

HONG KONG GEOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION 香港地理學會

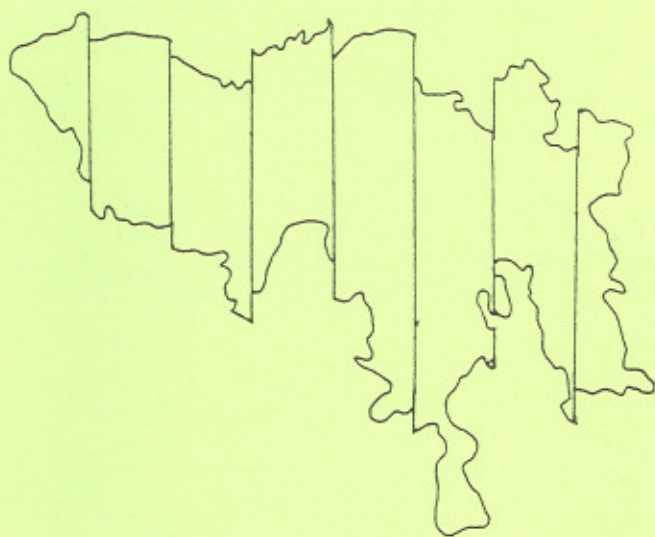


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## WORDS FROM EDITOR

This is the second issue of Hong Kong Geographer since the present editorial board took up office. Fortunately, with the support of members of the Association and others especially the ones who have contributed articles and actively participated in activities organized by the Association, the publication of this issue of the Hong Kong Geographer is not too much behind schedule. To them the editorial board would like to express its thanks.

In this issue there is a report on a junior form curriculum seminar organized by the Association. Also appeared are two exercises designed by Pun Kin Shing which teachers may find useful in their geography class. The Secondary Education Committee of the Association reports on the activities it helped organize in the past and provided brief descriptions on the activities to be organized in the nearby future. Members and others should find them interesting and are therefore encouraged to attend.

This issue also features three full-length articles. Li Si Ming continues his analysis on the 1986 By-census. The theme of the current issue is on the income distribution of Hong Kong. Chow Siu Choi and Ma Siu Wah write on the events leading to the paradigmatic changes in the earth science in the 1960's. Tsang Po Ling tries to evaluate the Home Ownership Scheme in Hong Kong. These articles should be of interest to all geographers, particularly to those teaching in the higher forms.

Since the publication of the previous issue, Chow Siu Choi has left Hong Kong to continue his study at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Chow Cheng shing has kindly agreed to take up the vacancy left over by Chow Siu Choi. The chief editor would like, on behalf of the Editorial Board, to welcome Dr. Chow's joining our team.

Last the chief editor would like to thank all members of the editorial board. Without their dedicated efforts, the publication of this issue would not be possible.

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## REPORT ON THE JUNIOR FORM GEOGRAPHY CURRICULUM SEMINAR

By  
Chan Yiu Sang  
Secondary Education Committee, HKGA

The new Form One to Three Geography curriculum has been implemented since 1986. With the view to help teachers understand the curriculum and improve its implementation in school, the Association has the intention to arrange a series of seminar on the Junior Forms Geography Curriculum. It is held on a regional basis, with one being scheduled for teachers from a few adjacent districts each time.

The first seminar had been held on the 7th November, 1987, at the Geography Room of the Lai King Catholic Secondary School. In that Saturday morning, altogether 15 teachers from 11 schools in Kwai Chung, Tsing Yi and Tsuen Wan had attended the seminar. The response was considered to be satisfactory.

The seminar was broadly divided into two sections: a) the development of Junior Forms Geography Curriculum; and b) teaching approaches and examination methods. A presentation on each of the topics was given by Mr. K.P. Yeung and Mr. C.C.Lam respectively. All participants then discussed and shared their opinions about the problems encountered in the implementation of the new curriculum. Moreover, teaching materials from other schools were also exchanged.

During the discussion, many teachers sincerely voiced their views on various aspects of the curriculum including its contents, teaching periods, textbooks, teaching materials....etc. All in all, the Association received satisfactory response for the seminar.



# THE PARADIGMATIC SHIFT IN THE EARTH SCIENCES IN THE 1960'S

by

Chow Siu Choi and Ma Siu Wah

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is now well known that the earth's crust is not fixed but mobile. But such an understanding is only arrived at after a long period of heated debate in the earth sciences. The climax of this debate was in the 1960's, although the idea that the earth's crust moves first appeared in the literature as far back as 1912 (Wagener, 1970). This paper attempts to document this debate. We begin with a discussion on the early works on continental shift, in particular the work of Wagener. Next we present the arguments against the theory of continental shift. Finally, we document the evidence gathered since the 1950's in favour of the continental drift theory.

## II. WAGENER'S THEORY OF CONTINENTAL SHIFT

The idea that continents move was first put forward by a German earth scientist, Alfred Wagener in 1912. In his book, The Origin of Continents and Oceans, Wagener gathered a number of the then well known facts in the earth sciences and biology and argued that these facts point toward the existence of a super-continent which Wagener called Gondwanaland in the past and that this continent later broke up into pieces and gradually drifted into their present position. The mechanism underlying this movement of continents was tentatively termed polflucht, meaning outward flow from the pole. This was because Wagener thought that the super-continent was centred at the North Pole and the drift of continents was from the North Pole outward. The evidence Wagener gathered and the arguments he put forward are summarized in Table 1.

## III. SHORTCOMINGS OF WAGENER'S THEORY

Wagener's theory possesses many weaknesses and left many unresolved questions. Many criticized the inaccuracy of the supposed jigsaw fit of the Atlantic continents. Since shorelines are subject to frequent epeirogenic, ie. vertical tectonic, movements, a close match of the shorelines could only be a pure coincidence.

Furthermore, similar stratigraphs on the opposing sides of the Atlantic do not necessarily imply contiguity. In fact, according to the American petrologist, H.S. Washington, the

<sup>+</sup> Chow Siu Choi is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and Ma Siu Wah is a graduate of Hong Kong Baptist College.



igneous rocks cited by Wagener were not even at all similar. In addition, Wagener's glacial evidence also invited attack. For, if Gondwanaland existed, its center would be too far away from the ocean and out of reach of moist air. Therefore, any ice-sheet would be impossible even if temperature was very low. Besides, the faunal and floral similarities between continents were also rebutted by land bridge theory, or by rafting.

TABLE 1  
A SUMMARY OF WAGENER'S THEORY

Discipline	Evidence	Argument
Geophysics	* Earth's crust is predominately Sial and Sima Sial is lighter than Sima	*Continents flow on Sima like boat on the sea
	*There are fold mountain belts	*This indicates horizontal acting force
Geology	*Similarities of Continental margins	*At 200m below sea level they fit together; hence there should be one super-continent in the past
	*Fold-mountain belts in S. Africa and S. America fit together	*It indicates that they are once one fold mountain belt
	*Gneiss in African Plateau is very similar to Brazilian Plateau	*So they should form part of a single plateau in the past
	*Conformity of the stratigraphical sequence between S.E. Brazil and S.W. Africa	*This is a strong evidence that they must be placed side by side to each other in the past
	*Fold mountain of Scottish Highland and Nova Scotia are similar, both belonging to the Caledonia Mountain age	*The two places match
Paleontology	*Different continents possess similar or identical fossils. E.g. Mesosaurus fossils in	*There must be some land connection between continents. Otherwise, such flora and fauna



Table 1 (cont.)

	Brazil and Africa -- these animals were extinct after Permian era	could not spread over isolated continents.
Biology	*We find Marsupial animals in Australia and Africa	*Ditto
	*Earthworms cannot be found all over the world	
Paleoclimatology	*Europe: changed from tropical humid to the present cooler temperate climate	*If we do not accept a drastic change of climate between continents, then we must accept that the past locations of the continents were not the same as today's
	*Africa: changed from sub-polar to present sub-tropical	
	*Antarctica: changed from tropical to present polar	

Source: A. Wagener, 1970

Another major weakness of the continental shift hypothesis is that it cannot explain why Gondwanaland remained a coherent and single super-continent for a long time and then suddenly broke up into pieces within a relatively short (geologically) period of time. It cannot explain the crumble up and deformation of Sial when it collides with the weaker Sima. Even if it can explain the fold mountain building process, but because, according to Wagener, the drifting of continents started in the Mesozoic Era, it cannot explain the formation of the older fold mountains such as the Caledonian and Armorican Belts. And most important of all, in Wagener's theory, there is a lack of a plausible mechanism for the great continents to drift thousands of miles apart. The polflucht force hypothesized was left unarticulated and tidal forces are too weak to do such work. Without an adequate mechanism, the whole array of evidence becomes more or less meaningless.

#### IV. NEW EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF THE CONTINENTAL DRIFT THEORY

It was clear that the continental drift theory was under heavy attack ever since its inception. The theory lost much of



its credence in the thirties and forties and there were very few believers in it. However, new evidence in paleomagnetism and sea floor spreading gathered since the 1950's gave the theory a new life.

Paleomagnetism is the study of the fossil or remnant magnetism of rocks of various geological age. Paleomagnetism is useful in validating the hypothesis of continental drift in that by calculating the dip angle of ferromagnetic rocks, their latitudinal positions in the past can be found. If the latitude implied by the dip angle of a rock is not the same as the present position, then the position of the rock must have changed or that of the magnetic field must have changed or both. If continents are fixed in location, then rocks of different ages should give the same magnetic pole position, provided that the past magnetic field is the same as the present one. Using magnetometer, experiments were carried out by a group of British scientists, led by P. M. S. Blackett and S. K. Runcorn (Hurley, 1968; Wilson, 1965; Cox, et. al., 1967). The results obtained were highly revealing. Assuming that the continents are fixed, Blackett and Runcorn produced a series of polar wandering curves, ie, curves indicating the path of the magnetic pole, one for each of the continents. The fact that these curves are different for different continents argues strongly that it is not the magnetic pole that has drifted (although it could very well be the case); but rather, it is the continents that have drifted. Under this new light, scientists then assumed that the magnetic pole is a fixed point and constructed continental wandering curves. The result indicates the existence of a super-continent as what Wegener hypothesized. Later evidence hints that the magnetic field also shifts, at a rate of  $1^{\circ}$  longitude westward per 5 years. But this is not inconsistent with the continental shift principle. For even if the magnetic pole shows westward movements, the existence of distinct polar wandering curves for different continents still supports the continental drift theory.

At about the same time as Blackett and Runcorn were constructing the polar wandering curves, Hess and others discovered that the ocean floors were full of irregularities and in constant state of flux. (Dietz, 1961; Heirtzler, 1968; Vine and Matthews, 1963; Weussel and Hays, 1971) The ocean floors were very young in terms of geological age, most less than 200 million years old. In the middle of most oceans there are continuous mid-oceanic ridges which are parallel to the respective continental margins. Based on such evidence a theory of sea floor spread was proposed. The theory hypothesizes constant outflow of magma from the mid-oceanic ridges, as a result of convective currents in the mantle. The lava gradually cools down and pushes the original oceanic crust horizontally outward which, in turn, pushes the continents. Such movements of ocean floors provides the mechanism for continental drift.

The sea floor spreading theory was supported by geological evidence gathered from ocean exploration and seismic wave detection, heat flow, gravity and magnetic anomalies. Among these, magnetic anomalies were the most impressive evidence.



Strip patterns of magnetic anomalies was symmetrically found at both sides of the mid-oceanic ridges, with an average width of 30 km. In the past four million years, there were four polarity reversal phenomena. The age of magnetic anomalies on both sides of the mid-oceanic ridge matches the known magnetic reversal periods. The data clearly demonstrate that ocean floors spread; for if they do not, then lava from the mid-oceanic ridge would form vertical layerings of magnetic anomalies and would not show any horizontal strip patterns. The data also allow us to compute the rate of sea floor spreading up to four million years ago. Take Atlantic Ocean as an example. Its average width is currently 6,400 km. At a rate of 30 km per million years, it takes about 210 million years to reach this distance. From this, it may be concluded that the Atlantic Ocean was opened at about 210 million years ago. This time table remarkably fits Wegener's calculations.

## V. CONCLUSION

Discoveries in Paleomagnetism and ocean floor studies provide overwhelming evidence that continents drift. By the end of the sixties, the debate finally came to a close. Hurley's (1968) work could be seen as a formal closure of this debate. The evidence on rock structure provided by Hurley added further credence to the continental drift theory. Specifically, Hurley found that rocks of South America and Africa fall neatly into two groups: the first formed more than 2000 million years ago and the other some 600 million years ago. Both were older than the split of Gondwanaland. And regions with rocks of the same age fit nicely to each other. Clearly, South America and Africa were formerly part of a single super-continent.

In spite of the above, there are a number of important questions, including some of those mentioned earlier such as how the formation of the older fold mountains can be explained and questions arising from the findings in ocean floor studies, left unanswered. In the latter category are: (1) The basis of sea floor spreading theory is the magnetic anomaly phenomena. However, it is found that in a number of sea floors, the magnetic anomalies are not symmetrical, an example of which is the North Eastern Pacific. How can this be accounted for? (2) The western side of the Pacific is rather complex. For instance, in Australia and Southern Hemisphere there are many flat-top mountains and reefs. Is the sea floor theory capable to explain this? (3) According to the theory, the farther away from the mid-oceanic ridge, the older the rock. This means that rocks in the oceanic trench are the oldest. But in the case of the Gulf of Alaska, the age of oceanic rocks toward the oceanic trench are younger. Would there be mechanisms other than convective activities in the mantle to give rise to such anomalies? (4) The theory postulates that all sea floors are created in the mid-oceanic ridges. But there are oceans without a mid-oceanic ridge. The Arctic Ocean is an example. Does this imply that these oceans are formed by other processes? All these suggest that mechanisms underlying continental drift are highly complex.



The advancements of the theory of plate tectonics in the seventies helped answer some of these questions. But there is still a lot to be learned before we can have a fuller grasp of the picture.

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## A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE 1986 BI-CENSUS: II. INCOME AND OCCUPATION DISTRIBUTION OVER SPACE

by

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### I. Introduction

Classic models of residential differentiation including the models of Burgess, Hoyt and Alonso argue that the forces of economic competition, together with the exercise of individual preferences, result in segregation of households of different socio-economic backgrounds over the urban space. Of course, the ageing of residential structures and the consequential process of filtering of households also play an important part in this sifting and sorting process. Recent works by the Marxian and institutional schools (see, for example, Castells, 1977; Pahl, 1977, 1979) add a political perspective on the urban question. The important roles played by private and governmental agencies are recognized. Under specific circumstances, public policies could have substantial impacts in altering the pattern of residential segregation, although more often than not they tend to reinforce the existing pattern. Two major variables by which households segregate themselves over space are income and occupation. This short paper attempts to examine the extent of spatial segregation with respect to these two variables in Hong Kong and assess to what degree the income and occupation distributions of households (with respect to space) have changed over time. The data we use are the 1981 census and 1986 bi-census. We first examine the income distribution pattern. Next we study the occupation distribution pattern. Last we try to draw some implications for housing and urban development policies.

### II. The Income Distribution Pattern

Urban Development in Hong Kong is very much constrained by its physical geography and shaped by its colonial history. Steep hills on both sides of the harbour for a long time restricted urban development to the narrow strip of lowlands on the northern part of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula to the south of Kowloon Hills. The panoramic view offered by the Mid-levels and Peak areas of Victoria Peak naturally makes them high-status residential districts of the city ever since its inception. This is aided by the fact that the central business district of the Territory is on the Island. The decision to maintain the Peak as an European enclave by the government in the early days of the Colony further contributed to the Peak's exclusive character. On the peninsula side, dockyards, godowns and other harbour facilities dominated the coastline. High density lower and lower-middle class housing tended to occupy the coastal areas whereas



high-status residential districts were found mainly in the heavily wooded central part of the peninsula. Such a pattern of residential distribution has persisted for quite a long time. The large influx of refugees from China in 1945-50 as a result of the Chinese civil war did not in any fundamental way alter the pattern. However, widespread squatting occurred in the then outskirts of the city. The government responded by launching a public housing programme which, after some 35 years of implementation, has become one of the largest and most successful in the world. Most public housing estates are erected on sites just cleared of their squatter huts and are thus located in the more peripheral districts. They include Shek Kip Mei, Wong Tai Sin, Tsz Wan Shan, Kwun Tong and Tsuen Wan on the Kowloon side and Chai Wan and Aberdeen on the island side. Not surprisingly, these areas are also the major industrial districts of the Territory.

In 1898 Britain took control of the New Territories, mainly as a buffer between the growing port of Hong Kong and the then politically unstable China. In part because of this, and in part because of the physical barriers presented by the Kowloon Hills, the New Territories, especially the northern part of it, was able to maintain its largely rural character up until the early 1970's when the government decided to launch the new town programme in conjunction with a ten year housing development plan. Since then, the New Territories has been undergoing a major transformation. The new towns are generally better planned. They are more spacious and are better served in terms of community facilities. Chunk roads were built and the Kowloon-Canton Railway was electrified to provide better links between the new towns and the main urban area. The 1970's and 80's witnessed not only large scale public housing development in the new towns but also substantial private housing development there. The population of Shatin, Tuen Mun, Tai Po and Sheung Shui showed tremendous increase over the period, mainly as a result of out-migration of households in the early stages of the family life-cycle from the urban area. Along with this, the income and occupation distribution of households over space showed corresponding changes. Proportionately there are less people engaged in farming in the New Territories than before. Also, there is a general increase in household income because of the influx of population with a relatively low dependency ratio.

Figures 1 and 2 give the percentage distribution of households with incomes less than \$4000 (1986 constant dollars) per month in the years 1981 and 1986, and Figures 3 and 4 give the percentage distribution of households with incomes greater than \$10000 per month in the same census years, respectively. These maps clearly show the pattern of residential distribution previously described. For example, we can see from Figures 1 and 3 that in 1981, Lantau Island, Tuen Mun and the Northern part of the New Territories had high concentration of low income households. Also, Western, Wanchai, Shau Kei Wan, Chai Wan and Aberdeen on the Island, Yau Ma Tei, Mongkok, Shum Shui Po, Hung Hum, Tsuen Wan, Wong Tai Sin, and Kwun Tong in Kowloon and the rest of the New Territories all had relatively high concentration of low income households. High income households were mainly



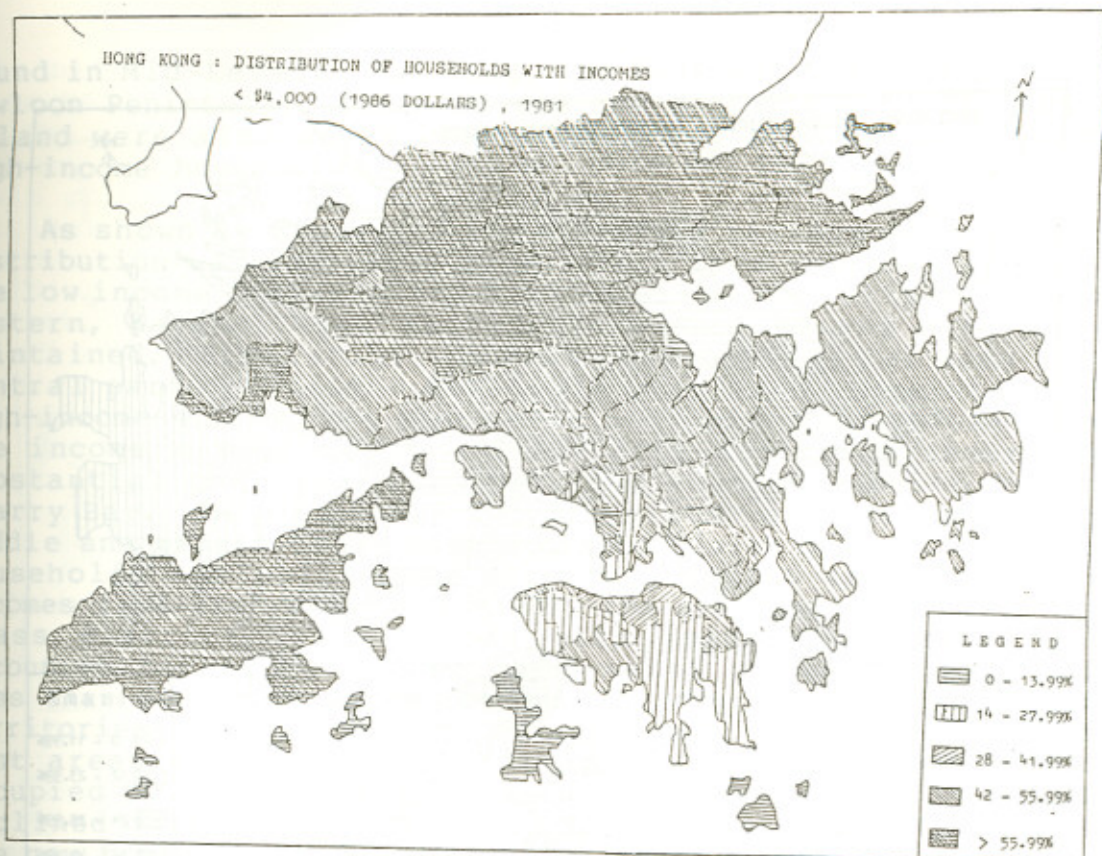


FIGURE 1

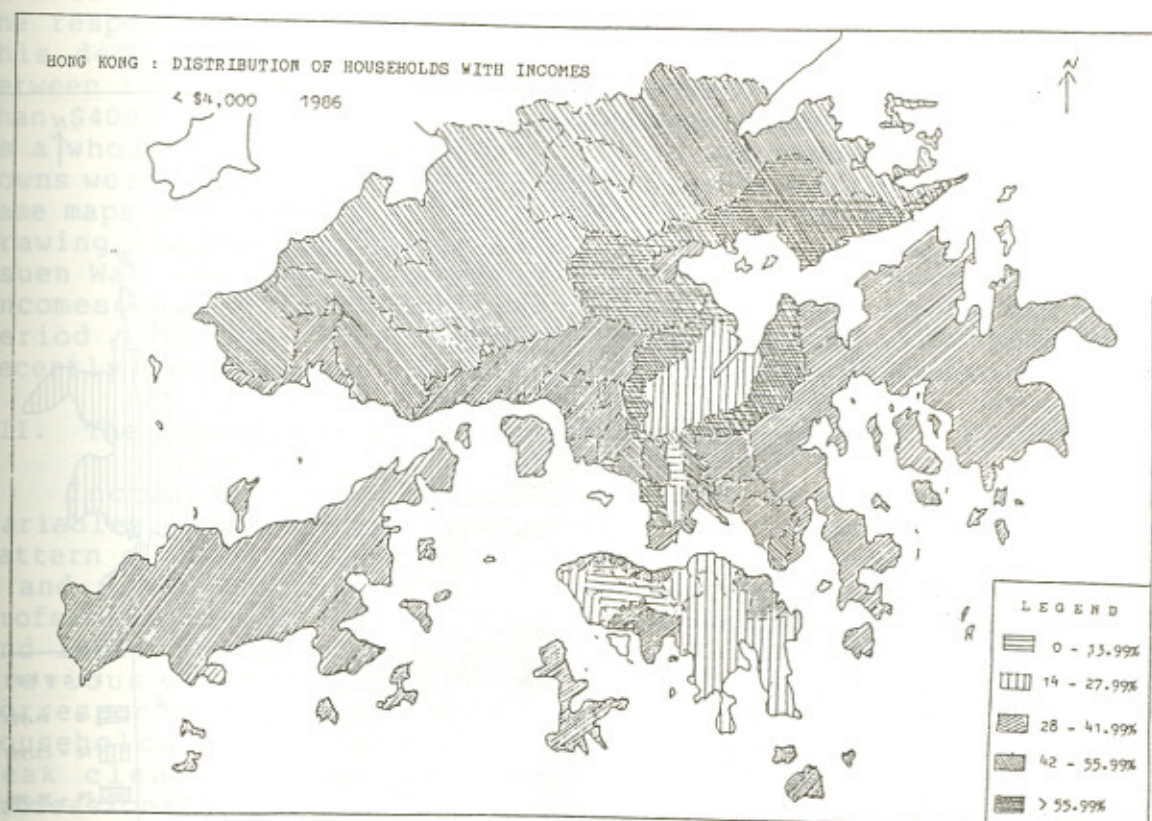


FIGURE 2



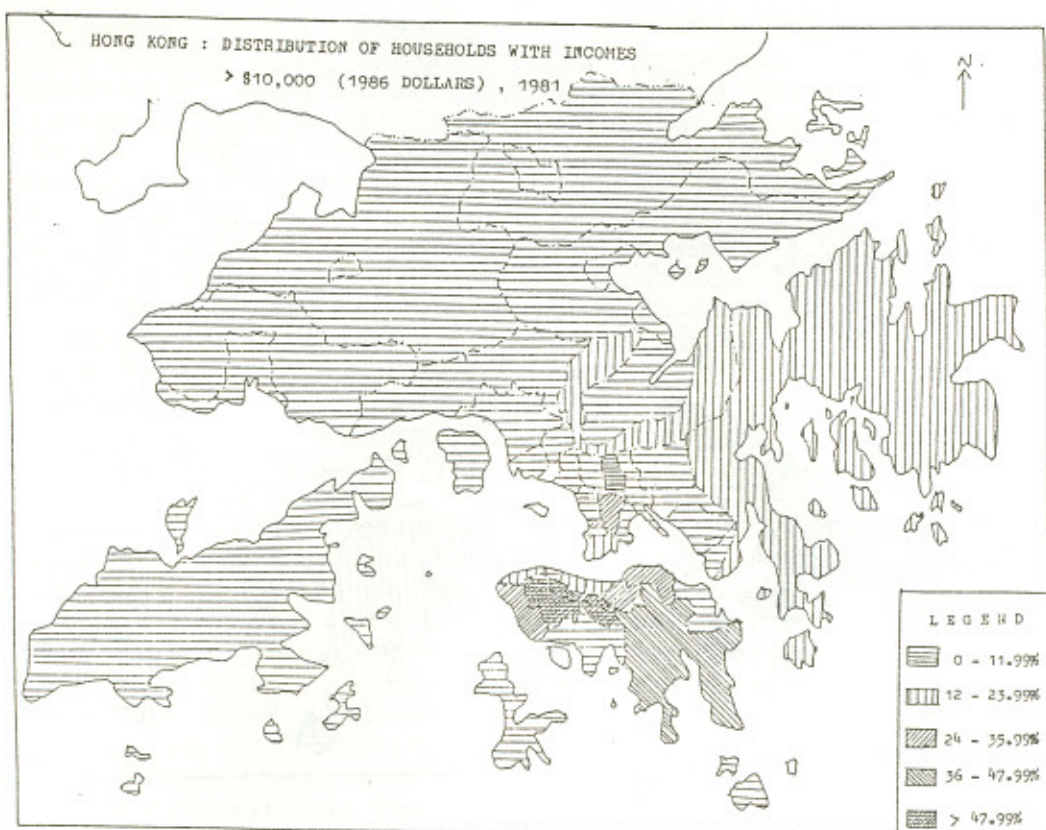


FIGURE 3

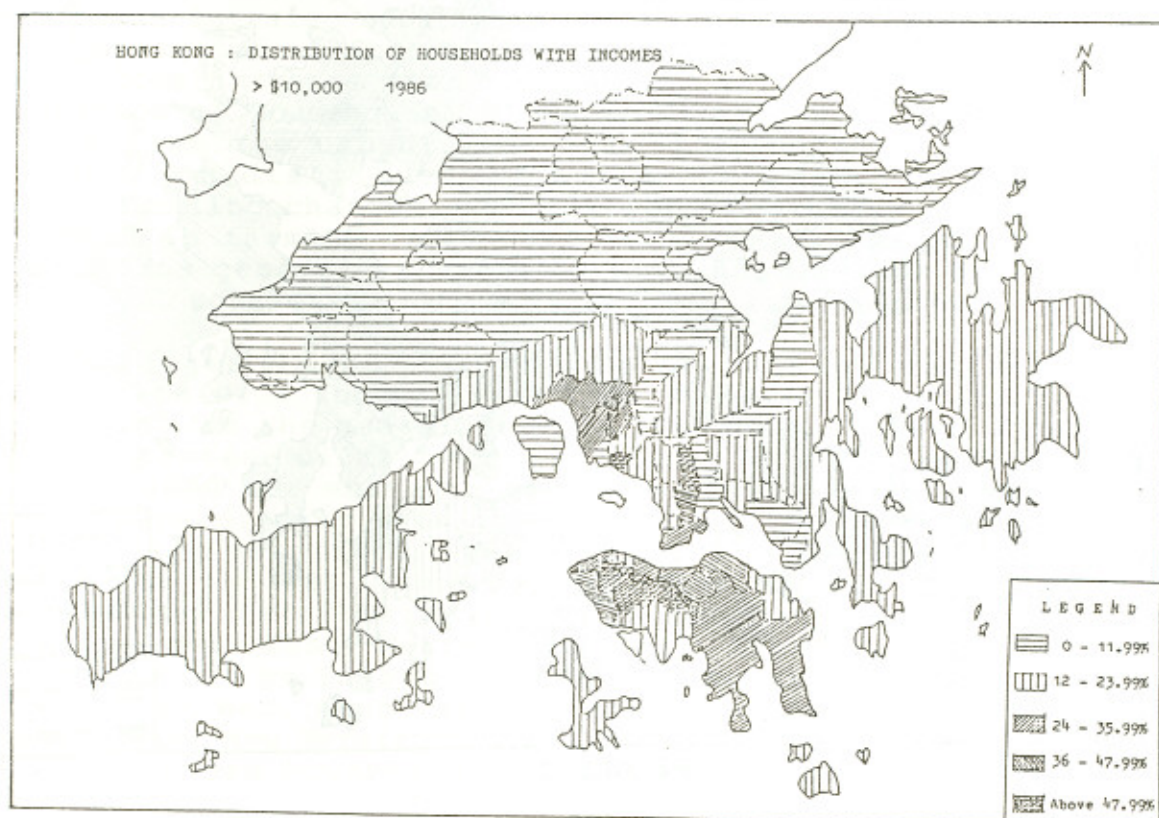


FIGURE 4



found in Mid-Levels, Tai Hang, the Peak and the central part of Kowloon Peninsula. Pokfulam and the southern side of Hong Kong Island were also areas with relatively high concentration of high-income households.

As shown by Figures 2 and 4, such a pattern of residential distribution was generally kept intact five years later in 1986. The low income status of the high density inner city districts of Western, Wanchai, Yau Ma Tei, Shum Shui Po and Hung Hum was maintained. Similarly, the Peak, Mid-Levels, Tai Hang and the Central part of Kowloon Peninsula were able to maintain their high-income status. But there were also some discernible changes. The income mix of certain inner-city districts showed quite substantial changes. Consider, for example, North Point and Quarry Bay. In 1981 these two districts were basically lower-middle and middle class neighbourhoods, with only 25.59% of their households having incomes exceeding \$10000 and 31.35% having incomes less than \$4000. In 1986, the area became an upper-middle class district. Households with incomes exceeding \$10000 accounted for 44.25% of the total while households with incomes less than \$4000 accounted for only 23.59%. But it is in the New Territories that the changes were the most significant. Although most areas in the New Territories were in 1986 still mainly occupied by low income households, the degree of concentration declined quite significantly. The change was most apparent in the new towns. In Shatin New Town, households with incomes less than \$4000 accounted for 44.41% of the total in 1981; but they accounted for only 25.70% of the total in 1986. In Tuen Mun New Town, the percentage of households with incomes less than \$4000 in 1981 was 50.82; but in 1986 it was 36.99. In Tai Po New Town, the respective percentages were 56.91 and 38.39. Although part of this decline was due to the general rise in real incomes -- between 1981 and 1986, the number of households with incomes less than \$4000 decreased by 9.28 percentage points for the Territory as a whole -- the magnitudes of decline registered in the new towns were too large to be explained by this alone. However, the same maps also show that the new towns were rather unsuccessful in drawing high-income households. The only exception is perhaps Tsuen Wan New Town in which the percentage of households with incomes exceeding \$10000 increased from 6.36% to 19.50% in the period 1981-86. This suggests that most of the households recently moved to the new towns are of middle incomes.

### III. The Occupation Distribution Pattern

Income and occupation structure are closely related variables. It may be expected that the occupation distribution pattern closely follows the income distribution pattern. Figures 5 and 6 map the distribution of households whose heads were professionals and administrative and managerial workers in 1981 and 1986, respectively. A comparison of these maps with the previous ones clearly shows the two distributions' close correspondence. Areas with high concentration of high-income households such as Kowloon Tong, Mid-Levels, Tai Hang and the Peak clearly emerge as areas with high concentration of professionals and administrative and managerial workers. Also,



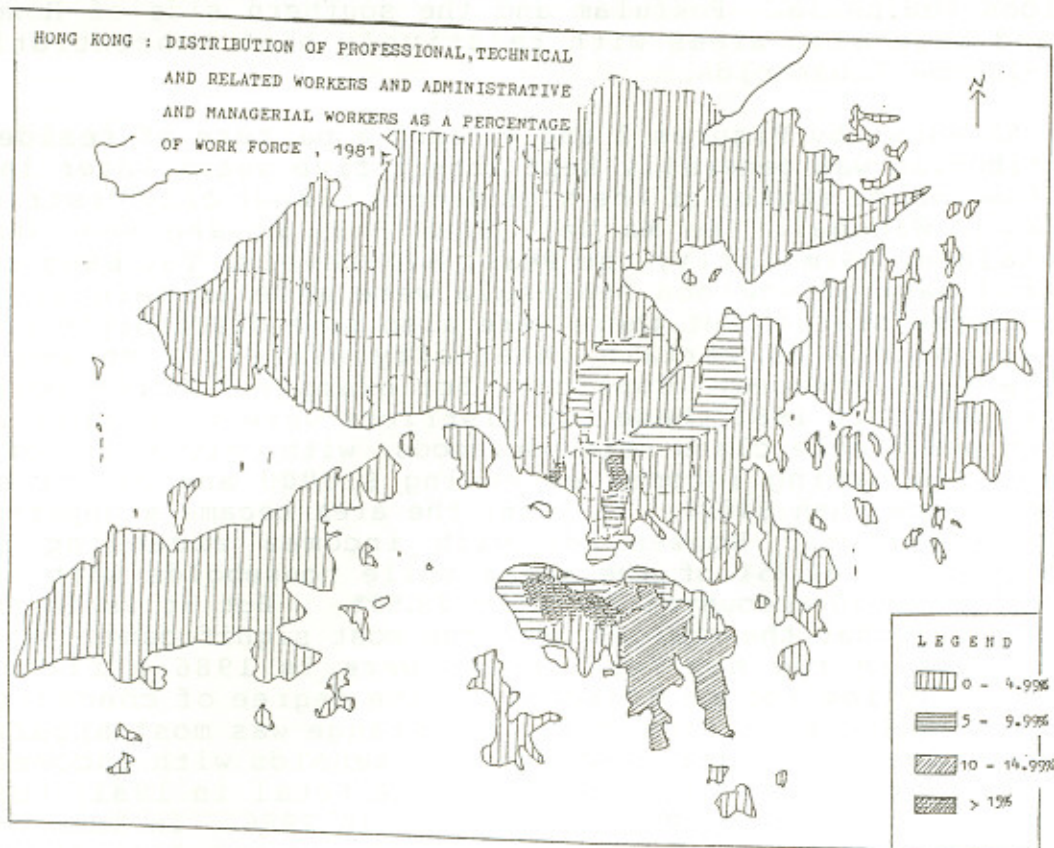


FIGURE 5

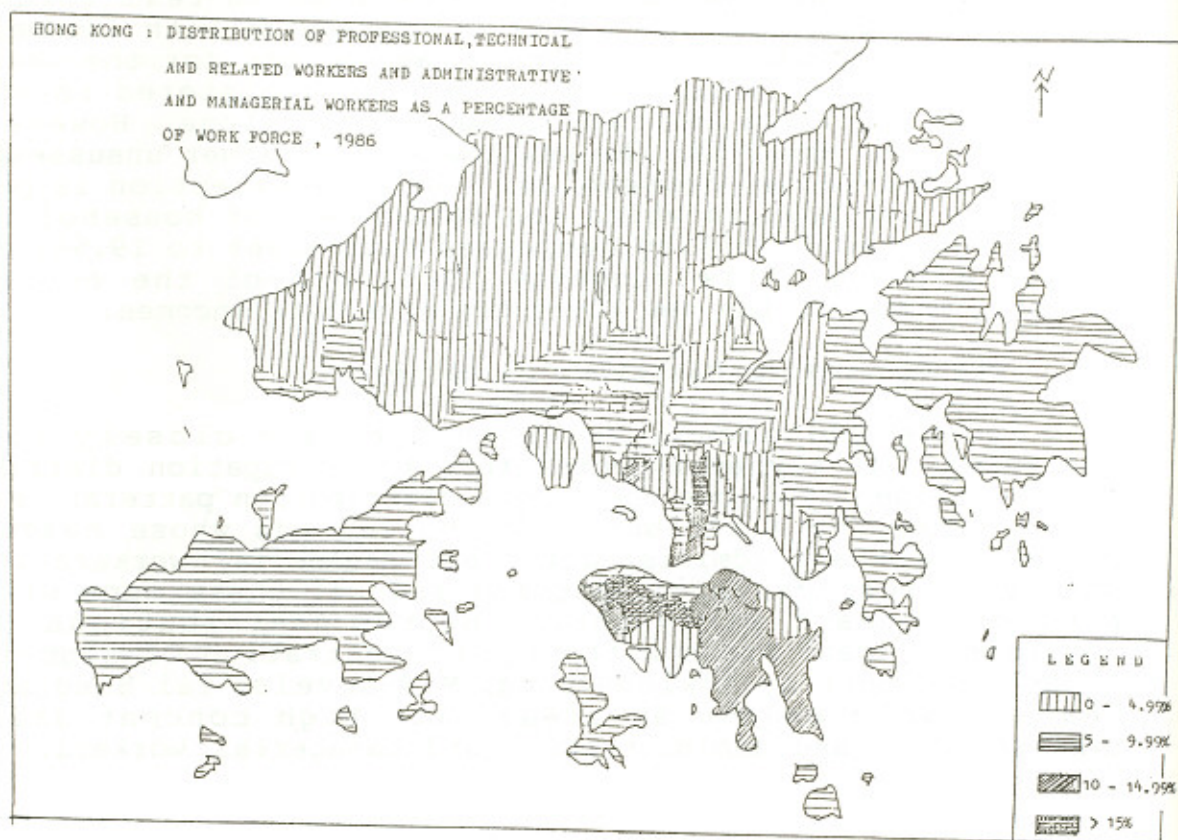


FIGURE 6



areas mainly occupied by low-income households including the entire New territories and the industrial districts of Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin and Chai Wan had relatively few households in this category. In fact, using data at the census district level, we obtain correlation coefficients of .99 between the percentage distribution of households with heads in the professional, administrative and managerial field and households with incomes exceeding \$10000 for both census years. It is obvious that the conclusions arrived at above apply also to the spatial distribution of households by occupation. In particular, the same trends emerge in the latter figures. A comparison between the 1981 and 1986 patterns shows that North Point was somehow "gentrified" over the period and had become an upper-middle class residential district. The same comparison also shows that the new towns were rather unsuccessful in attracting households in the upper strata of the social ladder.

#### IV. Policy Implications

Residential segregation in terms of socio-economic status clearly exists in the Territory. Areas with low concentration of low income households are invariably areas with high concentration of high income households. However, in comparison with most cities in the West especially the major urban areas in the United States and Britain, the degree of residential segregation in Hong Kong is not very high. Indeed there are very few areas in the Territory in which we find complete segregation of households in terms of socio-economic status. Even in the highly exclusive Peak district, there were in 1986 10.09% of its households with incomes less than \$4000 per month. And in such low prestige areas such as Tsz Wan Shan and Wong Tai Sin, some 13.15% of households residing there were having incomes greater than \$10000 in the same census year. There are many reasons for this. Among them the most important is perhaps the government's public housing programme which is currently providing accommodation to some 45% of the population. On the one hand, the programme is geared to the squatter dwellers and households residing in overcrowded private tenement housing. As such most public housing residents have relatively low incomes and thus its provision would increase the degree of segregation. However, in the case of Hong Kong, once a household has secured a public housing flat, life-long tenure is guaranteed. Because public housing carries rentals that are not more than a fraction of rentals prevailing in the private sector, very few households would move out of their public housing flats even though they themselves have succeeded in moving up the social ladder. Thus, in Hong Kong, public housing estates have a much wider mix of households than its counterparts in most major cities in the west. In a sense, this wider mix of households would contribute to the stability of urban neighbourhoods. And inasmuch as the education system is locationally organized, a more balanced mix of households of different socio-economic backgrounds would help reduce the disparity in education provision between the high and low income groups. Hence reduction in residential segregation is something the policy maker would like to seek for. However, at least in the case of public housing provision, this is (or has



been) accomplished by subsidizing the relatively well-off and thus runs counter to the equity principle. How to maintain a proper balance in residential mix while at the same time avoid subsidizing the rich is a thorny question which somehow has to be addressed.

A second observation relates to the changing character of the New Territories. Of course, this is a consequence of the government's new town development programme. So far, the programme has been quite successful in drawing the younger (see Li, 1987) and middle-income households to the new towns. Certainly, the new town programme has helped to reduce the degree of crowdedness in the main urban areas and provide better living environments to over a million people. But this process of decentralization is accompanied by an increase in the degree of segregation of low-income households in certain inner-city neighbourhoods. In Yau Ma Tei, for example, households with incomes less than \$4000 per month accounted for 52.09% of the total in 1981; however, they accounted for 55.19% in 1986. In Mongkok, the respective percentages were 53.10% and 64.13%. And in Hung Hum, these percentages were 46.76 and 48.38. Consider that these areas also experienced a general ageing of their population, it is clear that greater attention has to be paid to alleviate the plight of households in these dilapidated inner-city districts. Otherwise, growing disparity between the inner-city and the suburbs as witnessed in the west could add an element of distability to this politically sensitive Territory.

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## THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME IN HONG KONG: AN EVALUATION

by

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## I. Objectives and Performance

"The original intention was to sell them only to persons already in housing estates so as to make room in rented accommodation for others in more need. However, after careful thought I reached the conclusion that promotion of home ownership is such a desirable social objective in its own right that the scheme needed broadening.....Home-ownership, with the security it offers, is clearly the goal of very many of our people."

---- Sir Murray MacLehose, Speech at the opening of the Legislative Council, Oct. 6, 1976.

Housing scarcity and its related problems have been a constant source of friction between the government and the general public in Hong Kong. Despite the former's continuous efforts to meet the housing needs of the latter through the public housing programme in the past three decades, there is still a vast number of people currently living in a substandard housing environment.<sup>1</sup> The problem of inadequate public housing provision under the present financial system was recognized by the Housing Authority early in 1975/76 when the Home Ownership Scheme was introduced. The scheme was one alternative which enabled the government to minimize the constraints imposed by the slow recovery of building capital in public housing production.<sup>2,3</sup>

The scheme was initially designed to build flats for sale for "better-off families already occupying flats in the Authority's old (and lower rent) estates, thereby releasing these flats for reallocation to less well-off families still in the waiting list."<sup>4</sup> But the promotion of home ownership was soon conceived as a desirable social objective in its own right, so that the scheme was widened to ameliorate the plight of the lower-middle income group in the private rental sector.<sup>5</sup>

Since the inception of the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS), this new community of flat owners has swelled to some 60,000 families, of which about 42% were former public housing tenants, by the end of 1985.<sup>6</sup> This, together with the over-subscription of HOS flats, tends to confirm that there is a strong underlying demand for home ownership among the target groups. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the HOS flats are more welcomed by private



housing residents than by public housing tenants despite the fact that the latter are given more incentives to purchase them. On the one hand, this shows the desirability of extending the scheme to the lower-middle class; on the other, it calls for a review of the differential policy towards the two target groups.

The scheme has been expanded to account for 25% instead of the original 14% of the total public housing production through the inclusion of the Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS) as a regular development programme, allowing for the doubling of the annual production of 5,000 flats since 1985. Also, the transfer of rental units to the scheme for sale has been implemented. In view of its increasing role and its social objectives, it is important to examine to what extent the scheme has achieved its targets and in what ways it relates to other housing programmes. But first let us briefly look at data on the present distribution of living quarters in Hong Kong and persons accommodated (Table 1).

TABLE 1  
NUMBER OF QUARTERS AND ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PERSONS  
ACCOMMODATED, Mar. 31, 1980 and 1985

Category	#Quarters ( '000 units)		Estimated # Persons Accommodated ( '000 people)	
	1980	1985	1980	1985
Gov't Quarters	20( 2)	24( 2)	76( 2)	71( 1)
Public Rental Housing	432(46)	550(41)	1999(44)	2167(44)
HOS Blocks	2( *)	48( 4)	10( *)	169( 3)
Private Housing	502(52)	726(54)	2423(54)	2519(51)
Total Permanent Housing	962	1349	4509	4926

Source: Hong Kong 1986 (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1986).  
Appendix 28, p. 318.

Notes: 1. Public Housing comprises Housing Authority Rental flats, cottage areas and Housing Society estates.

2. Figures in parentheses are percentages (\* denotes figures less than 0.5%)

HOS blocks accounted for only 3.5% of the total permanent housing as at March 31, 1985. Although this was nowhere near



the stock of any other types of housing (except government quarters), the programme did proceed at a fairly rapid pace, from the first occupation of 2,440 flats in 1980 to 47,700 in 1985.

## II. Home Ownership and Rental Public Housing

"HOS proves that a planned, market-oriented public enterprise system can succeed."

---- Elaine Chung, Deputy Director of Housing - Administration. South China Morning Post, Dec. 11, 1984.

"The Authority tried to profit by shifting emphasis from the heavily-subsidized rental estates to HOS."

---- South China Morning Post, Dec. 11, 1984.

Table 2 shows the actual and projected production of rental public housing and home ownership flats in 1979-89. It can be seen that, with the exception of the initial years when completion was delayed, the annual production target of 5,000 (and later 10,000) flats has been exceeded. However, the supply of rental public housing has failed to achieve its target production level of 30,000 a year except for 1979/80 and 1981/82, when HOS output was low. There is a negative correlation between the two programmes, suggesting that the expansion of HOS scheme might be carried out at the expense of rental public housing. But such a conclusion may be too simplistic in that it has not taken into account the number of rental flats surrendered for reallocation. Furthermore, except for the extremely large supply of flats built under PSPS in 1985/86, the projections for production of public rental housing and HOS flats show some sign of slowing down of the latter relative to the former.<sup>8</sup>

There are two contrasting views concerning the ratio of HOS to rental housing: (1) those opposing the transfer of rental units to HOS flats for sale, fearing that this will be done at the expense of those who could not afford the capital outlay of home purchase; and (2) those calling for a reconsideration of welfare benefits and favouring a larger proportion of HOS flats based on the principle of more efficient use of limited resource.<sup>9</sup>



TABLE 2

**ACTUAL AND PROJECTED PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC HOUSING  
AND HOME OWNERSHIP FLATS, 1979-1989**  
(In Thousands)

Year	Public Housing	Home PSPS	Ownership HAHOS	Scheme Total	Grand Total
79/80	30.7(93)	- ( - )	2.4 (7)	2.4	33.1(100)
80/81	27.6(73)	1.5( 4)	8.7(23)	10.2	37.7(100)
81/82	35.1(89)	- ( - )	4.4(11)	4.4	39.5(100)
82/83	28.3(77)	0.8( 2)	7.5(21)	8.3	36.6(100)
83/84	28.6(74)	2.2 (6)	7.9(20)	10.1	38.7(100)
84/85	26.8(70)	1.4 (4)	10.2(27)	11.6	38.4(100)
85/86	28.5(58)	11.9(24)	8.7(18)	20.6	49.1(100)
86/87	32.2(76)	3.7( 9)	6.5(15)	10.2	42.3(100)
87/88	32.1(77)	3.8( 9)	5.9(14)	9.7	41.8(100)
88/89	35.6(79)	3.8( 8)	5.7(13)	9.5	45.1(100)

Source: Data extracted and percentage computed from the 1983/84 and 1985/86 Budget: Speech by the Financial Secretary, Moving the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer, 1983 & 1985), footnotes (36) & (22), p. 28 & 22 respectively.

- Notes:
1. 1979-1985 data are actual figures and the rest are projected ones.
  2. Public housing comprises Housing Authority estate blocks and Housing Society buildings, including flats built under Urban Improvement Scheme.
  3. 2,240 flats built under the now defunct Middle Income Housing Project are included in PSPS in 1983/84.
  4. Figures in bracket denote corresponding percentages of the grand total. They are rounded to the nearest number and may not sum to the total.
  5. Home Ownership Scheme comprises Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS) and Housing Authority Home Ownership Scheme (HAHOS).



Although HOS is claimed to "serve a double purpose of providing new homes for those who can afford to buy and of simultaneously making rental accommodation available for those who cannot", the latter is queried in view of the transfer of rental units to HOS sales, which, according to some pressure groups, is an attempt to make a profit by shifting emphasis from helping the poor who badly need accommodation to catering for the needs of the lower-middle and middle-income groups.<sup>10,11</sup> As rental public housing production would not benefit directly from the financial gain of the scheme which contributes in part to the Home Ownership Scheme Fund for further development and in part to the government general revenue,<sup>12</sup> it is debatable whether HOS should be expanded through the transfer of rental flats. Many doubt that such a transfer is carried out not for social motives but for the strengthening of the self-financing policy adopted for public housing provision.<sup>13</sup> Further, to a number of commentators, it is important to maintain the image of homeownership as distinct from rental occupation. The transfer of rental units to HOS sales, however, would obscure this difference. Besides, the interiors and exteriors of rental and HOS units are presumably not the same even though the former have improved in design and flexibility. There is also a concern over at what stage these rental units are to be transferred.

On the other hand, for those who oppose the above view, the prevailing rental level of public housing is seen to be incompatible with its increasing standard relative to private development. In this society with continued economic prosperity, the issue of housing as a social welfare benefit versus a personal need must be confronted, inviting an evaluation of the current policy of maintaining a massive public housing development programme. HOS is seen as a means to reduce the burden of the government in providing housing subsidies and enhance a more balanced tenure in line with that of other developed countries. The subject becomes more complicated since HOS sites are included in the 50 hectares annual land quota under the terms of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, while land for rental estates is not after June 1985.

### III. The Home Ownership Scheme and Private Housing

"Major factors built into the framework of the HOS were that it....in no way be detrimental to the buoyant property market."

---- Hong Kong 1981, p. 101

"....the government is in effect subsidizing people who can afford to buy private sector flats."

---- Real Estate Developers Association.  
South China Morning Post, Jan. 29,  
1985

The number of homeownership flats and private domestic flats completion in the years 1980-85 and their forecast through 1987 are given in Table 3. It can be seen that the bulk of private



domestic units are flats which are comparable to Home Ownership flats in terms of size.<sup>14</sup> Because the two are aimed at the same target group, there is strong evidence that the Home Ownership scheme competes with private housing. The favourable terms offered to prospective Home Ownership flats buyers put the private developers in a disadvantageous position.<sup>15</sup> It is not surprising at all to find strong opposition from the private developers, trying to persuade the government not to expand the HOS.<sup>16</sup>

In response to these complaints, the PSPS was introduced under which private developers were invited to produce similar flats for sale with terms similar to the main HOS. As its name implied, PSPS was designed to give private sector interests the opportunity to contribute their expertise towards public housing projects. Furthermore, it was agreed that more information about the HOS projects would be given to private developers to avoid undue competition in location and time of development. However,

TABLE 3

COMPLETION OF HOS AND PRIVATE DOMESTIC FLATS 1980-87

Year	PSPS	HAHOS	Total	Private	HOS:Private
1980	408	8072	8480	23786 (90.8)	1:2.5
1981	1098	6446	7544	30425 (90.5)	1:3.6
1982	760	6860	7620	20903 (87.1)	1:2.4
1983	2240	6282	8522	23522 (83.3)	1:2.8
1984	1408	11787	13195	20601 (90.5)	1:1.4
1985	11902	8304	20206	34613 (92.5)	1:1.6
1986	4866	9318	14184	37140 (84.7)	1:2.2
1987	2716	5750	8466	38085 (82.9)	1:3.7

Source: 1980-85 data were extracted from Monthly Digest of Statistics, February, 1986 (Hong Kong Government Printer), pp.34-5 and Hong Kong Housing Authority Annual Report 1979-85, various pages. 1986-87 data are estimates given by the Hong Kong Rating and Valuation Department, Property Review, 1986, Table 6.

Notes:

1. HAHOS flats referred to HOS flats built by the Housing Authority.
2. Figures in parentheses are percentages of small flats, ie., with floor size less than 70 m<sup>2</sup>.
3. The ratio refers to the number of HOS flats over that of small private flats.

it remains an unsolvable problem of paramount importance of how to determine and achieve the right balance between production from the HOS and those by private developers; in otherwords, the extent of government intervention in the housing sector.



#### IV. Conclusion

Since its inception, HOS has been a constant topic of discussion in relation to other public and private housing. In spite of this, the long-term housing strategy recently released by the government envisaged an expansion in government assisted home purchase and greater interchangeability between public rental housing and HOS/PSPS. These will not only complicate the picture of future housing mix but also affect respective livability. So further examination beyond the quantitative aspects of HOS versus public and private housing is important for future planning and evaluation.

#### NOTES

1. About half million people were living in squatter areas. In addition, there were some 130,000 people living in temporary housing and transit centres administered by the Housing Authority in 1985. See Hong Kong Housing Authority, A Review of Public Housing Allocation Policies: A Consultative Document, April, 1984' p.8 and Hong Kong Government Information Services, Hong Kong 1986 (Hong Kong Government Printer, 1986), p. 142.
2. The production of public housing has been criticized as being inadequate because of constraints imposed by the practice of self-financing since the reconstitution of the Housing Authority in 1973.
3. All capital expenditure on the rental estates is amortized over a period of 40 years.
4. Hong Kong Housing Authority, Annual Report, pp. 3-4.
5. Hong Kong Government Information Services, Address by H.E. the Governor Sir Murray MacLehose, G.B.E., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., at the Opening Session of the Legislative Council on 6 Oct. 1976 (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1976) p. 6.
6. Hong Kong 1986. (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1986), p. 137.
7. Some argued that the privileges given to public housing tenants in buying HOS flats should not continue unless there is a guarantee that Waiting List applicants will take up the flats thus surrendered. See Wah Kiu Yat Po, June 8, 1986. Others argued that it would make sense to confine the scheme to the middle-income residents of public rental housing rather than open it to other middle-income groups if it is the purpose of the scheme to vacate rental units for those most in need. See A. Ng, "Hong Kong's Housing: Review of Needs and Provision," in J. F. Jones (ed.), The Common Welfare: Hong Kong's Social Services (Hong Kong: The Chinese



University Press, 1981), p. 80.

8. This could possibly be interpreted as a stabilization of the HOS building programme following the earlier rush of flat completion in 1985/86.
9. For the latter view, see Hong Kong Government Information Services, Daily Information Bulletin, March 27, 1986.
10. Although it is known that the recent sale of around 5000 trident block units from the rental programme under HOS at Phases VIA and VIIA was exclusively for the existing public housing tenants, the number of rental flats being transferred is far more than this figure. The exact numbers are difficult to trace because rental flats at different stages of development have been transferred. But it is found that at least seven HOS courts consisting of another 5000 units were the result of such a transfer prior to 1984. For details, see Hong Kong Housing Authority, Annual Report 1980/81 and 1980/82, p. 38 and 36, respectively.
11. The middle-income housing project, although now defunct, is an indication of such an attempt.
12. In the 1985/86 Budget, around \$400 million was transferred from the Home Ownership Fund to General Revenue by the government. Real Estate Times, March 1985, p. 10.
13. For an analysis of the motives of the transfer of rental flats for sale under HOS, see "Public Housing for Sales," Hong Kong News Journal, 11, August 20, 1983, pp. 28-34.
14. It has been claimed that the HOS flats are comparable to good private housing. Hong Kong Housing Authority, The First Two Million. (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1980), p. 57.
15. In addition to their relatively low prices -- the HOS flats are sold at about 20 - 25% discount of the prevailing market price, there are favourable mortgage facilities available to HOS flat buyers.
16. Private developers do not deny the importance of HOS in offering home ownership opportunity to those who cannot afford to buy at the market place especially before the collapse of the property market in 1981. But they doubt whether it should be expanded when the prevailing prices are fairly affordable. For arguments against HOS, see K.S. Liu, "HOS policy seriously attacks private domestic sector," Economic Digest, July 30, 1984, pp. 6-7. Charles Sin, the chairman of the Home Ownership Committee, Housing Authority, has responded by pointing out that "many people prefer to buy flats built by private developers because of the restriction on the resale of HOS flats. And private developers have more freedom in deciding where to develop and the design." Positive impacts of the HOS on the property market were analyzed by J. K. C. Lee in "The Development of Home Ownership Scheme and its Impacts on the Property Market in Hong Kong." Management Report, University of East Asia, 1985, pp. 32-36.

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# CROSS-WORD PUZZLE ON EUROPEAN CAPITALS

by

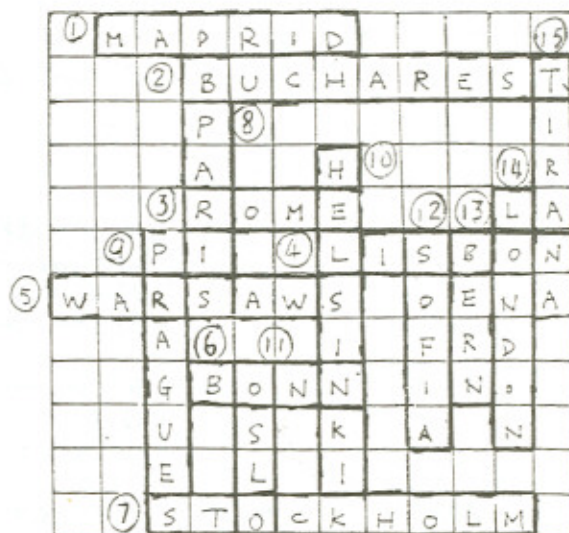
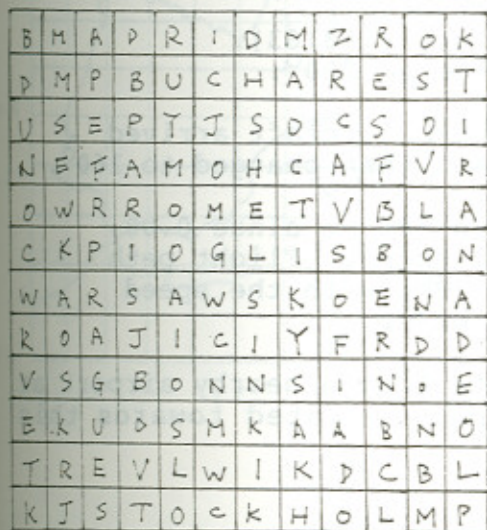
Pun Kin Shing

Chang Ming Thien School

Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

The capitals of the European countries are the very basic facts that a geography student should remember. However, it is always too time-consuming and monotonous to urge the students to memorise and recall these place names. This is a game to train the students to be familiar with the capitals of the European countries in an interesting way. An Form Three student with prior knowledge on the European capitals should find an average 7 - 8 capitals from the given 12 x 12 matrix within 20 minutes.

- |           |              |              |           |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1: Madrid | 2: Bucharest | 3: Rome      | 4: Lisbon |
| 5: Warsaw | 6: Bonn      | 7: Stockholm | 8: Paris  |
| 9: Prague | 10: Helsinki | 11: Oslo     | 12: Sofia |
| 13: Bern  | 14: London   | 15: Tirana   |           |





# FORM THREE MAP READING EXERCISE

by

Pun Kin Shing  
Chang Ming Thien School

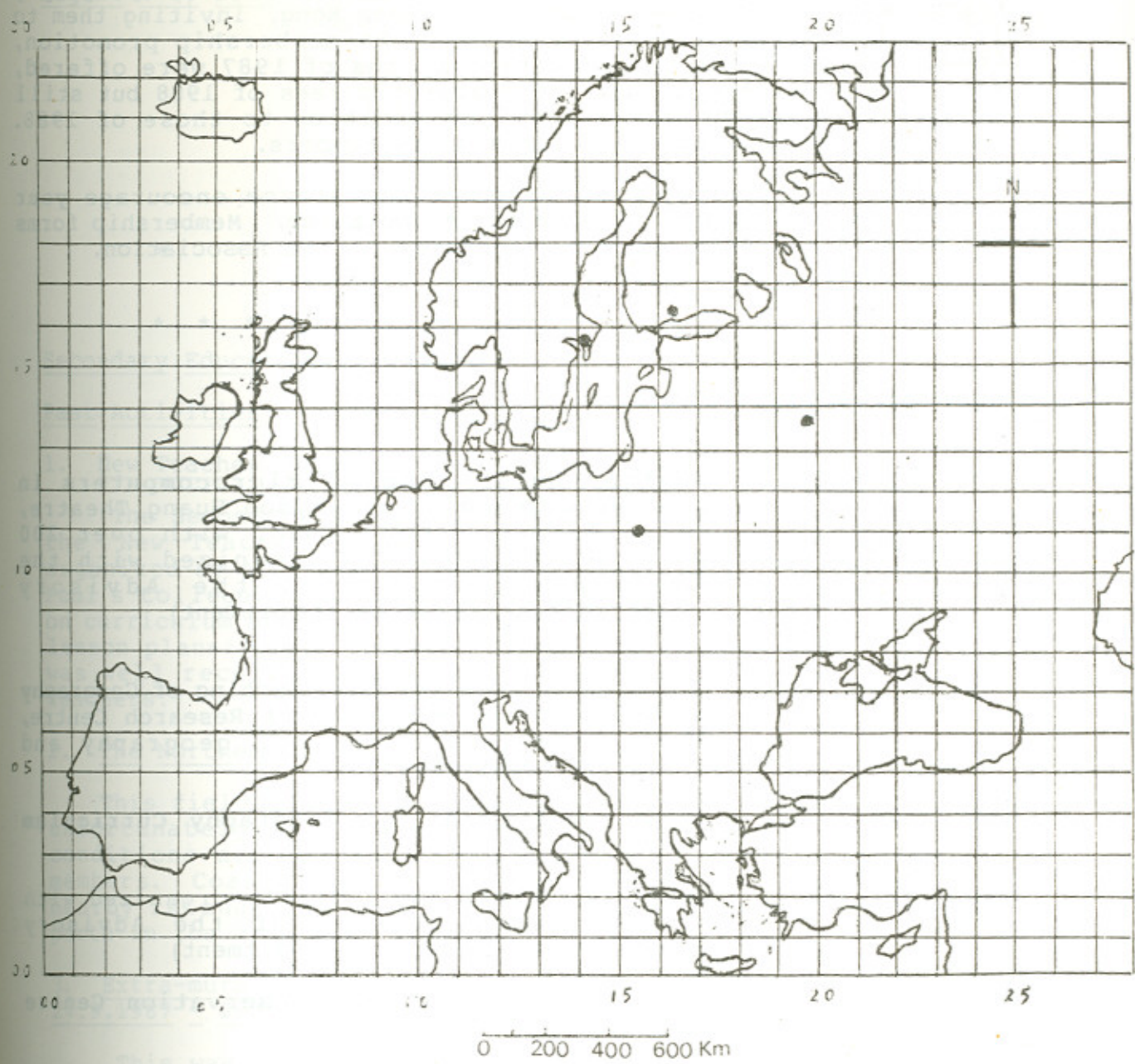
This is an attempt to integrate the teaching of map reading techniques into the ongoing geography syllabus in Form Three. The following exercise should be preferably given to Form Three students just after the introduction of the geographical backgrounds of Europe. This exercise trains the students to be familiar with the location of various European cities, and at the same time, requires the students to be equipped with knowledge on grid reference, scale, and various forms of bearings presentation. After an introductory lesson on these map reading techniques, an average Form Three class should have 40 - 50% of its students who can do this exercise without the help from the teachers.

## The Exercise

On 28th May 1987, a young man planned to drive a small aircraft from Helsinki of Finland to Stockholm of Sweden. However, his aircraft suddenly disappeared on the radar soon after the departure. Then, on the next day, i.e., 29th May 1987, the aircraft mysteriously landed in Moscow of the U.S.S.R.. The following records were found on his flight diary. According to the information given, draw his flight route clearly on the base map of Europe provided.

Date	Time	Incidence
28.5	22:30	Depart from Helsinki (163163). Flight path pointed to 250°.
29.5	0.00	Trouble appeared when aircraft arrived 153160. Flight path then changed to 160°.
29.5	4:00	Aircraft had flown 600 km since 0.00, no large city was found. Flight path changed again to 72°, with the speed increased to 200 km/hr.
29.5	7:00	Received a message from a nearby airport at N 67°W. Flight path pointed towards this airport.
29.5	8:15	Arrived Moscow.







## Membership Promotion

Past activities of the Association have been hindered to a large extent by the small number of members of the Association. In order to organize more viable activities in the future, we need to strengthen the membership. A membership promotion exercise was launched in early October. Letters were sent to the geography teachers of all secondary schools in Hong Kong, inviting them to join the Association. As part of the membership promotion, free membership for the remaining months of 1987 were offered, i.e. they only have to pay the membership fees of 1988 but still enjoy all the benefits of 1987 in addition to those of 1988. This offering is also valid for all new members.

To strengthen the size of the Association, please encourage your friends and colleagues to join the Association. Membership forms can be obtained from the Hon. Treasurer of the Association.

\* \* \* \* \*

## HKGA Activities

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <u>Nov. 21, 1987</u>    | <b>Seminar on the Use of Microcomputers in Geography Teaching</b> at Rayson Huang Theatre, University of Hong Kong, with over 200 participants (jointly organized with the Geography Section of the Advisory Inspectorate, Education Department) |
| <u>Dec. 19-20, 1987</u> | <b>Field Study Camp for the Teaching of Geography</b> at HKU Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre, Shek Kong (environmental geography and fieldwork techniques)   |
| <u>Dec. 1987</u>        | <b>Forum on Form 1 - 3 Geography Curriculum</b> (tentative)  |
| <u>Jan. 23, 1988</u>    | <b>Geography Field Day</b> (jointly organized with the Geography Section of the Advisory Inspectorate, Education Department)   |
| <u>Jan. 1988</u>        | <b>Field Trip to Mai Po Conservation Centre</b> (tentative)  |
| <u>Feb. 27, 1988</u>    | <b>Hong Kong Geography Day and Annual General Meeting</b> at the Department of Geography, University of Hong Kong (tentative)  |
| <u>Feb. 1988</u>        | <b>HKU Extra-mural Course on Junior Form Teaching</b>  |



(Feb. to April)

April 1988

Field Trip to Hainan Island (tentative)

August 4-6, 1988

International Conference on Environment and Spatial Development of the Pearl River Delta to be held in the Geography Department, Guangzhou. A post-conference field trip to study the environment, agriculture, and industrial and urban development of the Pearl River Delta will be organized in August 5-6 (jointly organized with Guangdong Geographical Society)

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Secondary Education Committee

##### Past Activities

##### 1. New Teacher Orientation Programme, 1987

The Secondary Education Committee of the Association joined the 'New Teacher Orientation Programme', which was jointly organized by 10 educational organizations in mid-August at St. Paul's College. Six members of our Association delivered talks on curriculum analysis, fieldwork, mapwork, communication skills, lesson planning and teaching strategies in geography. The course was well received and found to be helpful to the 15 beginning teachers.

##### 2. The Northeast New Territories Islands fieldtrip, 26.9.1987

This fieldtrip was a replacement to the 21.8.1987 trip, which unfortunately, had to be cancelled because of the stormy sea conditions associated with a typhoon. It was attended by 20 members. Coastal geomorphological features at Ap Chau and the nearby islands, as well as the human geography of the fishing ports in the area were studied.

##### 3. Extra-mural Course on the Teaching of Senior Forms Geography, 24.9.1987 - 26.11.1987

This was a course run jointly with the Department of Extra-mural Studies of the University of Hong Kong. A number of university and college lecturers introduced the teaching methods and content requirements of the new Certificate and Advanced Level geography curricula. The course was attended by 35 teachers.



## Forthcoming activities

### 1. Field Study Camp for the Teaching of Geography, 1987

Geography teachers would probably agree that, in recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed on environmental geography at the Certificate and Advanced Levels. In order to help teachers meet the fieldwork requirements in this connection, a field study camp will be held on 19th and 20th December this year at the Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre of the University of Hong Kong at ShekKong.

Six themes, viz, woodland and grassland ecology, soil study, rural town study, countryside conservation, farming land use and stream pollution have been chosen for field study. Participants, to be grouped according to their preference for the six themes, will be provided with a chance for developing 'field worksheet'. Each will receive a printed copy of the teaching materials designed in the camp by the end of January, 1988.

Dr. C.T.Wong (Director of the Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre, HKU) will give a talk on the neighbouring environment of the centre. Dr. P.G. Stimpson (Lecturer in the Department of Professional Studies in Education, HKU) will speak on techniques of fieldworks and design of worksheet.

A letter giving full details of the camp has been sent to members. To avail yourself of a place, please send a crossed cheque for \$95 made payable to 'the Hong Kong Geographical Association' before 25.11.1987. Applicants will be selected on first-come-first-served basis. Successful applicants will be informed and cheques will be returned to unsuccessful ones by 5th December, 1987.

### 2. Visit to the Mai Po Marshes and Conservation Centre, Sat. 2.1. 1988

The activity aims at providing members with a chance to learn mangrove ecology and the needs and practices for natural conservation in face of rapid urbanisation. The programme consists of a film show, a tour of the exhibition hall and a guided visit to the Mai Po Marshes.

Further details will be sent to members by early December. If you are interested, please complete the application form, and return it together with a cheque for \$40 made payable to the 'Hong Kong Geographical Association' before 15.12.1987. As only 30 places are available, applicants will be selected on a first-come-first served basis.

### 3. Hong Kong Geography Field Day, 23.1.1988

This is a field study to be jointly held with the Geography Inspectorate of the Education Department at the Kadoorie



Agricultural Research Centre, HKU in Shek Kong. It will cover two topics: a) the relationship between slope characteristics and other environmental variables; and b) the conservation of countryside and country parks. Further details will be sent to members in mid-December, 1987.

## Resources



LET'S GET  
ONE THING  
STRAIGHT

There is no world shortage of food.

BUT I  
THOUGHT..



There is enough food in the world today to feed everyone. The problem is that it's not being shared out fairly.

DO YOU  
MEAN...?

And that applies to most resources. It's not population pressure that's gobbling them up but wasteful production and consumption in the industrialised world.



I  
REALLY  
MUST  
PROTEST!



The West takes 2/3 of world fossil fuel imports, 3/4 of metal ores, and 4/5 of non-ferrous metals. The average American uses 13 times as much energy as a Latin American, 20 times as much as an Asian and 30 times as much as an African.



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NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

The Hong Kong Geographer is published on a quarterly basis by the Hong Kong Geographical Association. The journal welcomes full-length articles, research notes, and comments and opinions on current development of Geography both in Hong Kong and abroad and the teaching of Geography at the secondary level. It also welcomes book reviews and field trip guides and publishes news of schools, colleges, universities and research institutes which may be of interest to Hong Kong's geographers. Articles may be written in English or Chinese. In the latter case, the editorial board reserves the right to ask the author to submit a typewritten copy or to bear the cost of typesetting. Very tight financial restraints render this necessary.

All articles are to be submitted to:

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