.8
Jewellery, precious stones, etc.	999	2.5
Travel bag & handbags	913	2.2
Household equipment	783	1.9
Others	1,506	3.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,711</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Research Dept., H.K. Trade Development Council, H.K. Trade Review 1978, April, 1978.

Fig. 1

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF MANUFACTURING: DECEMBER, 1978.  
(% of total)

Source: Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong. Statistics of Establishments and Employment, December, 1978, Table 3



Table 5

Size Distribution of Manufacturing Establishments, December 1978

Employment Size	No. of manuf. est.	%	No. of persons engaged	%
1 - 9	27,205	66.0	108,066	13.2
10 - 19	6,037	14.6	80,958	9.9
20 - 49	4,714	11.4	146,281	17.9
50 - 99	1,918	4.7	131,733	16.1
100 - 199	863	2.1	116,655	14.3
200 - 499	362	0.9	105,972	13.0
500 - 999	104	0.2	69,303	8.5
1000 - 1999	32	0.1	43,522	5.3
2000 - 2999	3		7,138	0.9
3000 - 3999	2	0.01	6,855	0.8
Total	41,240	100.01	816,683	99.9

Source: Employment and Earnings Statistics Section, Census & Statistics Department, Hong Kong. Manufacturing Establishments and Employment by Industry/Size/Location, December 1978, p. 1.

Table 6

Total Industrial Land Zoned (July 1977)

District	Gross hectare	% of total
Hong Kong Island & Kowloon	165	10.0
New Kowloon	199	12.1
Tsuen Wan	438	26.7
Sha Tin	117	7.1
Tuen Mun	315	19.1
Yuen Long	82	5.0
Tai Po	143	8.7
Fan Ling/Sheung Shui	46	2.8
Rural Townships & rest of N.T.	140	8.5
Total	1645	100.0

districts of Kwun Tong and Tsuen Wan are packed with 'industrial' 'high-rise' blocks.

## VII. Spatial Pattern

Hong Kong's manufacturing was used to concentrated within a few districts in the Main Urban Areas, such as, Kwun Tong, Cheung Sha Wan, Hunghom and North Point (Figure 1). But Tsuen Wan has been growing into a major industrial concentration since 1960s (Figure 1). However, by 1978 (Figure 1) the rest of the New Territories was still insignificant in industry.

## VIII. Spatial Pattern of Large and Small Establishments

The large and small establishments do not share the same spatial pattern. The smaller ones are more concentrated in the inner and older urban districts (Map 1). Most of them are found inside domestic buildings. They do not have a proper accommodation. Hence they cause problems like dangers of fire and pollution within crowded neighbourhoods of the city. Larger establishments are usually found in the outer and newer urban districts, such as San Po Kong and Kwun Tong. These places were developed in the 1950s and 1960s for industrial growth.

## IX. Conclusion

The above are some of the more important features of the industrial geography of Hong Kong. They are not systematically linked together nor being used to build up a model. These facts and data have also not been looked at deeply and analytically. However, they may be basis for further discussion and enquiry into the various aspects of the industrial geography of Hong Kong.

## References:

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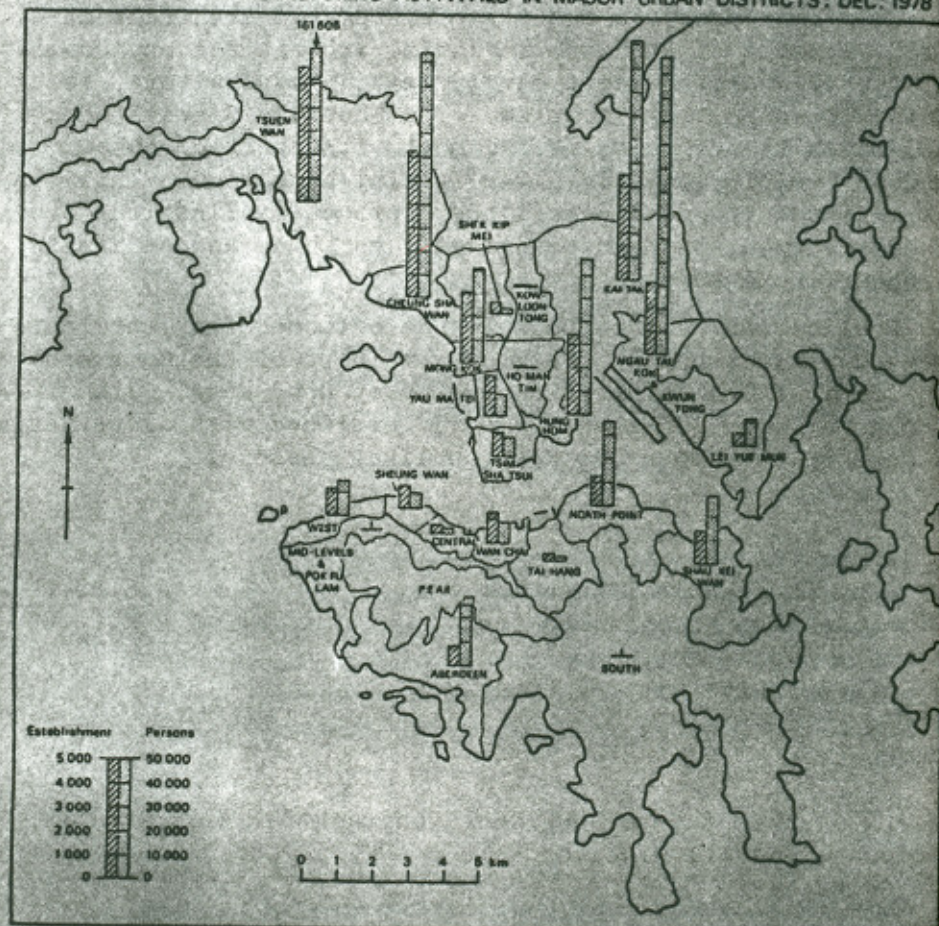


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Map 1

DISTRIBUTION OF MANUFACTURING ACTIVITIES IN MAJOR URBAN DISTRICTS, DEC. 1978



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