GROUP 1

HISTORY OF HONG KONG'S CULTURAL POLICY (BEFORE 1997)
“... cultural policy can be usefully thought of as the sum of its activities with respect to the arts (including the for-profit cultural industries), the humanities, and the heritage.”

Our goals

- To find out the cultural policies implemented by the colonial government before the handover
- To analyze how did the policies affected cultural activities held in Hong Kong
Outline

- Introduction
- History of Hong Kong cultural policies before 1997
- Analysis and conclusion
- Question-and-Answer session
5 stages in implementing cultural policies before 1997

- Before 60s: No intervention in cultural activities
- 60s: Supply of public space
- 70s: Subsidization of cultural activities
- 80s: Clear and definite plans introduced
- 90s: Interaction between government and citizens
Before 60s
Negative Non-interventionism

- Colonial government had no restrictions or intervention in cultural activities
- No subsidies to mass cultural activities

3 characteristics of this stage:
- Dualism in cultural activities
- Large influx of Chinese immigrants
- Introduction of border control
## Dualism in cultural activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High culture (Elite culture)</th>
<th>Low culture (Popular culture)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• British people</td>
<td>• General public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Classical music, Western pop songs, Hollywood movies, celebration of Western festivals</td>
<td>• Chinese opera, Canto pop, Hong Kong films, celebration of Chinese traditional festivals</td>
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</table>
Dualism in cultural activities

- Colonial government tended to deepen elite culture
- Subsidized activities that catered western audience (inviting foreign performing groups to Hong Kong)
- Indifferent to popular culture
Large influx of Chinese immigrants

- Freedom of movement across the border
- Inflow of cultural capital and market potentials
- Free development of popular and literary culture in the region

**Examples**
- Literary writers (Lu Xun, Eileen Chang, Yu Dafu, etc.)
- Theatre groups (mainly from Shanghai and Guangzhou)
- Movie production companies (local and from mainland)
Introduction of border control

- Implemented in Lo Wu in 1950
- Barrier which separate local people and those in mainland
- Culture from mainland stopped spreading to Hong Kong
- People were aware of local culture
1960s
Changes in 1960s

- The government attitude toward culture policy change: Negative non-intervention to positive non-intervention

- As Hong Kong become a place for the political struggle between Chinese Nationalist Party and Communist parties. Government become sensitive with their political activities and try to suppress it.

- The development of culture activities as important tool to stabilize Hong Kong community.

- Reactive policies highly influenced by mainland China political situation: 鎖關政策, Cultural Revolution(1966)

- 1960s start up phase: Main achievement on establish the fundamental platform for later development, and start to have cultural democratization
Hong Kong City Hall

- **1869-1933**: 1st city hall, generally only allow foreigners and elite class to enter to participant high class activities.

- The design of city hall building with European imperialism, classical style. The tall colonnade and arches attach with strong colonial color.

- It was demolished in 1947 for the expansion of HSBC headquarters building.
Hong Kong City Hall

- 1962: 2nd March new Hong Kong City hall established. It is the first public civic center open to all the community from different social classes.

- The design of the City Hall focus on its function. It used Bauhaus, an international modern style architecture, without national colors.

- Located on the new reclamation land in Central together with the Star ferry pier, Queen pier and Edinburgh Place. Construct the first and typical example of public space which adjacent to the Victoria Harbor after WWII.
Government role

- The new City Hall established during the period that colonial power start to go downward

- It remarks how colonial government adjust to the political and economic environment also to the increased demands and pressure from society

- They transit their management method from focus on elite class to concern more the whole society and encourage public involvement

- After the establishment of city hall, government department such as Urban Council and Urban Services Department start to play the role on art and culture related promotion work.
• Cultural and artistic activities start to be fund and manage by government

• Performances are still mainly base on western taste and invite oversea performance groups, but not constrain with social class

• The government referred the City hall to Urban council to manage, it have a decisive influence toward the development of later Hong Kong culture policy
Hong Kong City Hall

- Three parts: High block and low block with memorial garden
- As Library, art museum, theaters, concert halls, conference hall and marriage Registry
- It is an important cultural and political venues during colonize period.
- Activities hosted: Governor's swearing ceremony, and many cultural events during 60s and 70s, Cantonese Ten actress awards ceremony in 60s, 1st Hong Kong Arts Festival (1973), 1st Asian Arts Festival (1976), Hong Kong International Film Festival (1977), International Arts Carnival (1982), etc.
The intention of building City hall is to provide venues for large celebrations and activities.

It brings an important opportunity for the cultural development in Hong Kong, chance to observe a high level of foreign exhibits and performances.

And its concert hall and theatre have provide an important space for the arts event in Hong Kong.
The first time to set up public library open to all citizens, it open up the public horizons of cultural knowledge.

Library organize different cultural activities and provide venues for scholars lectures and artistic exchange platform, plus the non-intervention policy by government, created a freedom of cultural expression, achieve a certain extent of culture democratization.

It is the main channel for the citizen access to the worldwide performances.

It lay an important foundation for the arise of professional arts organizations and different culture group in the later period.
Free Television Broadcasts

- 19th Nov, 1967 Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB) officially start broadcasting
- It is the 1st company that provides free broadcasting
- It increases the popularity of television in Hong Kong and strongly influence the development of HK popular culture

• Controlled by the government licensing.
• Media have close relationship with government to help them to spread ideas
• EYT (Enjoy yourself tonight)
1967 Leftist riots

- In 1966, because of the increase of fare of Star Ferry, large scale of riot happened

- In 1967, influenced by the cultural revolution in China, the nationalism oppose colonial governing and demand for worker right

- Number of social instable events happened during this period of time and trigger the break out of leftist riots, which takes about 5 month to suppress

- The government investigate the reason of riots and find that it related to lack of recreational activities and affect the policy of the government

- It triggered the government to start reactive culture policies, use culture activities to cultivate citizen and help ruling Hong Kong

- It also provided opportunity for develop cultural democratization
Festival of Hong Kong

• First hosted on 6-15th December 1969

• Intention: Not purely entertainment. Its purpose is to win over the people, calm their emotions after the 1967 riot.

• After 1967 riots, the general public have strong resistance towards colonial ruling

• Cohesion is considered in favor for colonial ruling in short term, “Hong Kong Festival” came into being to build “Hong Kong people” identity, celebrating “their” place.

• Using recreational activities for young people to ease social discontent and excess energy, contend with the social ideology behind the riots, and increase their centripetal force toward Hong Kong
"Hong Kong Festival" sponsored by the government, in collaboration with the regional community, co-sponsored by government and commercial organizations.

Organized evening entertainment, carnival, respecting the General Assembly, parades, Grand Parade, agricultural exhibitions, carnivals, youth night, Miss Hong Kong Festival elections.
1970s
70s – Developing cultural activities on the base of 1960s

• Preference: Western pop culture

**Hong Kong Festival (1971, 1973):**
Free entertainment and performance – pop songs, exhibitions, Cantonese opera, musician, fashion show ...

• Downsized
• Canceled after 1973

But bring up the atmosphere of free entertainment
⇒ Lots of entertainment/ cultural activities come up at 70s
Urban Council as Leading Role

- **Background:** 1970s Hong Kong - Started to become an international city
  Wealthy society → demand for more cultural activities

- **Government Role (Urban Council):**
  "Coordinator, activator, infrastructure provider and facilitator."
  - NOT ONLY work up on venues
  - provides funding and financial aid
  - bring up young organizations and develop new art forms.

- **1973:**
  Urban Council (UC) = self-financed institution
  More resources for developing performing arts
1973: UC provide financial aid to Hong Kong Arts Festival

**MUSIC**
- New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra
- London Philharmonic Orchestra
- Menuhin Festival Orchestra

**RECITAL**
- Soprano: Elisabeth Schwarzkopf
- Violin: Yehudi Menuhin

**POPULAR MUSIC**
- Tom Paxton
- The Sweet
- LuLu
- Julie Felix

**DANCE**
- Royal Danish Ballet
- New London Ballet
- Royal Classical Javanese Dancers
- Paco Pena’s Flamenco Puro

**THEATRE**
- Bristol Old Vic Company
1977: UC operated *Hong Kong International Film Festival*

- **Western pop**

- Bring World Cinema to Hong Kong

- 1978: Included its pioneering Hong Kong cinema retrospective on Cantonese films of the 1950s
Subsidies & funding of Urban Council focused on performing arts. Entertaining elements of performing arts can keep the society stable.

- Hong Kong Arts Centre (1977)
- The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (1974)
- Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra (1977)
- Hong Kong Repertory Theatre (1977)
- Hong Kong Ballet (1979)
- City Contemporary Dance Company (1979)
- Chung Ying Theatre Company (1979)

Manage and fund by Urban Council

Fund by ADC at 1990s
Labor Legislation amended →
working time reduced + more statutory holiday

- Demand for leisure entertainment – Pop culture
  Movies, TV programme and Cantonese pop songs

Identity of “Hong Konger” and local culture being shaped through pop entertainment
Before 1980s, the British Colonial Government was always criticized for adopting a cultural policy of having no policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive policy</th>
<th>Prescriptive policy</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>• Attempt to practice policies in concrete and scattered form, gradually shape a set of administrative standard</td>
<td>• Involve with formulating policies and proposals</td>
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The formulation of arts and cultural polices and cultural institutional reforms were formally introduced to the government's policy agenda in 1980s.
Social Environment

- Christmas youth riots of 1981
- New Year youth riots of 1982

Cultural Environment

- Wave of establishing arts group
  - Hong Kong Dance Company (1981)
  - Hong Kong Festival Fringe and Arts Festival (1982)
  - Zuni Icosahedron (1982)
  - Exploration Theatre (1984)

Political Environment

- Unbalanced power of Urban Council
- Sir Murray MacLehose’s first official visit to China in 1979
  - Signing of “Sino-British Joint Declaration” in 1984
Policy objectives

a. the provision of the necessary venues and facilities for the performing arts;
b. the development of community for the general public;
c. the provision of training in the performing arts at the pre-vocational and vocational level;
d. the development of professional performance groups;
e. the achievement of the highest standards possible within the constraints of finance and available resources;
f. the establishment of the Advisory Council for the performing Arts; and
g. general support and encouragement of performing arts organizations
117 major cultural venues of varying size and capacity situated at accessible locations all over the territory

Council for the Performing Arts (CFPA) has been established to advise the Government on all aspects of the development of the performing arts

The establishment of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts at the vocational level

As a host to a variety Arts Festival
  • the Hong Kong Fringe Festival
  • the International Film Festival
  • the biennial Festival of Asian Arts
  • the biennial Regional Council Festival
  • the International Arts Carnival
1980s was the first time Hong Kong government formulated cultural policy with definite objectives.

“... was out of political consideration and history accumulation, it did not equipped with rational thinking and cultural horizon.”
Example: Arts funding

- **World trend**
  - Generation of non-private benefits for the society at large in the long-run;
  - Nurturing the artistic and creative capacity of the population;
  - Achieving a balanced development of the various aspects of cultural life

- **Hong Kong**
  - The conceptual framework objective of the Hong Kong Government's public expenditure policy on arts and culture has not been spelt out not until 1997
“At present the work and expenses public expenditure in arts and culture are distributed among various governmental bodies and departments **without a unified policy, each operating according to its own experience and short-term strategy.** It results in tremendous difficulties in overall assessment and uneven distribution of resources.”
It took more than 20 years of time to draw up a definite framework of cultural policy and the collaboration between governmental bodies were still chaos.

“trouble trouble when trouble troubles you”
The cultural policies were tools to maintain social order under political unrest and entertainments to polish up people under economic prosperity only.
Facilities built in the 80s

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Queen Elizabeth Stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tsuen Wan City Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Hong Kong Coliseum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ko Shan Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Sha Tin Town Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuen Mun Town Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Hong Kong Cultural Centre</td>
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The facilities are mainly designed for:
1. Sports activities
2. Performing arts

(Managed by the Urban Council)
Restructure of branches
1989

Broadcasting, Culture and Sport branch

Municipal Services Branch

Broadcasting Authority

Administration Branch
Structure of government department - 1989

Chief Secretary

Broadcasting, Culture and Sport branch

Regional Services Department

Urban Service Department

Urban Council
Conclusion for the 80s

- More facilities are built
  - To build an image of a prosperous city
  - Defining culture as leisure and entertainment

- Citizens are allowed to participate (with limited rights) in the consultation period of art activities

- More subsidies are provided to art groups
  - Mainly for performing art
  - Ignore some art related works. E.g. Art education, art critic
Conclusion for the 80s (cont’d)

- **Performances in HK**
  - Organized by Government
    - Import from other countries
    - Require large amount of money
  - Organized by merchandised group
    - Mainly copy from existing works
    - Lack of creativity
  - Organized by local art group
    - Experimental
    - Not meeting certain standards (from Europe)
Background

- Tiananmen Square protest in 1989
- Handover of Hong Kong
  - waves of mass migrations

- Different measures to settle the unstable
  - capital constructions
  - cultural development
Inviting consultants for art policy

• Peter Brinson
  1. High priority for culture
  2. Seek additional sources of finance
  3. Redistribute responsibilities between the Government and the municipal councils
  4. Academy for Performing Arts become the link between different culture related councils
  5. Advisory services and training for local arts administrators
• Peter Brinson’s suggestion in 1989 cannot be fully applied
  → Lack of funds
  → HK government lack of determination

• 1990: Colin Tweedy
  → Investigate how to gain financial support (Business Sponsorship) for art development
Making arts a public issue

- Survey on Population’s Attitude to the Performing Arts in Hong Kong in 1992


- Seek, collect and categorize the feedback received to formulate a coherent and feasible policy directive.
Transformation of Art Institution

- March 1994: Council for Performing Arts (Performing arts)

  Hong Kong Arts Development Council (Performing arts, visual arts, literature)

- June 1995: became a statutory body, introduced elected members

- Main roles: grant allocation, policy and planning, advocacy, promotion and development, and programme planning.
Five-Year Strategic Plan (1995)

- a five-year planning span was too long and unwieldy a period in which to address the changing pace and issues of the times.

Cultural education policy "藝術教育政策" (1996)

- To promote culture in schools
- Make arts being more common
During the transition period before the handover of HK, the government and public institutions started to publish a series of micro-policies.

The cultural sector also gave their response and critics to the policies.

Interaction between the government, cultural sector and the public.
Analysis & Conclusion
Analysis & Conclusion

- Before 60s: 
- 60s: Space AND Activities
- 70s: Activities AND Institutions
- 80s: Institutions AND Space
- 90s (before 1997): Players
Discussion

- For what the cultural policies are done? Why?
  - Resisting People’s Republic of China?
  - Turning Hong Kong into United Kingdom?

- For whom the cultural policies are done?
  - UK? Hong Kong people?

- What is DONE = What CAN be done?
- Facilitation or Limitation??
If the British government knew that they were going to leave Hong Kong soon, why would they bother to build those cultural facilities? What are the benefits of doing so?

Why do you think that Hong Kong Festival had stopped?