

**Mapping the Sexual Landscape: A Study of the  
Family Planning Association of Hong Kong  
(1950s - 1980s)**

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## **Abstract**

Abstract of thesis entitled: *Mapping the Sexual Landscape: A Study of the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (1950s - 1980s)*, submitted by CHO Man-kit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Gender Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (July 2013).

The study aims to fill the lacuna in the scholarship on the colonial history of Hong Kong by constructing a cultural history of the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (FPA). It was first established as the Hong Kong Eugenics League in 1936. After the World War II in 1950, it was reconstituted and renamed the FPA, resuming its work on the promotion and provision of family planning across the colony. By virtue of its elite background, the FPA began to receive subvention by the colonial government in 1955 and substantially increased its work. By the mid-70s, family planning had been widely known and practiced with a sustained downward trend in the birth rate. In fact, prior to the 70s, the FPA was the only voluntary group heavily subvented to provide family planning services which the colonial government deemed important but refrained itself from direct participation. This collaborative relation between the government and the FPA was fundamental to both parties in that the FPA was encouraged to advance its role as a cultural intermediary on the institutional basis while the government could exercise population control through an agent so as to minimize resistance. In disseminating the knowledge of family planning and contraceptive devices, the FPA not only contributed to limiting the size of family and brining down the population growth, it also modernized the society by providing people with a set of new language and tools to envision, express,

experience and organize their sexuality. In other words, the uniqueness of the FPA lies in being a voluntary group that actively engaged itself in making Hong Kong modern through transforming our reproductive and sexual body. The study is set to examine how the FPA tactfully made use of its dual roles as a non-governmental organization and a semi-official agent to contribute to the making of sexual modernity. To this end, the study will focus on the FPA's role in the formation of population policy, its discursive production of family and marriage and its initiative to develop the Family Life Education programme. And in each of these domains, an emphasis will be placed on laying bare in what way the FPA produced new sexual knowledge.

# 勘察性地景：香港家庭計劃指導會之研究（1950s - 1980s）

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## 概要

本論文以研究香港家庭計劃指導會（下稱「家計會」）的文化史為切入點，填補香港殖民歷史研究的不足。家計會前身為1936年成立的香港優生學會。二次大戰後重組並易名為現今使用的名稱，恢復為全港市民提供家庭計劃知識和方法的服務。憑藉其精英背景，家計會從1955年開始便獲得殖民政府資助，大幅度擴展它的工作。70年代前，家庭計劃在錄得持續出生率下降的情況下廣為大眾認識和實踐。其實，在70年代前，因為殖民政府不願直接提供服務，家計會是唯一一間獲大額公帑資助的家庭計劃服務機構。家計會與政府的合作關係對雙方的工作都舉足輕重。透過合作，家計會可以在政府的支持下積極扮演文化中介者的角色，而政府則通過家計會推行人口控制，減少出現反對聲音的機會。家計會在傳遞家庭計劃知識和工具時，不但減少了家庭的大小和人口膨脹的速度，還向市民提供了一套思考、表達、經驗和組織「性」(sexuality)的新語言和方法，將社會帶向現代化的發展方向。易言之，家計會的獨特之處在於作為一所志願團體，它通過改造我們的具有性慾和生殖功能的身體，積極地介入了香港的現代性。本論文將會研究家計會如何策略地利用非政府組織和政府代理人這兩個重疊的身份打造香港的性現代性。為此，本論文將聚焦分析家計

會在政府制訂人口政策的角色、它生產的家庭和婚姻論述，以及它所推行的家庭生活教育計劃，並就每個範疇，揭示家計會如何生產新的性知識。

## Acknowledgements

In retrospect, the present study was not what I had planned. The diversion from my original proposal to an analysis of Hong Kong sexual modernity originated from my grievances about and bewilderment with the serious backlash against the rights of sexual minorities since 2000. As a sexual rights activist, I was dissatisfied with the simplistic explanation that the Hong Kong Chinese were inherently conservative. In order to make sense of the present situation I am confronted, I decided to make a detour to giving a more nuanced analysis of the formation of Hong Kong sexual modernity, looking backward to locate how heterosexual marriage, family and the youth were constructed. The study was not meant to have immediate political implications. However, it will surely form part and parcel of my thinking and involvement in the sexual minorities movement.

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to my mentor, Prof. Angela Wong Wai-ching, for her unfailing support and inspirations. She always came up with sharp comments that exposed the weaknesses of some of my arguments and intellectual confusions. I am deeply sorry for keeping her late at night to read my manuscripts for our morning meeting.

Another accident, or serendipity as I prefer to say, was that this study took much longer time to complete. Without Ah Lai, my same-sex partner of more than a decade, to shoulder the economic burden of paying the rental, I could not have finished the dissertation. In this sense, the study was partially funded by him. No

matter what might happen in the future, I have owed him so much, financially and emotionally.

I would like to thank all of my friends who helped me in one way or another during the 7 solid years of my graduate study. Special thanks go to my mother Ann, Ah Lai, my twin brother Big Cho, P Zai and Jonas Chung for their love, warm company and encouragement.

It is sad that my father Cho Kai-wai and my friend Carmela Fung, who passed away last year, could not be able to join me to celebrate the completion of this overdue dissertation. I know you two would have felt proud of me if you were here. Thank you for having nurtured me a lot.

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## **Introduction: Why the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong Matters?**

In 2002, the first Chief Executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Tung Chee-hwa (董建華) announced in his *2002 Policy Address* that an ad hoc Task Force on Population Policy (hereafter the Task Force) be set up. It was charged with a task to look into what demographic impact of negative population growth would have on Hong Kong's economy and, on the basis of its findings, to suggest policy recommendations. Despite the fact the Tung's government was so proactive in responding to the aging population, family planning was surprisingly considered subsidiary at best or misunderstood to be a synonym for birth control at worst by the Task Force.<sup>1</sup> Having mistaken family planning for "birth control" which runs counter to the very initiative to address low fertility, the Task Force asked the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (hereafter FPA) to consider changing its name.

The fact that the FPA is singled out for deliberation by the Task Force is itself a testimony to its widely recognized work on the promotion and provision of family

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<sup>1</sup> There used to be a subtle difference between the notions of "birth control" and "population control," though they are increasingly used interchangeably. In the early 19th century, "population control" primarily referred to the control of population composition in terms of race, ethnicity and class through the racial hygiene movement. The Jewish Holocaust is a prime example. A theory of racial or ethnic superiority, being part of eugenic thoughts, often underpins the theory and practice of "population control." In contrast, the notion of "birth control" can be dated back to the 1840s as one of the issues that the American women's rights movement took up. The advocacy of "birth control" often grounds itself in terms of women's autonomy and appeals to women (and men, sometimes) across class, race and ethnicity. Nevertheless, "birth control" and "population control" often work together and lend justifications to each other at some historical junctures. Between the 1920s and 1930s, Eugenics, as a project to improve human quality in a scientific manner, went bankrupt when the Nazi racial sterilization program earned it a notorious name. However, the increasing popularization of Malthusian theory of population in that period lends a brand-new but powerful rhetoric to the notion of Eugenics, saving it from the verge of obsolescence. By framing population problem in terms of economic growth, social development and political stability, eugenic ideas with Malthusianism persist in the discourses of "birth control." See Omnia El Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007). The story of the FPA in Hong Kong shares a similar trajectory. In fact, the former of the FPA is the Hong Kong Eugenics League founded by expatriates who had connections with eugenics groups in London. However, after the reconstitution of the League into the FPA in 1950, its eugenic flavor faded away though its insistence on scientism persisted.

planning. For instance, in 1972 alone, over 80% of women who had already heard of the pill and intra-uterine devices, the two contraceptive devices highly recommended and offered by the FPA.<sup>2</sup> And, nearly half of the women (i.e., 48%) who had ever practiced birth control learnt it from the FPA. Because the FPA was very successful in having family planning widely known and practiced, its name is strongly associated with its this aspect of work at the expense of all others.

This stereotype impedes a full analysis of the rich history of the FPA. In fact, the FPA has been in a kind of partnership with the two governments before and after the handover. Their relation was so close that the FPA is often perceived as an official or semi-official organization. Therefore, not only is it impossible to discuss the post-war population of Hong Kong without making reference to the FPA's work, it is also impossible or at least incomplete to understand the construction of sexual modernity in colonial times without examining the role of the FPA and its collaborative relation with the government. However, many scholarly works on the Hong Kong colonial history that begin with or take demographic changes as their main object of analysis seldom examine the FPA on its own right. It is often discussed in passing and the focus is on examining to what extent the FPA's work slowed down the birth rate as

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<sup>2</sup> Choi C.Y. & Chan K.C., *The Impact of Industrialization on Fertility in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Social Research Centre, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1973),104.

recorded in the 60s.<sup>3</sup> Important as it is, however, the FPA of more than 60-year history has never been evaluated *beyond* such a narrow scope. Its impact on the social landscape and particularly in light of its collaborative relation with the colonial government was simply missing.

In narrating the history of medicine in Hong Kong, Arthur Starling et al., places the FPA in the historical trajectory of the Hong Kong Western medicine under the chapter title of “Health-Care Issues in a Changing Society.”<sup>4</sup> Although slightly wider in scope, the FPA’s work on birth control is still stressed at the expense of its many other work and achievements. This thesis is set to fill the lacuna by constructing a cultural history of the FPA, examining its often under-evaluated impact on “sexual modernity”.

## 1. The FPA and the Population Problem

Although the FPA celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2010, it actually has a history longer than that. It was first established as the Hong Kong Eugenics League in 1936 and affiliated with the International Birth Control League of London and New York,

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Ronald Freedman *et al.*, “Hong Kong Fertility Decline 1961-68,” *Population Index* 36 (1970): 3-18; Choi C.Y. & Chan K.C., *The Impact of Industrialization on Fertility in Hong Kong*, (Hong Kong: Social Research Centre, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1973),104; Wong Fai-ming, “Industrialization and Family Structure in Hong Kong,” in *Journal of Marriage and Family* 37 (1975): 986; Janet Salaff, “The Status of Unmarried Hong Kong Women and the Social Factors Contributing to Their Delayed Marriage,” *Population Studies* 30 (1976):391-412; Chan K.C., “The Role of the Family Planning Association in Hong Kong’s Fertility Decline”, in *Studies in Family Planning* 10(1976): 284; Ku Hok-bun (古學斌), “Hong Kong People and Hong Kong Population,” (「香港人與香港人口」) in *Our Place, Our Time: A New Introduction to Hong Kong Society* (《我們的地方，我們的時間：香港社會新編》), ed. Tse Gwan-coi (謝均才) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2002), 54.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Starling, Faith C. S. Ho, Lilian Luke, Tso Shiu-chiu and Edwin C.L. Yu, “Health-Care Issues in a Changing Society,” *Plague, SARS and the story of medicine in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press & Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences Society, 2006), 262-268.

the National Birth Control Association of London and the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau of New York. Unfortunately, all documents were reported lost during the Japanese Occupation from 1941 to 1945. However, we can glimpse a brief picture of the League from some of the FPA's founding members. Professor Gordon King, the first president of the FPA after it was reconstituted in its present name in 1950, recalled that the establishment of the League was a result of a visit by Margaret Sanger in the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> With the help of W.C.W. Nixon, Professor of obstetrics and gynaecology of the University of Hong Kong and notoriously known for his stance on abortion in the British pro-life camp, the Hong Kong Eugenics League was formed in 1936. Before 1940, it ran five clinics out of their own pockets. Its first clinic was housed in the Violet Peel Maternity and Child Welfare Centre. Throughout the short history of the League, it was reported that 3,621 women received contraceptive advice.<sup>6</sup> It remains unknown whether the League changed its name for fear of being associated with Facism. The first FPA's *Annual Report* issued in 1951 only offered a few words about the name change. It reads that "the new name of the Association more accurately expressed Nevertheless, what is certain is

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<sup>5</sup> "Message from Professor Gordon King," *The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong: Silver Jubilee* (Hong Kong: The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, 1975), 6-8; Margaret Sanger is a pioneer in birth control movement in the United States. In 1916, together with her sister, Sanger opened the first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, attracting nearly five hundred women to seek birth control information in the first ten days. She was soon arrested for violating Comstock Law, a law named after its key advocate Anthony Comstock. Essentially, the law prohibits distribution of obscene articles through mails. Information on contraception and contraceptive devices, together with pornography, are deemed obscene. Andrea Tong argues that because contraceptives free sex from the confines of marriage, Christian fundamentalists in the United States found it to be a serious threat to the sexual morality. Financially supported by the YMCA, Anthony Comstock founded the New York Society for Suppression of Vice and was appointed postal officer after the passage of the law to inspect every single mail. Being prosecuted, Sanger pleaded not guilty to the charge and challenged the constitutionality of the law in appeal. After a series of trials and constitutional challenges, the Supreme Court rang the death bell for Comstock Law in 1972, ruling it unconstitutional for it contravened privacy. Sanger is also a key figure in the development of the pills. However, because the pills were clinically tested in Puerto Rico where the literacy rate was low and the legal regulations were much more loose than those of the America, Sanger was once blamed as a racist. Andrea Tong, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> "Message from Professor Gordon King," *The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong: Silver Jubilee* (Hong Kong: The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, 1975), 6-8.

that the international birth control movement did play a significant role in the local context and continued to exert its influence in the three decades to come. In fact, no sooner had the Association been re-organized, it immediately entered the international arena by affiliating itself with the International Committee on Planned Parenthood and subsequently set up with other 7 countries the International Planned Parenthood Federation in 1952. Its international connection guaranteed the FPA to have the latest knowledge and technology in the area of family planning.

It is of importance to note that the FPA took a rather formal organizational structure in the year that it was reorganized, which laid a firm foundation on which it grew into the present shape and presented itself as a prospective candidate for government subvention since 1955. The high formality it assumed is no doubt attributable to its founding members who were overwhelmingly professionals and entrepreneurs. The clear division of posts into patrons, president, vice-president, secretary, treasurers and auditor plus a steering committee in its first year testifies to a rather ambitious endeavor that the FPA was determined to make. Only considering the fact that the FPA made itself publicly accountable by having its income and expenditure audited and published in the form of annual reports in the first year and ever since, it will suffice to say that the FPA is by no means a loosely organized charity group but a well-planned, elite-led organization. When it was reconstituted, the FPA had already set clear objectives which remained relatively unchanged in the last 60 years, including, among others, to advocate and promote scientific contraception, to

provide advice, instruction and treatment to women in need and to collect and disseminate knowledge concerning family size and problem of population.<sup>7</sup>

Not only was the FPA the largest provider of family planning services including provision of medical check-ups and contraceptives at nominal cost, since the late 50s, it was also the most prolific non-governmental organization which translated and produced thousands of pamphlets, booklets, bulletins, posters, books, video clips, and conference and seminar records on a wide range of sex-related issues such as family planning, sex/family education, marriage and youth sexuality. Its song “Two is Enough” (「兩個就夠晒數」) produced as part of a new family planning campaign in 1975 still evokes wide cultural resonance nowadays. Also, its frank, direct and open attitude towards sex pioneers a new trend of teaching sex education in and out of schools. The *Guidelines on Sex Education in Secondary School* issued by the Curriculum Development Committee and the Department of Education in 1986 bears the imprint of the FPA by largely following its framework of sex education.

The reconstitution of the FPA from its predecessor the Eugenics League in 1950 coincides with the imposition of border control from the colonial government and the government of the People’s Republic of China.<sup>8</sup> Steve Tsang Yiu-sang argues that this separation greatly scaled down the mobility of the populations and Hong Kong

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<sup>7</sup> *The FPA Annual Report 1952* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1952).

<sup>8</sup> In May 1950, the Hong Kong government imposed a daily quota system trying to balance the entry of immigrants from mainland China across the border with the number of those who leave the colony. This unilateral border control enraged the PRC, which also introduced border control a year later. See Johannes M. M. Chan, “Immigration Policies and Human Resources Planning,” in *Hong Kong Mobile: Making a Global Population*, eds., Helen F. Siu and Agnes S. Ku (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), 156.



and the Mainland, and consequently strengthened cultural homogeneity which was “the conditions for a political culture and an identity of its own to build up in Hong Kong.”<sup>9</sup> In retrospect, it is highly probable that the promotion and provision of family planning by the FPA and its concomitant western ideology of family/marriage could have brought the effect that nurtured the conditions for the identity formation of Hong Kongers.

However, in the 50s, what prompted the colonial government to impose border control was the massive influx of political and economic refugees from mainland China. Governor Alexander Grantham wrote a review in the *1956 Hong Kong Annual Report* nicely encapsulating the problem that he and his government encountered.<sup>10</sup> Entitled as “A Problem of People,” the review detailed the changes in the colony’s population in the previous decade (i.e., from 1945 to 1955) in relation to the geo-political upheavals and how the colonial government had responded. At the outbreak of Japanese war in 1941, he wrote, there were 1,600,000 in Hong Kong. By 1950 and 1956, there were 2,360,000 and over 2,500,000 respectively. The increase in population due to immigration was about one million in ten year’s time. These immigrants were not homogenous. The first influx of immigrants fled to Hong Kong right after the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. Grantham called them “economic refugees” because most of them only temporarily sought economic security and returned to China after the War. Later, the establishment of the People’s Republic of

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<sup>9</sup> Steve Tsang Yui-sang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong : Hong Kong University Press, 2004),181.

<sup>10</sup> *1956 Hong Kong Annual Report* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1956), 1-30.

China drove another new influx of immigrants who were suspicious of the regime. These “political refugees,” as they were dubbed, amounted to 700,000.

Grantham asked himself why the colonial government allowed these people of 300,000 to go homeless and live in such a poor condition. He offered two explanations: first, the colonial government waited for the immigrants who led a miserable life here to return to China. However, this hope did not materialize. Second, the problem of overpopulation was so immense that the government was not able to cope it with unless it dramatically changed from its hands-off policy on social welfare to a more responsible one that would provide the community a “decent, permanent, fire-proof homes.” He frankly wrote that:

It has never in the past been Government’s policy to enter into the field of domestic construction and there seemed to be valid economic reasons why it should not do so now. And although it was clear that only the Colony’s budget could provide funds of the magnitude needed for site formation and construction on the scale required, it was not so much the prime cost as the incidental implications of so drastic a commitment that gave Government pause.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, his letter to the Secretary of State on 14th November 1950 confirmed his reluctance to duplicate the model of the welfare state being championed in his

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 17.

homeland, Britain. He opposed to it in grave resentment that “from a realistic and practical angle ... such a step would be a mistake, and, at the present juncture, at any rate, would not only advance not the cause of social welfare in the Colony, but would actually retard it.”<sup>12</sup> Such a hands-off policy created the problem of squatters. However, a tragic fire in Shek Kip Mei on 25th December 1953 that made over 50,000 people homeless overnight initiated a drastic policy change. In Grantham’s words “...Government now assumed direct responsibility for the squatters in their moment of extreme need, and that Government would, from now on, itself enter the field of resettlement using public funds and its own constructional resources.”<sup>13</sup> From then on, the colonial government initiated the project of building public housing. There is a dispute as to whether the Shek Kip Mei fire dramatically changed Grantham’s mind. John Carroll, based on the research findings of David Faure, argues that the government had already taken the lead to address the squatter problem prior to the fire, not on humanitarian ground but out of political consideration of preventing civil disturbances.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, the provision of public housing, together with the expansion of medical and educational services, more or less marked a departure, though greatly limited, from an entirely hands-off approach. In light of the policy change, Tsang argues that government officials “gradually came to accept that they were responsible for the welfare of the local people.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted from Steve Tsang Yui-sang, “Expansion,” *Governing Hong Kong: administrative officers from the nineteenth century to the handover to China, 1862-1997* (Hong Kong : Hong Kong University Press, 2007), 73.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>14</sup> John Carroll, “A New Hong Kong,” *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 145.

<sup>15</sup> Steve Tsang Yui-sang, 2007, 75.

Encouraging as it might seem, it is far from the situation in which the government assumed a direct role in the provision of social welfare. It had been a usual practice for the colonial government to meet community needs by subventing social agencies. Although no mention of the FPA was made in Grantham's review, the FPA had already been subvented for its family planning services since 1955. Without explicating the dynamics between the colonial government and the FPA, an issue to be taken up in the subsequent chapters, it would be of help to explain at the onset what major benefits their collaboration could bring to the colonial governance and the impact that it might have upon the social scene. Subsidizing social services by way of subvention in the aftermath of the World War II bore the hallmark of the colonial government's new self-positioning and governance.<sup>16</sup> It allowed room for the government to readily manipulate over who, when and how much to grant a subvention, and subject the recipients to any criteria she deemed fit. And, above all, on top of instituting administrative flexibility and its concomitant power of control, the practice of subvention revealed an underlying philosophy that the colonial government could assume part of the social responsibilities without incorporating them into the routine government policy formulation and general expenses. It was of significance to a government that used to consider Hong Kong only as a strategic

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<sup>16</sup> In tracing the historical development of social policy from 1984 to 1997, Tang identifies 4 phases, namely, residual social policy (1942-52), partial social policy (1953-70), 'big bang' social policy (1971-77) and incremental social policy (1978-97). The aftermath of the World War II is a period of transition from partial social policy to 'big bang' social policy by which the colonial government changed its principle of running the colony at a minimal cost. Tang attributes the departure from this principle to the changes in geo-political environments. Tang argues that no sooner had Japan been defeated in 1945, did Mainland China lapse into a civil war between the Nationalist Government and the Communist forces, which rendered the demand for return of Hong Kong to China virtually impossible at that time. In addition, China's involvement in the Korean War in 1950 was penalized by the United Nations in the form of embargo. Hong Kong as a colony then became an entrepôt where war supplies were smuggled to China and a 'fortress' that Britain counted on to halt the spread of Communism. In sum, maintaining the status quo of Hong Kong as a colony was of strategic benefits to both China and the Britain. In this sense, the colonial government could in no way uphold the principle of "minimal state." See Tang Kwong-leung, *Colonial State and Social Policy: Social Welfare Development in Hong Kong 1842-1997* (Lanham, New York: University Press of America, 1998), 45-86.

entrepôt in the South-East Pacific Region and planned to evacuate in case of emergency.

Heavily subvented for half of its annual expenses, the FPA not only pioneered in the promotion and provision of family planning, it also almost held a monopoly of the services in this area for over two decades prior to the 1972 government's new policy to take up its clinics that were operated in the government premises. Even in the early 70s, it remained as the largest supplier of contraceptive devices, accounting for over 50% of the supplies.<sup>17</sup> However, the FPA received no reduction in subvention after returning part of its work to the government. Rather, it continued to rise. It might suggest that the colonial government discharged its responsibility for responding to the community need for family planning in an increasingly industrialized society by financing the work of the FPA through annual subventions. Many commentators cited above are right to identify the fact that regulation of population is fundamental to the project of modernity. Most of them argued to the effect that if there were too many mouths to feed, it would necessarily drain off most of the government resources for infrastructure, provision of medical, education and other social services. Population control was a corollary of a modernizing society like Hong Kong in late 50s and early 60s. However, what have been overlooked in the previous literature on Hong Kong population and history are, firstly, what kind of collaborative relation between the FPA and the government served their respective interests; secondly, in what way their collaborative relation influenced each other's

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<sup>17</sup> Chan K.C., "The Role of the Family Planning Association in Hong Kong's Fertility Decline", in *Studies in Family Planning* 10(1976): 284.

decisions and work and thirdly, on top of its established institutional basis, how the FPA shaped the sexual dimension of modernity in the colonial context.

## 2. Beyond the “Ruler” versus “the Ruled” Model

In making a cultural analysis of the FPA and its relation to sexual modernity in a colonial context, it is imperative to briefly consider existing scholarship on conceptualizing colonial power. I concur with Ngo Tak-wing’s call for getting beyond the false dichotomy of narrating the history of Hong Kong as a perennial antagonism between the “ruler” and “the ruled”.<sup>18</sup> He, together with the contributors to the anthology *Hong Kong’s History*, shares the view that focus should be shifted to “showing the great variety of social actors who have actively shaped the course of Hong Kong’s development in the last century and a half.”<sup>19</sup> They not only challenge the presumption of economic *laissez-faire* and political non-intervention that underlies most historical analyses of Hong Kong’s modernity, they also question, along with their disapproval for the analytical framework of “the ruler” versus “the ruled,” whether the effect of “the colonial policies and measures [were] either totally positive or totally negative.”<sup>20</sup> Based on his and the contributors’ research findings, Ngo contends that “it was a mixture of positive as well as negative policy measures, and the intended and unintended outcomes of progress and development, that allowed the ruling authorities to convey the belief among many Hong Kong citizens

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<sup>18</sup> Ngo Tak-wing, “Colonialism in Hong Kong Revisited,” in *Hong Kong’s History: State and Society under Colonial Rule*, ed. Ngo Tak-wing (London, New York: Routledge, 1999), 1-12.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

that colonial policies were for the most part benevolent in nature.”<sup>21</sup> On top of it, Law Wing-sang argues for a move beyond the confines of understanding colonial power from the political dimension.<sup>22</sup> He conceives colonial power as a network of relations existing and operating through a multiplicity of sites and channels. What he painstakingly did is to bring to the fore the importance of a cultural analysis of the colonial cultural forms, or what he terms “colonialities”.<sup>23</sup>

In concluding his work, Law argues that the shortcomings of postcolonial studies largely lie in its top-down, negative and totalizing conception of power.<sup>24</sup> Intellectually benefiting from by Foucault’s work, postcolonial studies still fall prey to the idea of power as domination that Foucault attacks. To bring Foucault’s insight back into power/knowledge and power as relation instead of a discrete entity possessed by people or institutions, Law argues for “an analysis that reveals both *epistemological complicity* and *institutional collaboration*”<sup>25</sup> so as to lay bare the specificities of the formation of colonialism at a given historical time. Similarly, historian Frank Dikötter in his work *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China* refutes the view that the in-take of “Western” sexual knowledge during the time of Republican China should be identified as a process of “Westernization” without giving a nuanced analysis of the rapidly changing social and cultural landscape of China.<sup>26</sup> Such a

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Law Wing-sang, *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong: Hong University Press, 2009), 1-6.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Law Wing-sang, 2009, 206-210.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 206. (my italics)

<sup>26</sup> Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1995), 10-13.

common view, he argues, also reifies the “West” as a monolithic and static entity. He contends that the Eurocentric “Western impact - Chinese response” model fails to account for the “emergence of plurality of intertwined modernities that have diverse origins and many directions.”<sup>27</sup> Although Law’s work on the identity formation of Hong Kong Chinese does not touch on sexuality while that of Dikötter makes no reference to Foucault when criticizing the model, both works, when taken as a whole, are a vivid manifestation of Foucault’s theorizing of power/knowledge. It is because, on the one hand, Dikötter’s work shares Foucault’s insight into the construction of reality through discourses and on the other hand, Law’s research showcases the productive and relational nature of power as understood by Foucault. When combined together, their approaches shed light on the relationship between the FPA and sexual modernity in colonial Hong Kong.

### 3. Sexual Modernity in a Colonial Context

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 12. In fact, Fu Daiwie argues in a similar vein in *Assembling the New Body: Gender/Sexuality, Medicine and Modern Taiwan* (Chinese) (Taipei: Socio Publishing Co. Ltd., 2005) that it would risk over-simplification if we assume that the medical institutions of modern Taiwan were entirely patriarchal. Rather, he asks for a historical approach where the voices of every stakeholder and player are allowed to be heard.



The relation between sex and modernity in multifarious geographical locations has been extensively documented and researched.<sup>28</sup> The struggle for national identity mostly foregrounds the context in which sex and modernity are articulated. For instance, in India and Egypt, the family planning movements emerged in the postcolonial times and was heavily associated with patriotic nationalism. Chatterjee and Riley, embarking on a historical and discursive study of family planning movements in India, identify that women's bodies were used by the modern Indian nationalists to inscribe a spiritual domain that symbolizes the "nation's distinctive cultural identity and sense of superiority to the West."<sup>29</sup> Family planning discourse, before and after Indian's independence from the British rule in 1947, supplied the nationalists with discourse/knowledge and technologies to construct an ideal woman who was westernized and modern in appearance but inwardly religious, and to embark upon the project of nation building through the management of the population.

Regardless of the divergence across the geographical locations in their forms of sexual modernity, they shared some key aspects. The building of a modern nation-state is often envisioned by subjecting human bodies to regulation in light of

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<sup>28</sup> For example, Frank Dikötter, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1995); Nilanjana Chatterjee and Nancy E. Riley, "Planning an Indian Modernity: The Gendered Politics of Fertility Control," *Signs* Vol. 26 No.3 (2001): 811-845; Denise Sang Tze-lan, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Sex-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); Sabine Frühstück, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Lisa Rofel, *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007); Omnia El Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory: Subjects of Knowledge in Colonial and Postcolonial Egypt* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2007); Kang Wenqing, *Obsession: Male Same-Sex Relations in China, 1900-1950* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009); Hans Huang Tao-ming, *Queer Politics and Sexual Modernity in Taiwan* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> "Planning an Indian Modernity: The Gendered Politics of Fertility Control," *Signs*, 23(2001):818.

scientific knowledge. Seen in this light, family planning is a form of scientific knowledge as well as a practice. But contrary to the common understanding that family planning is simply co-opted to the project of modernity, the very idea of planning one's reproductive, marital and sexual behaviour and choices fuels the process in which a society modernizes itself. Following Ning Yin-bing's conceptualization of sexual modernity manifested in the modern sex work industry, it refers to the scientific enlightenment of sex, sexual permissiveness, informalization of manners in interpersonal encounters, sexual movements, regulation of population and bio-politics that all transform the way we understand, express, experience and organize sex.<sup>30</sup> Among them, as Gail Hawkes argues, the motif of planning that is closely associated with population control is fundamental to sexual modernity in the sense that sexual drive is taken to be an animalistic instinct that rationality, in light of knowledge, seeks to rationalize and channels to a utilitarian end.<sup>31</sup> Similar to the dominant modernity thesis, people would experience disenchantment and be released from the fixity of traditional order. However, the re-ordering of the sexual landscape might bring about ambiguity and subject people to new and sometimes more subtle forms of regulation. In the process, sex is increasingly accorded more and more important social meanings which often overflows its original biological boundary and comes to be viewed as an attribute that defines personhood and is in need of rational management.

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<sup>30</sup> 甯應斌，〈性工作與現代性〉（桃園縣中壢市：中央大學性／別研究室，2004），67-68。

<sup>31</sup> Gail Hawkes, "Sex and Modernity," *A Sociology of Sex and Sexuality* (Buckingham & Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1996), 28-30.

The Foucauldian understanding of sexuality is of great analytical use here. He develops it in his ground-breaking *History of Sexuality, Vol.1* to refute what he calls the “repressive hypothesis” prevailing in the 19th Century that the Victorian period is a dark age full of sexual oppression and sexual silence.<sup>32</sup> To the contrary, Foucault argues that not only is it an illusion but is also an effect of power that masks its very presence. The technology through which power was exercised derived from the religious practice of confession, which was later diffused into other social arenas and disciplines such as education, psychiatry, prison and medicine where people were asked to tell the truth deep inside themselves. However, to Foucault, that truth does not come from the essence internal to people but is discursively constituted and made to appear internal and natural. The implications of such a conception are that the society at all levels is overwhelmingly preoccupied with sex and more importantly sexual oppression is not antithetical to the truth, or the knowledge of sex. Rather, to quote his words, “Sex is not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administered” by the production of sexual knowledge.<sup>33</sup> An incitement to sexual discourse in the 19th Century therefore attests to the fact that the utility of sexuality needs to be maximized and its calculability be harnessed to political and economic ends. One of the sites of discursive production that Foucault identified to be the most vibrant and have far-reaching cultural impact was what he termed “*Scientia Sexualis*,” i.e., the science of sexuality. Together with the emergence of anthropology, psychology and psychiatry, the science of sexuality abandoned the nature that natural science had long been preoccupied with. Instead, it turned *homo sapiens* into its object of analysis so as to describe, classify and analyze every detail

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<sup>32</sup> (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

<sup>33</sup> Foucault, 1990, 24.

of the human body and the mind in the name of liberation. The power effect of it is not an outright prohibition of sex, which is found to be no longer feasible and desirable in terms of control and progress. Rather, it produces, makes do and constructs. As Foucault forcefully argues in his previous work *Discipline and Punish*, “We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.”<sup>34</sup> It is under this regime of truth that “hysterical women,” “masturbating children,” “conjugal heterosexual couples” and “homosexuals” were produced. As power is exercised by discursively constituting an essence of the body, particularly through the medicalization of sexuality, to be discovered and mastered, the technology of power is therefore said to be bio-power or bio-technico power. In Foucault’s own words, bio-power is:

[W]hat brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life ... For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 194.

<sup>35</sup> Foucault, 1990, 143.

In this sense, the control of population comes as an essential part of bio-power in which the body is sexualized and deployed to serve the purposes of modernity. For the effective governance of a modern state, collection, surveying and analysis of the composition and structure of its population, its mortality and fertility rates, expectancy as well as the average age of marriage reign supreme. And, above all, it entails a more routine way of administrating sexuality in light of (scientific) knowledge, as in the case of family planning. Seen in this light, family planning as a means of population control is one of the many facets of bio-power through which sexual modernity is realized. Although Foucault's conceptualization is instructive to establish a theoretical connection between the discursive construction of sexuality and the emergence of modernity, and pointing to a positive understanding of power, his analysis in the *History of Sexuality*, as Lois McNay comments, is entirely biased towards the perspectives of institutions.<sup>36</sup> The body seems to be a static entity passively constituted and administered through discourses and practices. McNay succinctly points out that "The problem ... with such a conception is that it tends to reduce all forms of psychic inner life and the diversity of human experience and creativity to the effects of a unifying bodily discipline. Subjects are understood as arbitrarily constructed and manipulable 'docile' bodies, rather than as persons with the capacity for autonomous experience and action."<sup>37</sup>

Foucault's slippage into the conventional conception of power as domination that he sets to challenge calls for a review of the sociological theories that give autonomy

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<sup>36</sup> Lois McNay, *Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press & Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1994), 99-104.

<sup>37</sup> Lois McNay, 1994, 103.

and reflexivity a better analysis. As Gail Hawkes has already noted above that the notion of planning epitomizes the main feature of sexual modernity, Sociologist Anthony Giddens' account of reflexivity in modern society nicely makes up for Foucault's shortcomings. Giddens argues that there is a built-in disembedding mechanism where individuals are dislodged from social fixity and forced to reflexively organize their own life with reference to the ever-changing expert system (i.e., knowledge).<sup>38</sup> In other words, with no guarantee offered by traditions and a heightened awareness of risks (and their utilities), leading a life means constantly addressing ontological insecurity by making pragmatic decisions among competing knowledges and truth-claims. Giddens contends that the self becomes a reflexive project, an ever on-going one in need of constant reflexive making and re-making. Similar to the confessional technique, the institutionalized reflexivity has strong permeating power. It reaches many social and personal aspects. The body and sexuality are no exception. Specifically, what is important is that the motif and momentum of planning fertility with a view to decelerating population growth do not necessarily confine themselves within the framework of family/marriage. They diffuse and sometime are made to diffuse to other areas at purpose on the institutional and discursive basis of population control. Hence, not only is reproduction in need of reflexive organization, so are parent-child relations and youth.

Sharing many similarities with other places, Hong Kong, however, takes a rather unique trajectory of (sexual) modernity. It is obvious that the articulation of sex with

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<sup>38</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991).

Hong Kong's modernity did not occur in a national crisis running along the struggle for sovereignty or national identity. Nationalism in the colonial history of Hong Kong, as Law Wing-sang amply demonstrates, is primarily contested along labour movements, language policy and intellectual circles.<sup>39</sup> Sex has simply no place in the nationalistic and the anti-colonial discourse. In fact, the massive influx of immigrants from mainland China, mostly Guangdong Province, virtually makes it impossible to speak of a homogenous culture, at least within the majority of grassroots populace, in the late 1940s. And, the high mobility of populations across the border before and after 1950 when a border control was imposed irregularly suggests that people who entered the colony were primarily materially driven. What they shared is by no means an identity of Hong Kongers we speak of today but "the immigrant mentality".<sup>40</sup> The prevailing sentiment at the time as felt by a visiting British labour adviser is a sense of uncertainty and insecurity.<sup>41</sup> Although a substantial portion of refugees fleeing from the Communist rule decided to settle down in the colony in the early 1950s,<sup>42</sup> the mentality lingers much longer than expected. It is under such a particular historical and geographical setting that Lau Siu-kai develops his theoretical account of enduring political stability with the idea of "utilitarianistic familism" in

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<sup>39</sup> Law Wing-sang, *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong: Hong University Press, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> Steve Tsang Yui-sang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong : Hong Kong University Press, 2004),181.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 181.

1977,<sup>43</sup> which sheds light on the texture of cultural medium that the idea of family planning was implanted. He offers a definition that utilitarianistic familism refers to “the normative and behavioural tendency of an individual to place his familial interests above the interests of society and other individuals and groups, and to structure his relationships with other individuals and groups in such a manner the furtherance of his familial interests is the overriding concern.”<sup>44</sup> Materialistic or utilitarianistic orientation, as Lau identified, is the first and foremost epitome of Hong Kong Chinese. In the face of uncertainty, the materialistic orientation might permeate into many social as well as personal aspects. Although family planning was sometimes said to be contrary to Chinese customs of preferring a big family, the reality is that it was rarely resisted violently even within the social sector of people with low-incomes who were usually also low in education attainment. A survey conducted between 1958 and 1959 on the contraceptive practices among low income Chinese families in Hong Kong concludes that “There appears to be no strong cultural or social obstacle to the acceptance of birth control on the part of these low

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<sup>43</sup> Lau Siu-kai proposed this idea for the first time in an occasional paper in 1977, which is entitled “Utilitarianistic familism: an inquiry into the basis of political stability in Hong Kong” (Hong Kong: Social Research Centre. Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1977). It is a research outcome of a survey he conducted in 1976-1977 on the social and political behaviour of the Chinese residents in Hong Kong. Lau further developed this idea in a fuller sense in another occasional paper entitled “Utilitarianistic Familism: the basis of political stability in Hong Kong” (Hong Kong: Social Research Centre. Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1977), “From Traditional Familism to Utilitarianistic Familism: The Metamorphosis of Familial Ethos among the Hong Kong Chinese” (Hong Kong: Social Research Centre. Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1978) and *Society and Politics in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1983) where a whole chapter of “The Chinese Society I: Major Normative Themes and Utilitarianistic Familism” is devoted to it. (pp.76-85) Although this theoretical construct enjoys high popularity within and without the intellectual circle, it is not without its critique. For example, Lee Ming-kwan argues that Lau confuses moral obligation of filial piety with utilitarian consideration. See Lee Ming-kwan, “Family and Social Life,” in *Indicators of Social Development - Hong Kong*, eds. Ambrose King Y.C and Lee P.L (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1991), 41-66. and Lee Ming-kwan, “Family and Gender Issues,” in *Indicators of Social Development - Hong Kong*, eds. Lau Siu-kai et al. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia - Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1990), 1-31.

<sup>44</sup> *Society and Politics in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1983), 72.



income Chinese families than the simple desire to have male offspring.”<sup>45</sup> Therefore, it might be possible that the utilitarianistic orientation makes it receptive for the Hong Kong Chinese who were experiencing the plight of overpopulation in the late 50s and early 60s to gradually accept the idea of family planning with ease. In other words, the articulation of sex with Hong Kong’s modernity is premised on a “context of change that elements from a foreign repertoire were introduced.”<sup>46</sup>

Notwithstanding its recognition of the importance of population policy, the colonial government still held a rather ambiguous attitude towards the involvement in the direct provision of family planning. For example, although it was often widely applauded for its 1972 official announcement of its support for family planning by taking over some of the FPA’s clinics, it was actually a very restricted move. And, clearly, it is no doubt that the policy change was largely overdue as the problem of overpopulation started to grow in the mid-1950s, being plainly identified by Governor Alexander Grantham. At first glance, the rationale is primarily economical because keeping birth rate at low level is fundamental to the burgeoning industrial development and its concomitant rise in living standard. However, the policy change is also inherently sexual in the sense that reproductive behaviour and choices are subject to policy intervention. In 1976, adoption of a population policy with a much wider scope was reconsidered among heads of government departments. Not only the memorandum to be submitted to the Executive Council for that matter addressed the politically sensitive issue of controlling illegal immigrants, it also responded to the

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<sup>45</sup> Richard J. Coughlin and Margaret M. Coughlin, “Fertility and Birth Control Among Low Income Chinese Families in Hong Kong,” *Marriage and Family Living* Vol. XXV, No.2 (1963): 171-177.

<sup>46</sup> Frank Dikötter, 1995, 12.

FPA's call for the inclusion of sex education at school.<sup>47</sup> It is evident that the colonial government came to realize the sexual implications of a population policy. Nevertheless, it seems that the colonial government limited itself to the provision of contraceptives and medical check-ups, leaving the work of sexual knowledge update, importation, translation and adaptation to the FPA. With government annual subventions that make up nearly half of its yearly expenses, the FPA was "appointed" as the main agent to discharge the government responsibility for the provision of family planning as well as privileged site of sexual knowledge production and circulation. In other words, in fulfilling the need for controlling the population, the FPA was given an institutional platform and public resources to try out their social visions that the colonial government deemed beneficial to its rule and the society at large.

It is certain that there are many sexual modernities in the process of making and re-making simultaneously, shaping the sexual landscape in one way or another. Family planning is surely only one of the domains constitutive of sexual modernities. Interconnected but institutionally distinct are the domains of law, mass media, sexual movements and many others. Equally important is Foucault's theoretical insight into the divergence of discourses. He contends that "we are dealing less with *a* discourse on sex than with a multiplicity of discourses produced by a whole series of mechanisms operating in different institutions."<sup>48</sup> Seen in this light and against the colonial backdrop of Hong Kong, the discourse of family planning and sexuality

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<sup>47</sup> From Secretary for Social Services, "Draft memorandum for Executive Council: Population policy in Hong Kong," on 9th February, 1974, (13) in CR 2/3921/76, in HKRS146-11-4.

<sup>48</sup> Foucault, 1990, 33. (original italics)

from the 50s to 80s, among other dispersively produced discourses such as psychiatry, criminal justice and medicine that Foucault identified, played a major but often neglected role in constructing sexual modernity. And, bearing in mind Lau Siu-kai's observation that Hong Kong in the 50s-70s had a particular political and geographical setting, I examine in this thesis the relation between FPA and the colonial power in the making of sexual modernity. If Foucault is right, and he is as I am convinced, to refute the "repressive hypothesis" by showing that the Victorian epoch that people take to be a sexually repressive dark age was in fact the most productive in sexual discourses and a time that was almost fully preoccupied with sexuality. Inspired by Foucault, it would be much more fertile to look into the FPA and its discourses for its contribution to the local construction of family/marriage, the youth and sexuality in general. In other words, it is of significance to give the overdue attention and a nuanced analysis to the formation of sexual modernity in the colonial time through the case of the FPA. In sum, my interest in reviewing the cultural history of the FPA in the post-war colonial time is therefore to examine how family planning advocacy, both of its discourses and practices, constructed sexuality in general and nuclear family ideology, parenthood and youth in particular. Put simply, my research questions are twofold: (1) the discursive and historical analysis of the formation of modern sexuality in a colonial and predominantly Chinese society and (2) the institutional as well as a politico-socio analysis of colonial rule.

The present study is primarily an archival study, retrieving the disclosed official documents to construct a cultural history of the FPA and its role in the discursive formation of Hong Kong's sexual modernity from the 50s to 80s. These documents,

which are now archived in the Office of the Public Records, are diverse in their forms and nature. They range from memoranda, letters, budget proposals, leaflets, scripts to guidelines. Although no formal agreement between the FPA and the Hong Kong Government was found, the Information Section of the Government seemed to serve as a media agent in the 60s and 70s for the FPA through which it disseminated its latest press releases and information to the public. However, the documents archived in the Office are far from complete. For instance, it only holds the official minutes of the FPA's annual general meetings from 1965 to 1969 and from 1971 to 1973. Although this sporadic collection of documents coincidentally falls within the critical years in which the Government deliberated over the formulation of population policy, the unavailability of the documents before and after these two periods unfortunately constitutes a blind spot of the present study, effectively limiting me from elucidating in what ways the FPA positioned itself strategically in the first decade after its reconstitution in 1950. And, I found that a report by a Political Adviser that had been originally annexed to the agenda of a meeting was deliberately expunged. A piece of note was attached at the same place, notifying the relocation of the appendix to a file folder that the Office does not hold. To compensate, the present study also relies on newspapers, Hansards, biographies and various publications of the FPA from 50s to 80s.

## Thesis Structure

The thesis consists of four chapters with an epilogue. What follows is a sketch of each chapter and its main arguments.

**Chapter 1** will delineate the socio-political parameter in which the FPA, Hong Kong government, the British government and the local Catholic Church negotiated on a policy of family planning that well served their respective interests. Working as a focal point and a mediator through which the influence of British colonialism, Hong Kong self-governance and the Catholic religious belief converged and at the same time ran against each other, the FPA earned itself a privileged institutional basis upon which its work on marriage and family and sex education were developed.

**Chapter 2** will examine the FPA's discourse on what I call the marriage/family duplet in a social and legal environment that allowed concubinage for more than two decades since its reconstitution in 1950. It will also probe into the discursive strategies that the FPA adopted in making itself an emblem of scientific family planning expert. I argue that not only did the FPA deliberately act as a translator importing knowledge of family planning from abroad, it also, by playing this role, secularized Protestant conception of family and marriage under the guise of "Western" scientific discourse. It is the secularized Protestant familism that offered the FPA a protective coat under which sexual knowledge can be frankly discussed.

**Chapter 3** will make sense of the relationship between the development of sex education in schools and the refocusing of the FPA from population problem to youth sexuality through its Family Life Education programme in 1967. In response to the budding youth sexuality, the FPA introduced a discourse that further consolidated the centrality of sex in understanding young people and human relations in general. It pioneered a trend of discussing sexuality in a frank and open manner. The framework of its Family Life Education was later incorporated into the school curriculums, suggesting that its role as a pioneer helped test the water and clear the way for the government's subsequent appropriation.

**Chapter 4** will look into how the FPA and the government worked for its mutual benefits through the case of the contraceptive pills controversy. Particular attention will be placed on the dual roles of the FPA as a non-governmental organization and a government agent that it had established in its provision of family planning and sex education. It will also explore to what extent these dual roles enabled the FPA to intervene to sexuality issues in the 80s such as homosexuality.

## **Chapter 1 Pull and Push: The Formation of Population Policy**

### 1. Introduction

There were many voluntary organizations in the 60s working on a wide range of social causes. While some adopted a more grassroots approach, positioning themselves as a watchdog monitoring the Government, some established a good rapport with it and pushed it to work towards their own goals. The FPA is one of the few that managed to do both.

The conditions that enabled it to successfully maneuver these two roles are largely attributable to its overwhelmingly professional composition. Most of the members sitting at the steering committee were medical physicians. And its first two presidents, Prof. Gordon King and Prof. Daphne Chun, were renowned professors in Gynaecology here and abroad while the third one, though without medical training, was Mrs. Ellen Li Shui-pui, who was the first woman appointed to the Urban and Legislative Councils in 1964 and 1966 respectively. More fortunate is that elite of good social position, Sir Robert Ho Tung, Mr. J.H. Ruttonjee, Mr. Lawrence Kadoorie and Mr. Kwok Chan for example, served as its patrons when the FPA reconstituted in 1950. The FPA's public persona was therefore professional, respectable and knowledgeable. Above all, when it came to delicate negotiations with the Government while keeping good terms with it, such a composition added further advantage to the FPA by virtue of its familiarity with the bureaucrats' language, routine and ways of doing things.

Similar to many grassroots groups, the FPA contested the Government from time to time for responding to what it had demanded for, but it did so within the confines of decorum. It also shares with others an endeavor to urge the Government to incorporate their causes into public policy. It was particularly pressing for the FPA because the success of family planning requires a medium-to-high cooperation with the government in granting it permission to approach postnatal women at government hospitals and the Maternal and Child Health Centres. It also consists in complying with the legal requirements for the performance of medical operations and the provision of contraceptive devices, as well as allocation of public money. In this sense, the urge of the FPA for securing government support by way of policy is understandably great.

Clearly, social policy, from its formulation to implementation, is always a product of negotiations and compromises. Population policy is no exception. Even though the FPA was endowed with the expertise and administrative capacity to qualify itself as a candidate for undertaking the social cause, the Government was hesitant about developing an all-round population policy that would utilize the strength of the FPA in full. From 1964 onwards, there had been many occasions for the Government to consider to what extent it should participate in the direct provision of family planning services and whether to adopt a territory-wide population policy, yet the government had been sluggish and wavering. So was the population policy formulation.



In exploring the not-so-smooth development of population policy from the mid 60s to the early 70s, the chapter exposes a rather complex interaction among the British Government, the Hong Kong Government, the FPA, and the local Catholic Church. While each worked towards its own interests, None of them was powerful enough to have an absolute control of the trajectory. But the pull and push contributed to setting an institutional and social parameter of family planning which happens to allow the FPA to further develop as a semi-official agent, laying a firm foundation for its vision of modernizing family, marriage, the youth and sexuality.

## 2. Rivalry between the FPA and the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council

Not until 1965 did the Hong Kong Family Planning Association play a leading role in the field of birth control in Hong Kong since its reconstitution in 1950. It was the sole agent that the Hong Kong Government relied upon to curb the exponential growth of population. However, in 1965, the FPA met its first rival when the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council (CMAC) was founded that year. Having been incorporated in January 1967 in compliance with the Companies Ordinance, the CMAC charged itself with the two objects, among the other ten, to “promote the means of advice, guidance and education for successful marriages and responsible parenthood” solely within the framework of “the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church in matters which concern the nobility of marriage and family life.”<sup>1</sup> Of particular note is that in the year that followed, Pope Paul VI issued an Encyclical Letter on the regulation of birth. The Pope reaffirmed the Catholic Church’s position

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<sup>1</sup> “Memorandum of Articles of Association of the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council: Incorporated the 21st January 1967,” in HKRS229-1-802.

that “each and every marriage act (quilibet matrimonii usus) must remain open to the transmission of life.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, the rhythm method is the only morally acceptable method of contraception. This teaching was in direct conflict with what the FPA had been advocating for nearly 18 years. Peggy Lam (林貝聿嘉), the then FPA’s secretary, said that the Pope’s ruling hardly had any impact on the work of the FPA. Two Catholic workers at the FPA even openly disagreed with the latest teaching.<sup>3</sup> The comments by Ellen Li Shui-pui (李曹秀群), a Legislative Councillor cum committee member of the FPA, are worth noting here. She said, “The Catholics are entitled to their views. The Protestants’ view is that *scientific methods* should be used for the improvement of human beings.”<sup>4</sup> She went on to comment in a sarcastic tone that “the unpopular decision ‘does not mean the end of the influence of the Catholic Church, but I would not be surprised if even good Catholics occasionally put their biological needs above an unliberal[sic] generalisation.’” It is clear for Ellen Li, that contrary to Catholicism, Protestantism was compatible with modern science.

### 3. The CMAC’s Request Application for Government Subvention

In August 1968, it is against the unpopular reception of the Roman Catholic Church’s position on birth control that the chairman and founder of the Council Rev. Father Edward Collins made a request to the Hong Kong Government to settle its deficit in the financial year of 1969-70 by way of subvention. The first problem the request

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Paul VI, “On the Regulation of Birth,” released on 25th July 1968, accessed on 25th September 2010, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul06/index.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> *Hong Kong Standard*, 4th August 1968.

<sup>4</sup> *South China Morning Post*, 31st July 1968. (My italics)

encountered was to which government department the Council should be directed. The disclosed correspondences among senior officials on this matter not only shed light on their perceptions of the nature of the CMAC but also that of the FPA in general.<sup>5</sup> In a memorandum issued by M.C. Morgan from the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, the CMAC's subvention application was first turned down by the Department of Medical & Health Services on the ground that the nature of the CMAC in no way fit the definition of medical services. It was rather, to the Department, a provision of social welfare. However, the Department of Social Welfare to which the CMAC was referred by the Department of Medical & Health Services thought the other way round. In determining which department the CMAC should approach, a comparison was drawn between its work and that of the FPA, which had been receiving government subvention since 1955. An initial inquiry was made and concluded that in spite of the fact that "it offers only limited contraceptive advice" and "is designed to serve primarily Catholic couples,"<sup>6</sup> the CMAC was of similar nature to the FPA "with regard to the regulation of births and kindred problems." Initially, the application was left to the hands of the Department of Medical & Health Services, which the FPA's annual subvention applications were considered and approved. The Department, however, objected vehemently and explained that "the facilities the Council offers are social and not medical - no internal examinations are made, no appliances fitted and no medication distributed. The Council does not therefore qualify for a medical subvention but might qualify

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<sup>5</sup> These disclosed correspondences comprising memoranda, reports, minutes, notes from the Finance Branch, the CMAC's annual report and letters spanning over the period of 23rd September 1968 to 24th February 1973 come as a bundle of documents coded HKR229-1-802, which is now archived in the Public Records Office of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

<sup>6</sup> According to the CMAC's *Annual Report 1968*, however, "[o]ut of the total of 359 there were only 91 cases in which both husband and wife were Catholics. In additional 95 one party was a Catholic and in the remaining 173 neither party claimed any religious persuasion."

for a social subvention if their activities are considered sufficiently socially desirable.”<sup>7</sup> In the end, Morgan adopted the opinion of the Department of Medical & Health Services. The CMAC was therefore advised to approach the Department of Social Welfare for its first subvention application.

The incident is telling in that the Hong Kong Government in the 1960s understood family planning in general and the work of the FPA in specific *in strictly medical terms*. Their imagination of the medical entails either invasive medical procedures or medication, which conjures up a modern and scientific outlook. Here, the FPA was taken to be an exemplary bearer of application of scientific knowledge in reducing birth rate.<sup>8</sup> The CMAC seemed to contend with the position different from the FPA and saw itself as an agency providing “the more comprehensive field of marriage guidance” that was much in need but currently unavailable.<sup>9</sup> This distinction drawn between the FPA and the CMAC was endorsed by the Hong Kong Government which understood the latter to be a religion-based social service agency primarily providing marital counselling in which birth control by means of rhythm method, the only method of contraception that the Roman Catholic Church found religiously acceptable, was only a small part.

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<sup>7</sup> original underline.

<sup>8</sup> This image, which once gained the FPA reputation and resources, is somewhat limiting in the sense that it draws public attention exclusively to its work on birth control at the expense of other work that is equally respectful. This image is so ingrained in the public consciousness that even the HKSAR Government overlooked the wide range of work the FPA had been doing and asked it to consider changing its name on 2010. See HKSAR Government, *Report of the Task Force on Population Policy* (Hong Kong: 2003), 61, accessed 6th January 2010, [http://www.info.gov.hk/info/population/eng/pdf/report\\_eng.pdf](http://www.info.gov.hk/info/population/eng/pdf/report_eng.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> *The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council - Annual Report for the Year ended 31st March, 1967* (Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, 1967), 1.

#### 4. Dispute over the Effectiveness of the CMAC's Work

In 1968, the CMAC planned to apply for a subvention of \$57,080 to make both ends meet for the financial year of 1969-70. As they wished, the CMAC's application was finally approved but the amount of subvention was greatly cut to only a little more than one-third of what they had asked for. In the end, they were granted \$20,000 for general expenses<sup>10</sup>. The disappointing result was largely attributable to their religious insistence on the "morality of the methods used to achieve" family planning.<sup>11</sup> On approving the subvention, the Financial Secretary endorsed the recommendation by the Department of Social Welfare but left a rather critical comment: "The service provided is a family counselling one and not primarily a medical service as treatment as such is not undertaken. I find it difficult myself to see the justification for a subvention for this Agency from public funds as it is so closely tied up with the Catholic view on birth control and would appear by its very nature (compare the Family Planning Association) to be a fringe social welfare service."<sup>12</sup> Again, the FPA here served as a yardstick against which the value of the CMAC's work was measured. Despite the Financial Secretary's serious doubt as to whether public funds were used in a fair and efficient way, the CMAC continued receiving government subvention. The reasons for the ostensible discrepancy is to be explicated in the later part of this chapter. For the time being, the comparison with the FPA that the

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<sup>10</sup> Comparing with the subvention of \$740,000 the FPA was granted in 1969. The Hong Kong Family Planning Association, *19th Annual Report* (Hong Kong: 1969), 33.

<sup>11</sup> *The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council - Annual Report for the Year ended 31st March, 1967*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> From Ho. Financial Secretary, "Subhead 18 - Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council," on 24th January 1969, in HKR229-1-802.

government officials made in debating whether to fund the CMAC is instructive to understand how the government conceived of the nature of the FPA.

In the following four years, i.e., from 1970 to 1974, the CMAC secured government subventions of increasing magnitude, though, as usual, the subventions they applied for were largely marked down. In 1973/74, it was granted \$118,000, almost six times than it was in 1969/70. The increase in an additional subvention was mainly incurred by the expansion of the CMAC. However, its request for having additional subvention for hiring a director was repeatedly turned down until its fourth attempt in the 1972/73 application. It was in part due to the fact that the position of Director had been taken up by Fr. Edward Collins on a voluntary basis. His status as clergy drove the Government to conclude that it was not appropriate to provide him with subsistence allowance out of public funds in spite of the strong opinion of Fr. Edward Collins when he replied to the Social Welfare Advisory Committee. He retorted that the post of Director was not clerical in nature but involved substantial and active part in running the Council. What was in the mind of the Government in considering the application is an implicit distinction drawn between the CMAC and the FPA that the former was religious while the latter was secular. Before leaving the post of Director of the CMAC, Fr. Edward Collins wrote to the Director of Social Welfare on 13th July 1971, clearly spelling out his preference and perhaps a concession that “it is desirable and indeed necessary to press on the direction to a *lay person*, professionally qualified for the work and preferably born in Hong Kong.”<sup>13</sup>

In other words, he preferred his successor not to be a clergyman. In the end, the

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<sup>13</sup> Letter from Edward Collins to G.T. Rowe (Director of Social Welfare), on 13th July 1971, in HKR229-1-802. (my italics)

Government gave the green light to it and financed the salary of Executive Director which amounted to \$31,200 per annum in the 1972/73 financial year. Together with expenditure increase in salaries for supervisors and caseworkers, the subvention of \$118,000 was recommended by the Social Welfare Advisory Committee, almost 60% increase from that of the 1971/1972. Fr. Edward Collins' concession in return for the approval of the additional subvention for the post of Director is in itself a testimony to the government's preference for a secular agent to provide family planning.

Such a great leap attracted inquiry from the Colonial Secretary who suggested freezing the increase of \$43,400 and later he did freeze it at the administrative level for a very brief period. He questioned whether the work of the CMAC was producing effective results. In reply, G.T. Rowe, the Director of Social Welfare, seems to have lost his temper with the Colonial Secretary. He wrote impatiently in a memorandum dated 16th March 1972 that "I am somewhat distressed at the number of items you have still found necessary to query, particularly in the light of previous correspondence." He went on to challenge the decision to withhold the increase administratively:

These services [provided by the CMAC] have been considered and supported to the extent indicated by the Social Welfare Advisory Committee. I should make it clear that I too support them; otherwise, I would have said so. There is no higher advisory body available to me or to the Government, and even if there was the responsibility for considering such matters lies specifically with the Social Welfare

Advisory Committee. In the circumstances, I suggest that the amounts frozen should be released.<sup>14</sup>

Four days later, K.Y. Yeung, Deputy Financial Secretary, agreed to the frozen increase but insisted having the query about the effectiveness of the CMAC's work answered.<sup>15</sup> In a subsequent memorandum to the Director of Social Welfare, N.W.H. Maclead, acting for Deputy Financial Secretary, threatened to reduce or freeze part of the subvention application made in the future unless evidence showed otherwise.<sup>16</sup> In fact, according to the Council's subvention application, "only 65 persons received marriage counseling in 1972-73 while 459 attended medical advisory centres, presumably primarily in connection with family planning."<sup>17</sup> These figures were deemed highly unimpressive.

On 5th January 1973, finally, the Director of Social Welfare submitted a report to the Colonial Secretary. However, it simply failed to deliver the evidence that the Financial Secretary had repeatedly requested. As for the successful rate of marriage counselling, an area of work the CMAC claimed expertise and by which it distinguished itself from the FPA, the report provided no statistics but an excuse that

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<sup>14</sup> From G.T. Rowe (Director of Social Welfare) to Hon. Colonial Secretary, on 16th March 1972, in FIN77/75/71.

<sup>15</sup> From Colonial Secretariat to Director of Social Welfare, on 20th March 1972, in FIN77/75/71.

<sup>16</sup> On 14th November 1972, in FIN44/2321/68. Apart from the evidence submitted to justify subventing the CMAC, the Deputy Financial Secretary also queried whether the rise in salaries recommended was in compliance with the policy that no salaries of subvented agencies were more generous than that of the Government's. See "Finance Branch Note on Salary Increases for Staff of Subvented Voluntary Organisations," on 29th January 1972, in HKR229-1-802. A note of reminder was sent to the Director of Social Welfare on 22nd November 1972.

<sup>17</sup> From Colonial Secretariat to Director of Social Welfare, on 8th December, 1972, in FIN44/2321/68.



“[i]t is difficult to determine if a case is ‘successful’ or not.”<sup>18</sup> And, as a rule of thumb, it argued that “if a case is closed when the client feels that his problem is solved, then it is considered to be a successful case.” Nevertheless, it estimated, on a ground that was not clearly spelt out, that “slightly over half of total cases closed can be considered as successful.” Equally speculative is the successful rate of the ovulation method (i.e., the rhythm method) for family planning. Admitting the fact that “the failure of the patients to follow the routine prescribed by the doctors” is the main problem with this method, the report still pinned faith on it by saying that “it is believed that about 2/3 of the total cases (about 350 at present) are successful.” Comparing with the FPA, the success rate of a contraceptive method was often expressed in terms of how many children it had prevented. The report, in effect, left no way to assess the effectiveness of the work of the CMAC. Worse still, it was claimed that the Council provided educational services by organizing courses but no figures of attendance were available. Only that “invitations for talks had been coming from highly reputed schools” was said to be indicative of their usefulness. However, it is highly likely that the said reputed schools were schools run by the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong.<sup>19</sup> These schools, bounded by its religious teaching, might only invite agencies which shared the same conviction that all artificial contraceptive methods were morally unacceptable. In this case, the only ground for evaluating the usefulness of the educational services was largely compromised.

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<sup>18</sup> From Director of Social Welfare to Hon. Colonial Secretary, on 5th January 1973, in SWD1/5124/66/(72).

<sup>19</sup> See John Kang Tan, “Church, State and Education: Catholic Education in Hong Kong during the Political Transition,” *Comparative Education*, 33(1997):211-232. Tan observes that the Hong Kong Government gave many privileges to the Churches (both Catholic and Anglican Churches). The former is the largest denomination that sponsors schools which have always outnumbered government schools. He argues that the Hong Kong Government worked with the Catholic Church on a partnership basis to provide education.

The Department of Social Welfare was surely aware of the somewhat embarrassing situation they were in for having failed to provide solid evidence. They explained by drawing an analogy between addressing the problem of overpopulation and treating lung cancer in late stage. It would seem, they argued, an unreasonably low recovery rate if a doctor could only save one patient in every 50 cases of early stage of tuberculosis. However, if the patients were suffering from lung cancer in the late stage instead, considering the severity of the illness, the same recovery rate would have been considered high. The analogy is appealing at first sight. Yet, even if one accepts that the problem of overpopulation is as difficult and severe as the late stage of lung cancer, a valid and meaningful comparison should only be made between the recovery rates of the patients who undergo *different* treatments. If the recovery rate of a given treatment is remarkably lower than that of the other, its effectiveness would be no doubt called into serious question. In the case of the CMAC, the problem lay not in the fact that the FPA was facing a less severe problem of overpopulation. What made the CMAC less able to limit family size was its extremely limited choice of contraceptive methods. In fact, the report frankly admitted that “the method [i.e., rhythm method] on which it gives advice is admittedly difficult, in terms of human emotion, desires etc., to adopt but the only one acceptable to the Roman Catholics.” With its effectiveness questioned, the CMAC unavoidably faced a cut in its subvention. Subsequently, the subvention for the CMAC in 1973-74 was \$118,000, the same as its previous financial year<sup>20</sup>. This time, the Director of Social Welfare made no protest.

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<sup>20</sup> From Colonial Secretariat to Hon. Director of Social Welfare, on 1st February 1973, in FIN78/75/72.

### 5. The Role of the FPA in Fertility Decline in the 1960s

The incident shows that the FPA has established itself and was so perceived by the Hong Kong Government as an emblem of scientific family planning. Either implicitly or explicitly, there were frequent references made to the FPA throughout the processing of the CMAC's subvention applications during 1969-73. It confirms the very fact that the FPA had already secured no longer a role of a pioneer but a benchmark family planning provider in the late 1960s. Such a role transition set the stage for the FPA to build a closer partnership with the Hong Kong Government. However, that the FPA's work was recognized could only be explained in part by its acclaimed success in significantly curbing the birth rate in the 1960s. Although it is indisputable that the reduction in the crude birth rates between 1965 and 1968 is overwhelmingly marked, falling by 26% from 28.8 to 21.3,<sup>21</sup> there is a debate among intellectuals as to what extent other factors of socio-economic nature might be in play to substantially bring down the fertility rate. Ronald Freedman, Professor at the University of Michigan Population Studies Center, together with other colleagues, collaborated with the FPA to evaluate how far the work of the FPA had helped reduce birth rate over the period from 1961 to 1968. As a demographer, Freedman once expressed in a memorandum of January 1967 that he was having "a sense of history being made in Hong Kong every day. Between 1965 and 1966 alone the birth rate

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<sup>21</sup> The crude birth rate refers to the number of children born in every 1,000 people in a population per annum. The data are from Ronald Freedman *et al.*, "Hong Kong Fertility Decline 1961-68," *Population Index* 36(1970): 3-18.

fell by more than ten per cent ...”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, his exclamation is well-grounded in his analysis. The 1960s recorded the sharpest reduction in birth rate in the history of Hong Kong after the World War II. For the first half of the 1960s, the crude birth rate dropped from 35.5 in 1961 to 28.8 in 1965. A further and by far the largest reduction is witnessed between 1965 and 1968 in the decade<sup>23</sup>. The work of the FPA was often taken to play a determining role in successfully combating what the Governor Sir Alexander Grantham had termed “a problem of people”.<sup>24</sup>

However, a quick skim of the literature of the early 1970s tells a rather confusing story. Choi Zing-jan (蔡正仁), who was the then-Head of the Department of Sociology at the United College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, provided an overview of the changes in Hong Kong population, which was published in the *Hong Kong Council of Social Service Quarterly*.<sup>25</sup> He argued that the sharp decrease ever recorded in the 1960s was a consequence of the highly distorted age distribution and changes in marital status. Family planning, in effect, played a minimal role here.

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<sup>22</sup> “Memorandum to the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong,” on 29th May 1968, in HKRS306-1-98.

<sup>23</sup> The reduction persisted to 1971 in which the crude birth rate fell to 19.7. Chan Bo-on (陳寶安) added a cultural factor that most analyses did not take into consideration. February 1964 to January 1965 and February 1967 to January 1968 were *mang nin* (盲年) according to the traditional Chinese lunar calendar. People were not advised to get married in *mang nin* because it was believed to bring bad luck to marriage. In terms of the number of marriage registration, there might have some truth in Chan’s claim. The number of couples registered for marriage dropped from 12,700 in 1964 to 12,608 in 1965. A more marked reduction was observed between 1967 and 1968 in which almost 1,000 couples less registered for marriage. However, it remains unknown how far it would impact on people’s reproductive decisions. Chan Bo-on (陳寶安), “The Trend of the Fertility in Hong Kong” (「香港人口出生的趨勢」), *Hong Kong Council of Social Service Quarterly* (《社聯季刊》) 50 (1974):3. Of particular note is that *the Hong Kong Council of Social Service Quarterly* devoted two consecutive issues, No. 49 and 50, to the discussion of Hong Kong population. 10 contributors in total shared their analyses and predictions from sociological, economic, educational and social policy’s perspectives. It indicates that population gained a wide social impact in the early 1970s.

<sup>24</sup> *1956 Hong Kong Annual Report* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1956), 1-30.

<sup>25</sup> “The Growth of Hong Kong Population,” (「香港人口的成長」) 49 (1974): 1-3.

In 1971, there were only 180,000 women at the most productive childbearing ages (25-34), 60,000 less than that of 1961. It was a delayed effect of low fertility during the World War II, giving rise to a smaller population of women at childbearing ages twenty years later. Janet Salaff, on the basis of statistical analysis, attributes the reduction to the changes in the economic structure that delays the age at which women entered into marriage.<sup>26</sup> The manufacturing industry, started in the 1950s as an alternative to an over reliance on transit trade,<sup>27</sup> was beginning to get off the ground in the 1970s. Women, at that time, constituted 43% of labor force in the manufacturing industry, which in turn accounted for 47% of total population in employment.<sup>28</sup> In addition to a shortage of men aged between 25 to 29 and a heightened aspiration to more independence and autonomy, argues Salaff, women choosing out to work of will or family economic burdens were more likely to delay marriage. In evaluating the contribution of the FPA to the lower fertility in the 1960s, Ronald Freedman was surely by no means unaware of the impact of age distribution, changes in marital status and the burgeoning manufacturing industry. In fact, he came to a view that “the rapid decline of the crude birth rate from 35.5 in 1961 to 28.8 in 1965 was a result largely of changes in the age structure, partly of changes in

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<sup>26</sup> “The Status of Unmarried Hong Kong Women and the Social Factors Contributing to Their Delayed Marriage,” *Population Studies* 30 (1976):391-412.

<sup>27</sup> Before 1950, Hong Kong used to serve as an entrepôt between China and the West. In 1950, China’s involvement in the Korean War brought the American embargo upon itself. Later, the United Nations also imposed an embargo on strategic goods to China. Having lost its main pillar of economy, Hong Kong was once referred to by an American journalist as “this dying city.” The development of industry, or more specifically the transition from trade to manufacturing industry, is a matter of survival for Hong Kong in 1950s. See *1956 Hong Kong Annual Report* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government, 1956), 10-12.

<sup>28</sup> Ku Hok-bun (古學斌), “Hong Kong People and Hong Kong Population,” (「香港人與香港人口」) in *Our Place, Our Time: A New Introduction to Hong Kong Society* (《我們的地方，我們的時間：香港社會新編》), ed. Tse Gwan-coi (謝均才) (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2002), 54.

marital status, and only slightly of real changes in age-marital-specific birth rates.”<sup>29</sup> So was the steeper decline recorded between 1965 and 1968. What intrigued Salaff was that the crude birth rate of 1967-68 keep on declining despite the age structure suggesting that it should be the other way round<sup>30</sup>. In other words, the highly distorted age structure was found to be the primary cause for the fertility decline between 1961 and 1965. From 1965 onwards, however, women aged between 20 and 24 grew in number and the decline in the age group 25-29 lessened. These changes in the age structure should have favoured a rise in the birth rate. The continued drop, therefore, begged the question whether there were other factors at work. It was against this background that Salaff examined the role of the FPA. She argues that the rapid decline in fertility rate in that particular year roughly correlated with the effort of the FPA to step up its work between 1965 and 1968. In 1965, the FPA recorded the largest number of new clients (35,946) attending its clinics for family planning advice (and purchase of contraceptives), nearly 64% increase of its previous year’s. And among the new clients, over half of them were women aged 20-24 and 25-29<sup>31</sup>. Nonetheless, it remains inconclusive to determine how far and in what way the FPA contributed to the decline. Salaff anticipates two possible but contradictory interpretations of the data that:

At one extreme the position is that social conditions greatly increased the demand for birth control, especially among young couples, and that the couples would have found ways to meet the

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<sup>29</sup> Ronald Freedman, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Janet Salaff, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Janet Salaff, 11.

demand if the Association had not been there. At other extreme some might argue that the Association should receive credit for the demand, at least among those they served, since few of their clients had used contraception before visiting the clinics.<sup>32</sup>

In fact, almost a year before the publication of the journal article, Freedman *et al.* was still optimistic of the role that the FPA played in the 1967-68 fertility decline. Freedman wrote in a preliminary report to the FPA, entitled “The Continuing Fertility Decline in Hong Kong: 1967”, that “the recent declines occurred at a time and in age-patterns which makes it plausible to interpret the change as due to a significant degree (but certainly not entirely) to the activity of the Hong Kong Family Planning Association, which became much more successful in reaching larger numbers of women and especially those in younger age groups.”<sup>33</sup> However, a year later, he concluded in a journal article with much qualification that “it seems implausible to us that there would have been such a large sudden shift both in the demand and in the means for meeting it without the Association’s activities.”<sup>34</sup>

## 6. High-handed Intervention from the British Government

Ambiguous as the evidence might be, however, it did not weaken the power of the rhetoric that the FPA had long been using to advance its agenda of accessible family

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<sup>32</sup> Janet Salaff, 12.

<sup>33</sup> Ronald Freedman *et al.*, “The Continuing Fertility Decline in Hong Kong: 1967,” submitted on 20th January 1969, in HKRS306-1-98.

<sup>34</sup> Ronald Freedman, 13.

planning services. Mrs. Ellen Li Shu-pui, the then Legislative Councilor cum the Joint Treasurer for the FPA, addressed the Legislative Council on 11th September 1968 by provoking the plight of children who were out of schools because the population was so large that schools could not accommodate them.<sup>35</sup> Anticipating another post-war baby boom in 1976, Ellen Li urged the Hong Kong Government to formulate an official policy on family planning. The government's response was rather mixed. A.T. Clark, the then Director of Social Welfare Department, queried that decline in birth rates in some countries were not attributable to family planning programme, while Dr. P. H. Teng, the then Director of the Department of Medical and Health Services, expressed his willingness to further liaise with the FPA and promised to offer help within his bounds of power but, to the disappointment of Ellen Li, reiterated the same official position that "the present status quo of the Family Planning Association should be preserved at all costs."<sup>36</sup> Two months later, the FPA tried to exploit as full advantage as possible of P.H Teng's lip-service made at the LegCo. They submitted a report to the Hong Kong Government on exploring the possibility of further collaboration.<sup>37</sup> Initially, the long list of the proposed items it did not include integration of the FPA's clinics to the government Maternal and Child Health Centres. Frustrated by the Government for only paying lip-service to family planning, the chairman of the FPA, Mrs. Veronica Browne wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 25th September 1970, attaching another rather ambitious proposal of

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<sup>35</sup> Hong Kong Legislative Council, *Official Report of Proceeding*, 11th September 1968.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 419.

<sup>37</sup> HKRS307-3-5. Submitted to the Government on 6th September 1968, the report provides an overview of, among others, the FPA's programmes, an analysis of the need for family planning services, the financial situation of the FPA, the shortcomings of the services and proposed future programmes. It is more like a review of how far the FPA's family planning programme had been run than a proposal addressed to the Government.



eight items with take-over of the FPA's clinics by the Government on top priority.<sup>38</sup> Such a move that had been thought to be impossible was finally realized in 1973. The Governor Murray Maclehoze with the Executive Council discussed and agreed on 20th March 1973 that the Government would depart from its *laissez-faire* approach and adopt an official policy on family planning, in which integration of the FPA's clinics was part of it. It is intriguing to explore, given the government's considerable resistance to heavy involvement in family planning in the early days as evidenced by the conflicting views among officials and a substantial decline in fertility in the previous decade that might be largely attributable to socio-economic causes other than family planning, why the Hong Kong Government changed its mind to absorb the FPA's clinics into its own basic medical health system? What is the politics of population behind the scene? What socio-political context accounts for such a seemingly abrupt change and in what way does it set the social parameters for the family planning policy as well as allow the FPA to take shape? To answer these questions brings us back to the early days when the 1973 family planning policy germinated.

Although one or two government officials came to realize the magnitude of overpopulation, the first impetus for giving a serious thought to population policy came from the British government. As early as 1954, in estimating the population of children reaching school age from 1954 to 1961, the then Director of Education, D.J.S. Crozier, observed that the increase largely outweighed the Government's financial capacity to provide them with a system of aided, fee paying education. By

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<sup>38</sup> From Veronica Browne to the Colonial Secretary, on 25th September 1970, in Ref. No. MBS/jc/MED.-2/A-5, in HKRS163-1-1731.

1961, it was projected that there would be 67,798 children reaching school age.<sup>39</sup> Together with the primary school population of about 359,000, aged between 6 and 12, in 1961, there would be almost half million children that primary schools were to accommodate. Overwhelmed by the projected figures, Crozier thought that adopting an Ostrich policy could not save the Government from the disastrous consequences that it might bring. The magnitude of seriousness, he commented, might ultimately force upon us “some form of population control,” an idea as such was first officially uttered, though in a confidential document. However, it received no mention in the often cited *1956 Hong Kong Annual Report* when the Governor Alexander Grantham discussed what he termed “A Problem of People.” Ironically, population control as a means to curb the exponential birth rate was given great weight by the British Government. On Valentine’s day of 1955, upon an inquiry of the Parliament, the Secretary of States for the Colonies issued a circular numbered 162/55, asking all British Colonial territories if they had any system of birth control, including those run by voluntary organizations.<sup>40</sup> In reply, the Department of Medical & Health Services stated that “It is the Department’s *policy* to support the Family Planning Association as much as possible and to this end rooms have been made available at certain Government clinics, as is shown on the attached list.”<sup>41</sup> This correspondence out of tons of others between the Hong Kong Government and the British seems to render it hardly significant. However, it indeed suggests an emergence of colonial power in pushing the Hong Kong Government to give some thought to formulating a

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<sup>39</sup> From D.J.S. Crozier to Black, “Confidential Memorandum,” on 3rd March 1954, in REF. No. E.D. 2421/54, in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>40</sup> Savingram from the Secretary of States for the Colonies, on 14th February 1955, in C.O. Ref: SSA 171/01.

<sup>41</sup> M.D. 349/49, on 10th March 1955, (10) in HKRS163-1-1731. (my italics)

family planning policy<sup>42</sup>. Two years later, inquiry of similar kind was made by the Salvation Army<sup>43</sup>. In addition to repeating the same lines as it replied to the Secretary of States, the Hong Kong Government further spelt out its “unspoken” policy that “While it is the policy of the Government to support this Association *there is no intention of taking any direct part in its work since it is considered that this kind of service is more appropriately provided by a voluntary agency.*”<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, the position that the Hong Kong Government took in response to the repeated inquiries over its policy on population control could hardly make itself immune from the often uninvited British intervention. On 22nd December 1960, R.C. Elstone, General Secretary of the Family Planning Association of London with which the Hong Kong FPA was closely connected, wrote to Iain Macleod, a member of the Parliament, expressing her concerns that the Hong Kong Government was not doing enough to curb the sharply increasing population.<sup>45</sup> Hearing from George Cadbury, the Special Representative of the President of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, who had just paid a visit to Hong Kong, Elstone lamented the lack of enthusiastic support from the Social Welfare Department and the Medical Services Department. She alleged that they restrained the development of the FPA in Hong Kong by, for example, not encouraging the FPA to display a notice in the government hospitals and Maternal and Child Health Centres in which the FPA’s

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<sup>42</sup> “Family planning policy” and “population policy” were often used interchangeably in the documents. Their distinction was first made clear until 1972 when the Commissioner for Census and Statistics commenting that family planning policy was only part of a population policy. See (96) in CENST/4517, on 13th January 1972, in (24) in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>43</sup> (22)2 in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>44</sup> CR 3/3861/54, on 9th April 1957, (23) in HKRS163-1-1731. (my italics)

<sup>45</sup> RCE/FM, on 22nd December 1960, (26)1 in HKRS163-1-1731.

clinic sessions were held. She criticized that the Hong Kong Government allowing the FPA to use its premises on the one hand but leaving it to run on its own on the other was like abandoning animals to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Sarcastic as it might sound, Elstone's letter aiming to invite intervention from the British Government by appealing to Macleod discloses a factor that had long hindered the Hong Kong Government from direct participation in family planning - the Roman Catholic Church. Although it was ill-perceived, she argued, "Some officials concerned with social welfare seem to fear that if their departments become too identified with family planning the Roman Catholics might draw out of some of the charitable work that they are now doing."<sup>46</sup> Elstone ended her letter with a modest request that the Hong Kong Government publicly affirm that it be concerned with population problem and its solution. In fact, well before the letter had reached Iain Macleod, the then Governor Robert Black had already come across Cadbury at a reception during his stay in Singapore. In commenting on that encounter, Black said, "I was surprised and noted that Mr. Cadbury looked as if he were going to build this up, and this is confirmed by the letter which Miss Vickers has now sent to my wife." Black went on to explain that the government policy of no direct participation in family planning was sensible because "there was a lot of feeling on this subject amongst a large body of very worthy people; the Roman Catholic missionary activities in Hong Kong represent remarkably fine works; one had to respect their prejudices and also to maintain co-operation for the best overall result in social welfare work."<sup>47</sup> On the side of Lady Black, she replied to her on 22nd February 1961 after discussing with Governor Robert Black and took the lines

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

suggested by the Department of Medical & Health Services.<sup>48</sup> Although Robert Black explained to Cadbury in person the considerations that the Government had during their brief encounter in Singapore, Cadbury still pursued to elicit political pressure from the British government with a view to influencing the policy decision in Hong Kong. The high-handed intervention from the British Government through administrative as well as personal levels was perhaps a detour that the FPA of Hong Kong made. The FPA having built a network with people in powerful positions gives substance to my observation that it is an elite-led organization skillful in pursuing its agenda through exploiting formal as well as informal institutional channels. And this was repeatedly seen throughout the 60s and the 70s.

In fact, Cadbury's move was successful in having the Colonial Office ask Black to send the FPA of London "a considered reply based on first-hand information."<sup>49</sup> Accused of lacking enthusiastic support and cooperative attitude toward the FPA, the Department of Medical & Health Services retorted that the FPA's posters as well as notices were always allowed to be displayed at the premises under its management. And, they argued, many staff of the Maternal and Child Health Service and Obstetric worked closely with the FPA as evidenced by the fact that 30% out of 1,094 sterilizations performed at the Tsan Yuk Hospital in 1960 was referred by the FPA.<sup>50</sup> In the process of gathering views from various departments, the question whether the Government should actively participate in family planning by way of incorporating it

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<sup>48</sup> M.26, on 9th February 1961, in HKRS163-1-1731. Joan Vickers was another member of the British Parliament. She sent a letter to Lady Black on 1st February 1961 to ask for her favor to convey Cadbury's message to the Governor. See (32) in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>49</sup> FED 579/400/01, on 13th January 1961, (26) in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>50</sup> (27) in CR 3/3861/54, 28th January 1961, (28) in HKRS163-1-1731.

into the general health services turned into an issue of great importance. In other words, judged by the effect of Cadbury's political maneuver of the subordinate relationship between the U.K. and Hong Kong, together with the previous inquiries from British government, they served as a catalyst for a deliberate review among departments about the government's position on population policy. It is clear that the major obstacle to adopting a more positive policy irrespective of increasing subvention to the FPA's work since 1955 lies in the perceived attitude of the Catholic Church. It might also explain why the CMAC was subvented regardless of the serious conflict of views among high-ranking officials.

It was not groundless for the Catholic Church to carry such a weight in the Government's deliberation of population policy. D.W.B. Baron, the then Director of Social Welfare, recounted some years ago that when the FPA applied for affiliation with the Council of Social Services, the Roman Catholic member agencies of the Council threatened to withdraw if the FPA's application was accepted. After they were reassured that affiliation implied no agreement or approval for the work or policy of other members, then they gave the green light<sup>51</sup>. It is understandable that at a time when a large portion of social welfare services was provided voluntarily by Roman Catholic agencies, with government's subventions sometimes, any policy change that might provoke their resentment should be avoided or, at least, taken with great care. While the then Director of Social Welfare was aware of the strong reaction the Roman Catholic agencies might go against family planning (by means of artificial contraception), he was in favour of the Government publicly supporting and

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<sup>51</sup> S.W.D. 5110/51, on 3rd February 1961, (30) in HKRS163-1-1731.

advocating birth control campaign as long as a cheap and effective oral contraceptive had not been widely available in the Colony. Quoting Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish economist who made a speech at the 9th International Conference of Social Work in Tokyo in 1958, Baron insisted that “a social development policy for Hong Kong which ignored the need for population control would be in his words, ‘totally unrealistic,’” in light of the rising population growth.<sup>52</sup> However, equally realistically speaking, the Colonial Secretary and the Department of Medical & Health Services did not see an official endorsement of the work of the FPA to whatever great degree would in anyway alleviate population growth. Dr. P.H. Teng, the then acting Director of Medical & Health Services, even opined that tacit endorsement had already been given to the FPA by allowing it to use the Government premises and equipment. And, most of the public were simply not aware of the fact that the FPA was only a government-subsidized voluntary organization. Overt official public endorsement, he worried, would only “antagonise opponents who tacitly accept the existing arrangements.”<sup>53</sup> Dr. Teng went on to cast doubt as to the effectiveness of the FPA’s work in bringing down the birth rate. Citing the same set of figures that Elstone referred to when she was making a case for a more positive government involvement in light of a population rebound in 1960 after a short-lived decline, Dr. Teng took the figures to be an indication of the uncertainty in determining to what extent the activities of the FPA contributed to the reduction of population growth. He argued that even if every single woman who attended its family planning clinics practiced birth control immediately afterwards in 1959, these 9,388 women, when compared

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> (238) in M.D. (G) 349/49, 8th February 1961, (31) in HKRS163-1-1731.

with the total number of 600,000 women reaching child-bearing age in the same year, was simply negligible, so was the FPA's impact on population growth, if any.

### 7. The Change of the British Policy

In addition to the pressure solicited from the British Government, the request of declaring family planning as an official policy was taken up by legislative councilors sympathetic to the FPA. On 16th March 1964, Sidney Gordon, a nonofficial legislator, while appreciating an increase in subvention by \$100,000, making it up to \$250,000 in total in the financial year of 1963/64,<sup>54</sup> urged that “perhaps the time has come for Government to take a more positive role by instituting a campaign to promote Family Planning by all legitimate means.”<sup>55</sup> Without granting Gordon's request in his reply speech, Colonial Secretary Edmund Teesdale announced that the FPA's application for subvention for the financial year of 1964/65, worth \$400,000, was pending to final approval without reduction. Nevertheless, he hinted that “The problem (i.e., over-population) is ... fundamental to our social progress and one to which we must give thought as to our policies.”<sup>56</sup> Coincidentally, on the same day (i.e., 16th March 1964) that the Hong Kong Government promised to secure the FPA's finances by granting full subvention they asked for in the subsequent year but expressed reluctance to go any further, the Secretary for Technical Co-operation, the U.K., issued Circular Savingram No. SS254/01 to all British colonies, announcing its

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<sup>54</sup> Hong Kong Legislative Council, *Official Report of Proceeding*, 16th March 1964, 95. Gordon's appeal was echoed by Li Fook Shu, a Legislative Councilor, who thought that family planning would help “produce a more responsible sense of citizenship which should go far to lighten the burden of social problems which we are carrying today.” (104)

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



policy change, albeit a small one and to restricted audience, in committing itself into provision of technical aids in the field of family planning, which used to be avoided because of its controversial nature.<sup>57</sup> Subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary would finance either visits or longer attachments by British medical practitioners, scientists or organizations with expertise in the field of family planning, or training or research over a long period of time. Regions or countries eligible for application, however, must be the ones in which the local government adopts an official policy on family planning. The position of the Hong Kong Government in 1964 with regard to family planning effectively ruled itself out of the possibility of receiving technical assistance. Of particular note is that to avoid controversy, the Secretary for Technical Co-operation requested that recipients of the circular should keep it low-profile.

The change in the British policy on provision of technical assistance initiated a new round of internal discussions within the Hong Kong Government. Commissioner of Census & Statistics K.M.A. Barnett responded to the circular by raising a fundamental question of “What is Hong Kong going to do in the field of Family (Welfare) Planning?”<sup>58</sup> Apart from his suggestion that the Hong Kong Government could make use of the technical assistance to send some students to attend family planning courses in the United Kingdom and have some trained as demographers in Bombay, he asked his colleagues to give more thought to the aim of family planning and the means through which it was achieved. To Barnett, it was desirable to have a stationary population in which the most appropriate size of family consisted of one

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<sup>57</sup> No. SS251/01, 16th March 1964, (56)1 in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>58</sup> (2) in SP 300/5/64, 4th May 1964, (58) in HKRS163-1-1731.

son and one daughter. What is intriguing and somehow hilarious is his suggestion that family size could be limited by continence because of “the idea that lust is as nasty as gluttony.”<sup>59</sup> While Barnett addressed the question he raised in a rather peculiar way, Dr. P.H. Teng, the then Director of Medical and Health Services, and D.W.B. Baron, the then Director of Social Welfare, gave serious considerations to it at policy level. Although it was encouraging for the United Kingdom to begin committing itself to offering technical assistance in the field of family planning, Dr. Teng thought, it was of little value to Hong Kong. It was because, to quote his own words, “The basic question concerning population control in Hong Kong is neither technique nor knowledge but is of public education and of availability of services.”<sup>60</sup> Despite some opposition to family planning by means of artificial contraception, he, for the first time, clearly expressed his full support for officially assuming family planning work into basic medical health programme. By the time the then Director of Social Welfare sent his response, the International Planned Parenthood Federation passed a resolution at the Regional Council on 15th May 1964 that “the time has now come for the Government of Hong Kong to accept responsibilities for the provision of family planning advice and facilities as an integral part of the Government’s Maternity and Children Health Welfare Services.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> In fact, K.M.A. Barnett was often known for his wild and sometimes fanciful proposals. *South China Morning Post* reported on 21st November 1967 that Barnett suggested in the Third Annual Seminar on Family Planning that overpopulation was a result of sexual indulgence. If there was a chemical “which is water-soluble and can suppress libido in both sexes, it [could] be introduced into all urban water supplies ... as readily as I should for the addition of fluorides, which is now accepted in many places.” in HKRS No.70 D-S No. 2-388.

<sup>60</sup> (3) in CR/ASS/10, on 8th May 1964, (59) in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>61</sup> (60)2 in HKRS163-1-1731.

In supporting the idea of the Government taking a more active role in family planning, the then Director of Social Welfare, D.W.B. Baron helpfully summarized the considerations that had inhibited the Government from doing so. The first two reasons he identified were the official attitude of the London Government, which for a long time assumed a rather cautious position, and opposition expected from the local Roman Catholic community. With the relaxing of the scope of the technical assistance offered by the London Government and the ambitious and unprecedented move that the local Roman Catholic Church itself stepped into the field of family planning through the set up of the CMAC, it was clearly a good sign to Baron and the Hong Kong Government that the major stumbling block had been removed. The “general public interest,” in Baron’s word, should then thrive and prevail “without being unduly influenced by opposition from one quarter”.<sup>62</sup> The momentum of departing from the mode of indirect participation was finally built. However, as it was an unprecedented move, the officials planned it with great care. On 16th July, 1964, the heads of the Medical & Health Services, Social Welfare and Census & Statistical Planning together with the principal assistant Colonial Secretary held a cross-departmental meeting.<sup>63</sup> In assessing the possible reactions from the Roman Catholic Church and the local people, they proposed to carry out some pilot schemes and turned down the suggestion of publishing a White Paper or appointment of a working group. In order to test the water, Aberdeen and Shek Kip Mei were chosen as the places that the pilot schemes were run. As Aberdeen abounded with boat and land people with Roman Catholic background while Shek Kip Mei was predominantly inhabited by Chiu Chau population who was thought to be irrational

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<sup>62</sup> (62) in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>63</sup> (63)1 in HKRS163-1-1731.

and traditional, their reaction, if any, would well be indicative of how people of the most conservative end thought about family planning.<sup>64</sup> To de-emphasize the role of the Government in the pilot schemes, the FPA was encouraged to use the government clinics there. It was, indeed, a wise move because in case of adverse reaction, it was the FPA to blame. The Government bore no responsibility. In other words, the FPA was like a protective coat under and through which the Government advanced its own agenda in relation to population policy and other social engineering.

### 8. Local Formation of Population Policy

Having said that, the FPA was not deceived in any sense. In fact, they were briefed on the government tactics and willing to cooperate. Simply put, the Hong Kong Government and the FPA were sometimes in a symbiotic relationship and at other time in a more antagonizing one. With this strategic partnership, the political calculations that the Hong Kong Government made when considering the subvention of the CMAC became much clearer. Well before the CMAC submitted the first application for subvention in August 1968, they had asked the Hong Kong Government for the official endorsement of their plan to seek financial assistance from the Ministry of Overseas Development to subsidize a visit by Dr. W.M.O. Moore to the CMAC. Upon receiving their request, P.H. Teng, the then Director of Medical & Health Services, was delighted as “These active steps are a most

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<sup>64</sup> Among other suggestions, an FPA’s film was dubbed in Chiu Chau and to be broadcast at the FPA clinic sessions at the Government premises. Among the officials, K.M.A. Barnett, the Commissioner of Census & Statistical Planning, held the most negative view of the Chiu Chau: “... the community most seriously in need of guidance (and least receptive to what had been done so far) was the Chiu Chau. Entrenched in an alien language, with social conventions, a tendency to self-segregation and a low record both of literacy and economic success, this community really needs a campaign to itself.” A letter dated on 5th January, 1965 to the Director of Information Services. in (76) in HKRS163-1-1731.

promising sign that population control measures will meet with considerably less opposition than had been anticipated.”<sup>65</sup> He, therefore, strongly recommended the Government to support it. However, in replying to Dr. Teng’s letter on the capacity of acting Colonial Secretary, I.M. Lightbody seemed to hesitate. He thought that the CMAC was not likely to succeed in securing the assistance and, above all, the official endorsement would open the floodgates for the CMAC’s subsequent subvention request to the Hong Kong Government.<sup>66</sup> To him, supporting the CMAC’s application was not cost-effective. P.H. Teng held a totally different view which could be said to dominate the way the Hong Kong Government thought of the CMAC in the subsequent 10 years. As to the lingering doubt over the effectiveness of the contraceptive method that the CMAC promoted, Teng considered it “not relevant in this context”.<sup>67</sup> It is quite obvious that both Teng and Lightbody subjected the CMAC’s request to utilitarian calculations (i.e., how much the Hong Kong Government could gain from granting an official endorsement to its application), what they differed were their views on the question of utility, i.e., how useful it was. While Lightbody was preoccupied with evaluating how far the work of the CMAC could bring down the birth rate, Teng saw it as a strategic move and opined that the rewards the Hong Kong Government would gain outweighed the amount of subvention it had to give because “we are now freed from any likely embarrassment in supporting the activities of the Family Planning Association”.<sup>68</sup> In that sense, it is

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<sup>65</sup> (86) in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>66</sup> (88) in HKRS163-1-1731

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. On 11th May, 1965, J.C.A. Hammond, acting for Colonial Secretary, suggested a few lines to be sent to the Ministry of Overseas Development with regard to the CMAC’s application for assistance. Although he reiterated that the endorsement implied no commitment of the Hong Kong Government on subventing the CMAC, its strategic use as discussed above eventually made room for subventing the CMAC in 1968 and afterwards. (90) in HKRS163-1-1731.

the CMAC that opened the floodgates for the Hong Kong Government to take a more active role in the field of family planning and not vice versa.<sup>69</sup> And, what this implies is that the subvention given to the CMAC is just a courtesy in return for less opposition from them.

Ironically, such a strategic move initiated a cascade of changes leading to an unintended situation where the Hong Kong Government had no choice but to replace its covert support with a full espousal of family planning as a social policy. A few months later, the Ministrant replied to the Hong Kong Government that the CMAC's application for fund did not fall within the scope of the technical assistance scheme.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, considering that CMAC was a voluntary organization and the application was of knowledge exchange nature, the Ministry of Overseas Department was willing to subsidize part of the expenses on the condition that the Hong Kong Government had a publicly announced official family planning policy. Although the Ministry accepted the Governor's excuse of not "offend[ing] the susceptibilities of our sizable Roman Catholic community by large-scale, direct official participation in this field"<sup>71</sup> and funded Dr. Moore's travelling expenses, the British pressure on the formulation of an official family planning policy by the Hong Kong Government kept on increasing. Of particular note is the covertly fluctuating position that the

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<sup>69</sup> In addition to the pilot schemes, the officials attending the cross-departmental meeting on 16th July, 1964 agreed to (i) select local students to attend short training courses in Britain, (ii) give instructions to officers of the Social Welfare Department about family planning, (iii) participate in the courses held by the United Nations Demographic Training and Research Centre in India, (iv) ask the Indian Commissioner for copies of films on family planning, (v) keep the new approach to family planning low-profile, (vi) encourage the FPA to make its own films and (vii) encourage the FPA to seek time on Commercial Radio and the Radio Hong Kong.

<sup>70</sup> From the Ministry of Overseas Development to the Officer Administrating the Government of Hong Kong, "Saving," on 10 August 1965, in MED. 214/81/01, (93) in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>71</sup> (100) in HKRS163-1-1731.

Department of Social Welfare took. When the idea of a more active role that the government should play began to germinate in 1964 and was given covert support by various heads of government departments in the July meeting that year, D.W.B. Baron, the then Director of Social Welfare, had already shared his view in a confidential memo to the Colonial Secretary that, to quote his words, "... family planning work in Hong Kong should be officially integrated into the general public health programme ... [because it] I believe could do more than anything else to promote the spacing and limitation of families".<sup>72</sup> Baron strongly urged the Hong Kong Government to reach a policy decision for, in the same tone and rhetoric that Ellen Li would have had, "every day the population prospects become more alarming and unmanageable."<sup>73</sup> However, four years later, the newly appointed Director of Social Welfare, Alastair Clark, was highly suspicious of the effectiveness of the FPA. In preparing notes for speech in a Legislative Council debate on 11th September, 1968, Clark not only questioned if the reduction in birth rate could be attributed to the work of the FPA, he also opposed government's direct participation in family planning. A point in the note not incorporated into the finalized version of the speech epitomized Clark's view: "Surely not intention (of taking over the FPA or deputing it as a direct paid agent to achieve policy aim); *not HK's way of doing things anyway...*"<sup>74</sup> Perhaps, paradoxically, indeterminacy is the HK's way of doing things. With the frequent change of government officials, the budding idea of formulating a family planning policy was on the verge of extinguishment and the Hong Kong Government showed sign of retreating from covert support to limited participation.

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<sup>72</sup> (62) in HKRS163-1-1731, on 27th May 1964.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> (143) in HKRS163-1-1731, my italics.

Again, it was the British pressure that saved the idea from the risk of miscarriage. In a restricted despatch delivered to Sir David Trench, a successor to Robert Black, the Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs brought to the fore that it was time for the Hong Kong Government to consider:

[T]he possibility of a declaration ... of a colony-wide family planning programme, and the provision by Hong Kong Government doctors and ancillary staff of family planning services within the normal health services. Such a programme ... could open the way to normal Government applications for assistance in this field from various donors and international agencies and foundations.<sup>75</sup>

Coincidentally or not, the FPA submitted a proposal for a family planning programme in Hong Kong from 1971 to 1976 in the same month, with a warning that the number of child-bearing women aged between 25 and 29 would increase by a double by 1976. Among the other 7 suggestions was the integration of family planning clinics into government Maternal & Child Health Centres. To justify their request, the FPA claimed that they had already been over-stretched and the workload was so heavy that no voluntary organization could and should bear<sup>76</sup>. To K.W.J. Topley, the new Commissioner for Census and Statistics, the FPA's proposal and the despatch from the Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs were "a serious and concerted attack."<sup>77</sup> Echoed by J.K. Craig, the then Director of Medical and

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<sup>75</sup> (156) in HKRS163-1-1731, 10th September, 1970.

<sup>76</sup> (157)2 in HKRS163-1-1731, 24th September, 1970.

<sup>77</sup> (161) in HKRS163-1-1731, 17th October, 1970.



Health Services, giving a serious thought to an adoption of a colony-wide family planning policy seemed to be something that the Hong Kong Government could no longer kept at bay.

To summarize what has been discussed so far, under the British high-handed intervention and by its change of policy on colonies, the Hong Kong Government pacified the local Roman Catholic Church by giving an endorsement of an assistance application in which the CMAC asked the Overseas Development Ministry to finance part of Dr. Moore's visit in Hong Kong. Such a move led to two inter-related consequences: (1) the government took it as a sign that the local Catholic Community abandoned its position opposing family planning and (2) from the side the CMAC, they considered the endorsement a recognition of its work and a green light to continual government support in form of subvention. Since 1968, the Department of Social Welfare had started subventing the CMAC regardless of serious doubt cast by other officials as to its effectiveness. However, unintentionally, such a qualified advance in playing a more active role but not direct participation in the field of family planning invited the British Government, often in concert with the FPA, to put pressure on the Hong Kong Government. That the British Government signed a UN Declaration on family planning in 1967 and in the subsequent year set up a Population Bureau under the Ministry of Overseas Development gave further impetus for keeping its colonies in line with the latest British policy on family planning.<sup>78</sup> The British Population Council even decided to gradually withdraw its financial support for the post-partum programme in collaboration with the FPA in 9

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<sup>78</sup> (177) in HKRS163-1-1731, 26 February, 1971.

Hong Kong hospitals with a view to pushing the Hong Kong Government to go further.<sup>79</sup> The outcome deviated from what the Government had expected in that its financial support to the CMAC in return to its acceptance or at least tolerance of the Government's indirect involvement in family planning through the FPA backfired as the FPA and the British government used it to ask for more.

### 9. Pressure from within

In addition to the political miscalculation, the tensions within the Hong Kong Government as to what extent family planning was officially adopted as a government policy gave another impetus. On 8th February 1971, a meeting of the Medical Development Plan Standing Committee was convened to discuss and recommend whether and how much subventions were to be granted to the FPA and many other applicants. Originally, the committee agreed to give a 10 percent increase to the FPA in the year of 1971/72. However, the FPA later requested the part for the operational cost of the Yuen Long Centre be deducted because its opening was postponed. At the same time, the FPA asked for a pay rise from \$1,934,426 to \$2,048,708. While the committee members found the request rather weak in justification and tended to reject it out of hand, the Chairman hesitated. He worried that not entertaining the FPA's request might be read as a discrepancy from the positive position the Government took by "entrusting the work [of family planning] to a voluntary agency."<sup>80</sup> In the meeting, Jehangir Hormusjee Ruttonjee, a committed

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<sup>79</sup> Saving Despatch HKK18/12 from the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the Governor, Hong Kong, on 30th April, 1971, in (182) in HKRS163-1-1731.

<sup>80</sup> "Extract from Minutes of 50th Meeting of the Medical Development Plan Standing Committee held on 8.2.71," on 8th February 1971, (1) in HKRS163-1-1731.

supporter of the work of the FPA, took the difficulty that the committee ran into to be a situation beyond their purview of power. It was, he argued, a policy decision that should be made by the Executive Council instead of the present committee of only advisory nature. He further warned that “it would be embarrassing to answer any subsequent queries from the Executive Council if the Family Planning Association which had asked for about \$2 millions were given \$814,000 which was only a 10% increase over the previous year’s budget.” In other words, if the committee endorsed the recommendation to raise the subvention only by 10%, they would risk embarrassing the Hong Kong Government as it had promised to lend support to the FPA as long as the request was reasonable. In the end, while the committee revised its recommendation and suggested the Financial Secretary to grant \$1,447,600 to the FPA in 1971/72, they looked for clearer instructions in the form of Government policy. However, such a favourable recommendation was not approved by the Financial Secretary. The amount of subvention to be granted was the one the Standing Committee had originally recommended (i.e., \$814,000).<sup>81</sup> The confusion within the Hong Kong Government as to what extent the work of family planning through the FPA was supported required a policy decision.

With tremendous pressure exerted from within and without, the Hong Kong Government should have formulated such an overdue policy, either out of a genuine recognition of overpopulation as a serious social problem or a not-so-willing response to the British Government. The indecisiveness of the Hong Kong

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<sup>81</sup> Having been granted with subvention far less than requested, the FPA replied to the Medical and Health Department in resentment and urged to have it reconsidered. See Letter from Mrs. Veronica Browne to Dr. The Hon. G.H. Choa, the Medical and Health Department, on 2nd March, 1971.

Government, however, suggests that there were likely other inhibiting factors in play. After meeting with P.B. Williams, Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary on 30th June 1971, Veronica Browne, Chairman of the FPA, sent a letter enclosed with a couple of documents she might have mentioned in the meeting.<sup>82</sup> Although there was no minutes of that meeting archived, judging the replies and the documents Browne attached to the letter, we could still infer what had been discussed. Among a list of statistical surveys that gave a sketch of the Hong Kong population, below it were additional notes that Browne wrote in reply to the issues that could have been raised during the meeting. Of particular note is her strong objection to the claim that family planning would decrease future labour force, which is an argument against family planning first articulated since the Government began to give serious thought to it in 1964. It is very likely that during the meeting Williams expressed the concerns about the impact that family planning could have on the availability of labour force. Browne rightly rejected the claim by pointing out that the newly born would only join the labour force in 1990. By the time they reach adulthood, she argued, they would definitely compete with the burgeoning manufacturing industry for their mothers' time and attention. In this sense, they were not an asset but a burden that might impede the advancements of the rapidly expanding industry.

Putting aside what effect population increase would bring about, however, William's concern pinpoints the fact that the Government began to ponder population in terms of its (dis)utility for economy. At this point, the way the Hong Kong Government conceived of population began to depart from that of the FPA which had long taken

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<sup>82</sup> From Veronica Brown to Mr. P.B. Williams, on 5th July 1971, VB/jc/C-9/A-5.

population as one of the major sources of sufferings. It was undeniable for the Government that over-population was one of the roots for the many plights that people experienced from the 50s to the early 70s. Nevertheless, it came to realize that a more productive approach to population was to put it to a positive end. While the Government started to approach population with a new philosophy, the FPA kept on pushing the Government to take more steps. On 6th October, 1971, Ellen Li tabled a motion that on top of urging the Government to adopt a population policy, she advocated (1) zero population growth as a policy target and (2) amendments to the existing laws and regulations which favoured large families, such as housing, tax exemptions and paid maternity leaves.<sup>83</sup> Holding a favorable view of formulating a population policy, M.C. Morgan, Commissioner for Census and Statistics, called for an inter-departmental meeting on 19th October 1971. His call was approvingly echoed by Director of Information Services. In the meantime, to pacify the increasing aggressiveness of the FPA in advancing its agenda through Ellen Li in the Legislative Council, Hugh Norman-Walker, the Colonial Secretary made a public promise that “[p]roposals from the Family Planning Association for further assistance will receive sympathetic consideration.”<sup>84</sup> In fact, this was one of the many promises that the Government made once every two to three years in response to Ellen Li’s petition.<sup>85</sup> These words of support should not be simply understood as a tokenism because it was these tokens, so to speak, that the FPA furthered its interests. In fact, these tokens were often cashed in finally.

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<sup>83</sup> Hong Kong Legislative Council, *Official Report of Proceedings*, 6th October 1971, p.38-40.

<sup>84</sup> Hong Kong Legislative Council, *Official Report of Proceedings*, 13th October 1971, p.33.

<sup>85</sup> Dr. Teng Pui-hui, the then Director of the Medical and Health Services, also pledged to support the FPA that “no reasonable request will be refused.” see Hong Kong Legislative Council, *Official Report of Proceedings*, 11th September 1968, p.419

1971 and 1972 marked a new phase in the Hong Kong population history in which the Government not only formulated the first official policy on population, it also by so doing gained itself a more self-determining role and power in the internal affairs. Behind the scene of the Legislative Council were frequent exchange of correspondences across departments, preparing for the second historic meeting subsequent to the one on 16th July 1964 in which a low-profile and tacit support of family planning had been adopted. Five days prior to the meeting, the Colonial Secretariat circulated a memo among heads of departments, sketching out the issues to be discussed on 8th December 1971.<sup>86</sup> It was suggested that the meeting would come to a consensus as to a Government population policy in light of (a) Mrs. Veronica Browne's (chairperson of the FPA) letter on 24th September 1970, (b) their request for subvention rise from \$814,000 to \$1.4 million, (c) pressure from the Secretary of State to declare a colony-wide family planning programme and (d) the speeches delivered by Ellen Li and other unofficial members sympathetic to her in the Legislative Council. Whether to pursue the technical assistance offered by the then U.K. Secretary for Technical Co-operation was another matter for discussion.

Surprisingly, however, the meeting led to nowhere other than repeating the old cliché that the FPA "should be given all possible financial assistance to enable it to expand its clinical programme but not on family life education."<sup>87</sup> The effectiveness of the

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<sup>86</sup> Colonial Secretariat, "Memo," 3rd December 1971, (17) in CR 3/3861/54 II. The list of recipients includes Mr. T.S. Heppell, Department of Social Welfare, Dr. J.K. Craig, Department of Medical and Health Services, Mr. W. Fisher-Short, Department of Education and Mr. K.W.J. Topley, Commissioner for Census and Statistics.

<sup>87</sup> "Minutes of a Meeting on Family Planning held on Wednesday, 8th December 1971 at 2.30 p.m.," 3rd January 1972, CR 3/3861/54 II.

work of the FPA in bringing down the fertility rate was called into question again. As no strong correlation had ever been shown, together with a rather finite resources that the Department of Medical and Health Services had at hand, the meeting concluded that it was not a right time for direct Government participation. Accordingly, the draft policy on family planning annexed to the minutes reads: “For practical reasons it is not considered feasible for Government to take over the provision of family planning services at this stage.”<sup>88</sup> It is not clear why the meeting came up with such a conservative policy proposal despite the fact that enthusiasm for changes was so prominently felt for the last couple of years.

Nevertheless, in commenting and revising the minutes, the lost enthusiasm revived. K.W.J. Topley, Commissioner for Census and Statistics, found it unsatisfactory to stay within the framework of family planning and its corollary question as to what extent the Government should support the FPA financially.<sup>89</sup> To Topley, the Government should think out of the box and recognize the need for a population policy of which family planning policy in question was only a part. Admitting that there was a shortage of resources and priority should be given to other more pressing issues, however, Topley still advocated that, as long as the demand for birth control was great enough, the Government should assume the responsibilities by taking over the FPA’s clinics. While Topley was in favor of population policy, T.S. Heppell, the then Director of Social Welfare held a different view. He cautioned against the Government committing itself in adopting a policy of population reduction.<sup>90</sup> To him,

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> K.W.J. Topley, “Confidential Memorandum,” 13th January 1972, (96) in CENST/4517.

<sup>90</sup> T.S. Heppell, “Confidential Memorandum,” 31st January 1972, (85) in SWD 198/64c.

setting a target figure would be a very bad move in that its impact on population growth remained unknown but it would subject the Government to relentless demands from the voluntary agencies for meeting the target. It is intriguing to note that while Heppell saw no point in having the Government subscribed to a policy that set population reduction as its aim, he was in favor of providing family planning, either indirectly or directly, by the Government as long as it was demanded by the public. He thought the Government should only fulfill its role by making sure the demands for family planning services were met without publicly declaring the Government's preference in what rate the population should grow. In a sharp contrast to these two directors, J.K. Craig, the Director of Medical and Health Services, took a much more down-to-earth approach as it would be his Department to assume the responsibilities if the Government was to take over the FPA's clinics. Considering there was a shortage of resources and the financial implications it had, Craig felt reluctant to implement this policy but made a concession that "If this were the case, then, of course, I should need adequate time to recruit and train sufficient staff and be given the necessary funds to carry out such a project."<sup>91</sup> Regardless of their contrasting views, they all urged to have a third meeting. Meanwhile, a consensus was reached that the Department of Medical and Health Services would gradually take over the FPA's clinics situated at the government premises.

Such a drastic and more progressive move that overruled the decision to stay low profile in the 8th December 1971 meeting was further backed up by the Secretary for Home Affairs, who after consulting the local people, concluded that "The approach

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<sup>91</sup> J.K. Craig, "Confidential Memorandum," 2nd February 1972, (95) CR/ASS/10.



of Chinese in Hong Kong to family planning matters is *essentially practical*.<sup>92</sup> With the major obstacles to formulating a public policy on family planning being largely cleared, the Government could go at full speed. The intra-departmental meeting chaired by the Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary P.B. Williams on 20th September 1972 gave a final push. It recognized the importance of family planning in population control and the overburden that the FPA had long been taking. It also decided to integrate the FPA's clinics into the routine Maternal and Child Health services. As to population policy, the members of the meeting opined that the emphasis should be placed on the health of mothers and children instead of a target figure. The unspoken consideration is that it made the policy less provocative and diverted the focus away from the rate of population growth to the demands from the local people for family planning services. On 18th October 1972, the Governor Sir Murray Macle hose announced that a policy paper was to be tabled to the Executive Council for discussion and endorsement. Within less than half a year, a memorandum entitled "Family Planning Policy" finally reached the table of the Executive Council. As promised by the Governor Sir Murray Macle hose, the memorandum indicated a new direction of the Government with regard to family planning by gradually absorbing about 30 FPA clinics operating in Maternal and Child Health Centres and Government hospitals. In assessing the population problem at stake, the memorandum wrote:

Rapid population growth causes worldwide problems, straining social services and leading to unemployment. In Hong Kong's

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<sup>92</sup> J.M. Rowlands, "Confidential Memo," 21st July 1972, (25) in SHA 123/98c. (my italics)

circumstances there is the added problem of pressure on limited land resources. The more rapid growth is here, the more difficult will continuing improvements in the quality of life become: the general interest of the community will thus be served by continuing to restrain growth within tolerable limits. The necessary restraint will however become more difficult to achieve during the next two decades.<sup>93</sup>

If read together with Veronica Browne's reply to Colonial Secretary P.B. Williams' worries about the possible adverse impact of family planning on labor supplies, we could infer that the way the Administration ruled its Colony drastically changed as evidenced by the adoption of a more active approach to population. In the eyes of the high-ranking officials, overwhelmingly expatriates who only stayed in the Colony as long as their appointment lasted, Hong Kong was no longer a conquered place to administer but a rapidly developing city that demanded sophisticated planning. Therefore, the memorandum went on to put forward a new understanding of family planning which "is not only a means of population control but also a community health and welfare measure."<sup>94</sup> The change from a hidden population policy to an open one coincides with the exponential expansion of social welfare under the governorship of Maclehoze as many commentators have already noted.<sup>95</sup> Carroll argues that although the building of a welfare society as in the case of the provision of public housing he analysed is not entirely Maclehoze's own idea but a trend that

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<sup>93</sup> "Memorandum for Executive Council: Family Planning Policy," on 20th March 1973, Document No. XCC(73)20.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>95</sup> C.f. John Carroll, "A New Hong Kong," *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 140-166.

can be traced back to his predecessor David Trench, it is the social and economic conditions at the time that Maclehorse assumed governorship in November 1971 that enabled him to implement a large-scale welfare reform.<sup>96</sup> Clearly, the adoption of family planning as an official population policy was one of the many policies that had far-reaching impact on the social fabric of Hong Kong as well as on the FPA which was so central to the government deliberation on the population policy. On 20th March 1973, the Council endorsed the proposed policy, signifying not only a new page of the Government but also that of the FPA.

## 10. Conclusion

In reviewing the development of an official population policy that spanned over twenty years, it could be readily noted that the announcement Murray Maclehorse made at the Legislative Council on 18th October 1972 is in fact an outcome of a decade-long political pull and push among the Hong Kong Government, the British Government, the CMAC, the HKFPA, advocates of family planning in the U.K. and the legislative councilors sympathetic to the cause of birth control. This is by no means a simple story as some might have it to be unfolded “naturally” when the Government came to realize the problem of over-population in light of increasing knowledge. Neither was it solely a fruition that the FPA came to after three-decade of advocacy. Although Maclehorse’s announcement of the official population policy in 1972 marked a milestone in the history of Hong Kong, its occurrence was not a consequence of thoughtful planning. In retrospect, that the Hong Kong Government

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 161.

started to grant subvention to the FPA in 1955 could not be read as a wholehearted recognition of the practice of family planning at that time. The FPA was only one of the many other voluntary agencies that received government subventions. Norman Miners observes that one of the rationales for subsidizing non-governmental organizations to carry out work of public interest was to solicit open consent for a colonial government without the legitimacy that a political party would normally gain in winning an election.<sup>97</sup> It was until the CMAC's request for subvention in 1965 that compelled the government to come up with a position on family planning and consequently consolidated the status of the FPA as a scientifically-based agency in contrast to the CMAC as a religious group. However, not only did the Department of Social Welfare fail to provide solid evidence on the effectiveness of the CMAC's work, it was not so certain that to what extent the work of the FPA contributed to the real fertility decline other than a consequence of distorted age structure. Regardless of the indeterminacy, the continual and increasing support of the FPA by way of subvention and provision of free clinic spaces at the government hospitals and the Maternal and Child Health Centres allowed the FPA to gear up for the development of family life education and subsequent work on youth sexuality. With such a prestige institutional position, the FPA could easily exploit the existing institutional channels to advance its own agenda on modernizing family, marriage, the youth and sexuality.

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<sup>97</sup> Norman Miners, "Pressure Groups," *The Government and Politics of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1981), 257-258.

## **Chapter 2 Sexual Conjugal Familism: The FPA's Discourse on Family and Marriage**

### 1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have delineated the socio-political parameters in which the FPA, Hong Kong Government, the British Government and the local Catholic Church negotiated a policy of family planning that well served their respective interests and beliefs. Throughout the formative years of that policy from the early 60s to the early 70s, religion or the rivalry between Protestantism and Catholic in particular was always the underlying subtext. Against this background, I will argue in this chapter that not only did the FPA deliberately act as a translator that imported the knowledge of family planning from abroad, it also, by playing this role, secularized Protestant conceptions of family and marriage under the guise of “Western” scientific discourse. Family planning, in this sense, added a sexual dimension to the burgeoning project of modernity that Hong Kong had embarked upon since the early 50s. In fact, in the post-war period, the FPA was one of a few semi-official agencies that actively as well as systematically produced and disseminated sexual knowledge in relation to family planning to the public. For example, it had already distributed at least 500 million leaflets in 21 years from 1950 to 1970.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is a rough estimation based on the *Annual Reports* of the FPA from 1950 to 1970. According to the “Catalogue of Resource Materials” (Hong Kong: FPA, 1975), the FPA had already published 12 different pamphlets on family planning, contraceptive methods, population education and family life education and 7 posters between 1970 and 1975.

Above all, 1965/66 was a watershed for the FPA in which it substantially diversified its channels of propaganda to exploit the full potential of radio and television.<sup>2</sup> In the financial year of 1965/66 alone, a promotional film that was screened at 43 cinemas for 6 months had already reached 2,000,000 people.<sup>3</sup> So was another one-minute promo screened in the subsequent year which received the same spectacular readership.<sup>4</sup> Although it is difficult to assess to what extent and in what way individual reproductive choices and the way they organized their family life were influenced by the FPA's massive propaganda, Hong Kong women's tremendously high level of knowledge of contraceptive methods is suggestive of its well-received impact. In fact, in 1972 alone, over 80% of women had heard of pills and intra-uterine device (IUD), the two contraceptive devices highly recommended and offered by the FPA.<sup>5</sup> Nearly half of the women (i.e., 48%) who had ever practised birth control learnt it from the FPA.<sup>6</sup> On top of the diversified publicity campaign, the FPA re-allocated the work of the field workers to further its reach to women both in terms of number and age groups. Prior to 1966, field workers spent 60% of time on visiting the Resettlement and Low-Cost Housing Estates while 40% on hospitals. An evaluative survey in 1966 revealed that successful recruitment rate was much higher from the latter than the former so that a new strategy was adopted to intensify

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<sup>2</sup> Chan K.C., "The Role of the Family Planning Association in Hong Kong's Fertility Decline," in *Studies in Family Planning* 10(1976): 284. From May to July 1965, the FPA collaborated with the Radio and Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and the Commercial Broadcasting Co., Limited to launch a 3-month radio programme. See The FPA, *Annual Report* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1965). The RTHK is a government department that is run under by an appointed Director but enjoys editorial independence.

<sup>3</sup> FPA, *Annual Report* 1966.

<sup>4</sup> FPA, *Annual Report* 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Choi C.Y. & Chan K.C., *The Impact of Industrialization on Fertility in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Social Research Centre, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1973), 104.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 121.

recruitment work at the Maternal and Child Health Centres and maternity wards afterwards.<sup>7</sup> Chan K.C. found in a statistical survey that the new strategy was effective in inducing an upsurge of women acceptors (i.e., women who practised birth control after receiving consultation from the FPA's clinics) of 20-24 age group and those with low parity (i.e., number of living children).<sup>8</sup> In addition, the FPA accounted for half of the supplies of contraceptives and offered them at a cost much lower than the market price, making itself particularly appealing to low-income family which sought cheap but effective contraceptives.

On the whole, it is beyond doubt that the FPA was one of a few government-subsented agencies whose work and propaganda had reached people across the Colony at such a considerable magnitude. To map its discursive output and the cultural impact that it might have brought to the way people of Hong Kong understood family and marriage as well as its changes, it is imperative to situate the work of the FPA to the historical context from the 1950s to the early 1970s. Of absolute relevance here is the long fight by local and expatriate women's groups for repealing the customary Chinese marriage under the Ching Dynasty Law since the 30s, a practice dated back to the Spring and Autumn period (700-453 B.C.). In fact, at the time that the FPA was re-established in 1950, Chinese men, subject to certain criteria, could legally keep concubines, abandon his wife and pass his inheritance along the patrilineal line. It was not until 1971 that monogamous heterosexual marriage was taken to be the only legal form of marriage through a legislative

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<sup>7</sup> Chan K.C., "The Role of the Family Planning Association in Hong Kong's Fertility Decline", in *Studies in Family Planning* 10(1976): 286.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

reform. In other words, the FPA was working against a culture in which concubinage was legally sanctioned in its first 22 years after reorganization.

Although the FPA did not directly participate in the campaign for abolishing concubinage, the very practice of keeping concubines necessarily constituted the social context that the FPA was embedded and, above all, a social reality into which it strove to intervene.<sup>9</sup> It is obvious that concubinage and large family with many children were in an unresolvable conflict with the FPA's philosophy of nuclear family with one husband and one wife. Nevertheless, the contribution that the FPA did make should not be underestimated for its apparent absence in the campaign. Its input could be felt in an indirect way through what I call discursive detour. By detour I mean a roundabout route one deliberately takes to avoid head-on confrontation towards a destination. To nurture a social environment favourable to the legal definition of monogamous marriage, the FPA provided a new set of lexicons and know-hows for people to envision what a modern family and marriage are. If the reform of the marriage law is a significant milestone indicative of how far Hong Kong has been modernized or Christianized, the discursive production of the FPA might play a constitutive role in it by having gradually reshaped the social landscape

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<sup>9</sup> The Hong Kong Government admitted that more and more people opted for monogamy prior to the 1971 legal reform. From 1960 to 1964, over half of the marriages were registered in compliance with the Marriage Ordinance which only recognized marriage of one husband and one wife. 《香港華人婚姻問題白皮書》(香港：香港布政司署，1967)，1. Nevertheless, according to a territory-wide survey conducted by Robert Mitchell, at the time of 1967, about 35% of men and women interviewed agreed that husband should be permitted to take another woman if the principal wife is infertile. Even 18 % of the couples who have a close marital relationship, as Mitchell measured by how often they go out together, would still feel that wives should grant such a permission. The percentage is even higher, i.e., 43%, for those couples whose marital relationship is less intimate. *Family Life in Urban Hong Kong* (Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service, 1972), 58-59. The findings could be seen as indicative of the fact that monogamy had not fully assumed a status of cultural hegemony. In other words, in the late 60s, the idea of having a small family, passionate husband and wife marriage life and a loving parent-children relationship had not fully taken root in Hong Kong society but was surely taking shape.



in relation to family and marriage. Throughout the chapter, I will argue that the project of modernity is by and large sexual in the sense that a society modernizes itself by virtue of the manner that people express, experience and organize their sexuality, for example, in light of the knowledge of birth control and the availability of contraceptive devices. In retrospect, Ellen Li is right to have concluded that “The concept of family planning has brought considerable more influence to bear on moulding the ‘modern family’ than I realised at the time.”<sup>10</sup> She even thought it was “a revolution in the concept of family”<sup>11</sup> which in turn revolutionized the status of women. True as it is, however, the conceptual revolution of marriage and family did not come with sexual liberation as commonly witnessed in the Eugenic movements in Europe and Mainland China.<sup>12</sup> Rather, the FPA only discussed sex openly within the frame of marriage. In part, it might be because the search for sexual knowledge was not coupled with national crisis and national identity. Therefore, the local birth control movement as advocated by the FPA was more inclined towards provision of services and dissemination of knowledge without directly engaging itself in any campaign that aimed to change the existing political setting. The primacy given to sex, sexual enjoyment in particular, by the FPA within the confines of family and marriage is indicative of a different path that the sexual modernity of Hong Kong

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<sup>10</sup> *My way: Dr. Ellen Li: her life & her contribution* (Hong Kong: 1998), 60.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> For instance, Zhang Jing-sheng (張競生) was a committed advocate of birth control and sexual liberation in the 1920s when the National Party was enjoying the sovereignty of China. Having received tertiary education and exposed to the ideas of Eugenics in France, Zhang turned into a champion of birth control since his return to China in 1920. To him, sexual liberation from the traditions and superstitions went naturally with the philosophy of Eugenics whose aim was to refine the quality of a given race/population. Therefore, in light of what he learnt in France, he proposed a theory of “the third water” (第三種水) which, he believed, was a bodily secretion during female’s orgasm that was conducive to the development of a zygote with a strong physique that Chinese people generally lacked. Therefore, in a word, the revival of the Chinese hinged on how well they had sex. 江曉原, 「張競生其人其事」, 收於張競生編著《性史1926》(台北市: 大辣出版, 2005), 9-23. C.f. Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

took and well reflected in the sexual morality deeply ingrained in the local culture. I will argue in what follows that it is a form of sexual conjugal familism.

## 2. Mrs. Ellen Li Shui-pui as a Public Face of the FPA

To understand the role of the FPA in a society that sanctioned concubinage, we have to take full account of a key figure who linked up these two apparently separate but parallel campaigns, i.e., campaign to end concubinage and family planning campaign. This figure is Mrs. Ellen Li Shui-pui (李曹秀群)<sup>13</sup>. However, it has to be made clear at the onset that I am by no means arguing Ellen Li enjoyed an absolute monopoly of the FPA through which her ideological influence was felt in every single piece of the FPA's work. Since the day the FPA was re-organized in 1950, it was run by a committee comprised of more than 20 people with president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and auditors. From 1957 onwards, Ellen Li was appointed as a honorary auditor on and off and served as the FPA's president from 1974 to 1978 and chairperson from 1960 to 1961. Nevertheless, her active participation and enthusiasm cannot be disputed for she was the one in the committee who represented the FPA on most public occasions. It became even more prominent when she chaired the Educational Programme Sub-Committee in 1957. Many articles published by the Sub-Committee were under her name. Having been appointed as the first woman member of the Legislative Council in 1966 and her determination to make it a platform to advocate family planning further consolidated the linkage

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<sup>13</sup> In fact, Ellen Li is one of the Chinese Christian women who made great and far-reaching impact on law, politics, education and culture. See 黃慧貞、蔡寶瓊，《華人婦女與香港基督教口述歷史》(香港：牛津大學出版社，2010)，xxv.

between the two campaigns. By and large, Ellen Li was the public face of the FPA from the 50s to the late 70s. By reviewing her pioneering role in these two campaigns, we can catch a glimpse of the discursive resonance between the two and examine what effect the discourse of family planning might have produced upon the local sexual landscape.

### 3. Biography of Mrs. Ellen Li

Ellen Li, as I have briefly discussed her eloquent speech at the Legislative Council in the previous chapter, was a Chinese woman born in Vietnam. She was the only girl among her four brothers. Being very open-minded, her father gave her the greatest opportunities that other women of her time could not enjoy. Ellen Li left Saigon for Hong Kong for secondary school education and earned a Bachelor's degree in business administration from a university in Shanghai in 1932. During her stay in Mainland China, she had already been exposed to the idea of family planning. Having worked in a bank in Hong Kong for a brief period of time after graduation, Ellen Li quit the high-paying job and embarked upon social welfare service for the following 50 years. In the late 30s, she co-founded with other women the Hong Kong Women's War Relief Fund Association and the Eugenics League. The former was formed by a group of women who helped deliver clothing and medical supplies to China. A year later, it was re-established as the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club. With the outbreak of Japanese invasion, Ellen Li retreated to Mainland China with her family. After the British government resumed the sovereignty of Hong Kong in 1945, the first task Ellen Li took on herself was to revive the activities of that Club in

1946 and the League in 1948. She also founded the Hong Kong Council of Women in the first year after war, which was a platform facilitating collaboration among the existing women's groups towards the advancement of women's rights.<sup>14</sup>

It is clear that shortly after Ellen Li returned to Hong Kong after war, she was nearly fully preoccupied with connecting women and empowering them in one way or another. As she commented on her more than 50-year social service retrospectively in an autobiography<sup>15</sup>, she said that her “primary motivation was not to bring the barriers to progress crashing down but to help women find the power to move into the *modern* age on their own.”<sup>16</sup> In her view, making birth control methods as widely available as possible and lobbying for reforming marriage law were equally fundamental to women's liberation because only were women freed from the burden of over-reproduction and the inequality in marriage, can they lead a fulfilling life that was productive to society as a whole. It is no doubt that the image of women she was envisioning at that time was essentially different from that of the traditional Chinese women who were overwhelmed with mouths to feed and chores as well as suffering in an unequal marriage. To her, the prosperity of a society required full and equal participation of men and women.

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<sup>14</sup> The preamble of the Council's constitution stipulates that “The council sincerely believes that the good of humanity will best be advanced by greater unity of thought, sympathy and purpose, by banding ourselves together in a federation of women of all races, nations, creeds and classes, to further the application of the Golden Rule to society, custom and law: ‘Do into others as you would have them do unto you’.” (Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Council of Women, 1946), 1.

<sup>15</sup> *My way: Dr. Ellen Li: her life & her contribution* (Hong Kong: 1998).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 99. (my italics)

All in all, the “new Chinese women”<sup>17</sup> is what Ellen Li worked so hard to achieve. This vision might have been inspired by her participation as a volunteer in the Wah Kwong Girls’ Club under the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) in the early days when she was a student at the St. Stephen’s secondary school.<sup>18</sup> Upon her return from Shanghai, Ellen Li joined the YWCA as an adult member and assisted to organize the English Speaking Department. From 1948 to 1962, she was elected to serve as president, vice-president and honorary treasurer for the YWCA alternatively. Importantly, Ellen’s service in the YWCA largely overlapped with hers in the FPA to the extent that she almost worked at both groups in tandem. On top of it, both groups also overlapped in composition. For this, Ellen Li’s biography supplements the missing part of how the FPA was re-organized in 1950 and its relationship to the YWCA. She recounted that the Hong Kong Council of Women was formed by representatives from the YWCA, “Kai Fong” (街坊) District Welfare Association and some other women’s groups in Kowloon and the New Territories. They took the initiative in re-establishing the FPA as their first task after war. The representatives were even co-opted as the founding members of the FPA, which somehow made it share the same vision with the YWCA and other women’s groups in advancing women’s rights. The connection between the FPA and the YWCA by way of Ellen Li’s involvement is not coincidental. Rather, we could infer that they were indeed two platforms on which she pursued her own agenda in paving the way for the emergence of the “new Chinese women.” On the one hand, Ellen Li was engaged in

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>18</sup> The YWCA is a movement cross the globe since the mid 19th Century. It took root in China before the commence of the First World War by running hotels in Shanghai and Canton. Among others, the YWCA aimed at eradicating the disproportionately high women’s illiteracy rate by the provision of education and technical know-how. The Hong Kong YWCA was founded in 1921 and since then ran a number of primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong.

the local family planning movement and greatly expanded the work of the FPA under her strong leadership; on the other, she played a leading role in the passage of the *Marriage Reform Ordinance*, modernizing the marriage law. These two campaigns did not stand alone but mutually reinforced each other. And, it was Ellen Li who kept the issues alive on the agenda of the LegCo by taking the full advantage of being a legislator in tabling motions and posing questions in relation to family planning in the annual government budget debates.

#### 4. The End of Concubinage with the Reform of the Marriage Ordinance

In the late 1940s, in addition to reviving the FPA, on the agenda of the Hong Kong Council of Women, of which Ellen Li was a founder, was a call for legislative reform of the marriage law. The dispute over the continuation of Ching Dynasty Law in general and that of the concubinage under the British rule was attributed to the proclamation made by Captain Charles Elliot upon seizure of Hong Kong, which prescribed that “The Chinese inhabitants of Hong Kong were warned also by Proclamation of the cessation of the island that they were now subjects of the Queen of England, and that, pending Her Majesty’s pleasure they would, subject to the control of a British Magistrate, be governed according to the laws, customs and

usages of the Chinese.”<sup>19</sup> At the time when Ellen Li embarked upon a full-time participation in social service in the 1930s, there were at least 5 types of marriage co-existing and equally legal.<sup>20</sup> The co-existence of monogamy and polygamy and the different legal regulations that were applied to them not only caused huge confusions but also brought about legal disputes when they needed the court to determine the validity of a marriage in relation to inheritance. Above all, in the eyes of Ellen Li, they were the obstacle to women’s rights.<sup>21</sup> She even “thought it absurd that Hong

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted from Ellen Li, 1998, 80. Captain Elliot’s Proclamation made in 1841 was also one of the justifications that the Chinese leaders appealed to in claiming that Mui Tsai (妹仔) was a local customs immune from the British interference. See Norman Miners, “The Attempts to Abolish the Mui Tsui System in Hong, 1917-41,” in *Hong Kong: A Reader in Social History*, ed. David Faure (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press China, 2003), 466. Hu Hong-lie (胡鴻烈) and Zhong Qi-rong (鍾期榮) in their coauthored book *Hong Kong Marriage and Inheritance Law* explain the proclamation together with the Treaty of Nanjing that in principle the Ching Dynasty Law, customs and usages of the Chinese that had already been in existence at the time of 1843 were all applicable to Chinese people. The proclamation was later transposed into the *Supreme Court Ordinance 1873* which further delineated the legality and the scope of applicability of the Ching Dynasty Law in the Colony. It prescribed that “Such of the laws of England as existed when the Colony obtained a local legislature, that is to say, on the 5th day of April 1843, shall be in force in the Colony, except so far as the said law are inapplicable to the local circumstances of the Colony or of its inhabitants, as except so far as they have been modified by laws passed by the said legislature.” (香港：南天書業公司出版，1957) It is Captain Elliot’s proclamation and the 1874 *Supreme Court Ordinance* that rendered Ching Dynasty Law enforceable in the Colony and gave them, ironically, a life-span longer than that in Mainland China and Taiwan.

<sup>20</sup> (1) Marriage consummated according to the Chinese customs commonly practiced and widely recognized in the year of 1843 is called the Chinese customary marriage; (2) Marriage consummated in Hong Kong according to the Nationalist Civil Code of 1930 is named the Chinese modern marriage; (3) Marriage consummated in compliance with (2) but outside Hong Kong is also named the Chinese modern marriage; (4) Marriage consummated in Hong Kong according to the Marriage Ordinance of the Hong Kong Law is registered marriage; (5) *de facto* marriage. See 香港布政司署《香港華人婚姻問題白皮書》(香港：香港政府，1967)，5.

<sup>21</sup> Because there was no registry for the Chinese customary marriage, marriage that was consummated according to the Chinese customs commonly practiced and widely recognized in the year of 1843 was not recognized abroad. And, legal disputes concerning this type of marriage was particularly difficult to solve because the Court had to verify if the marriage in question had been consummated in the manner commonly practiced and widely recognized in the year of 1843, which was often far away from the time when the cases were heard in Court. Worse still is that there was no expertise in Chinese customary marriage. In fact, the colonial government was aware of the problem and the pressure exerted by women groups under the leadership of the Hong Kong Council of Women in their fight to abolishing concubinage. In response, the then Governor Alexander Grantham ordered a committee be set up and chaired by Sir Strickland in October 1948, exploring the possibility of making amendment to the law in relation to marriage, divorce, inheritance and adoption. However, in 1950, the consultation paper of the committee’s proposal was badly received in that the general public was rather indifferent to the issues it had brought up. Another consultation paper on the same set of issues released in 1953 received the same apathetic response. Proposals for marriage law amendment were therefore shelved. See 香港布政司署《香港華人婚姻問題白皮書》(香港：香港政府，1967)，2.

Kong was still subject to the Ching Dynasty laws<sup>22</sup> under the British rule. In her autobiography *My Way*, Ellen Li made it clear why she stood in firm opposition to concubinage: “I had lived all my life among people for whom concubinage was an acceptable and even enviable institution. ... However, I had also been educated in a *Christian* school and then a *modern* university where there has been talk of female equality and liberation. Old feudal customs were no longer suited to the needs and circumstances of the Chinese community in the way that they might have been when the British had arrived on the scene.”<sup>23</sup> Here Ellen Li was making a connection between Christianity and modernity that she thought they were two sides of the same coin. She also believed that Christianity and modernity would eventually triumph over what she considered backward and illiberal “old feudal customs.” Her personal experience seems to have laid a firm foundation for her later advocacy of putting an end to concubinage. No sooner had she recovered from breast cancer, Ellen Li was appointed to be the first Chinese woman of the Urban Council in 1964. Two years later, she was even appointed to be the first woman of the Legislative Council which had long been dominated by men. By working closely with the Attorney General Denys Roberts, Ellen Li co-drafted the bill in a way that exempted concubinage already kept prior to the law taking effect so as to minimize opposition but outlaw any new concubinage. The bill was passed in October 1970 almost unanimously except a vote of objection cast by Oswald Cheung.<sup>24</sup> It was finally turned into law in October 1971 after a year of buffer time for objection to be raised. In looking back

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<sup>22</sup> 李曹秀群，〈《淫生歲月》〉（香港，1993），88。

<sup>23</sup> Ellen Li, 1998, 71. (my italics)

<sup>24</sup> Ellen Li recalled in the autobiography that the only one vote of objection was in fact a token one for all of her colleagues in the council thought that it would be unwise to pass the bill unopposed. They drew lots to decide who raised the token objection. See 〈《淫生歲月》〉（香港，1993），89。



what lessons she had learnt, an exercise she did from time to time in her two autobiographies, Ellen Li attributed the fruition to her insistence on exploiting every chance available to her and taking full advantage of her leadership role in the Council of Women, the Chinese Women's Club and the YWCA.<sup>25</sup> Surprisingly, she did not mention the FPA as one of the channels she had made use of. Perhaps, strategically speaking, Ellen Li did not envision any role the FPA could play in the demand for legislative reform. And, more importantly, from the side of the FPA, it was so conscious to restrain itself from being associated with social issues of overly political nature, which would risk ruining their hard-won public face as a non-partisan charity.

In the course of consultation on amending the regulations of concubinage, some local elite of Chinese men voiced their severe opposition. They argued that the freedom to keep concubines was guaranteed by the Captain Charles Elliot's Proclamation that the Hong Kong government had no legal and constitutional grounds to intervene into such a Chinese practice. Among them was Sir Lo Man-kam (羅文錦) who was so vocal in opposing any government's proposal to change the status quo concerning concubinage. With the prestige as a Legislative Councilor cum a member of the Executive Council, he detailed the grounds for keeping concubinage intact in a memorandum, which was echoed by many other local elite of Chinese men and even the *Heung Yee Kuk* (鄉議局), a government recognized advisory body that represented the indigenous inhabitants in the New Territories.<sup>26</sup> Notwithstanding the

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<sup>25</sup> *My way* (Hong Kong, 1998), 83.

<sup>26</sup> Wong Pik-wan, "Negotiating Gender: The Women's Movement for Legal Reform in Colonial Hong Kong" (PhD diss., University of California, 2000), 147-152.

open opposition by the local elite in the early 1950s and 60s, the amendment bill in October 1970 that put an end to the institutionalized practice of concubinage received little open resentment. Even Ellen Li was a bit surprised by that “For one year everything was quiet” when the amendment bill was finally turned into law in 1971.<sup>27</sup> Wong Pik-wan attributed the end of concubinage to three factors, namely “the continuous legislative pressure exerted by local women’s groups and the first Chinese female legislator Mrs. Ellen Li; the modernization (Westernization) process that shaped the perceptions of the governing elite and the public regarding polygamy and other family law; and the impact of the United Nations on the government officials in Hong Kong.”<sup>28</sup> Sensible as they are, there still needed a cultural intermediary to facilitate a substantial change in the way people organize their private life sexually. To be specific, the issue to be addressed is how modernization was translated and embodied in the local context of late 20th Century. The FPA, in this sense, played a role that cannot be neglected.

### 5. The Discursive Production of the FPA

In the 20 years from the 50s to 70s, the FPA was highly prolific. It imported and localized a wide range of ideas in relation to family and marriage. With the end of the World War II, the League of Eugenics re-organized and changed its name to the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong as we know it today. By its very work nature, the FPA was heavily involved in public education although it did not position itself as such in its early days. A glimpse of its “Constitutions and Rules” drafted and

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<sup>27</sup> 李曹秀群，〈淫生歲月〉（香港，1993），89.

<sup>28</sup> Wong, pik-wan, 160-161.

reprinted in the 2nd *Annual Report* in 1952 confirms this. The charter spelt out 6 objects and purposes that the FPA charged itself, one of which reads: “To collect and disseminate knowledge concerning the size of the family and the problems of population in their special relationship to the Colony of Hong Kong.”<sup>29</sup> It is clear that the work of the FPA was never limited to the provision of contraceptives and other reproductive devices. Coated in scientific language, its practice is in fact an embodiment of as well as a means to propagate the “true knowledge” of family, marriage and sex that the FPA believed.

At a glance, the rationale that propelled the FPA to commit itself in the field of education was simple and direct: overpopulation was a consequence of people’s ignorance. In part it is attributable to the Chinese traditional belief that big family was a blessing but the primary cause, the FPA believes, was the extremely limited access to contraceptive devices and knowledge of birth control. Throughout the 50s, many FPA’s publicity materials recounted the same narrative that couples with problems of over-fertility often regretted for not having heard about the work of the FPA earlier. An interview with a fisherman in the No. 8 *Quarterly Bulletin* in 1959 well encapsulates this sense of remorse:

We have 9 children and my wife is pregnant with our tenth. I did not want so many children and tried to prevent their coming by sending my wife to one doctor or herbalist after another. Although she took much medicine it was all to no avail. Each consultation only made

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<sup>29</sup> The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, *Second Annual Report 1952*.

me ten or twenty dollars poorer. There are many others like me who have never heard of Family Planning since we don't read newspaper sbut will eagerly follow any instruction just to prevent adequately those we have. I will gladly bring my wife to your clinic even if it means a day lost from work if only you can help her.<sup>30</sup>

From the 1950s to mid-60s, the FPA framed the problem of overpopulation purely as a result of lack of knowledge without taking into account the wider social context. Neither did it give a thought to the issue of distributive justice, i.e., whether overpopulation and its disproportional detrimental effect on the people in lower social classes had anything to do with an unjust distribution of primary social goods. In the preface to *Family Planning and Birth Control*, the philosophy of political apathy when it came to providing an analysis of what caused overpopulation was first clearly spelt out: "The FPA is only concerned about personal matters but not the problems with population and global economy. Birth control is strictly a personal matter over which couples made their own choice. Unless they can adopt a method of birth control compatible with biological needs, moral standard and religious faith,

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<sup>30</sup> The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, *Quarterly Bulletin*, No. 8 2nd Quarter. This typical narrative was well grounded by the FPA's self-evaluation in 1958 in which the FPA did a statistical analysis of the 37,000 cases accumulated in their clinics from 1951 to 1958. They also planned to interview some 300 new patients asking about their reproductive choices. According to the 175 interviews that had been conducted at the time of the *Bulletin* publication, it was said that most women interviewees "would have come sooner had she known about our clinics earlier." *Quarterly Bulletin*, NO. 17 1st Quarter, 1959.

otherwise it will not succeed.”<sup>31</sup> Although deliberately limiting the causes of overpopulation to the lack of knowledge, what the FPA could not deny is that the effect of the antidote as simple and direct as the provision of family planning knowledge goes far beyond the realm of the personal.

Probably based on the remorseful fisherman’s story and the interviews with service users in a self-evaluating survey conducted in 1958, the FPA produced a series of pamphlets targeting fishermen, peasants and blue-collar working mothers/women between 1967 to 1973. Three of them that can still be retrieved from university libraries or the government public records share the same theme that demands a detailed analysis here. These two pamphlets are entitled “The Farmer’s Dream” (農夫的夢) and “The Three Wishes” (三個願望).<sup>32</sup> The former is a story in which the farmer, Mr. Chan being a father of a family with a son and a daughter, wished to have more children. He left home after having a bitter quarrel with his wife about how many children was desirable. Lying down under a tree for a rest, he dreamed that he had eight children. However, this was how the family suffered began. Both Mr. Chan and his wife were exhausted for feeding the eight mouths but hardly had them full. Anxious about how to make ends meet, he woke up suddenly from this bad

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<sup>31</sup> This booklet bears no year of publication. However, by its reference to the latest subvention granted by the Hong Kong Government in 1967, it is safe to infer that it was published between 1966 and 1967. The original text is: “家庭計劃指導會所關心的祇是個人的問題，而不是人口或世界經濟方面的問題。節育絕對是個人的事，由夫婦兩人決定，除非他們選用一種合乎生理要求、道德水準及宗教信仰的節育方法，否則不會成功”。 It has to be made clear that the FPA only took an apolitical attitude when interpreting the causes of overpopulation, likely for not placing the blame on the authority which substantially financed itself. Nevertheless, as discussed in the previous chapter, the FPA by virtue of its elite composition was skillful and competent in making political maneuvers in advancing their own agenda.

<sup>32</sup> These two pamphlets were published in 1969. FPA, *Annual Report* (Hong Kong: FPA, 1970).

dream. Mr. Chan returned home immediately. Since then, Mrs. Chan often paid visit to the FPA's clinics for consultation and the family of four lived happily forever.

“The Three Wishes” employed a similar narrative structure in which a newly wedded couple, being fishermen, went out for fishing one day. They caught a small bottle in which a fairy was caught. To pay tribute to their help, the fairy offered them three wishes. Mr. Kam was so eager to have children so that he made a wish to have 10 children. But they soon realized they could not manage it. Overwhelmed by the 10 children, Mrs. Kam wished all would be gone. In a twinkling, all were gone. With the last wish, they planned carefully and decided to have a son and a daughter. Their last wish came true. The Kam's lived happily afterwards.

Both stories share a similar narrative structure that the desperate plight of over-fertility could be gone in an instance either with the help of magic power or as if waking up from a bad dream. That the tension was resolved was immediately tagged onto the FPA as if the effectiveness of its service was as magical as the fairy's. Such a story-telling structure is what Anthony Giddens terms counterfactual thinking, one of the prominent features of the “Western” modernity.<sup>33</sup> Counterfactual thinking is a mode of thinking that goes contrary to the taken-for-grantedness, signaling a desire to get away from the situation one is deeply embedded *with the help of new knowledge*. It often entails a logical jump, as in the case of the over-fertility, from understanding that having too many children is not inescapable (because of the availability of reliable contraceptive methods) to recognizing the ideal that having

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<sup>33</sup> *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991), 27-32.

too many children is not desirable. The rhetoric that makes possible such a logical jump from the descriptive to the prescriptive is the notion of happiness. Although it sounds less restrictive, the very notion of happiness is moral in that it imposes a normative standard by which family is evaluated. In this sense, the FPA did “preach” but in a subtle way. It somehow managed to transpose the use of scientific knowledge and technology as a means to achieve happiness into an end itself, leading to a circular argument that a happy family is a family that restricts its size while a family practicing family planning is a happy family.

Clearly, another theme that runs through the pamphlets, less in “The Farmer’s Dream” and “The Three Wishes” but more prominent in “A Smart Worker” (聰明的工友), is planning. The story begins with two lovers of a man and a woman who were discussing to have a family after marriage. Both of them were eager to have an ideal living environment and a modern family with enough clothes, food and savings that people living in it were happy. They wanted to provide proper education to their children. They also wanted to enjoy family life with their children after work so that they could feel relaxed when they went to work in factory. Because they were worried about having too many children, as advised by a colleague, they consulted the FPA and learnt that birth control and birth spacing were a key to happy family life. With their worries removed, they married in a wedding afterwards. Although the fairy is gone, counterfactual thinking remains and the theme of incessant planning stands out more clearly. Again, in light of new knowledge, people are made more aware of the future as an open project that everyone has to work on it reflexively.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

Happiness would not naturally come but need to be carefully planned. To Giddens, such a reflexivity is institutionalized with the decline of tradition and religion in offering answers to existential insecurity (i.e., the meaning of life). However, the institutional reflexivity in the form of incessant planning as witnessed in the local discourse of family planning has less to do with decline of religion. Rather, in the colonial context, the discourse of family planning was deeply intertwined with religion in a peculiar way that I will explicate in the later part of the chapter.

#### 6. Construction of the Dialogic Other

However, introduction of new knowledge does not necessarily encourage counterfactual thinking. To be effective, it has to be able to resonate with the existing ones within the limit of a given discursive parameter. For this, the FPA constructed its dialogic other, a caricature without the know-how of birth control. It is through the dialogic other that the FPA's scientific propaganda campaign could sound more persuasive. Prior to 1960, the Chinese Communist Party, together with the image of remorseful couples exemplified by the fishermen above, is the dialogic other to which the FPA made frequent reference in constructing its own legitimacy and epistemological privilege.

In 1955, the Information and Publications Sub-Committee of the FPA launched a bilingual *Quarterly Bulletin*. 2,000 copies were printed and distributed to its members as well as medical, educational and legal professions in each quarter. Heads of government department and religious bodies and other overseas family planning



organizations were also on the recipients' list. The first issue reported that the United Nations held a World Population Conference from 31st August to 10th September 1954. The editor of this issue, W.H. Winn, only alluded briefly to the issues discussed in the conference in summary but left a rather long comments on what she called the "politics" of the conference. Winn saw a rather interesting and ironic liaison with regard to the dividing positions on birth control among representatives. At one end were experts from the United States, North Europe, India and Japan which took birth control to be an effective solution to overpopulation while at the other end were two groups that had long been ideologically antithetical but lined up temporarily because of disapproval of birth control. They were Roman Catholicism and Communism. The former believed that artificial intervention into the natural course of life is immoral while the latter held an optimism that production necessarily exceeds population growth in a communist-ruled country. The issue was a prelude to the construction of the FPA's dialogic other and implied an ideological opposition between the FPA and Communism.

However, it was not effective for the FPA to advance its agenda if the constructed "other" was taken to be a static entity. Rather, the "other" often underwent changes, albeit in a slow and piecemeal manner. Nevertheless, it was the changes of the "other" that further conferred rhetoric power, social legitimacy and epistemological privilege to the FPA. For that, in the same issue, what immediately followed was the news of the alliance formed between Roman Catholicism and Communism in the 1954 conference was an update on the policy change in population in the Chinese Communist Party, which had long been of the view that a

communist country was immune from the plight of overpopulation. As a follower of the orthodox Marxism, the Chinese Communist Party believed that the increase in production must outnumber that of population growth. However, the *Bulletin* paraphrased a piece of news from *New York Times* whose heading described it “startling.” The news was about a deputy who proposed to impose a ceiling on the population by spreading “medical theories” and “providing practical guidance” on birth control at the September meeting of the China National People’s Congress. Not sure if the proposal would be finally accepted at that time, however, with reference to the news, the issue of the *Bulletin* went on to criticize the official position of the Chinese Communist Party by quoting a leader from the British Labour Party. He said that “I think the real reason for this is that China, being admittedly a backward country, hopes to make up in quantity what it lacks in quality in order to achieve a position of power in the world. This is a disturbing thought.”<sup>35</sup> To further substantiate this claim, the editor W.H. Winn introduced a “Western” perspective by quoting Dr. Winfield who had practiced medicine in the Mainland for years. Dr. Winfield concurred the view that the medical advancement in reducing infant mortality rate induced the problem of overpopulation. For this reason, argued Dr. Winfield, the role of medical physicians was not confined to life saving but reduction of birth, which literally meant prevention of more new life coming to the Earth.<sup>36</sup> It seemed that the editor W.H. Winn specifically highlighted the anti-humanitarian undertone in the news to, on the one hand, present to the readers the threat of overpopulation to national survival and, on the other, to provoke a mixed sentiment on Communist

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<sup>35</sup> *Quarterly Bulletin*, No. 1, 1st Quarter, 1955.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

China where the sacred Hippocratic Oath gave way to national interest. She commented:

That welfare in high death rate country can be endangered by a reduction in mortality is a grim paradox not easy for anyone with compassionate humanitarian instincts to accept. Historically, in such countries as China, high fertility has been necessary until very recently to balance universally high death rates - especially among infants. During the past century, an ever more effective control of deaths - especially in the young years - has changed that. What was once a necessity for national survival may become in the modern world a dangerous anachronism. It is in this context that Dr. Winfield's warning must be read.<sup>37</sup>

At first glance, one is tempted to explain that the FPA devoted such a large coverage on the latest development and the policy changes of the Chinese Communist Party because a majority of the local population were political and economic immigrants from Mainland China. However, living outside the Communist regime, the immigrants had no obligations to follow the instruction of the Party in relation to their reproductive choices. Furthermore, most of them deliberately left their homelands for a place not under the communist rule. And, judging from the target audience of the *Bulletin* and the number of copies it was printed, it was by no means an educational tool to the general public. Rather, it was more likely an appeal mixed

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

with political undertone and emotional sentiment to the local and expatriate people in power that Hong Kong had to be different from China, a “backward” country, in terms of the way overpopulation was addressed. The editorial of the *Quarterly Bulletin* No.9 of the 1st Quarter of 1957 made this purpose clear: “The problem of population is a world-wide one. In this issue we refer to Mexico, China and Hong Kong. Throughout the world the forces which stand in the way of a solution to the problem are the forces of Ignorance and Reaction. And *the most important task is the re-education of the Authorities as well as of the mass of the People.*”<sup>38</sup>

If the *Bulletin* really set government and social elite as its audience, it would become clearer for what purpose it extracted and reprinted part of the Hansard of the House of Commons in the the 3rd Quarter No.3 issue released in 1955. Of particular attention is the speech of Mr. Thomas Reid on the second reading of Colonial Development and Welfare Bill. He opined that “It is impossible to expect over 50 million of us, who all practise birth control and have only small families, to bring up our own families, and vote £1,600 million for our own and our dependencies’ defence to save the world from Communist imperialism and, at the same time, provide for the families of those who refuse to limit their numbers. It cannot be done; it cannot be done.” Given that Hong Kong was a shelter for political and economic refugees from Mainland China, the reprint of the Hansard in length must have provoked a strong sentiment against Communist China which was said to be backward and so naive to conquer the world by number. All in all, the difference between Hong Kong and Mainland China was articulated through how far science

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<sup>38</sup> 1. (my italics)

(of population) was adopted. A wide coverage of China in subsequent issues of the *Bulletin*<sup>39</sup>, therefore, served the purpose of highlighting the differences that had been already in place or were to be envisioned between these two places. The identity of Hong Kong as a modern city was established through its difference from Mainland China in the way that (over)population was conceived and managed.

The No. 7 *Quarterly Bulletin* of the 3rd quarter of 1956 gave another frontpage report on the latest census results of the People's Republic of China. Conducted at midnight on June 30th 1953, the census was considered in strict compliance with the modern statistics of its first kind in the history of China, covering 95% of the total population by direct census. In addition to obtaining the most up-to-date demographic data, another purpose of the census was to facilitate political registration in which a given geographical constituency could vote for a list of approved candidates at a later time. The political purpose of the census was said to further its reliability. However, the result of this nation-wide census was astonishing in that the total population of Chinese was some 602 million, a figure greatly outnumbering previous predictions of less than 500 million. It is probably due to a significant rise in birth rate with the end of the civil war and the subsequent unification under the Communist rule, giving rise to a natural increase of about 20 per thousand per annum. Bombarded with a figure much larger than had ever been predicted, it was reported that the Chinese Communist Party was determined to step

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<sup>39</sup> For example, the *Quarterly Bulletin* No.9 of the 1st Quarter of 1957 and No.11 of the 3rd Quarter of 1957 reported news about the latest development of birth control in Mainland China. The former was about a proposal to raise the legal age for marriage for men and women so as to deter early marriage while the latter was an extract of an article written by a gynaecologist cum obstetrician of the Bureau of Women and Children's Health, Ministry of Public Health of China. It adopted a rather contradictory position as to birth control that on the one hand the author was convinced by the orthodox Marxist doctrine while on the other hand supported raising the age for marriage.

up its birth control campaign. On top of the rhetoric that women were restrained from having jobs and are physically impaired for having too many children, the Party adopted a new rhetoric that access to birth control campaign was a right of the people. “The Government should take the necessary measures to assist and guide birth control among the masses, carry out the planned rearing of children and protect the health of women and children.”<sup>40</sup> That the adverse impact that overpopulation had had in China, as the FPA deemed the real cause for the Party to scale up the effort in birth control, was seldom given an official articulation by the PRC Government.

The moral the FPA drew was that hypocrisy helped in no way. When political orthodoxy was accorded more importance than the real problem at stake, it would greatly impede the full embrace of the Western knowledge as the solution to the problem of overpopulation. To make the point sharper, the issue quoted a “traditional Chinese medicine” for contraception from the October 1956 edition of the “News of Population and Birth Control” (a circular published by the Authority in China). Not only did it add substance to the sentiment against Communism and the backward image of China, but also staged another set of dichotomy between Hong Kong and Mainland China crucial to the image building of the FPA. The prescription, given by Dr. Yei Hsichun, “advises women to swallow live tadpoles, three to five days after menstruation. If fourteen are downed the first day and ten the next, immunity from conception will last five years! No bigger than melon seeds and equipped with tails, this ‘contraception’ can in found in fish ponds and ditches before and after the

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<sup>40</sup> *Quarterly Bulletin* 8(1956): 3.

(spring) Ching Ming Festival.”<sup>41</sup> It can be easily recognized that this pair of dichotomy the FPA drew is the traditional and sometimes mysterious way of understanding versus the Western, modern and scientific knowledge in curbing population growth. In a word, the modernization of sex, the body and population of Hong Kong rests on an ideological dichotomy of China as backward and lack of knowledge vs. Western as scientific and advanced. It was particularly relevant to the abolition of concubinage as its proponents often argued for it by appealing to the Chinese customs.

Nevertheless, it has to be made clear that the image of China that the FPA constructed in its publications was strongly biased through selective reporting for ideological use. In fact, well before the establishment of the League of Eugenics (Hong Kong) in 1936, there had been a government-initiated family revolution in the Mainland in the 1920s, which abolished polygamy and concubinage and set men and women on an, at least legally, equal footing. Even though the Nationalists lost control of China to the Communists, the state-sanctioned attempts to harness the reform of family and marriage to political end did not come to a halt but greatly intensified instead. Between 1950 and 1958, the Communist Government launched a Marriage Law Movement which replaced the “arbitrary and compulsory feudal marriage system” with a new “democratic system based on the free choice of partner, monogamy, equal rights for both sexes, and the protection of the rightful interest of

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 3. Its Chinese translation is as follows: “據十月份『新人口與節育』報導，中共某醫生建議，謂婦人於經期後四、五天，若生吞蝌蚪即可收避孕之效，倘首日吞十四條，翌日繼吞十條，則可避孕五年。此種『避孕良方』於每年清明前後，可見於魚塘及溝渠，為狀小如瓜子，帶有尾巴。” The “News of Population and Birth Control” also reported that a discussion about raising the legal marriageable age at 18 for women and 20 for men was under way.

women and children.”<sup>42</sup> However, the ambitious movement ended in failure. Arranged marriage was still widespread and traditional customs were persistent. Aline Kan Wong attributed its failure to the reluctance of many cadres to strictly implement the revised law because they considered family and marriage private spheres that state should not intervene. The momentum of the reform was then taken over by the Great Leap Forward and the establishment of the commune immediately after the Marriage Law Movement faded away. Although not a few critics argue that the advocacy of the commune was a way to free women from domestic work so that they could join the collective labour when it was in great shortage at that time, its impact was no longer confined to economic aspect but spilled over to the very organization of family and marriage.<sup>43</sup> In this sense, there is at least one point of convergence between the FPA and the Communists, i.e., both were working to re-organize the family and marriage institutions. Their difference was that when the Communists were putting their ideas in practice in a large-scale manner, the FPA and Ellen Li were still struggling how to deliver the messages more effectively. It becomes clearer that the association of China with backwardness is at best not well-substantiated and at worst misleading by not doing full justice to the whole scene concurrently happening in the Mainland. The distorted representation of China served as a caricature for the FPA to build its legitimacy and epistemological privilege.

## 7. Scientism, Eugenics and the Qualitative Responsibility

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<sup>42</sup> “Article 1 of the Marriage Law, quoted from Aline Kan Wong, “Changes in the Marriage and Family Institutions in China, 1949-1969,” presented in the Seminar on Social Change in China, on 2nd May 1970, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Aline Kan Wong, 11.



In fact, the binary opposition between the traditional and the modern, which is respectively synonymous with superstition and scientific knowledge, was built into the very guiding philosophy of the FPA in the form of scientism dated back as early as to its reconstitution in 1950. Scientism is a belief that science as a discipline and scientific facts it establishes by way of scientific method have a say, if not final, on how the social should be organized and how to determine the good from the bad social organization. On top of the doctrine of scientism, the FPA fully took advantage of its predominantly medical composition in framing the discourse of family planning. It condemned the traditional ideas of large family on the one hand and framed the family planning movement morally as well as politically neutral by making claims to science on the other. On a closer look, it is indeed an exercise of moral bracketing that its own preference for what counts as good family is covered under scientific language, which purports to be morally neutral and only governed by rationality. By so doing, the FPA conveys an idea that what counts as a good family is less about deliberations than a deduction from the non-negotiable scientific facts.

The 1957 *Quarterly Bulletin* had a special feature on the population problem in Egypt in which the editor quoted favorably Aldous Huxley's "Politics and Biology" at length.<sup>44</sup> Dismissing all solutions to the problem of overpopulation, Aldous Huxley contends that "economic aid, shows of military strength, Voices of America" or any other means of similar magnitude was doomed to fail because they could never "improve the underlying biological situation."<sup>45</sup> "The simple biological

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<sup>44</sup> 2nd Quarter 10(1975): 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> 2.

reason,” Huxley believes, is that human beings are not only citizens but subjects of nature<sup>46</sup>. In simple words, biological problems called for biological interventions. Similarly, the FPA first made it clear in its 1954 *Annual Report* under the heading of future objectives that “It is not our object to interfere with beliefs or scruples which are opposed to us. We aim to counter ignorance, poverty and want, the evils of ill-health and overcrowding, to ensure that no family is condemned to grow to a size beyond its means or wishes simply through lack of knowledge.”<sup>47</sup> It further explicated its philosophy in the same paragraph that:

It is our belief that parenthood brings responsibilities which must be accepted by parents and that by the recognition of this families can be happier and the burden now carried by the more responsible sections of the community can be eased. To us this is the basis of a sound morality and a constructive approach to many of the problems of the world in which we live.<sup>48</sup>

The appeal to biology, or more specifically the scientific truth about population, served as a cushion against attack on moral and religious grounds. However, as shown above, scientism was itself a a set of normative values. In other words, ironically enough, the FPA and the general discourse of population control drew on the moral forces of science.

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<sup>46</sup> 1.

<sup>47</sup> 18.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

The dialogic other (i.e., Communist China), the distinction between the traditional and the modern and the scientism all serve as a ground for the FPA to define the problem of overpopulation strictly in terms of having or not having the correct knowledge. In the early 50s, the FPA cited various justifications for the need of knowledge enrichment and renewal. One of them was Eugenics whose trace can be detected in the late 50s. Perhaps, it comes as no surprise as the former of the FPA was the League of Eugenics. However, eugenic thought had never occupied a prominent place in the FPA's propaganda. It was not wholly received but selectively made use to advance birth control, a project that was much smaller in scale in comparison with Eugenics which strove to refine the quality of a given race.

The call for an appropriate parent-child ratio was a residue of eugenic thought most noticeable in the contemporary discourse of family planning. It is repeatedly said to be a major determinant of the relationship quality between parents and children. Not only was it desirable to have a small family, it needed to be a quality one in terms of the interactions between parents and children. In fact, calling for a shift from quantity to quality was not new. The British leader quoted above also shared a similar view. Historically, Eugenics in Germany and family planning in India and Egypt, for instance, exhibited a similar pattern that the concern about quality instead of quantity moved center stage. The *1958 Quarterly Bulletin* No. 13, the 1st Quarter issue, reprinted an essay of Reverend Trueman, who received the second runner-up in an essay competition organized by the FPA in 1957. Being praised as a "penetrating" analysis "with special reference to the happiness and peace of mind of individual married couples, the genetic and eugenic aspects of population control,

and the imperative need to limit the alarming growth of the world population,”<sup>49</sup> Rev. Trueman’s essay, entitled “Population and Family Planning,” was no less devoid of an eugenic flavor. In commenting a recent study by British Royal Commission on the birth-rates of different classes of English society, he said the Commission worried that:

[I]ndividuals of higher intelligence (as far as this can be estimated) seem likely to have fewer children by far than the less gifted members of society. If this trend should continue for long, it would have an effect on the genetic make-up of English society. *Social conditions would be exerting selective pressure to favour the unintelligent, and human evolution would be acting in reverse.* In such a situation the work of the family planning clinics has the desirable effect of evening out the birth-rates in England. The less intelligent families often have many children, not from choice, but because they do not know of, or cannot be bothered to learn, any efficient contraceptive technique. To make information and appliances more easily accessible is not to force them unwillingly to limit their families, but to offer a social service they appreciate and use.<sup>50</sup>

The way Rev. Trueman wrote strongly conjures up the image of Fascist genocide in the name of Eugenics. Nevertheless, Omnia El Shakry in her *The Great Social*

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<sup>49</sup> 13(1958):1.

<sup>50</sup> 2. (my italics)

*Laboratory: Subjects of Knowledge in Colonial and Postcolonial Egypt* carefully distinguishes positive Eugenics from the negative one that the former is taken to be “encouraging the propagation of the fit” while the latter is associated with population or ethnic cleansing<sup>51</sup>. Negative Eugenics found no cultural resonance in the 50s colonial Hong Kong whose population makeup was mostly political and economic refugees from Mainland China. There was no clear divide along race within the refugees.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, as discussed in passing in the introduction, the birth control campaign was not coupled with national identity crisis. There was simply lack of social cohesion and a xenophobic sentiment that would have encouraged the pursuit of maintaining a pure race. Instead, the eugenic favour quoted above was transposed into the growing emphasis on an appropriate parent-child ratio. Advocated by positive Eugenics, the ratio aims to nurture an affect that is centered on the emotional investment in children. The *Quarterly Bulletin* 1959 collected an article titled “No Longer a Personal Matter” under the heading of the “Notes from Abroad”.<sup>53</sup> The author, Dr. G.C.L. Bertram, General Secretary of the Eugenics Society in London, argued that the wide spread of contraceptives relieved people of the burden of feeding more than ones could afford and thereby brought them a new personal freedom. However, it induced a new kind of responsibility, in Bertram’s term, *a new qualitative responsibility*.<sup>54</sup> He argued that “We must now have regard to quality because, with the single exception of identical twins, all people are born different from one another; and all people have differing inherent qualitative attributes to pass

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<sup>51</sup> (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007)

<sup>52</sup> Refugees did segregate themselves according to their place of birth such as Chiu Chao(潮州) but they usually shared the same national identity (i.e., Chinese).

<sup>53</sup> 19 (1959): 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

on to their posterity.”<sup>55</sup> Closely related with the quality-quantity distinction were the role of mother and wife, personal freedom, ideal family and the idea that every child was precious in itself. Paying attention to the quality of the mankind, Bertram went on, “we assume responsibility for the future development and evolution of own species.”<sup>56</sup> Children themselves were said to be a vehicle and a path to the human future.

The introduction of the notion of parenthood responsibility, or a new qualitative responsibility, was sentimentally centred on the figure of “the (un)wanted child”. The figure of “(un)wanted child” was a main rhetorical device commonly deployed in many FPA publications from the early 50s to 70s. “The picture of the month” in a 1955 *Quarterly Bulletin* perhaps conveyed the idea much clearer and straightforward than words. Its caption reads: “Our picture this month has been chosen quite frankly for its *emotional appeal*. But it will serve also to stress the fact that the object of the Family Planning Association is *the planning of healthy, happy families*.”<sup>57</sup> This pair of siblings in the photo, supposedly brothers, were dressed in clean and decent attire and grinning cheerfully with the elder cuddling the younger in an intimate manner. That they wore cotton-padded jacket suggests they were living in a family capable of providing them with more than basic material goods. It was not only made for eliciting emotional appeal to the weak and vulnerable but also signified a new parent-children ethics, i.e., responsible parents were expected to be emotionally invested in their children in the way that they were no longer perceived as family

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> (my italics)

assets but an emotional bond that bound husbands and wives. The illustrated leaflet *The Illustrated Birth Control Methods* (「避孕方法簡單圖解」) starts with this new parent-children ethics: “An ideal family must have children. A childless family leads a monotonous and empty life because having children is the emotional bond that unites husbands and wives, being a common interest and an ideal for both.”<sup>58</sup>

It might be argued that the analysis above is merely speculative or over-interpretative because the figure of “the (un)wanted child” could be simply a symbol for the sake of its emotional appeal for a small family on a humanitarian ground without privileging a new parent-child relationship. It seems logically sound that the less family members divide given resources, the more each can get in terms of both material goods and emotional needs. However, the speech made by the late Legislative Councilor, Tse Yu-chuen, in a Legislative Council meeting on Budget Debate on 12th March 1965 encapsulated the figure of “the (un)wanted child” nicely. In replying to the Budget Debate in which the government decided not to take up the FPA’s work but continued to fund it by way of subvention, Tse made a plea for expanding the present work on population control and argued on the ground that:

Perhaps it is also necessary to educate Chinese residents that it is not necessarily a blessing to have a large family of many children and that family planning is scientific and has nothing to do with social and moral inhibitions. *For obvious reasons big families among the*

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<sup>58</sup> (my translation). Original text: “一個理想的家庭，一定要有子女，無子女的家庭，在生活上也會感覺單調和空虛，因為子女是夫婦感情的聯繫，是夫婦間的共同興趣和理想”。 No date of publication could be found on the pamphlet. However, by the FPA’s emblem used from 1967 to 1973 printed on the back, it is believed to have published in that period.

*rich are also undesirable, considering that parental solicitude and responsibility should not be overstretched.*<sup>59</sup>

Tse's view is clear that irrespective of poor or rich family, small one is always preferable because sufficient amount of parental care for every child can be guaranteed. In other words, although the degree to which emotion is invested in children has material basis, satisfaction of material needs is never a substitute for parental care. Qualitative responsibility is more or less independent of economic class of a given family and turns to be an inherent quality of modern family that imposes a moral demand on nearly every parent. More importantly, not only did the value of children change from being a family asset to an emotional bond between husband and wife, fusing family with marriage into a duplet, children were also a key to the human future. In other words, it is the valorization and sentimentalization of children that amalgamated family/marriage with modernity.

#### 8. The Threat and Opportunities of Baby Boom in the Early 70s

Although family planning and its concomitant idea of qualitative responsibility might have great impact on family and marriage, they came without much resistance. Except for the Roman Catholic Church's disapproval of artificial means but not the idea of family planning as such, the smooth import of family planning to the local scene as evidenced by no report of strong opposing voices suggests that family

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<sup>59</sup> HKRS No. 70 D-S No. 2-388. (my italics)



planning might have come to satisfy a social need grown out of an industrializing society.

Judging by different social and economic indicators, be they the industrial composition of the labour force, changes in the pattern of external trade, the income-per-capita and its rate of increase,<sup>60</sup> annual consumption of fossil fuel per capita or purchase of luxury goods,<sup>61</sup> it is no doubt that Hong Kong had been transforming into an industrial society in full swing since mid-1960. There is a convenient view arguing that it is industrialization favouring nuclear family that created a social need for birth control methods. However, as Wong Fai-ming argues, the empirical data available before 1975 did not substantiate such a claim because the causal relation between the change in family structure and industrialization was not of a unilineal determination but of what he termed “functional interdependence”.<sup>62</sup> It means that, on the one hand, industrialization created a social condition favourable to conjugal/nuclear family while on the other, the change in family structure and its concomitant emergence of a goal-driven, independent and utilitarian personality type provided industrialization with its labour power and mentality. What was certain then was a “world-wide movement toward the concomitance of industrialization and the small nuclear family.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Choi C.Y. & Chan K.C., *The Impact of Industrialization on Fertility in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Social Research Centre, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1973), 2.

<sup>61</sup> Wong Siu-lun, “Modernization and Chinese Culture in Hong Kong,” in *The China Quarterly* 106 (1986): 306.

<sup>62</sup> Wong Fai-ming, “Industrialization and Family Structure in Hong Kong,” in *Journal of Marriage and Family* 37(1975): 986.

<sup>63</sup> Wong Siu-lun summarizes four Chinese culture in Hong Kong that is found to be conducive to the development of industrial capitalism. They are, namely, incorporative cosmology, high achievement motivation, familism and utilitarian discipline, 1975, 308-309.

Nevertheless, the success of family planning discourse might be related to how the FPA took advantage of the public sentiment on social progress. Apart from the discursive/rhetorical devices it deliberately employed to make itself and its propaganda appear more convincing and effective, the FPA jumped on the bandwagon by provoking anxiety over the threat of overpopulation to the hard-won economic fruits and the risen standard of living followed by industrialization. In 1964, the then Director of Social Welfare Department, D.W. B. Baron spoke at the opening of a seminar on Education and Social Work in the Regional Conference of the International Planned Parenthood Federation that improvement on standard of living often came with radical changes in ideas about family. If population growth was kept in check, he asked, “Should we then sit back and wait for this ‘economic flashpoint’?”<sup>64</sup> Dr. P.H. Teng, the then Director of Medical and Health Services, concurred with Baren’s view that “Any addition to a family which has an income just adequate to provide for the bare necessities of life will not be an economic asset but a financial burden not only to the family but to *the whole community*.”<sup>65</sup> Even an annual debate at the Urban Council on 1st December 1964 also expressed worries over the foreseen threat of another baby boom that “Whatever progress we may make in housing and social services during the years would be negatived[*sic*] by the greater demand caused by the increase in population over the same period.”<sup>66</sup> On top of it, “Family Planning in Hong Kong,” a film produced by the FPA in 1967

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<sup>64</sup> HKRS No.70 D-S No. 2-388.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. (my italics)

<sup>66</sup> “Extract from Mr. Cheung Wing-in’s Speech at U.C. Annual Debate,” on 1st December 1964, HKRS No.70 D-S No. 2-388.

financially supported by the Social Welfare Department Lotteries Fund, took up a similar line with a warning that “at the present moment 40% of our total population are children under 15 years old,” forecasting another potential baby boom a few years later when they entered child-bearing age in case they are not taught to practice family planning. It was said that many families were so crowded that they could no longer accommodate more children. The unwanted ones were either left to charity groups or went astray. For this, the FPA declared that “They aren’t an asset to any community.”<sup>67</sup>

Perhaps a news report from *the South China Morning Post* on 7th December 1972 well encapsulated such a sentiment. It read “... unless Hongkong faced up to its population problems, it may well find that all the great effort made to improve housing, schooling and health would be *swept away* by the rising side of a population increase.”<sup>68</sup> In the same year, the FPA invited *Hong Kong Standard* to run a feature on the two consecutive days in November, alerting people not to be complacent with the apparently declining rate of population growth because the effect of “an extremely high fertility rate in Hongkong in peacetime just after the war” was to be

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<sup>67</sup> HKRS No.70 D-S No. 2-388. Ellen Li also expressed a similar concern in the Budget Debate on 15th March 1967 that “... the number of women of the 20-24 age-group will probably increase by 100% in the next 5 years and will by itself cause a large increase in the birth rate unless the present level of family planning practice is increased substantially.” Hong Kong Legislative Council, *Official Report of Proceedings*, 15th March 1967, 195. In the next year, Y.K. Kan spoke at the Legislative Council on 11th September 1968 that he normally refrained himself from discussions on birth control and gambling because they would provoke strong emotions and come to nowhere. However, he was in full support of a more positive Government policy on family planning for “It would be unrealistic to attempt to attack our social and economic problems and spend millions of dollars, year after year on housing, education, medical and social services, and ignore the root cause, that is, a rapid population growth.” Hong Kong Legislative Council, *Official Report of Proceedings*, 11th September 1966, 414.

<sup>68</sup> “Quick action is urged to cope with expected baby boom,” *South China Morning Post*, 7th December 1972. (my italics)

felt in the coming years.<sup>69</sup> The potential risk was even taken seriously by the Hong Kong Government. In deliberating over an adoption of a Colony-wide population policy, one of the considerations was to “secure various other improvements” because “The more rapid growth is here, the more difficult will continuing improvements in the quality of life become: the general interest of the community will thus be served by continuing to restrain growth within tolerable limits.”<sup>70</sup> It can be clearly noted that a public sentiment was grown along with the rapid development of Hong Kong into an advanced industrial society from the mid-60s to the early 70s.<sup>71</sup> And, it was interwoven, upon the effort of the FPA, with the local discourse of family planning, which was said to be not only scientific but also *economical*.

It remains unknown to what extent individual reproductive choices made were influenced by the discourse of risk. However, the threat of another baby boom and its widespread resonance in society at large perhaps suggest that individuals were more or less living in a form of community and linked with each other through a planned reproductive, sexual and family life with reference to a same future projection. In other words, people were envisioning a common future collectively. Although there were about 60,000 Chinese people entering Hong Kong illegally in the 10 years between 1962 and 1972, only accounting for less than 2% of total population in 1971

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<sup>69</sup> “HK and the baby boom” and “HK facing baby boom, say experts,” *Hong Kong Standard*, 16th and 17th November 1972.

<sup>70</sup> “Memorandum for Executive Council: Family Planning Policy,” on 20th March 1973, SHA 123/98c and 8/81/71.

<sup>71</sup> In 1971, the net domestic product had already tripled that of 1965 which costed HK\$9,000 million and the government revenue was HK\$3,071, being seven times than that in 1965. Wong Ming-fai, 989.

(i.e., 4,064,400),<sup>72</sup> the immigrants that arrived earlier immediately after war had begun to settle and started their own immediate family here with no desire to return to the Mainland.<sup>73</sup> Their organization of family and reproductive choices had paramount bearing on the social landscape. In 1967, 43% of the married women at or under the age of 45 were using birth control methods.<sup>74</sup> This figure climbed higher to 65% in 1972.<sup>75</sup> In terms of the desire to limit the number children though failing to realize it for various reasons, over half of the fertile women with two children in 1972 reported not to desire more children while over 85% of those with more than two said so.<sup>76</sup> It means if conditions allowed, the number of fertile women practising birth control would have been much higher.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps Dr. G.C.L. Bertram, General Secretary of the Eugenics Society in London, was right to proclaim that “Family planning is no longer merely a personal matter, nor even a national matter; it is the concern of all humanity both now and for the future.”<sup>78</sup> Whether or not the high acceptance rate of family planning was kept in the second generation after war held the key to, as the economic crisis thesis would have it, the future of Hong Kong. As a result, that overpopulation would “sweep away” all of the economic achievements gave a strong discursive as well as emotional support to the idea of family planning

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<sup>72</sup> Johannes M. M. Chan, “Immigration Policies and Human Resources Planning,” in *Hong Kong Mobile: Making a Global Population*, eds. Helen F. Siu and Anges S. Ku (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), 159.

<sup>73</sup> Wong Fai-ming, 1975, 990.

<sup>74</sup> Robert Mitchell, *Family Life in Urban Hong Kong* (Taipei: The Orient Cultural Service, 1972), 269.

<sup>75</sup> Choi C.Y. & Chan K.C., 107-109.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 101-102.

<sup>77</sup> In fact, the percentage of ever-users of contraceptives rose even higher to 88% in 1977. See The FPA, *Family Planning, Knowledge, Attitude and Practice in Hong Kong 1977* (Hong Kong: FPA, 1977), 32. The increasing trend of the use of contraceptives testifies to a sustained collective effort in keeping family small.

<sup>78</sup> FPA, *Quarterly Bulletin* 19(1959): 2.

and conjugalism that it was often associated with, i.e., the notion of a family with a pair of monogamous heterosexual couple emotionally bonded by their own children. It is against the background that the FPA stepped up its effort in modernizing marriage.

### 9. Towards Modern Coupledness and the Importation of Sexual Conjugal Familism

The trend towards conjugal family with two children in the 60s is parallel to the FPA's introduction of "happy family" since the late 1950s. To the FPA, not only did the relations between children and parents have to be reworked in light of new knowledge, so did the relations between husbands and wives. The early 1960s witnessed coupledness as a principal form of intimacy. In fact, this ideal had already been accepted prior to industrialization whose role was to mainly accelerate the trend but not to give birth to it in the first place.<sup>79</sup> For example, in 1961, nearly 63% of all families fell within a narrower category of nuclear family.<sup>80</sup> The importance of the FPA was its provision of a new set of lexicons for people to envision and practice conjugal coupledness. In other words, the FPA fleshed out the modern monogamous marriage/family.

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<sup>79</sup> Wong Ming-fai argues that nuclear family ideals were accepted prior to industrialization, which played the role in accelerating the trend instead. "Modern Ideology, Industrialization and Conjugalism: The Hong Kong Case," in *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 2(1972), 146-7.

<sup>80</sup> Choi C.Y., *The Impact of Industrialization on Fertility in Hong Kong: Some Socio-Psychological Aspects* (Hong Kong: Social Research Centre, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1975), 8. The figure Choi used was quoted from the first post-war census by the Department of Statistics which employed a narrower definition that excluded widowed family.

Parallel to its effort in curbing the exponential growth of birth rate which showed sign of leveling off in 1958, the FPA launched the married life information service of its first kind in the same year with the opening of the first Marriage Guidance clinic at its Headquarters on November 27th 1958.<sup>81</sup> The first publication leaflet for the clinic, *Happy Marriage* (「幸福的婚姻」), embodies continuity and rupture of the FPA's pioneering work in birth control.<sup>82</sup> On top of family planning primarily concerned with limiting number of children and spacing between births, it explicitly spelt out the “Truth of Marriage” in four bullet points. The first two read “Marriage is a *new* beginning of two people” and “Husband and wife are a lifelong companion”.<sup>83</sup> Family was no longer exclusively discussed in terms of (over) reproduction, which conjured up the images of miserable mothers and their hungry-for-food-and-love children. Couples then entered the scene and were given a special attention in their own right. Nevertheless, what underlies the FPA's advocacy of birth control and the newly opened field of marriage guidance is again the enduring theme of “planning”. Now that marriage attained a status as an end in itself instead of a means of reproduction, it was made possible to be rationally organized in light of new knowledge. The “Truth” about marriage awaits delineating. In this imaginary, concubinage fitted in nowhere because it was essentially incompatible with the idea of the union of a husband and a wife exclusive to all others. Neither did it allow an equal footing between partners. As a result, family planning was inherently incompatible with concubinage.

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<sup>81</sup> *Quarterly Bulletin (The Family Planning of Hong Kong)*, No.16, 4th quarter (1958): 3.

<sup>82</sup> Initially, the leaflet was sent by post to people who registered with the Registry for Marriage.

<sup>83</sup> Original text: “婚姻是二人新生活的開始” and “夫婦是終身良伴”. (my translation and italics)

It seems that the development of the married life information service was a corollary of the FPA's birth control movement that it claimed to have succeeded in shrinking the family size in the late 50s. With the burden of feeding an over-populated family being lessened, emotional needs once deprived of by virtue of material poverty were said to naturally prevail and demand the overdue satisfaction. Such a naturalistic account sounds plausible at first sight in that it has some truth to arguing material conditions circumscribe the possibilities of the intimate. However, removal of material constraints dictates no imagination of what a "happy" marriage could and should be. Its content has to be actively imagined and given institutional shape.<sup>84</sup> Provided that there is no intrinsic value that qualifies what a "happy" marriage is meant to be, that it is identified as such must be historically specific. The FPA's notion of "happy marriage/family" is no exception.

Ellen Li recounted the development of the marriage guidance clinic in a quarterly issued by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service<sup>85</sup>. In the mid-50s, the World Council of Church ran a mission of spreading marriage guidance in the Southeast Asia. In 1957, with Mrs. Vera Mace and Dr. David Mace being the facilitators,<sup>86</sup> a three-month training workshop was held in Chiang Mai, the largest city in Northern Thailand. The FPA assigned Mrs. Victoria Cheng (程任定夫人), a committee member, to take part in it. On her return to Hong Kong, Mrs. Cheng set up the first FPA's Marriage Guidance clinic. Together with Ellen Li and two physicians, she

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<sup>84</sup> Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004).

<sup>85</sup> "The work of marriage guidance (婚姻指導工作)," *Hong Kong Council of Social Service Quarterly* (社聯季刊) 3 (1961):3-6.

<sup>86</sup> They were a married couple and coauthored many journal articles and books on family counselling. They also co-founded the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment in 1973 (It was later renamed the Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment).



served as the first generation of counsellors in the clinic on a voluntary basis.<sup>87</sup> Her service was, unfortunately, short-lived because of her sudden death in July 1961.<sup>88</sup> Though tragic as it is, the bureaucratic structure of the FPA since its re-establishment in 1950 more or less guaranteed its stability. The married life information service continued to thrive in conjunction with the FPA's birth control endeavor. Of particular note, however, is the striking similarity between the Evangelical conception of marriage/family and the FPA's marriage guidance propaganda. Both believed in monogamy that demands absolute and exclusive surrender of oneself to each other. In delineating the meaning of marriage, Ellen Li wrote that, among decent material life, a harmonious sexual relationship, child-rearing and others, "a respectable marital morality and spiritual life" was constitutive of "happy marriage"<sup>89</sup>:

It is crucial for young men and women to understand that union by marriage is holy in nature. Marriage is not only a source of pleasure but also demands our own contribution. We have to be held responsible for each other, making a lifelong commitment and

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<sup>87</sup> *Quarterly Bulletin (The Family Planning of Hong Kong)*, No.16, 4th quarter (1958): 3. There is a discrepancy between the *Quarterly Bulletin* (No. 14, 4th quarter, 1958), Mrs. Ellen Li's essay quoted above (in 1961) and the *Silver Jubilee* publication as to the fact that Mrs. Victoria Cheng involved in the early days of the clinic and the exact year of establishment. The *Silver Jubilee* wrote that the clinic "was started by Mrs Ellen Li in November 1959. She served as the first Counsellor for several years before being succeeded by the late Mrs Victoria Cheng..." (1975:49) Assuming that the clinic was opened in November 1959, its history would have been less than two years before the death of Mrs. Victoria Cheng in July 1961. Then, there would be no way for Mrs. Ellen Li to have served the clinic for several years before handing it over to Mrs. Victoria Cheng. The news of the opening of the Marriage Guidance clinic in an issue of 1958 *Quarterly Bulletin* further refutes *Silver Jubilee's* account.

<sup>88</sup> *11th Annual Report, 1961-1962* (Hong Kong: The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong: 1962, 2).

<sup>89</sup> "The work of marriage guidance (婚姻指導工作)," *Hong Kong Council of Social Service Quarterly* (社聯季刊) 3 (1961):4.

never abandoning the other arbitrarily. We have to refrain ourselves from having sexual relationships outside marriage. For the sake of living together, part of our freedom has to be sacrificed and we need to leave the habit of enjoying ourselves alone.<sup>90</sup>

Being a Christian, however, Ellen Li was different from other churchgoers who usually took every chance to assert their faith in Christianity. Throughout her two autobiographies, there was no a single chapter or even a single paragraph devoted to her experience of religious life. Except that she mentioned she “had been educated in a Christian school” in passing,<sup>91</sup> she seldom addressed or presented herself as a Christian in public occasions. Apart from her chairpersonship of the YWCA, the second most representative link between her Christian faith and her devotion to family planning movement was a book *Love, Marriage and Family* (《戀愛婚姻與家庭》) that she co-authored with three other priest couples. Unfortunately, it is now inaccessible for it is not archived in any university libraries or public libraries. Nevertheless, from the materials at hand, it is safe to infer that Ellen Li and Victoria Cheng were likely the key figures who brought the Christian notion of family and marriage to the FPA’s family planning movement. And this influence is still so palpable even 14 years later that the exact Biblical wordings from the *Genesis* were simply adopted in an FPA’s booklet *The Enlightened Marriage* (《婚姻的啟蒙》):

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. Original text: “青年男女一定要明白：雙方給合是神聖的，婚姻生活不但要享受，也是一種施與，彼此都要有責任感，要終身廝[*sic*]守，不能隨意拋棄，不作婚姻以外的性結合，須要犧牲自己一部份的自由，放棄單獨享樂的習慣，處處為共同生活着想。”

<sup>91</sup> Ellen Li, 1998, 71.

The purpose of marriage is unification...You two are living so close and intimate to the degree that the two individuals vanish but become one body. In other words, you two have reached the level in which the mind and the body fuse together and you can communicate with each other without uttering a word.<sup>92</sup>

The underlying tone of the Creator's command "they shall be one flesh" was nicely encapsulated in the aforementioned "Truth" about marriage in the *Happy Marriage* leaflet. The resemblance found here is not accidental. Dr. David Mace, who designed the three-month training workshop of which Mrs. Victoria Cheng partook, is a key figure in delivering the Christianized family ideology through family counselling. In 1974, having been invited by a consensus of the Associate Editors of *The Family Coordinator*, an American-based academic journal, Mace wrote in an autobiographical style to reflect upon how he embarked on a career as a scholar specializing in family sociology and family counselling. Graduating from Cambridge University, UK, he served as a Methodist minister for four years since 1930. The misery and plight of the people he served shattered the integrity of his theological preconceptions. In the midst of religious confusion, Mace resigned from the Ministry and worked as a family counsellor. In 1949, he migrated with his wife to the United States and began his teaching career at a graduate school. Despite his rather varied career path, what he had not forgotten is the quest for finding "the central source of all this human misery" that he had witnessed in the London slum<sup>93</sup>. He concludes

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<sup>92</sup> (Hong Kong: The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, 1975), 13. (my translation); Original text: "婚姻的目的在合一... ..就是你們生活得如此接近，如此親蜜，以至不再是兩人，而是合而為一體的了。亦即是你們倆已達到靈肉合一，心靈相通的地步了。"

<sup>93</sup> "What I have Learned About Family Life," *The Family Coordinator* April (1974): 189-192.

that “...it is the family that we learn to love and to be loved, and thus to be friendly and cooperative; or learn to hate and to exploit others, and thus to be aggressive and acquisitive.”<sup>94</sup> As the marriage relationship, Mace believed, was the core of the family, its failure or success determined that of the society.

In retrospect, Victoria Cheng’s participation in the three-month training programme in 1957 was a vital link between the FPA and David Mace’s Christianized idea of modern family/marriage. It is highly probable that the opening of the marriage guidance clinic was a direct consequence of the training programme. It basically followed Mace to provide marriage counselling to newly wedded couples and those who had married for years. And, above all, even the whole programme of marriage guidance and the FPA’s conception of modern family/marriage replicated his teachings to a great extent that Mace’s imprints were so visible in many FPA’s publications.

The first and foremost resemblance was the FPA’s adoption of “happy family,” a notion that was advanced by David Mace in the early 50s and fundamental to all of his work. He published a pamphlet entitled *What Makes a Marriage Happy?* in 1959, summarizing his experience in marriage counselling work.<sup>95</sup> There he championed a view that “happy marriage [should] not be [seen] as a gift handed to us on our wedding day, but as something we have to create together by long years of toil and

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 189.

<sup>95</sup> David Mace, *What Makes a Marriage Happy?* (New York: The Public Affairs Committee, 1974 [1959]).

effort.”<sup>96</sup> Among other aspects, Mace laid enormous stress on sex, adjustment and partnership in married life, which he thought held the key to a happy marriage. Sex was important because “for most couples it is the supreme expression of their married love.”<sup>97</sup> The importance of adjustment was also on the rise in the 50s when Mace was writing this pamphlet because people of his contemporaries were gradually entering a post-traditional order. The chance of meeting and working with people with drastically different backgrounds and customs greatly increased. So was the chance of conflicts. Couples in a marriage did not necessarily share the same taste, religion, way of living and outlook on life. Mace was right to say that “No two people will agree on everything, so some adjustments are necessary even for couples who grew up next door to each other.”<sup>98</sup> With sex satisfied and ways of living adjusted, the couple could work in a complimentary partnership, forming into one unit in which “you” and “I” were no longer distinguishable so that “we” were truly united.<sup>99</sup> These aspects that Mace deemed paramount were largely replicated in the FPA’s publications. For example, with regard to adjustment and partnership in marriage, the 1975 *Enlightened Marriage* devoted a whole chapter on “Adjustment, Love and Married Life”. It proclaimed at the beginning that “Marriage is not what poets would believe as ‘something that God blisses and will be happy forever’. It requires you two to work it out on a daily basis. It is like a beautiful cobblestone pavement. Your continual love to each other, care of each other and understanding of

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>98</sup> David Mace and Evelyn Millis Duvall, “Happiness is the Goal,” in *Sex, Love and Marriage*, ed. Jules Saltman (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1968), 22.

<sup>99</sup> David Mace, 1974[1959], 9.

each other are the cobblestone to pave the road.”<sup>100</sup> Again, the motif of planning and reflexivity seen in the qualitative responsibility and the need of family planning was extended to married life.

Having conceptualized marriage as the “foundation-stone” of the family, Mace argues that strategies devised to assist family by focusing on children, mothers or social rehabilitation largely misfires. Rather, the key issue that matters is the “quality of marriage” along with sex, adjustment, partnership and other aspects. To Mace, the happiness of the family lies in the “permanent, exclusive, monogamous marriage.” Understood as such, couples are bestowed a unique role of lifelong companion to each other. Once entering marriage, one’s interpersonal network has to be re-prioritized with couples being placed at the center while all other relationships therefore rendered subsidiary. With the fusion of two individuals by way of exclusion, the boundary of individual collapses into one. The very notion of quality marital life entailed the application of knowledge in a reflexive manner to the domain that used to be deemed so private and requires no special training. Marriage/family was then scrupulously dissected into its composite for analysis, diagnosis and adjustment. Each part of marriage/family, for example sex, child care, interpersonal communication, constituted a separate object of knowledge. Marriage Guidance primarily consisted of two parts, pre-marital and post-marital. In the former, engaged couples were given basic knowledge on the anatomy and physiology of both sexes. On that basis, the importance of a healthy sexual life was introduced alongside the principles of contraception and family planning. As for the post-marital guidance, it

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<sup>100</sup> 香港家庭計劃指導會，《婚姻的啟蒙》(香港：香港家庭計劃指導會，1975)，1。

was largely remedial. Counsellors assisted couples to address family conflicts and sexual disharmony. The future of marital and family life immediately ahead and after was to be carefully worked out so that the engaged couples came to a consensus on financial arrangements, time allocation and adjustment of individual habits.

The aspect that distinguished David Mace's teaching from Familism that stresses conjugality lies in his positive perception of sex in marriage. He clearly articulated a view alternative to that of the mainstream Christian community in his 1970 *The Christian Response to the Sexual Revolution*.<sup>101</sup> Mace took issue with the conventional interpretation of the Bible in relation to sex. He argued the Church's teachings that equated sex with sin was not a loyal exegesis of the Bible but a contamination of the Oriental and Hellenistic philosophies.<sup>102</sup> Confronted with sexual revolution, argues Mace, some Christian insisted on the traditional teaching and reacted vehemently. He thought, however, it was time for Christians to re-examine their own positions and understanding. Although not fully espousing sexual revolution, especially its approval of pre-marital sex, Mace found some of its influence appealing and justified, that is, sex was in itself beautiful and joyful.<sup>103</sup> He called for a re-interpretation of the Bible and a search for the new morality that gave more stress to context rather than non-negotiable rules of do's and don'ts. To do so, Christians must join the explosion of discourse on sex because "unless we can *talk* about sex, we cannot *think* about it."<sup>104</sup> In concluding his revolutionary appeal, he

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<sup>101</sup> (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 126. (original italics)

thought such a reinterpretation of the Bible was in absolute consistency to the core belief of Christianity, namely, the doctrine of the Creation and the Incarnation. It was because, he eloquently argues that “Sex gives us the power to share in the work of creation - this is its *procreative* aspect. And it has the potentiality to involve us in the deepest and most sublime experiences of human love, of love incarnate - this is ... its *unitive* aspect.”<sup>105</sup> It is through Mace’s (re-)formulation that sex was deeply coupled with love and linked to a re-interpreted Christian morality. Sex was no longer considered an antithesis to holiness. Rather, it was the means that one found themselves connected with God as long as it was within the confines of marriage. Frank and sometimes explicit discussions on marital sex were then deemed perfectly moral and worthy of encouragement. The permissive and open attitude of the FPA towards sex was largely originated from its importation of Mace’s, as a reformist Christian belief, re-reading of the Bible. Therefore, it was not surprising to find some of the FPA’s publications loaded with Christian flavor but at the same time explicit in sex talk. For example, two out of five chapters of the *Enlightened Marriage* were about marital sex. The last one, “the pleasure of sex” (床第之歡), was even on sexual techniques.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid 129. (original italics)

<sup>106</sup> Similar to what David Mace did to the conventional Christian view on sex, it re-interpreted what it meant to be the virtue of chastity. It wrote “According to the different purposes for each stage of life, putting sexual desires in an appropriate way to achieve the unity of the soul and the flesh is permissible. Sexual intercourse is an expression of deepest intimacy. Either boundless, intimate, passionate or intense sex among married couples is also a manifestation of the virtue of chastity.” (p. 30) Original text: 「按我們生命歷程每一階段之不同目的，合理地運用性慾的能力，靈肉合一，籍肉體的結合表達深摯的愛，那麼夫婦之間或是無拘無束，或是如膠如漆，或是熱情如火，都仍是最貞節的表現。」 In fact, in 1974, the FPA published *Sex and Marriage* (《性與婚姻》) which discussed in explicit terms sex in honeymoon, techniques, postures, frequency of sex and of course, the idea of family planning. (香港：香港家庭計劃指導會，1974)。



Rather than a transition all the way to individualism as many modernization theories espouse, there are three interrelated paradoxes concomitant with sexual modernity as manifested in the local history of family planning:

1. The ideal of two individuals becoming one flesh in marriage presupposes a choosing and enlightened subject who is highly aware of him/herself as an individual and responds accordingly with the guidance of “objective” knowledge *before* and *after* marriage;
2. To sustain the exclusiveness of marriage, not only in terms of sexual relations but extended to all other interpersonal relations, entails a deliberate invitation of incessant interventions from outside. Pre-marital guidance and follow-ups are a case in point. Concubinage had no place in the FPA imaginary of marriage/family;
3. The family/marriage ideology as a duplex is modelled on that of Evangelical Christian tradition but is secularized at the hand of David Mace and the subsequent FPA’s advocacy. Sex is no longer a taboo within marriage. It is invested with a new utility of bonding the married couples and their children together in a unity.

All in all, it becomes imperative that couples in a marital relationship are not only spiritually united but also financially, temporally, habitually and *sexually* fused into one. *The Enlightened Marriage* begins with a rather pragmatic opening: “a marriage certificate is never a guarantee of a happy marriage. It is only a learning license. Once entering marriage, couples need to learn adjustment which cannot be made without effort by intuition, by luck or by the simple fact that you two have

married.”<sup>107</sup> What presumes here are a pair of *choosing subjects* who make informed reproductive and sexual decisions about how to run their “private” life in light of proper knowledge. Calculability, planning and reflexivity permeate the “private” domain of family/marriage.

## 10. Conclusion

With the diversification of propaganda channels in 1965, the discourses of the FPA nearly reached every corner of the Colony. In its first 22 years of work, the FPA worked against a legal as well as social reality that concubinage was allowed and practiced and it showed sign of dying out. Although the FPA did not explicitly champion for its abolishment, the whole idea of family planning did run against it. It is probably that Mrs. Ellen Li was a key figure that bridged the two by her privilege and position as a devoted committee member of the FPA, the first women non-officio legislator and the president of YWCA. With the old institution fading out, conjugal familism was on the rise. Although a full analysis of its historical and cultural formation is out of the scope of the present study, and the dispute over to what degree industrialization facilitated its development is well noted, I argue that the discursive production of the FPA played a significant role here. In propagating the idea of family planning and provision of contraceptives, it provided a new set of lexicons and imaginary for envisioning family, marriage and parenthood. Not only did it justify the new imaginary by constructing a dialogic other and instating a series

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<sup>107</sup> (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1975), 1. (my translation); original text: “結婚證書並不是婚姻生活幸福的保證書，它只是一張學習許可證。結婚之後，夫婦必需學習適應。這種適應並不能靠直覺，運氣或者已經結婚這事實而自然造成。”

of dichotomies in the pairs of Chinese/Western, backward/scientific, remorseful/happy, ignorant/knowledgeable. More importantly, it also instilled the modern themes of reflexivity, planning and risk into marriage and family. To aspire to a modern marriage and family, the reproductive choices and behaviour of married couples were subjected to reflexive planning in light of new knowledge. So was the parent-child relationship. Largely appropriating David Mace's revisionist Christian teaching, the FPA introduced the momentum of reflexively organizing one's life into marriage. Following Mace, sex in marriage was given paramount importance. It was turned into an object that husbands and wives had to learn, explore and practice. The effect was that frank and sometimes explicit discussions of sex were acceptable provided that they are for the sake of happiness of marriage/family. In sum, the promotion and provision of family planning out of a need for curbing the population growth gave birth to a sexual enlightenment strictly confined within marriage/family. Limited as it sounds, this sexual conjugal familism offered a protective coat under which the FPA developed sex education in and out of schools, an issue taken up in the chapter that immediately follows.

## **Chapter 3 “We Must Talk About Sex”: The Development of Sex Education**

### 1. Introduction

Sex education has always been a battlefield where parties of diverse ideological positions compete with each other to gain the upper hand in moulding it in their desired way. Similar to many other places, the battle in Hong Kong was also struggled over the figure of youth. A growing anxiety over the easy access to pornography by young people in the 60s inaugurated a collective exploration of how to contain their budding sexuality in an appropriate and manageable framework. It is against this background that sex education with a relative formality emerged, following an explosion of syllabi, teaching materials, official instructions and guidelines. Although there were some oppositions in the name of Chinese culture, the quest for devising a sensible sex education capable of responding to the needs of young people in the rapidly changing society prevailed. The community at large came to realize that placing the young in a greenhouse devoid of contamination was not only ineffective but also counterproductive. With the social environment increasingly saturated with sexual implications, any educational programme that subscribed to the idea of sexual innocence would definitely lose ground to popular culture that young people were in contact on a daily basis. In competing with the sexually-saturated social surroundings, sex education had no alternative but to directly address the sexuality of the youth. In this sense, the move to diminishing the influence of pornography on the youth paradoxically invited a recognition and construction of young people as sexual beings. Secured with the institutional basis

accumulated from its provision of family planning and the public image as an expert in sex-related issues, the FPA was in a privileged position to step into the field of sex education.

Although the FPA had been delivering information on family planning since the 1950s, it would be grossly misleading to say that the FPA dictated the development of sex education in Hong Kong for there were many other agencies playing a prominent role as well. In fact, in the 70s, the FPA was not the sole advocate of sex education. At many occasions and through different platforms, many educators, politicians and even Church leaders had been actively pressing for the introduction of sex education to schools. The unique role that the FPA played in this concerted effort lay in its privileged position and ability to line up these people from diverse backgrounds under the umbrella of family life education, which the FPA took as one of its signature campaigns. In March 1967, a Working Committee on Family Life Education was formed with representatives from the educational fields, religious and social work groups and other stake-holders.<sup>1</sup> It started collecting materials abroad ranging from pamphlets, curriculum guides to audio-visual aids. In addition to importation of materials from abroad that were simply absent in the local scene, it also committed itself with the task of translating new ideas and terminology into Chinese from sources primarily in English. Of particular attention is that the Department of Education assigned an official to serve on the committee so that its work and perspective more or less could be said to have received official endorsement. Since the inception of the committee, it compiled a catalogue of

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<sup>1</sup> FPA, *Annual Report 1967/68* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1968), 20.

collected materials that were available for loan. In the subsequent year, the Working Committee spelt out more clearly its remit as to “help[ing] young people adjust themselves to the rapidly changing pattern of family life in Hong Kong and to prepare them for their future responsibilities as adults in the community.”<sup>2</sup>

Overall, the FPA worked with the Education Department in good terms throughout the 60s and 70s. For example, with funding from the American Friend Service Committee and the Hong Kong Christian Service, the Working Committee sponsored an official from the Education Department to the United States for a one-month course in sex and family life education during the summer of 1969. Strategically speaking, it was a wise move to co-opt the government to the committee because the introduction of family life education to schools, of which sex education was a part, necessarily sought official approval before implementation. And, that the FPA embarked upon developing family life education could be understood as its own strategic repositioning as well. Seeing that there were a marked downward trend in fertility by 26% between 1965 and 1968, as well as another baby boom expected to come in the subsequent decade, the very idea of family life education provided the FPA with a timely chance to refine, integrate and re-package its continual work on birth control and marriage counselling along a new organizing axis of youth sexuality.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the FPA’s emphasis was shifted in response to the perceived need for preparing the children, who were born after war but were starting

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<sup>2</sup> The FPA, *Annual Report 1968/69* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1969), 27.

<sup>3</sup> I employ Foucault’s notion of sexuality here to denote the fact that sex has been turned into a naturalized attribute that defines personhood through discourse and the power relation that it is embedded. In this sense, sex education as advocated by the FPA and many other agencies and people is in fact sexuality education, which strives to shape the way youth understands, experiences, organizes and expresses their sex. It also shapes how the other conceive of youth sexuality. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume I* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

to grow into adulthood, to appreciate the virtue of keeping family small. It can be said that the family life education as a new major campaign was the FPA’s response to the budding youth sexuality but at the same time moved beyond the confines of birth control as what it did in providing marriage counselling. It is against this background that sex education enjoyed special attention in the family life education. When summarizing various approaches the panelists proposed in a four-day seminar on “responsible parenthood and family life education,” Arthur Hinton, a member of the Family Life Education Sub-Committee cum a principal, succinctly pointed out that “If we want to speak at all in our education about the family, about relationships between people, about marriage, then we must talk about sex.”<sup>4</sup> Sex was therefore accorded with a privileged position in the family life education programme.

## 2. The Moral Outcry and the Emergence of Sex Education in Schools

Hinton’s conviction seems to have been commonly shared among those who advocated introduction of sex education to schools. Prior to the FPA’s endeavor through its own platform, the principal of the Diocesan Girls’ School (拔萃女書院), Mrs. C. J. Symons, pronounced her plan to introduce “personal hygiene” to her school at the speech day ceremonies on 13th January 1966.<sup>5</sup> It immediately initiated a new round of public discussions. Although she agreed that the subject was better

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<sup>4</sup> “Summary of Conference,” in *Proceedings of the Seminar on Responsible Parenthood and Family Life Education*, eds., The FPA (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1972), 85. (my emphasis)

<sup>5</sup> “Girls School to Introduce Sex Education,” *South China Morning Post*, 13 January, 1966. In fact, the subject was ill-defined as it not only focused on personal hygiene, but also discussed dating and wider social and moral implications of sex in the form of lectures by the school’s own staff. 4 groups of students aged between 10 and 18 volunteered to participate in it. The group of younger students aged below 14 would only be taught personal hygiene, other issues would be brought up for more mature groups. See “School To Start Pilot Scheme in Sex Education,” *South China Morning Post*, 10th May, 1967.

left to parents, their reluctance to and embarrassment over discussing sex with children called for active and determined interventions. Otherwise, as she argued, pornographic materials would take over parents’ and teachers’ roles. Mrs. Symons’ decision was widely praised except one or two people who had some hesitations as to whether the moral aspects of sex would be ignored<sup>6</sup>. But these worries were proved to be unnecessary as she explained in a later interview that “... far from just explaining the facts of life to the girls, the main purpose was to explain the moral implications of sex.”<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the fact that she eloquently described the subject as “neither sex-obsessed nor sex-repressed” at the speech day, sex education, or “personal hygiene” as she euphemistically referred to, was taken to be a preventive and corrective measure against deteriorating morals. Such a justification for the need for sex education recurred throughout the discussions in the late 60s and the whole 70s. Even students leaders openly espoused it on the ground that “... the easy access of pornographic publications and films make sex education most pressing.”<sup>8</sup> Arthur Hinton, a determined champion of sex education quoted above, also argued on a strikingly similar but more sophisticated basis that “... children are almost indoctrinated with the idea of sexual satisfaction as an ultimate aim in life” through the media of advertisements, novels, plays, films, T.V. programmes and songs as our society was turning into a consumer society.<sup>9</sup> To him, sex education, if not a panacea, must be an

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<sup>6</sup> “Extracts from the Chinese Press,” *South China Morning Post*, 13th January, 1966. This comment was from *The Wah Kiu Yat Po*.

<sup>7</sup> “Sex at School,” *China Mail*, 9th March, 1967.

<sup>8</sup> “Sex Lessons in Schools Urged,” *China Mail*, 2 January, 1968.”

<sup>9</sup> “Summary of Conference,” 85.



urgently needed social campaign counteracting the whole trend of what he called “sexual permissiveness.”

In light of the fact that a few schools attempted to sex education in schools, in December 1967, the Department of Education issued a circular to secondary schools granting discretion to schools in offering sex education provided that they fulfilled the three-pronged requirements, which included (a) prior consent sought from individual parents, (b) principal’s approval of a teaching scheme that is worked out stage by stage and (c) consultation with the chief inspector of schools prior to the implementation of a new teaching programme. Despite the Department being reluctant to dictate what to teach and giving a free hand to schools to experiment what method of delivery they deemed fit, it nevertheless held a general concept of what sex education consisted of. In a reply to a written question posed by *Kung Sheung Yat Pao* on 15th April 1969, the spokesperson of the Department listed some topics of sex education that it considered suitable to be taught in various subjects. They were physiology of sexual reproduction in general and mammalian reproduction in a Biology course, female hygiene in domestic science lessons and the social and moral aspects in civics and religious instruction or moral education.

It is clear that from the very beginning when the introduction of sex education to schools was raised in the mid 60s, it was always discussed in company with pornography. In fact, their affinity has a historical root. Prior to 1975, there was a moral outcry over the exposure of the juvenile to violent and pornographic comics,

leading to the enactment of tightened legal regulations.<sup>10</sup> According to *The Vintage Porn Magazine* (《老鹹書》), the late 60s and the early 70s witnessed the blossoming of pornographic magazines.<sup>11</sup> The most popular one was *The Vintage Car* (《老爺車》), which started publishing in 1968. It was groundbreaking because it was the first local porn magazine that was modelled on *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. In addition to having plenty of photos of nude female models, there were also novels, commentaries, features and advice columns. It was said that *The Vintage Car* enjoyed a high circulation with handsome economic profits. As a result, it attracted many others to follow suit. In the early 70s, a number of new porn magazines were published. Two of them were *New Interests* (《新趣》) which featured rumors and scandals and *Hotline* (《熱線》). The severe competition drove the new comers to be more explicit in style and contents. *A Rare Beauty* (《尤物》) was the first of its kind to have illustrations of heterosexual sexual intercourse. The rapid expansion of porn industry and their increasing explicitness attracted criticisms from religious and education groups. At the same time, serial comic books with unprecedented violent scenes were enormously popular among young people. *The Little Rascal* (《小流氓》), one of the best-sellers, enjoyed an extremely high circulation of 720,000 copies per month.<sup>12</sup> Almost every advocate for the provision of sex education to the young was more or less preoccupied with the adverse impact the pornographic magazines and the comic books might had had. The pornographic upsurge was also

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<sup>10</sup> The Colonial Government drafted the Objectionable Publications Bills 1975 in place of the Indecent Exhibition Ordinance for the former's scope was much wider and applicable to materials widely popular among teenagers, i.e., comic books. The Bill was finally passed in the third reading on 16th July, 1975. See Hong Kong Legislative Council, *Official Report of Proceedings*, Wednesday, 2nd July, 1975, 881-887.

<sup>11</sup> 江湖中人 (香港:次文化堂, 2006)。

<sup>12</sup> Mary Ho Wai-wah, “Social action and political activities - a case study of the movement to eliminate sex and violence in children's comic books in Hong Kong,” in *The Hong Kong Journal of Social Work* 10(1976): 18-23.

prevalent in films. In response, some of the member of the Family Life Education Sub-Committee had a meeting with the censor who was in charge of film censorship on 22nd January 1973. On 8th March, members discussed and agreed to write to the Colonial Secretariat, urging the government to “enforce a law restricting children from entering cinemas showing films described as ‘not suitable for children.’”<sup>13</sup> In this light, the FPA joined with other religious, social and educational groups to condemn pornography. And, it would be safe to assume that the Sub-Committee also considered sex education a remedy in the early 70s.

In addition to the historical affinity between pornography and sex education, there is a discursive affinity in play as well. By contrasting sex education with pornography, sex, youth sexuality in particular, was stripped of sensual quality and turned into knowledge which could be objectively described, analyzed and transferred. In that sense, sex education enabled students to understand sex in a detached way as they did to other school subjects. The erotic dimension of sex was rendered as abominable as pornography whose strong connotation of moral deterioration in turn isolated the sensual feeling that sex could offer. Consequently, sex education was considered the most effective way to contain the influence of pornography by inculcating young people a set of *knowledge* about sex. With this, their sexual curiosity would be greatly diminished. Urban Councillor cum an outspoken sex education champion Dr. Woo Pak-foo (胡百富) was of the view that sex was a basic drive that came with us since we were born to this world. As a result, sex education should be a life-long education from cradle to grave. To him, the purpose of sex education was “to let

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<sup>13</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Family Life Education Sub-Committee, on 8th March, 1973, in HKRS147-7-233.

young people acquire an understanding of what is ‘sexual attitude’ and ‘sexual morals.’ When they grow up, they need to know the *truth* but not the distorted or false facts.”<sup>14</sup> In other words, the erotic and sensual dimension of sexuality was taken away and rendered antithetical to the truth of sexuality. By so doing, sex education, on the one hand, took on an important task to rectify the emerging social problems but on the other hand produced an incessant desire for the sensual aspect of sexuality that is censored. But most of the sex education advocates seemed to only realize the former. For example, at a three-day student health seminar in 1968, Dr. Woo argued that “sex education could check the spread of venereal diseases” and juvenile delinquency.<sup>15</sup> At the same occasion, Dr. P.H. Teng, the Director of Medical and Health Services, was the first government official who also endorsed the view that sex education should be part of the secondary school curriculum.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. Controversy over the BBC’s Sex Education Films

However, apart from the Education Department, those who supported sex education had never spelt out what teenagers should know. Nor did they define what they meant by “sexual attitude” and “sexual morals”. They were only concerned about the “when” and “how”. For example, Dr. Woo recommended that “basic facts” should be

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<sup>14</sup> 胡百富，「我對『性教育』的意見」，《教育署光》9(1968): 27-29。(my italics) However, Dr Woo opposed to sex education as an independent subject. He thought it would best achieve its aim by an integration approach where sex education was incorporated into a range of the existing school subjects.

<sup>15</sup> “Give Sex Lessons Says Doctor,” *Hong Kong Standard*, 9th July, 1968. In another occasion, speaking on the capability of the president of the Hong Kong Civic Association, Dr. Woo urged that “all factual instruction must be completed before 16 years of age” in view of the rampant juvenile delinquency. See “Sex Education Should be Introduced in Schools - Dr Woo,” *South China Morning Post*, 31 January, 1970.

<sup>16</sup> “Sex Education Should be Part of School Curriculum,” *South China Morning Post*, 9 July, 1968.

imparted to youngsters before the process of maturity completed. He also held a strong view that sex education should be taught step-by-step and stage-specific. Some of its contents should be strictly reserved for those who had entered marriage life while some for those who had children. To Denny Huang (黃夢花), another Urban Councilor cum adviser of the Hong Kong Teachers Association, choosing a teacher of integrity in his/her private (sexual) life came first.<sup>17</sup> It seemed that wide acceptance of the idea of sex education as an antidote to pornography was highly suggestive of the collective awareness of young people’s budding sexuality, which was symptomatic of the rapid and drastic social and cultural changes brought by industrialization. However, the contents of sex education was never given proper treatment. When it went into concrete details and became visualized, some deep-rooted belief and values came to the fore.

At first glance, we might have an impression that except a few Chinese editorials warning that the introduction of “western” sex education to Hong Kong would lead to unexpected consequences<sup>18</sup> and that a few Chinese educators opposed it on the ground of Confucianism<sup>19</sup>, most opinion leaders and commentaries were in favor of the move. However, as Denny Huang once commented, “... introducing sex

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<sup>17</sup> 黃夢花，「應否將性教育列為中學課程」，《教育署光》9(1968): 29-30。

<sup>18</sup> One example the editorial quoted is that in February 1970, a marriage was declared void because the wife was found to be a transsexual (a male-to-female trans woman in this case). It argued that such a ridiculous phenomenon could only happen in Western society where sex education was accorded with great importance. 「從幾項奇聞談性教育」，《星島日報》，1970年2月17日。Judging by the details of its description, the case should be *Corbett v Corbett (otherwise Ashley)* which is exactly the precedent that the Court of First Instance relied upon to reject Ms. W’s, a male-to-female trans woman, right to marry with her fiancé in her post-operative gender (i.e., woman). After a long legal battle, Ms. W finally won the case in the Court of Final Appeal on 13th May 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Mr Ku Mou-kin, principal of Tai Tung Middle School was quoted to have said “Coming out with Confucianism, many are so conservative they daren’t think of the modern ideas. It’s hardly believable that sex education should be taught at schools where Chinese students are in the majority.” “Should School Teach on Sex?” *The China Mail*, 5th January, 1968.

education to children is like giving them fire to play with.”<sup>20</sup> It remains unknown whether he was meant to play with the double sense of the word “fire” in Chinese for lust and danger but his analogy was sensibly applicable to educators themselves because they would get into trouble for delivering sex education. On 20th April, 1969, there was a first sign of backfire. It was reported that Mrs. Wong Kuan, a mother of two daughters and a former school nurse, alleged that a sex education film screened in an exhibition for principals and teachers of 76 schools had gone too far.<sup>21</sup> She told the reporter that she would be forming an anti-sex education committee. In the next few months, no update was reported about the proposed committee. More than half a year later, the issue was revived fiercely. A moral outcry was immediately sparked off over probably the same British Broadcasting Commission’s Merry-Go-Round series that the FPA purchased and made available for loan.<sup>22</sup> According to *The Catalogue of Resource Materials* in 1971 that the FPA’s Family Life Education Sub-Committee compiled as its routine exercise every year, the three films in question were entitled “Beginning,” “Birth” and “Full-Circle.” “Beginning” explains how life starts and compares human beings with other animals. It also explains how a human foetus grows with the aid of a drawing of uterus. The second film “Birth” shows how a baby is born. It contains a scene in which a half-naked woman is giving birth. “Full-Circle” explains how a baby grows into adulthood and compares the differences between male and female body by showing children in full frontal nakedness and introducing words like penis and vagina to the audience. It conveys

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<sup>20</sup> “Sex: Our Teachers Undecided,” *Hong Kong Standard*, 12th May, 1968.

<sup>21</sup> “Women Declares War on Sex Films for Our Students,” *The Star*, 20th April, 1969.

<sup>22</sup> This series of 28 programmes contained many other topics unrelated to sex. It was produced to stimulate children at the age of 8 and 9 to explore and understand the world.

the idea that when boys and girls grow up, they will reproduce their own offspring as their parents did. It also contains scenes of fertilization of a sperm and an egg. These films had been kept in the FPA’s library for a while for loan and were screened at a Parents-Teachers Association’s meeting sometime in November 1970.

The after-screen reaction was mixed. Arthur Hinton highly praised the films and said that “I wish my children could have seen them when they were in that age group.”<sup>23</sup> However, on the same day, the Chairperson of the Hong Kong Private Anglo-Chinese Schools’ Association, Mr. Pang Hon-tin, urged the authority to “Ban [the] sex education films” because they were “a slur on Chinese virtue.”<sup>24</sup> Commentaries heavily loaded with emotions questioned if it was suitable for a child of 8 or 9 years old to watch the process of labour and full frontal nudity of a boy and a girl. The contention continued to grow in scale to March 1971 when John Canning, the Director of Education Department, ordered a ban on these three BBC’s films by virtue of the regulation 99 of the Education Regulations to prohibit the presence or use of any film in schools.<sup>25</sup> In fact, John Canning only watched the films on 13th March 1971 after he came to be aware that the Parents-Teachers Association planned to screen them at junior English schools. His decision brought considerable embarrassment to the FPA because schools, the Parents-Teachers Association and the FPA itself would have thought that they had already received official endorsement by having the Department represented in the Family Life Education Sub-Committee

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<sup>23</sup> “Schools Can Have Sex Education Film On Request,” *South China Morning Post*, 18th November, 1970.

<sup>24</sup> “Ban These Films,” *The Star*, 19 November, 1970.

<sup>25</sup> The reply to the written question posed by *The Hong Kong Standard* on 30th March, 1970, HKRS70-3-578. In fact, it is not the first time that sex education films were banned. A short time prior to this incident, another sex education film “Michael and Helga” was banned by the censor.

which made the purchase of the films. It is true to say that the FPA ran into a crisis that might ruin its credentials and public image. To defend the FPA's position, the chairperson of the Sub-Committee, Michael Taylor, wrote a long essay in the *South China Morning Post*.<sup>26</sup> He argued that the series, including the ones on sex education, were well-received in Great Britain, reaching nearly 15% of all junior schools. Their wide acceptance made them be repeated in the subsequent year. Recalling the occasions that he was invited to introduce the films, Taylor was worried that parents and teachers would not accept them. But he was relieved every time after the screening as no-one expressed resentment. Taylor questioned that Canning's decision was not made on a rational basis because it was peculiar that the films were only unsuitable to Hong Kong students but not the British ones of the same age group. He agreed that parents had the right to prevent their children from watching the films but disapproved of the view that children should watch it only in the company of parents because it would give undue emphasis on sex education, which rendered it substantially different from other subjects and turned it into a source of embarrassment.

In addition to clarifying the issues by the Sub-Committee itself, the FPA decided to arrange a special screening session for the press in an attempt to enlist support that could overturn Canning's decision. A film critic from the *China Mail* who attended the session opined that “They are done with natural frankness, and bring home the vital points without giving cause for any upset at all.”<sup>27</sup> The dispute caught the

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<sup>26</sup> “Acclaimed in Britain, Banned in Hongkong,” *South China Morning Post*, 20th May 1971.

<sup>27</sup> “Critics Watch 3 Sex Films,” *China Mail*, 1st June, 1971.



attention of the Rediffusion Television (麗的電視有限公司)<sup>28</sup>, which then bought the banned films and planned to broadcast them late at night on Chinese (with translation) and English channels so as to let parents make their own informed choice, as it said.<sup>29</sup> This move attracted lots of criticisms from the Hong Kong Teachers’ Association, Kaifong and even the FPA itself. Ellen Li expressed that she was “not too happy” with the films broadcast out of a school context and worried that it would provoke the Chinese parents.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps Ellen Li’s worry was not groundless. It could be readily seen that the films were primarily positively evaluated by expatriates but not so by local people. *Sing Tao Yat Pao* quoted a representative from the the Hong Kong Private Anglo-Chinese Schools’ Association saying that “The views of sex education films of this kind go contrary to the Chinese traditions and customs. Therefore, the three films will be of no help to solve youth problems but increase their misunderstanding of sex.”<sup>31</sup> The appeal to the perceived conservativeness of Chinese culture as a ground to lament the screening of the films or the introduction of sex education to schools in general was scattered throughout the late 60s and 70s. The editorial of *Tin Tin Daily News* on 14th July, 1971 well encapsulated such a perception. It argued that “We do not need sex education” because:

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<sup>28</sup> Rediffusion Television, established in 1957, is the first subscription cable television station in Hong Kong. In 1973, it began providing free television service. It was renamed the Asia Television Limited in 1982.

<sup>29</sup> “Parents Will See Banned Sex Films,” *Hong Kong Standard*, 2nd July, 1971; “RTV Plans Sex Films for Tuesday,” *South China Morning Post*, 2nd July, 1971; “Dont’ Show Sex Films on TV,” *The Star*, 3rd July, 1971; “Uproar over Sex Films on TV,” *South China Sunday Post - Herald*, 4th July, 1971. Afterwards, the setting of the forum on Rediffusion Television was rightly criticized for being that “The absence of any Chinese parent or teacher on RTV’s panel of experts seemed ... strange.” “Shouldn’t It be the Parents’ Task?” *The Star*, 10th July, 1971.

<sup>30</sup> “Parents Will See Banned Sex Films,” *Hong Kong Standard*, 2nd July, 1971.

<sup>31</sup> 「電視放映性教育片，危害青少年及兒童」，《星島日報》，1971年7月5日。(my translation)

As a society based on Chinese families, Hong Kong could not be a copy cat of the ‘Western’ civilization without adaptations, especially when it comes to sexual relationships between men and women. There are drastic differences between the Chinese and the Western. Regarding sexual issues, Hong Kong people are generally in favor of the Chinese approach, embracing the idea that reticence could bring happiness. Sex is an enjoyment within the order of normal human relations. It is not something one should tell the others [...] Hong Kong does not need sex education ...<sup>32</sup>

However, such arguments against sex education and the relaxation of sexual moral codes in general did not have much effect considering the high popularity of pornographic magazines and the long queue for the first sexual health exhibition in 1975 sponsored by the FPA. On the contrary, they were more or less an expression of anxiety testifying to the alluring nature of sex education. To use Denny Huang’s metaphor, in one sense, sex education was like a fire that could spread instantly from one place to another. It was designed to repress the sensual nature of sex with the technique of objectification but in return allured us to the very repressed. In another sense, it created heatedly debated controversies that tested the FPA.

#### 4. The Rapid Expansion of Family Life Education

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<sup>32</sup> 「我們不需要性教育」（社論），《天天日報》，1971年7月14日。（my translation）

The airing of the films on Rediffusion Television plus an after-screen forum did not help change the mind of Canning. The Education Department said that Canning still stuck to his decision, prohibiting the films from being shown to students at junior secondary schools.<sup>33</sup> Nor did the airing enlist more support from the general public as the reaction was rather mixed. It seemed to have only reinforced those who had already formed an opinion. For example, *The Star* asked the opinion of 6 parents who had watched the films on TV. Only one of them was in favor of it. Dr. Denny Huang even thought that “They are not suitable for Chinese children”<sup>34</sup>. The editorial of *The Star* on the next day even openly espoused Canning’s decision and deemed the films “totally unnecessary”.<sup>35</sup>

This incident that had almost lasted for two years was indeed a backlash against the FPA’s initiative of family life education. It posed a challenging task for the FPA to resolve the controversy in a diplomatic way because on the one hand, it was obliged to defend its positions but on the other hand, it could risk ruining the cooperative relation with the Education Department. However, in retrospect, the FPA handled it sophisticatedly. It reacted to the incident in a moderate manner without full-fledged contestation but managed to take advantage of it as a chance to stimulate public discussions about sex education by, among other methods, arranging a screening for the press. Such a self-consciously limiting reaction to Canning’s decision could be indicative of FPA’s own evaluation of the incident. It was likely that the FPA took it

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<sup>33</sup> “Canning Sticks by his Decision to Ban Controversial Sex Films,” *Hong Kong Standard*, 18th July, 1971.

<sup>34</sup> “Only one in sex favours sex films,” *The Star*, 7th July, 1971.

<sup>35</sup> “For Adults - not youngster,” *The Star*, 8th July, 1971.

to be a combination of Canning’s own personal moral standard and the Colonial hands-off approach to issues on the Chinese community and customs in avoidance of provoking opposition.<sup>36</sup> In reviewing the FPA’s development of the Family Life Education, the chairperson of the Sub-Committee, Mrs. Patricia Nicholl, admitted that from 1965 to 1970, the Family Life Education section mainly collected and translated resource materials abroad to arouse public interest and test the water.<sup>37</sup> The result was, unfortunately, rather mixed but the FPA learnt a lesson that a more comprehensive sex education that was sensitive and responsive to the local scene was needed.

In retrospect, it was this controversy that speeded up the pace of the FPA’s family life education development and pressed for a clearer instruction on sex education at school by the Education Department. On 7th October 1971, the Department issued another General School Circular No. 126/71 on top of the one issued in 1967. Except that it kept the three conditions unchanged for schools to fulfill before commencement of any sex education, the Department suggested a scheme of work after consultation with secondary school principals for the first time. Although it was not a complete curriculum or syllabus and had no binding force, it systematically spelt out topics and issues possible to be integrated into various existing subjects ranging from Form 1 to Form 5.<sup>38</sup> It adopted a spiral mode in that topics and issues

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<sup>36</sup> It was similar to the adoption of a territory-wide population policy in the form of takeover of some FPA’s clinics in 1973 discussed earlier. The government was reluctant to such a move for fear of provoking resentment from the Chinese community.

<sup>37</sup> “Evolution of Family Life Education in Hong Kong,” in *Proceedings of the Family Life Education Seminar* on 15th September 1976 (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1976), 8-9.

<sup>38</sup> The subjects that the Education Department considered suitable and relevant to sex education included Biology, Economics and Public Affairs, Physical Education, Domestic Science, Chinese Literature, English Literature, Religious Knowledge, Chinese Language and Literature, Art and Crafts and History.

were so arranged to cater for age-specific needs and the corresponding level of maturity. For example, suggested topics for Form 1 mainly focused on personal hygiene, understanding of the basic reproductive system of plants and animals, interpersonal relationships, preparation for the onset of adolescence, cultivation of good habits and hobbies. The topics for Form 5 touched on the responsibilities of parents, social and emotional problems in relation to sex such as moral conflicts and venereal diseases. It also introduced to students the benefits of family planning and resources to that end such as Maternal and Child Health Services and Marriage Guidance Associations.

The detailed and well-thought framework of the first kind was a counter-statement to the stance that the Department took up almost a year previously. In November 1970, in response to a written question by *The Star* on the Department’s policy on sex education, in addition to repeating the three-pronged conditions, it replied that “The Education Department has no intention of insisting or dictating in the matter of sex education. However, heads have been urged to consider the question of sex education very seriously within the context of Hong Kong life.”<sup>39</sup> However, in a year’s time it departed from the previous position and took a small but very significant step in pushing the sex education into a new direction by way of a revised General Circular more concrete suggestions. With this permission, though still restricted, schools that were interested in sex education began pursuing their own curriculum or activities in relation to youth sexuality though many other schools still remained dormant. Again, it was Catholic schools that took the lead to pioneer this new field. In 1973, the

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<sup>39</sup> The written question was posed to the Department on 2nd November, 1970 in HKRS70-3-578.

Catholic Education Council implemented a sex education programme in all of its 200 schools, in which medical doctors were invited to explain anatomy and physiology of sex, domestic economists to discuss financial problems and a lawyer to offer a legal perspective while priests or nuns were to place the subject in a moral context.<sup>40</sup> Reverend Louis Jasper, a committee member of the FPA’s Family Life Education Sub-Committee, also organized a similar programme at a vocational training centre for the deaf where he was a teacher. The momentum for sex education at school was built up gradually.

Despite the BBC’s sex education films scandal, the FPA seemed to have a rather dogged determination to advocate sex education, both in and out of schools and, above all, it did not deliberately avoid controversy. From 19th to 23rd September 1975, it sponsored the Medical Society of the University of Hong Kong to run a six-day sexual health exhibition at City Hall, attracting over 40,000 visitors. This was the first of its kind in Hong Kong. Collaborating with the Health Education Unit of the Education Department, the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council and the Medical School of the Hong Kong University, the FPA, together with the HKU Medical Society, conducted its ever largest public sex education. The exhibition covered a wide range of issues from sexual frustration, puberty, contraception, pregnancy and abortions, sexual diseases, sexual deviations, the nature of sex, and social and psychological aspects of sex. There were 3-dimensional exhibits, photos, charts and drawings. Over 100 medical students were on-site to answer questions that visitors had in relation to the exhibits. The well-attended exhibition, costing \$17,000 and

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<sup>40</sup> “Sex in School,” *The Star*, 28th February, 1973.

taking 5 months to prepare, was positively commented by the media, which praised it for demonstrating how sex could be explored in a decent and open way.<sup>41</sup> The organizing committee of the exhibition concluded this event by saying that “... the public perception of sex has been in constant change. It is no longer bound by the old thoughts. Majority of people surveyed agree that they feel no embarrassment to discuss sex. They also come to a view that people do not naturally acquire the correct knowledge of sex when they grow up. This is why we all need sex education.”<sup>42</sup> The huge success of the exhibition was cited by the new Director of Education Kenneth Topley, successor to John Canning, as a strong indication of the change in attitude toward sex education,<sup>43</sup> which further fueled the momentum for the development of sex education and created a favourable environment for the FPA to intensify its work on family life education.

Although opposition to the very idea of sex education at school was heard from time to time,<sup>44</sup> there was a growing impetus for it and more concerned groups joined the cause although that they might not share the same idea and vision with the FPA about sex education. One of these groups was the Salvation Army, which initiated a petition campaign to urge for the introduction of sex education to schools. As at 13th

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<sup>41</sup> “Editorial,” *Wah Kiu Man Pao*, no date of publication but should be within a few days after 17 September 1975.

<sup>42</sup> 香港大學醫學會「性與健康」展覽籌委會，「寫在『性與健康』展覽之後」，《新教育》，創刊號，1975。(my translation)

<sup>43</sup> “Changed attitude on sex education,” *South China Morning Post*, 16th September, 1976. He was quoted to have said that “People did not cover their faces with newspapers when they were photographed - they saw nothing shameful in attending a sex education exhibition.”

<sup>44</sup> Of particular note is that Szeto Wah (司徒華), being the president of the Professional Teachers’ Union, thought that sex education was unnecessary because “... students need not be given sex education because they are bound to know something of sex as they grow up.” “Why All this Fuss about Sex Education?,” *The Star*, 18th November, 1974.

May 1975, it was reported that over 50,000 signatures were collected. 11 churches also supported the cause and would join with the Salvation Army to organize an anti-pornography festival.<sup>45</sup> Another group that was in favor of sex education was the Education Action Group (教育行動組), which was founded in 1971 by professionals. It spearheaded a number of important education reform campaigns including the provision of nine-year free education, use of Chinese as the medium of instruction, the abolition of the Secondary School Entrance Examination and the expansion of teacher training facilities. As its name suggests, the Group was always actively enlisting support from the general public by informed publications and high-profile actions.<sup>46</sup> On 7th July 1975, the Group’s chairperson Anthony Ha sent a letter to the newly appointed Director of Education Department, urging him to “[introduce] into the school curriculum a course on family life education of which sex education would be a part.” In the same letter, the group expressed its support for the enactment of the Objectionable Publications Bill 1975. In reply, A.G. Brown, for Director of Education, mentioned that a substantial element of family life education had been incorporated into the newly revised Social Studies Curriculum.<sup>47</sup> Two days later, local Chinese and English newspapers had coverage on their correspondence. It was probable that the Group released the correspondence to the media in the hope of arousing media attention. However, as it was preoccupied with other issues, there

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<sup>45</sup> “Churches Support Sex Education,” *The Star*, 13th May, 1975.

<sup>46</sup> For example, it conducted a research on the adverse impact of the Secondary School Entrance Examination on students of different social classes. Judged by the frequent correspondences between the Group and the Education Department from 1972 to 1981, the Education Action Group was surely a very enthusiastic and determined watchdog for any education policy in Hong Kong. As a result, its queries, views and criticisms were often taken seriously by the Department as exemplified by the often lengthy replies.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Anthony Ha, the Education Action Group to Mr. Topley, the Director of Education Department, on 7th July, 1975, HKRS147-7-261; Reply from A.G. Brown, the Education Department to Anthony Ha, the Education Action Group, on 11th July, 1975, in HKRS147-7-261.



was simply no follow-up on the part of the Group and it seemed that sex education was not its priority concern either. The letter it sent to the Department might be more like an assertion of its disapproval of pornography than wholehearted support for sex education. Again, we see the conflation of sex education with (anti)-pornography. Nevertheless, it is the conflation that continued to legitimize the introduction of sex education to schools with an emphasis on its preventive and corrective roles.

#### 5. Sex Education as a Response to the Budding Youth Sexuality

With the remarkable success of the first sexual health exhibition, the Family Life Education Sub-Committee also felt the growing demand for sex education in schools. It greatly stepped up its work since 1973 without any noticeable setback because of the BBC's films incident. In June 1974, the FPA reorganized its structure, placing greater emphasis on its role as a knowledge/information translator and provider. The four existing sections, namely, Family Life Education, Education and Training, Fieldwork, and Publicity and Publications, were merged to an integrated Information, Education and Communication Department under which Family Life Education, together with the other three, was subsumed. As a result, more Assistant Officers were recruited to meet the rising workload.

The Family Life Education Section should be one of the busiest ones in the FPA. Its education officer delivered more than 100 talks to schools every year and gave 4-5 speeches or participated in activities run by other organizations every month. Most of the time the officer was requested to speak on adolescence, dating and marriage,

relations with friends and parents. The volumes of work were in itself a testament to the overwhelming need of education in this area and the role of the FPA as one of the major sex education providers. In addition to invitations to lectures, talks, seminars and programmes, the Sub-Committee strove to start to train its own family life educators through developing programmes and certificate courses for teachers and social workers.

In early 1973, the members of the Sub-Committee came to a view that there should be a pamphlet clearly introducing the idea of family life education to the public.<sup>48</sup> The production of the pamphlet from drafting to printing took up nearly 4 months to complete. Although it was only a short piece of introductory essay of about 500 words, it was a prelude to a fundamental shift in focus that population problems, if not considered less important, were submerged under a bigger umbrella term of family life education and stood equally with “sex education” and “human relationships,” which were the other two topics that made up the the family life education campaign.<sup>49</sup> It could be easily seen that sex was placed in a more prominent position alongside the population problems that had preoccupied the FPA for more than two decades. This was a big contrast to Ellen Li’s comment in the 1961 *Quarterly of the Hong Kong Council of Social Services* that “Sex education is one of the needs. Although it does not belong to what the FPA is to offer, we still think that

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<sup>48</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Family Life Sub-Committee of the Family Planning Association, on 18th May, 1973, in HKRS147-7-233.

<sup>49</sup> It by no means suggests that population was no longer a core concern of the FPA. In fact, the FPA held a 5-day conference at the Legislative Council Chamber to mark the United Nations Population Year in 1974. It also published a teachers’ handbook on population education in 1977. However, the problem of population did become less acute in the 70s. According to the *FPA Annual Report 1977/78*, the crude birth rates per thousand for the 1973, 74, 75, 76 and 77 were 19.7, 19.7, 18.3, 17.7 and 17.7 respectively. A steady decline in birth rate was observed.

imparting the knowledge of sex education to students of senior form merits consideration.”<sup>50</sup> The new FPA’s preoccupation was youth sexuality, which was made public and subject to public discussions because, as the pamphlet wrote, “In his [sexual] actions and decisions he must bear in mind the consequences, not only for himself, but for the other members of the community.”<sup>51</sup>

An appendix of a projected work programme from 1975 to 1977 for the section for the 6th February meeting even substituted “family life education” for “sex/family life education.”<sup>52</sup> Such an alteration, trivial as it might seem, gave sex (education) an even more prominent role in family life education in that sex (education) became the most important element of what family life education was all about.<sup>53</sup> A longer version of the pamphlet for teachers took much longer to finish and was published in 1975 in the form of a handbook. It should not be understood to be an abrupt departure from the FPA’s concern about population. Rather, it was the epitome of a more mature view that the FPA had developed over the years. Primarily written by Arthur Hinton who eloquently asserted that “we must talk about sex” and edited collaboratively with the other members of the sub-committee, the *Teachers’ Handbook* more or less represented the totality of the Sub-Committee’s views on

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<sup>50</sup> 「家庭計劃教育在香港」，《社聯季刊》3(1961): 11。Original text: 「性教育也是需要之一，不屬家庭計指導會的內容，但我們仍覺得將性教育的知識灌輸給年紀較大的學生，是值得考慮的。」

<sup>51</sup> FPA, *Draft Information Pamphlet* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1973), 2, in HKRS147-7-233.

<sup>52</sup> Appendix 1 to the Agenda of the Family Life Education Sub-Committee of the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong held on 18th January, 1974, in HKRS147-7-233.

<sup>53</sup> In fact, according to Wong Ho Yuk-chu (江何玉柱), an education officer of the FPA’s Family Life Education section, the Working Committee on Family Life Education in its early days gave a serious thought to whether the section should be named “Sex Education” or “Family Life Education” Sub-Committee. In the end, they came to the view that “family life education” was less provocative and misleading. 「家庭計劃指導會與家庭生活教育」，《社聯季刊》48(1974): 7-9.

youth sexuality. In defining the scope of family life education at the beginning, the *Teachers' Handbook* wrote “family life education is broadly conceived and deals with actual family life situations and also with *human sexuality*.”<sup>54</sup> Comparing with the FPA’s previous publications on the same subject, it was the most comprehensive and exhaustive guideline on sex/family life education that the FPA and other agencies had ever produced in terms of the breadth of issues it engaged (e.g. pedagogy) and its positions on a number of controversial topics such as prostitution, homosexuality, extra-marital sex and abortion that were seldom incorporated into sex education programme proper. More importantly, it formed a skeleton of and set a tone for the subsequent development of the FPA’s family life education. In order to examine this milestone in the development of sex/family life education, the structure of the *Teachers' Handbook* is duplicated as below:

### Introduction

The Scope of Family Life

The Importance of Family Life Education

### Education Within the Family

The Effect of Family Attitudes on Children’s Attitudes

Children’s Questions

Adolescence and Parenthood

### Family Life Education in School

The Relationship between Home and School Influences

Other Influences on the Child

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<sup>54</sup> “Family Life Education,” attached to the agenda of the Family Life Education Sub-Committee on 7th November, 1973. HKRS147-7-233. (my italics)

A Suggested Syllabus for Schools

Family Life Education as a School Subject

The Integration of Family Life Education with Other Subjects

The Team Teaching Approach

Segregation of the Sexes for Family Life Education Classes

The Difficulty of Teaching Family Life Education

Group Discussion Approach

Specialist Training for Teachers

The Views of the Teachers

Teaching Aids

Counselling in Schools

#### Adolescence

Sexual Development

Relationships between Boys and Girls

Helping Adolescents with Emotional Matters

The Need for Affection

#### Sex and the Moral Issues

Masturbation

Venereal Diseases

Education in Family Planning

Abortion

Prostitution

Sexual Relations outside Marriage

Homosexuality

The Population Problem

The Threat of Overpopulation

Family Planning Association Booklet: “What is Population Education”

The Role of Parents

Consultation by the School

The Cooperation of Parents with the School

Conclusion

6. Greater Emphasis on Youth Sexuality

First, it can be clearly noted that apart from about half of the document devoted to pedagogy, sex education almost took up the rest of it. Ellen Li’s saying as quoted above was perhaps a true reflection of the FPA’s earlier understanding of a rather minimal role sex education would have played. At that time, it was only introduced or touched upon in passing when population education needed to deal with the technical know-how of contraception. A substantial work had been devoted to disseminate the benefits of family planning that limited the size of family and promoted spacing between births. Sex or sexual issues raised in population propaganda were subsidiary. In this sense, in the 50s and 60s, people were largely understood to be more of “reproductive beings” than “sexual beings”. However, as argued at the beginning of this chapter, there was a significant change in the FPA’s understanding of the problem in the late 60s and early 70s which resulted in a greater emphasis on sex education. On the one hand, the turn to youth sexuality that the FPA

underwent in the late 60s and 70s was attributed to its perceived needs of the youth who took up half of the population and the expected baby boom if no interventions were made. Therefore, strictly speaking, sex/family life education was advocated not at the expense of the FPA’s yearlong concern about overpopulation. It was indeed a variation of its effort in population control with the new target subject, i.e., youth. Seen in this light, the population problem was integrated into a bigger endeavour. With this in mind, the FPA believed that the clashes of the “modern western culture” as well exemplified by the sexual representations in mass media with “traditional Chinese culture” made it particularly difficult for teenagers to make well-informed decisions and life choices. Long working hours as a corollary of rapid industrialization also rendered parents virtually unable to give guidance to the youth who, in the FPA’s Education officer Rita Wong’s own words, were “the pillars of the society”.<sup>55</sup> In a word, the Family Life Education was said to fulfill the unattended needs of the youth specific to a modernizing society.

On the other, the BBC’s sex education films incident in the early 70s did not ruin the FPA’s reputation and its collaborative relationship with the Education Department but opened the floodgates for public discussions of the need for sex education. These factors contributed to the FPA’s increasing work on sex education targeted to young people. Parallel to this serendipity was the early 1970 moral outcry over violent and pornographic materials popular among youth, which further lent a discursive backing to the government, the churches and the FPA to develop sex education in and out of schools. It would suffice to say that sex education was first institutionalized in the

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<sup>55</sup> Rita Wong, “Target group,” *Proceedings of the Family Life Education Seminar* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1976), 20-22.

early 70s against these backgrounds in the sense that it was incorporated into the routine educational scene though not on a large-scale basis, taken as a responsibility that schools had to bear and received a little institutional support from the Education Department. At the social level, there was a growing social consensus that it should become part of the knowledge that children and teenagers were taught and acquired. As the outline of the *Teachers' Handbook* showed, sex/family life education as grown out of the need for checking birth rates became increasingly independent and its objective was no longer confined to that end. Part of the population education was not only submerged under sex/family life education but occupied only a small portion in the sex/family life education framework.

Secondly, the handbook was a testament to the fact that sex/family life education was a response to as well as a catalyst for sexualization of individuals. In fact, the section on “Family Life Education in Schools” took up the largest portion of the handbook. It began with the fact that the failure of parents to bring up sex and family life issues at home, either out of embarrassment or ignorance, placed the burden on teachers at school. And, equally relevant, as the pamphlet argued, was the changing social and cultural conditions where the declining power of traditions asked for a better way to cultivate an understanding of the self and build satisfactory relationships with others. It was convinced that education should play this role to fill up the lacuna. In order to encourage an easier adoption of sex/family life education, the handbook devised a syllabus that was complementary to the suggested ones of Health Education, Nature Study and Social Studies for primary school level issued by the Education Department with the help of the Education Department official serving on the FPA's



Family Life Education Sub-Committee. It also included a syllabus of family life education for use in secondary schools.

As discussed above, the promotion of sex education in school was in part a consequence of the moral outcry over the flooding of pornography. However, judged by the syllabi in the pamphlet, there was simply no any palpable trace of strong distaste for it. Rather, the effect of the moral outcry on the development of sex/family life education was indirect. It did not take the form of anti-pornography as some might have expected. Nor did it teach ways to suppress sexual desire and silence anything sexual. The FPA’s approach was exactly what Arthur Hinton eloquently argued in the 1972 seminar that “we must talk about sex” in a frank, open and straight-forward manner. To be more specific, the FPA strove to position itself between the two extremes. At the one end was the “traditional” view that considered sex filthy and immoral while the other was sexual hedonism that anything goes.<sup>56</sup> In other words, the sentiment against pornography with which Arthur Hinton and other FPA’s staff and volunteers shared, together with the worry about another baby boom, drove them to have sex better placed, somewhere between the two extremes.

Such a move had a spillover effect which pushed the boundary of sex/family life education beyond population control into recognizing sex as an important human attribute in itself through which life was organized. To this end, the first issue of the bilingual *Family Life Education Review* ran a feature on “What are my children learning - when and where?”<sup>57</sup> Three parents, probably improvised from stories that

<sup>56</sup> 香港家庭計劃指導會，《給你年青人》（香港：香港家庭計劃指導會，1977），9。

<sup>57</sup> “What are my children learning - when and where?” in *Family Life Education Review* 1(1975): 2-4.

the editor had heard, shared their reflections on their growing-up process and how frustrated and perplexed they were when no one could they turn to for sexual knowledge. One of them mourned that “My parents told me nothing about sex. My teachers told me nothing about sex.”<sup>58</sup> Another parent echoed that “Though my parents never openly spoke to us children about sex, I realize now that we learned a great deal from them. However, what I learned at home was not nearly enough. I wanted to know more. I felt a need to know more.”<sup>59</sup> This parent concluded that “I know this means I must overcome some of my own shyness and anxiety about talking honestly and frankly about personal matters. Family life is too important and precious to treat carelessly.”

It is obvious that open and frank discussions of sex was somehow rendered equivalent to family life education, suggesting that “the greatest possible joy and benefit from living together”<sup>60</sup> hinged on to what degree we, i.e., children and parents, about talk about sex. In this sense, sex/family life education not only gave sex a proper place and proper name<sup>61</sup>, it also sexualized children and teenagers in the sense that they were sexual beings by placing sex at the center of human relationships. Although the understanding of what was meant by family life education was kept evolving throughout the 70s, sex was still the main theme. In the Family Life Education Seminar, organized by the Information, Education and Communication Department of the FPA on 15th September, 1976, Mrs. Elim Lau,

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>61</sup> It will be illustrated below by the terminology list that the Sub-Committee compiled in 1973.

assistant education officer of the FPA, put forward a definition what Family Life Education was meant to achieve in a panel presentation. She said: “... Family Life Education is the education of the interpersonal relationship within and outside the family. It aims at teaching people to think for themselves and learn to get along with other people. They should understand themselves as man and woman, as *sexual beings*, as growing children and as brothers and sisters.”<sup>62</sup>

It would suffice to argue that the FPA bended the public demand for sex education that was originally tasked to combat pornography to the one with much wider scope and social implications. To the FPA, the necessity of sex education lay in the recognition of more prominent roles and functions that sex was imputed. The popularity of pornography was only a sign of it rather than an indication of the deterioration of morality. Understood as such, it is easily comprehensible why the FPA believed that “sex education in the broad sense is family life education, which is the education of love.”<sup>63</sup> The cover pages of the first two issues of the *Family Life Education Review* issued by the Sub-Committee well embodied this idea. At the center was signs of male and female. Around the two signs were silhouettes of a toddler, a reading child in a seat, a pair of heterosexual couples and a family of a couple with a son and a daughter. The first issue explained that “The design of the cover is based on the idea that life and the relationships between human beings, especially that between man and woman, is something very precious. This is true

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<sup>62</sup> “Definition,” *Proceedings of the Family Life Education Seminar* on 15th September, 1976 (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1976), 15. (my italics) Mrs. Elanor Cheng, another assistant education officer of the FPA also employed the term “sexual beings” when defining the scope of sex education. “The objective of sex education is to help people to understand and appreciate their own sexuality and sexual of the opposite sex - hoping that this knowledge can enable people to respect everyone as a *sexual being*.”(p. 18, my italics)

<sup>63</sup> 香港家庭計劃指導會，《給你年青人》（香港：香港家庭計劃指導會，1977），9。

throughout the whole cycle of life.”<sup>64</sup> In this light, encouraging frank discussions between children and parents and stressing the lifelong rewards it could bring were in fact a continuation of the emphasis the FPA put on the qualitative responsibility in its family planning propaganda in the 50s and 60s.<sup>65</sup> The difference was that in the previous decades, the FPA was concerned that children in an over-fertile family could not be materially and emotionally satisfied. In the 70s, on top of the provision of a warm and caring home, responsible parenthood entailed care of the sexual development of children.

### 7. The Development of Youth Sexuality and Modern Society

The handbook introduced a framework of developmental psychology in understanding young people, in which growing up was conceptualized as a series of developmental tasks to cope with the passage from childhood into adulthood and the turmoils it engendered.<sup>66</sup> It understood adolescents as people in an unstable state, fluctuating between the desire for independence and the longing for parents’ reassurance. It argued that the unique social context where East met West, rapid industrialization and over-crowding living environment further exacerbated the problem. Sex/family life education was therefore a tool that facilitated a smooth transition. Not only was sexual knowledge on physical change imparted to the young, but also were parents trained to communicate with adolescents in a more sympathetic way so as to take good care of their affectional needs. Such a

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<sup>64</sup> *Family Life Education Review* 1(1975): 2.

<sup>65</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>66</sup> Johanna Wyn & Rob White, *Rethinking Youth* (London: SAGE publication, 1997).

conceptualization of youth as a category and the role of sex/family life education started to gain popularity. However, the view of Dr. Denny Huang, an Urban Councillor, quoted above, that sex education should focus on combating teenage pregnancy, pornography and sex crimes was still prevalent in the mid-70s.<sup>67</sup> In the anti-pornography discourse, sex was either considered harmful or purely designed for procreation. The success of the new conceptualization put forward by the FPA hinged on its appropriation of the anti-pornographic discourse while at the same time widened the scope of sex education.

Since the widespread adoption of the developmental psychology framework in the Social Studies and Health Studies, the FPA’s and many other social agencies’s own initiative on the promotion of sex/family life education,<sup>68</sup> youth were conceptualized as a distinct category. They were presumed to go through a series of turbulent stages. Such an idea about youth gradually took root in the ordinary lexicon. Above all, their sexual development was coupled with the development of a modern society. Sexual drive was not something to be tamed but needed to be channeled to productive use. Taking up nearly half of the population, youth occupied a privileged position in the planning of the future. And, in light of the developmental psychology where sex was

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<sup>67</sup> “Sex teaching: Govt has role,” *South China Morning Post*, 8th Oct, 1976. Dr. Huang was quoted to have said that “They believe that a proper understanding of the functionings of sex would lead to the reduction of sex-related crimes and disease, as well as contribute to marital happiness.”

<sup>68</sup> For example, serving as a Sub-Committee member since 1971/72, Peter Whyte wrote a rather long essay entitled “The Parent and the Child” in the third issue of the *Family Life Education Review*. Being the first Dean of Students at the Hong Kong University (1970-83) cum an Australian clinical psychologist, he began the essay with a thesis widely dispersed throughout the FPA’s Family Life Education materials that “The exposure of the modern child to influences such as contemporary education, televisions, high density urban living, all make necessary some modifications of traditional methods even though the underlying values may remain unchanged.” What followed were categorization of a human life from infancy, pre-school, latency period, puberty to adolescence, and the developmental tasks of each stage. It seemed to suggest that parents in the modern time needed to acquire the knowledge of what stages their children were in and what developmental tasks that it was accompanied if they were to take good care of them. More importantly, the essay itself is suggestive of the FPA’s espousal of the framework of developmental psychology in understanding the youth.

turned into a new organizing theme of human life, youth’s sexuality was subject to examination under spotlight in response to the needs of the era. As Arthur Hinton reflected upon the role of sex in family life education in the 1980 *Family Life Education Review*. He said that:

I believe that when we reach adolescence, we will often feel bewildered because of bodily changes and awareness of sex. Different societies at different times used different means to help teenagers to cope with them. For instance, rites of passage, instructions of firm attitudes and belief so that they know what sexual acts are acceptable and what are not, or practices or rules that are commonly obeyed in relation to pre-marital sex, marriage, abortion, prostitution and homosexuality ... Nowadays, many societies in the world have been so different from those in the past. Research into human behaviors, the knowledge we gain from psychology, doubt we cast on traditions and the misunderstanding of sex that the mass media are circulating confuse and perplex, especially youngsters, about sexual behaviors. I think we cannot and should not define what is the ‘correct’ sexual behaviors. But I believe we should help people understand sex.<sup>69</sup>

What Hinton implied was that the break away from the past rendered unfeasible and inapplicable the old practice that used to prepare a teenager to turn to an adult. The

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<sup>69</sup> 「性與家庭生活教育」，《家庭生活教育簡訊》6(1980):1. (my translation)

Family Life Education was therefore a modern way to deal with the modern problems. It aimed to nurture a certain quality of personhood, which on the surface appealed to the same set of values and attitudes such as responsibility, love and compassion that had been upheld for long.<sup>70</sup> But on a closer look, the very cultivation of the personhood with modern outlook largely predicated on the the properly guided sexual development of the youth. In the previous two decades (i.e., 50s and 60s), the private reproductive choice of a married couple that was largely determined by the “old” belief in “the bigger the better” was held to be of prime social implications and therefore subject to massive intervention by way of family planning movement. In the 70s, the focus was shifted to the youth whose sexuality held the key to the future. The *Teachers’ Handbook* made it plain that “[the Family Life Education’s] emphasis is on helping children grow up to be responsible, to be responsible about their own sexuality and in their dealings with others, not to exploit the other sex for their own physical gratification but to take sex as an expression of affection and love.” In this light, not only youth were *sexual beings* who were creatures with sexual needs but also *sexual subjects* who came to be endowed with sovereignty and limited autonomy by disciplining their own sexuality for the good of the future.

#### 8. The Impact of the FPA’s Family Life Education

Although the draft *Teachers’ Handbook* left no clues as to what it was modelled on, its principal author, Arthur Hinton, perhaps provided some hints. Hinton was born in

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<sup>70</sup> Elim Lau, “Definition,” in *Proceedings of the Family Life Education Seminar* on 15th September, 1976 (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1976), 15.

London on 18th April 1920.<sup>71</sup> Prior to his stay in Hong Kong, his life was intermingled with the Second World War II. He joined the Friends Ambulance Unit in 1942, which was a Quakers’ organization providing opportunities for those who refused to serve the military on the ground of conscience but were willing to alleviate sufferings of the war. After 1945, he worked for the Colonial Office as an English teacher in Malaya. On 8th February 1953, upon his request, he was transferred to Hong Kong and continued his teaching career in a new place. However, Hinton was not “only a teacher” as the title of his autobiography *Only a Teacher* suggests. He took up many public posts<sup>72</sup> and the one which had direct relevance to his work in the FPA’s sub-committee was his involvement in the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)’s Working Party on Education around 1975.<sup>73</sup> In March that year, he attended a workshop cum seminar of the East and Southeast Asia and Oceania Region of the IPPF on “Community Education for Family Planning Service.” In December, he met with other members of the Working Party in London for consecutive 8 days, drawing up an education programme. Although the establishment of the IPPF was to forge a concerted effort across the globe, its member agencies remained financially autonomous. Its role was to facilitate exchange of ideas and experiences without imposing a set of agenda for its members

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<sup>71</sup> The following biographic information about him comes from his autobiography *Only a Teacher* (Toronto and Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2004).

<sup>72</sup> For example, he served as president for the Hong Kong Teachers’ Association and very outspoken on various issues in relation to education.

<sup>73</sup> IPPF was an international organization founded in 1952 by Margaret Sanger and Rama Rau, among the 8 founding countries was Hong Kong which was represented by the Hong Kong FPA. It was a global platform for the advocacy of sexual and reproductive health. One of its major contributions revolutionizing the 20th Century was its financial support to the development of an oral contraceptive for women. The impact of the oral contraceptive pill on women is discussed in chapter 4. Of particular note was the controversy over the government proposal to list it as a prescription drug when amending the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance in 1975.



to follow.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, at a time when he was tasked to draft the *Teachers’ Handbook*, Arthur Hinton as a member of the IPPF’s Working Party on Education was very likely to have brought back some new ideas about how to do sex education. And the constant exchange between the FPA and the IPPF since 1952 might have left imprints on the way the Family Life Education was formulated. Although there was no document that clearly showed the link, we can still infer by comparing the IPPF’s proposed sex education framework with that of the FPA.

The IPPF’s involvement in sex/family life education could be dated back to 1967, the same year when the Working Committee of Family Life Education of the Hong Kong FPA was founded. During the IPPF’s 8th International Conference in Chile, it decided to expand its work from responsible parenthood to sex education for the youth. In July 1969, an ad hoc Working Group was set up, which comprised of 20 experts in the field of sex/family education from different regions. The group presented its deliberations in a conference in November that year in Tunisia, laying down a clear direction for the IPPF and its associated family planning associations across the globe. It suggested that “... programme in responsible parenthood and sex education should be to relate personal behaviour to more general social needs and objectives, and to help (young) people” to (1) acquire biological, psychological and social knowledge of human sexuality, (2) to make responsible sexual choices and (3) to build interpersonal relationships on the basis of responsibility.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Vicky Claeys, “Brave and angry - The creation and development of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF),” *The European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care* 2010(S2):S67-S76.

<sup>75</sup> IPPF, “Report and Recommendations,” in *Responsible Parenthood and Sex Education: Proceedings of a Working Group held in Tunisia*, in November 1969 (London: IPPF, 1969), 2.

The Working Group also proposed a list of elements of an education programme, which arranged sex/family life education into two levels. The first was information where knowledge of the biological basis of sexuality, growth and development, and social aspects of sexuality were included. The second level dealt with sexual behaviour and planned parenthood. The structure was strikingly similar to that of the FPA's *Teachers' Pamphlet*. It did not only cover almost identical issues but followed the idea of developmental psychology. The resemblance was highly suggestive of the fact that the FPA's handbook was a direct copy of the IPPF's. In addition, in response to the growing demand, the IPPF started collecting information, approaches, audio-visual aids, and teaching curricula on sex/family life education for its members since 1969. It was highly probably that some of the works the FPA introduced were first suggested by the IPPF. From 28th September to 1st October 1971, the IPPF's seminar on “Responsible Parenthood and Family Life Education” held in Hong Kong further scaled up its endeavor in this field. In evaluating the world situation in 1971, the IPPF commented that “... young people of today will have a profound influence on the achievement of future development goals. Their understanding of the relationship between their own reproductive behaviour and the social and economic situation of the future has far-reaching implications.”<sup>76</sup> Such a stand was adopted without modification by the FPA's Family Life Education Sub-Committee and clearly stated at the beginning of the *Teachers' Handbook*.

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<sup>76</sup> The FPA, “Background Paper,” in *Proceedings of the Seminar on Responsible Parenthood and Family Life Education*, eds., The FPA (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1972), 6.

Together with *Teachers' Handbook*, back in 1973, the FPA Family Life Education Sub-Committee also agreed to compile a bilingual terminology list which included terms commonly used in family life and sex education. It was originally intended to serve as a reference material for teachers and social workers who participated in the FPA training workshops because feedbacks received from them indicated that they did not fully understand the technical terms some speakers used. In the same year, the Sub-Committee compiled a list of about 250 terms. Most of them were anatomical terms of the male and female reproductive systems which were subsumed under the headings of “general terms,” “sexual reproduction: sex organs” and “terms related to sexual reproduction.” Although the purpose of compiling the list was simple, as the FPA would have it, the underlying intention seemed to have the effect that people were taught to call the sex organs and things sexual in their “right” names. Its strong preference for medical nomenclature excluding slang expressions marked the difference of the sex/family life education from the common sense and helped professionalize this field by appealing to an epistemological privilege (i.e., it held the “true” names of something). Of particular note were the rest of the terms listed under “terms on relationships” and “sex related terms.” They, together with the later part of the *Teachers' Handbook*, introduced some lexicons that had seldom been spoken in ordinary conversations. These terms were “bestiality,” “fetish,” “frigidity,” “lesbian,” “masochism,” “narcissism,” “peeper,” “pervert,” “sadism” and “sexuality.” The inclusion of these terms spoke volumes about the FPA’s ambition to stretch further the boundary of sex education which was overly reproduction-centered previously. Perhaps the members of the Sub-Committee felt that a list of bilingual terminology could not adequately serve the purpose. The final product then

came as a glossary in addition to a list though not every term on the list had a corresponding entry in the glossary. For example, the definitions for “homosexual” was rather neutral. It read “Of the same sex; or the sex interest is directed towards persons of the same sex. A homosexual is a man who falls in love with other man or woman who falls in love with other woman. Lesbian is a female homosexual.” The neutrality that the FPA held in relation to homosexuality was in sharp contrast to the hostile social sentiment in the mid-70s when a case in which a government official was arrested for having sex with men was widely reported and many commentaries opposed to decriminalization.<sup>77</sup> In this sense, in addition to providing teachers and social workers with a reference material, the publication of the terminology list, together with the *Teachers’ Handbook*, was an early sign of the FPA’s implicit endeavor to broaden the sexual horizons of the general public and nurture a more tolerant attitude toward sexual diversity.

The goal of having sex/family life education implemented in schools took a great step forward in 1975 when the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) proposed a syllabus on Social Studies for Form I to Form III in secondary schools. Being a pilot scheme and open to secondary schools to adopt at their own discretion, the new subject would integrate the three existing subjects of more academic nature, namely History, Geography and, Economic and Public Affairs into one that would be more relevant to the daily life of students. It was so designed as to “[promote] a general social awareness and the understanding of the needs of a modern industrial

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<sup>77</sup> The FPA’s stance on homosexuality is to be explicated in Chapter 4.

society together with the impact of the progress of technology on man and society.”<sup>78</sup> Arthur Hinton commented in an interview that the ambitious attempt to dismantle compartmentalization of subjects with Social Studies was in fact a preparation for the implementation of the Nine Year Free Education Scheme by which a substantial number of less able students would leave school at the end of Form III. Instead of teaching them the knowledge of discrete disciplines that was of no immediate use, Hinton said that Social Studies provided them with “the unity of knowledge about the community [that] will be of value to them whatever they go after Form III.”<sup>79</sup> During the interview, Hinton expressed his full support to the new syllabus and espoused the issue-oriented and student-centered mode of teaching and learning.

There were three broad themes, namely “Man, the Biological and Social Animal,” “Man and His Environment” and “International Understanding,” under which the subject knowledge of History, Geography and, Economic and Public Affairs were integrated. The syllabus also incorporated Health Education. One of the characteristics of the new subject was the inclusion of sex/family life education in each year of study of junior secondary forms. In Form I, students were taught about human growth and development with an emphasis on the onset of puberty. They would also learn the population of Hong Kong and its associated problems. There would be a continuation of population issues in Form II and a sub-theme of “social and emotional problems of the adolescent” was introduced. In Form III, “Preparation for maturity and adulthood” was one of the six topics of Health and Welfare. It would

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<sup>78</sup> Curriculum Development Council, “The Nature of Social Studies,” *Provisional Syllabus for Social Studies (Forms I - III)* (Hong Kong: Curriculum Development Council, 1975), 6.

<sup>79</sup> “What is to be done? The teaching of Social Studies in junior secondary forms,” 《教與學》3 (1975): 11 °

discuss the onset of sexual maturity for male and female, new responsibilities and privileges that adults enjoyed and, making decisions about one’s sexual behaviours of, for example, masturbation, homosexuality, prostitution and family planning.<sup>80</sup> The issues covered in the provisional syllabus largely resembled those of the FPA’s Family Life Education. However, it remained unclear to what extent the CDC adopted the work of the FPA when formulating the new subject course. The involvement of the Education Department in the FPA’s Family Life Education Sub-Committee since its inception in 1967 would possibly be a link. Annie Yim Wan Nicholson (羅艷雲) recounted her experience of serving the CDC as an appointed member that although its membership included principals, practising teachers, college and university lecturers, officers of the Advisory Inspectorate, and other officers of the Education Department, “the initiation and coordination obviously came from the Curriculum Planning Officers who were government servants in the Education Department.”<sup>81</sup> The process of curriculum formulation, she argued, was highly manipulated by the administrators to the extent that it was “implemented as directed”.<sup>82</sup> However, as the archive documenting the curriculum development of Social Studies spans over a long period of time into 1983, in what way the CDC, or the Curriculum Planning Officers, appropriated the FPA’s sex/family life education can only be analyzed when the archive is disclosed for public access.

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<sup>80</sup> Curriculum Development Council, 15-35.

<sup>81</sup> Annie Yim Wan Nicholson, *A Study of the Implementation of a Curriculum Innovation in a Secondary School in Hong Kong: the Case of F.I-III Social Studies* (Master of Education Diss., the Hong Kong University, 1988), 25-26.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

Apart from the CDC's initiative before 1975, another powerful impetus came ironically from the problem of population that was less prominent in the FPA's Family Life Education. As I discussed in chapter 1, after years of discussions the Hong Kong Government finally came to a view in 1972 that an official declaration of the government support for family planning should be made and all of the FPA's clinics operated at the government premises (i.e., government hospitals and Maternal and Child Health Centers) would be gradually taken over by the Department of the Medical and Health Services in three phases. Groundbreaking as it was, this move was very limited in scope in the sense that it did not envision what demographic structure and composition were deemed desirable with respect to the economic, social, political and cultural development of Hong Kong. Therefore, applause only lasted for a short while. An editorial of the *South China Morning Post* rightly lamented that “But merely making a decision does not get it into effect; this calls for a proper policy, and this is what Hongkong is waiting for.”<sup>83</sup> And, the FPA also kept urging the government to follow Singapore's policy that penalized over-fertile families by reducing their tax exemptions and disqualifying them from government housing.<sup>84</sup> In September 1974, the FPA further pressed the government to consider formulating an all-round population policy. On a list of recommendations the FPA gathered in a seminar of the World Population Year programme was that “Population, family life and sex education [should] be included in the curricula of schools, colleges and universities.”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> “Getting to grips with population control,” *South China Morning Post*, 20th June, 1973.

<sup>84</sup> “Population panic: Family planners hit out at Govt,” *The Star*, 5th July, 1973.

<sup>85</sup> “ ‘Big families’ incentives must go, Govt is told,” *South China Morning Post*, 7th September, 1974.

Clearly, only can a population policy that aimed at bringing about desired demographic consequences address these demands and criticisms. In 1975, Governor Murray MacLehose instructed that a memorandum be prepared for the Executive Council which would formulate a positive population policy and list out the measures that were needed to be taken for the implementation of that policy. The Secretary for Social Services took the lead to draft the memorandum and sent it to 11 heads of government departments on 9th February 1976 for their comments.<sup>86</sup> The proposed population policy consisted in extension of family planning services, formal sex education, social incentives and disincentives such as delivery public housing, fiscal measure, fees for births, maternity leaves and school admissions. With these measures taken, the draft proposed to achieve a zero population growth in the long run. Similar to the situation of the 1972 policy declaration, the draft received numerous feedbacks from respective departments and opened up rounds of heated discussions as to whether illegal immigration should fall in the hands of the Working Party on Population Policy, whether zero population growth was desirable and whether or not to mention abortion in the memorandum. However, the proposed scaling up of formal sex education was simply uncontested among all of the departments concerned.

Besides, a protruding factor that had a great bearing on the population but was not taken seriously at the 1972 policy deliberations was illegal and legal immigration. The Director of Immigration commented that not only were illegal immigrants from mainland China largely short of skills and formal education, legal immigrants were

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<sup>86</sup> From Secretary for Social Services, “Draft memorandum for Executive Council: Population policy in Hong Kong,” on 9th February, 1974, (13) in CR 2/3921/76, in HKRS146-11-4.



also lacking the abilities to earn themselves a living. He recommended rewording a paragraph as follows: “... some immigrants have contributed little to public revenue whilst consuming considerable public infrastructure. This is largely true of illegal immigrants generally. It is also certainly true of legal immigrants who either had no formal education or did not progress beyond primary level and had apparently worked as farmers/fishermen or were unemployed ...”<sup>87</sup> Although the recommencement of repatriations on 29th November 1974 had largely cut down the number of illegal immigrants, the number of people who could enter Hong Kong legally from mainland China was determined at the discretion of the Chinese authorities, which was estimated to amount to 20,000 per annum. Together with the number illegal ones, the total number of immigrants from mainland China would be 30,000 each year provided that the political situation remained stable. Because of the politically sensitive nature and the inconsistency in the statistics of immigrations, heads of the respective department discussed and came to a consensus in a meeting on 4th May 1976 that “emphasis should be laid on the more certain input which natural population contributed.”<sup>88</sup> It was under this deliberation that sex education as part of a measure that controlled population growth was proposed and examined. In a supplementary note submitted by the Advisory Inspectorate on behalf of the Education Department, sex education in schools would be further stepped up with the implementation of Social Studies syllabus to all junior secondary schools after the abolition of the Secondary School Entrance Examination as suggested in the

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<sup>87</sup> From Director of Immigration to Secretary for Security, “Comments by Immigration Department on the draft memorandum for Executive Council,” on 12th April, 1976, (38) in IMM CR 208 Pt 4, in HKRS146-11-4.

<sup>88</sup> Draft minutes of a meeting held at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday 4th May 1976 in room 150, C.G.O. to discuss a draft Exco memorandum on Population Policy, in HKRS146-11-4.

1974 *White Paper on Secondary Education*.<sup>89</sup> Sex education was therefore received further institutional backing and gained a significant position in the population policy.

Despite the constant effort of a decade from 1967 to 1977 and the government’s initiative to incorporate it into the Social Studies course, the FPA failed to further develop sex/family life education into an independent subject at school. Neither did it succeed in persuading schools to recognize its importance. Until 1977, there were only 50 secondary schools having implemented sex/family life education by way of implementing Social Studies as part of their curriculum, which was less than 20% of the total number of schools.<sup>90</sup> Peggy Lam, the then Assistant Director of the FPA, said that the unwillingness of teachers was the major obstacle because many of them found it embarrassing to utter the three-letter word in class.<sup>91</sup> Instead, schools preferred inviting the education officers of the FPA to give talks and workshops. Within the 12 months prior to April 1977, the FPA had already reached 38,000 students.<sup>92</sup> Opposition to sex education at school was still persistent in the late 70s. Critics often appealed to the Chinese culture as the 1971 editorial cited above. For example, an editorial of a newspaper on 12th July 1977 wrote that “As to Hong Kong, Chinese people are the main component of the social structure. They have unique cultural traditions and ways of life ... .. In recent years, there is a bad influence that we adopt everything from the West and incorporate them without

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<sup>89</sup> From Social Subjects Section, Advisory Inspectorate, “Formal Sex Education and Note on Sex Education,” on 20th March, 1976, in HKRS146-11-4.

<sup>90</sup> “Sex-shy teachers hit family planning,” *South China Morning Post*, 12th April, 1977.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

careful considerations of the possibility of adverse consequences.”<sup>93</sup> It seemed that the introduction of sex/family life education to schools ran into an impasse in the mid- to late 70s. Nevertheless, the FPA’s incessant effort, together with the government early attempt to implement it through Social Studies and its inclusion in the formulation of a new and broader population policy, sketched out the general outline and major components of what sex/family life education should be. In fact, the framework of the FPA’s sex/family education nearly dictated the 1987 *Guidelines on Sex Education in Secondary Schools* issued by the CDC. The FPA’s list of terminology and glossary was even incorporated into the 1988 *An English-Chinese Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in the Teaching of Social Studies in Secondary Schools*, issued by the CDC. Although sex education did not develop as an independent subject. Neither was the Social Studies widely adopted in schools. The Family Life Education programme enabled the FPA to be the major provider of sex/family life education to schools upon invitation. In 1977/78 and 1978/79, the FPA delivered 354 sessions of whole-day or half day programme for schools, reaching nearly 50,000 students in total.<sup>94</sup> Seen in this light, although the impact of the FPA on sex education in and out of schools was not immediate, it certainly lingered and left a rather long-lasting imprints on the development of sex education from the 70s to 80s.

### Conclusion

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<sup>93</sup> 「小學性教育不能操之過急」，《工商日報》，1977年7月22日。Original text: 「以香港來說，華人是社會結構的主幹，有特的文化傳統和生活方式 ... .. 香港近年來吹起一股歪風，對於西方的一切都認為『足賽楷模』，囫圇吞棗式的加以吸收，能不能消化或者是否會產生弊端，則不加思索。」

<sup>94</sup> *FPA Annual Report 1977/78*, p. 21 and *FPA Annual Report 1978/79*, p.17.

The history of sex education grew out of a public anxiety over the budding sexuality of youth in modernizing industrial society since the mid-60s. The role of the FPA in the early days was ambiguous. On the one hand, it joined the cause of condemning the unchecked propagation of pornography by asking for a stringent legal regulations. On the other hand, it departed from the populist sentiment by importing the idea of sex/family life education from the IPPF, urging to give due recognition of the young people as sexual beings and their right to comprehensive sex/family life education. Obligated by this borrowed idea and its own anxiety about another baby boom as those who were born after the World War II were about to grow into adulthood, the FPA re-prioritized its work and laid a greater emphasis on youth sexuality in the early 70s. Family Life Education thus became an organizing theme which integrated the FPA's work on marriage counselling, population education and family planning services. By so doing, youth sexuality was given a more prominent place in the discourse of family planning and was coupled with the development of a modernizing society. However, the introduction of sex/family life education to schools as a separate subject or part of the curricula of various existing subjects was not that successful even under the auspices of the Education Department's proposal of Social Studies in 1975 and the all-encompassing population policy in 1976. Nevertheless, with its expertise developed over the years, the FPA built up its leading role as one of the primary providers and an expert of sex/family life education, which secured its social impact on the later development of sex education.

## **Chapter 4: The Double Agent and Sex Expert: The Role of the FPA as a Semi-official Agent and an NGO**

### 1. Introduction

Not only had the FPA secured the position as an agent of the government in matters related to family planning in the 50s and 60s, it also became a major and highly active producer of sexual discourse beyond the narrow scope of birth control and a provider of conception and fertility services. The FPA took new directions in the late 60s and early 70s. It embarked upon sex education, introducing a new set of lexicon from abroad that placed sex center-stage in its work. By so doing, it laid down a skeleton of how sex education could be taught for others to follow. Having survived a series of crises, the FPA was not deterred but became more ambitious to step into the “unexplored fields” such as homosexuality and the sexual needs of people with disabilities, for instance. It is intriguing to examine what kind of partnership it entered into with the government in the 70s so that it was given the institutional basis and financial resources to expand its work. And it is equally intriguing to ask what the FPA gave the government in return. As unavoidable in every relation, there were conflicts of interest between the FPA and the government. How did they negotiate and what strategies did they deploy to achieve a win-win result? In the chapter, I will examine how the FPA and the government worked for their mutual benefits and how their collaboration enabled the FPA to further strengthen its role as a public sex expert. Particular attention will be paid to the dual roles that the FPA played as an NGO cum government agent. Contrary to popular belief, its dual roles were often

secured in controversy. As a result, the chapter deliberately begins with the pill controversy.

## 2. The Pill Controversy

The controversy over the inclusion of oral contraceptives, which had long been freely available over the counter, into the prescription list in 1975 was a litmus test to measure to what extent the idea of family planning as advocated by the FPA for the previous 25 years took root in Hong Kong society and the ability of the FPA to maneuver a public controversy. The controversy began with a memorandum that Dr. G.H. Choa, the Director of the Medicine and Health Services (DMHS), tabled to the Executive Council on 3rd June 1975. It proposed, *inter alia*, to amend the Pharmacy and Poison Ordinance on the advice of the Pharmacy and Poisons Board, which was represented by the pharmacy industries, pharmacist professional body, Hong Kong Medical Association, British Medical Association's Hongkong Branch. The board was chaired by the DMHS. The revised Ordinance proposed to implement a registration system for all pharmaceutical products for sale or use in Hong Kong. It also introduced a licensing scheme for pharmaceutical manufacturers and required that all of their local products be analyzed to meet the standard. To facilitate these amendments, the Poison List in the form of schedules annexed to the ordinance needed updating. Clearly, the pill was not the core issue of the bill as it was only one of the hundreds of drugs to be added to the Schedule. Comparing with the 1972 policy decision to take up part of the FPA's clinics, the proposal to amend the said ordinance was, in view of the Director, much less controversial in nature. It imposed

no direct financial implications to the government either. Consequently, no mention on the update of the Poison List was made in the Memorandum because the Executive Council was only concerned with broad policy direction instead of minute details. When assessing the possible public reactions, the DMHS anticipated that “The bill itself should have a neutral public relations impact ... [and] will satisfy considerable pressure that has been developing for the introduction of up-to-date provisions.”<sup>1</sup> It is safe to say that the Director tabled the proposal to the Executive Council for discussion simply because it was an established routine. The endorsement it sought was only a courtesy one. At the same time, he seemed to be utterly unaware of, so was the Council, a barrage of criticism it would provoke once it was made public.

A day after the first and second readings of the bill in the Legislative Council on 18th June 1975 in which Dr G.H. Choa’s speech still made no reference to the new regulation of the pill, the FPA reacted to the proposed amendment promptly. Prof. Ma Ho-kei (馬鍾可璣), Chairperson of the FPA, wrote to the Office of the Unofficial Member of the Executive and Legislative Councils (UMELCO),<sup>2</sup> to express her deep concern about the bill on the grounds that putting oral contraceptives on the

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<sup>1</sup> “Memorandum for Executive Council Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) Bill 1975,” on 3rd June 1975, XCC(75)27, in HKRS618-1-4.

<sup>2</sup> UMELCO was established in 1963 and strengthened in 1970 as a compromise in response to the demand for the office of Ombudsman modelled on that of Sweden in the 60s. An Ombudsman is a statutory agency, independent from the Administration but granted with legal power to acquire any relevant files from the government and hear witnesses during investigation of administrative abuse and misuse upon complaint. Though Ombudsman is limited by law to give no instructions and orders but recommendations, it is an effective built-in check-and-balance system. In the course of investigation, the UMELCO enjoyed a similar status as an Ombudsman to have access to government files and policy papers except confidential reports and secret files on security matters. It also helped liaise with unofficial members to receive public complaints and functioned as a secretary. Norman Miners, “The Governor and the Executive Council,” *The Government and Politics of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1981), 170-176.

prescription list would necessarily increase the financial burden of economically disadvantaged women who might therefore be forced to discontinue it because of inconvenience and additional consultation fee.<sup>3</sup> In addition, according to the proposed regulation, prescription drugs were barred from being advertised to the public, which effectively stopped the FPA from informing users of the possible side effects and the proper method of administration. Prof. Ma argued that although there were few reported cases of blood clotting after taking the pill for a long period of time, dozens of research had repeatedly confirmed its safety and benefits that largely outweighed the potential side effects. In light of the research findings, she pointed out that authorities of the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States were considering taking the pill off prescription. The proposed amendment was indeed a move that went against the trend of the developed countries. Worse still was its “direct conflict with the government policy of promoting family planning.”<sup>4</sup> She demanded that the pill should be left out of the list as it had been and a meeting be arranged between the FPA and unofficial members.

In fact, since the FPA’s introduction of oral contraceptive as a method of contraception in 1959, its use had kept rising. The findings of the two territory-wide surveys conducted by the FPA itself, namely *the Family Planning Knowledge, Attitude and Practice in Hong Kong* in 1972 and 1977, confirmed that the pills were the most popular means of birth control, accounting for 36% and 32% of all of the

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<sup>3</sup> From Prof. Ma Ho-kei, the FPA to R.W. Primrose, Administrative Secretary of UMELCO, on 19th June 1975, in HKRS618-1-4. Prof. Ma estimated that there were about 350,000 women on the pill.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



the currently employed methods respectively.<sup>5</sup> Even if the FPA and MCH Centers could offer to have registered physicians who prescribed the oral contraceptives in case the bill was passed without modification, subtracting those who obtained the pills from private doctors, there were still 28% of women getting them from drug stores in 1977 alone.<sup>6</sup> It was the group that would be mostly affected by the new regulation. As it was estimated that there were 614,546 married women aged between 15 - 49 in 1977,<sup>7</sup> the new regulation, if imposed, would have had direct impact on about 170,000 married women who chose to buy the pills over the counter.<sup>8</sup>

The FPA's high-profile opposition attracted the attention of Malcolm Potts, who was the former Medical Director of the IPPF and happened to stay in Hong Kong during that period. He was interviewed by the *South China Morning Post* for his comments on the incident and expressed his great astonishment by saying that "I am appalled and speechless to find Hong Kong tightening up on the use of birth control pills while the rest of the world is relaxing their restrictions."<sup>9</sup> He also criticized Hong

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<sup>5</sup> The FPA, "Practice of contraception," *Family Planning Knowledge, Attitude & Practice in Hong Kong 1977* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1977), 36. Other contraceptive methods were intra-uterine device, sterilization, condom, rhythm, spermicide and others. As to the source where practising women acquired the pills, there was a significant drop in the demand from the FPA, falling from 54% in 1972 to 32% in 1977. However, it can by no means be interpreted as a distaste for the FPA's supply. As discussed in Chapter 1, from 1973 onwards the government absorbed all of the FPA's clinics operating on its premises to the MCH Centers, resulting in a sharp decline in the demand for oral contraceptives from the FPA in the subsequent years. (p.37) When the supplies of the FPA and the MCH centers were taken together, they were still the largest share (i.e. over 50%) of the total supply of oral contraceptives, though the rising popularity of condom might have made it a few points less (i.e. the percentages of women aged between 15 and 49 taking the pills fell from 36 in 1972 to 32 in 1977 while condom use increased from 7% to 18% in that period).

<sup>6</sup> *Family Planning Knowledge, Attitude & Practice in Hong Kong 1977*, 37.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6, fn. 6.

<sup>8</sup> The real number of women affected must be larger than the estimation for the FPA's survey excluded those unmarried women who also bought over-the-counter oral contraceptives for contraception.

<sup>9</sup> "IPPF protests Pills curb move," *South China Morning Post*, 20th June, 1975.

Kong for keeping its “Victorian abortion law”. Although Peggy Lam, the Executive Secretary for the FPA, clarified the next day that they had never asked the IPPF to intervene into what she thought an entirely local issue and did not consider abortion as a means of family planning. She agreed with Potts’ remarks on the government move.<sup>10</sup> In the days that followed, a more influential stakeholder came on the scene to lend support to the FPA. On the same day when Peggy Lam’s letter of clarification was posted, the British Medical Association’s Hong Kong Branch issued a lengthy statement against putting the pills on the prescription list because “The free sale of the Pill made a great contribution to reducing unplanned pregnancies, induced abortions, maternal ill health and improving the quality of family life for those who cannot find time to see a doctor every month.”<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, there were a few paragraphs of the Association’s statement strikingly similar to Prof. Ma’s letter to the UMELO. They were nearly identical to the extent that the Association might have plagiarized Prof. Ma’s.<sup>12</sup> The marked similarity between the two suggested that the FPA might have written to the Association for support. This speculation was highly probably for the Association was one of the two medical profession representatives in the Pharmacy and Poisons Board.<sup>13</sup> As a medical physician herself, it was reasonable for Prof. Ma to enlist support from the medical profession. However, the Association did not explain why, as a medical representative in the Pharmacy and

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<sup>10</sup> “FPA, pill and Dr Potts’ views,” *South China Morning Post*, 21st June, 1975.

<sup>11</sup> “Doctors favour over the counter Pill sale,” *Hong Kong Standard*, 21st June, 1975.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Prof. Ma wrote: “It should be possible to define clearly oral and injectable contraceptives so as to differentiate them from hormone preparations which are used for treatment of illnesses and should be prescribed by a doctor...” while the Association’s statement read: “It should be possible to clearly define the oral and injectable contraceptives so as to differentiate them from other hormone preparations which need to be restricted.”

<sup>13</sup> Another medical representative is the Hong Kong Medical Association.

Poison Board, it did not oppose the proposed amendment in the first place when it was raised in the Board.

Almost a week later, a government spokesperson, not the DMHS himself or the Board, finally came out to defend the notorious proposal. S/he argued that the intention of the bill was to curb the rampant sale of counterfeit pills which were so difficult to distinguish from the genuine ones by naked eyes. To safeguard the public interest, and that of women in particular, “some element of control is needed,” the anonymous spokesperson said.<sup>14</sup> However, such an explanation was strongly refuted by a veteran pharmaceutical businessperson. S/he thought that the right way to address the problem of counterfeit drugs was not to put them on prescription list but to prosecute those who produced those drugs in the first place.<sup>15</sup> While lamenting that the excuse was “just nonsense and childish thinking,” the businessperson made reference to the FPA to argue that “... the pills have been successfully used by thousands and thousands of females of child-bearing age under the guidance of FPA for the past 18 years with mountains of statistics and experience to support and to prove that the pills are safe to use over a long term without fear of any serious or untoward side-effect etc.”<sup>16</sup>

It was important to note that the frequent reference to the work of the FPA was very common. Dr. E. Waldmann of the Child Development Centre, the Hong Kong University, also made reference to the FPA’s work when criticizing the proposal for

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<sup>14</sup> “Pill control to end a racket,” *South China Morning Post*, 24th June, 1975.

<sup>15</sup> “Just the thing to promote fake pills,” *South China Morning Post*, 3rd July, 1975.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

being a “retrograde step”.<sup>17</sup> He argued if the government was to make sure that every woman who embarked upon a new course of oral contraceptives could be evaluated by a qualified physician in advance, making the pills a prescription drug was entirely counterproductive because the FPA, which was providing such a service for the time being, would be very likely to cease to do so because of shortage of funds to hire physicians. In fact, not only did many commentaries keep referring to the FPA, social groups such as the International Feminist League of Hong Kong<sup>18</sup> and the Hongkong Association of University Women<sup>19</sup> also positively quoted FPA’s position on the free sale of low-dosage oral contraceptives and the principle of family planning. So did the editorials of the Chinese newspapers. For example, *Ming Pao Daily News* editorial wrote: “Requiring that the Pill can only be obtained with a doctor’s prescription runs against the modern ideas of birth control, family planning and social welfare.”<sup>20</sup> The editorial of *Keung Sheung Daily News* on 29th June 1975, entitled “For the sake of birth control, contraceptives should not be put under control,” shared a similar view. It is evident that the idea of family planning by way of contraceptive methods had been widely accepted as a common practice.<sup>21</sup> More significant is that the popularity of birth control was not only confined to verbal endorsement. According to the FPA’s survey in 1977, the pill controversy broke out

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<sup>17</sup> From Dr. E. Waldmann to Lee Man-kwong, for Administrative Secretary, UMELO Office, on 5th July, 1975, in HKRS618-1-4.

<sup>18</sup> The International Feminist League of Hong Kong issued a statement on 25th June 1975. One of the paragraphs read: “One should remember that in Hong Kong the FPA have struggled to introduce the concept of planning a family, and have worked to establish the use of what is considered by Chinese women a ‘western drug’.”

<sup>19</sup> From Lorine Parsons, President of the Hongkong Association of University Women to J.W. Primrose, Administrative Secretary for the UMELO, on 5th June 1975. The letter read: “The Family Planning Association here has operated successfully for 25 years ... Requiring a prescription for the pill by registered doctors at these centres would increase the costs and slow down the distribution.”

<sup>20</sup> 26th June, 1975.

<sup>21</sup> 「為配合節育不宜管制避孕丸」，《工商日報》，1975年6月29日。

at a time when the increase in the use of contraceptive was the sharpest. The users of contraceptives in 1977 amounted to 71.9% of people aged between 15 and 49 while the figure in 1972 was only 42%.<sup>22</sup>

The frequent positive references to the FPA not only reflected but also consolidated a prime agent of family planning in the public consciousness. In other words, family planning came to be widely viewed as a necessity for a modern society as well as a fundamental philosophy that guided the development of a young society like Hong Kong. Because such an idea had already been embedded in people's orientation toward the future as well as attributed to the success of economic transition and the rising living standard, any restriction on the access to contraceptive methods would be seen as a threat and therefore spark huge controversy. In fact, even the government explanation was based on that same premise before defending the proposal. An anonymous medical officer argued in such a fashion that "Socially we all know the seriousness of this population explosion and threat. Most of the people would agree about the of necessity of birth control. While we all may wish to achieve this aim, this does not mean we could be less vigorous in protecting the mothers-to-be in employing various measures and means to achieve such an aim."<sup>23</sup> Put simply, what was at stake, as the officer tried to argue, was how the idea of family planning was achieved but not the idea itself. Seen in this light, it would suffice to say that the discourse of family planning had already gained a hegemonic position in the early 70s.

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<sup>22</sup> The FPA, "Practice of Contraception," *Family Planning, Knowledge, Attitude & Practice in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1977), 32-33.

<sup>23</sup> "Some form of control over Pill justified.]," *South China Morning Post*, 5th July, 1975.

Prof. Ma's request to meet with the unofficial members of the Legislative and Executive Councils was positively entertained. Together with Prof. Daphne Chun, Director of the FPA, Prof. Ma went for a meeting convened by legislator Oswald Cheung on 4th July 1975. In reply to the meeting invitation, G.H. Choa declined to attend but assigned a Deputy Director who, he claimed, had expertise that he lacked because of the Deputy's previous involvement in family planning programme in Singapore. Instead of reiterating that the proposal helped curb counterfeit drugs, G.H. Choa made the first concession. He tried to pacify the FPA by promising, after consultation with General Attorney John Hobley, that the FPA and the like fell within the exemption clause granted to "an institution where the dispensing is under the supervision of a registered pharmacist or other person as may be approved by the Director of Medical & Health Services."<sup>24</sup> He even agreed that if there was still any doubt, elaboration could be made so as to ensure that the FPA would be definitely freed from the new regulation. However, this was not what the FPA wanted even though the concession was in its favor. The FPA did not take the restriction on oral contraceptives to be an incident that only jeopardized its own interest. It really took it to be a women's right to contraception and detrimental to its cause of sex/family life education. Therefore, the FPA did not accept the concession. The FPA's lobbying seemed to be very successful as the UMELO councillors were on its side after the meeting. DMHS was left no choice but to take the pill off the prescription list and revise the amendment bill to be read in the Legislative Council on 16th July. The new regulation allowed that "pills containing not more than 50 micrograms of

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<sup>24</sup> From G.H. Choa, DMHS, to Oswald Cheung, on 27th June 1975, in HKRS618-1-4.

oestrogenic substances and not more than 5 miligrams of progestational substances should be entirely free of prescription and included in the 2nd Schedule to the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations 1975.”<sup>25</sup> Despite the widely-welcomed concession, however, the rationale of the government to put the pill on prescription in the first place was, as the editorial of *The South China Morning Post* wittily described, “a mystery”.<sup>26</sup> *The Star*’s editorial on 4th July also questioned the lack of transparency of policy making.<sup>27</sup> In its editorial on 7th, *The Star* urged that introducing “a greater measure of open Government into our process of consultative government” was needed.<sup>28</sup>

It is evident that not only the idea of family planning was broadly endorsed across all walks of life but also the work of the FPA was widely recognized. Armed with the overwhelming social consensus, the FPA could easily enlist the support of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council whose voting intention was of significance to the government political calculation. After the government announced that the pill would be taken off from the prescription list, Professor Daphne Chun said in a press interview in the next day that “We welcome this step by the Government as *we were always confident* that the Government would make *reasonable* decision on the matter after all the views expressed by the Family Planning Association, unofficial members of the Legislative Council and members of

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<sup>25</sup> From A. Chapman, Chief Executive Officer of the UMELO Office, to All other UMELO members, on 8th July 1975, in HKRS618-1-4.

<sup>26</sup> “A reprieve for the Pill,” *South China Morning Post*, 8th July 1975.

<sup>27</sup> “Why pick on the Pill?,” *The Star*, 4th July 1975.

<sup>28</sup> “We need more open consultation,” *The Star*, 7th July 1975.

the public.”<sup>29</sup> By saying so, she gave honor to the government whose amendment bill, if unchallenged, would have spoiled the FPA’s effort in the family planning movement and therefore largely reduced the number of women going to its clinics for consultation and cheap contraceptives. Indeed, it was not flattery. What she said was likely a friendly gesture or even an olive branch the FPA held out to the government in the hope that its invitation of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council to intervene into the matter and putting the brakes on the amendment would not embarrass the government too much. Obviously, what the FPA valued, after the dispute was over, was to keep a working relation with the government. Here, judged by the way the FPA managed the controversy, it can be said that it strove to strike a balance between the dual roles as a non-governmental organization watchdogging the government and a semi-official agent providing sex/family planning education as well as services.

In retrospect, in about a month’s time from the first reading of the bill on 18th June 1975 to the low-dosage oral contraceptives being taken off the prescription list on 16th July, such a drastic policy change was rarely seen in the Colonial history. One might be tempted to explain the government’s initial proposal in terms of its intention to impose a more stringent moral regulation because unrestricted

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<sup>29</sup> “Medical and welfare groups welcome decision on the Pill,” *Hong Kong Standard*, 8th July, 1975. (my italics)



accessibility to the pills had profound implications for sexual freedom.<sup>30</sup> Plausible as it might seem, however, the fear of moral deterioration because of allowing the pills to be accessible over the counter could hardly be felt in the media. The Pharmaceutical Society of Hong Kong, which appealed to the government for relaxing the requirement, said that “The moral issue to the public is not considered.” The president added that “In Hongkong, pills have been available freely for many years without any apparent effect on the health or morals of the population.”<sup>31</sup> The editorial of *Keung Sheung Daily News* also shared the view that women’s promiscuity had nothing to do with the free accessibility to the pill.<sup>32</sup> What should come first when considering the issue, it argued, was the aim of family planning.

Nevertheless, upon closer inspection, the pills did have sexual implications for the FPA instead. Clearly enough, leaving the pills in low dosage from regulation would provide an easier means for married couples to enjoy sex without the fear of conception. In fact, contraceptives were absolutely fundamental to the FPA’s

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<sup>30</sup> In the history of the United States, contraceptive devices had long been considered obscenity and banned from circulation by post. Such a harsh law was chiefly advocated by Anthony Comstock who was a devoted Christian living in a suburb of Connecticut throughout his childhood. Because of his belief in Christianity, when he came to New York, he found it filthy and flooded with sinful sex. In collaboration with the YMCA, he founded the New York Society for Suppression of Vice. When the postal law was passed in the parliament in 1873, to credit his relentless effort in curbing obscenity, it was often referred to as the Comstock Law. He was even offered a post which had the power to inspect any mails whether they carried contraceptive devices or information. His hostility to contraception was because contraceptive devices freed sex from marriage. Sex as a source of sensual pleasure, with the aid of contraceptives, became an end in itself. In 1916, Margaret Sanger opened the first birth control clinics in Brooklyn, disseminating information pamphlet on contraception. She and her sister were soon arrested by the police and put in jail for a month. On appeal, the court ruled that women had no right not to be conceived during sexual intercourse but granted the use of contraceptives strictly for prevention of disease. Thereafter, all women contraceptives were euphemistically referred to as “feminine hygiene” products to exploit the legal loophole. It was until 1972 when the Supreme Court declared restrictions on contraceptives unconstitutional, putting an end to the Comstock Law. See Andrea Tone, *Devices and desires: a history of contraceptives in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001). In contrast to the United States, Hong Kong was very liberal in terms of its legal regulation of contraceptives.

<sup>31</sup> “Govt gets new plea to relax Pill ban,” *Hong Kong Standard*, 5th July 1975.

<sup>32</sup> 「為配合節育不宜管制避孕丸」，《工商日報》，1975年6月29日。

endeavour in limiting family size and population growth as well as its philosophy of coupledness based on emotional investment in children and gratifying sexual life to the exclusion of all others.<sup>33</sup> It was only when sex was decoupled from the necessity of reproduction that it could be harnessed to the FPA's vision of happy family life. Without them, or increased difficulty in access to them, sex would no longer function as a glue that binds couples together but turn into a source of lifelong misery because of over-fertility. Therefore, the unrestricted availability of contraceptives, the low-dosage pills in this case as the most popular method during that time, was essentially a material and institutional condition under which the FPA's endeavour and philosophy were made feasible and desirable. The FPA's immediate reaction to the amendment bill could be understood as a defense of what it took to be its core belief as well as the material and institutional condition conducive to its work and the very idea of family planning. The dual roles it played as exemplified by the pill controversy more or less guaranteed its hold over the institutional basis and public acceptance.

### 3. Government Appropriation of Family Life Education

Not only did the FPA strive to act as a double agent, the government also more or less deliberately nurtured such a role. With the work of the FPA well received in the community at large, the government thought of a way to put it into greater political use to strengthen effective governance. In response to the recommendation of the report on "Social Causes of Violent Crime among Young Offenders in Hong Kong"

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<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 3.

which gave top priority to Family Life Education as a preventive measure,<sup>34</sup> the Government Secretariat Social Services Branch issued a Green Paper entitled *The Development of Personal Social Work Among Young People in Hong Kong* in November 1977. The Green Paper outlined a five-year plan for the social services targeted to young people aged between 6 and 20 provided at the governmental and voluntary agencies levels. Its objective was surprisingly clear and simple stating that the purpose of “personal social work among young people is to reduce or prevent anti-social or delinquent behaviour in young people.”<sup>35</sup> It admitted that the provision of recreational spaces and activities as an energy outlet for the youth, though important in itself, were no longer able to address the challenge of increasing magnitude. Interventions at the personal level by way of guidance and help were urgently needed so as to “educate young people and their families to understand and accept the proper role they should play at home and in society...”<sup>36</sup> The government would plan to invest \$20.2 million in the 1978/79 financial year and the annual expenditure was expected to gradually increase to \$30.5 million in 1982/83.<sup>37</sup> A three-thronged approach was proposed, namely social work at school, outreaching social work and family life education. The first two were targeted at young people at and out of schools while the last one was aimed at the whole community.

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<sup>34</sup> Speech of Annie Chan, Assistant Director of Social Welfare Department at the launching press conference on 27th February 1978, in HKRS618-1-4.

<sup>35</sup> Hong Kong Government Secretariat, Social Services Branch, *Green Paper on the Development of Personal Social Work Among Young People in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: 1977), 2.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 31.

The notion of Family Life Education as the FPA imported in 1967 through setting up a Working Committee on Family Life Education was largely adapted by the Green Paper.<sup>38</sup> Although it was not fair to say that other agencies in the same field made no contribution to the content of Family Life Education in 10-year's time, the early work of the FPA as a pioneer left some noticeable and long-lasting imprints on the government Family Life Education that attested to its moulding force. For example, at the launching press conference on 27th February 1978, Annie Chan, the Assistant Director of Social Welfare Department more or less employed the same set of rhetoric to foreground the need of the Family Life Education Campaign, which implemented what the Green Paper had suggested. She said: "In an ever-changing society like Hong Kong, especially in the past 20 years, it is no longer possible for the traditional Chinese family to withstand the impact of alien influences and the rapid economic progress which have brought about significant changes in the structure of and concept of the family. As a result many social problems have emerged in their new form and context."<sup>39</sup> But interestingly enough, the very idea of family life education was an import that was born in the United States in the 60s.<sup>40</sup> What the government proposed to do is to counter the "alien influence" with "alien" methods. Sarcastic as it might sound, the apparent contradiction testified that the discourse of family life education was so localized and well implanted in the sexual landscape that its "alien" origin had simply vanished in public memory. The FPA played a undeniably significant role in the localization of the Family Life Education.

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<sup>38</sup> For a review of the historical development of this Working Committee and its impact, please refer to Chapter 3.

<sup>39</sup> Speech of Annie Chan, on 27th February 1978, in HKRS618-1-4.

<sup>40</sup> See Rose M. Somerville, "Family life and sex education in the turbulent sixties," *Introduction to family life and sex education* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 283-317.

As to the structure of the government Family Life Education campaign, it also bore remarkable resemblance to the FPA's by having four major categories, namely (a) human development and child care, (b) sex education and preparation for responsible parenthood, (c) human roles and relationships and (d) nutrition, health education and home management.<sup>41</sup> However, while sex education occupied center stage in the FPA's family life education as I have shown in the last chapter, the Social Welfare Department gave the "family" a greater emphasis instead. The Green Paper proclaimed in the beginning of the chapter on family life education that "a broader approach at preserving and strengthening the family as a unit" must be adopted so as to "improve the quality of family life among individuals, by enhancing their understanding of self, of human relationships within the family and of the role each family member plays, and *to forestall family breakdown by imparting knowledge on marriage, child care and the responsibilities of parenthood to individual members.*"<sup>42</sup> On closer look, however, there were minute differences between the FPA's and the Department's conceptualization of Family Life Education and the functions they imputed to it. The FPA understood the provision of Family Life Education to be a response to the needs of the youth's budding sexuality against a modernizing social context. It was at pains to help young people to come to terms with themselves as sexual beings and act in a responsible way. The FPA could therefore be said to be future-oriented. On the contrary, the Family Life Education that the government

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<sup>41</sup> "Speech by Mrs. Henrietta Chen, Principal Social Welfare Officer, Social Welfare Department, at the Luncheon Meeting of Rotary Club to be held at the Leo Lee Gardens Hotel on Wednesday, March 1, 1978 at 1 p.m.," in HKRS618-1-4. The only difference from the FPA's was the addition of the last category, i.e., nutrition, health education and home management.

<sup>42</sup> *Green Paper*, 1977, 19. (my italics)

envisioned was primarily remedial and preventive with a view to restoring the weakened functions of family that were said to be one of the root causes for a series of social problems such as “generation gap, unmarried motherhood, marital discord, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction and community disorganisation” that Annie Chan named in the press conference. Clearly, the government-initiated Family Life Education campaign was modelled on that of the FPA, appropriating its framework, rhetoric, scope, targets and justifications and putting it into an entirely different use.

Not only did the government appropriate the FPA’s discourse of family life education, it also co-opted the FPA, among other 10 voluntary agencies, to the Central Guiding Committee on Family Life Education which advised on the implementation of the campaign. From March 1978 onwards, the Social Welfare Department formed a team of social workers with a principal social welfare officer and 10 family life education officers who were assigned to 7 different districts. During March and April 1978, nearly 50 events were held by voluntary agencies across the colony. They included talks, seminars, camps, exhibitions and visits. Despite variety of forms, most of them were about parenting. The Social Welfare Department implemented it in a more balanced way. For instance, the family life education officer at Wong Tai Sin organized a forum on “Teenagers and Love”, examining the meaning of love, its common misunderstanding, the needs of becoming mature and things to know about dating.

However, when it came to sex, its stance was less progressive than the FPA. One of the serial booklets, *To the Young People* (《給年青人的》), on Family Life

Education illustrated with cartoons perhaps well encapsulated the Department's presumptions about youth sexuality. Out of the 22 youth problems discussed in the booklet, only three of them were sex related while the rest were concerned about self identity as well as relationships between young people and family. Of particular attention was the question of "What is nocturnal emission? Is it harmful?" (「什麼是夢遺？它對我有害嗎？」) The booklet, on the one hand, pacified worrying teenage boys by saying that nocturnal emission was part of a normal growing process. But on the other hand, it warned that obsession with pornography and having a regular habit of masturbation would give the brain frequent sexual stimuli, which in turn led to increase in the occurrence of nocturnal emission. It ended with a cartoon of a boy and a girl playing tennis with a caption below which read "Active participation in social activities, especially recreational ones and sports, could help you quit bad habits."<sup>43</sup>

On the contrary, the FPA treated nocturnal emission and masturbation in a much more liberal way. In the 1975 *Family Life Education Teacher's Handbook*, "masturbation" was discussed among the other 7 issues under the chapter's heading of "Sex and the Moral Issues." It somehow reflected the conservative cultural context in which they were issues calling for moral concerns or even provoking moral condemnation. Notwithstanding, the *Handbook* emphatically asserted that "... many children masturbate and no evidence has ever been found to prove that it is harmful. It is people who feel guilty about it who make others feel guilty about it

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<sup>43</sup> 社會福利署，《給青年人的》(香港：社會福利署，1978)。The other two sex-related questions were "what is puberty?" and "what is menstruation? How should I deal with it". (my translation)

too.”<sup>44</sup> The revised version of the *Handbook* published in 1983 even added that “The teacher’s job is to reassure young people that masturbation is a perfectly normal, harmless habit indulged in by people at some time in their lives.”<sup>45</sup>

The subtle difference between the FPA and the Social Welfare Department in their attitude toward masturbation showed that although the government-initiated Family Life Education campaign largely replicated that of the FPA, it was never a direct copy. One of the most obvious divergences was that the government’s was short of progressive views about sexuality but replaced with a greater emphasis on interpersonal relationships and the adverse consequences of their breakdown. It did not share with the FPA that sex was a modernizing force. To the Social Welfare Department, sex was often dangerous and devastating if left unregulated. The drama series “Under the Same Roof” (「屋簷下」), a project jointly produced by the Social Welfare Department and the Radio Television Hong Kong as part of the publicity for the campaign might be illustrative of the the Department’s sex-negative attitude and its emphasis on family.

On 3rd March 1978, the first episode featured “The Story of Ah King” (「阿琼的故事」). It was a tragedy adapted from a real case. Ah King, aged 27, was a girl of a poor family. Her father always wanted her to get married soon though her mother did not. Ah King had a boyfriend, Ah Tong (阿棠), who worked as a courier. Although he had a previous marriage, Ah King did not mind and had premarital sex with him.

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<sup>44</sup> The FPA, “Sex and the Moral Issues,” *Family Life Education Teachers’ Handbook* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1975), 23.

<sup>45</sup> The FPA, “Sex and the Moral Issues,” *Family Life Education Teachers’ Handbook* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1983), 49



She only came to know he had three children after getting pregnant. She had no choice but married him and took care of his children. To alleviate her burden, she asked her sister to live with them. Ah Tong was used to being promiscuous. When Ah King was hospitalized for birth, he had sex with her sister. When returning home, she discovered their affairs and accidentally knocked over a stove during a quarrel. With great anger, Ah King threw everything near her to the fire. She was arrested and put in jail for arson. In the end, she decided to divorce. The moral of this episode, as the Social Welfare Department wrote in the press release, was that getting married without thinking twice could end in tragedy.<sup>46</sup>

This episode, together with the subsequent ones in the series, was telling in that it exposed the problems in a modernizing society where individuals were confronted with new mode of intimacy and family organization and were forced to make difficult life choices on their own of considerable complexity unknown to the previous generation. For example, the 5th episode, “Ever Since,” was about the conflict between mothers and daughters-in-law and how it developed into a full-blown interpersonal friction. The press release commented that “... the trifle happenings which led to the final outbreak between the two generations were some of the most common ones found in case histories handled by the Social Welfare Department and the voluntary agencies.”<sup>47</sup> Family Life Education, to the Social

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<sup>46</sup> Press release of 「屋簷下」之「阿琼的故事」, on 2nd March 1978, in HKRS70-8-1340.

<sup>47</sup> Press release of 「屋簷下」劇集明晚又播映·家庭生活教育電視劇·第五輯描述婆媳關係, on 30 March 1978, in HKRS70-8-1340.

Welfare Department, was reactive to the challenges that modern social life presented to the institution of family.<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless, the significance of the FPA lay not in whether the government duplicated its family life education programme both in terms of its content and modes of delivery, although it did to a great extent. Rather, the appropriation of the very idea and framework of family life education for a new social and political use further attested to collaborative relation between the FPA and the government. The discourse of the FPA in relation to sex, family and youth produced in the previous two decades laid a fertile ground for the government to adopt. I am not to argue that the FPA was assigned a political task to import the idea of sex/family life education in the first place. However, having been heavily subvented, the FPA was more or less given a special role in the provision of knowledge and services in relation to birth control and sexuality education that were two social welfare the government preferred not to be directly involved in. It would be safe to say that the government meant to support the FPA and the like with a modern outlook to carry out social engineering. The 10-year experiment of family life education by the FPA and many other social services groups under the auspices of the government proved to be well received and once again confirmed the saying that Chinese were practical. Therefore, with the water tested and the way cleared, the government could then officially take a more proactive step to intervene into the issues pertinent to Chinese families that it

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<sup>48</sup> Three years after the Family Life Education campaign had been launched, the Sub-committee on Research and Evaluation of the Central Guiding Committee on Family Life Education, in collaboration with the Social Research Centre, CUHK, conducted a territory-wide survey to evaluate the public awareness of the campaign and its impact. With 1,837 questionnaires completed, 37.6% of respondents had heard about family life education. See The Central Guiding Committee on Family Life Education and the Social Research Centre, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, *1981 Base-line Study on Evaluation of Family Life Education Service* (Hong Kong, Government of Hong Kong, 1982), 15.

had long refrained itself from in the fear of provoking opposition. Having said that, the symbiotic relationship between the FPA and the government became clearer. While the government offered the FPA an institutional basis and financial security, the FPA provided it in return with a reshaped sexual landscape in which people were made more receptive to family planning education campaign and sex education. In sum, figuratively speaking, the discourse of the FPA had sedimented in the sexual landscape on which the legitimacy and efficacy of the government's family life education were based.

#### 4. FPA's Monopoly of Conception and Fertility Services

Another aspect that can shed light on the impact of the FPA is to what extent its provision of services is received. Inspired by an Australian study which revealed that 80% of youth who sought counselling services had problems with sex or fertility, the FPA conducted a survey of similar kind in 1979/80 to estimate how many youths sought counselling services from voluntary agencies and to sketch out an overview of the type and prevalence of problems that youth-clients encountered. At the beginning, the FPA was so ambitious that the study would cover nearly all of the Hong Kong voluntary providers of counselling services. However, it turned out that only 5 agencies were willing to participate, effectively limiting the generalization of the findings. Nonetheless, it provided a synopsis of where the FPA was positioned among the other 4 major counselling services providers, namely Hong Kong Federation of Youth Group, Caritas Family Services, Youth/Women's Christian Association and Breakthrough Counselling Centre.

When youth's problems were categorized into physiological, emotional, academic & occupational, spiritual, environmental and other unidentifiable aspects, it was found that the counselling services of the FPA monopolized the first category, accounting for 96% of the total counselling services offered by the 5 agencies.<sup>49</sup> Among the sub-categories of the physiological problems, there was 74% of counselling services related to conception and fertility provided by the FPA while the Breakthrough Counselling Center was specialized in emotional problems as reflected by its 66% share. This was a strong indication that the FPA had already secured a distinctive niche over the years. When analyzed together with the returned questionnaires of the non-participating voluntary agencies, the first three problems for which youth-clients sought counselling services were, in descending order, conception and fertility (29.6%), studies (14.3%) and peer relationship (11.4%).<sup>50</sup> Chan K.C., the principal investigator of the survey and the author of the report, explained that most counseling services on sex and fertility sought were about unplanned pregnancies, suspected or confirmed. Because the nature of these cases demanded immediate concern, youth with this problem were highly motivated to seek help.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, it did not make the above findings any less significant. The niche that the FPA secured in the field of conception and fertility was largely due to its acquisition of medical and technological expertise, which would be a considerable hurdle for other rivals to imitate in terms of knowledge and resources. And, above all, the FPA's advantaged position was surely the consequence of its unique role in birth control

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<sup>49</sup> Chan K.C., *Report on the Study of The Needs of Youth* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1981), 15.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

that the government bestowed in the previous two decades. Therefore, parallel to its expansion of sex/family life education in the mid-70s on the solid discursive foundation of population it had laid down in the 50s and 60s, its youth counselling services benefited from its medical and technological expertise originally developed to address over-fertility (and sub-fertility). In other words, the FPA's monopoly of fertility services was a direct consequence of government bestowal.

#### 5. Sex Experts and the FPA's Position on Homosexuality

The triumph against the Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) Bill 1975 to list the pill as a prescription drug and the official appropriation of family life education to address youth problems in 1978 spoke volumes for the fact that FPA had consolidated its unique position as a semi-official agent as well as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in the late 70s as if it were a double agent. Its monopoly of youth counselling in relation to conception and fertility as well as provision of contraceptive advice and devices at clinics further attested to its reach beyond discursive output. With this firm foundation together with both tangible and intangible resources (e.g. political connections) at its disposal, the FPA repositioned itself as a sex expert at the dawn of the 80s that parents, youth and teachers would turn to for advice and journalists for comments. More importantly, it strove to be more proactive in setting new agenda and exploring cutting-edge sexual issues.

Of particular significance was its more liberal view about homosexuality. In the early days of the FPA, homosexuality was seldom discussed alone. It was only mentioned

in passing, often derogatorily. For example, a few months prior to her sudden death in July 1961, Victoria Cheng (程任定夫人) wrote an article for a brochure of the Happy Family Campaign, explaining the necessity of marriage guidance. She wrote:

The marriage guidance is to impart young people a correct understanding of conjugal love. It is because a correct understanding of love will lead to successful marriage while an incorrect one is often the primary cause of suffering. In newspapers there are family tragedies because of misconception everyday, for example, abandonment, adultery, murder, incest and *homosexuality* etc. These aberrations arise from misconception of love.<sup>52</sup>

Fortunately, it was most likely her own bias. In the meeting of the Sub-Committee of Family Life Education on 28th June 1974, when members were discussing the drafted syllabuses of family life education for primary and secondary schools, Patricia Nicholl, the chairperson, recommended to include, among others, “homosexuality viewed from a more understanding angle.”<sup>53</sup> It seemed that Arthur Hinton, the author of the *Teachers’ Handbook*, took her advice and gave homosexuality a sympathetic treatment by writing that “The general tendency today is to recognise that people differ in the expression of their sexual desires as they do

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<sup>52</sup> 程任定夫人，「婚姻指導的需要」，《家庭幸福運動》(香港：港九街坊福利會婦女部，1961)，127。(my italics and translation)

<sup>53</sup> The minutes of the Family Life Education Sub-Committee of the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, on 10th June 1974, in HKRS147-7-233.

in all other respects. One should accept and tolerate differences. The criteria should be respect for other people, avoiding hurting them wherever possible.”<sup>54</sup>

It was not clear why Patricia Nicholl held a rather sympathetic attitude toward homosexuality, however, what was sure was that hers became an official position for the FPA in the years to come.<sup>55</sup> In the last chapter, I briefly discussed that the compilation of the glossary for Family Life Education with an entry of homosexuality written in neutral tone was rather unusual because the social sentiment was quite hostile to it. However, social hostility did not deter the FPA from exploring the issue and upholding its sympathetic attitude. The 11th issue of the *Family Life Education Review* released on September 1983 ran a feature on homosexuality. It introduced the classification of homosexuality proposed by Milton Diamond, the hypothetical speculations of its etiology and the Kinsey’s scale. It also included a review of Bai Xian-yong’s (白先勇) novel “In Our Kingdom” (「在我們的王國裡」) together with a chronology of major incidents in relation to homosexuality in Hong Kong. The issue was historic in the sense that it responded to the heatedly debated proposed amendment to the Criminal Ordinance which suggested decriminalizing sex between consenting men at or over the age of 21 in

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<sup>54</sup> The FPA, *Family Life Education: Teachers’ Handbook* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1975), 27.

<sup>55</sup> There was not much information about Mrs. Patricia Nicholl, unfortunately. Her name first appeared on the name list of the Family Life Sub-Committee in the 1971-1972 *FPA Annual Report*. It was known that when she arrived in Hong Kong in 1971, she met with Reverend John Foster, the then Dean of St. John’s Cathedral, who was already a member of the Sub-Committee at that time. Because of Nicholl’s ten-year work in the National Marriage Guidance Council, they founded the Marriage Guidance Council, Hong Kong in 1973 in collaboration with others, which is the predecessor of the ReSource The Counselling Centre. Probably because of their collaboration, it was believed that Rev. John Foster invited Nicholl to serve on the Sub-Committee. See “History and Ethos,” ReSource The Counselling Centre, accessed 7th July 2013, <http://www.resourcecounselling.org/eng/history.htm>.

private place.<sup>56</sup> The social antagonism was far more serious than the time when the glossary was compiled. Led by Choi Yuen-wan (蔡元雲), the chairperson of the Breakthrough, an alliance of Christian churches, educational, counselling, social work and cultural groups was formed with a view to keeping homosexual acts between consenting adults of the same sex criminal.<sup>57</sup> It was the first time that the local Evangelical Christians gathered around the issue of homosexuality and it was also the first time that they spelt out their anti-gay position in a systematic fashion, drawing on from medical, psychological, religious, traditional and moral perspectives. In the same month that the Alliance issued a position paper against decriminalization, the 11th issue of the *Family Life Education Review* also commented on it in sharp contrast to the alliance, which is quoted at length here:

In fact, from a social perspective, excluding, punishing or discriminating against homosexuals was a waste of national and social assets. Many renowned figures were homosexuals here and abroad, such as Tennessee Williams, E.M. Forster, J. Arden and Witman. Imagine that all of them were put in jail or received

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<sup>56</sup> The incident that triggered decriminalization was the death of John MacLennan. MacLennan was an inspector of the police force. As cases around that time disclosed some government officials of high rank were homosexuals, the Governor ordered that a “special investigation unit” be set up under the police to carry out what I call “gay cleansing”. The unit was charged with compiling a list of homosexual officials to be prosecuted if evidence was available. MacLennan, among others, was on the prosecution list. On the 3rd of January, 1980, the unit planned to arrest him in his work place but he did not report duty. Rather, MacLennan was found dead with five gunshots at home. Theories of conspiracy arose. Under the media pressure, the government appointed an independent committee, looking into the real cause for MacLennan’s death. On the other hand, the Coroner’s Court went through its legal proceedings as to judge whether his death was natural or not. Surprisingly, both found nothing suspicious. Nevertheless, in the ruling of the Coroner’s Court, it advised that the government follow the British legal reform in 1967 to decriminalize sex between consenting men. In response, the government asked the Law Reform Commission to study the possibility of decriminalization. A ten-year consultation was therefore started. See 周華山、趙文宗，《「衣櫃」性史》（香港：香港同志研究社，1995）。

<sup>57</sup> 各界關注同性戀法例聯合委員會，《同性戀透視》（香港：各界關注同性戀法例聯合委員會，1983）。



punishment, they could no longer realize their potentials. That would be a great loss to the majority.

Viewed from another perspective, homosexual orientation should not be a criterion that determines one's worth. A homosexual could be a person with absolute integrity, being altruistic, responsible, just and caring of the other. If he is only different from the majority in terms of his sexual orientation, should we despise and exclude him? What Arno Karlen said is worthy of consideration: 'I came to know quickly to give priority to human dignity. Whether s/he is a homosexual or heterosexual was less important.'<sup>58</sup>

In fact, the FPA was one of the 15 organizations which had responded to the consultation of the Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong on the decriminalization proposal. The other 77 consulted organizations did not reply.<sup>59</sup> Part of the letter sent by Peggy Lam, the Executive Director of the FPA, was reprinted in the appendix 8 (III) of the report where she wrote:

I feel that the law on homosexuality needs to be changed.

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<sup>58</sup> 「同性戀問題初探」，《家庭生活教育簡訊》11(1983): 3。(my translation)

<sup>59</sup> 香港法律改革委員會，《有關同性戀行為之法律研究報告書(論題二)》(香港：香港法律改革委員會，1983)，A71。

The term “abominable offence” seems best restricted to public activity of forcible nature, and not to behaviour carried out in private between consenting adults. In this way minors are still protected.<sup>60</sup>

Homosexuality was also one of the “social issues related to sexuality” that received individual coverage in the 1983 *Family Life Education Teacher’s Handbook*. It was indeed an expanded version of the earlier one written by Arthur Hinton with addition of discussions on the functions, changes and recent trends of the family, family roles & relationships and the human life cycle while the largest portion of the “family life education in school” was deleted possibly because its persuasive nature was no longer needed as sex/family life education had been incorporated into the Social Studies syllabus. Probably written with its target reader, i.e., teachers, in mind, the revised *Teachers’ Handbook* gave more emphasis on understanding homosexuality as “transient phase of adolescent self-discovery.”<sup>61</sup> It comforted teachers as well as parents who happened to read this handbook that it was normal for adolescents to explore sex with friends of the same sex. The intense identification and attachment to the same sex might well fade away as they grew up because they would eventually “[develop] into heterosexual love for a person of the opposite sex.”<sup>62</sup> By saying this, the FPA was somehow inclined to dismiss the reality that some young people would identify themselves as homosexuals and reserved the term to a minority of adults.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. There is a remark in the report that “The comments made by Mrs Lam are her own personal view and not that of the Association.” Nevertheless, hers should not have deviated too much from that of the FPA.

<sup>61</sup> The FPA, *Family Life Education Teachers’ Handbook* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1983), 95-98.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 97.

Insufficient and misleading as judged by today's standard,<sup>63</sup> its position was still unconventional in the light of the open confrontation between the evangelical churches and the government. More importantly, the FPA's limited though important interventions into the reform of the draconian homosexual law ran the risk of provoking strong opposition from the Christian groups and schools with which it had been collaborating. Its persistence and sympathetic attitude toward homosexuality in many of its publications throughout the 80s<sup>64</sup> seemed to have coincidentally complemented with the government's attempt to pass the amendment bill.<sup>65</sup> Although it might not have had so much influence on eradicating the deep-rooted homophobia,<sup>66</sup> what was more important to the government which inclined toward

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<sup>63</sup> As the scope of the study is limited to the period from the 50s to late 80s, it would be fair to the FPA to add a remark here that its position on homosexuality substantially changed after 2000. For example, under the auspices of the Equal Opportunities (Sexual Orientation) Funding Scheme administered by the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the FPA published a booklet *What If I am Not a Heterosexual* (《假如我不是異性戀》) in 2008. It represents a new benchmark of the FPA's view about homosexuality as it not only holds a sympathetic attitude, it also treats it as a normal sexuality in the continuum of human sexual behaviour. The booklet is divided into two parts. One part covers issues from coming out of the closet, dating to same-sex marriage. The other addresses common misunderstandings.

<sup>64</sup> For example, 《青春路上》(香港：香港家庭計劃指導會，1984)，40；《性教育小冊》(香港：香港家庭計劃指導會，1984)，61-68；

<sup>65</sup> Decriminalization was finally passed in the legislative council in 1991. However, it can by no means be understood as a big step toward a genuine recognition of lesbian and gay human rights. Rather, many councillors who voted for the amendment bill reiterated their position during the debate that homosexuality was immoral but considered in light of legal liberalism, the law should not intervene as it harms no others. Their voting attitude, they emphasized, should not be read as an approval of homosexuality. In that sense, the negative moral evaluation of homosexuality *per se* had not been changed. What made the councillors who distasted homosexuality vote in favor of decriminalization was a firmly held belief in the harm principle of liberalism, which functioned as a shield to keep their own moral preferences and religious, mostly Christian, views out of the issues pertinent to public interests and minority rights. It has to add that the age of consent for anal sex between men thereafter set at 21 was discriminatory. It was 5 years higher than that for vaginal intercourse. In 2005, a self-identified gay men at 18 sought judicial review and challenged the disparity on a constitutional ground. He won at the Court of First Instance and the Appeal Court which ruled that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is unlawful and unconstitutional. For the history of decriminalization, see 周華山、趙文宗，《「衣櫃」性史》(香港：香港同志研究社，1995).

<sup>66</sup> One of the indicators was the level of acceptance of homosexuality among young people. According to the *Working Report on Adolescent Sexuality Study 1986*, about 52% of young people aged between 14 and 18 against the statement that "It should not be legally wrong to practise male homosexual behaviour between two consenting adults." Only less than 25% said yes. (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1986), 112.

decriminalization was that respected social agencies such as the FPA also supported decriminalization.

The FPA's stance on homosexuality could be considered as a prelude to its increasing preoccupation with sexual issues and its effort in having the community at large recognize the fact that sex was important and had already permeated nearly every aspect of our life. To this end, the FPA organized a series of seminars spanning over the whole 80s. They were the Sexuality & Life Seminar (1984), the Sexuality & Morality Seminar (1985), the Youth Sexuality & Health Seminar (1987), the Sexuality & Media Seminar (1987) and the Sexuality & Marriage Seminar (1988). As the chairperson of the Education & Youth Sub-Committee, Mrs. Katherine Yau (邱何恩德), said in the preface in 1984, that the FPA chose sexuality as the theme of the seminar was because it was still an extremely sensitive issue that people declined to take seriously. In addition, she argued, having been heavily embellished by the media for boosting circulation, the truth of sexuality was something we could not know. In this sense, the series of seminars was a platform where speakers of diverse backgrounds and expertise spoke and exchanged views so as to increase the awareness of the general public about sexual values and issues. Judged by the speakers the FPA invited, the seminars were meant to facilitate true dialogue across different camps of sometimes antagonizing ideology. For instance, the the Sexuality & Marriage Seminar invited the Executive Director of Breakthrough, Choi Yuen-wan, who launched the campaign against decriminalization of homosexual acts to speak on "the changes of idea of sex in youth and the future of marriage" while Ng Man-lun (吳敏倫), president of the Hong Kong Sex Education Association, was a

respondent to Mr. Choi's talk. There was a heated debate between Choi and Ng as to what extent sex and marriage had been separated and how to evaluate its impact on the marriage institution.

The FPA's aggressiveness could be felt in its concerns about the taboo subject, i.e., homosexuality, and its role as a facilitator to stimulate public awareness and discussions of sexuality, its concern about the sexual need of the socially marginalized was also an indication of its broad conception of sexuality and willingness to be a pioneer. In October 1977, the FPA co-organized with the Hong Kong Association for Mentally Handicapped Children & Young Persons Ltd. a Seminar on Sex Education for the Handicapped, which Peggy Lam described as an "unexplored field".<sup>67</sup> The IPPF East & South Asia & Oceania Regional Office introduced Ms. Winifred Kempton, an expert in sex education for people with disabilities,<sup>68</sup> to the FPA. The seminar as the first of its kind was well attended with about 350 participants from schools of special education, social services organizations, medical professional bodies, Social Welfare Department and the Special Education Section of the Education Department. Kempton talked about why people with disabilities needed sex education and what were the goals of family life education targeted to them.<sup>69</sup> She also shared the rules for teaching and counselling.

Peggy Lam concluded the seminar by promising that "the Family Planning

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<sup>67</sup> Peggy Lam, "Preface," *Seminar on Sex Education for the Handicapped* (Hong Kong: The FPA and he Hong Kong Association for Mentally Handicapped Children & Young Persons Ltd, 1977), 1

<sup>68</sup> "Handicapped" is widely considered offensive. In what follows I will use "people with disabilities" to refer to them unless it is used in the source that I directly quote.

<sup>69</sup> Peggy Lam, "Preface," *Seminar on Sex Education for the Handicapped* (Hong Kong: The FPA and he Hong Kong Association for Mentally Handicapped Children & Young Persons Ltd, 1977), 8. The goals were (1) to enrich the lives of the students by cultivating self-esteem and relieving unnecessary anxiety, (2) to protect them from sexual exploitation and (3) to help them to be socially acceptable and live as a sexually responsible person.

Association of Hong Kong would act as a resource centre to answer questions on the issue and to provide references upon request.”<sup>70</sup>

The FPA did not pay lip service to Kempton and those in need but lived up to its promise. In 1979, it took the lead to liaise with the other 8 social services organizations and government departments to form a committee, initiating sex education for people with disabilities.<sup>71</sup> They co-organized a seminar and ran a 3-day programme to train social workers and teachers how to teach sex education to people with disabilities. The committee devised a set of teaching kits with slides, illustrations and dolls together with a teachers’ handbook. On top of it, the FPA started a clinics for people with disabilities, catering for their need of family planning. It also organized workshops for parents of people with disabilities. The FPA’s commitment originated from the demand for sex education from social services groups of people with disabilities. For example, on 5th March 1974, the family life education officer gave a talk to people with visual disability upon the request of the Hong Kong Society for the Blind. The problem they encountered was that the model of male reproductive organ the officer brought there was not prominent enough for them to feel the differences.<sup>72</sup> The demand drove the FPA to be receptive to the need of people with disabilities. With the help of the IPPF, Kempton’s visit to Hong Kong and her seminar in 1977 gave further impetus for the FPA to pursue developing education in this area. The 7th issue of the *Family Life*

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> They included the Hong Kong Association for Mentally Handicapped Children & Young Persons Ltd. with which the FPA co-organized the 1977 seminar, Caritas Hong Kong, the Education Committee of the Lutheran Church Hong Kong Synod, the Salvation Army, the Social Welfare Department, the Education Department, a primary school and a district organization at Tze Wan Shan.

<sup>72</sup> “Monthly report for March, 1974. Family Life Education Section,” on 4th April 1974, p.2.

*Education Review* of June 1981 ran a special feature on “People with disabilities and Sex Education”. It largely adapted Kempton’s views expressed in the seminar and discussed the joys and plight of marriage of people with disabilities so as to demystify the bias that they should avoid any sexual activities and intimacy. As to the goals of sex education for people with disabilities, it simply copied from Kempton’s. This is not only a case that shows the willingness of the FPA to pioneer the “unexplored field” but also its receptiveness to new ideas.

#### 6. Premarital Sex and the Limits of Sexual Conjugal Familism

Throughout the 80s, the FPA explored many sexual issues in its *Family Life Education Review*, vividly exemplifying its role as an expert on sexuality. Here is a table of the featured topics in selected issues:

Date of publication	Issue no.	Featured topic
June 1981	7	“People with disabilities and sex education” (「弱能人士與性教育」)
March 1982	8	“Sex education for primary and secondary school students” (「向中小學生推行性教育」)
June 1983	10	“The sexual problems of the youth” (「青年人的性困擾」)
September 1983	11	“An exploration of the homosexual problem” (「同性戀問題初探」)
December 1983	12	“The false facts of sex” (「性之訛傳誤說」)
March 1984	12	“Sex and Marriage” (「性愛與婚姻」)
September 1984	14	“Premarital sex of teen girls” (「少女的婚前性關係」)
March 1985	15	“How to prevent and respond to sexual harassment” (「怎樣預防及應付性騷擾」)
September 1986	17	“Family sex education” (「家庭性教育」)

Date of publication	Issue no.	Featured topic
May 1987	18	“Sex education at school” (「學校性教育」)
August 1987	19	“People with disabilities and sex” (「弱能人士與性」)
May 1988	21	“Sexual assault” (「性侵犯」)
July 1988	22	“Adolescents and sex” (「青少年與性」)
October 1988	23	“The sexual world in the eyes of the secondary school students” (「中學生眼中性的世界」)
September 1989	26	“The culture of pornography” (「色情文化」)
September 1990	27	“The elderly and sex” (「老人與性」)

The table is self-explanatory that in the 80s the FPA began to engage itself in a number of sexual issues that were apparently outside the scope of family planning and birth control. Their inclusion in the *Review* was in fact a manifestation of the very design of the Family Life Education which facilitated the FPA to step in the vibrant and diverse sexual arenas. Similar to homosexuality, it adopted an understanding attitude towards these issues. It is clear that, to the FPA, the best way to tackle sex-related social problems that modernization had brought was to subject them to frank and open discussions. And, in the process, the FPA assigned itself a role that imported, translated and delivered knowledge to the public and further consolidated its public image as an expert in the field of sexuality.

Progressive as it might sound, however, the FPA took a rather rigid position against premarital sex among teenagers. This time, the fear of another baby boom or rapid increase of population growth were not applicable at all because the crude birth rates



fell steadily from 16.8 in 1980 to 12.3 in 1989.<sup>73</sup> Although premarital sex among young people was becoming more common in the late 80s,<sup>74</sup> what worried the FPA most was not the rise in the unwanted pregnancies and abortion.<sup>75</sup> Instead, the FPA criticised young people for having premarital sex because they were confused about what true love was. An entire chapter of the booklet *To You Young People* (《給你年青人》) was about premarital sex. It wrote “What young people must understand is that love is not a short-lived sense of pleasure. True love should be lifelong and always be attentive to the other.”<sup>76</sup> It follows naturally that the FPA also opposed to cohabitation. It dismissed the common argument for cohabitation as a pre-marriage experiment in which both parties can evaluate and decide whether to fully enter into a marital relationship. For this, the FPA ran a rather sarcastic argument that “if a pair of lovers has to resort to cohabitation to test whether their individual way of living can really be compatible with each other, it means both of them lack in sincerity and

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<sup>73</sup> “Number of known births for different sexes and crude birth rate, 1961-2011,” Health Facts, HealthyHK, Department of Health, accessed 9th July 2013, [http://www.healthyhk.gov.hk/phishweb/en/healthy\\_facts/health\\_indicators/birth\\_rate/](http://www.healthyhk.gov.hk/phishweb/en/healthy_facts/health_indicators/birth_rate/).

<sup>74</sup> According the *Adolescent Sexuality Study*, about 19% and 26% of young women and men aged between 18 and 27 respectively had sexual intercourse with their partners during dating. And for those men who had sexual intercourse either with a partner in a dating, prostitute or wife (32.8% of all male respondents aged between 18 and 27), 52.2% had their first coital experience with partners during dating. It indicates that premarital sex was very common in young men. (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1986), 127-129. However, among teenagers from Form 3 to Form 6, the prevalence of premarital sex was only 2.6%, greatly lower than that of young adults. *A Study of Hong Kong School Youth: Report on Family Life Education Survey* (Hong Kong: The FPA, 1983), 122.

<sup>75</sup> Because of confidentiality, records of unmarried pregnancy are usually kept secret. It is difficult to have the whole picture. According to the 14th issue of the Family Life Education Review, it was estimated by the 1983 Population By-census that women aged between 14 and 19 numbered 246,900, whose crude birth rate was 12. The 1981 Population Census found that the mean age for women to get married was 24.4. It suggests that the 2,962.8 babies that the women between 14 and 19 born might likely be consequences of unmarried pregnancy. Among those who sought termination of pregnancy from the FPA from December 1981 to February 1982, about 60% of 126 service seekers were women aged between 17 and 27. 15% of them were under 17 years old. 「青年人的性困擾」，《家庭生活教育簡訊》10 (1983): 1.

<sup>76</sup> 香港家庭計劃指導會，《給你年青人》(香港：香港家庭計劃指導會，1977)，37。(my translation) 《性教育小冊》(香港：香港家庭計劃指導會，1984) was largely rewritten from 《給你年青人》，exemplifying the continuity of the FPA’s discourse on youth sexuality in general and premarital sex in particular.

discernment. It is because the very attitude of giving marriage a try suggests that both have doubt over living in a lifelong companionship and have not fully understood and trusted the other ... Could it be said that we have to cohabit with someone in order to know her/him better? How many people of the opposite sex do we have to cohabit with in a life?’<sup>77</sup> The FPA’s reasoning would only hold true if ordinary contacts were a true indicator of how well a pair of lovers could get along in marital life. Unfortunately, this was often not the case. The launch of the Family Life Education campaign by the Social Welfare Department in 1978 was itself a testimony to the increasing conflicts and disharmony in family and marriage. However, the FPA still stuck to its almost dogmatic and non-negotiable belief that pre-marital sex was bad. To make its point sharper and sound more convincing, the FPA even appealed to sexism that “Let’s put ourselves in another person’s shoes. If my girlfriend agrees to my sexual advances, or she deliberately asks for it, promising that everything would be alright because she is on the pill, frankly speaking, I would definitely find it disgusting unless I am a person who likes taking advantage of others. ‘Oh no! How many guys has she slept with? What kind of woman she is?’”<sup>78</sup> Such a sexist remark was in fact in line with the FPA’s view about the pill that it was restricted for married couples to limit their family size as well as to enjoy marital sex life in full without the fear of over-fertility. When the pill was used not in the way that the FPA prescribed, the FPA reacted severely in a moralizing and sexist tone.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>78</sup> 香港家庭計劃指導會，「預支婚姻生活值得嘗試嗎？」，《家庭生活教育文集》（香港：香港家庭計劃指導會，1981），69。（my translation）The original text is: 「我們設兒處地想想：假如我的女朋友答應我求歡的要求，或道自動投懷送抱，並一再保證不必担心，因為她是經常服食避孕丸的。老實說，我如果不是貪便宜之輩，一定覺得倒胃口：「老夫，她究竟和幾個人有過合體緣？這還算什麼女孩子？」

The genuine reason for the FPA's strong disapproval of premarital sex lay in the significance of sex that the FPA accorded to marriage. As I argue in the chapter 2, in developing the marriage guidance service in the 60s, the FPA incorporated the originally Christian but later secularized sexual conjugal familism. This idea took sex to be the most precious element and foundation of family/marriage duplex. According to the schema endorsed by this doctrine that classified different intimate relationships in a hierarchical order, lifelong companionship between a man and a woman in the form of marriage was placed at the top. Ideally speaking, it was sexual intercourse through which a couple was fused together into one for good. This religious flavor led to two apparently contradictory consequences. On the one hand, sex was exclusive to a married couple as a means to express their deepest intimacy and commitment. Therefore, sexual intercourse prior to or outside of marriage was rendered unwise and incompatible with the nature of love and sex which were considered two sides of a same coin. However, on the other hand, because sex was so precious that it had to be taken with great care and enriched with correct knowledge. It was under the protective coat of family/marriage duplex that the FPA was enabled to mediate between the two extremes of sexual conservatism and sexual libertarianism, and produced vast volumes of publications with frank and sometimes explicit discussions about sexuality.<sup>79</sup> As masturbation and homosexuality were not a perceived threat, at least understood by the FPA, to the family/marriage duplex, they were approached with acceptance and tolerance. However, the FPA's uncompromising view on premarital sex exposed the limits of sexual conjugal familism.

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<sup>79</sup> For detailed analysis, please refer to chapter 3.

## 7. Conclusion

The pill controversy was an incident that exposed an unusual conflict between the government and the FPA. In retrospect, it was probably a technical mistake that the Pharmacy and Poison Board might have overlooked. But the overwhelming support from the general public and the unofficial members of the Legislative Council that the FPA gained in opposition to the amendment bill was witness to the wide acceptance of the idea of family planning it had been advocating since 1950. Although there was a real conflict between the FPA and the government, it was by no means confrontational. With the help of the unofficial members, the FPA succeeded in urging the government to make concession but at the same time gave credit to it. It was apparent that the key to the FPA's success was its dual roles as an NGO and an agent of the government. As an NGO, the FPA advocated a social cause while as a government agent it was subvented to provide services that the government was not in best position to do. Such a symbiosis was of benefit to both parties in that the FPA secured its institutional basis and financial source while the government could take up part of the social services when they had already been widely accepted and expected little resistance. The launch of the family life education campaign by the Social Welfare Department was a case in point where the FPA laid a fertile ground for the government to step in the Chinese family and youth problems. In retrospect, the major co-optation of the FPA's work by the government, absorption of FPA's clinics to the MHC programme and the appropriation of family life education for example, further strengthened the FPA's institutional basis, financial income and

technological expertise on which to explore the many other new “unexplored fields” in the 80s. It was these advantages that materially enabled the FPA to embark upon issues of sexuality in general and sexual taboos in particular. Not only did the FPA’s production of sexual discourse enrich the understanding of sexuality in a broader sense, it also set an example of what a professional body could approach sexual issues of great social controversy.

## Epilogue

The study is a search for the formation of the Hong Kong sexual modernity from the 1950s to 1980s through the lens of the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, or the FPA for short. The FPA is not chosen simply because it has not received proper analysis on its own, though its absence is to some extent surprising when I was reviewing the existing literature on the Hong Kong colonial history of gender and sexuality. The FPA deserves a fuller treatment in that it was one of the engines propelling colonial Hong Kong towards a modern city. It is true that there were many other domains, for instance popular culture, education and the law, bringing about radical transformations on human relations, self-identity and the very organization of the social and the cultural. What is unique to the FPA is its identity as a voluntary group that actively engaged itself in making Hong Kong modern through our reproductive and sexual body.

### 1. From Reproductive Modernity to Sexual Modernity

In the early days, what the FPA envisioned was more likely reproductive modernity than sexual modernity as it was primarily preoccupied with over-fertility and its impact on women, children and the society at large. It provided services where women could consult with medical doctors or trained officers for advice on birth control. However, it did not limit itself to purely playing the role as a social service group but positioned itself as an organization that championed a particular social cause. Its uniqueness lies in its dual roles as the main discursive producer of family

planning *and* the largest supplier of contraceptives by which women who consulted it could really put the idea of limiting the size of family into practice. Unlike other advocacy groups, only the FPA could provide people with the technological means to *physically embody* its mission of modernizing the society through family planning. In this sense, the reproductive modernity that the FPA initially envisaged was one in which every family, equipped with the knowledge and the tools, learns to keep its size small, plan when to have children and space each birth at an appropriate interval.

To achieve this end, family planning entailed an intervention into the way people organize their sexual/reproductive life. The effect was that the more successful the FPA's birth control was, the more free-floating the sexual body could be. With the availability of cheap but effective contraceptives, the sexual body was increasingly freed from its naturalized reproductive aims and functions and transformed into a relatively discrete domain where it was more malleable and plastic. Although sexualization of the body in popular culture, for instance, contributed in part to the process of transformation, whether one could access contraceptives and acquire the knowledge of family planning seemed to be absolutely decisive. Perhaps, it was an unintended but more or less inevitable consequence that the FPA had not thought of when it commenced its work. The reproductive modernity that it helped achieve by having family planning widely known and practiced across the colony called for the emergence of sexual modernity, in which sex was detached from its biological functions and came to be an attribute by which we identified ourselves, related to others and organized our experience.

## 2. Sex Endowed with a New Utility

To the FPA, the sexual body that was disembedded from its reproductive fixity could and should be channeled to a *proper place* and *proper use* by subjecting it to reflexive planning in light of new knowledge in the same manner it did to the reproductive body. The place that the FPA deemed appropriate to contain the newly emerged sexual body was monogamous marriage/family. However, as sex and reproduction were gradually delinked with the use of contraceptives, diverting the sexual body back to the reproduction-oriented marriage/family would be of no avail. Seen in this light, marriage/family had to undergo an extensive renovation if it was to house the sexual body. The extensive adoption and translation of David Mace's works that re-valORIZED sex in marriage/family proved to be useful to the FPA. Instead of outright prohibition or turning a blind eye to it, sex was managed by being bestowed with a new utility which is an emotional bond of married couples. Following Mace's model, the FPA set up its first marriage guidance counselling services in 1958 and published dozens of books and pamphlets which entirely espoused Mace's conception of "happy family". At first glance, the expansion of the FPA's service to married couples seemed to be a natural outgrowth of its existing family planning programme in an attempt to intervene into the reproductive choices and behaviour of the newly wedded or those planning to get married. However, judged by the contents of the marriage guidance counselling programme and its publications, its intent was clearly more than curbing population growth. By incorporating Mace's works, the FPA came to recognize and above all, had the general public recognize the importance of sex to the success of marital life and all



human relations. Issues of (over)fertility were thus gradually subsumed under the new banner: happy marriage/family. It is one of the significant transitions of the FPA because not only was it aware of the sexual dimension of reproductive modernity but also obliged to address the malleable sexual body that it had interpellated into existence.

As I have argued in the chapter 2, Mace is important to this transition. His works tried to replace the negative view of sex dominant in mainstream Christian belief with a positive one. To him, sex is less portrayed as a necessary devil to be contained within monogamous marriage and only preserved for procreation. Rather, sex is valorized and glorified as a gift that can emotionally bond married couples. By secularizing the Christian belief in monogamy, Mace advances an appealing position in non-religious terms that for the sake of a happy family/marriage, sex is like many other skills, affects and knowledge that require exploration, cultivation and practice. The motif of reflexive planning in light of knowledge in Mace's works coincided with the FPA's discourse of family planning, making Mace's philosophy transferable to the FPA. In effect, the valorization of sex in monogamous familial relationships, or what I term the sexual conjugal familism, offered the FPA a protective coat. Under the cost, the FPA could encourage more open and frank discussions about sex and introduce new sexual knowledge to the public while still holding on to its primary concern with adult married couples. In other words, confining sex talk within conjugal family relations was a risk-minimizing tactic of the FPA when it was still struggling to gain a secured institutional and social position.

### 3. A Collaborative Sexual Modernity

As a cultural intermediary, the FPA could not have brought about such a massive reproductive/sexual transformation on its own. While the FPA lacked a leader as charismatic as Margaret Sanger, it could still enlist government support and public recognition. Its success was largely attributed to its elite background and structural formality since its reconstitution in 1950 that attracted the like-minded, mostly expatriates and professionals, to join the cause. Its clearly defined objectives of eliminating the plight of overpopulation and disseminating family planning knowledge in its early days helped it to stay focused on its mission throughout its 63 years of history. Although one or two committee members, for example Ellen Li and Arthur Hinton, were more widely known, the FPA often worked as a collective. All of these gained it a respectable public persona.

The success of the FPA is partly because of its cooperative team work and partly because of the government support. Along its development, it received the government's blessing in terms of financial support and institutional backing. However, the government's motive was not as straightforward as that of the FPA. When the government came to admit the seriousness of overpopulation in the mid-50s, the FPA started to be subvented. The reasons for designating the FPA as the primary voluntary agent to carry out population control was threefold: firstly, the FPA had been working in the field of family planning before and after the war. With its expertise in scientific knowledge and technology as contrasted with the CMAC, trained human resources and good international connections with other family

planning organizations, it was unwise for the government to take over it; secondly, it was not until the 1970s that the government was responsive to the provision of social welfare. Subventing a voluntary groups without direct participation in provision of social services went in line with the colonial hands-off social welfare policy; thirdly, there was a perceived, though later found to be minimal, resistance from the local Roman Catholic Church and Chinese people. In order not to upset the Church which volunteered itself to provide many social services as such education and medical care, and not to provoke the resentment of the indigenous Chinese community which might be accidentally escalated into a full-blown hostility to colonial rule, the government refrained itself from intervening into individual private reproductive/sexual life. It was very likely that subventing the FPA was also a risk-minimizing tactic of the government whose vigilance was in part due to its recognition of the regulatory impact on sexual life that any population control would imply. It was out of these considerations that the government built a not-so-explicit collaborative relationship with the FPA. Similar to what Foucault suggests in *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, population control is a form of practice that administers sex for a utilitarian goal.<sup>1</sup> But it had to be done so through an *agent* for the colonial Hong Kong government. By so doing, what sexual knowledge was to be imported and produced, and in what way they were disseminated was handed on to the FPA. Therefore, the making of sexual modernity was of collaborative nature.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol.1* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Law Wing-sang, *Collaborative Colonial Power: The Making of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong: Hong University Press, 2009)

Seen in this light, the colonial state as reflected in the practice of the colonial Hong Kong government is a fractured one. It should not be conceptualized as a monolithic bloc but an assemblage of competing and conflicting entities at the inter- as well as intra-departmental levels. And the way that the colonial power was exercised was not that straight-forward. Its instructions were often weighed against the interests of Hong Kong by the Hong Kong government which was supposed to be representative of the British Government's sovereignty and interests. It seems, at least within the field of population policy, the colonial power was not solely concentrated in the two governments. Their governance of Hong Kong was interrupted at one time but facilitated at another time by elites with an overall effect of forming a mutually dependent power nexus. In this sense, the FPA was surely a beneficiary.

With the financial and institutional bases secured by way of collaboration, the FPA was allowed to reach hundreds of thousands of women and greatly scaled up its propaganda. The idea that family/marriage has to be reflexively planned and organized in light of scientific knowledge was widespread over the colony. So were the contraceptive devices widely practiced. Although there is no consensus among academics as to whether the work of the FPA or industrialization was the major force that brought down the rate of population growth, it is more likely that the two were not in a unilineal relation but of functional interdependence as Wong Fai-ming succinctly argues.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, industrialization created a social condition favourable to conjugal/nuclear family while on the other, the change in family

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<sup>3</sup> Wong Fai-ming, "Industrialization and Family Structure in Hong Kong," in *Journal of Marriage and Family* 37(1975): 986.

structure that was partly initiated by the FPA's work on family planning provided industrialization with its labour power and mentality.

However, the ambiguity of how effective the FPA's work was did not weaken the bases that the government conferred it probably because the government would not risk losing control of the population growth when the economy showed signs of prosperity. However, the threat of another baby boom was not strong enough to have the government deviate from its indirect participation in family planning. For this, as the chapter 1 has shown, the FPA deliberately invited high-handed intervention from the British government through its administrative as well as personal levels. It is evident that having built a network with people in powerful positions, the FPA as an elite-led organization was skillful in pursuing its agenda by tactfully exploiting formal as well as informal institutional channels. Such a tactic of detour was repeatedly seen throughout the 60s and the 70s.

With the pressure from within and without, the government finally agreed to adopt a territory-wide population policy, incorporating about 30 FPA's clinics into its Maternal and Child Health programme, sparing the FPA more resources to develop new areas of work. At first glance, the rationale for the adoption of population policy was chiefly economic, i.e. overpopulation would drain off the resources for improving living standard. However, it is a historic moment that the government officially recognized the convergence of the impetus for economic growth and the impetus for modernizing family/marriage by way of family planning.

After the government announced an official position on population policy, the FPA shifted its work to a new terrain. In the chapter 3, I traced the historical development of the FPA's Family Life Education programme and examined its discourse on youth sexuality. Originally, the FPA shared with other concern groups about the adverse influence of pornography on young people. However, the FPA was less concerned about legal censorship. In response to the budding youth sexuality, it resorted to knowledge as exactly what it did when confronted with overpopulation. In the late 60s, it continued playing the role of a cultural intermediary, translating and importing new knowledge for local use. The introduction of the Family Life Education programme from the International Planned Parenthood Federation inaugurated a new perception of youth sexuality. Young people, together with married couples, were recognized as *sexual beings* under the framework of Family Life Education. It not only prefigured another transition of the FPA's emphasis from population problem to youth sexuality but also epitomized a generalized anxiety about an increasingly sexualized social landscape. The FPA's pioneering work on Family Life Education linked youth sexuality with the future. In this sense, the sexual development of young people was juxtaposed with the development of a modern society. Again, silencing sex was clearly not an option. Rather, the FPA incited a discursive explosion about youth sexuality. With the framework of developmental psychology, the period of growing up was named adolescence and was compartmentalized into different stages with different developmental tasks. The pioneering work of the FPA's Family Life Education inaugurated a trend of speaking of sex frankly and openly.

By examining the contraceptive pill controversy in the chapter 4, I showed that the Hong Kong government and the FPA were sometimes in a symbiotic relationship and at other time in a more antagonizing one. The privileged position of the FPA in the making of Hong Kong sexual modernity rested on its ability to strike a balance between the dual roles as a non-governmental organization monitoring the government and a government subvented semi-official agent providing sex/family planning education as well as services. The FPA's success and its contribution to the making of sexual modernity were substantially based upon the government's bestowal of institutional basis while the government had to heavily rely on the FPA to help it control the population growth and pave the way for the introduction of sex education at school. The appropriation of the FPA's Family Life Education by the government into its own initiative in 1978 that carried exactly the same name (i.e., Family Life Education campaign) testifies to the delicate collaboration between the FPA and the government. In fact, the government not only duplicated the FPA's programme both in terms of its content and modes of delivery, but also put it into a new social and political use. The FPA did not resent this but was co-opted into the steering committee of the government family life education campaign. Clearly, the discourse of the FPA in relation to sex, family and the youth produced in the previous two decades laid a fertile ground for the government to exploit politically.

As hinted above, the colonial power is fractured by different social players. Besides the FPA, the Catholic Church was also influential in the development of population policy. Its significance is more indirect than is often assumed. Although it seems to be a buttress against the FPA's cause, it is also a necessary player without which the

FPA could have not gained so much. Of significant is the Church's tactic which did not oppose to family planning *per se* but artificial contraception. It therefore developed its own family planning services in the form of the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council (CMAC) whose suggested contraception method is compatible with its moral teaching. The Church decided to respond to the FPA not by condemning the immorality of artificial contraception but providing an alternative. By so doing, the idea of family planning was given further weight. Although the FPA and the CMAC sought for government financial resources, they were not in a strictly competitive relation because one's gains did not mean the other's loss. The "collaborated" competition between them pushed the government to a point of no return to take up the responsibility of providing family planning services. And, it is also the Catholic Church to be the first to implement sex education at school, making the FPA, the latecomer to the scene, be more readily accepted. In light of this, the perceived conservativeness of the Catholic Church has to be rethought and its often unintended effects have to be given more attention. So are the competing as well as complementary discourses in relation to sexuality, family, gender and work prior to and concurrently circulating in the 60s and 70s.



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