

Celebrating Queen Victoria in the Colonial City: The Diamond Jubilee in Hong Kong and Cape Town

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Abstract

Richard Morris – ‘Celebrating Queen Victoria in the Colonial City: The Diamond Jubilee in Hong Kong and Cape Town’

The 1897 Diamond Jubilee was a truly global celebration, breaking out across the wide expanses of the British Empire in a near simultaneous fashion. Yet these local events were not identical across the world. Using the local coverage of the celebrations that took place in Hong Kong and Cape Town, two of the empire’s most rapidly growing and significant port cities, this thesis uses the comparative method of analysis to uncover the nuances, similarities and discrepancies within them. This approach allows light to shine away from the focus of the festivities – Queen Victoria – and to be brought to bear more directly onto the locations and celebrants themselves. This thesis considers the socio-political and economic background to the events and examines whether these issues had any bearing on how the celebrations were performed and received. It also seeks to examine the subject of empire loyalty within these two cities, and the extent to which genuine levels of affection held towards the queen could be found. Whilst it is apparent that the celebrations were largely well-attended, and general levels of public engagement with the event appeared to be high, the arguments of this thesis take issue with the facile verdict, voiced by colonial institutions at the time, that active participation and attendance at the event was proof enough of its popularity. Instead, this work considers the different motivations that may have lay behind attendance at the festivities and also considers the various representations of Britishness that were also projected during the celebrations. In the final chapter, the Diamond Jubilee is considered in relation to the histories and identities of the two cities in which these celebrations took place.

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INTRODUCTION

On 22nd June, 1897, inhabitants of settlements large and small across the vast expanses of the British Empire saluted the achievement of Queen Victoria in completing the sixtieth year of her reign. Whilst the focus of the festivities remained on London, the imperial capital, where the aged monarch processed through the city's streets and attended an open air service of thanksgiving on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral, local events took place across an empire that was becoming increasingly interconnected. When Queen Victoria responded to the countless messages of congratulations and gifts she had received by addressing a short message to the inhabitants of her empire, her words were transmitted from Buckingham Palace to the farthest corners of her realm within minutes via an extremely complex and lengthy British cable network that now spread its tentacles throughout the globe and was at the pinnacle of technological innovation.¹ Two of the major imperial outposts that received the queen's message were the cities of Hong Kong and Cape Town. Despite the enormous distances that separated them from the epicentre of the celebrations in London, both these cities were similarly *en fête*, with the streets festooned with flags and bunting, residents and visitors taking in celebratory concerts, exhibitions and performances, and the queen's milestone being marked in a most conspicuous, and seemingly, enthusiastic fashion.

Located thousands of miles to the east of London, situated on the border of a great, yet decaying, Chinese empire, the Crown Colony of Hong Kong strove to create a spectacle that would rival all others seen in the relatively brief history of this city. The great natural harbour, which had been responsible for the initial annexation of this area by the British in 1841, played an important role in the celebrations. Looking out across it from the newly-reclaimed Praya would be to witness large numbers of visiting warships and merchantmen, resplendent in bunting and lights, moored among the opium hulks, Chinese junks and smaller craft that were a permanent fixture in these waters. In the City of Victoria itself, tens of thousands of visitors from the Chinese mainland had arrived

¹ J. Morris, *The Spectacle of Empire: Style, Effect and the Pax Britannica* (London, 1982), pp. 116 – 7.

especially to witness this event, and their presence further added to the seething mass of humanity that packed the streets of this densely populated settlement. All elements of the city's society appeared to have embraced the celebrations and the grand colonial elite followed an official programme of festivities which incorporated celebratory dinners, the laying of foundations stones and attendance at the various cultural, sporting, religious and martial events that lauded the Record Reign. The celebrations would have appeared to have provoked enthusiasm from across the community, with both Chinese and foreign residents financing, attending and participating in the events. So great was the range and strength of this participation that an onlooker would surely have been moved to wonder how Queen Victoria, who had never come close to setting foot in the outer reaches of her realm, had been able to achieve such a level of popularity. If contributing to the spectacle was indeed proof of empire loyalty, then the Hong Kong celebrations would surely have given considerable credibility to the concept of the imperial family and the Great White Queen.

Whilst many people would have primarily taken the jubilee event as an opportunity for relaxation and amusement – by attending Chinese flower shows, exhibitions of artefacts, plays and concerts, or by simply walking around and taking in the scene – there were also a large number of residents who were working that day and doing their utmost to cash in on the popularity of the occasion. Therefore, among the celebrants, tourists and passers-by, would be visible the hawkers of curios and knick-knacks, the rickshaw drivers, the pickpockets, the soothsayers, the street food vendors and others who saw this event as a great opportunity to ply their trade. No doubt the shops, bakeries, brothels, hotels and restaurants also did a roaring business at this time, and the event would certainly have provided the local economy with a considerable shot in the arm. However, such a scene had become a relatively common sight in Hong Kong, for not only had the city hosted a couple of Golden Jubilees in recent years – to celebrate both that of Queen Victoria and the date of its own foundation – but Chinese religious and cultural festivals also drew in large crowds from afar and caused the city to be similarly energised and decorated. However, the array of colour, noise and activity that would have greeted a Diamond Jubilee visitor would surely have been spectacular to behold.

Those who spent the celebratory period of the Diamond Jubilee in the city of Hong Kong would surely remember the event there for a long time to come.

A similar scene was simultaneously taking place at the foot of Africa, in the city of Cape Town. Here, bunting and triumphal arches also decorated streets that thronged with people from near and far. Residents of all colours and socio-economic backgrounds mixed with tourists from the suburban areas and beyond, many of whom had been brought to the city along new railway lines that owed their recent proliferation to the region's new mineral wealth. Other visitors present in the city during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations would have travelled from further afield, finding their way to Cape Town along famous maritime transportation routes that marked out the city as a vital node in global trade. Some of these might have had Cape Town as their final destination; some might have been *en route* to the diamond fields of Kimberley or the great golden reefs of Transvaal; others might have been simply stopping off at Cape Town on their travels between Europe and Asia. If the celebrations in Hong Kong were attended by a predominantly Chinese population, then the scene at Cape Town was more noticeable for its cosmopolitan mix. If any place was capable of displaying the great ethnic diversity of the British Empire then this was it. Again, colonial officials bustled around with an air of self-importance, fulfilling the various rituals that comprised these great ceremonial events. Again, the noise of warships' guns, fired in tribute to the occasion, rent the air as the programme of parties, processions, concerts and military tattoos took place.

As in Hong Kong, the people and governing authorities of Cape Town provided a memorable and extravagant spectacle. As far as both these cities were from London, neither place shirked the opportunity to celebrate the queen's exceptional achievement. This thesis aims to make further sense of these celebrations and questions what might have motivated such an impressive response to this imperial event by each city's inhabitants. It seeks to understand why so many people, of different races and walks of life, thronged the streets of these cities to participate in and spectate upon both the official programme of events, which had been drawn up by committees comprising the

colonial elite, and the more homemade efforts of local communities and individuals to mark the occasion. It also seeks to understand whether the popularity of the celebrations can inform historians on the popularity of both Queen Victoria and the imperial project as a whole in the overseas colonies. Finally, it also seeks to analyse what the impact of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations was on the host cities themselves – whether the event’s relevance disappeared for good when the final piece of bunting was swept aside, or whether it left a series of memories and physical commemorations that left its mark for many years hence.

The Diamond Jubilee celebrations were among the most famous events of the late Victorian era. Therefore, as one would therefore expect, it has not been neglected by historians and discussion of the event features in a large number of publications.² However, although the great procession through London, replete with exotic personnel from all corners of the empire, has been well documented and commented upon, and a detailed study has been produced of the celebrations which took place in Cambridge, there appears to be a scarcity of research into how the event actually manifested itself in the cities of the overseas empire.³ This thesis attempts to make a contribution towards the filling-in of this gap through its analysis of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations that took place in Hong Kong and Cape Town. Among the subjects under investigation are how the non-British subjects of the queen reacted to the Diamond Jubilee, how the expatriate British communities located there interpreted and regarded the event and how the celebrations can be placed in the context of the host cities.

In her summary of the long-term effects that the Diamond Jubilee had on imperialist sentiment in London and on future political developments, Jan Morris voiced significant reservations on its impact, arguing that the celebrations were ‘mostly froth, whipped up

² The most comprehensive description of the Diamond Jubilee that I encountered is J. Morris, *Pax Britannica: the climax of an empire* (London, rev. ed., 2012). However, the event has received significant coverage in other publications, including J. Andrews, ‘The Imperial Style: Rhetorical Depiction and Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee’, *Western Journal of Communication*, vol. 64, no. 1 (2000), pp. 53 – 77, G. King, *Twilight of Splendour: the court of Queen Victoria during her Diamond Jubilee year* (Hoboken, NJ, 2007) and D. Judd, ‘Diamonds are forever: Kipling’s imperialism.’ *History Today*, vol. 47, no. 6 (1997), found at <http://www.historytoday.com> [Accessed 30th September, 2013].

³ E. Hammerton and D. Cannadine, ‘Conflict and Consensus on a Ceremonial Occasion: The Diamond Jubilee in Cambridge in 1897’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1981), pp. 111 – 146.

for the occasion by Press and politicians.’⁴ Her conclusion is reminiscent of the words of Fernand Braudel, who asserted that community celebrations and events such as the Diamond Jubilee should be considered poor source material by anyone wishing to gain an accurate picture of the past. In his view, the performances witnessed constructed a facade that was more likely to mislead social commentators and historians than to inform them; he argued that the intrinsic nature of the celebratory event ‘blinds the eyes of contemporaries with clouds of smoke; but it does not endure, and its flame is hardly visible.’⁵ However, whilst it is possible to look at any particular celebration and readily draw up this same conclusion due to the inherently ephemeral and exceptional nature of the proceedings, interesting and useful analysis can be gleaned from these events if sufficient knowledge and attention is directed towards the task. Therefore, prior knowledge of the community and personalities under analysis is also a vital pre-requisite to the forming of an accurate investigation.⁶ Whilst any attempt to analyse this type of subject matter remains a challenge, it is possible to peer through the clouds of smoke and to analyse the matters of substance that lie within.

The study of an event can become significantly more fruitful when one compares and contrasts the same celebrations in different locations. The use of the comparative method is a vital tool for the historian in these circumstances, allowing discrepancies between particular events to be brought to light and drawing attention to local behaviour that might otherwise have gone undetected. The intrinsic nature of an event – which takes place over a relatively short timeframe – also creates a situation that is further conducive to the employment of the comparative method. By studying the Diamond Jubilee celebrations that took place in two cities rather than in one, this analysis is aided and improved significantly. Therefore, although important caveats have to be borne in mind throughout the process, and it is admittedly often difficult or impossible to determine the

⁴ Morris, *Pax Britannica*, p. 441.

⁵ F. Braudel, ‘History and the Social Sciences’, reproduced in A. Budd (ed.), *The Modern Historiographical Reader* (Abingdon, 2009), p. 252.

⁶ D. Cannadine, ‘The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the “Invention of Tradition”, c. 1820 – 1977’, in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 104 – 5.

innermost thoughts of performers and spectators, a study of important and influential events should certainly not be written off as being a worthless exercise for a historian.

Cape Town and Hong Kong are two highly interesting and relevant case studies. Both cities were alike in being prominent and vital links within the network of the British Empire and both were home to diverse and multi-ethnic populations. In common with other port cities they were a melting pot of indigenous and extraneous cultures.⁷ Hong Kong and Cape Town were also colonial cities in which the British contingent constituted a minority of the population.⁸ Although a study of the celebrations held within two landlocked or more British-dominated cities within the empire might have been equally valid, the fact that both Hong Kong and Cape Town are the sites of such important meeting points between conflicting cultures is what makes them such interesting, although challenging, case studies.

In addition, the Diamond Jubilee took place during a time of intense challenge as governing authorities tried to cope with serious questions that were posed as a result of rapid urbanisation, the unprecedented growth of their resident population, threats to the cities' levels of public health and a fractious and uncertain political situation. Although any two locations within the queen's overseas possessions could theoretically have provided an opportunity for a comparative analysis of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, Hong Kong and Cape Town were also chosen because of the significance of the challenges that both cities faced at this time. Across the empire, the 1890s was a decade in which British hegemonic status was beginning to visibly wane. However, few regions gave the colonial authorities more cause for alarm than South Africa and southern China. Located in between the Jameson Raid and the outbreak of the Second Boer War, the Diamond Jubilee events in Cape Town were performed in the midst of a febrile political atmosphere. In Hong Kong, concerns were being expressed over the

⁷ F. Broeze, 'Introduction: Brides of the Sea', in F. Broeze (ed.), *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th to the 20th Centuries* (Honolulu, 1989), p. 26.

⁸ Although I am mindful of the wide-ranging interpretation of Britishness that allowed individuals from outside the geographical area of Great Britain to identify themselves as British at this time – and this will be discussed in Chapter Four – I use the term 'British' throughout this thesis in the narrow nationalistic sense – i.e. people who derive from the islands of Great Britain – unless otherwise stated.

manoeuvrings of fellow foreign powers, anxious to gain advantage from the clear decay of the Chinese Empire. In both cities, the large number of imperial troops that were garrisoned there provided proof of an increase in political tension in the region. This tension was also replicated in the communities of these two cities, where social harmony was undermined by long-standing disputes and the presence of racial discrimination. Whilst an argument can be made for analysing any two locations which laid on festivities for the Diamond Jubilee, I argue that the celebrations in Hong Kong and Cape Town present appropriate and particularly interesting case studies.

I. Research Aims

This analysis of the Diamond Jubilee celebration in Hong Kong and Cape Town aims to examine the following key questions:

1. What was the socio-political and economic background to the celebrations in each city? How had each city evolved over the previous years leading up to the event? What were the deeper structural changes that impacted on life in these cities at this time?
2. What was the state of community relations within each city on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee? Were there issues that threatened to compromise levels of support for the event and might some communities be less likely to offer their support than others?
3. What was the reaction of non-Britons towards the Diamond Jubilee? Did their participation appear to be affected by any of the grievances discussed in the previous chapter? Was there evidence of genuine levels of affection held towards the queen? If the event was well-attended and celebrated, to what extent can this be seen as an indication of empire loyalty?

4. How did the British populations in these cities engage with the event? How did they interpret Britishness during the celebrations? Did other national and ethnic groups attempt to appropriate Britishness for themselves during the celebrations and how successful was this?
5. What was the significance of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations for the city in which they took place? To what extent was a specific celebration of the city included in the event's narrative? How did both cities commemorate the event and what was the rationale behind the choice of their legacy projects?

II. Methodology

Much of the primary source information consulted in the making of this thesis is press coverage of the Diamond Jubilee events from newspapers from Britain, Hong Kong and Cape Town, and throughout the wider geographical area that these two cities were part of. The newspapers consulted are exclusively English language ones – and the lack of contribution from publications written in a different language is a significant handicap to understanding the events more comprehensively. There were a few occasions during the jubilee celebrations where the words of non-English language newspapers, such as the Afrikaans publications *Het Dagblad* and *Ons Land* in Cape Town and the Cantonese newspaper *Chung Ngoi San Po*, were reproduced, translated and published by their English-speaking contemporaries, but these appearances were sporadic, highly selective and largely inconclusive. One major step that could be made towards improving the quality and range of the analysis present in this thesis, particularly in regard to the sections that discussed the question of empire loyalty among the cities' non-Anglophone residents, would be to incorporate more non-English language source material. In his article on the 1884 riots that took place in Hong Kong during the Sino-French War, Lewis Chere also argued that a firm understanding of the motives of the Chinese participants in these events was needed in order to produce a more satisfactory body of evidence. In his view, what needed to be consulted was 'Chinese language newspapers, the records of the court proceedings against the native newspapers and rioters, and

whatever private records, diaries or papers which might have survived from that time.’⁹ This argument also applies to the Diamond Jubilee events, in Cape Town as well as in Hong Kong. The incorporation of any foreign language information in connection with the jubilee celebrations into the body of primary source material under consideration would doubtless have enhanced the potential for a sounder and more complete analysis of the event to have been delivered.

However, the English-speaking press do produce a valid, if occasionally jaundiced, account of what transpired in the two cities during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Many of the most prominent Hong Kong and Cape Town newspapers of the period have survived and a satisfactory number of their editions that cover the jubilee can be read at the British Library. Whilst some Afrikaans language titles can also be accessed in this way, it is unconfirmed that many other relevant foreign language publications from this very specific period have also survived. Therefore, it is possible that even a researcher who possessed a command of all the languages that could be found in these two cities might discover that the English language material was the most prevalent and the most comprehensive authority on these celebrations. Furthermore, although the exclusive use of this material has its obvious shortcomings in terms of perspective and institutional bias, it may be the case that the range of primary source information that has survived is limited. If so, any researcher of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations that took place in these cities may also have to navigate through these English languages sources as best as possible.

That said, it should not be assumed that the English-speaking press in these cities presented a uniformity and consistency of opinion in their reports. Although the bulk of their journalistic output can be characterised as being tailored to the traditional colonial views that abounded in the queen’s overseas possessions, occasionally a surprisingly unguarded, rebellious or provocative comment could find its way into the coverage and offer a new perspective to the reader. This phenomenon was also discussed by Chere

⁹ L. Chere, ‘The Hong Kong riots of October 1884: Evidence for Chinese Nationalism?’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch*, vol. 20 (1980), p. 56.

who, whilst he acknowledged the inherent drawbacks associated with using English material to gain an appreciation of Chinese motives, nevertheless claimed that occasional moments of valuable insight could be gleaned from their pages:

Unfortunately the English press in Hong Kong, because of the prejudices of the reading public for which it was produced, is not a very good source of information about the Chinese community in the Colony. Many of the reports in the English press were coloured by the prevailing attitudes of the European community toward the Chinese. However, this prejudice makes it just that much more important when the papers depart from those attitudes because that departure should indicate that something had occurred to alter the opinions of the reporters.¹⁰

The most interesting contributions of the English-speaking press to this analysis occurred when the coverage offered a comment or an angle of reporting that appeared to be incompatible with the mainstream opinions of the British expatriate communities at the time. The presence of these illuminating snippets of text show that, whilst it would indeed be the ideal scenario to be able to consult a wide range of foreign language newspapers, it would be wrong to consider the English language publications to be inherently compromised in their outlook and, therefore, inherently poor source material.

It is also fitting that newspaper coverage contributes an important part of the source material for this thesis as the royal jubilees were largely the creation of this particular industry. Beginning with the inaugural British royal jubilee event in 1809, newspapers had been the principal drivers of the celebrations – competing with each other in the amount of coverage and information that they could provide to their readerships. Linda Colley argues that the establishment of royal jubilee celebrations was ‘a remarkable tribute to the activism of the press’ and that the newspapers ‘served to heighten anticipation of the event by printing readers’ suggestions and emotive editorials, as well as mayoral notices about Jubilee meetings, advertisements for Jubilee souvenirs and details of subscriptions, procession routes and bean-feasts.’¹¹ As so much of the narrative surrounding the Diamond Jubilee celebrations that took place in Hong Kong

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹¹ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 – 1837* (New Haven, CT, 5th ed., 2014), p. 226.

and Cape Town was engineered by the cities' English language newspapers, their coverage has to form the principal source of primary material for any serious analysis of this event.

In addition to contemporary newspaper coverage, government documents have also made a significant contribution to this study. Although relevant information has been located and read in archives located in the cities of Hong Kong and Cape Town themselves, the majority of the relevant material encountered is housed at the National Archives in London. Whilst expansive accounts of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations are not included in the Colonial Office despatches of the relevant period, this source material was a valuable aid in gaining an understanding of the development and severity of important issues at the time – such as the troop build-up in South Africa around the time of the Diamond Jubilee and the visitation of Bubonic Plague to Hong Kong in 1894. Although the formal and understated language of civil servants and government ministers at the time can present a barrier to forming a visceral understanding of these issues, these documents – which, of course, would have been confidential and outside the knowledge of the general public – were consistently useful and informative. Although one has to make sufficient allowances for the working conditions, gaps in knowledge and institutionalised mindsets that produced these documents, as is the case with all research material, this study has benefitted from the fact that this material is now declassified and available.

Colonial Office documents that were relevant to Hong Kong proved easy to obtain because, due to its Crown Colony status, a large amount of information devoted to the administration of it habitually went back and forth between Government House and Whitehall. Gaining specific information on the city of Cape Town from this archive proved to be more of a challenge, as the correspondence was concerned with the administration of the entire Cape Colony. So frustrating was the lack of specific information on Cape Town at times that it was considered whether focussing on another Crown Colony – such as Gibraltar or Bermuda – may not have been a more practical option. However, some useful information was found in the Western Cape Archives and

Records Service archive on Roeland Street, Cape Town. As the city's Diamond Jubilee celebrations were organised at the municipal rather than at the colonial level, it was in Cape Town's municipal archives that more relevant information could be found. In Hong Kong, there was no such distinction – the colonial government was also the municipal government. The presence of census information for both cities in surviving documents was an additional assistance in the construction of this analysis.

A third significant source of primary material that was located and used in this analysis is the photographic records that exist of the two Diamond Jubilee events. With the contemporary newspaper coverage of the celebrations not being able to provide any images, presumably due to the technological and financial challenges involved in doing so, a researcher looking for such material would be indebted to the work of early amateur photography enthusiasts. The efforts of Dr Juritz in securing clear and insightful images from the Cape Town celebrations, all of which can be viewed at the Western Cape Archives and Records Service archive, are particularly valued. The presence of these images among the relevant source material for this project provided an interesting and additional dynamic to the analytical process. Similar shots, taken during the Diamond Jubilee procession in London, also offered a genuine memento of the proceedings. These amateur photographs presented a more authentic vision of the celebrations in comparison to the compilations that were published by professionals such as R. C. Hurley. Although his photographic record of the celebrations in Hong Kong does present a strong visual image of the city at the time, such publications were often influenced by a political agenda. The source material on Hong Kong would have been bolstered further if photographic images of the event that had been taken by an amateur as a personal keepsake had been located.

This study of the Diamond Jubilee in Hong Kong and Cape Town has also been enriched by the use of contemporary guide books to the city. Representing something of a fledgling tourist industry, these publications offer useful insights into both the officially-sanctioned histories and identities of the cities – although one must always be aware of the hubristic and extravagant nature of the writing that is habitually contained within this

type of genre and never forget that they were designed to attract visitors, rather than to provide an objective analysis of the subject matter. Whilst the ones that were found and consulted did not offer specific information on the Diamond Jubilee event, they proved to be a reasonably valuable and interesting source material – particularly in relation to Chapter Five, which analyses the relevance of the celebrations to the identities and external promotion of these cities.

In conclusion, a reasonably wide body of primary source material has been consulted for the making of this analysis. As acknowledged earlier, it would doubtless have been improved by the inclusion of relevant non-English language material – although whether much of this exists is still to be determined. It was also hoped that private papers and diaries could have been found that shed some further light on the jubilee events in these two cities. However, although efforts were made to find such material, none has so far been found. Therefore, this study relies most heavily on newspapers, government documents, photographs and guide books from the period. Whilst there is always some scope to improve the range of primary source material available, one can only work with what is to hand. That said, it is hoped that the information used in the construction of this thesis was plentiful and wide-ranging enough for a legitimate and serious piece of analysis to have been undertaken.

III. Literature Review

This thesis has used secondary source material from several principal fields of historiography: recent work on Hong Kong; recent work on Cape Town; the relationship between the British monarchy and its colonial subjects, and the subject of Britishness in the British Empire.

Hong Kong

For much of the second half of the twentieth century, Hong Kong seems to have been largely overlooked as an attractive subject for academic research and the body of work

produced by George Endacott was considered to represent the authority on the city's history for many years.¹² The quotation below suggests that the history of Hong Kong may have long been perceived by scholars as being too staid and uninspiring to warrant serious investigation:

Notwithstanding certain episodes of turmoil and conflict, Hong Kong's history has been a history of veritable political stability. It is no wonder that a politically tranquil place has failed to attract prolific scholarly attention to its politics. As a result, even though political commentaries have been aplenty, serious academic work on Hong Kong politics is meagre.¹³

However, the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997 appears to have provided significant impetus to the production of academic material on the city, and much more work has followed in the last couple of decades. Whereas earlier history books on Hong Kong focussed rather more exclusively on the story of the British community there, more recent publications have concentrated to a greater extent on social, rather than political, history and have brought the city's other communities into the discussion. This work has challenged the verdict offered in the previous quotation that Hong Kong was a predominantly a place of political tranquillity.

The relatively recent input of Chinese scholarship has also been an important development, helping to shift the focus of historical inquiry away from the politics of the British community and onto the city's resident Chinese population. A central figure in this development is Jung-Fang Tsai, who has challenged the traditional colonial message that the Chinese community in Hong Kong was a relatively loyal and subservient group. Indeed, much of his work discusses the prevalence of social unrest and anti-foreign sentiment in the city.¹⁴ Nor it is just Chinese historians who have expanded the focus of historical inquiry in the city to delve deeper into previously neglected aspects of Hong

¹² See, for example, G. Endacott, *A History of Hong Kong* (London, 2nd ed., 1964).

¹³ S. Lau, P. Wan and K. Shum, *Hong Kong Politics: A Bibliography* (Hong Kong, 1999), p. vii.

¹⁴ See, in particular: J. Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842 – 1913* (New York, 1993) and 'From Antiforeignism to Popular Nationalism: Hong Kong between China and Britain, 1839 - 1911', in M. Chan (ed.), *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong Between China and Britain, 1842 – 1992* (Armonk, NY, 1994).

Kong's past. Prominent among modern historians of Hong Kong is John Carroll, who has been a prolific contributor on the interaction between the British and Chinese communities.¹⁵ Other work has shined a light on the extent of the injustices and discrimination that the Chinese community in Hong Kong habitually faced at the hands of the colonial representatives.¹⁶ This thesis has benefitted hugely from this more recent material, which has brought greater balance and credibility to the portrayal of the many interactions that took place in the city during the time of the Diamond Jubilee.

The work available on Hong Kong has also been improved by a recent focus on the other national groups that were resident in the city.¹⁷ Although the populations of many of these communities were comparatively small, these new academic contributions have offered an enormously helpful insight into the social dynamics and racial hierarchies that existed within Hong Kong's foreign communities. Also of great use has been the work of Robert Bickers.¹⁸ Although much of his analysis centres on interactions and events that took place at the Shanghai International Settlement, his many publications have created a credible picture of everyday life in the foreign concessions of the Chinese treaty ports. His work includes much that is of relevance to Hong Kong society at the end of the nineteenth century.

Alain Le Pichon has also produced a fascinating article on the symbolic relevance of the creation of Statue Square in the city, built on newly-reclaimed land that resulted from the Praya Reclamation Ordinance of 1889.¹⁹ He argues that Hong Kong in the 1880s lacked both an architectural focus and a unique image of itself to transmit to the outside

¹⁵ See, in particular: J. Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA, 2005) .

¹⁶ See, in particular: C. Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841 – 1880* (Hong Kong, 2001) and P. Wesley-Smith, 'Anti-Chinese Legislation in Hong Kong', in Chan (ed.), *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong Between China and Britain, 1842 – 1992* (Armonk, NY, 1994).

¹⁷ See, for example: C. Plüss, 'Migrants from India and Their Relations with British and Chinese Residents', in C. Chu (ed.), *Foreign Communities in Hong Kong, 1840s – 1950s* (Basingstoke, 2005) and R. Mak, 'The German community in 19th century Hong Kong', *Asia Europe Journal*, no. 2 (2004), pp. 237 – 55.

¹⁸ See, in particular: R. Bickers, *Empire made me: an Englishman adrift in Shanghai* (London, 2004) and *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832 – 1914* (London, 2011).

¹⁹ A. Le Pichon, 'In the Heart of Victoria: the Emergence of Hong Kong's Statue Square as a Symbol of Victorian Achievement.' *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal*, vol. 3 (2009).

world, despite the astonishing growth and success of the city over the previous four decades. Therefore, the creation of Statue Square is, for him, a deeply important development as it not enhanced the city and gave it a focus point, but also revealed much about the colonial society at the time. His recognition of the fact that the project was largely devised and driven-through by Catchik Paul Chater, a fabulously wealthy and influential businessman, rather than by the colonial government illustrated to him how powerful business interests in the city were and the largely passive role that the colonial government played in the administration and success of Hong Kong. The importance of local business was furthermore highlighted by the presence of the Hong Kong Club and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank building on the new development. As Statue Square was created during the period under investigation by this thesis, this innovative article offers a valuable insight into the highest levels of the colonial elite and this importance of private business to the success of the colony.

Therefore, a much more balanced and rich genre of secondary source material has been produced on Hong Kong history over the past few decades, and this study of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations would have been much the poorer without this relatively recent development in the historiography that pertains to this city.

Cape Town

The social, political and economic transformations that took place in Cape Town during the latter decades of the nineteenth century have also received significant recent attention from historians. The prominent authority on this period is Vivian Bickford-Smith, who has challenged the notion that the Cape Colony represented a unique beacon of liberalism in the colonial world of Africa at that time.²⁰ As the picture of Hong Kong representing an example of political tranquillity during the colonial era has been recently challenged, so too has the image of a nineteenth-century Cape Town basking in the benevolent glow of British rule. Bickford-Smith analyses how the mineral revolution

²⁰ See: V. Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: group identity and social practice, 1875 – 1902* (Cambridge, 1995).

attracted significant numbers of non-European migrants into the city. This dramatically altered the racial dynamics of the city, and endangered the white dominance of the political process. Therefore, Bickford-Smith argues that Cape Liberalism was only ever a political luxury that could be employed when the dominance of the white establishment was secured. As soon as the arrival of significant numbers of non-white immigrants posed a threat to the traditional elites, the politicians of the Cape Colony acted to secure their power – thus undermining the liberal values that it had hitherto been credited with. This analysis challenges the perception that the British in southern Africa somehow suddenly became more racist in the 1890s. In fact, it suggests that other races were not viewed by them as being a threat to their hold on power during earlier times, so the veneer of liberality could be maintained.

In common with John Lambert, Bickford-Smith has also sought to remedy the neglect of British South African identity in the historiography on the region.²¹ In his most recent publication, *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis*, he argues that the developing cities of Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg became increasingly anglicised in form and name from the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards.²² Although the British identity was just one of a large number of influences in these increasingly complex and populated settlements, he argues that the growth in urbanisation that followed the mineral revolution of the 1870s marked an era where the British identity became increasingly prominent in these large-scale urban areas and greater divergence could be detected between these places and the more Dutch-dominated countryside. The increasingly assertive promotion of Britishness in these cities reflects the increased importance of Cape Town and the Cape Colony in general to the geo-political strategies and finances of the British Empire around the time of the Diamond Jubilee. Bickford-Smith's body of work is absolutely vital to any scholar

²¹ J. Lambert, “‘An Unknown People’: Reconstructing British South African Identity’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 37, no. 4 (2009), pp. 599 – 617. V. Bickford-Smith, “Revisiting Anglicisation in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2003), pp. 82 – 95.

²² V. Bickford-Smith, *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis: Cities and Identities in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2016).

wishing to understand both the complex society of Cape Town and British South African attitudes and identity during the latter decades of the nineteenth century and beyond.

This thesis has also benefitted from the work of other historians who have also contributed to our understanding of the community relationships that were present in Cape Town during the time of the Diamond Jubilee. Prominent among these is Elizabeth Van Heyningen, whose work has made a large contribution towards a greater understanding of the community dynamics present in the city.²³ In partnership with Nigel Worden and Vivian Bickford-Smith, she has also published a seminal social history of the city in the nineteenth century which has brought together their work into one compilation and thus provided a contribution of great clarity and authority.²⁴ This book, *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, explains the great diversity that was present in its society and catalogues the shift in perceptions that took place during the city's transition from a port and refreshment station on the trade routes to an important colonial centre that increasingly pushed its influence further into Africa and set the tone for the European development of the continent. Augmented by many photographs and illustrations, this book offers a comprehensive understanding of the complicated make-up of Cape Town's population, and explains how this society was constantly divided by issues of class, ethnicity, gender and religion.

Recent works produced by Malherbe, Deacon and Hunt have also made further contributions to what is now a rich catalogue of material on the city.²⁵ Whatever the challenges that present themselves to a researcher of nineteenth-century Cape Town history are, a paucity of high quality secondary source material on the city should not be one of them.

²³ See: E. Van Heyningen, 'The Social Evil in the Cape Colony, 1868 – 1902: Prostitution and the Contagious Diseases Acts', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1984), pp. 170 – 197 and 'Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880 - 1910', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Cape Town (Cape Town, 1989).

²⁴ N. Worden, E. Van Heyningen, and V. Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City* (Cape Town, 1998).

²⁵ V. Malherbe, 'Family Law and "The Great Moral Public Interests" in Victorian Cape Town, c. 1850 – 1902', *Kronos*, no. 36 (2010), pp. 7 – 27. H. Deacon, 'Racial Segregation and Medical Discourse in Nineteenth-Century Cape Town', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1996), pp. 287 – 308. T. Hunt, *Ten Cities that made an Empire* (London, 2014).

The British Monarchy and its Colonial Subjects

The analysis contained in this thesis has also profited from an engagement with source material that considers the relationship between the British monarchy and the colonial subjects of the empire. Duncan Bell and David Cannadine have both evaluated how the role of Queen Victoria evolved during her reign into one that held wider significance across the empire: a position overseas that increased in value whilst her levels of domestic influence were visibly diminishing.²⁶ As Bell discusses, the queen increasingly became projected to the people of the colonies as the great unifying face of empire, a totem around which the disparate lands and races held under British control could rally. Therefore, the exposure of the queen in these lands increased – and the work of Plunkett analyses the technological advances that allowed her image and her words to reach a wide, global audience by the time of the Diamond Jubilee.²⁷

Whilst work has also been produced to describe how the queen came to fulfil an important symbolic role within the empire, representing the peak of a power structure that, through the use of flattery and Ornamentalism, was able to incorporate local rulers into the imperial project, it is the relationship between the monarch and the general populations of Hong Kong and Cape Town that are of most significance to this thesis.²⁸ The queen's reluctance to make forays into the wider empire reduced the opportunities for personal ties of affection to be created, but the British monarchy began to be represented and exhibited in the colonial possessions abroad during the Diamond Jubilee period as a result of royal tours. The work of Kaul, Sapire and McCreery all offer important analysis on how royal visits were interpreted and welcomed in overseas

²⁶ D. Bell, 'The Idea of a Patriot Queen? The Monarchy, the Constitution, and the Iconographic Order of Greater Britain, 1860 – 1900', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2006), pp. 3 – 22. See again D. Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c. 1820 – 1977', in Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*.

²⁷ J. Plunkett, *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch* (Oxford, 2003).

²⁸ D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire* (London, 2001) and B Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*.

colonial communities.²⁹ These authors examine royal tours across a relatively wide time span, and a gradual decay in the relationship between the imperial figureheads and the colonial subjects can be observed. However, the Diamond Jubilee appears to have taken place during a period where the mythology of the Great White Queen still carried some degree of influence among significant sections of the colonial population.

Britishness in the British Empire

The concept of Britishness is one of the central themes discussed in this thesis, and relates to not only the British populations' embrace and interpretation of the Diamond Jubilee event, but also extends to the non-British residents of these cities. The characteristics and mentalities of Britons abroad in the empire have been the subject of scrutiny over recent years, with the material produced making a significant contribution to this study.³⁰ Whilst the British community in Hong Kong at this time was a largely transient population, Cape Town's British contingent contained a large number of people with deep ancestral roots in the city and region of southern Africa and, with fewer personal connections to the mother country, the relationship of these individuals to Britain and Britishness takes on a new perspective. Recent work, such as that produced by Saul Dubow and Andrew Thompson, has explored how colonial settler identities were able to exist in harmony with Britishness, and the celebration of one could take place without any detriment to the other.³¹

²⁹ C. Kaul, 'Monarchical Display and the Politics of Empire: Princes of Wales and India 1870s – 1920s', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 17, no. 4 (2006), pp. 464 – 88. H. Sapire, 'Ambiguities of Loyalty: the Prince of Wales in India and Africa, 1921 – 2 and 25', *History Workshop Journal* (2011), pp. 1 – 29. C. McCreery, 'Telling the story: *HMS Galatea's* Voyage to South Africa, 1867', *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 61, no. 4 (2009), pp. 817 – 37.

³⁰ See in particular: R. Bickers, 'Shanghaianders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843 – 1939', *Past and Present*, vol. 159, no. 1 (1998), pp. 161 – 211. G. Bickley, 'Early Beginnings of British Community (1841 – 1898)', in Chu (ed.), *Foreign Communities in Hong Kong, 1840s – 1950s*. D. Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj* (London, 2007).

³¹ S. Dubow, 'How British was the British World? The Case of South Africa', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2009), pp. 1 – 27. A. Thompson, 'The Languages of Loyalty in Southern Africa, c. 1870 – 1939', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 118, no. 477 (2003), pp. 617 – 50.

The broad church that Britishness represented also appeared to allow non-Britons to assume this identity also. However, although Mordechai Tamarkin has recently argued that Cape Afrikaner society was generally more in favour of Britain, and an adoption of Britishness, than the actions and rhetoric of Alfred Milner suggested, the adoption of Britishness by non-white subjects was a controversial one among British overseas communities.³² As the work of Daniel Gorman explains, the concept of an imperial citizen was largely a myth.³³

IV. Structure of the Thesis

In their discussion of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations that took place in Cambridge, Hammerton and Cannadine argue that any analysis of this event would be incomplete and deeply flawed were important background knowledge of the locations where they took place not incorporated into it:

Simply to look at the way in which the Jubilee was celebrated round the world on Jubilee Day itself may make for exciting prose and amusing anecdote. But it examines too brief an episode, in too decontextualized a manner, for satisfactory historical analysis. An alternative approach might be to try to understand how a ceremonial event may reflect the tensions and strains, as well as the links and bonds, within a society, by looking at the way in which one particular community planned and then celebrated the Diamond Jubilee.³⁴

Therefore, it is extremely important to understand the issues that most affected the resident communities in Hong Kong and Cape Town at the time. It is this knowledge which can transform the analysis of an event and can turn a collection of anecdotes into something that is genuinely insightful. It also enables the researcher to more easily determine what information is of real value and what information can be adjudged to resemble the disorientating smoke that Braudel referred to. This thesis can be considered as being split into two parts. The first part, which encompasses the opening two chapters, searches for the prominent issues of contention and topical relevance that were

³² M. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners* (London, 1996).

³³ D. Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester, 2007).

³⁴ Hammerton and Cannadine, 'Conflict and Consensus on a Ceremonial Occasion', pp. 114 - 5.

present in the societies of Hong Kong and Cape Town during the jubilee period. Through the analysis provided in these chapters, it is hoped that a suitable level of context can be acquired in order to intelligently assess the behaviour that was witnessed during the celebrations. The second part of the thesis, which consists of the third, fourth and fifth chapters, focuses on the events of the celebratory period and uses the conclusions of the earlier chapters as a means of making sense of the proceedings.

In Chapter One, the search for the context to the event begins with an analysis being made of the deeper structures that were present in Hong Kong and Cape Town's societies at the time of the jubilee. In particular, consideration is given to developments that had recently taken place in regard to the cities' population sizes, their demographic compositions and the models of governance that were employed there. This chapter will consider the impact that these factors had on everyday life in the city and on the levels of community cohesion that were present. An understanding of these deeper structures is complemented by the analysis provided in Chapter Two, which explores more directly the state of community harmony in Cape Town and Hong Kong on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee and considers the potential challenges that existed to both social cohesion and levels of support for the queen and for the empire. Whereas the previous chapter was concerned with structural trends, this chapter looks at specific events and developments that impacted more visibly on the surface of these societies. Among the issues under consideration in this chapter are the causes of significant public order disturbances, the presence of long-standing social rifts and the consequences of discriminatory practices that were commonplace within these communities. Between them, these two chapters present an analysis that provides the level of understanding and context required to make a convincing and knowledgeable appraisal of these two sets of Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

With the important requirement of understanding the community dynamics that were present in these cities at the time of the Diamond Jubilee satisfied, the following three chapters concentrate on providing an analysis of the celebrations themselves. Chapter Three considers the role of Queen Victoria within the colonial project and the extent to

which her non-British subjects in these cities may have been able to form genuine bonds of admiration and affection for her. This chapter also analyses their response to the Diamond Jubilee and seeks to answer why they turned out in large number for the festivities. Chapter Four focuses on the reaction of the local British communities and governing authorities to the Diamond Jubilee. In particular, this chapter examines their relationship with the concept of 'Britishness'. It also appraises the notion of the 'imperial citizen' and considers whether non-Britons were able to successfully appropriate Britishness for themselves during the celebrations. Chapter Five examines the relationship between the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and the city in which they took place. The importance of the celebrations to the city's history and sense of self is evaluated here, as is the value and durability of the legacy projects that the Diamond Jubilee event left behind.

Figure 1: Location of Hong Kong



This map shows the location of Hong Kong on China's south-east coast. Situated at the mouth of the Pearl River Delta, downstream from the famous mercantile centre of Canton, it offered the British Empire a strategically-vital foothold in this corner of eastern Asia.

Image taken from:

<https://image.slidesharecdn.com/qingchina> [Accessed 24th October, 2017].

Figure 2: A view of early Hong Kong



This painting of Hong Kong harbour, attributed to a Chinese artist in the early 1860s, offers an appreciation of both the topography of the region and of the busy nature of the port. Looming over the city of Victoria, on Hong Kong Island's northern shore, stands Victoria Peak. In the channel that separates the island from the Kowloon Peninsula, ships flying the Stars and Stripes, the French tricolour and the Red Ensign of the British merchant fleet are discernable – thus offering evidence of the international significance of the city as an economic base.

Image taken from the 'Company History' section of the HSBC Bank's website:

<http://www.hsbc.com/about-hsbc/company-history> [Accessed 14th October, 2017].

Figure 3: Map of Hong Kong, c. 1900

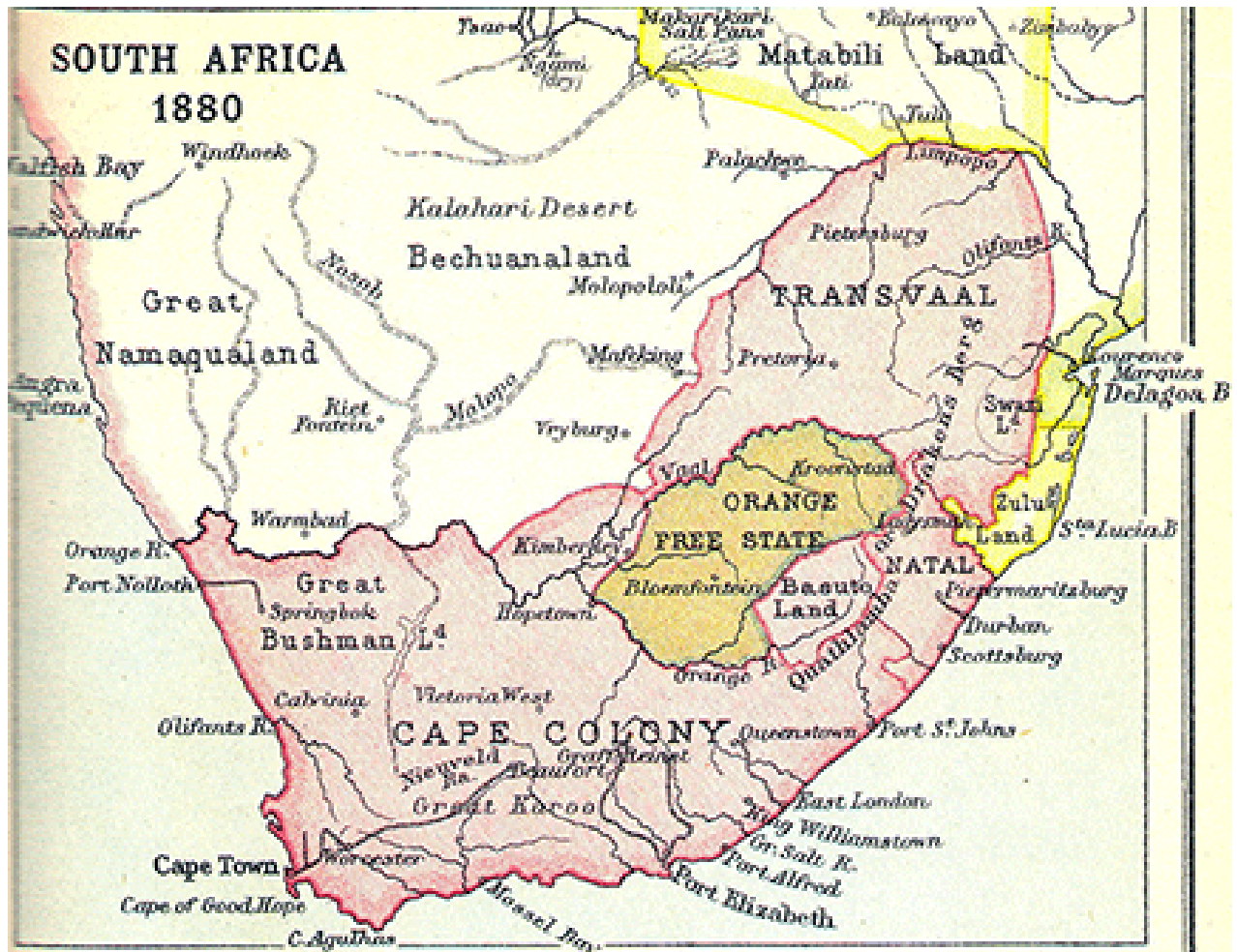


This image of Hong Kong, which represents a view of the colony taken shortly after its incorporation of the New Territories and the remainder of the Kowloon Peninsula in 1898, offers a detailed view of Hong Kong Island. The shaded area on the northern shore of the island, which sits directly across the bay from the southern-most tip of Kowloon, is the site of the City of Victoria. Victoria Peak is clearly marked on the map, as is the important Royal Naval Yard. On the island, British names seem only to have successfully colonised the northern part of it, with landmarks and settlements in the south continuing to be referred to by their Cantonese names. Although British influence extended across the island, its focus was concentrated on the financial and military centres on its northern shore.

Image taken from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s online edition:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Hong-Kong-Island> [Accessed 24th October, 2017].

Figure 4: Location of Cape Town

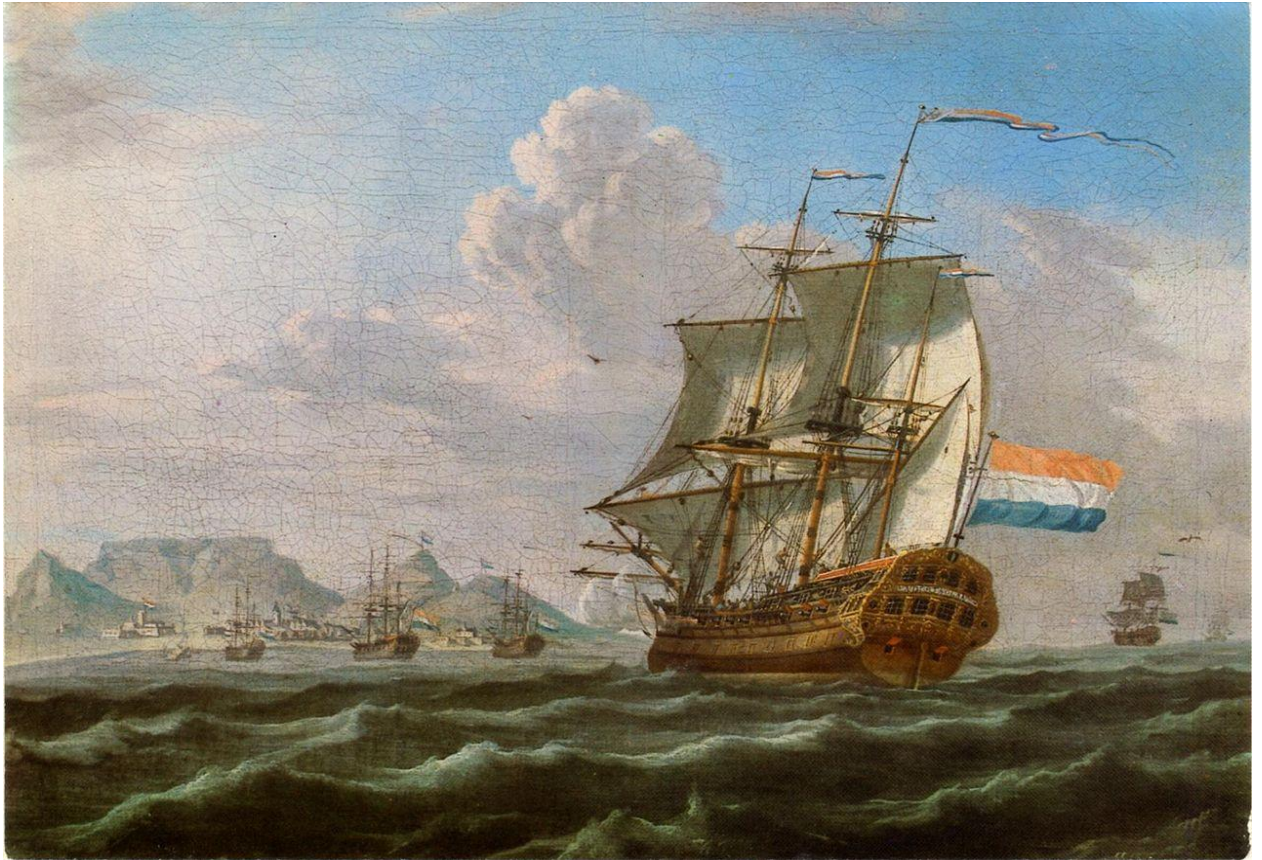


This map of southern Africa indicates Cape Town's location at the south-western tip of this enormous continent and helps to explain why it was such an important refreshment station for European merchant ships plying their trade in the Indian Ocean. The presence on the map of Cape Agulhas, which marks the dividing line between the Atlantic and Indian oceans, and the Cape of Good Hope, which was named by King John II of Portugal, bears witness to the impact of pioneering fifteenth-century Portuguese seafarers along this coastline.

Image taken from:

<https://castinet.castilleja.org/users/pmckee/africaweb/southafrica.html> [Accessed 24th October, 2017].

Figure 5: A view of early Cape Town

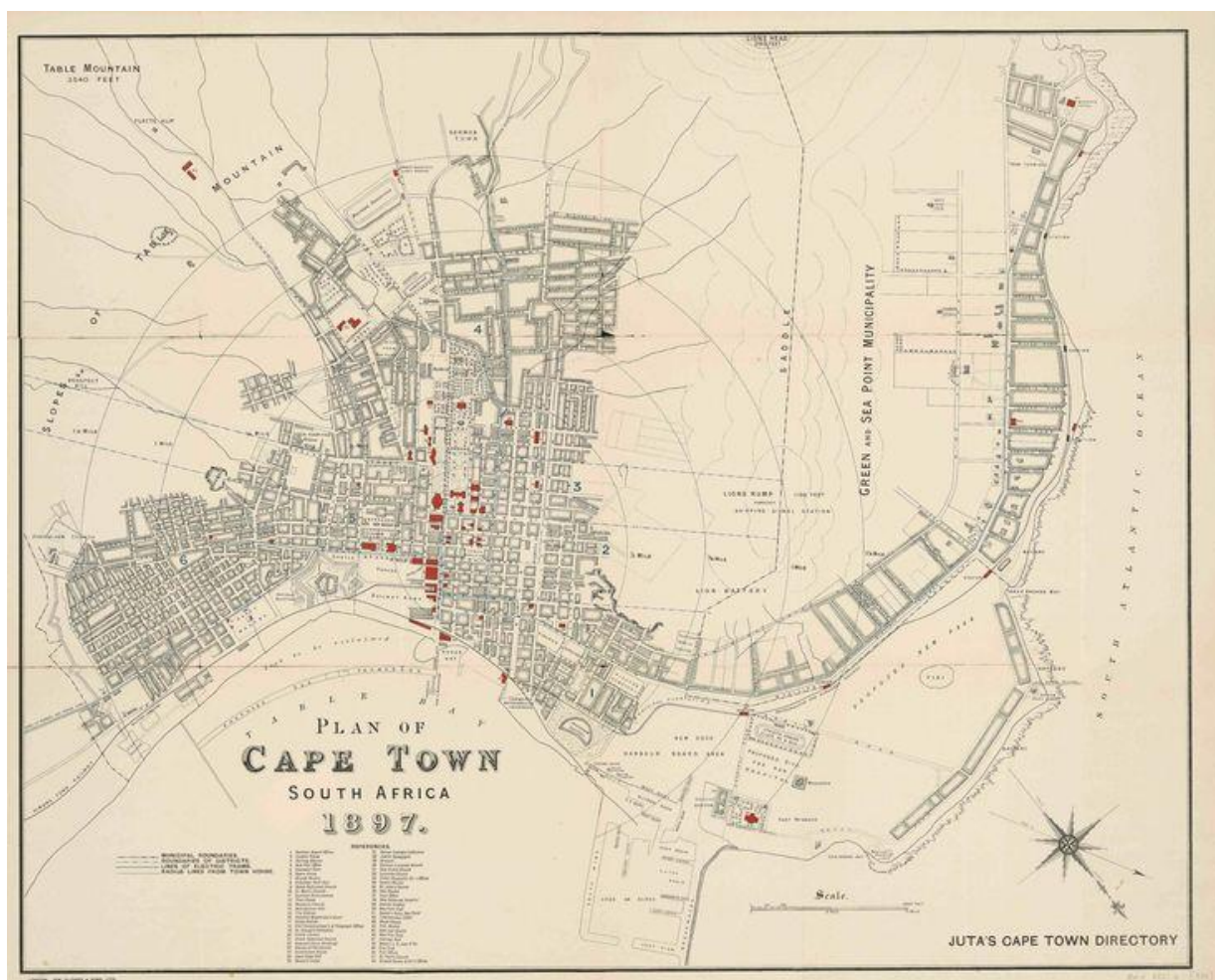


This painting, 'The *Noord-Nieuwland* in Table Bay' was painted c. 1762 by an unknown artist and now forms part of the William Fehr collection, which is housed at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. It offers the viewer a good perspective of Cape Town's topography, with the Dutch fort and the town largely cocooned by Table Bay, Table Mountain and the adjacent peaks. At this point, the town still appears to be relatively small and the fort stands isolated from it on the left side of the painting. The gaze of the painter faces south, with the Cape of Good Hope located beyond Table Mountain.

Image taken from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anonymous_The_Noord-Nieuwland_in_Table_Bay,_1762
[Accessed 14th October, 2017].

Figure 6: Map of Cape Town, 1897



This street plan of Cape Town, originally located in 'Juta's Cape Town Directory' for 1897, appears to show how the settlement had spread during the period since the painting of figure 5. Housing and other urban infrastructure can now be seen to have reached and to have extended well beyond the distinctive star-shaped stone fort and has snaked further up the lower slopes of Table Mountain. In addition, the development of new coastal communities at Green Point and Sea Point can be perceived on the western-most shore, beyond Signal Hill. The outline of a significant system of docks also bears witness to recent economic development.

Taken from the website of *Pinterest*:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/explore/house-plans-south-africa> [Accessed 3rd October, 2017].

CHAPTER ONE

Growing Pains: the Cities in the Pre-Jubilee Era

In order to carry out an informed analysis of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations that took place in Cape Town and Hong Kong, it is important to consider the underlying themes, structures and patterns that impacted upon these cities at this time. An appreciation of how the cities evolved in the years prior to the celebrations, and how some pivotal events had further contributed towards the political and social climates that were present in 1897, thus forms a vital pre-requisite to any worthwhile study of them. To this end, this chapter will look at the recent physical and social development of the cities and considers the impact of changes to their population sizes, demographics and models of governance. Both Hong Kong and Cape Town expanded dramatically in size and prestige in the years leading up to 1897. In Hong Kong, this growth was largely welcomed by the colonial elite: to their eyes, this confirmation of the city's robust economic strength vindicated the decision to create a new trading station at Hong Kong upon the expulsion of the British merchants from Macao. The population of the city was numerically dominated by the Chinese from the outset and the presence of an extremely small number of Eurasians in 1897 indicated that any mixing between the different ethnicities present was rare. The stay of many residents in Hong Kong was also often temporary in nature – a factor which may have allowed them to put up more readily with levels of over-crowding and resource scarcity that became increasingly acute over time. Reflecting its inherently transient nature, Hong Kong's population remained overwhelmingly male in composition and those present tended to retain strong links to their respective home communities during their sojourn in the city.

In contrast, the increasing levels of immigration and urbanisation appear to have provided Cape Town's governing authorities with significant cause for concern. Although the opportunities provided by this advancement in the city's economic strength

and importance would undoubtedly have been welcomed by some of them, the explosion in its size and population also raised uncomfortable questions over whether they might soon find it increasingly difficult to maintain their ascendancy. Cape Town's growth in the decades leading up to the Diamond Jubilee was transformative, producing a new bustling and prosperous city that was clearly different to its previous incarnations. Despite its traditional role as an important refreshment station on the maritime route to India, the city had remained a comparatively small and quiet colonial outpost for much of its history. However, precipitated by the apparently arbitrary act of finding diamonds in the rock around Kimberley, this growth now produced a series of unexpected events that had significant implications for the city. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, Cape Town expanded extremely rapidly and the population shock witnessed there was sudden and without local precedent. The increasingly busy port and the new railway network, which began to stretch out from Cape Town to the diamond fields and beyond, destroyed the city's parochial charm and prompted seismic changes within its society: this was due in particular to the arrival of thousands of black African labourers from the continent's interior. However, whereas the population of Hong Kong was, from the very beginning, overwhelmingly Chinese, Cape Town in 1897 remained a truly cosmopolitan city – a place where no single ethnic group dominated numerically and a significant mixed-race community resided. The gender demographics of Cape Town were also much more balanced than they were in Hong Kong, indicating that the majority of its inhabitants considered the city their permanent home.

This chapter will also consider whether these changes to the cities' population sizes and demographics had an impact on the local systems of governance. In Hong Kong, the enormous growth in the city's size and economic prestige had little discernible effect: Hong Kong began life as a Crown Colony and, despite regular calls made by its foreign business community for a greater devolution of powers from London, this remained its constitutional status at the time of the Diamond Jubilee. This was largely due to politicians and civil servants in Whitehall being aware of the important role that the city played as a military centre in the region and also being opposed to any legislative reform that might one day inescapably lead to a transfer of power to the local Chinese

community. In contrast to the stasis witnessed in Hong Kong, Cape Town's local political systems had evolved during the late nineteenth century: the Cape Colony had been bequeathed Responsible Government in 1872 and, by the time of the Diamond Jubilee, Cape Town had become the capital city of a strategically important and economically significant British possession. However, by this time it had also become evident that the recent population and demographic shifts had impacted directly on political matters in the city: in the wake of the recent influx of African workers and the development of a non-white bourgeois class, the existing political elite had brought in legislation in 1892 that restricted the franchise and severely compromised the reputation for liberalism that the Cape Colony had previously enjoyed.

I. Population Growth

Hong Kong

Despite official proclamations by Chinese magistrates forbidding local populations from having any dealings with the British interlopers, employment in their new colony of Hong Kong proved to be an attractive proposition for local Chinese workers from the very beginning. In May 1841, the island had an estimated Chinese population of 5,650. However, by March 1842, this number had dramatically increased to 12,361. Including the foreigners, the total population that month stood at over 15,000 people.¹ This growth represented a remarkable transformation from what had only recently been a collection of remote fishing villages. It also provided the British governing authorities with an early indicator of the city's extraordinary potential for economic growth, immediately confounding the sceptics who had called it 'one of the most unenviable transmarine possessions belonging to her most Gracious Majesty.'²

¹ J. Tsai, 'From Antiforeignism to Popular Nationalism: Hong Kong between China and Britain, 1839 - 1911' in M. Chan (ed.), *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong Between China and Britain, 1842 - 1992* (Armonk, NY, 1994), p. 11.

² *The Hong Kong Register*, quoted in S. Tsang, *Governing Hong Kong: Administrative Officers from the Nineteenth Century to the Handover to China, 1862 - 1997* (London, 2007), p. 1.

That early potential became quickly fulfilled as Hong Kong developed rapidly over the following decades. Echenberg relates that by the mid-1890s, only a little over 50 years since its foundation, the city had already become an economic juggernaut: ‘more than half of China’s imports and more than one-third of its exports passed through the British Crown Colony. Its annual average of 22 million tons, 2 million more than London’s, placed it first among global entrepôts.’³ The colonisers had been aware from the outset that Hong Kong needed to attract large numbers of Chinese labourers in order for it to be commercially viable, and by promising the Chinese the freedom to practise their native religious ceremonies and social customs they incentivised their movement to the city. The immediate designation of Hong Kong as a ‘free port’ – whereby all vessels were exempt from import and export duties – also contributed to its remarkable early growth.⁴ This eagerness to attract migrants and businesses from over the border continued well into the twentieth century: from the establishment of the city in 1841 up until 1953, no barriers of entry were raised to restrict Chinese immigration into Hong Kong.⁵

Although many of Hong Kong’s Chinese population temporarily fled the city during the bubonic plague outbreak of 1894, an event which the presiding governor, William Robinson, described as ‘an unparalleled exodus from our shores of some 50,000 or 60,000 Chinese’, large-scale Chinese immigration had been a constant presence up to the time of the Diamond Jubilee.⁶ Even after the plague exodus, the number of people that had departed – roughly equivalent to a quarter of the resident population at the time – was quickly replaced once the ‘all clear’ was signalled a few months later. The growth in population that Hong Kong experienced in the decades leading up to the Diamond Jubilee is illustrated by Table 1. Although the usual caveats over the reliability of census information remains of strong relevance here – and this is especially so in the case of Hong Kong at this time because the governing Anglo-Saxon elite was so detached from

³ M. Echenberg, *Plague Ports: the global urban impact of Bubonic Plague 1894 – 1901* (New York, NY, 2012), p. 15.

⁴ Tsai, ‘From Antiforeignism to Popular Nationalism’, p. 10.

⁵ S. Tsang, ‘Government and Politics in Hong Kong: A Colonial Paradox’, in J. Brown and R. Foot (eds), *Hong Kong’s Transitions, 1842 – 1997* (Basingstoke, 1997), p. 65. R. Hughes, *Borrowed Time, Borrowed Place: Hong Kong and its many faces* (London, 2nd ed., 1976), p. 53.

⁶ The Governor of Hong Kong Sir William Robinson in his end-of-year address to the members of the Legislative Council, Wednesday, 28th November, 1894, N. A., CO 131/23 ‘Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1894’, p. 28.

the vast bulk of the resident population and, in particular, the city's subordinate classes – these statistics do offer some guidance on this issue.

Table 1: Population growth in Hong Kong, 1862 - 1897⁷

Year	Population counted in Hong Kong	Increase in population from previous figure	Average increase in population per annum
1862	123,511		
1881	160,402	36,891	1,942
1886	181,720	21,318	4,264
1897	246,880	65,160	5,924

The information presented above suggests that the growth in Hong Kong's population, which had been significantly boosted during the middle part of the nineteenth century by Chinese people fleeing the catastrophic consequences of the Taiping Rebellion, accelerated further in the years preceding the Diamond Jubilee.⁸ Although there had been some initial debate over whether the island of Hong Kong could offer the British Empire the foothold in China that it was looking for, by 1897 it was certainly clear that the colony had successfully established itself and was now a significant economic power within the wider region.

Cape Town

Whereas the extreme levels of population density witnessed in the tiny colony of Hong Kong in 1897 had been a feature there for much of its comparatively short existence, the dramatic surge in Cape Town's population during the three decades leading up to the Diamond Jubilee was an extraordinary and transformative event. The finding of diamonds in Kimberley during the second half of the 1860s was directly responsible for this as migrants from across the world entered the Cape Colony in large numbers. The diamond trade not only provided a welcome boon for the city's local markets, but it also

⁷ The statistics for 1881 and 1897 were taken from the 1897 census report of Francis W. Clark, the colony's Medical Officer of Health, N. A., CO 131/28 'Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1898', p. 269. The statistics for 1862 and 1886 were taken from G. Sayer, *Hong Kong 1862 – 1919* (Hong Kong, 1975), p. 138.

⁸ F. Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong* (London, rev. ed., 1997), p. 246.

played a vital role in bringing the Cape Colony's economy out of a deep depression in the mid-1860s. By 1876, diamonds had become the Cape Colony's largest export product.⁹ Although the region was again plunged into deep recession from 1882 to 1886, as the initial diamond mining bubble burst, the discovery of great seams of gold at Witwatersrand in 1886 prompted a further frenzy of immigration and economic activity across southern Africa.

As the principal port for the whole of southern Africa, Cape Town was changed decisively by these developments and 'underwent a metamorphosis from sleepy colonial backwater to thriving city.'¹⁰ Whereas large-scale immigration had been a constant theme of Hong Kong's history, Cape Town had remained a small and parochial town for much of its existence. Therefore, the great mass of people that entered the city at this time, both from the continent's interior and through its increasingly busy port, fundamentally transformed Cape Town. The April 1891 census results for the electoral division of Cape Town, taken as part of a colony-wide survey, shows the enormous increase in the city's population that resulted from the mineral revolution: whereas the 1875 census recorded a population of 33,239, the figure given for 1891 was 51,251 – equating to an astonishing increase of 54.19 per cent over the previous sixteen years.¹¹

Unfortunately, unlike in Hong Kong, no census took place in the year 1897. However, the *Illustrated Cape Town Guide*, published during the early months of that year, stated 'there is a resident population in Cape Town and suburbs of upwards of 90,000'.¹² If this assertion was accurate, the city's population had nearly trebled over the previous two decades: a rate of growth that even surpassed the population increases seen in Hong Kong over the same period. This trajectory continued through the years of the Second Boer War, as large numbers of workers, soldiers and refugees entered the city: Worden,

⁹ W. Worger, *South Africa's City of Diamonds* (New Haven, CT, 1987), p. 120.

¹⁰ N. Worden, E. Van Heyningen and V. Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City* (Cape Town, 1998), p. 211.

¹¹ The Government of the Cape of Good Hope Colony, *Results of a census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope as on the night of Sunday, the 5th April, 1891* (Cape Town, 1892), p. 11.

¹² Dennis Edwards & Co. Ltd, *The Illustrated Cape Town Guide* (Cape Town, 1897), p. 35.

Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith offer a population figure of 171,000 for Cape Town and its suburban villages in 1904.¹³

II. Demographic Change

Hong Kong

Hong Kong's census results of January 1897 also reported that the Chinese population – at just over 94 per cent - formed the vast majority of the city's permanent residents. Their share of the existing population had been remarkably constant throughout the city's recent history, as the statistics in Table 2 illustrate:

Table 2: The proportion of Chinese residents in Hong Kong's population¹⁴

Year	Population counted in Hong Kong	Chinese population of the city	Chinese residents as a percentage of the population
1862	123,511	120,477	97.5%
1886	181,720	171,290	94.3%
1897	246,880	233,280	94.5%

Therefore, although the population of Hong Kong appears to have doubled in the period 1862 – 1897, the demographic mix of Chinese and foreign residents within the city does not seem to have altered in any noticeable way.

The Chinese inhabitants may have been classified as one monolithic block by the 1897 census compilers, but this categorisation painted an overly-simplistic representation of them. To begin with, the figure attributed to them also incorporated the 251 mixed-race 'Eurasians' – an often bilingual group whose language skills and understanding of both eastern and western societies gave them a competitive advantage over the vast majority of the city's residents. As a result, this group included some of Hong Kong's wealthiest and most influential people. The prime example of this was Robert Ho Tung, the Head

¹³ Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, p. 212.

¹⁴ The statistics for 1897 were taken from Clark, 1897 census report, CO 131/28, p. 269. The statistics for 1862 and 1886 were taken from Sayer, *Hong Kong 1862 – 1919*, p. 138.

Comprador at Jardine Matheson & Co., who at the time was unquestionably one of the city's richest men.¹⁵ The comparatively tiny number of Eurasians present also shows how little the city's population had mingled over the previous years – showing that, despite the clear practical advantages that the situation offered, to be mixed race in Hong Kong was exceptional. Strong social barriers to racial intermingling had been erected on both sides: Chinese women who mixed with foreign men were branded deviants within their own community, while British men who took up Chinese wives were similarly perceived as out-castes by their peers – such a course of action was considered to be unnatural and an affront to the 'superiority' of the British race.¹⁶ This was a time and a place where racial identities were safeguarded fiercely.

In addition to the Eurasians, the figures given for the Chinese resident population also encompassed migrants from a variety of clans and geographical regions throughout southern China. Although many Chinese residents came to Hong Kong from the neighbouring Canton delta region, this was not exclusively the case. Their different backgrounds and the local bonds forged back on the mainland remained relevant whilst they were in Hong Kong: Tsai asserts that 'the Chinese emigrants from the same native place speaking the same dialect often clung together for protection and mutual assistance and competed with other dialect groups for resources and work opportunities.'¹⁷ Therefore, the Chinese in Hong Kong relied upon pre-existing bonds of language and geographical origin in the same way that, for example, Irish, Polish and Italian immigrants to New York did at this time – and ethnic rivalries over work and housing would have similarly been in evidence. A graphic example of this is provided by a famous incident in January 1891, when the Hong Kong Police Force managed to thwart 'what might have been the greatest clan fight in the colony' when ill feeling between the Tung Koon and Nam Tau gang members reached a crescendo just ahead of the celebrations for the city's Golden Jubilee.¹⁸

¹⁵ S. Airie, *Thistle and Bamboo: the Life and Times of Sir James Stewart Lockhart* (Hong Kong, 2010), p. 33.

¹⁶ H. Lethbridge, *Hong Kong: Stability and Change. A collection of essays* (Hong Kong, 1978), p. 210. D. Gorman, *Imperialism Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 205 – 6.

¹⁷ Tsai, 'From Antiforeignism to Popular Nationalism', p. 11.

¹⁸ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 21st January, 1891.

How much the colonial authorities were aware of the actual differences that existed within their Chinese population is unclear: the fact that the 1897 census does not seek to differentiate between the groups – and is even happy to consider Eurasians as part of the collective – suggests that a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of this matter may not have been considered necessary. Language barriers and the demands on the census compilers' time may also have played a role here – it was doubtless easier to just count the Chinese rather than to try to interview them and determine their place of origin. However, later analysis provided by James Haldane Stewart Lockhart, Hong Kong's Colonial Secretary in 1897, showed that he at least was aware of the diversity contained within the Chinese community. Due to the recent merging of his position with that of the Registrar General – the office that formed the official channel of communication between the colonial authorities and the Chinese – Stewart Lockhart had become responsible for dealing with this community's grievances.¹⁹ His sophisticated knowledge of it is visible in a report, sent to Whitehall in 1898, on the ethnic make-up of the people living in the area located directly north of the city. In it, he explained that the inhabitants of this area, soon to be incorporated into the British colony and known as the New Territories, were 'composed of three races of Chinese, the Puntis, the Hakkas and the Tankas.'²⁰ Stewart Lockhart related that the Puntis, meaning 'Natives of the Soil', were the local Han Chinese and formed the majority of the community. They regarded themselves as being innately superior to the Hakka people, who were reputed to be descended from the Mongols. He explained that the overthrow of this dynasty by Ming forces in the fourteenth century had resulted in the Hakka people moving down to the southern provinces from their former strongholds in the north. As the name Hakka implied – a term meaning 'Strangers' – they were, according to Lockhart, 'regarded by the Puntis as aliens, and speak a dialect quite different from Cantonese.'²¹

¹⁹ Airlie, *Thistle and Bamboo*, p. 34.

²⁰ James Haldane Stewart Lockhart, Colonial Secretary/Registrar General of Hong Kong, 'Report by Mr Stewart Lockhart on the Extension of the Colony of Hong Kong', sent to the Colonial Office and dated 8th October, 1898. N. L. S. JHSL papers, Acc. 4138/2 c2, p. 9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

The third group, the Tankas, made up the majority of Hong Kong's floating population. Stewart Lockhart told the Colonial Office that they 'form a class by themselves and are looked down upon by the land population.'²² Considered to have been descended from the aboriginal Yue people of southern China, the Tankas had resided in the local area since Neolithic times. However, they had suffered centuries of discrimination at the hands of the Han Chinese when the latter superseded them as the dominant ethnic group in the area.²³ Forbidden from settling on shore or marrying Han Chinese by Qing imperial edicts, the Tankas – 'whom everyone else despised' – represented the very base of Hong Kong's social pyramid.²⁴ This pariah status was further solidified by frequent interaction between Tanka women and European men, as prostitutes, mistresses or, occasionally, wives.²⁵ Although the British authorities had allowed the Tankas to settle on the land in recognition of their assistance in establishing the colony, many still lived their lives on water.²⁶ Together with the Hoklo people, who had arrived in Hong Kong from the nearby mountainous province of Fujian, they comprised the city's 'boat people'. Interestingly, the British enumerators of the 1897 census did differentiate between the Chinese floating population, 'who make their homes upon the junks, cargo-boats, sampans etc. in the Harbour', and those who were based on land. As a result, the census recorded that 33,275 of the Chinese population of Hong Kong – fourteen per cent of the total figure - were its 'Harbour' population.²⁷

Specific ties of location and dialect divided Hong Kong's Chinese community still further. An individual's ethnic and clan identity remained highly relevant to their ability to find work and accommodation, as various sectors of the economy had become dominated by particular groups. For instance, Tsai's discussion of the city's chair and rickshaw industry highlights the disproportionately large presence of Teochiu and Hoklo people employed within it. He states that they were forced to be particularly 'parochial'

²² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²³ 'The Tanka people or Boat Dwellers', *Linguistic Minorities.HK*, <http://linguisticminorities.hk/en/community/tanka/> [Accessed 28th July, 2015].

²⁴ J. Morris, *Hong Kong* (New York, NY, 1988), p. 11.

²⁵ Lethbridge, *Hong Kong: Stability and Change*, p. 210.

²⁶ J. Carroll, 'Chinese Collaboration in the Making of British Hong Kong', in T. Ngo (ed.), *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule* (London, 1999), p. 17.

²⁷ Clarke, 1897 census report, CO 131/28, p. 269.

and ‘clanny’ because ‘traditional kinship ties and dialect group cohesion were important to these minority groups in their competition for resources and employment opportunities with larger and more powerful dialect groups of Punti Cantonese.’²⁸ Therefore, the divisions that were present in the Chinese society of Hong Kong were further entrenched by the territorial nature of the city’s labour market. Undercurrents of competition and discrimination flowed throughout the Chinese community: ‘Rivalry and tensions existed not only between the Hoklo, Teochiu, Hakka, and Punti Cantonese coolies but also between Cantonese coolies from Tung Kuan and those from Sze Yap.’²⁹

An appreciation of these divisions and rifts within the Chinese community in Hong Kong is an essential aid to understanding their participation in the Diamond Jubilee celebrations because it allows interpretations to be made which go beyond what is displayed at face value. Whereas many British commentators and colonial officers of the time clearly regarded the Hong Kong Chinese as one monolithic block, comprehension of the different factions in the community empowers any analysis of their behaviour during the event. These differences also remained entrenched over time due to the fact that the Chinese population was largely a transient one. Many Chinese labourers saw Hong Kong primarily as a convenient site of lucrative, short-term, employment. As a result, links to their hometown and to their family across the border were assiduously maintained and cherished. This psychological attachment to the hometown and the family, the *jia*, was the dominant guiding principle within the Han concept of identity.³⁰ Many of them would surely have been aghast at any suggestion that their presence in Hong Kong now behove them to think of themselves primarily as residents of that city. They continued to define themselves through their links to their ancestral homelands.

The gender demographic of Hong Kong’s ethnic Chinese community – where males outnumbered females significantly – reflected its transient nature. This was explained by Francis Clark, the colony’s Medical Officer of Health, in his 1897 census report:

²⁸ J. Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842 – 1913* (New York, NY, 1993), pp. 110 - 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³⁰ A. Joniak-Lüthi, ‘The Han *Minzu*, Fragmented Identities, and Ethnicity’, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 72, no. 4 (2013), pp. 852-4.

The preponderance of the male sex is also most marked, especially among the Chinese, of whom no less than 70.9 per cent are males, while among the non-Chinese population the percentage is 58.6 of males.... many of them are attracted here from the neighbouring provinces of the mainland by the prospect of good wages and the protection of the British flag, and are content to leave their wives and families in China, during their sojourn here, for the facilities of transport to Canton and the neighbourhood are so great that it is a simple matter for them to visit their homes at frequent intervals.³¹

This ability to return to friends and families across the border so easily, which was powerfully illustrated by the great Chinese exodus from Hong Kong during the plague outbreak of 1894, acted as an additional disincentive for permanent roots to be set down and an alternative identity to be embraced. It also reduced the need for greater levels of co-operation and mixing between the clans to have taken place. The continued emotional attachment of the Chinese community to their ancestral lands, rather than to the British city they resided in, was, for Governor Robinson, a matter for regret: 'It has often struck me as extraordinary – not to say discreditable – that, after 55 years of British rule, the vast majority of Chinese in Hongkong [*sic*] should remain so little “Anglicised”'.³²

Although they were a very small part of the population statistically, Hong Kong's foreign residents formed a highly visible presence there due to their comparative wealth and occupation of positions of prestige and influence in society. Therefore, although the Chinese society dominated the city in numerical terms, Hong Kong may have appeared to have been more cosmopolitan to the eye than the population statistics suggested. The classification for the 8,482 non-Chinese civilian residents and 5,118 military personnel counted in the 1897 census is shown in Table 3:

³¹ Clark, CO 131/28, p. 270.

³² Robinson, 'Address to the Legislative Council of 25th November 1895', CO 131/24, p. 37. During the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth, Hong Kong was called 'Hongkong' by British officials and subjects. This situation changed in 1926, when the Hong Kong Government decreed that the city's name should be henceforth represented as two words – a development which reflected the Chinese use of two separate characters in their depiction of its name. P. J. Melson, *White Ensign, Red Dragon: The History of the Royal Navy in Hong Kong, 1841 – 1997* (Hong Kong, 1997), p. 16.

Table 3: Non-Chinese residents in Hong Kong's population; 1897 census³³

Designation	Nationality / Grouping	Population
Non-Chinese civilian community	British	2,374
	Portuguese	2,267
	Japanese	398
	Germans	366
	Americans	223
	Malays	219
	Philippine Islanders	216
Colonial Military Forces	Army	2,850
	Royal Navy	2,268

In his presentation on the census results, Francis Clark also informed the Legislative Council that ‘a sprinkling of Frenchmen, Spaniards, Jews, and a variety of other nationals’ were also included in the count and that approximately half of the Army’s soldiers garrisoned in Hong Kong were Indian sepoys.³⁴ Therefore, although Hong Kong had been granted to Britain in perpetuity over 50 fifty years previously, the expatriate British civilian community that resided there in 1897 comprised a fraction under 1 per cent of the city’s residents. Of note also is the fact that the imperial armed forces, tasked with defending this prosperous and strategically-vital colony, amounted to no more than 2 per cent of the population.

Hong Kong was also viewed by many within the foreign community as a place of temporary residence – where the energetic and enterprising might make their fortune before returning home to see out a comfortable and more sedate retirement. The city’s expatriate British elite, in particular, were largely transitory in nature: military and colonial office personnel, including the governors, tended to stay only for a number of years at a time. Merchants tended to stay for longer, but they often also eventually returned to Europe – their fortunes having been made or their health having been broken by life in such unrelenting heat and humidity. Even the missionaries and teachers ‘who had a vocation to work among the Chinese’ often left for other posts elsewhere during

³³ Clark, 1897 census report, CO 131/28, p. 269.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

their professional lives.³⁵ Although the Protestant and Roman Catholic cemeteries at Happy Valley did house many of their number, Gillian Bickley suggested that ‘to be buried in either place was not an expected conclusion to the lives of most of the British civilians who spent time in Hong Kong.’³⁶

However, there were also members of the foreign community who may have regarded Hong Kong as their permanent home – as suggested by the fact that the gender imbalance here was markedly less pronounced than in the Chinese community. For instance, the city’s Portuguese contingent, one that was numerically on a par with the British civilian community, was largely composed of individuals whose families may have been well-settled in the Far East due to Portugal’s administration of Macao since the sixteenth century. It is also conceivable that among the other various national groups listed in the 1897 census there were a significant number of individuals who were happily settled in Hong Kong and had created a permanent base for themselves.

Cape Town

Whereas Hong Kong was largely populated by males, Cape Town’s population was remarkable for its gender balance: of the 51,251 people recorded in the 1891 census, 26,250 were male and 25,001 were female.³⁷ This suggests that Cape Town was a more ‘habitable’ city than Hong Kong: viewed less as a temporary place of enrichment and more as a place to settle down and raise a family. It also reflected the greater age of the city, founded nearly two centuries earlier than Hong Kong by the Dutch in 1652. Cape Town’s census compilers took the same binary approach to recording ethnicity as they did to recording gender – designating its residents either ‘European or White’ or ‘Other than European or White’. Having adopted this startlingly un-nuanced approach, the compilers revealed that Cape Town’s resident population in 1891 was even more equally split along racial lines as it was by gender: 25,393 of the city’s residents were

³⁵ G. Bickley, ‘Early Beginnings of British Community (1841 – 1898)’, in C. Chu (ed.), *Foreign Communities in Hong Kong, 1840s – 1950s* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 21.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁷ Government of Cape Colony, *Results of 1891 census*, p. 11.

categorised as being ‘European or White’, whereas 25,858 people were not.³⁸ However, in contrast to the blanket definition given to Hong Kong’s Chinese population, the Cape Town census compilers did at least provide a greater level of accompanying detail. The breakdown of the ‘Other than European or White’ category into its component parts is shown in Table 4. This information has been augmented by an illustration of what proportion of the city’s population each group formed.

Table 4: Cape Town’s population; 1891 census³⁹

Grouping	Population	Percentage of the population
European or White	25,393	49.6%
Mixed and Other	16,669	32.5%
Malay	8,255	16.1%
Kafir and Bechuana	554	1.1%
Hottentot	311	0.6%
Fingo	69	0.1%

Although the ‘Mixed and Other’ category did include many non-whites from various areas of southern Africa, a large proportion of this category would have been members of the local mixed-race ‘Coloured’ community. Despite the fact that the Dutch East India Company had originally banned inter-racial marriages, inter-racial dalliances were common throughout Cape Town’s history.⁴⁰ By the late nineteenth century, the city’s population had intermarried and mixed between ethnicities in a way that the residents of the more racially-stratified Hong Kong had not. However, it is difficult to accurately state how many of Cape Town’s population were classed as Coloured at this time, as the 1891 census makes no specific distinction for them.

Although all sections of Cape Town’s urban community had grown in size in the sixteen years since the 1875 census due to the gravitational pull provided by the mineral revolution, the census of 1891 showed that it was the ‘Other than European or White’

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 32 – 3.

⁴⁰ A. Lester, *From Colonization to Democracy: A New Historical Geography of South Africa* (London, 1998), pp. 19 - 24.

category that had been disproportionately responsible for the large increase witnessed in the city's population. The evidence for this is illustrated in Table 5:

Table 5: The increase in Cape Town's population, 1875 - 1891⁴¹

Grouping	1875 Figure	1891 Figure	Percentage increase in population during this period
European or White	18,973	25,393	33.8%
Other than European or White	14,166	25,858	82.5%

Therefore, whilst the 'European or White' component of Cape Town's population had increased by a third over this period, the number of those who were considered 'Other than European or White' had almost doubled in size. This represents a significant change in the racial demographic mix of the city. Reflecting on the situation in the Cape Colony as a whole, which mirrored the trend recorded in Cape Town, the Director of the 1891 census, Henry De Smidt, stated that it was 'very disappointing' that the European element had not been able to keep pace during this population boom.⁴² Others shared De Smidt's concerns that the demographics and character of the region was changing: 'By the 1890s racial anxieties added a new edge to the desire for British immigrants, as John X. Merriman explained to Sir Charles Mills, the colonial agent in London, in 1891: "The whole question of getting an increase in our white population is.....of the greatest importance and of such complication that it makes one despair."'⁴³

Vivian Bickford-Smith argues that the great increase in Cape Town's 'Other than European or White' population, illustrated in Table 5, derived from the people counted as 'Mixed and Other Coloured Races' in the 1891 census. More specifically, he argues that it was principally due to 'a large-scale migration of Africans in the 1880s and 1890s'.⁴⁴ The question of why so many Africans came to Cape Town during this period has been analysed by Patrick Harries. He has identified that a sharp fall in the price of

⁴¹ Government of Cape Colony, *Results of 1891 census*, p. 17.

⁴² Henry De Smidt, Director of the Census, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. xxxiii.

⁴³ Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, p. 218.

⁴⁴ V. Bickford-Smith, 'Black Ethnicities, Communities and Political Expression in Late Victorian Cape Town', *The Journal of African History*, vol. 36, no. 3 (1995), p. 450.

diamonds in 1876, which led to a halving of wages for the mine workers at Kimberley, resulted in many men of the Amatonga population, who originated from the coastal plains north of Zululand, leaving the diamond fields to find alternative employment. Harries suggests that many of them subsequently found work in the large public infrastructure projects, such as the construction of railways, that were taking place in the Western Cape on the back of the mineral revolution.⁴⁵ Many other African migrant labourers were also brought to Cape Town under contract by the Cape Colony government in order to ease a local shortfall of labour on Western Cape farms: Bickford-Smith argues that the arrival of 4,000 Africans from the Eastern Cape in 1878 – 9 and 2,700 indentured labourers from Mozambique between 1879 and 1882 under this scheme represented significant additions to the non-white population of Cape Town.⁴⁶ Other African labourers also took advantage of the expanding railway network and made their way to the city independently, where they often found employment in its newly-enlarged dockyards.

The increased mobility of the African labourers meant that their migration into Cape Town was a permanent feature of the second half of the nineteenth century. Although all sections of the city's population grew in number during the period 1875 to 1891, it was this large influx of African migrant labourers that had the greatest and most visible effect on Cape Town's demographic profile. In common with new Chinese arrivals to Hong Kong, who encountered prejudice and hostility from members of different clans and different nationalities who were already established there, African newcomers to Cape Town were also often given an unfriendly reception: in the 1880s, migrant labourers from various parts of the African continent were frequently labelled 'Mozambiquan' by Capetonians. Bickford-Smith explains that this term 'applied to strangers whether they were from that part of the world or not, a term that had connotations of colour (degree of blackness) and foreignness rather than being an

⁴⁵ P. Harries, *Work, Culture and Identity: Migrant Labourers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860 – 1910* (London, 1994), pp. 26-7.

⁴⁶ V. Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: group identity and social practice, 1875 – 1902* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 44.

accurate description of geographical origin.’⁴⁷ Whether it was technically accurate to the individual or not, the very existence of this labelling though shows that African immigration had become highly noticeable to the citizens of Cape Town and that it constituted a major social issue. It is estimated that, by 1900, there were approximately 10,000 Africans living in Cape Town – ‘most of them housed in appalling conditions.’⁴⁸ The increase in its African population was the dominant story of Cape Town’s population growth during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was this population that was primarily responsible for recent large increase in the ‘Mixed and Other Coloured Races’ seen in the 1891 census.

However, the city’s Malay population also received an additional boost at this time due to an increasing number of conversions to Islam, a process which became particularly attractive to some of Cape Town’s non-white population as it ‘provided material support for the poor and social status for the wealthier which may have been denied to them by bourgeois white exclusiveness.’⁴⁹ In setting the parameters for their classification in 1891, De Smidt endorsed the 1875 census’ definition of the Malay as a group that, although traditionally Asiatic in origin, should be identified by faith rather than by ethnicity. As a result, all Muslim converts were defined as Malay by the 1891 census, thus inflating the figures for this group. The existence of a popular expression of the period ‘*Slam’s Kerk is die Zwart Man’s Kerk*’ suggests that there were a sizeable number of non-white converts, although Ross also reports that some Europeans, in particular European women, also chose to follow this route.⁵⁰ De Smidt further justified this methodology by adding that ‘this people retain at the present day not only the bond of a common faith, but they also occupy a distinct social position, they affect a distinct costume, and observe distinct habits and conditions of life, which have enabled them to sustain their individuality as a distinct class of the community.’⁵¹ Therefore, the

⁴⁷ Bickford-Smith, ‘Black Ethnicities’, p. 450.

⁴⁸ E. Van Heyningen, ‘Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880 - 1910’, Ph.D. Thesis (University of Cape Town, 1989), p. 113.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 445 – 6.

⁵⁰ Translation: ‘Islam’s church is the black man’s church’, Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 73. R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750 – 1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 144.

⁵¹ De Smidt quoted in Government of Cape Colony, *Results of 1891 census*, p. xvii.

‘otherness’ of the individuals within the Malay community – their dress, religion and habits – were the principal indicators in their categorisation.

What the Cape Colony census of 1891 does not provide is a breakdown of the ‘European and White’ category into specific nationalities. De Smidt did acknowledge, in his report on the census, that determining this information had been considered desirable at the beginning of the exercise, but it soon became clear that they could have obtained only an approximation at best.⁵² Their strategy, to diagnose ethnicity through an inspection of the dominant language of the household, was highly unreliable: many white and European residents of the city could trace their families’ existence in Cape Town over many generations and many households may have become multi-lingual as a result. As a result, one cannot convincingly ascertain the British or Afrikaner numbers for the city at this time, even though Vivian Bickford-Smith tentatively offers the view that ‘by 1875, the number of White English-speaking Capetonians had crept ahead of their Dutch – or Afrikaans – speaking counterparts’.⁵³ It is a pity that such evidence is lacking for, even though some Europeans’ families may have been resident in Cape Town for many years, their place of origin remained relevant to them: Lambert argues that, well into the twentieth century, South Africans of native British stock continued to regard themselves as British nationals first and foremost.⁵⁴

A large body of people also came to Cape Town in the years that followed the 1891 census: ‘With the help of some 70,000 migrants, mostly from southern Africa and Europe, the population of greater Cape Town grew from 79,000 to 170,000 between 1891 and 1904, making the city the largest in pre-Union South Africa.’⁵⁵ Due to the absence of a census between 1891 and 1904, it is impossible to specify a precise figure for the year 1897. Therefore, the figure of 90,000, provided by that year’s *Illustrated Cape Town Guide*, remains the best evidence available. Bickford-Smith calculates that around 40,000 of the 70,000 new migrants that arrived in Cape Town between 1891 and

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

⁵³ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 34.

⁵⁴ J. Lambert, “‘An Unknown People’: Reconstructing British South African Identity’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 37, no. 4 (2009), p. 601.

⁵⁵ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 131.

1904 were white, with the lion's share of them coming from Britain. In addition, approximately 9,000 European Jews fled to Cape Town to escape pogroms taking place in western Russia, thus following exactly the same path from religious persecution as hundreds of French Protestants had done two centuries earlier. Of the estimated 30,000 non-white migrants, Bickford-Smith claims that two-thirds of these were Coloured people from Cape Town's regional hinterland, whilst many of the rest were Africans from the Eastern Cape.⁵⁶

III. Models of Governance

In Hong Kong, the continuing retention of Crown Colony status remained a source of deep frustration to many members of its foreign elite. Despite this, their agitation for reform did not prompt a change of heart in Whitehall. However, the great changes that took place in Cape Town over this period were reflected in the city's local politics. As its population rose and its demographics changed, Cape Town's structure of governance evolved in order to ensure that the city's European elite retained control. The threat that the increasing growth, enrichment and influence of Cape Town's non-white bourgeoisie posed to them, prompted by their harnessing of the mineral-fuelled economic booms, caused the electoral goalposts to be shifted and the eligibility to vote restricted – undermining the liberal reputation that the Cape Colony had earned due to its 'colour blind' franchise; one that was unique in southern Africa.

Hong Kong

Although, by 1897, Hong Kong had developed in size and economic strength many times over since its foundation, the method of governance employed there remained resolutely the same. Indeed, Chan argues that the constitutional structure of Hong Kong only saw significant change when the countdown to its repatriation to China began in the late twentieth century: 'Until 1982, Britain's official policy was to resist major constitutional change, retaining with only minor modifications the Victorian pattern of

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

administration-led bureaucracy under a London-appointed governor garnished with appointed advisory or consultative bodies.⁵⁷ John Darwin echoes this view, noting that ‘by comparison with almost every other part of the British Empire Hong Kong’s fate was constitutional stasis.’⁵⁸ Subtle changes were in evidence there during the final years of the nineteenth century however: by 1897 there was now unofficial Chinese representation on the city’s main political consultative body – the Legislative Council – in the form of Ho Kai and Wei Yuk.⁵⁹ However, this was not a radical evolution: both these men were highly anglicised and had been educated in the United Kingdom. Both also occupied positions with the colony’s elite: Ho Kai was a prominent barrister and physician while Wei Yuk was Comprador to the Mercantile Bank of India.⁶⁰

Although their role on the Legislative Council was to provide the governor with the mood of the Chinese community, neither of these men could be seen as being truly representative, in both social position and educational background, of the teeming population whose views they were tasked with conveying. For example, Ho Kai regarded himself ‘as not only Chinese but also a British subject’ and every trip he made to China ‘reminded him that he was a different kind of Chinese’.⁶¹ Tsai also argues that ‘Members of the new intelligentsia like Ho Kai.... were alienated from the working coolies in the colony.’⁶² The cultural sensitivities of these men also reflected the huge gap that existed between them and Hong Kong’s mainstream population – Tsai also accuses the anglicised Chinese elite of being ‘iconoclasts, ready to attack some time-honoured beliefs and values’ such as the traditions of *feng-shui*, the practices of foot-binding and opium-smoking, and the *mui-tsai* system.⁶³ Ho Kai had also earlier broken with convention by taking an English wife, Alice Walkden, who tragically died, only

⁵⁷ M. Chan, ‘Hong Kong: Colonial Legacy, Transformation, and Challenge’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 547 ‘The Future of Hong Kong’ (1996), pp. 13 – 14.

⁵⁸ J. Darwin, ‘Hong Kong in British Decolonisation’, in Brown and Foot (eds), *Hong Kong’s Transitions*, p. 19.

⁵⁹ ‘Members of the Hong Kong Legislative Council’, N. A., CO 129/276, ‘Colonial Office Despatches, 1st June – 15th August 1897’, p. 26.

⁶⁰ J. Carroll, ‘Colonial Hong Kong as a Cultural-Historical Place’, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2 (2006), p. 520.

⁶¹ J. Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), p. 112.

⁶² Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, p. 169.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

three years into their marriage, shortly after giving birth to their daughter in 1884.⁶⁴ An alumnus of Aberdeen University, his life was surely of greater similarity to the colonial elite than to the vast majority of the city's Chinese residents. Both he and Wei Yuk had done very well out of their British connections and both were admirers of Britain's ability to bring order to their corner of southern China. An influential leader of the Chinese pro-reform movement, Ho Kai thought that British ideals of democracy offered a shining example of how a fairer and more prosperous China could be created once the moribund Qing dynasty was finally swept aside.⁶⁵

Being a sparsely populated island in 1841, Hong Kong had developed without much in the way of an indigenous population. Therefore, the city was predominantly populated by Chinese migrants from elsewhere. As a result, the British did not have the presence of a strong pre-existing power structure to engage with immediately upon their arrival. Instead, they came to rely on the Chinese merchants and professional classes, such as Ho Kai and Wei Yuk who rose above the crowd. Whilst this was probably the only practical solution that could have been employed, it meant that the question of who best represented this diverse community remained perennially unclear. British high society tried to keep itself at arm's length from the Chinese as much as possible, but by utilising the influence of the local Chinese bourgeoisie they created a method of rule that was largely effective at 'controlling the largely unassimilated, partly transient labouring masses' who were so vital to ensuring the city's continued success.⁶⁶

The British colonial authorities believed that there were significant compensations to the Chinese in living under the British flag. Governor Robinson, addressing an unhappy Chinese delegation in December 1895, expressed this clearly: 'You Chinese know that there is no place in your own country where you can live so quietly, so free from disturbance or interference, as Hong Kong; or if there is, it only surprises me that you do

⁶⁴ G. H. Choa, *The Life and Times of Sir Kai Ho Kai* (Hong Kong, 2nd edition, 2000), p. 28.

⁶⁵ N. Ng Lun, 'The Role of Hong Kong Educated Chinese in the Shaping of Modern China', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1983), pp. 108 – 9.

⁶⁶ C. Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841 – 1880* (Hong Kong, 2001), p. 329.

not go and live there.’⁶⁷ Tsang suggests that the Chinese were aware that this policy did deliver positives as well as negatives to them: ‘The colonial government maintained minimal contacts with the native population, which was not unusual in territories ceded to the British Empire in the nineteenth century. Although the British policy of “benevolent neglect” implied that the government did very little for the Chinese, it also meant the government was not oppressive.’⁶⁸

It is difficult to accurately gauge the community’s mood towards British governance in Hong Kong at this time for oneself due to the absence of any local Chinese primary sources as contributions to this thesis. Among their number may have been some people who considered the Qing to be an equally foreign power, so this may have softened their view of the British.⁶⁹ Hong Kong was well known as a refuge of anti-Manchu sentiment – hosting both the modern political revolutionaries such as Ho Kai and Sun Yatsen, who planned to replace the aging empire with a republic, and the secret societies of ‘Hongmen’ that aspired to deliver the return of the Ming dynasty. Such was the level of intrigue around the time of the jubilee that Governor Robinson felt compelled to write to Joseph Chamberlain in January, 1897, informing him of his intention ‘to take every precaution to prevent Hong Kong becoming a base of action for conspiracies against the Government of China.’⁷⁰

However, although the Chinese community did not agitate for direct access to political power in Hong Kong, this should not be taken as an indicator that life for them under the British flag was always rosy. When problems arose, sections of the Chinese community tended to resort to direct action in order to air their grievances – as seen by the regular incidents of strikes, boycotts and civil disobedience that took place in this period.⁷¹ However, the fact that large numbers of Chinese continued to flock to the city suggests

⁶⁷ Robinson quoted in Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, p. 101.

⁶⁸ Tsang, ‘Government and Politics in Hong Kong’, p. 66.

⁶⁹ E. Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861 – 1928* (Washington, DC, 2011), p. 10.

⁷⁰ Governor Sir William Robinson to The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, ‘Secret Societies hostile to China’, 5th January, 1897, N. A., CO 129/275, ‘Colonial Office Despatches, 1st January – 31st May 1897’, p. 5.

⁷¹ Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, pp. 13 – 5.

that life there was perceived by them as having its advantages – and their retention of close links to their homelands and desire to return there may well have further reduced their appetite for serious political reform. Darwin's analysis that their exclusion from political power could have been swiftly brought to an end 'by a popular movement of even modest proportions' is certainly an interesting hypothesis, but no serious challenge to British rule was made by any section of the Chinese community.⁷² This leads one to construe that, as long as life was not made intolerable by the colonial authorities and the opportunity of earning good money remained, all sections of the fragmented Chinese community in Hong Kong saw some benefits to being ruled by the British. It is highly possible that they realised that the British had created the economic miracle that they now resided in, and getting rid of the British would put their livelihoods in jeopardy.

Members of Hong Kong's foreign civilian elite were more intolerant towards the lack of devolved political power and they regularly agitated for the shackles of Crown Colony status to be loosened. This desire for reform was in evidence from the earliest decades of the colony, as a call for Hong Kong's governance to mirror the financial autonomy and control in civic matters enjoyed by the Shanghai Municipal Council in the 1860s shows. Further supplications were presented in 1894, 1916, 1919 and 1922.⁷³ Each time they were rejected by the Colonial Office. The regularity of their efforts shows the high level of frustration that must have been present. Although some members of the foreign community made enough money to provide some measure of compensation for their state of political impotence, there was a perceptible feeling of annoyance and injustice at Whitehall's decision not to devolve any meaningful power to certain sections of the local citizenship.

The demand for constitutional change closest to the Diamond Jubilee event was the petition sent to the House of Commons in May 1894. Signed by 362 highly prominent citizens, the fact that it had been organised by Thomas Whitehead, a respected banker

⁷² Darwin, 'Hong Kong in British Decolonisation', p. 24.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

and a member of the Legislative Council, gave it additional clout.⁷⁴ Arguing that Hong Kong's extraordinary economic growth was primarily due to 'the enterprise, skill and energy of British merchants and ship-owners, to vast expenditure on public works and reclamations, and to its increasing manufacturers', the petitioners bemoaned the fact that they were allowed to take 'only a limited part or small share in the Government of the Colony, and are not permitted to have any really effective voice in the management of its affairs, external or internal.'⁷⁵ The *Hongkong Daily Press*, which supported the petitioners' cause, accepted that the special situation of Hong Kong, 'a Colony so peculiarly situated on the borders of a great Oriental empire, and with a population largely composed of aliens whose traditional and family interests and racial sympathies largely remain in that neighbouring Empire', meant that the safeguarding of British imperial interests sometimes had to take priority over certain democratic principles.⁷⁶ However, this understanding did not, in its view, call for a total denial of the innate rights of its British citizens: 'All the petitioners claim is the common right of Englishmen to manage their local affairs and control the expenditure of the Colony where imperial considerations are not involved.'⁷⁷ This argument derived from 'an articulate strand of local Whiggism whose patriotism was expressed in terms of the indivisible rights of freeborn Englishmen, whether exercised at home or in the colonial arena.'⁷⁸ For the petitioners, the right to a system of local democracy was self-evident – and the introduction of it need not have impinged on imperial concerns. The petitioners clearly felt that the bureaucrats in London should loosen their grip on power and acknowledge the administrative and intellectual talent that resided in the city.

The principal factor behind the decision to consistently ignore the foreign civilian elite's pleas for self-governance seems to have been the importance of Hong Kong to the British Empire as a military base. This position was re-emphasised during a debate at the

⁷⁴ 'There were a few Chinese and Indian signatures, but overwhelmingly it was a European, even a British, demand.' F., Madden and D., Fieldhouse, *The Dependent Empire and Ireland, 1840 – 1900: Select Documents on the Constitutional History of the British Empire and Commonwealth*, Vol. 5 (New York, 1991), p. 499.

⁷⁵ 'Petition to the Commons, May-June 1894', reproduced in *Ibid.*, p. 499.

⁷⁶ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, editorial of 5th May, 1894.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, editorial of 5th May, 1894.

⁷⁸ S. Dubow, 'How British was the British World? The Case of South Africa', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2009), p. 6.

Colonial Office in 1883 on whether the colony should continue to be led by a civilian governor or by the highest ranking military officer present – as was the case at that time in Gibraltar and Bermuda. The contribution of the Governor of Hong Kong at the time, Sir George Bowen, shows that, despite the fact that he was a civil servant and had administered a number of self-governing colonies in Australasia, he felt that Hong Kong's value lay firmly in its strategic military importance to the wider empire:

There are two views of the *raison d'être* of this Colony; one that, like most other Colonies, it exists for the sake of the residents in it; the other, that Hong-Kong is not for the Hongkongese [*sic*] only, but for the British Empire at large, as an aid and support to the trade with China generally, and as our Chief Military and Naval Station in these seas. Local interest must always tend to the prevalence of the former view, but I consider that the latter is the true one, and that it is important to emphasise it.⁷⁹

On this occasion, the Colonial Secretary, the Earl of Derby, declined to replace a civilian governor with a military one. However, the fact that this issue refused to go away, and was discussed again at the time of the 1894 petition, shows the continuing debate over whether Hong Kong was primarily an 'Imperial Emporium' or an 'Imperial Fortress'.⁸⁰

It is clear that the foreign community of Hong Kong was reluctant to accept the idea that their city was primarily a military base. The *Hongkong Daily Press* commented in 1894, 'In time of war it may be found necessary to give the military supreme control, but in times of peace military domination would be almost the worst thing that could happen to the Colony.'⁸¹ For the petitioners, Hong Kong was a great economic success story of their own creation – a dynamic centre of business, first and foremost. However, the city's importance as a military outpost of the British Empire has been more recently confirmed by Robert Bickers who points out that 'before Singapore's interwar

⁷⁹ Sir George Bowen, despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Derby, dated 30th November, 1883. N. L. S. JHSL papers, Acc. 4138/2 b. Earlier in his career, Bowen had governed the colonies of Queensland, New Zealand and Victoria.

⁸⁰ Sir George Bowen, despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Derby, dated 23rd May, 1883. *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, editorial of 4th May, 1894.

development, Hong Kong was the only British naval base in the Far East.’⁸² Although Hong Kong, the empire’s ‘Gibraltar of the East’, did not follow Gibraltar’s lead by installing a military man as its governor, the exigencies of the armed forces in Hong Kong remained a vital consideration in the minds of imperial administrators throughout this period. In his reply to the 1894 petition, the Marquis of Ripon made this clear in his rejection of the call to abolish Crown Colony status: ‘An Imperial Station with great Imperial interests, on the borders of a foreign land, the nucleus of wide-reaching British interests in the Far East, must, it appears to me, be kept under Imperial protection and under Imperial control.’⁸³

Further evidence of Hong Kong’s vital importance as a military base is provided by the requisitioning of the Mount Austin Hotel by the British Army, in the face of much protest from The Peak’s European residents, in the summer of 1897. The Hong Kong special correspondent of a Peruvian newspaper confirmed that, despite the military’s protestations that the hotel was to be converted into a hospital, the actual intention was to create something rather more substantial: ‘The object of the purchase of this property in the highest point of the island, from whence it is completely dominated, is to construct a strong fortress on the site now occupied by the hotel, in order to defend the island from the rear, where at the moment it is completely defenceless.’⁸⁴ Just a week before the Diamond Jubilee celebrations took place, the *Hongkong Telegraph* responded to this development with a withering description of the levels of local democracy present in Hong Kong:

It is a pure, unadulterated Crown Colony, administered solely for the benefit of the Home Government as completely and entirely as if it were a Portuguese or Spanish possession.... It has the forms of representative Government. It has none of the realities. Honduras has far more freedom. The old constitutional rule, “No taxation without

⁸² R. Bickers, ‘The Colony’s Shifting Position in the British Informal Empire in China’, in Brown and Foot (eds), *Hong Kong’s Transitions*, p. 44.

⁸³ The Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Marquis of Ripon, to Governor Sir William Robinson, despatch of 23rd August, 1894. Reproduced in Madden and Fieldhouse, *The Dependent Empire and Ireland*, p. 505.

⁸⁴ Words of the special correspondent of *El Comercio* reproduced in *The Overland China Mail*, 17th June, 1897.

representation” is utterly set aside and disregarded so far as we are concerned.⁸⁵

This quotation provides a strong indication of how bitterly the continuation of governance from London was viewed by some members of the community. Had the foreign elite not been so transitory in nature, and not so aware of the opportunities for employment and enrichment on offer in Hong Kong, the pressure deployed on the home government to change Hong Kong’s constitutional status might perhaps have been relentless.

A second reason given for the refusal to modify Hong Kong’s constitutional position in 1894 was the Colonial Office’s belief that the interests of the Chinese population would be best served by preserving imperial control. In his reply to the 1894 petition, the Marquis of Ripon did praise the skill and enterprise of the British merchants who had helped to build up Hong Kong. However, he also stated that ‘the fact remains that the overwhelming mass of the community are Chinese, that they have thriven under a certain form of government and that in any scheme involving a change of administration their wishes should be consulted and their interests carefully watched and guarded.’⁸⁶ British authorities in London were clearly aware of the contribution that the Chinese had made to Hong Kong and of the need to consider their interests. To Ripon, the presence of so many Chinese people in Hong Kong in the first place was proof enough that the existing system worked and should therefore be maintained: ‘the fact that the Chinese have settled in the island in such large numbers has not only been one main element in its prosperity, but also the most practical and irrefutable evidence that the government, under which a politically timid race such as the Chinese have shown every desire to live, must have at least possessed some measure of strength and of justice.’⁸⁷ Orientalist notions of the Chinese community’s traditional detachment from politics are made here, giving the colonial administrators ammunition to claim that as the ‘politically timid’ Chinese were disinterested in – or incapable of – ruling themselves, then it fell to the

⁸⁵ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 16th June, 1897.

⁸⁶ Marquis of Ripon to Governor Robinson, 23rd August, 1894, quoted in Madden and Fieldhouse, *The Dependent Empire and Ireland*, p. 503.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 502-3.

British imperial government to benevolently do so on their behalf. The success of Hong Kong was largely built on the back of migrant Chinese labour and this Colonial Secretary was clearly aware that nothing should dissuade future generations from migrating to the city.

A final reason why the proposals of this petition were rejected was the precedent that devolving further power to the local population would set, leading one day to a situation whereby the Chinese could make a morally unanswerable case for direct inclusion in the city's governance. The possibility of this scenario taking place was recognised by Ripon in his rejection of a supplementary proposal, included in the 1894 petition, that an 'Unofficial Member' of English birth should be added to the Executive Council. In his reply to Governor Robinson, Ripon argued that it 'would be invidious and inequitable to lay down that Chinese subjects of the Queen shall be debarred from appointment to the Executive Council, and therefore the possibility of the appointment being hereafter filled by a Chinese gentleman must be reckoned with.'⁸⁸ Ripon's words present quite clearly the dilemma faced by colonial authorities across the British Empire in dealing with aspirant local indigenous populations. On the one hand, a semblance of equality had to be maintained – an image created whereby all Queen Victoria's subjects had the same rights and opportunities. However, this was counterbalanced by the practical realisation that a pre-requisite to the British maintaining power in these regions was the adoption of a dictatorial style and the exclusion of others. The British belief in their inherent racial superiority facilitated the solving of this conundrum, as it could then be argued that it was in the best interests of the other races to be ruled by those most capable – i.e. them. This quotation illustrates this paradox beautifully: Ripon at first suggests that it would be an unthinkable insult if the Chinese were denied advancement through overt discrimination. However, the second section of this statement warns of the possible consequences for British rule in Hong Kong should Chinese advancement be realised

Although the British authorities used local intermediaries to facilitate governance, access to real power had to therefore be limited to Britons, or – at a stretch – to those of Anglo-

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 506.

Saxon origin. Therefore, this passage sheds light upon the status of the Chinese within Hong Kong at this time, providing a clear example of the logic that permitted the Chinese to be acknowledged as *bona fide* subjects of Queen Victoria, but also allowed them to be the victims of discrimination. Spurr, in his exposition of the colonial mindset, argues that ‘Members of a colonizing class will insist on their radical difference from the colonized as a way of legitimizing their own position in the colonial community. But at the same time they will insist, paradoxically, on the colonized people’s essential identity with them – both as preparation for the domestication of the colonized and as a moral and philosophical precondition for the civilizing mission.’⁸⁹ Therefore, this philosophy allowed the colonial elite to pay lip-service to the idea of an equal and valued place for the Chinese subjects within the empire, whilst simultaneously allowing them to regulate the Chinese to a subaltern role. While the Chinese remained numerically dominant in Hong Kong, there was little chance of the foreign community’s pleas for greater levels of democracy and any devolution of power from London being seriously considered.

Cape Town

In contrast to Hong Kong, Cape Town had seen a regular evolution in its system of government over the decades of British rule that had followed the final retaking of the city from the Batavian Republic in 1806. Cape Town acquired its own municipal government in 1840 and it became the capital city of Cape Colony following the granting of Responsible Government in 1872: ‘These changes had real meaning for Cape Town, which was deeply embroiled in the early struggle for independence. Despite resistance from the Eastern Province, Cape Town became a capital city in its own right, asserting its identity as the home of parliament.’⁹⁰ Although its traditional role as the ‘tavern of the seas’ still remained important to both its economy and its identity, despite the recent threat posed by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Cape Town’s new status as a self-governing municipality was a deeply symbolic and welcome

⁸⁹ D. Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham, NC, 1993), p. 7.

⁹⁰ Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, p. 171.

development. A sense of civic pride at this constitutional evolution is clearly perceptible in the introduction of a guide book to the city that was published in 1897:

On every side there is evidence of a new era of enterprise in the City of Cape Town which augurs well for its future prosperity. Moreover, it has the advantage of being the most populous town in the Colony; it is the nearest port to England; it is the seat of Government; it is surrounded by most beautiful scenery; and it is possessed of a suburb [sic] and health-giving climate. Thus it has many advantages over other less favoured towns in South Africa.⁹¹

Cape Town's enfranchised citizens could now exercise a large degree of autonomy over how they were governed and who they were governed by. Politically, Cape Town came of age and blossomed in this period. The city was viewed as a classic example of how power could be devolved to local people within the British Empire if the conditions were right – i.e. there was a sympathetic and sizeable Anglo-Saxon governing elite present.

British 'Cape Liberalism' had also gained a famous reputation throughout the nineteenth century for its perceived high levels of political tolerance and an enlightened approach to governance, embodied by the presence of a large 'colour-blind' property-based franchise that was unique throughout southern Africa. According to historians of a more recent vintage, however, wealth and race still continued to play a disproportionately large part in determining who wielded local political power and many of the proclaimed virtues of 'Cape Liberalism' were a myth: 'While the political citizenship and the right to elect and be elected was linked to property ownership, through a set of discursive means the urban hegemony of English as a superior European ethnicity was established and ultimately controlled municipal politics.'⁹² The great influx of African labourers to the city during the mineral revolution provoked a reversal in the progressive direction of Cape Town politics, with the Europeans closing ranks, reducing the electorate and forming a political *laager* to safeguard their position.

⁹¹ Edwards & Co., *The Illustrated Cape Town Guide*, p. 23.

⁹² F. Miraftab, 'Colonial Present: Legacies of the Past in Contemporary Urban Practices in Cape Town, South Africa', *Journal of Planning History*, vol. 11, no. 4 (2012), p. 288.

The recent demographic changes were also replicated across the Cape Colony as a whole, due primarily to a series of military annexations made throughout the nineteenth century that brought the Transkeian territories and huge numbers of Xhosa people into its population. Whereas the rapid growth in the number of Africans residing in Cape Town over the final quarter of the nineteenth century had been due to immigration, the corresponding growth of the African population within the Cape Colony as a whole had been the result of regular episodes of eastwards military conquest. However, due to the large number of Africans that met the property criteria required for the franchise, this group became a considerable electoral force in the Cape Colony during the 1880s. In the 1890 parliamentary elections, Africans – particularly those residing in the Eastern Cape areas – were estimated to have had a significant impact in one-sixth of the colony's constituencies.⁹³ As a result, legislation was passed by the Cape Colony's parliament to reduce their potency at the ballot box.

In the specific case of Cape Town, this legislation 'aimed at restricting the vote and thereby making the town council more safely the creature of "better", i.e. bourgeois, White Capetonians.'⁹⁴ The first example of this legislation was the Cape Parliamentary Registration Act of 1887, brought in by the administration of Prime Minister Gordon Sprigg. In a striking example of putting the requirements of his own political survival before the region's existing political traditions, the prime minister intended to use this legislation to reduce the impact that the ownership of tribal land, particularly in the Eastern Cape where his own constituency was, had on a voter's property calculations. Xhosa politicians responded to this attack on native voting rights by stepping up the campaign to get those African men in the region, who were still eligible to vote, to register themselves. In this way, the impact of Sprigg's Registration Act was successfully neutralised, although the malicious intent behind it was clear for all to see.

However, the movement to restrict the ability of many non-whites to vote received real momentum with the passing of the Franchise and Ballot Act by Cecil Rhodes' ruling

⁹³ J. Evans, P. Grimshaw, D. Phillips and S. Swain, *Equal Subjects, Unequal Rights: Indigenous People in British Settler Colonies, 1830 – 1910* (Manchester, 2003), p. 163.

⁹⁴ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 60.

coalition in 1892 – only five years prior to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. This measure, which tripled the property qualification required to vote from £25 to £75 and introduced a literacy test, meant that although some relatively poor white colonists lost their ability to vote, by far the biggest losers were the non-white middle classes. Despite there being an insistence at the time that the legislation had not been instigated by the recent changes to the colony's racial dynamics – Rhodes arguing that 'The question was not one of colour, but of education' – this was unconvincing.⁹⁵ The *Cape Times* and other sections of the community felt that Rhodes had introduced it in order to appease the Afrikaner Bond, the party that formed the majority of Rhodes' governing coalition.⁹⁶ Indeed, the Act's architect, Jan Hofmeyr, appeared to let the cat out of the bag regarding its discriminatory intent with his statement, made in the Cape Assembly, that the qualification should be set high enough that 'the ordinary aboriginal barbarian could not reach it.'⁹⁷ It is therefore apparent that, despite the fact that Rhodes was forced to placate the liberal wing of his coalition by also introducing the secret ballot, this was a largely retrograde piece of legislation that was principally constructed in order to thwart the political aspirations of targeted sections of the Cape Colony's population.⁹⁸

Therefore, although the Franchise and Ballot Act theoretically safeguarded the Cape's 'colour blind' political traditions by not precluding voters on the basis of their ethnicity, in reality it was a reaction to the changing demographics that now threatened the white community's hold on power. Indeed, Tamarkin argues that this legislation can now be seen as being a precursor to the politics of segregation that dominated South Africa for the second half of twentieth century: 'In getting his government, with its liberal wing, and Parliament to raise the franchise to the detriment of black political advance, Rhodes made a most significant contribution to the entrenchment of white domination.'⁹⁹ However, it received support at the time from not just the more extreme wing of Afrikaner Bond but also from whites who held more moderate positions on the subject

⁹⁵ Cecil Rhodes quoted in K. Wilburn, "'Friend of the Native?': James Sivewright and the Cape Liberal Tradition', *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 65, no. 2 (2013), p. 282.

⁹⁶ G. Shaw, *Some Beginnings: The Cape Times (1876 – 1901)* (Cape Town, 1975), p. 24.

⁹⁷ Jan Hofmeyr, leader of the Afrikaner Bond, quoted in Wilburn, 'James Sivewright and the Cape Liberal Tradition', p. 282.

⁹⁸ R. Rotberg, *The Founder* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 365 – 6.

⁹⁹ M. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners* (London, 1996), p. 175.

of race. Among them was Theodore Wirgman, a clergyman of British stock who would later write powerful polemics against the injustices that the Afrikaners inflicted on the non-white population during their time in southern Africa.¹⁰⁰ In November, 1891, he wrote to the *Speaker* magazine in London from his rectory in the Eastern Cape, arguing that ‘Of course, Mr. Hofmeyr’s franchise proposals seem a piece of retrograde Toryism to English Radicals, who forget the difficulties of our position; but, staunch Radical as I am in English politics, I feel that we are bound to “go slow” in applying the rigid logic of the “one man one vote” doctrine to a native population which outnumbers us *two to one*.’¹⁰¹ The parallels between this statement and the Marquis of Ripon’s rejection of the 1894 petition are clear: action needed to be taken to ensure that the colonised, non-white populations could never access the levers of power. In Cape Town, this need required the passing of additional legislation. In Hong Kong, this required that the *status quo* remained and that calls for more liberal legislation needed to be consistently resisted.

For the *Manchester Guardian*’s local southern African correspondent, the Franchise and Ballot Act was indisputably a racially motivated piece of legislation:

It is true, no doubt, that this requirement will have a special tendency to keep off the register the increasing crowd of natives. That, however, is a result which can only be objected to by those who are prepared to recommend that the balance of political power in a not unimportant British colony should be left in the hands of natives who are not yet able to appreciate the methods and the meaning of civilised government.¹⁰²

The language used in this quotation is stark, and the journalist clearly believed that his newspaper’s readership would not contest the notion offered that the ‘natives’ were ill-suited for political leadership. Such views were not controversial in many contemporary white communities – either in the mother country or in the dominions. As well as casting some light upon the motivation behind the Franchise and Ballot Act, this quotation

¹⁰⁰ A. T. Wirgman, ‘The Boers and the Native Question’, *The Nineteenth Century: a monthly review* (London, April, 1900), pp. 593 – 602.

¹⁰¹ A. T. Wirgman, ‘Mr. Rhodes and the Africander Bond’ in the ‘Letters to the Editor’ section, *The Speaker: A Review of Politics, Letters, Science, and the Arts*, 26th December, 1891. Italics as shown in the original.

¹⁰² ‘The Cape Franchise (From Our Correspondent)’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 19th July, 1892.

further reinforces the fact that this was a period when racial profiling and prejudice were commonplace.

Although the Wirgman quotation suggests that this legislation did receive support from many white colonists, the passing of this Act was met by significant opposition from local non-white communities – and one of the protest movements that this spawned was the Coloured People's Association. The depth of feeling that was present among Cape Town's Coloured community towards the Franchise and Ballot Act can be ascertained by the existence of a petition, which collected over 10,000 signatures, and the presence of a well-attended public meeting in August 1892. During this meeting, one of the representatives, James Curry, questioned the need to restrict the franchise and argued that the loyalty of the Coloured community to the Cape Colony was not in doubt: 'we Coloured people have never rebelled.'¹⁰³ Although the petition raised by the Coloured People's Association was ultimately unsuccessful, petitioning had a strong tradition in Cape Town politics. This showed that elements of European political culture had successfully transplanted themselves to this corner of Africa. The existence of petitions help to explain how Cape Town's citizens saw themselves in relation to the body politic. Heerma van Voss argues that 'petitions tell us something about the way government was perceived by petitioners. They must have seen government as something which could be moved to decide in their favour.'¹⁰⁴ Viewed thus, the use of petitioning by the Coloured population of Cape Town, and the foreign community of Hong Kong in 1894, can be perceived as an affirmation of loyalty towards the incumbent political process – thus seeming to vindicate James Curry's protestation.

Andrew Thompson supports this argument: 'appeals and petitions to Britain, based on a deep-seated belief in Victorian notions of free wage labour, secure property rights, equality before the law and a non-racial franchise, were fundamental to the evolving

¹⁰³ Curry quoted in Bickford-Smith, 'Black Ethnicities', p. 456.

¹⁰⁴ L. Heerma van Voss, 'Introduction', in L. Heerma van Voss (ed.), *Petitions in Social History* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 6.

ideology of the first generation of African political leaders.¹⁰⁵ Petitions were also created by the Chinese community in Hong Kong: during the visitation of bubonic plague there in 1894, a petition was created by the residents of East Street to complain about the sanitation officers ‘entering their houses unexpectedly and frightening the children’.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, petitioning appears to have been a political process that was embraced across the empire and viewed as the most civilised way to voice grievances.

The Coloured People’s Association had no doubt also been encouraged by the fact that previous petitions had been effective in changing government policy in Cape Town. This had happened in 1878, when a group of Malay fishermen had managed to reverse the ban on fish curing that had been recently enforced in Rogge Bay. In this, the petitioners suggested that if Queen Victoria knew about the unpopular decisions that were being made in her name by local politicians, she would right these injustices. They wrote:

We were always under the impression that we were emancipated in the reign of our most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, and freed from tyranny, but it seems that we are mistaken, as our rulers (perhaps without intention) are depressing us [*sic*]; surely it is without the proper knowledge of the extent of our misfortunes.¹⁰⁷

The reference to their emancipation from slavery is a clear indicator of their faith in the queen’s benevolence towards them and this image of Queen Victoria as their liberator goes a long way towards explaining this community’s traditional support for her.¹⁰⁸ This sentiment also reinforces the fact that the imperial mythology of the Great White Queen still endured – and Queen Victoria continued to be seen as a guardian of truth and justice by some of her non-white subjects across the globe.¹⁰⁹ Ranger argues that this image of an ‘omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent monarchy’ became a central theme of the

¹⁰⁵ A. Thompson, ‘The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa, c. 1870 – 1939’, *The English Historical Review*, vol. 118, no. 477 (2003), pp. 648 – 9.

¹⁰⁶ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 21st May, 1894.

¹⁰⁷ The 1878 petition of the fishermen of Rogge Bay to the Cape Parliament and the Governor of Cape Colony, quoted in Bickford-Smith, ‘Black Ethnicities’, p. 454.

¹⁰⁸ C. McCreery, ‘Telling the story: *HMS Galetta*’s Voyage to South Africa, 1867’, *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 61, no. 4 (2009), p. 824.

¹⁰⁹ H. Sapire, ‘Ambiguities of Loyalism: the Prince of Wales in India and Africa, 1921 – 2 and 25’, *History Workshop Journal* (2011), pp. 5 – 6.

imperial ideology that was projected towards Africans in general, as the colonial authorities hoped to tap into the existing African notions of kingship in order to solidify their influence.¹¹⁰

A further, final, blow to the reputation of the Cape liberal tradition was the abolition of Cape Town's electoral 'plumping' system in 1893. This legislation, created specifically to prevent a black political campaigner, Achmat Effendi, from being elected to the House of Assembly, abolished the ability of an elector to give all four of his votes to a single candidate by stipulating that he could give them only one vote each.¹¹¹ Although the fall of Rhodes' administration in the early days of 1896 meant that no legislation was enacted to restrict the franchise further before the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, these developments remained a divisive issue within Cape Town. As the large number of signatures on the Coloured People's Association's petition of 1892 shows, issues that concerned race and access to the franchise were important and emotive ones in Cape Town during this decade. The drawbridge had been hastily raised by the white political establishment, and some of those affected by this process may have regarded the sudden withdrawal of their ability to cast a ballot and have an impact on their community's future as a cruel blow.

In both Hong Kong and Cape Town, disquiet was present over the governing mechanisms employed within the cities. The introduction of regressive legislation in Cape Town, and the stubborn vetoing by politicians in Whitehall of the proposals to devolve greater governing powers to Hong Kong's local civilian elites, bred tension – tension that may have influenced, and been reflected in, these cities' celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee. In order to understand the celebrations in Hong Kong and Cape Town in greater depth, the following chapter will consider more of the important issues which contributed to the political climate that was present at the time of the Diamond Jubilee.

¹¹⁰ T. Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 212.

¹¹¹ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 145.

CHAPTER TWO

Divided Cities: Community Unrest Prior to the Diamond Jubilee

This chapter explores the state of community relations that existed in Cape Town and Hong Kong on the eve of the Diamond Jubilee. In particular, it focuses on the severe crises triggered in both cities by the outbreak of epidemic disease in the years leading up to the event. In 1894, Hong Kong was hit by an outbreak of bubonic plague that caused enormous social unrest, an unparalleled exodus of Chinese residents from the city and a significant death toll. Twelve years earlier, Cape Town had been forced to contend with an equally destructive outbreak of smallpox. Several years later, the new burial regulations that had been brought in to counter further outbreaks caused extreme tension in the community, with the rioting by members of the Malay community outside the newly-closed Tana Baru cemetery being the most graphic manifestation of it. These episodes revealed community dynamics at their most acute: the arrival of highly contagious diseases put social relationships under extreme stress, relegated the everyday needs of individuals to the interests of the urban elites and brought underlying antagonisms to the fore. The different cultural practices that were present in both cities were subsequently scrutinised by the colonial authorities for their compatibility with the new sanitation agenda, which compounded the high levels of tension already present and further exposed deep social rifts and long-standing prejudices. Although the Diamond Jubilee was intended to show the solidarity and strength of the empire, these severe public health emergencies revealed that, in both Hong Kong and Cape Town, community relations at the time of the celebrations were compromised by grave and long-standing social fractures.

Secondly, this chapter will consider political events in both cities that also posed a severe threat to existing social relations at the time of the jubilee. In Hong Kong, the

resident Chinese community had regularly been the target of discriminatory legislation. Although their industry had been pivotal to the success of this small British colony, they and their cultural practices were viewed by large sections of the foreign colonial and business elite with significant antipathy and distrust. In Cape Town, the political scene was rocked by the Jameson Raid. Eighteen months on from this speculative attempt to grab Transvaal, the failed coup continued to cast a shadow over the Diamond Jubilee preparations. In late April, 1897, Sir Alfred Milner wrote to a correspondent from the *R.M.S. Norham Castle*, the ship bearing him to his new post at Cape Town, that South Africa ‘is just now the weakest link in the Imperial chain.’¹ Race feeling between Briton and Dutchman appeared to be at a level not witnessed since the Great Trek, and the preparations for the Diamond Jubilee were played out against a background of diplomatic squabbles, ultimatums and the steady flow of troop arrivals.

Therefore, this chapter will argue that, in both Hong Kong and Cape Town, the great imperial event took place within a wider political conjuncture: a time where new and old challenges and tensions had recently come to the surface. Although the event was intended to showcase the strength and diversity of the empire, the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in both these cities were enacted against a potentially volatile backdrop of racial tension, suspicion and disharmony.

I. Public Health Challenges

The outbreak of bubonic plague that ravaged Hong Kong in 1894 was the most catastrophic single event in the city’s short history. Although gaining an exact count of the dead was a difficult task, due to the extent and speed of the Chinese exodus and their ability to spirit away the corpses of family members back to the mainland for burial, the colonial authorities estimated the death toll to be ‘over 2,500 victims in the island alone’.² The scale of the Chinese community’s exodus from the city was extraordinary:

¹ Sir Alfred Milner’s letter to Sir George Parkin, dated 28th April, 1897. Extract reproduced in C. Headlam (ed.), *The Milner Papers: South Africa 1897 – 1899* (London, 1931), p. 42.

² Governor Robinson, address to the Legislative Council, 28th November, 1894. Recorded in N. A., CO 131/23, ‘Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1894’, p. 28.

within two months of the plague's arrival, 80,000 people, a third of the total population, were reported to have fled.³ This upheaval was also replicated in commercial terms: Hong Kong was officially declared 'an infected port', with the majority of the Asia-Pacific region acting swiftly to impose quarantine restrictions on vessels that came from it.⁴ Foreign shipping either refused to take on board native passengers or refused to enter the city's harbour altogether.⁵ These developments prompted Governor Robinson to report, 'Without exaggeration I may assert that so far as trade and commerce are concerned the plague has assumed the importance of an unexampled calamity.'⁶ The outbreak also prompted the colonial authorities to cast off the policy of 'benevolent neglect', which had hitherto been employed towards the Chinese community, and forced them to take a far more invasive and confrontational approach towards the safeguarding of public health in the city. In addition, they were forced to analyse whether all the different practices, rituals and living arrangements that were present in the city were fully compatible with the new public health agenda.

Although it took place a decade and a half before the Diamond Jubilee, the arrival of smallpox in Cape Town in 1882 offers a similar opportunity to glean vital information on the city's deep rooted community dynamics. This period of high drama resulted in a death toll that was of a similar scale to that seen in Hong Kong in 1894 and it also caused severe community unrest. Predominantly, it led to a fierce backlash against the city's Malay residents, who 'like Jews in medieval Europe, were singled out as scapegoats.'⁷ The episode provoked an enquiry into the suitability of the many burial practices that were employed within the city and provided momentum for a transformation in the provision of public health. As in Hong Kong, difficult decisions

³ Governor Robinson, Despatch to the Marquis of Ripon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, of 20th June, 1894. *Ibid.*, p. 283. *The Celestial Empire*, issue of 29th June, 1894: 'From the outbreak of the plague up till now, it is estimated that at least one-third of the Chinese population has gone to the mainland.'

⁴ *The Japan Weekly Mail*, 19th May, 1894: 'A plague known as "Black Death" has broken out in Canton and spread to Hongkong. Strict quarantine regulations will be put into force by the Government to prevent the fatal disease from entering Japan.' *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 21st May, 1894: 'Singapore has imposed nine days' quarantine [on ships from Hong Kong], including the time occupied by the passage.'

⁵ Governor Robinson, Despatch to the Marquis of Ripon, 20th June, 1894, CO 131/23, p. 288.

⁶ Robinson quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁷ V. Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town: group identity and social practice, 1875 – 1902* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 74.

had to be taken by the governing authorities on whether traditional habits risked compromising the health of the overall urban population. As a result, the challenge of improving public health in the cities during this period became a deeply contentious social and political issue.

The response to these epidemics meant that an atmosphere of social and political tolerance, which had allowed daily life to progress in a comparatively harmonious fashion in both cities up until then, had to be swiftly replaced by a central decision-making process that was much more interventionist in nature. The frustrations and prejudices that had been harboured by those in power towards particular sections of the urban community came to light during these periods of extreme danger and upheaval. That rifts in society should be revealed during a time of pestilence is nothing new, as previous outbreaks of the plague in England had also led to popular backlashes against those perceived to be responsible for spreading the disease: ‘Plague could be conquered only by cleansing society from the physical and moral ills associated with it – poverty, popular disturbance, drunkenness, filth of all kinds.’⁸ Echoes of this sentiment could be found in both Hong Kong and Cape Town at this time. In both cities, the targeting of particular communities and their time-honoured practices was met with social unrest and incidents of rioting. In both cities, challenges raised over the disposal of the dead – one of the most important and highly emotive subjects within all societies – acted as a trigger for the violence.

Hong Kong

Tens of thousands of people had died of bubonic plague in Canton during the early months of 1894, and the regular flow of people between this city and Hong Kong meant that it would surely only have been a matter of time before the virus found its way to the British colony. For example, that March, an estimated 40,000 visitors from Canton had travelled to the city to witness the re-opening of the newly restored Man Mo Temple, and a similar number of people had earlier left Hong Kong to take part in Canton’s

⁸ P. Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1985), p. 339.

Chinese New Year celebrations.⁹ The plague made its first appearance in Hong Kong soon after these events and the Chinese areas of the city bore the brunt of the infestation. However, the colonial government – perhaps hamstrung by its default position of ‘benevolent neglect’ – was initially slow to act as the crisis unfolded around it.¹⁰ On 12th May, the *Hongkong Daily Press* acknowledged that appropriate action by the authorities was finally now being taken, but that ‘the measures now decided upon should have been initiated at least five or six days ago, for it appears certain that the plague had declared itself at that time.’¹¹ By the end of May, the plague’s progress throughout the Chinese areas of the city had already become extensive and the *Hongkong Telegraph* reported that ‘as far as the efforts of the energetic and hard working “Whitewash Brigade” are concerned, it is manifest that more infected dwellings are discovered daily than they can possibly cleanse.’¹² The situation was grave indeed: this had revealed itself to be a civic emergency of the utmost severity which called for quick and decisive action. For the city’s ruling authorities, concerns over community relations were secondary while the plague still rampaged through the streets. The finding of 109 dead bodies during one day in June alone shows the extent of the challenge that they faced.¹³

This challenge became harder still due to the cultural traditions of the city’s largest community. In accordance with Confucian precepts that the family should care for its sick and should repatriate the bodies of the deceased to their ancestral lands for burial, the Chinese had stored the corpses of family members in their houses until they could be transported back home.¹⁴ This practice was clearly incompatible with the recent theories on germ transfer and could not be tolerated. Governor Robinson opined that ‘Educated to insanitary habits, and accustomed from infancy to herd together, they [*the Chinese*] were unable to grasp the necessity of segregation; they were quite content to die like

⁹ J. Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842 – 1913* (New York, NY, 1993), p. 173. M. Echenberg, *Plague Ports: the global urban impact of Bubonic Plague 1894 – 1901* (New York, NY, 2012), p. 28.

¹⁰ J. Lowson (Medical Officer in charge of the Epidemic Hospital), ‘Report upon the Epidemic of Plague in Hongkong in 1894’, N. A., CO 131/24, ‘Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1895’, pp. 179-80.

¹¹ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, editorial of 12th May, 1894.

¹² *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 31st May, 1894.

¹³ N. Cameron, *Hong Kong: The Cultured Pearl* (Hong Kong, 1978), p. 118.

¹⁴ M. Sutphen, ‘Not What, but Where: Bubonic Plague and the Reception of Germ Theories in Hong Kong and Calcutta, 1894 – 1897’, *Journal of the History of Medicine*, vol. 52 (1997), p. 93.

sheep, spreading disease around them as long as they were left undisturbed.’¹⁵ He clearly believe that firm action had to be taken, and the dead and the dying had to be forcibly parted from the living as quickly as possible. As Prashant Kidambi discusses in his chapter on the outbreak of the plague in Bombay two years later, localist assumptions dominated the authorities’ response – with the implication being that the plague was being encouraged to spread, due to the appearance of filth, poor ventilation and a general level of ‘sanitary disorder’, in the most run-down and squalid areas of the city.¹⁶ The words of the *Hongkong Daily Press* illustrate this: the newspaper argued that the outbreak derived its power from levels of poverty and filth present and that consequentially ‘the European community, living under more healthy conditions than the generality of the Chinese, have little to fear from it.’¹⁷

The governing authorities’ lack of faith in the Chinese community’s ability to combat the plague by itself was further exposed by its demand that all patients had to receive treatment according to modern western medical principles. The Bye-laws of Section 32 of ‘The Public Health Ordinance, 1887’, which were enacted by the colony’s Sanitary Board on 11th May in response to the outbreak, commanded that all corpses were immediately removed and ‘buried in a special place to be set apart for that purpose’.¹⁸ Those suspected of carrying the virus were to be instantly taken to the colony’s hospitals – often they would be taken to the newly-commissioned hospital hulk *Hygeia*, resting at anchor in the harbour. The infected house would then be whitewashed and condemned, with the family’s belongings burnt in the street. The city’s authorities had clearly decided that the Chinese community’s traditional reliance on ancient remedies and practices gave no guarantee of the wider city’s safety and offered no substitute for the recent advancements in western medical science.

¹⁵ Governor Robinson quoted in F. Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong* (London, rev. ed., 1997), p. 303.

¹⁶ P. Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890 – 1920* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 51.

¹⁷ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 12th May, 1894.

¹⁸ ‘Government Notification – No. 175’, *The Hongkong Government Gazette*, ‘Extraordinary issue of 11th May, 1894. Reproduced in N. A., CO 132/35, ‘Hong Kong Government Gazettes, 1894’, pp. 375 – 6.

David Arnold has argued that it was not unusual for battle lines to be formed on this issue at this time: ‘Disease was a potent factor in the European conceptualisation of indigenous society. This was especially so by the close of the nineteenth century when Europeans began to pride themselves on their scientific understanding of disease causation and mocked what they saw as the fatalism, superstition and barbarity of indigenous responses to disease.’¹⁹ Criticism of Chinese traditional medicine in general also became more explicit during this period: James Lowson, the Medical Officer in charge of the Epidemic Hospital, attacked both ‘the existence and condition’ of the Tung Wah Hospital, where patients were exclusively treated according to traditional Chinese medical principles. He described it as the site of ‘medical and surgical atrocities’ and claimed that the hospital ‘constitutes a serious menace to the health of the community.’²⁰ The *Hongkong Telegraph* shared Lowson’s concerns, voicing that ‘the employees of the Tung Wah Hospital are exhibiting culpable negligence in the matter of the burial of the dead which is nothing short of disgusting, not to say revolting.’²¹

However, the experience was clearly a traumatic one for the Chinese families who, having to first endure the death of a loved one, were then made to give up the body to colonial officers in accordance with the new regulations. The deceased would then be transported to ‘secret mass graves on the outskirts of the city, where the corpses were buried in quicklime and the graves covered by six inches of cement’ – far away from the victim’s ancestral lands.²² Despite the fact that F. H. May, the colony’s Captain Superintendent of Police, later told the Legislative Council that the public reaction to the house visitations had been an overwhelmingly positive one – ‘During the whole of that time not a single complaint was made against any one of these men although they were daily occupied in carrying out measures which were very distasteful to the Chinese population’ – there was considerable opposition to the anti-plague measures at the start

¹⁹ D. Arnold, ‘Introduction: disease, medicine and empire’, in D. Arnold (ed.), *Imperial medicine and indigenous societies* (Manchester, 1988), p. 7.

²⁰ Lowson, ‘Report upon the Epidemic of Plague in Hongkong in 1894’, CO 131/24, p. 177.

²¹ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 23rd May, 1894.

²² Echenberg, *Plague Ports*, p. 31.

of their implementation.²³ This was admitted to at the time by Governor Robinson, in a private despatch to the Colonial Secretary:

At this time, about the 21st May, the greatest dissatisfaction was shewn [sic] by the Chinese community in regard to the methods of sanitation we were employing. Complaints were made that the privacy of women's apartments was being invaded, that women and children were being "frightened out of their wits" by the daily visits of the Military and Police, and then it began to be rumoured that the "Foreigners" had sinister and unspeakable designs on the women and children.²⁴

The *Celestial Empire*, from its vantage point in Shanghai, also reported that 'the Chinese are objecting very strongly to having their premises inspected. The Police, however, are insisting on carrying out the instructions of the Sanitary Committee, and have broken into all the houses that were closed against the Inspecting Officers, and dispersed the mobs that collected to resist the inspection.'²⁵ Despite the public claims of the authorities, it is clear that the anti-plague programme they instigated was met by significant opposition in its early days.

Further unrest followed: the city's Chinese cargo-boat workers went on strike in protest against the new measures – something which the *Hongkong Telegraph* described as them 'playing the old game – paralysing commerce and bluffing the Government and European community into surrender.'²⁶ Although this strike was short-lived, the motivation behind it appeared to have been the cargo-boatmen's anxiety not to upset the wider Chinese community by helping to transfer patients across the harbour to the *Hygeia*. This may have revived memories of their strike during the Sino-French War a decade earlier, when the boatmen refused to provide their services to French ships in the harbour.²⁷ Proud of their own medical traditions, the Chinese were unhappy that patients

²³ F. H. May, 'Report of the Captain Superintendent of Police for 1894', CO 131/24, p. 107.

²⁴ 'Governor's Dispatch to the Secretary of State with reference to the Plague', 20th June, 1894. CO 131/23, p. 284.

²⁵ *The Celestial Empire*, 25th May, 1894.

²⁶ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 26th May, 1894.

²⁷ L. Chere, 'The Hong Kong riots of October 1884: Evidence for Chinese Nationalism?', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch*, vol. 20 (1980), p. 57.

were being sent to British institutions for treatment where, it was rumoured, ‘Western doctors cut open pregnant women and scooped out the children’s eyes in order to make medicines’.²⁸ The *Hongkong Telegraph* also reported that placards had also been posted all over Canton warning that any Chinese in Hong Kong faced the prospect of abuse at the hands of the foreign doctors, and these placards had ‘the effect of greatly reducing the number of passengers carried by the Canton steamers to Hongkong.’²⁹ Clearly, some of the Chinese living in Hong Kong harboured high levels of mistrust and prejudice towards the foreigners and this episode offers a good indication of how poorly-integrated Hong Kong society was. However, the reporting of the placards in Canton is also a fine example of how problems in Hong Kong were frequently depicted by the city’s English newspapers as being the result of outside agitation by anti-foreign authorities and troublemakers.³⁰ This mechanism of denial allowed the Hong Kong Chinese to be depicted as naïve and prone to manipulation, yet fundamentally loyal subjects – and disruptive events to be passed off without serious levels of introspection.

In the early days of the anti-plague measures, the efforts of the army and the police to enforce them were frequently met with outright violence. On 21st May, the *Hongkong Daily Press* reported that ‘many of the houses visited were blockaded and the sanitary officers stoned, and in the afternoon all attempts to continue the house-to-house inspection had to be discontinued, the work being rendered exceedingly unsafe and difficult.’³¹ A graphic demonstration of the levels of unrest present was provided by the relocation of the Royal Navy gunboat, *H.M.S. Tweed*, to West Point during the final week of May, which now put her directly opposite the Chinese quarter of Taipingshan – where many of the visitations were taking place. There she lurked menacingly over the following week, reminding the Chinese community of the power of her guns. The *Hongkong Telegraph* remarked that ‘her presence cannot but convince the rowdy element of the Chinese that the Government “means business” this time.’³² This was a

²⁸ Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, p. 93.

²⁹ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 23rd May, 1894.

³⁰ Chere, ‘The Hong Kong riots of October 1884’, p. 56.

³¹ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 21st May, 1894.

³² *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 24th May, 1894.

stark indicator that the days of ‘benevolent neglect’ were over – at least for the time being.

The positioning of *H.M.S. Tweed* to a station overlooking Taipingshan was a deeply symbolic gesture, the guns of the colonial power being trained on economic migrants who had been officially welcomed into the city and whose presence had been integral to the success of Hong Kong. This newly-aggressive stance did not go unnoticed in Canton, with anonymous placards soon appearing in its streets in response. On them was written a threat to destroy the British concession there if the Chinese areas of Hong Kong were attacked: ‘if the Authorities of Hongkong decide to destroy Tai-ping-shan, revenge will be taken by setting fire to buildings at Shameen.’³³ Although neither event came to pass, this episode shows how controversial Hong Kong’s anti-plague measures were. The duty of care felt by inhabitants of Canton towards the Chinese of Hong Kong is evidence of a number of things. Firstly, this reinforces how strong the communication and fraternal links between the two cities were, with many Hong Kong Chinese having family members within the Canton region. Secondly, it could be seen as another early indicator of Chinese nationalism: this response was arguably in the same manner as the excitement generated in the Chinese community at Shanghai following the naval action taken at Fuzhou in August 1884, when the French Asiatic Squadron destroyed a Chinese fleet, the local shipyards and forts along the Min River.³⁴ Thirdly, the reaction of the city of Canton to events in Hong Kong undermines the traditional colonial argument of the time that the Chinese were primitive by nature, instinctively apolitical, and with little interest in matters that did not concern them directly.³⁵

Despite the attendant controversy, the re-positioning of *H.M.S. Tweed* did appear to have suppressed the unrest. The despatch of a contingent of armed Sikh policemen into the area also helped to pacify it and gave further impetus to the anti-plague measures.³⁶ This

³³ *The Celestial Empire*, 15th June, 1894.

³⁴ Chere, ‘The Hong Kong riots of October 1884’, p. 63.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³⁶ Echenberg, *Plague Ports*, p. 41.

episode prompted the *Hongkong Telegraph* to voice its outrage that the government's intervention had been responded to by such high levels of civil disobedience:

The germs of this vile disease were either brought into the colony by Chinese from Canton or were incubated in the foul dens existing in the Chinese quarter, and because necessary sanitary laws are introduced, the value of which their ignorance and prejudice will not allow them to examine or consider for one moment, a number of Chinese who have hitherto enjoyed all the rights of citizenship on British soil, rise up and threaten violence!³⁷

Again, it provides evidence of the localist assumptions that were commonplace during the period – a suggestion that the Chinese brought the plague upon themselves through their persistent levels of ignorance and their unwillingness to adopt western standards of hygiene. Other newspaper correspondents accused the Chinese population of encouraging the plague to spread: 'It is remarkable that more diseases do not occur among the Chinese, considering the way that they live, huddled together in filthy hovels, never thinking of washing or cleansing themselves or their habitations.'³⁸ Such views point to the cultural racism inherent in the period: the journalists assumed that the Chinese chose to live like this and were ignorant of more civilised and sanitary practices. What they should have considered is the economic and political forces that compelled so many of the Chinese population to live in such over-crowded and squalid conditions.

The extract from the *Hongkong Telegraph* also contains an interesting reference to Chinese 'citizenship' in the city. Although all those who resided under the British flag were technically 'subjects', the elevation to a position of 'citizen' traditionally required evidence of supplementary characteristics, rights and obligations. Daniel Gorman has recently argued that the concept of citizenship within the British Empire was a relatively hazy one and unquestionably lacked the power and certainty of *Civis Romanus sum*. He argues that, whilst those born on British soil, *jus soli*, would have certainly considered themselves to have been automatically entitled to citizenship, the concept often proved

³⁷ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, editorial of 23rd May, 1894.

³⁸ *The Celestial Empire*, 18th May, 1894.

difficult to define overseas due to the absence of a British written constitution.³⁹ This led to an ‘unofficial, rhetorical and localized nature of citizenship’ in the empire, leading to ‘great discrepancies among imperial subjects in rights, benefits and duties.’⁴⁰ However, it is difficult to see what discernible rights and benefits the Chinese community, who faced institutionalised discrimination on a daily basis, received. Unlike the citizens of the ancient world, they wielded no political power and held no advanced social position. Whereas citizenship was a permanent state that crossed national borders, the Hong Kong Chinese soon became someone else’s problem the moment they crossed the border back into China. Therefore, it is incomprehensible that this newspaper should seriously suggest that the Chinese in Hong Kong ‘enjoyed all the rights of citizenship’. One can only assume that it did so as a means of trying to promote the idea of an imperial citizen. However, with little substance to back up this concept, this can only be seen as a purely rhetorical tool.⁴¹

It was not just the Chinese style of living that came under fire but also their cultural and religious traditions. Just as the Chinese could not understand western medicine’s preoccupation with segregation and ventilation, the foreign elite observed with incomprehension the use of firecrackers by the Chinese community to try to scare away the plague demons.⁴² Anglophone newspapers in the wider region also ridiculed the Chinese interpretation of why the plague struck: ‘The Chinese at Hongkong have answered to their own satisfaction the question why the plague has visited that colony. They are pretty unanimous in the belief that the Peak Tramway, of all things, is directly responsible.’⁴³ The Chinese believed that, by cutting a swathe straight up the side of the Victoria Peak to accommodate the funicular tram, the city’s engineers had affected the *feng-shui* of the Peak to a grievous extent. Furthermore the straightness of its track had given the plague demons, which – like all evil spirits – were believed by them to be only

³⁹ D. Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 19 - 20.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴¹ This argument, that the concept of imperial citizenship was little more than a rhetorical tool to engineer some sense of solidarity across the diverse and unequal empire, was supported by E. B. Sargant, a member of the Royal Colonial Institute, in a speech given to the Institute in April, 1912. *Ibid.*, pp. 20 - 1.

⁴² *The Overland China Mail*, 24th May, 1894.

⁴³ *The Straits Times*, 2nd June, 1894.

able to travel in straight lines, a means to enter the heart of the city. However bizarre this interpretation would have sounded to western ears, it certainly seems to have had influenced large numbers of Chinese labourers: the *Celestial Empire* recorded in mid-June that ‘At the Peak residences the coolies are leaving numerous owing to placards alleging the tramway as the cause of the plague.’⁴⁴ Their analysis of the plague outbreak was vastly different to the proposal put forward by Alexandre Yersin following his study of the epidemic in Hong Kong that summer. Yersin's discovery of the offending pathogen, which was subsequently named *Yersinia Pestis* in his honour, vividly portrays the chasm that separated the Chinese beliefs from western medical theory at this time.

At the end of May, *H.M.S. Tweed* left her position opposite Taipingshan and returned to her regular moorings.⁴⁵ Despite the initial violence and high levels of non-compliance, Governor Robinson reported to Whitehall that ‘the majority of the Chinese, after being made to understand what the object was which the Government had in view, did not object to the visitation but even assisted those deputed to search their houses and to disinfect and cleanse them when necessary.’⁴⁶ At the end of the summer, the ‘all clear’ was sounded and many Chinese returned to the colony. Foreign shipping returned to the port again and life swiftly seemed to return to normal. However, large areas of Taipingshan still remained empty, declared ‘quite unfit for human habitation’ and condemned to either ‘wholesale or partial destruction.’⁴⁷ This ghost town served as a physical reminder of how devastating the plague outbreak had been and the extent to which the colonial authorities had been forced to intervene in the lives of so many. The authorities themselves realised that the maintenance of safe levels of public hygiene would be a formidable challenge: the colony’s longstanding Colonial Surgeon, Phineas Ayers remarked, somewhat melodramatically, that ‘The labours of Hercules in cleansing the Augean stables were a trifle compared with that which the Government has to

⁴⁴ *The Celestial Empire*, 15th June, 1894.

⁴⁵ *The Overland China Mail*, 30th May, 1894.

⁴⁶ Robinson, ‘Governor’s Dispatch to the Secretary of State with reference to the Plague’ of 20th June, 1894. CO 131/23, p. 284.

⁴⁷ Sir William Robinson, ‘Address to the Legislative Council’, 28th November, 1894, *Ibid.*, p. 28.

contend with in the near future in cleansing the City of Victoria and other inhabited portions of the Colony.’⁴⁸

Cape Town

In Cape Town, the disposal of the dead was also a catalyst for social unrest and violent demonstrations. As a result of the smallpox outbreak of 1882, the decision was made to close the city’s old, centrally located, cemeteries in the hope of reducing infection rates. Burials would then take place at new facilities built at Maitland, located several miles away in the new suburbs. This was an unpopular decision: ‘To many Capetonians, almost any alternative was preferable to burial at Maitland.’⁴⁹ Not only were the new burial grounds further away but – to add insult to injury – the burial fee also increased markedly at this time. The *Cape Argus* was highly critical of the new arrangements: ‘Unreason won the day, and the ridiculously remote site at Maitland was chosen.’⁵⁰ However, although this new situation was unpopular across the city, two groups were particularly outspoken in their opposition to the cemeteries being closed: members of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Malay community.

The members of the Dutch Reformed Church feared that their traditional practice of piling the bones of the deceased in vaults above the ground was now under threat. Referring to their historical position as ‘the only established Church of this Colony’, its congregation made a representation to the colony’s Prime Minister, asking for some family vaults to be exempt from closure.⁵¹ In addition, a petition on this issue was sent to the House of Assembly in July 1885. However, fearing that exempting them would set a precedent for the other groups that were contesting the closure of their cemeteries, the House of Assembly members turned down their request. In the Dutch Reformed Church, the priority given to sanitary concerns in the debate on issues of such cultural and political sensitivity appears to have been mystifying: ‘For the Dutch, the cemeteries

⁴⁸ Phineas Ayers, ‘Medical Report on the Epidemic of Bubonic Plague’, CO 131/24, p. 175.

⁴⁹ E. Van Heyningen, ‘Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880 - 1910’, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Cape Town, (Cape Town, 1989), p. 192.

⁵⁰ *The Cape Argus*, 18th January, 1886.

⁵¹ Van Heyningen, ‘Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880 - 1910’, pp. 192 – 4.

issue had become a betrayal, not only of their culture, but of the constitution bequeathed to them by the British, by a government which was unreasonably influenced by the medical fraternity.⁵² The decision to close their cemeteries offended them deeply and, in common with the interpretation of the Coloured opponents towards the Franchise and Ballot Act, seemed to them to be the product of paranoia and political pressure rather than objective reasoning. It seemed a direct attack on their cultural values and an insult to the enormous contribution made, over the course of centuries, by members of their congregation to the city of Cape Town.

The Cemetery Board's decision to close all the established cemeteries, made under the authority of the 'Public Health Act, No. 4' of 1883, became effective on 15th January, 1886. In addition to this, the Act banned the practice of carrying corpses to the grave by hand as part of large funeral procession, as this was considered to be highly conducive to spreading disease. Although funeral processions were regular occurrences in the city, involving groups of all denominations, in the Malay community the practice of transporting the dead to the grave upon men's shoulders was a non-negotiable part of their burial protocol. As a result, this legislation was also regarded by the Malay community as a direct attack on their heritage and their religious freedoms. However, their response to it was more direct and less litigious than that of the Dutch Reformed Church: just two days after the enforced closures, a crowd of mourners, 3,000 strong, forcibly opened the gates of the Tana Baru cemetery and buried the body of a child. Having completed the burial, sections of the crowd then attacked the dozen or so policemen who had followed the proceedings in order to collect the names of the ringleaders. In the violence that followed, several policemen were injured – one of them seriously – and the cry 'Kill the *Deeners*' was heard.⁵³ Van Heyningen argues that this was 'the only occasion when a sector of the labouring classes rose in a co-ordinated response to the actions of the authorities' in nineteenth-century Cape Town.⁵⁴

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 200 – 1.

⁵³ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 112. Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, p. 210. *Deener*: a colloquial name for Cape Town's policemen.

⁵⁴ Van Heyningen, 'Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880 - 1910', p. 169.

In mitigation, there may have been other factors that fuelled the Malay community's anger that day: the period in between the smallpox outbreak of 1882 and the Tana Baru riot in 1886 was marked by a deep economic depression – 'the most severe South Africa had to endure during the nineteenth century.'⁵⁵ This took place due to an overdue correction to the period of speculative frenzy recently witnessed in the diamond market and a corresponding recession in both England and America – 'which illustrated the growing inter-dependence between South Africa and the world's commodity and money markets.'⁵⁶ The Malay community was not immune to this economic downturn. Although the finding of the great reefs of gold at Witwatersrand a few months later quickly catapulted the region out of depression and back to the heady days of a mineral-fuelled boom, the cemetery riot 'took place in the depths of depression, when discontent born of poverty and hunger was at its most intense.'⁵⁷ Therefore, it is possible that this economic situation helped to exacerbate the sense of frustration that resulted in this rioting.

However, the policing of Cape Town was also a factor – and it was an incendiary issue for many Capetonians at this time. In 1886, Cape Town's policemen were exclusively white and predominantly of British origin.⁵⁸ Friction between the police and the Malay community had already been well-established, with 'frequent attacks by Malays on policemen in the course of the nineteenth century.'⁵⁹ The observation by Nasson that, during the Victorian era, 'many new recruits regarded the police not as a career but as a subsistence option.... to tide themselves over a period of unemployment or bad times' calls into question the levels of professionalism that were present within Cape Town's police force during this period.⁶⁰ For many years, the force had held a reputation for

⁵⁵ C. Schumann, *Structural Changes and Business Cycles in South Africa* (London, 1938), p. 84, quoted in D. Hobart Houghton, 'Economic Development, 1865 – 1965', in M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford History of South Africa, volume II, 1870 – 1966* (Oxford, 1971), p. 12.

⁵⁶ Hobart Houghton, 'Economic Development, 1865 – 1965', p. 12.

⁵⁷ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 112.

⁵⁸ B. Nasson, 'Bobbies to Boers: police, people and social control in Cape Town', in D. Anderson and D. Killingray (eds), *Policing the Empire: Government, Authority and Control, 1830 – 1940* (Manchester, 1991), p. 238.

⁵⁹ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 112.

⁶⁰ B. Nasson, "'Messing with Coloured People": the 1918 Police Strike in Cape Town, South Africa', *The Journal of African History*, vol. 33, no. 2 (1992), p. 308.

misconduct, drunkenness and brutality. The programme of improvements laid out in 1840, inspired by the highly-acclaimed London Police Reforms of 1829, 'did not really ever get off the ground' and was considered a failure.⁶¹ Despite this effort to modernise and improve the force, Cape Town's policemen continued to remain synonymous in the minds of many people across the community with incompetence and law-breaking and were often regarded as 'interfering, overbearing and certainly unwelcome outsiders.'⁶² This reputation did not improve as the century progressed: 'even in the closing decades of the nineteenth century the Cape Town force was still too small to combat urban crime and disorder effectively; much of its law enforcement action was slack and ill-disciplined or amateurishly inept.'⁶³ Throughout this period the city's police officers retained and embellished their reputation for unprofessionalism, unreliability and dishonesty.⁶⁴ Their presence at Tana Baru that day was clearly perceived as a direct provocation by some members of the funeral party. This was confirmed by the magistrate who presided over the trial of the sixteen Malay men who were subsequently charged with assaulting the police officers: 'It is my opinion that, if they [*the police*] had not gone there, there would not have been any misconduct on the part of the Malays.'⁶⁵

However, the fact that the Tana Baru cemetery gates were forced open by a large group of mourners, and the body of a child was buried there in direct contravention of the Public Health Act, shows the depth of feeling that was present on the issues of the cemetery closures and funeral rites. Although the evidence suggests that the unwelcome presence of the police at this event was integral to the rioting that followed, the rebellious act of the burial alone shows the ruptures that existed in the city over the sanitation debate. The disinclination of the Malay community to engage with the new public health directives was a source of friction for many within the wider community: 'the fact that the Malays wanted to continue to bury the dead in the traditional manner

⁶¹ K. Elks, 'The Police and Crime in Cape Town, 1825 – 1850', *Kronos*, no. 12 (1987), p. 48.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁶³ B. Nasson, 'Bobbies to Boers', p. 238.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

⁶⁵ Crosby, the presiding magistrate, quoted in Van Heyningen, 'Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880 - 1910', p. 208.

was also seen as tantamount to wishing to infect Whites.⁶⁶ The comments of the *Cape Argus* further illustrate this sentiment: ‘We have always been glad to note many evidences of a law-abiding disposition amongst the Malays, who have given us little trouble on the whole; but in questions affecting the health of the town there had been a strong feeling against them ever since the time of the small-pox epidemic.’⁶⁷

The Islamic practice of carrying the corpse to the burial site was not the only one of the Malay community’s traditions which was considered a possible threat to public health: in 1882, fears had been raised that their habit of bringing holy water back from Mecca, as a souvenir from the *haj*, might introduce cholera into the city.⁶⁸ The Cape Colony’s Prime Minister of the day, Thomas Scanlen, wrote in a letter to fellow parliamentarian John Merriman, ‘if these brutes are allowed to bring cholera into the place we shall bear a heavy responsibility.’⁶⁹ This sentiment clearly shows the antipathy and distrust with which the Malay community was viewed by some very prominent figures within the city’s white elite at this time. This image was also projected to the city’s English-speaking tourists: a guide book to Cape Town, published in 1897, informed them that whilst the Malay area was one of ‘the most picturesque features of the city’ and the women found there were ‘invariably attired in gorgeously coloured dresses’, their homes were ‘not always strictly habitable, according to European ideas.’⁷⁰

As with the Hong Kong Chinese population’s traditional cures, the faith-based medicines of the Malay community were also perceived as being inadequate by many within Cape Town’s white population, and the Malays’ continued adherence to them led to further resentment. This was visible in the drive to vaccinate the population against smallpox that took place in the early decades of the nineteenth century, an initiative that was largely ignored by the Malay community. Their refusal to vaccinate themselves remained in the minds of some people and served to increase the pressure on the Malay community when smallpox struck again so powerfully in 1882. In mitigation, harbouring

⁶⁶ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 74.

⁶⁷ *The Cape Argus*, 18th January, 1886.

⁶⁸ Van Heyningen, ‘Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880 - 1910’, pp. 167 - 8.

⁶⁹ Scanlen quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁷⁰ Dennis Edwards & Co. Ltd, *The Illustrated Cape Town Guide* (Cape Town, 1897), p. 81.

doubts about the efficacy of vaccination programmes was not unusual in this period: the arm-to-arm process involved was deeply uncomfortable and, as a reliable vaccination for smallpox was only developed in the early 1890s, the whole campaign was of little value.⁷¹ Therefore, the Malay community were certainly not alone in boycotting them – but their absence was the one that was most commented on, for it fitted in with the existing cultural stereotype of them being unhygienic, ignorant and implacably opposed to new methods of treatment. Like the Chinese of Hong Kong, the Malay community also avoided western hospitals in their city – although, for them, this was mainly due to their inability to supply them with *halaal* food, a much more mundane explanation than the Chinese population’s fear of mutilation at the hands of western doctors.⁷²

Therefore both the Malays of Cape Town and the Hong Kong Chinese were vilified for what was perceived by their detractors as their stubborn reliance on backward and unscientific medical traditions. However, it is clear that these two communities themselves saw no contradiction between following their own traditional beliefs whilst living in a ‘modern’ westernised society: Nile Green, in his study of the Muslim community of Bombay in the nineteenth century, argues that the exposure of individual members to an industrial British port city had not reduced their connection to their traditional religious customs as much as might have been expected – ‘the colonial impact on Muslim religious forms was considerably less than has often been imagined.’⁷³ As was the case with the Hong Kong Chinese during the bubonic plague, newspapers in Cape Town also evoked the concept of citizenship when describing how the Malay community should act: ‘A contemporary is informed that all the Malays are ready “to die for their faith.” They are not asked to do that, but merely to show that they are worthy to be regarded as orderly fellow-citizens’.⁷⁴ Although some Malay residents of Cape Town would have been able to vote in 1886, it is clear that they were considered to be an inferior and backwards race by the city’s white elite. As with the Chinese of Hong Kong, the newspaper’s description of members of the Malay community as

⁷¹ Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, p. 243.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 128 – 9.

⁷³ N. Green, *Bombay Islam* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 237.

⁷⁴ *The Cape Argus*, 19th January, 1886.

‘fellow-citizens’ can only be met with significant scepticism and considered a rhetorical tool, designed to promote unity across the city’s population but devoid of any meaningful substance.

The issue of sanitation had long been a bane of Capetonians’ lives: the city had been infamous among both visitors and locals for its lack of clean water supplies and the ubiquitous stench which emanated from its network of ageing Dutch canals. One of its weekly newspapers, the *Lantern*, enquired in 1880 whether there was ‘another city in the world that can show a larger number of people upon a smaller and dirtier bit of ground, cursed with a wonderful variety of exhalations, and with a worse Town Council?’⁷⁵ However, traction was finally seen on these issues in the 1870s due to the completion of the Molteno Reservoir. Following this, a successful system of drainage was implemented in the 1890s by a Town Council dominated by the Clean Party.⁷⁶ Considered to represent the more Anglophile and scientific members of the community, this faction was in power from 1882 to 1902. During this period, issues of public health and sanitation moved up the Town Council’s agenda. Indeed, upon finally leaving office in 1902, the Clean Party declared that Cape Town, which had previously known as the ‘city of stinks’, could finally be considered ‘clean and modern!!’⁷⁷ Therefore, by the time of the Diamond Jubilee, the general levels of sanitation in the city had improved markedly. However, the city was still vulnerable to the threat of epidemics, as the visitation of bubonic plague to Cape Town several years later, would prove. Sections of the community that were seen as being an impediment to good public health, such as the Malays, were still regarded with suspicion.

Although the link between the Malay community and poor sanitation was well-established in the minds of many white inhabitants at the time of the Diamond Jubilee, over the previous couple of decades prior a similar connection had been made with

⁷⁵ *The Lantern*, issue of 31st July, 1880, quoted in Van Heyningen, ‘Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880 - 1910’, p. 111.

⁷⁶ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, pp. 47 – 59.

⁷⁷ The declaration of the Clean Party quoted in F. Miraftab, ‘Colonial Present: Legacies of the Past in Contemporary Urban Practices in Cape Town, South Africa’, *Journal of Planning History*, vol. 11, no. 4 (2012), p. 289.

members of the ethnic Dutch working class due to their support for the Dirty Party – a movement that was ‘mostly Afrikaners, with Malays making up the lower ranks.’⁷⁸ During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the sight of dispossessed Afrikaners drifting into cities had become a common one: new generations of Dutch farmers had begun to inherit increasingly smaller and less economically viable pieces of lands from their parents and, coupled with agrarian disasters such as the Rinderpest epidemic of the 1890s, an increasingly number of them found themselves having to leave their land and try their luck in the cities.⁷⁹ Due to this section of society’s instinctive support for the Dirty Party, Afrikaans came to be perceived by the British elite as the language of the ignorant and impoverished in this period, enabling the English language and ‘Englishness’ to become further entrenched as indicators of modernity and success.⁸⁰ Although much of the political discourse up to this point had stressed the unity of the white races in Cape Town, Vivian Bickford-Smith also draws attention to the fact that, from the 1870s onwards, the city had seen the development of a ‘narrower English chauvinism’.⁸¹ Therefore, as more poor and landless whites entered Cape Town during the final part of the nineteenth century, whether as dispossessed farmers from the hinterland or as refugees and treasure seekers from overseas, the consensus that had existed between the city’s white communities had become increasingly threatened.

Of clearer relevance to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations was the fact that the debate over improving the city’s sanitation had become intertwined with that of loyalty towards the British Empire: ‘Sanitation rhetoric was part and parcel of Englishness in the Cape Town context. Such Englishness demanded loyalty to the empire, respectability, deference and cleanliness from those it sought to colonise.’⁸² Therefore, those that opposed the drive for improved sanitation in the city could be termed ‘un-English’ and doubts were expressed over where their allegiances lay. To members of the sanitary

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁷⁹ A. Lester, *From Colonization to Democracy: A New Historical Geography of South Africa* (London, 1998), p. 63, pp. 68 - 9.

⁸⁰ Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 62. R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750 – 1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 43.

⁸¹ V. Bickford-Smith, ‘Revisiting Anglicisation in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2003), p. 90.

⁸² Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice*, p. 61.

reform movement, the British Empire stood for progress, science and civilisation. Any obstruction of the sanitation agenda would be, in their eyes, incompatible with feelings of loyalty towards Britain's imperial project.

In Hong Kong, the colonial authorities used a show of strength to quell the violence during the plague outbreak, and this method was also employed in the aftermath of the 1886 cemetery riots in Cape Town: the Cape Town Volunteers were quickly mobilised, patrolling the city by night and camping for several days on Green Point Common – in full view of the Muslim cemeteries that ranged across Signal Hill.⁸³ The presence of the Volunteers acted as a deterrent against further trouble in just the same manner as the guns of *H.M.S. Tweed* did in 1894. In both cases, the forces of the state were deployed to maintain law and order and focussed their efforts on a particular section of the community. By doing this, the ruling elites revealed, in the starkest of terms, the subaltern position of these communities within each city's social hierarchies.

II. Political Challenges

As important an issue as public health undoubtedly was, there were additional pressures which strained the relationship between colonial administrators and the residents of both cities. In Hong Kong, political tensions between the government and the Chinese community had been regularly in evidence throughout the city's history, often accompanied by discriminatory legislation. The city was highly segregated, the Chinese labour force was exploited by unscrupulous landlords and business owners and many members of the British elite seemed to regard the Chinese with a paradoxical mixture of superiority and fear. Morris comments that, among the British community, 'distrust of the Chinese as a race seemed ineradicable; an element of fear and resentment, compounded by racial bigotry and reinforced by horrible social contrast, lay behind the grand imperial appearances of Hong Kong.'⁸⁴ Chinese cultural practices were derided and subject to punitive legislation, and fear of assault or worse at the hands of Chinese

⁸³ *The Cape Times*, 20th January, 1886.

⁸⁴ J. Morris, *Hong Kong* (New York, NY, 1993), p. 142.

assailants appeared to have been a common theme of everyday expat life there. Alan Lester argues that fear of the colonised is at the psychological heart of every colonial society.⁸⁵ In Hong Kong, the British community's fear of their colonised Chinese population appears to have been particularly acute.

Cape Town was also jolted by momentous political events in the period leading up to the Diamond Jubilee. The development of Transvaal's mines and the determination of local Boer leaders not to be bullied into surrendering control over their land changed the political dynamics of southern Africa markedly. Although the outbreak of the Second Boer War took place more than two years after the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, it is clear that war was regarded by many as being imminent at that time: racial tension between Dutch and British settlers was on the increase, the region was militarising at rapid pace and the British Government appeared to be playing a dangerous game of diplomatic bluff with the Boer republics. As a result, the solidarity of the white community of Cape Town now found itself being put under further pressure due to the power politics being played out in the north. The splits that had been evident during the sanitation debate were, by the time of the jubilee, brought back out into the open again due to discussions on South Africa's position in the British Empire and the question of whether the Boers of Transvaal, sitting on the greatest collection of mineral resources in the world, had the right, the capital and the expertise to harvest this tremendous wealth.

Hong Kong

The Chinese exodus of 1894 was only one in a series of developments that had unnerved the British elite in the city. Although their precarious situation had long been appreciated, concern over the ability of the Chinese to overthrow them had become entrenched in many British minds after the bread poisoning incident of 15th January, 1857. Lowe and McLaughlin suggest that events outside the city may have provoked this alleged attack, for it followed a breakdown in Anglo-Chinese relations over the *Arrow* affair and the subsequent bombardment of Canton by the Royal Navy in October

⁸⁵ Lester, *From Colonization to Democracy*, p. 53.

1856.⁸⁶ However, whether the bread poisoning incident was a deliberate attempt at mass murder or not, the psychological affect that it had on the British community in Hong Kong was severe: it underlined how exposed their position was, how few they were in number and how much they relied on the local Chinese for the functioning of everyday life. Their mood would only have darkened further a few months later, as the events of the Indian Mutiny also showed just how vulnerable small British communities, miles away from home, could be.⁸⁷

The fear of violent crime being perpetrated towards them by Chinese assailants resulted in the passing of laws that were ‘frankly and almost viciously anti-Chinese in content.’⁸⁸ Prominent among these was the ‘Light and Pass Ordinance’ of 1857, further consolidated in 1870, which discouraged the movement of Chinese people after dark. As the Diamond Jubilee loomed, this legislation continued to be on the statute books – despite a challenge made by prominent Chinese citizens towards it in December, 1895 – and feelings towards this law continued to run high.⁸⁹ The official ‘Criminal Statistics and Coroner’s Returns’ for 1897 showed that 149 Chinese were prosecuted that year, under the ‘Regulation of Chinese Ordinance’ act of 1888, for contravening the Light and Pass regulations.⁹⁰ However, on 8th June 1897, just a fortnight before the Diamond Jubilee, this ordinance was suspended. Despite the howls of protest from some foreign quarters, subsequent police records showed that the safety of the city was not compromised by the lifting of this regressive legislation and the initial fears proved to be unfounded. The timing of this suggests that this legislation may have been suspended in order to reduce the obstacles to Chinese enthusiasm for the jubilee; however, no evidence has been found to make that direct connection.

⁸⁶ K. Lowe, and E. McLaughlin, “‘Caution! The Bread is Poisoned’: The Hong Kong Mass Poisoning of January 1857”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2015), p. 204.

⁸⁷ G. Bremner and D. Lung, ‘Spaces of exclusion: the significance of cultural identity in the formation of European residential districts in British Hong Kong, 1877 – 1904’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 21 (2003), pp. 239 - 40.

⁸⁸ P. Wesley-Smith, ‘Anti-Chinese Legislation in Hong Kong’, in M. Chan (ed.), *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong Between China and Britain, 1842 – 1992* (Armonk, NY, 1994), p. 97.

⁸⁹ Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, p. 100.

⁹⁰ N. A., CO 131/28, ‘Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1898’, p. 122.

Although the British elite tried to keep themselves at arm's length from the city's mainstream population and placed their trust in the policy of 'benevolent neglect', there were daily interactions between the state and the Chinese community in the realm of law and order. These were always likely to be fractious affairs as the Britons not only saw themselves as being naturally superior to the Chinese, but also considered the individual Chinese people that they encountered to be 'actual or at least potential troublemakers.'⁹¹ Munn argues that 'the criminal justice system was the arena in which government and people encountered each other most extensively, most directly, most unequally, and with far-reaching consequences.'⁹² From the very beginning there grew a tradition of Hong Kong magistrates acting in an indiscriminate and heavy-handed manner towards the Chinese that came before them.⁹³ In the case of the Chinese defendants alone, these magistrates had the ability to embellish their verdicts with 'one, two, or three public or private whippings.'⁹⁴ Tsai argues: 'To the masses of coolies, the "foreign devil's" rule in Hong Kong often seemed arbitrary and unjust.'⁹⁵

In Hong Kong, as in Cape Town, policing was also a contentious issue due to concerns raised by the wider community over the force's professional standards and its recruitment process. The colonial government insisted that the majority of the police force had to be brought in from overseas as the locally recruited Chinese policemen could not be trusted.⁹⁶ Predominantly composed of Sikhs from northern India and men of European descent, few of these had any command of the local Chinese languages and so had to rely on local interpreters. In 1895, the Captain Superintendent of Police, and future governor of the colony, F. H. May deflected criticism of the foreign policemen's language skills by remarking that 'Chinese is such an unattractive language that it is extremely difficult to induce men to take up the study of it.'⁹⁷ There was a Chinese

⁹¹ S. Tsang, *Governing Hong Kong: Administrative Officers from the Nineteenth Century to the Handover to China, 1862 – 1997* (London, 2007), p. 7.

⁹² C. Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841 – 1880* (Hong Kong, 2001), p. 111.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁹⁴ P. Wesley-Smith, 'Anti-Chinese Legislation in Hong Kong', p. 96.

⁹⁵ Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, p. 115.

⁹⁶ N. Miners, 'The Localization of the Hong Kong Police Force, 1842 – 1947', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 18, no. 3 (1990), p. 297.

⁹⁷ CO 131/24, p. 107.

contingent in the regular police but they patrolled unarmed – unlike the rest of the force, who were regularly equipped with rifles and bayonets – and so were clearly perceived as an inferior, and potentially mutinous, component within it. The setting up of the District Watch Force in 1866 by the Chinese community showed what little confidence it had in the city's official police force.⁹⁸ Although this body came under the general supervision of the Registrar-General, its Chinese constables were funded exclusively by Chinese businesses. Operating exclusively in the Chinese areas of the city, and wearing a different uniform to the regular police, they tried to act as a counterbalance to the 'corrupt and ineffective' official force.⁹⁹ Indeed, there is strong justification for this verdict on the regular force for, only a few weeks after the Diamond Jubilee, several experienced European police officers were suspended from duty for taking bribes from some of the city's gambling houses.¹⁰⁰ By this time, word of the official police force's reputation for unprofessionalism had also reached ears outside the city, with a Dublin newspaper informing its readers that the Hong Kong Police Force had 'been held loosely in hand for many years.'¹⁰¹ While the District Watch Force did serve as an important link between the colonial administration and the city's Chinese community, its very existence showed that the policing of Hong Kong was in an unsatisfactory state.

Despite the importance that the colonial authorities attached to the continuing availability of Chinese labour in Hong Kong, legislation that discriminated against them remained a constant presence on the statute books. From the very beginning of the city's existence, an unofficial planning strategy had segregated the zones of habitation in the island along ethnic lines, with the Anglo-Saxon and European elite having the most centrally located and commodious of these. However, over time the increasing numbers of Chinese immigrants prompted the threat of their encroachment upon these areas.¹⁰² The passing of the 'European District Residential Ordinance' of May 1888 now set in stone what had always been the case – Hong Kong was a racially segregated city.

⁹⁸ Miners, 'The Localization of the Hong Kong Police Force', p. 306.

⁹⁹ S. Tsang, *Governing Hong Kong: Administrative Officers from the Nineteenth Century to the Handover to China, 1862-1997* (London, 2007), p. 40.

¹⁰⁰ *The Hongkong Weekly Press and China Overland Trade Report*, 15th July, 1897.

¹⁰¹ *The Freeman's Journal*, 21st September, 1897.

¹⁰² Bremner and Lung, 'Spaces of exclusion', p. 236.

Although the Chinese areas of the city were becoming increasingly overpopulated at this time, their room for expansion was now kept firmly in check – meaning that higher levels of discomfort and over-crowding would be the only possible result. These phenomena were graphically illustrated by the visitation of the plague in 1894, where the disease quickly spread through the crowded and ramshackle dwellings.

This episode also unearthed evidence of how the Chinese migrant labour force had been unscrupulously exploited by the city's landlords. In a sensational exposé, the *Hongkong Telegraph* revealed that many of the most run-down and dilapidated properties in the Chinese area were owned by influential members of the ruling elite. With outrage, the newspaper noted that many of the worst basement 'slums' in Hollywood Road were owned by 'the Hon. E. R. Belilios, C.M.G., philanthropist, public school promoter, etc., etc.,' and that these places of residence were 'unfit for use even as race-pony stables much less human habitations.'¹⁰³ For Belilios, a sitting member of the Legislative Council and a former Chairman of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, the embarrassment caused by this exposé would undoubtedly have been acute.¹⁰⁴ Despite being 'the foremost opium trader in the colony', it is clear from the *Telegraph's* quotation that he had a reputation for behaving in a sanctimonious manner.¹⁰⁵ The newspaper appears to have taken the opportunity to stick the boot into him here with relish. Belilios was a Jewish man of mixed Portuguese and Indian descent, so one wonders whether anti-Semitism and racism may have also encouraged this personal attack on him.¹⁰⁶

However, Belilios might have taken consolation from the fact that he was not the only prominent citizen to be named and shamed: a week later, other pillars of the community were castigated by the same newspaper for owning the most run-down properties in Taipingshan. These houses, where the plague had flourished, were now deserted and earmarked for destruction. Perhaps even more embarrassing was the *Telegraph's*

¹⁰³ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 28th May, 1894.

¹⁰⁴ B. Mellor, *Lugard in Hong Kong: Empires, Education and a Governor at Work, 1907 – 1912* (Hong Kong, 1992), p. 193.

¹⁰⁵ Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, p. 311.

¹⁰⁶ Mellor, *Lugard in Hong Kong*, p. 193.

revelation that both Wei Yuk and Ho Kai, the two Chinese representatives on the Legislative Council, were also owners of some of the most disgraceful and badly maintained houses – and were thereby profiting from the misery of their fellow Chinese. The *Hongkong Telegraph* thundered: ‘The mere loss of their wretched buildings is feeble punishment for the sin they have done in allowing matters to get into such a terrible state. It is criminal negligence; it is wholesale murder by parsimony.’¹⁰⁷ From this, the message was clear – the lives of individual Chinese people were made unpleasant and were even put at risk by the brazen pursuit of profit employed by fellow residents. Many of the guiltiest perpetrators, it now transpired, occupied some of the society’s most venerated offices and positions of influence.

Although this scandal seems not to have led to dramatic repercussions, its presence serves as an indication of the nonchalant attitude taken by members of the city’s elite to the Chinese labourers, and other members of the urban poor, who now lived ‘cheek by jowl’ in their dilapidated properties. Had the racist 1888 Residential Ordinance legislation not limited the space that the Chinese could dwell in, then the levels of discomfort, over-crowding and profiteering witnessed at the time of the plague wouldn’t have been so severe – and the disease may not have ravaged these neighbourhoods with such speed.

Despite the original promise made by the city’s governing authorities that the Chinese could live their lives freely in Hong Kong, their culture was also subject to discrimination: for example, Chinese theatres had to close at 11pm every evening, whereas European ones could continue until 1 o’clock in the morning.¹⁰⁸ In contrast to Cape Town, where the musical talents of the Malays were appreciated across the city, Chinese music was not well received by the foreigners.¹⁰⁹ A few days before the Diamond Jubilee, the *Hongkong Telegraph* reported that it had received complaints from European residents over the ‘nocturnal noise nuisance’ emanating from nearby Chinese ‘Sing Song’ houses. It snootily remarked ‘The appetite of the Chinese for “wild Gordian

¹⁰⁷ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 30th May, 1894.

¹⁰⁸ Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁹ Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City*, p. 243.

knots of sound”, which they call music, appears to be insatiable.’¹¹⁰ Police records for 1897 also show that ten Chinese individuals were prosecuted that year for beating their drums and gongs in a loud and anti-social manner during the night time hours.¹¹¹

A further example of the cultural issues that divided the city was the unease that some members of the British community expressed over the traditional local practice of *mui-tsai*. This had reached a crescendo in 1879, when an increasing demand for prostitutes and servants in Hong Kong encouraged criminals to traffic woman and girls who had been kidnapped from their Guangdong villages into the city. For some of the British elite, *mui-tsai* – whereby girls from poor backgrounds were sold to, and adopted by, wealthier families as an act of benevolence – facilitated kidnapping and extortion by making it difficult to judge whether girls had entered the city willingly or under duress.¹¹² Abolitionists also argued that, even when cases were genuine, this tradition often led to the girls being subjected to forced labour within their new households – a state of affairs that seemed uncomfortably close to slavery. As a result, the *mui-tsai* tradition caught the eye of reformist groups in Britain such as the Anti-Slavery Society.¹¹³

In the end, though, the Chinese won the battle to retain it and the purchase and adoption of poor local girls by wealthy Hong Kong Chinese families remained a regular occurrence in 1897. Indeed, the practice persisted well into the twentieth century. However, the treatment of women remained an issue of note during the jubilee year: 1897 saw the passing of the ‘Women and Girls Protection Ordinance’ and 25 girls were released from the horrors of working in authorised brothels that year as a result of this new legislation.¹¹⁴ Although the clamour against *mui-tsai* was less audible at this time, many of the resident Britons remained suspicious of its intentions.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 19th June, 1897.

¹¹¹ CO 131/28, p. 122.

¹¹² J. Carroll, ‘A National Custom: Debating Female Servitude in Late Nineteenth-Century Hong Kong’, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 43, no. 6 (2009), pp. 1463 – 7.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1467.

¹¹⁴ CO 131/28, p. 327.

¹¹⁵ Carroll, ‘A National Custom’, p. 1489.

However, there were aspects of Chinese culture that did meet with British approval. This was particularly so of their artwork: their highly ornate flower displays and skill with calligraphy and pottery were highly impressive to foreign eyes. In addition, the lavish decorations that garlanded Chinese celebrations and festivals – which included magnificent triumphal arches and banners, paper lanterns depicting all sorts of creatures and objects and the presence of exhilarating illuminations and firework displays – appear to have also been highly regarded. Despite this, Chinese celebratory activity and cultural expression was strictly regulated and controlled – confined to a fixed set of parameters laid down by the colonial authorities. For example, in 1897 a total of 342 Chinese were prosecuted for discharging fireworks without the necessary permits.¹¹⁶ Whilst some aspects of Chinese self-expression were much admired, they had to be deployed within a carefully managed environment.

Another of Hong Kong's communities that felt 'habitually slighted' by the British elite was its Portuguese contingent.¹¹⁷ Although the 1897 census showed that their numbers were on a par with the British civilian population, they did not appear to be highly respected by them. Many of the Portuguese worked in mundane clerical jobs in the city's post offices and branches of the civil service, where they complained of being habitually denied promotions and any ability to make a meaningful contribution. Whereas the Chinese community had, since 1880, been given a voice in the Legislative Council in the form of an unofficial member, it was not until 1927 that a Portuguese resident, Jose Pedro Braga, was elevated to this influential body. Yet the Portuguese community was arguably almost as well established in Hong Kong as the British were – many of their descendants, having quickly sensed how vital the British were to conducting business in that part of the world, had forsaken Macao and had followed the British to their new city on the other side of the Pearl River Delta. Yet this demonstration of faith in the British went unrewarded. In fact, it may be accurate to suggest that the Portuguese community were perceived by the British elite as representing the lower slopes of the foreign community's social pyramid. The Portuguese were more integrated with the Chinese

¹¹⁶ CO 131/28, p. 122.

¹¹⁷ Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, p. 382.

than many other foreigners were: they were ‘mostly of Eurasian stock, practised Catholicism, but spoke Cantonese’.¹¹⁸ However, as with the other races in Hong Kong they tried to maintain their own distinctive identity.

Before his stint on the Legislative Council, Braga wrote a highly-detailed and incisive pamphlet that attacked both the inability of Portuguese clerks to achieve promotion within the colonial bureaucracies of Hong Kong and the presence of a general anti-Portuguese sentiment. He published this in 1895 – just two years shy of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. In it he drew attention to six letters that had been sent that summer to the city’s English-speaking newspapers, purportedly written by British citizens, in which Portuguese clerks employed in the Hong Kong Post Office were accused of incompetence and theft. Some of these letters also called for them to be replaced by Englishmen. Braga used this evidence to highlight ‘the smouldering and ever-present animosity which undoubtedly exists here in so far as the Portuguese community and the many posts held by descendants of the Portuguese is concerned.’¹¹⁹ It seems clear from Braga’s pamphlet that Portuguese post office workers felt that, every time a letter was misplaced, members of the British community were rather too quick to judge them.

Recent developments had also added fuel to these flames, for two Portuguese employees at the post office and at the treasury had earlier swindled the Hong Kong Government out of large amounts of money. However, the Braga felt that the whole Portuguese community was, in the late summer of 1895, the target for vitriol and innuendo because of the indiscretions of a few individuals. To illustrate this point, he quoted a letter which stated ‘Is it not a disgrace to any Government calling itself civilised that it should continue employing, year after year, a lot of underpaid Portuguese who have robbed the public systematically in recent times and possibly do so now?’¹²⁰ Clearly the wider Portuguese community was held in contempt by some of the city’s British residents.

¹¹⁸ H. Lethbridge, ‘Caste, Class, and Race’, in *Hong Kong: Stability and Change: a collection of essays* (Hong Kong, 1978), p. 179.

¹¹⁹ J. Braga, *The Rights of Aliens in Hongkong* (Hong Kong, 1895), p. 2.

¹²⁰ Letter of ‘Another Victim’ of 27th August, 1895, written to the *Hongkong Telegraph* and reproduced in *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Cape Town

The Jameson Raid took place less than eighteen months before the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Its aftermath threw the politics of the Cape Colony into crisis, causing the immediate withdrawal of support by the Afrikaner Bond for Cecil Rhodes' ruling coalition and Rhodes' subsequent resignation as Prime Minister. Although Rhodes, who for so long had courted the support of the Bond and its leader Jan Hofmeyr, pleaded ignorance of his friend Jameson's spectacularly unsuccessful foray into Transvaal, little credibility was given to this. This initial cynicism appeared to be justified in 1897 when, a few weeks after the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the House of Commons enquiry into the raid found Rhodes responsible for the planning and financing of it.¹²¹ As a result of the raid, tensions between the Dutch and British communities intensified rapidly: James Sivewright, a member of the Afrikaner Bond who had served in Rhodes' administration, stated in March 1896 that 'Racial feeling has been evoked more strongly than was ever the case during the War of Independence, and distrust of Englishmen is greater today than at any time since I first landed in South Africa.'¹²² The effect that it had on solidifying some elements of the ethnic Dutch community's opposition to Britain and reinvigorating the Afrikaner nationalist cause was commented on by Theodore Wirgman, a canon of Grahamstown Cathedral. In an article published in a London magazine in 1901, Wirgman argued that relations between the Cape Dutch and their kindred in the Boer Republics had, prior to the raid, been strained – with fiscal disputes over tariff levels and the ease of access to each other's markets poisoning the relationship. However, he argues that the raid brought these factions together - 'The religious tie between the Republics and the Cape Colony Dutch at once asserted itself with binding force.'¹²³

The increasing precariousness of the British position in the Cape Colony at this time was further discussed by Muizenburg resident James Gill in February 1896. In a letter to

¹²¹ M. Tamarkin, *Cecil Rhodes and the Cape Afrikaners* (London 1996), p. 271.

¹²² J. Sivewright, quoted in 'The South African Problem: Views of a Cape Minister', *The Observer*, 15th March, 1896.

¹²³ A. T. Wirgman, 'The Religion of the Boers', *The Nineteenth Century: a monthly review*, June 1901 issue (London), p. 971.

Joseph Chamberlain, he voiced his belief that the Afrikaner Bond was having a destabilising influence on Cape politics and he also expressed his concern that the Jameson Raid had now given them a decisive opportunity to undermine Britain's control of the region:

Before the Boer War the Cape Colony was firmly and securely British: intermarriages, business connections, increasing intercourse, and the spread of education on English lines and through English teachers were rapidly obliterating every trace of race division. The Boer War gave the first check to this process; the more recent occurrences in the Transvaal have given another and perhaps a more serious one.... What I fear is that our weak hold of the country gives us no chance of making headway against it. The preponderant voting power in Parliament.... is within the grasp of the Afrikaner majority.... A struggle for supremacy is in the air.¹²⁴

For Gill, the only way for the British to strengthen their position in the Cape Colony was through a programme of large-scale immigration of people from Britain, aided by subsidies from the imperial government if necessary, which would finally cancel the demographic dominance that the Afrikaner population had long held among the white population. As the extract states, Gill linked the re-awakening of Afrikaner consciousness to the short War of Independence that the Transvaalers fought against the British in 1880 – 1. He argued that, from this moment on, British control of the Cape had become compromised. The ill-conceived and ill-fated Jameson Raid dramatically increased the threat to British primacy in South Africa.

Gill's letter presents a grave scenario and, as a contemporary source written by an educated man living in the outskirts of Cape Town, his views would have carried some currency.¹²⁵ The presence of a newly assertive Afrikanerdom may indeed have been seen as a direct threat to the dominance of the British in the Cape Colony. This interpretation of Gill's gains additional credibility due to the formation of the South African League in June, 1896 – 'a loyal and political organisation founded because of the apprehension in

¹²⁴ Letter of J. Gill to Joseph Chamberlain, 26th February, 1896. N. A., CO 48/530, 'Additional Colonial Office Despatches for 1896', pp. 389- 91.

¹²⁵ Gill makes mention of his M.A. (*Cantab*) in his letter to Chamberlain.

the minds of a large number of loyal British subjects, of various races, of danger....to British rule.’¹²⁶ The South African League believed that this perceptible increase in race feeling between the communities might lead to the loss of the British colonies to the empire if not checked: ‘Fanned assiduously by the Hollander element in the South African Republic this feeling has become distinctly aggressive, and there can be no manner of doubt that, in the minds for certain sections of the Dutch element, the idea is being gradually evolved of an independent United States of South Africa.’¹²⁷

Although Mordechai Tamarkin has recently argued that the Jameson Raid was not the great turning point in Anglo-Dutch relations that it has traditionally been depicted as, it is indisputable that this event had a great effect on the political situation at the time. Tamarkin concedes that the raid did indeed strengthen the existing fraternal bonds between those of Dutch extraction across southern Africa. However, in his view, the majority of the Cape Afrikaners ‘were deeply loyal to the empire and entertained no desire to replace republican for imperial allegiance.’¹²⁸ This may indeed have been the case, although members of the South African League would surely have strongly contested this verdict. The farewell address of the Afrikaner Bond to Baron Rosmead in April 1897, on the occasion of the High Commissioner’s retirement and return to England, makes it clear that, only weeks before the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the Jameson Raid had certainly not been forgotten by the Afrikaner community: ‘The memory of the deplorable events which occurred shortly after the commencement of Your Excellency’s second term of office in South Africa is unhappily still present in the minds of all.’¹²⁹

Thus, the Jameson Raid remained the dominant political story of the day – a situation that was further encouraged by the presence of the South African Enquiry Committee into the event taking place in London. Whilst newspapers kept Cape Town’s public

¹²⁶ ‘The Declaration of the South African League’, sent to the Colonial Office and reproduced in N. A., CO 48/528, ‘Colonial Office Despatches, January – July, 1896’, pp. 380 - 2.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 380 - 2.

¹²⁸ M. Tamarkin, ‘Milner, the Cape Afrikaners, and the outbreak of the South African war: From a point of return to a dead end’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 25, no. 3 (1997), p. 400.

¹²⁹ Address of the Afrikaner Bond to Rosmead on the occasion of his retirement from South Africa, N. A., CO 48/531 ‘Colonial Office Despatches, January – April 1897’, p. 9.

abreast of the plans for the Diamond Jubilee, these reports were often accompanied by news from the enquiry, ensuring that this deeply divisive episode remained fresh in the minds of all. Confirmation came, from a newspaper sympathetic to the Transvaal regime, that the Jameson Raid had also overshadowed Pretoria's preparations for the Diamond Jubilee: 'There has been a tendency of late, and which the Secretary of State for the Colonies has also accepted as a fact, to regard that mad breach of International Law as buried and forgotten.... It will take some time, we regret to say, before that old sore can be healed, and such a factor in the situation should never be lost sight of.'¹³⁰ Whether the raid was the great turning point in Anglo-Dutch relations in South Africa or not, memories of it were still fresh as Cape Town prepared to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee.

In the first half of 1897, momentum towards war appeared to be unstoppable, with both sides building up their military capabilities. In March, the *Daily News* in London hoped that Chamberlain was not going to make 'a colossal mistake' by waging war on Transvaal.¹³¹ In April, as Alfred Milner steamed towards the Cape to take up the office of Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner, Frank Harris, editor of the *Saturday Review*, beseeched him 'above all to keep in mind the fact that a war between the two white races in South Africa would be a criminal folly.... Under the shadow of Table Mountain you will quickly realize that there is a certain colonial sentiment which is shared by the best Englishmen and Dutchmen alike.'¹³² Harris urged Milner to ignore the aggressive posturing of Chamberlain and to recognise the many shared values that both sides possessed, values that had allowed the Europeans to co-exist with one another relatively peacefully for many years. Above all, he urged Milner to be statesmanlike and to 'not talk of war, nor think of war as Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Goschen do.'¹³³ However, on the same day that Harris' open letter to Milner was published, the *Manchester Guardian* reported the imminent departure of the transport ship *Dunera* to

¹³⁰ *The Press*, extract from 'The Peace Debate', 24th April, 1897.

¹³¹ 'Ominous Rumours' – a summary of news from the London newspapers, *The Star* (Johannesburg), 12th March, 1897

¹³² F. Harris, 'An Open Letter to Sir Alfred Milner', *The Saturday Review* (April 24th, 1897), pp. 432 – 3.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 433. Goschen was First Lord of the Admiralty. He sent a squadron of Royal Navy ships to Delagoa Bay, in March, 1897, to demonstrate their power to the Transvaalers and to send the message to both them and Germany that Britain intended to retain an active role in that part of south-east Africa.

the Cape with 180 tons of military stores and 600 men of the Royal Irish Rifles on board.¹³⁴ On 13th May, the War Office publically confirmed that it had censored General Nicholson for making an anti-Boer speech to the Dublin Fusiliers just before they had embarked to join the troops mustering in South Africa.¹³⁵ On 21st May, the *Cape Times* reported that, not only had the *Dunera* now arrived, but two more troopships, *Dilwarra* and *Jelunga*, were now *en route* to the Cape. Carrying three batteries of field artillery, they were scheduled to arrive in Table Bay only a fortnight before the Diamond Jubilee celebrations took place.¹³⁶

At this time, British troops arrived regularly in Cape Town – despite the Acting High Commissioner, Major General Goodenough, advising the Colonial Secretary at the end of April that there was ‘a good deal of uneasiness’ in the city over the ‘reported despatch of reinforcements to South Africa.’¹³⁷ This uneasiness could be detected in the suggestion of *Ons Land*, one of Cape Town’s Afrikaans language newspapers, that only Queen Victoria’s desire for a peaceful celebration of her Diamond Jubilee had prevented the immediate despatch of 20,000 British troops to the region.¹³⁸ Even so, it was still noted by the *Cape Times* in May that the imperial military contingent in South Africa had trebled over the previous three years.¹³⁹ At the beginning of May, it was confirmed that the abandoned garrisons at King Williams Town and Grahamstown had been re-commissioned by the War Office and that troops would soon be sent from Cape Town to occupy them.¹⁴⁰ Even if this troop build-up was all part of an elaborate game of bluff, played by Chamberlain in the hope that Kruger would back down on the issue of Uitlander voting rights, the stage appeared set for war.¹⁴¹

¹³⁴ *The Manchester Guardian*, 24th April, 1897.

¹³⁵ *The Cape Times*, 15th May, 1897.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 21st May, 1897.

¹³⁷ Telegram from Maj. Gen. Goodenough, Acting High Commissioner, to Chamberlain, 28th April, 1897. CO 48/531, p. 266.

¹³⁸ This statement by *Ons Land* was reproduced in ‘The Australian Mail’, telegrams from Australian newspapers, in *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 5th May, 1897.

¹³⁹ *The Cape Times*, 21st May, 1897.

¹⁴⁰ *The Port Elizabeth and Eastern Province Standard*, 1st May, 1897. CO 48/531, p. 187, Telegram of 3rd May, 1897: ‘The War Office wish [sic] King Williams Town and Grahams Town Barracks to be got ready for Battalion now at Cape Town.’

¹⁴¹ R. Shannon, *The Age of Salisbury, 1881 – 1902* (Harlow, 1996), pp. 481 – 91.

The Cape Assembly also witnessed a dramatic increase in confrontational rhetoric during this period. In late April, just before his departure for the jubilee celebrations in London, Cape Premier Sir Gordon Sprigg affirmed that the British Government did not desire war in South Africa but, if a conflict did break out, then it would firmly be the fault of Transvaal.¹⁴² The *Cape Argus* also reported that Sprigg's Cabinet was split due to the increasingly anti-British attitude being displayed by Thomas Te Water, a member of the Afrikaner Bond and Sprigg's Colonial Secretary, and his opposition to the build-up of British forces.¹⁴³ For the Afrikaans newspaper *Het Dagblad*, which advertised itself as holding a consensual and progressive 'broad, true, South African Policy', the 'Peace Debate' – proposed with the intention of clearing the air and forging an anti-war consensus in the Cape Assembly – had been disastrously counter-productive.¹⁴⁴ Rather than calm the situation, the newspaper blamed it for inciting greater levels of race feeling: 'And what is the upshot of it all? That the alienation between the great races – in the Parliament as well as in the land – has become greater by the debate.... we doubt very much if the original authors of the motion have very much reason to be pleased with the attainment of their end.'¹⁴⁵

Furthermore, loyalist politician James Rose Innes proposed that the Cape Colony should make a contribution towards Britain's imperial defence through subsidising the Royal Navy's local operations. The *Cape Times* was hugely in favour of this proposal, saying that it would make a fine jubilee gift to the mother country: 'The first recognition of the naval unity of the Empire would be something worth taking to the Diamond Jubilee – something better than an illuminated address.... Those ships that they go on building in England are to guard our coasts and our trade every bit as much as the coasts and trades of England.'¹⁴⁶ Although Sir Gordon Sprigg, a man regarded as having a *penchant* for the dramatic, had originally promised Britain that the Cape Colony would provide the

¹⁴² 'Cape Colony and the Transvaal: Important speech of Sir Gordon Sprigg', *The Manchester Guardian*, 24th April, 1897.

¹⁴³ The summary of this story in *The Cape Argus* was found in *The Port Elizabeth and Eastern Province Standard*, 1st May, 1897.

¹⁴⁴ Advertisement for *Het Dagblad* in *The Cape Argus*, 6th May, 1897.

¹⁴⁵ These words of *Het Dagblad* were reproduced in *The Port Elizabeth and Eastern Province Standard*, 4th May, 1897.

¹⁴⁶ *The Cape Times*, editorial of 29th May, 1897.

Royal Navy with a battleship at the Diamond Jubilee, an annual financial contribution was seen as being rather more practical and achievable.¹⁴⁷ Despite concerns over the fractious atmosphere in the Cape Assembly, Innes' measure was passed unanimously on the day that the Prime Minister boarded the boat for London. Therefore, much to the *Cape Times*' relief, Sir Gordon Sprigg did not arrive empty-handed when he attended 'the great Rally of the Kindred'.¹⁴⁸ If the proposal made by Innes was a ploy to expose disloyal politicians in the Cape Assembly, then it did not work.

However, some faint glimmers of hope for peace still remained visible: a few days before the Diamond Jubilee it was reported that Transvaal's Volksraad had rescinded the contentious Immigration Law and a more conciliatory tone towards the Uitlanders was being adopted. This led the Shanghai-based *North-China Herald* to comment 'There is every hope therefore that the predictions of those who have been telling us that a war with the Transvaal was only postponed till after the Commemoration festivities at the desire of the Queen will be falsified.'¹⁴⁹ Yet, despite this development, the troop build-up continued and the Diamond Jubilee was condemned to take place during a time of acute upheaval and political tension. Just days before the Diamond Jubilee festivities began, the *Cape Mercury* lived up to its pugnacious motto of 'Colonial, Outspoken, Progressive' by declaring that 'the Africander Bond would prefer to be part of a Republic under its own flag, and is only deterred from taking steps to reach this end by the fear of foreign conquest if the protection of England was removed.'¹⁵⁰

Both Hong Kong and Cape Town thus faced acute social and political challenges as the celebratory period approached. In Hong Kong, ongoing cultural and political issues appeared to threaten local support for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. For years, local communities had faced discrimination at the hands of the British elite and this event would test whether local difficulties could cast a shadow over a global celebration. In Cape Town, the mood among the city's white population had been thrown into crisis by

¹⁴⁷ *The Cape Mercury*, 5th June, 1897.

¹⁴⁸ *The Cape Times*, editorial of 1st June, 1897.

¹⁴⁹ *The North-China Herald*, 18th June, 1897.

¹⁵⁰ *The Cape Mercury*, editorial of 12th June, 1897.

the increasing diplomatic tensions that existed between Britain and the Boer Republics. In both cities, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee took place against a potentially volatile backdrop of racial tension, suspicion and disharmony.

Figure 7: Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee message

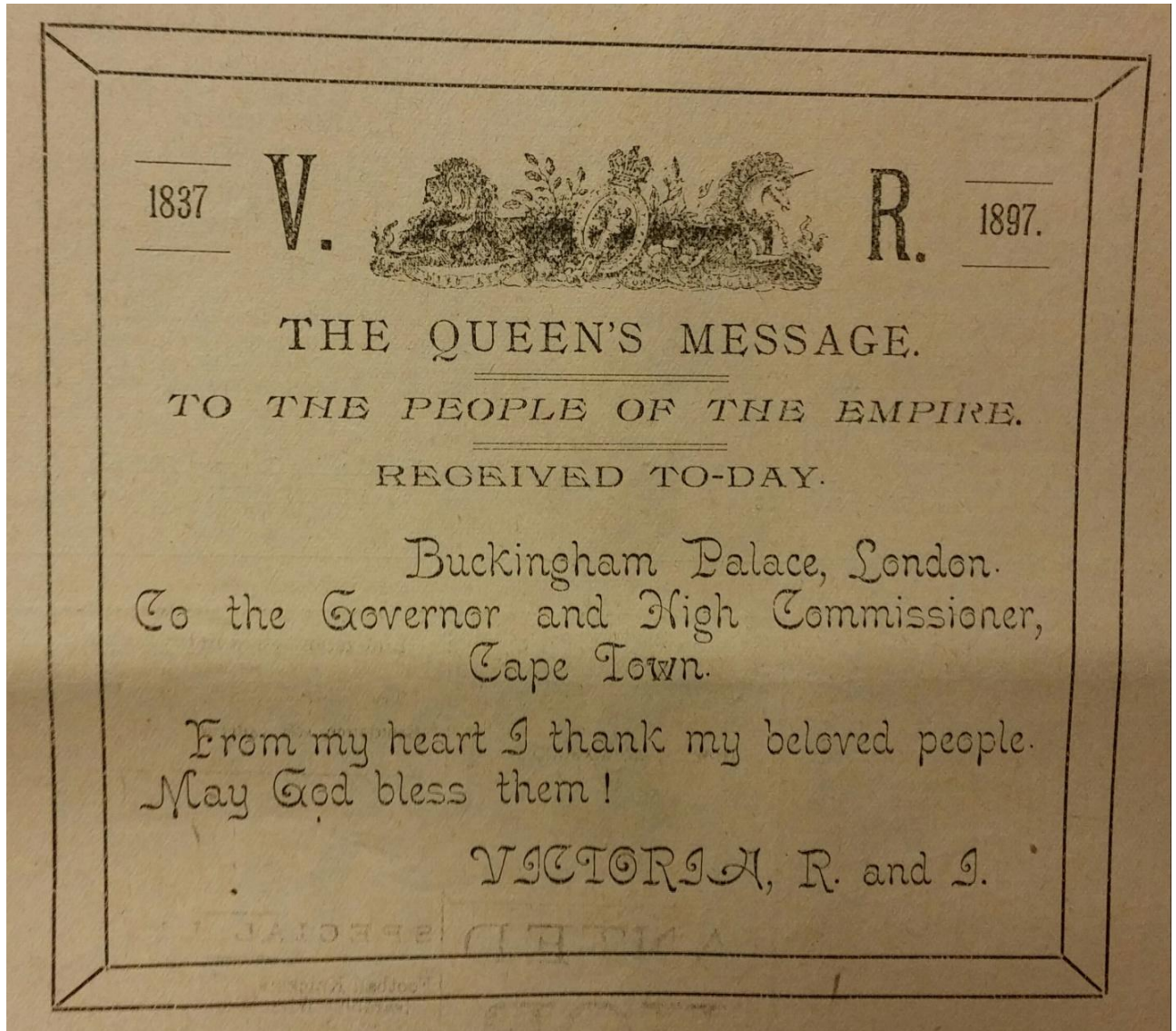


Image taken from *The Cape Argus*, 22nd June, 1897.

CHAPTER THREE

‘For Queen and Empire’? Why the Two Cities Celebrated

The achievement of Queen Victoria in reaching the sixtieth year of her reign was not only a great personal milestone, and a notable landmark in the history of the British monarchy, but was also a highly significant imperial event. By 1897, Victoria had become an important symbol of the British Empire and was projected as a great unifying force within it: ‘the linchpin for a sense of global national identity’, binding ‘the distant peoples of her realm in close communion.’¹ Therefore, as well as being a celebration of Queen Victoria’s longevity on the throne, the Diamond Jubilee also became a politically-orchestrated celebration of the imperial connection. Soldiers and notables from across its vast expanses were invited to attend the commemorative events in the United Kingdom, and their presence provided the local population with concrete proof that Britain did indeed govern over sprawling lands across the seas and its family of imperial subjects contained people from every part of the racial spectrum. To emphasise this, the Duke of Argyll is reported to have told the queen, following the Diamond Jubilee parade in London, ‘we could not help remember that no sovereign state since the fall of Rome could muster subjects from such distant lands.’²

This chapter will argue that, by the time of the Diamond Jubilee, the queen had become a vitally important component in the machinery of empire. Due to an evolution in her constitutional role, the development of new technologies and the queen’s own desire to make herself more relevant and more accessible to her subjects, she became a well-known figure in her overseas lands – even though she had not herself ventured far beyond the territorial waters of the United Kingdom. Her life was documented and her

¹ D. Bell, ‘The Idea of a Patriot Queen? The Monarchy, the Constitution, and the Iconographic Order of Greater Britain, 1860 – 1900’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2006), p. 3.

² The Duke of Argyll quoted in J. Andrews, ‘The imperial style: Rhetorical depiction and Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee’, *Western Journal of Communication*, vol. 64, no. 1 (2000), p. 71.

likeness was reproduced to an extent that had never been known before in the history of the British monarchy, and even in the most far-off corners of her empire – such as Hong Kong – there were those who were so familiar with her image and her life story that they felt they had established a personal connection with her. Her important role as the great figurehead of the empire meant that it was vital that her Diamond Jubilee celebrations passed off successfully in the British territories scattered across the globe.

This chapter also analyses the response of the people of Hong Kong and Cape Town to the Diamond Jubilee, and seeks to answer why they, and the many visitors that swelled the audience numbers over the celebratory period, turned out for the festivities. It takes issue with the simplistic assertion made by eminent British officials on the ground that their populations' participation in the celebrations alone was a ringing endorsement of both Queen Victoria and her empire. Instead, what was presented was a far more fragmented and differentiated picture. Whilst there is enough evidence to suggest that some support for the institutions of monarchy and empire existed in both cities, it cannot be conclusively proven that these were the main motivating factors behind the levels of attendance and participation witnessed. People were drawn to the Diamond Jubilee festivities for a variety of reasons, both ideological and practical, and it is impossible to agree with the British colonial authorities' assertion that the celebrations represented a valid plebiscite on the popularity of both the queen and the imperial project that she personified.

I. The Importance of Queen Victoria to the British Empire

Although the queen played a central role in the empire project at the time of the jubilee, the specific interweaving of the two institutions had been a comparatively recent development: 'During the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, no royal ceremonial occasion could plausibly have been called an imperial event. But, from 1877, when Disraeli made Victoria empress of India, and 1897, when Joseph Chamberlain brought the colonial premiers and troops to parade in the Diamond Jubilee procession,

every great royal occasion was also an *imperial* occasion.’³ Bernard Cohn puts the beginning of greater formal interaction between the monarchy and the empire at the slightly earlier date of 1858, when the British Government took over the running of India after the Sepoy Mutiny.⁴ This new engagement of the monarch with the empire was reinforced by the extensive travels of Queen Victoria’s second son Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh. Although he had spent much time abroad beforehand in his professional capacity as an officer in the Royal Navy, Alfred became the first member of the British royal family to make an official visit to both Cape Town, in 1867, and Hong Kong, in 1869.⁵ Chandrika Kaul argues that not only did the royal tours of the later nineteenth century that followed on from Alfred’s pioneering voyages seek to bind the disparate groups of the British Empire together, but they also sought to strengthen the existing bonds that lay between Britons based overseas and the mother country.⁶ Added to Queen Victoria’s portfolio of symbolic imagery was the ‘Patriot Monarch’ – ‘standing watchful guard over her magnificent realms, and signifying permanence, unity, and strength.’⁷

The more implicit linking of the monarchy with the British Empire not only gave the imperial project a much needed figurehead, but it also gave Queen Victoria a new opportunity for relevance and prestige. Although politically active in her younger days, to the detriment of both the established political process and her popularity with the British public, by the time of the Diamond Jubilee the queen had accepted the inaction required of her constitutional role and had successfully re-established herself in the affections of the nation.⁸ Memories of the period of self-imposed, self-indulgent seclusion from public life that resulted from the death of her husband in 1861 had

³ D. Cannadine, ‘The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the “Invention of Tradition”, c. 1820 – 1977’, in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 124. The italics shown are Cannadine’s own.

⁴ Due to the Government of India Act, 2nd August, 1858. B. Cohn, ‘Representing Authority in Victorian India’, in *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁵ These visits are chronicled in J. Milner and O. W. Brierly, *The Cruise of HMS Galatea* (London, 1869, new ed. Cambridge, 2014), and W. Beach, *Visit of His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh to Hong Kong in 1869* (Hong Kong, 1870).

⁶ C. Kaul, ‘Monarchical Display and the Politics of Empire: Princes of Wales and India 1870s – 1920s’, *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 17, no. 4 (2006), p. 469.

⁷ Bell, ‘The Idea of a Patriot Queen’, p. 6.

⁸ Cannadine, ‘The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual’, pp. 109 - 20.

largely dissipated. Following the success of her Golden Jubilee celebrations ten years previously, she had, by the summer of 1897, ascended to the revered position of national matriarch.⁹ Her new role as the figurehead of a sprawling international empire had also given the status of the British monarchy a significant boost at a time when her political power was much diminished. As a result of her new importance to the British Empire, royal ceremonial occasions, which had previously been underwhelming and understated affairs, were injected with grandiose and ostentatious rituals.¹⁰ The intended audience for these glamorous events – who could better appreciate their finery due to the photographic images which now adorned local newspapers – included her overseas subjects of hers as well as those residing in Britain.

The Golden Jubilee had been a homely affair, with Queen Victoria and the royal household firmly at the centre of the celebrations. This was in keeping with the public image of the monarchy that Victoria, encouraged by her husband Albert, had fostered – an image which replaced the grandeur and aloofness projected by some of her more extravagant Hanoverian ancestors with a more down-to-earth and domesticated version. In response to the reduction of her constitutional power, she made a conscious attempt to evolve the monarchy: demystifying it, playing down its trappings of power and making it appeal more to the sensibilities of the general public.¹¹ However, the Diamond Jubilee was grasped by some British statesmen, in particular Joseph Chamberlain, as an opportunity to push forward a political objective: in this case, to celebrate and reinforce the imperial connection at a time when competition between foreign powers during a renewed bout of empire building – a period subsequently defined as ‘New Imperialism’ – was at its height. Therefore, despite the existing political challenges posed by the Irish Home Rule question, the famine and unrest in India and the recent diplomatic upheaval in the country’s relationship with Transvaal, the 1897 celebrations were grasped as a chance for Britain to make a powerful statement. They celebrations needed to be lavish

⁹ L. Vallone, ‘Victoria’, *History Today* (2002), pp. 49 – 52.

¹⁰ Cannadine, ‘The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual’, p. 120.

¹¹ G. King, *Twilight of Splendour: the court of Queen Victoria during her Diamond Jubilee year* (Hoboken, NJ, 2007), p. 8, pp. 19 - 20. Eric Hobsbawm also argues that nineteenth century monarchs needed to reset their institutions more towards the people, ‘however lowly’, or they might meet the same end as the Bourbons did in 1789: E. Hobsbawm, ‘Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870 - 1914’, in Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 281-2.

and to project the idea of a militarily strong, economically affluent and socially harmonious British Empire to audiences both at home and abroad.

Due to comparatively recent technological advances, such as the development of the camera, the recent innovation of royal overseas tours and the increasing importance of the monarchy to Britain's imperial designs, the lives of Queen Victoria and the royal family had also become increasingly more accessible to her subjects. From the 1860s onwards, 'real life' photographic images of her were extensively disseminated in various forms – posters, portraits and newspapers. These images also conveyed a more human, intimate, face of royalty to her subjects, one that was in keeping with the demystification of the institution that the queen was orchestrating. The official Diamond Jubilee celebrations that took place in the United Kingdom also helped to break new ground in the public consumption of the queen's image, being one of the first major public events to be filmed.¹² Never before had a monarch's life been so catalogued and commented on. As a result, many of her subjects, scattered across the globe, would have felt like they knew Queen Victoria on a personal level – and their perception of her may have combined respect for the office she held along with affection for a person whose trials and tribulations they felt they could relate to.¹³

In Hong Kong, the queen's image had also passed through society since 1862 in the form of postage stamps, which were valid in all of Britain's Chinese Treaty Ports [Figure 8].¹⁴ Even if very few of the city's Chinese population directly sent or received correspondence using Hong Kong's postal service, a greater number of them would surely have glimpsed these tiny portraits of her at some point due to their general circulation. However, the Cape of Good Hope Colony was one of the very few imperial possessions not to have shown her likeness on its stamps by 1897.¹⁵ Despite this, the Diamond Jubilee took place at a time when Queen Victoria was one of the most well-known – if not, the most well-known – people in the world. The fact that she would have

¹² J. Plunkett, *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 239 – 40.

¹³ King, *Twilight of Splendour*, p. 2.

¹⁴ Illustrative material can be found at the end of the chapter.

¹⁵ K. Jeffery, 'Crown, Communication and the Colonial Post: Stamps, the Monarchy and the British Empire', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 34, no. 1 (2006), p. 50.

been recognisable to so many of her overseas subjects no doubt reinforced the imperial connection.

Therefore, the celebrations took place at a time when the British monarchy was deployed as ‘an instrument of imperial politics and propaganda’ across the wider British Empire.¹⁶ As a result, colonial administrators were extremely keen to see that great royal celebrations were celebrated in the colonies with great gusto by all their inhabitants. For the colonial elite, such a positive reaction would not only have been a fittingly respectful tribute to the queen, but it would also have helped them to more easily perpetuate the notion that membership of the empire was hugely advantageous for its colonised people, entitling them to greater levels of personal freedom and superior standards of living. In his Diamond Jubilee ode, Welsh poet Sir Lewis Morris articulated this idea, writing that ‘The dusky millions of thy fabulous East’ and ‘Thy crescent realm on Afric’s [*sic*] peopled shore’ were grateful recipients of the queen’s benevolence:

Ruled by just laws, and learning to grow free,
Rejoice by thy Britannic Peace increased.
Thy praise is by a myriad voices sung.¹⁷

Similarly, the words of Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, ‘We are undertaking the great experiment of trying to sustain an empire entirely on the basis of mutual goodwill, sympathy and affection’, would also have sounded extremely hollow had there not been an overwhelmingly favourable reception to the Diamond Jubilee across the empire.¹⁸

A joyous celebration of this event in the colonies was also important for the sake of the audience back home.¹⁹ The Diamond Jubilee took place at a time when proponents of Sir Charles Dilke’s vision of a ‘Greater Britain’, which included Colonial Secretary Chamberlain, still doggedly harboured hopes of convincing the British public and its

¹⁶ Kaul, ‘Monarchical Display and the Politics of Empire’, p. 464.

¹⁷ Sir Lewis Morris, extracts from ‘June 22 1897 – An Ode’, published in *The Times*, 22nd June, 1897.

¹⁸ Lord Salisbury quoted in *The Home News for India, China, and the Colonies*, 25th June, 1897.

¹⁹ Kaul makes this point in relation to the Prince of Wales’ tour to India in 1920-1, arguing that these visits not only attempted to unify the empire, but also attempted to show those back at home that Britain had created an orderly, civilised and loyal population within its colonies. Kaul, ‘Monarchical Display and the Politics of Empire’, p. 472.

elected representatives that increased political and economic union with the empire was the best way of safeguarding the Britain's prestige and position of pre-eminence on the world stage. The global hegemon since the fall of Napoleon in 1815, Britain now appeared to be facing serious competition from newly-industrialised juggernauts such as Germany, Russia and America.²⁰ Although the Diamond Jubilee was intended as an expression of imperial strength and unity, a sense of morbidity hung over the proceedings: many Conservative imperialists, such as Chamberlain, were conscious of a sense of national decline and the new challenges to Britain's superpower status.²¹ Dennis Judd argues that 'Behind the bold, brash and frequently self-congratulatory front that the Diamond Jubilee celebrations presented to the world, lurked, in almost unquantifiable measure, pessimism and insecurity. Although many of Britain's leaders and opinion-makers chose not to articulate it, there was a deep-seated anxiety as to what the future held both for the nation and the Empire, especially during the imminent, and unknowable, new century.'²²

However, despite the looming existential threats, the British Empire, which like the queen had been viewed in some quarters as a costly nuisance at mid-century – Disraeli stated that the colonies were 'millstones round our necks' – also appeared to have been experiencing a period of heightened public interest at the time of the Diamond Jubilee.²³ Heroes of empire now fired the public's imagination, such as General 'Chinese' Gordon, whose failure to defend Khartoum until a British relief force could reach him in 1885 animated conversation across the nation and led to savage criticism of Prime Minister Gladstone's failure to rescue him.²⁴ The removal from power of Gladstone, who for so long had been the strongest opponent of imperialism, saw the Liberal Party begin to re-orientate itself, attempting to shed its 'Little Englander' image through a new engagement in the empire and internationalism.²⁵ Although Bernard Porter offers the

²⁰ D. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860 – 1900* (Princeton, NJ, 2007), p. 2. However, Chamberlain's plans for an imperial *Zollverein* were quashed at the Colonial Conference that took place in London immediately after the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. (*Ibid.*, p. 58.)

²¹ D. Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester, 2007), p. 6.

²² D. Judd, 'Diamonds are forever: Kipling's imperialism', *History Today*, vol. 47, no. 6 (1997), p. 40.

²³ Benjamin Disraeli quoted in A. Keppel-Jones, *South Africa* (London, 1949), p. 78.

²⁴ Andrews, 'The imperial style', pp. 58 – 9.

²⁵ Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*, p. 4.

suggestion that Britain had ‘never been a convincing imperial society’, with the empire only ever occupying a peripheral position in the interests of most Britons, any negative reporting of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in the queen’s overseas lands would surely have delivered a collective shock to the home audience.²⁶

On a more practical level, there were also a significant number of people whose jobs relied on the imperial connection and many with loved ones who had either emigrated or were serving overseas. There were also many members of the business community and many individual shareholders who had significant assets invested in Britain’s territories abroad. Any negative reporting of the celebrations overseas would also surely have emboldened the foreign competitors that Britain now had to contend with and may have had a profoundly destabilising effect on its entire imperial project. Whether the empire was truly popular among the British public is a matter for debate, but the importance that the empire held to Britain in so many ways meant that large numbers of Britons would surely have been acutely sensitive to any rupture in this relationship. Therefore, statesmen such as Joseph Chamberlain seized the opportunity to make the Diamond Jubilee a celebration of the empire as well as the monarch. As a result, the reputations of both institutions depended on a joyous display of loyalty being produced by Queen Victoria’s subjects at home and abroad.

II. The Preparations in Hong Kong and Cape Town

If the amount of money gathered through public subscription towards the Diamond Jubilee in both Hong Kong and Cape Town is a reliable indicator of the levels of enthusiasm that were present, then this event appears to have been eagerly anticipated. In Hong Kong, the total amount raised by the general population of the city – Briton, colonial subject and foreign national alike – eventually came in at just over \$98,000.²⁷ This represented a near doubling of the \$50,000 that the city’s Jubilee Committee had

²⁶ B. Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society and Culture in Britain* (Oxford, 2004), p. 282.

²⁷ \$ = Hong Kong Dollars. All references to dollars in this thesis will relate to Hong Kong Dollars unless otherwise stated.

expected to be raised.²⁸ Due to the colonial government's pledge to match each dollar raised by the public, a significant sum, nearly \$200,000, was eventually collected for the event's festivities and commemorations.²⁹ In Governor Robinson's opinion, this show of loyalty and generosity, coming so soon after over \$50,000 was raised for the Indian Famine Fund, was remarkable: 'a most gratifying indication of the universal esteem and respect in which Her Majesty is held by the residents in this distant Colony – both British and Foreign.'³⁰

Because the Hong Kong Dollar was on the Silver Standard at this time, it is difficult to offer a comparison for the total amount raised in Pounds Sterling, which was on the Gold Standard during this period. A fixed exchange rate between the two currencies only came into being in 1935, when the Hong Kong Dollar left the Silver Standard.³¹ However, the purchasing power potential that \$200,000 had at this time can be gauged by contemporary reports on property prices and infrastructure costs. For example, during the Diamond Jubilee celebratory period, it was reported that the fine, centrally located three-storied and capacious stone former clubhouse of the Hong Kong Club, the remarkably ornate successor to which can be seen on the shoreline in Figure 21, had been sold for \$127,000.³² Furthermore, the cost of creating a new 23.5 mile around the island of Hong Kong in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee, which would involve building 10 miles of brand-new road as well as upgrading the existing local thoroughfares, was estimated by W. Chatham, the Acting Director of Public Works, to be \$255,000.³³ This was a significant engineering project, requiring cutting through rock and levelling a wild and undulating topography. Therefore, the fact that the \$200,000 raised comes close to paying for this venture shows what an impressive sum of money this was.

²⁸ N. A., CO 129/276, 'Colonial Office Despatches, 1st June – 15th August 1897', p. 96.

²⁹ *The Overland China Mail*, 28th April, 1897.

³⁰ Governor Robinson, telegram to Joseph Chamberlain, 17th June, 1897. CO 129/276, pp. 98 - 101.

³¹ J. Greenwood, 'The Monetary Framework underlying the Hong Kong Dollar Stabilization Scheme', *The China Quarterly*, no. 99 (1984), p. 631.

³² *The Hongkong Weekly Press and China Overland Trade Report*, 22nd June, 1897.

³³ *Ibid.*, 21st October, 1897.

The amount was also a significant improvement on the funds generated for the queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations: \$60,000 had been collected ten years earlier, a sum which included a \$25,000 donation made by the colonial government.³⁴ The success of the fundraising in 1897 becomes even further apparent when it is contrasted with the city's budget for the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935, when only \$50,000 was set aside by the local government. With the colonial authorities in 1935, no doubt hamstrung by the Great Depression, admitting that they would have to put on 'celebrations on more modest scale than on similar occasions in the past', the historical magnitude of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in this city becomes ever clearer.³⁵ The most generous contributor to the Diamond Jubilee subscription lists was the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, which gave \$3,000.³⁶ However, this contribution should surely have been controversial: although managed by foreigners since 1854, the customs service was a Chinese government agency and was regularly the biggest single contributor to its exchequer.³⁷ Therefore, it must have been made using, or rather misusing, Chinese state funds. No reverberations are detected in Hong Kong's English press over this issue – which surely shows the extent to which the foreign managers of the customs service controlled the purse strings of this vitally important organisation and the general sense of entitlement that they held towards it.

Robinson's claim regarding the international nature of the support for the celebrations was based on solid foundations for letters were promptly received from the American, Portuguese and German communities stating their desire to contribute fully towards the fund-raising efforts.³⁸ The Chinese community was also not slow in showing its intention to celebrate the Record Reign: a subscription fund of their own was swiftly created and a committee containing one hundred of its most eminent members was established, tasked with – the *Hongkong Daily Press* presumed – the intention 'to make an exceptionally bright display' and to 'unmistakably display their feelings of loyalty to

³⁴ *The Overland China Mail*, 25th October, 1887.

³⁵ The Governor of Hong Kong, Sir William Peel, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 4th March, 1935. N. A., CO 129/553/7, 'Silver Jubilee Celebrations, March 1935', p. 6.

³⁶ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 7th June, 1897.

³⁷ R. Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832 – 1914* (London, 2011), pp. 1 – 3.

³⁸ *The Overland China Mail*, 28th April, 1897.

Queen Victoria.’³⁹ The city’s celebration of Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee was chiefly remembered for a great Chinese procession, which was said to have cost between \$70,000 and \$80,000 – a further indicator of how impressively the \$200,000 raised ten years later compares. Several thousand strong and several miles in length, it featured twenty four bands and two ornate Chinese dragons – each of whom was operated by 180 bearers. The great length of it can be gauged by the fact that the procession took three hours to pass through.⁴⁰ Having set the bar high in 1887, hopes were high among the English press that the Chinese would make a similarly magnificent contribution to the Diamond Jubilee, despite the fact that the programme of house visitations and other anti-plague measures, which so aggrieved them, still remained in place.⁴¹

In Cape Town, portents for a successful celebration were also present. The symbolic importance of this event, and the strength of emotions that it generated in some quarters, may be gauged by the request made to the Cape Town Municipal Council in May 1897 by the residents of New Street, a thoroughfare that ran alongside the Company Gardens created by the original Dutch settlers, asking that their street be re-named in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee. This request was unanimously accepted at a meeting attended by the city’s mayor, Sir John Woodhead, and ‘Queen Victoria Street’ was created as a result.⁴² The influx of subscriptions to the Festivities Committee had also been brisk and £4,700 had been received by the beginning of June.⁴³ Leading the list of contributors, with a £150 donation, was the British South Africa Company.⁴⁴ Coming at a time when a House of Commons committee in London was investigating the company’s role in the Jameson Raid, the reproduction of the subscription lists in the local press may have given it some much-needed positive publicity. Therefore, in both case studies, the largest donations to the jubilee funds had a distinct whiff about controversial around them – the misuse of Chinese state funds in Hong Kong and the

³⁹ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 8th May, 1897.

⁴⁰ *The North-China Herald*, 24th November, 1887.

⁴¹ Although bubonic plague made a further significant return to Hong Kong in 1896, with ‘no less than 1,078 deaths’ attributed to it, the death toll from the plague in 1897 was 21. Francis W. Clark, Medical Officer of Health, N. A., CO 131/28 ‘Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1898’, p. 271.

⁴² Western Cape Archives, 1/1/1/45, ‘Cape Town Municipal Council Minutes’, Minutes of the Public Works and General Purposes Committee, 20th May, 1897, p. 303.

⁴³ *The Cape Mercury*, 1st June, 1897.

⁴⁴ *The Cape Times*, 25th May, 1897.

political posturing of a recently disgraced chartered company in Cape Town. Clearly, the subscription lists offered a great opportunity for companies and individuals to project themselves and the apparent strength of their loyalty to a large public audience, and the British South Africa Company seems to have taken advantage of this shamelessly.

As was the case in Hong Kong, the amount of money raised for the Diamond Jubilee dwarfed the figure collected for the corresponding event a decade earlier. An indication of this can be found in the Golden Jubilee organising committee's anxiety that, as this event was held at a time of economic depression, the £2,000 estimate received for the statue of Queen Victoria that was to commemorate the event would prove to be beyond them. Fearing that the amount collected would not contribute to 'much more than half the sum', they instead settled for a cheaper version that cost £1,200.⁴⁵ Had the Golden Jubilee committee had access to the levels of funding available ten years later, then such deliberations would have been unnecessary and the more expensive option could have been swiftly purchased. In addition to the amount collected for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations themselves, by the end of May over £600 had also been pledged towards the Victoria Nursing Institute, a new health facility that was to be built, in commemoration of the event, in the working-class suburb of Woodstock.⁴⁶

A further indicator of great enthusiasm for the event was the fact that shops in Cape Town had also been quick to offer Diamond Jubilee memorabilia, and their wares were advertised prominently in the local English-speaking press. Foremost among these vendors were Cleghorn & Harris, of Adderley Street, who stocked a large array of items that had recently been received from manufacturers in England. Their range, which included portraits of the queen and mementoes of the occasion, such as brooches, cuff-links, medals and waxwork statuettes, was displayed in the shop's windows more than a month before the festivities took place and the demand for the jubilee goods was said to be considerable.⁴⁷ So great was the market for jubilee bunting and cotton flags that

⁴⁵ *The Cape Times Mail Edition*, 8th June, 1887.

⁴⁶ *The Cape Times*, 25th May, 1897, A. Digby, *Diversity and Division in Medicine: Health Care in South Africa from the 1800s* (Oxford, 2006), p. 257.

⁴⁷ *The Cape Times*, 22nd May, 1897.

Thorne, Stuttaford & Co., of Adderley Street, was forced to give the public notice, several weeks before the celebrations, that the stock held by them would ‘fall far short’ of the amount ordered by their customers.⁴⁸

Flags of all nations had also been imported specifically for the celebrations – an indicator of the event’s international appeal – by Alexander Cameron & Co. of St. George’s Street; Plaster of Paris busts of Her Majesty could be purchased from Cane and Sons of Long Street; ladies’ Diamond Jubilee handkerchiefs were for sale at J. & A. English of Adderley Street; Cards of Congratulation to the Queen – ‘the hit of the day!’ – were available to buy at Juta & Co., also on Adderley Street.⁴⁹ The special nature of the event was reinforced by the issuing of Cheap Excursion Tickets by the Cape Government Railways to encourage people living in the wider Western Cape area to attend the Cape Town celebrations: during a three-week window in June those living more than 30 miles from the city centre would see the price of a return fare halved.⁵⁰ It is therefore possible to construe that the celebrations for the Record Reign were considered important and much-anticipated events by a sizeable chunk of Cape Town’s urban and suburban populations.

There were also conspicuous signs of interest emanating from the city’s non-white population, with donations being received from the congregations of various mosques and a single contribution of £21, 12 shillings made by the ‘Indian Community’, a population that had first been brought to the Cape as indentured labourers by the British in the 1860s.⁵¹ The city’s Malay community had reacted to the visit of Prince Alfred in 1867 with seemingly spontaneous demonstrations of warmth and loyal support, and their contribution to the Diamond Jubilee subscription lists now implied that, despite the troubles over small pox outbreaks, burial rites and voting rights that had taken place in the interim period, their affection towards the Great White Queen – who they linked directly with both the abolition of slavery and the freedom to practise their own religion

⁴⁸ *The Cape Argus*, 22nd May, 1887.

⁴⁹ *The Cape Times*, 25th May, 1897. *The Cape Mercury*, 12th June, 1897. *The Cape Argus*, 21st June, 1897.

⁵⁰ *The Cape Mercury*, 5th June, 1897.

⁵¹ *The Cape Times*, 18th June and 21st June, 1897.

– remained at a high level.⁵² Therefore, in both Hong Kong and Cape Town, there seemed to be plenty of indications that the celebratory events for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee would play out with the levels of affection and loyalty desired by both the colonial officials on the ground and the statesmen in London.

However, the Diamond Jubilee was a highly complex social and political occasion. The colonial authorities wished to project, and seemed to have believed for themselves, that the celebratory events in these two cities offered nothing more than an opportunity for their communities to show support for Her Majesty and – by extension – life under the British flag in general. There is little evidence of the celebrations in these two cities being heavily scrutinised after the event – both the colonial officials and the local English-speaking press corps seemed to have decided that if the turnout was good and there was no overt opposition, then it could safely be declared a roaring success. It is against this political background that Sir Alfred Milner's message to the queen, stating that the Diamond Jubilee in Cape Town was being 'celebrated with the most impressive and unanimous enthusiasm', must be considered.⁵³ The same is equally so for Governor Robinson's assertion that 'in no other corner of British territory were those expressions [of loyalty, respect and devotion towards our beloved Queen-Empress] more spontaneous and sincere in their utterance, or more practical proof of their sincerity furnished, than in this remote Colony of Hongkong.'⁵⁴ This is not to deny that there appeared to have been solid grounds for the colonial officials to have called their Diamond Jubilee celebrations a success – for instance, there was no evidence of any counter-demonstration or any large scale public order offenses – however, these verdicts did not appear to have been the result of a sophisticated or well-informed analysis.

This chapter seeks to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the celebrations in these two cities. Despite the words of Milner and Robinson, the great Record Reign jamboree offered the urban communities of Cape Town and Hong Kong opportunities to celebrate

⁵² C. McCreery, 'Telling the story: *HMS Galatea's* Voyage to South Africa, 1867', *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 61, no. 4 (2009), p. 824.

⁵³ Milner's reply to the queen's jubilee message was reproduced in the *Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

⁵⁴ Governor Robinson's address to the Legislative Council, 25th November, 1897. N. A., CO 131/27, 'Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1897', p. 43.

things other than Queen Victoria and to pursue their own political agenda. Beyond the smokescreen created by the official protocol of gift giving and official addresses, there is certainly evidence of some seemingly genuine and enthusiastic praise for the queen, and isolated, spontaneous acts of generosity and respect made towards her appeared to have taken place. Although the newspaper reports of the celebrations focussed disproportionately on the contribution of the cities' elites to the celebrations, loyalism was a broad church and was not the exclusive preserve of those at the top of the social pyramid.⁵⁵ However, to say that everyone in these cities participated in the celebration with the same levels of enthusiasm, as the reports sent back to Buckingham Palace and the Colonial Office suggest, is to offer a grossly misleading analysis of what took place.

For some, the festivities may indeed have primarily afforded them the opportunity to salute the virtues of a monarch who – thanks to her fame and longevity – was by this point a global celebrity. Queen Victoria was indisputably one of the dominant and defining personalities of her age, and alongside respect and fondness for her personal qualities there would also have been an appreciation of her contribution as a monarch, her status as a global leader and the impact that she, and her nation, had had on the world stage during her long reign. In addition to celebrating the queen herself, the event also provided an opportunity to celebrate the institutions that she was symbolically associated with – such as the empire. Within the narrative of the celebrations was also located an appreciation for life under the British flag, suggesting that the lofty sentiments expressed by Lord Salisbury regarding Britain's desire to build an empire of consent may not be dismissed entirely as hot air. Instead, there were tangible benefits to being part of the empire: for all the injustices and inequalities that accompanied the colonial system, the British gave its colonised people access to economic markets, systems of governance and levels of personal security and freedom that were denied to many others across the world.

⁵⁵ A. Thompson, 'The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa, c. 1870 – 1939', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 118, no. 477 (2003), pp. 619 – 20.

However, many of the people that spent the celebratory period in either Hong Kong or Cape Town may have embraced the event for reasons that were more rooted in pragmatism than enthusiasm – for it allowed them the chance to make some extra money, to forget their troubles and make merry for a couple of days, to show off their cultural and material wealth to friends and foes alike and, ultimately, to take some respite from the grind of daily life. Many of the people in these cities might have been largely indifferent towards, or even opposed to, Queen Victoria and the British Empire. Some of them may have sought to hi-jack the celebrations, using them instead as a vehicle to transmit their own political messages. Many of the Chinese spectators that travelled down the Pearl River to Hong Kong from nearby Canton to see the celebrations, or the suburban and rural dwellers who took advantage of the Western Cape Railway's discounted tickets and observed the festivities in the shadow of Table Mountain, may have just been interested in observing rather than celebrating the event.

Therefore, participation in the Diamond Jubilee did not necessarily translate into support for the focal point of the celebrations. Holding divergent political opinions did not always suppress the desire to make the most of a good party or to witness an interesting spectacle. During the Prince of Wales' visits to Calcutta in 1905 – 6, at a time of unprecedented local agitation in protest against the decision to partition Bengal, political opposition to British rule appeared able to 'co-exist with mass enjoyment of the *tamasha* (spectacle) of an imperial pageant.'⁵⁶ Therefore, a large turn-out for the celebratory events should not have been automatically interpreted as proof that the queen and the empire were popular. Levels of public support for these institutions in these cities would surely have ranged across the entire gamut - from wild enthusiasm, to general ambivalence, and perhaps also to fervent opposition. However, there was little point in staying at home when such a spectacular event was taking place. Although, to paraphrase Sir Lewis Morris' 'Diamond Jubilee Ode', myriad voices may have indeed have congregated in order to pay tribute to Her Majesty, there were also myriad motivating factors behind the participation and attendance of the people of Hong Kong and Cape Town in the celebratory events. Whereas personal attachment to the monarch

⁵⁶ Kaul, 'Monarchical Display and the Politics of Empire', p. 470.

and British values might have motivated some, others may have taken part in order to promote their own agenda. Loyalty may have been worn proudly as a badge of honour or employed as a flag of convenience. Although the celebrations in these two cities formed part of a global event, local politics also impacted upon them. Therefore, the reaction to the festivities that took place is an issue of great complexity.

III. A Celebration of Queen Victoria?

In the aftermath of the celebrations, the English-speaking press in both cities unanimously voiced the opinion that the Diamond Jubilee had been an unprecedented success. In Hong Kong, the *Telegraph* concluded that ‘All classes and all nationalities vied with each other in doing honour to the most beneficent and most noble Monarch the world has known, and, had it not been for somewhat unfavourable weather conditions, the display in Hongkong would have been the finest seen here.’⁵⁷ A similar tone was struck by the loyalist *Cape Times* in Cape Town: ‘it is safe to say that on no previous occasion has there been such a spontaneous and enthusiastic exhibition of patriotic feeling as that displayed by all sections of the community yesterday.’⁵⁸ Whilst it is a challenge to accurately gauge the feelings of all of Hong Kong and Cape Town’s inhabitants towards the Diamond Jubilee through the use of English language material alone, enough evidence is available to sense that there were indeed some genuine levels of affection and respect shown towards the queen. Amidst the official gift-giving protocol, the thanksgiving services and the various representations made to the colonial authorities by influential delegations, a few individual acts of generosity from some of the more humble members of the community stand out as being seemingly sincere tributes to the queen.

As might be expected, there was no shortage of official tributes paid to Queen Victoria. Representations were made by many community leaders and fine words were occasionally accompanied by a gift. For example, in Hong Kong, Ho Kai presented an

⁵⁷ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 24th June, 1897.

⁵⁸ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

ornate tablet on behalf of the city's Chinese community, which offered to the queen the traditional Chinese blessings of happiness, long life, health and peace [see Figure 9].⁵⁹ This ceremony repeated the events of ten years earlier, when a magnificent brass tablet was presented by the Committee of the Man Mo temple, the oldest Chinese temple in Hong Kong.⁶⁰ In Cape Town, the Jewish community of South Africa presented their address inside an elegant and finely decorated wooden casket. Made from locally sourced wood, it was rich in detail and displayed symbolic imagery which showed the intertwining of Queen Victoria with the Jewish faith: on the lid was carved a representation of the two stone tablets bearing the Ten Commandments surmounted by a crown, whilst the arms of the Cape Colony and the shield of David were also engraved on the piece.⁶¹ The 'Indian residents of Cape Town' also presented their address inside an ornate silver casket which incorporated similar symbolic imagery, with both the Star of India and the arms of the Cape Colony engraved upon it.⁶²

How much these sentiments were down to protocol and how much they were due to feelings of genuine affection is difficult to analyse, but each one of the offerings and visits received by the colonial representatives would no doubt have led them to believe that British rule was popular in the two cities and Queen Victoria was held in high regard by many of her overseas subjects. However, although many of the tributes to the queen were of a fairly generic nature, there were some interesting discrepancies in what they focussed on. Different groups discussed different qualities and themes – some acclaimed her position as a famous world leader, some concentrated on her status as a woman and as a mother, and some also made the focus of their congratulations a professed sense of gratitude for life under the British flag.

The British contingent's praise of Queen Victoria on reaching this milestone appeared to offer a more personal tribute than those given by other sections of the community – who had been fed a depersonalised and mythical image of the benevolent Great White Queen

⁵⁹ *The Overland China Mail*, 1st July, 1897.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 15th November, 1887.

⁶¹ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

⁶² *The Cape Argus*, 17th June, 1897.

to base their loyalty on.⁶³ Victoria's acknowledged personal qualities, what King has described as 'a solidly middle-class veneer of common sense, shared values, and simple taste and pleasures' – were remarked upon and celebrated.⁶⁴ The queen's common touch was lauded eloquently by Shanghai's *North-China Herald*, which told its readers that 'in her motherly heart she objects to what Americans call fuss and feathers, and finds today, as she has ever, more enjoyment in her own home, royal though it be, even in its simplicity.'⁶⁵ The *Hongkong Daily Press* drew further attention to the homely values that the queen had brought to the British monarchy: 'Thrones have so often been the vantage coign of pleasure and folly, or the perch of lawless ambition, that special recognition is due when royalty shows the white flower of a blameless life.'⁶⁶ Peering through the hyperbole, it is clear that the decision, made by the queen and Prince Albert, to modernise the monarchy and establish a more direct relationship with the great mass of her subjects had borne some fruit – members of the expatriate British communities in Hong Kong and Cape Town felt that they were celebrating the achievements of both a queen and a loved and respected individual.

In the editorials of the English-speaking press there are also references to the queen's traumatic and premature loss of her husband and the sense that, despite the initial political damage that her subsequent withdrawal from public duties caused her, this episode had provoked a groundswell of affection for her. In addition to the loss of her husband, the queen had also lost two of her children, Princess Alice in 1878 and Prince Leopold in 1884. In the decade leading up the Diamond Jubilee, three of her favourite German sons-in-law and her grandson Prince Albert, the heir presumptive to the throne, had also died.⁶⁷ Hong Kong's official Congratulatory Address made reference to these tragic events in its eulogy, stating that sympathy towards her 'sorrow and suffering' had been ubiquitous: 'extended to all alike, rich and poor, native and foreign without

⁶³ A. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies: A Study in British Power* (London, 1959), p. x.

⁶⁴ King, *Twilight of Splendour*, p. 10.

⁶⁵ *The North-China Herald*, 18th June, 1897.

⁶⁶ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 22nd June, 1897.

⁶⁷ King, *Twilight of Splendour*, p. 19.

distinction of race and creed.’⁶⁸ It is clear that the sympathy generated towards the queen as a result of her great personal losses was a major contributing factor to the levels of affection shown towards her by members of the British communities in these cities.

References were also frequently made to the monarch’s gender, with the Mayor of Cape Town praising ‘the illustrious example which Your Majesty, not only as a Queen but as a mother, has given the world.’⁶⁹ The Chaplain of St. John’s Cathedral, Hong Kong, also stated in his Diamond Jubilee sermon that ‘As a Maiden, Wife, Mother, and Widow she has been a true Woman.’⁷⁰ In Cape Town, a fellow clergyman, Rev. Dr Cameron, said in his address, ‘we have had before us in the loftiest of earthly positions an example of pure life, loving sympathy, gracious motherhood, the heart of the woman beating true under the robes of the Queen.’⁷¹ However, such a strong focus on her gender gives credibility to the idea that, in the masculine environment of the Victorian Age, the queen may have occasionally struggled to attain resonance as an authority figure due to the subordinate position of the female within British society.⁷² It is worth remembering that, although a British woman could be the head of state at that time, the nation’s women were still denied the right to vote. Technically, under the 1870 Naturalization Act and the primacy that it gave to the husband in determining nationality, Queen Victoria – by marrying her German cousin – was no longer British at all.⁷³ In the often brutal and male-dominated world of the British colonies, celebration of the queen’s femininity may therefore have been a double-edged sword – whilst her womanly virtues were held up as a source of praise, other less flattering stereotypes attributed to womanhood at the time may have been applied to her too. Therefore, whilst her gender may have been lauded here, it may have undermined her credibility as a head of state. This is ironic, considering that the

⁶⁸ The Congratulatory Address from the residents of Hong Kong, an advance copy of which was published in *The Overland China Mail*, 12th May, 1897.

⁶⁹ Sir John Woodhead, address on behalf of the Cape Town Corporation, reproduced in *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

⁷⁰ Rev. R. F. Cobbald, *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 21st June, 1897. The use of capital letters in this quotation exactly reproduces that employed in the newspaper report.

⁷¹ Address by Rev. Dr Cameron, reproduced in *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

⁷² A. Auslander Munich, ‘Queen Victoria, Empire, and Excess’, *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1987), p. 265.

⁷³ D. Gorman, ‘Wider and Wider Still?: Racial Politics, Intra-Imperial Immigration and the Absence of an Imperial Citizenship in the British Empire’, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2002), p. 2. <https://muse.jhu.edu/>, [Accessed 13th June, 2016].

other great symbol of the British Empire, Britannia, was also a woman. Queen Victoria's gender was certainly central to the British communities' appreciation of her.

However, Dorothy Thompson has argued persuasively that the slightly condescending tone of some of the tributes made to Queen Victoria may not have represented the feelings of all of her colonial subjects. Indeed, she attributes these regressive attitudes to the English faction in particular, suggesting that non-English subjects, including those of Celtic British descent, were instinctively less narrow-minded in their acceptance of a female head of state.⁷⁴ Although she does not pursue this idea in great depth, she does offer the tantalising suggestion that the queen may have been more widely accepted as a powerful, yet benevolent, figurehead by many of the other ethnicities present within her empire because of her gender. She argues that because Queen Victoria was a female, she was able to project a more inclusive, less confrontational image as the head of state – and this enabled more of her subjects to develop a sense of loyalty towards her.⁷⁵

Non-English subjects of the queen may also have had a greater acceptance of female authority figures. Although there is no proof of this link in the reports of the celebrations provided by Hong Kong's English-speaking press, perhaps it is possible that some local Chinese may have been mindful of the enormous influence that was held at that time by the Dowager Empress Cixi and may have correlated her position with that of Queen Victoria. Such an association was likely to have been a possibly unwelcome one at this time, for Cixi was reported to have been widely denounced across the country due to a toxic combination of personal extravagance on one hand and an inability to keep China safe from foreign predators on the other – a factor most graphically witnessed by the crushing of Chinese forces by the Japanese in 1895 and the humiliating terms imposed of them by the Treaty of Shimonoseki.⁷⁶ However, Cixi's hold on power in the Forbidden City may have helped to inform the Hong Kong Chinese community's understanding of Queen Victoria.

⁷⁴ D. Thompson, *Queen Victoria: Gender and Power* (London, 1990), p. 138.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁷⁶ B. Goodman, 'Improvisations on a Semicolonial Theme, or, How to Read a Celebration of Transnational Urban Community', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 59, no. 4 (2000), p. 909.

Female figures were also present in the canon of local Chinese gods, many of whom were based on a historical figure. Prominent among these was Tin Hau, the ‘Empress of Heaven’, who, as the protector of seafarers, held a vitally important role in the spiritual life of all southern Chinese coastal communities and was one of the most important deities in Hong Kong.⁷⁷ Whilst it is surely a step too far to suggest the Queen Victoria may have achieved a god-like status in the eyes of the Chinese residents of Hong Kong, it is plausible that a connection with powerful female figures within the local traditions may have strengthened their perception of her.

Indian inhabitants of both cities might have similarly been exposed to female deities. In addition, they may also have cross-referenced their celebrations with their own native traditions that celebrated motherhood as the bedrock of the household and the family – albeit it within a patriarchal framework that was akin to Victorian Britain’s. This reference to motherhood is visible in the address of the Indian inhabitants of Cape Town, who stated their desire to ‘express once more their warm congratulations to their great Queen-Mother’.⁷⁸ This offers the idea that city-dwellers who derived from the Indian subcontinent were more likely to base their identification with Queen Victoria on her role as a mother. Therefore, although reference to the queen’s gender was regularly made during the celebrations, it was subject to different interpretations and different levels of appreciation: an indication of how complex the Diamond Jubilee event and the many responses to it were.

Isolated acts of praise for the queen did also appear to emanate from the wider communities. In Hong Kong, Mrs Achee, the Chinese proprietor of a large furniture dealership, pledged \$500 worth of iron bedsteads and furniture to the new Women’s Hospital that was to be built in honour of the Diamond Jubilee.⁷⁹ This act of generosity was reminiscent of an episode during the Golden Jubilee when a Parsee gentleman –

⁷⁷ Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, pp. 53 - 5. Tin Hau is the Cantonese name for this god. In his book, Bickers uses the Putonghua name for her – Tien Hou – as his focus is on her temple in Shanghai. She is based on a young woman from Fujian who lived c. 960 – 987 AD, during the early Song dynasty.

⁷⁸ ‘Address by Indian Subjects’, *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

⁷⁹ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 26th June, 1897.

who wished to remain anonymous – paid for six public drinking fountains to be installed in the city.⁸⁰ Although these drinking fountains were reported to have cost around \$5,000 – and the value of this contribution dwarfed any other made that year – the \$500 worth of goods pledged by Mrs Achee still represented a significant and generous gift.⁸¹ It was seen by one Hong Kong-based newspaper correspondent as being a remarkable gesture, as wealthy Chinese inhabitants of the city, in contrast to Parsee gentleman a decade ago, had hitherto shown little interest in financing projects that benefitted the wider community.⁸² This therefore raises the possibility that Mrs Achee broke with convention because she felt a specific desire to pay tribute to the queen on this auspicious occasion or because the creation of a hospital for women and girls was something that she strongly supported. Of course, her motivation may have been a combination of the two. The amount of free publicity generated by her donation would not have been a bad thing for her business either.

Other indicators of enthusiasm towards the jubilee from the more humble echelons of Hong Kong's society were also present – from the contributors of all nationalities, including many Portuguese, who may have pledged as little as \$1 each to the jubilee fund and whose donations were recorded in the newspapers, to the fears of a Chinese shopkeeper who wrote to the *Hongkong Telegraph* to express his fears that the lavish decorations he planned to put up 'to do fitting honour to the Jubilee', might be destroyed by drunken soldiers, sailors and civilians.⁸³ It is possible to see ulterior motives at work here – some contributors may have felt obliged by their employees or customers to donate or felt it would be in their interest to publicise their support for the jubilee. Perhaps some of them even enjoyed the idea of seeing their name in print and felt that the price of a dollar was worth paying for this. However, the sight of many Portuguese and Chinese names on the jubilee subscription lists must have given great heart to those who hoped that the city would unite in admiration of the queen. Ultimately, however, the

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 1st November, 1887. Hong Kong celebrated the Golden Jubilee on 9th and 10th November, 1887.

⁸¹ To put the Parsee gentleman's generosity into perspective, two of the great titans of Hong Kong's economy, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and the famous trading house Jardine, Matheson & Co., pledged only \$1,000 each towards the 1887 festivities. *The Overland China Mail*, 25th October, 1887.

⁸² *The North-China Herald*, 9th July, 1897.

⁸³ Letter by 'A. Shopkeeper', *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 12th June, 1897.

fact that there were only 166 Chinese names on the subscription lists – constituting a tiny minority out of a population of a quarter of a million – does put the generosity of the mainstream Chinese community into some degree of perspective.⁸⁴ Governor Robinson lamented in 1895 how little the Chinese population of the city had been ‘Anglicised’, and this appears to have been borne out by their financial contribution to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.⁸⁵ It would be difficult, on the evidence of the subscription lists and the individual acts of generosity, to argue that the majority of the Chinese population of Hong Kong felt a strong emotional attachment towards either the representation of Queen Victoria given to them or the institution of empire which she symbolised at this time.

Examples of great enthusiasm for the event were present in Cape Town, however. One of these was a collection made by the ‘Ladies of Sea Point and Green Point’ in order to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee by installing drinking fountains in their local area. Having raised the sum of £132, they unilaterally decided to purchase three fountains and asked the city’s Municipal Council to keep them supplied with water, and the accompanying lamps supplied with gas. However, their spirit of exuberance was not matched immediately by the Municipal Council, whose representatives argued that they had not given any undertaking to support this project. Finally, the Mayor of Cape Town agreed to erect the fountains – although not at the locations that the ladies had in mind – and to supply them with water. However, ‘the question of the gas was another matter.’⁸⁶ This episode shows that, whilst it was a political necessity for local authorities to show support for the Diamond Jubilee, practical considerations had to be taken into account and not every proposal generated by an enthusiastic public could be carried out.

Members of the city’s Malay community were also noticeably active in showing support for the image of Queen Victoria that had been projected by the idea of the Great White Queen. This display of affection would have come as little surprise to Cape Town’s

⁸⁴ *The Japan Weekly Mail*, 10th July, 1897.

⁸⁵ This quotation, also mentioned in Chapter One, is from ‘Address to the Legislative Council of 25th November 1895’, N. A., CO 131/24, ‘Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1895’, p. 37.

⁸⁶ *The Cape Times*, 30th June, 1897.

colonial authorities given the memorable contribution made by them to the city's official Golden Jubilee procession: an estimated 2,000 Malay residents had paraded in all their finery, with a portrait of the queen displayed prominently within their ranks.⁸⁷ Their traditional support for the queen was also alluded to by the *Cape Argus* after the cemetery riots in 1886: 'We have heard much lately of a peculiar attachment to the Queen, but the way to show attachment to the Queen is to obey the laws passed by the Parliament of this colony and assented to by the Crown.'⁸⁸ This sentiment manifested itself in 1897 in the lavish decoration of the Chiappini Street mosque, which was 'illuminated for six nights with crowns, diamonds, and transparencies.'⁸⁹ In addition, Malay resident Lalie Soeker ordered a large bust of the queen, 'surrounded by stars and diamonds', which was displayed in Plein Street, and 400 'Imperial crowns' were also manufactured and purchased by members of the Malay community to celebrate the event.⁹⁰

The Indian community also mobilised in support of the celebrations, with Bombay House, on Long Street, being festooned with bunting, flowers and 60 jubilee lights.⁹¹ It is interesting to speculate whether their affection for the queen was partly driven by any knowledge of Victoria's fascination with India and her attempts to learn 'Hindustani'. It would also be interesting to know whether the Indian inhabitants of Cape Town were aware of Queen Victoria's *munshi*, Abdul Karim, and whether they had any idea that the monarch's great personal attachment to him was, for many years, the source of considerable friction in the royal household.⁹² Therefore, among the protocol of official gift giving and official addresses of congratulation, there is evidence of some genuine affection being shown in these two cities for Queen Victoria. These heartfelt gestures were not confined exclusively to the British population: some non-Britons also felt a clear measure of affection for the representation of the queen that had been projected to them.

⁸⁷ *The Cape Times Mail Edition*, 22nd June, 1887.

⁸⁸ *The Cape Argus*, 18th January, 1886.

⁸⁹ *The Cape Times*, 29th June, 1897.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² King, *Twilight of Splendour*, p. 5 and p. 12.

IV. A Celebration of the British Empire?

As well as appreciation for Queen Victoria herself, the cities' reception of the Diamond Jubilee appears to have been partly informed by a sense of gratitude for some benevolent policies that had been enacted during her reign. Whereas the colonial elite largely acclaimed Queen Victoria as an individual and as the figurehead of the empire, other sections of the community appeared to base some of their enthusiasm on the benefits of life under the British flag. Whilst they made no mention of any enthusiasm for the concept of the British Empire as a whole, with no celebration of being part of an imperial family in evidence, admiration for the queen frequently intermingled with positive verdicts on Britain's impact on their lives. Whilst this was no doubt what the British governing authorities wanted to hear, and allowances have to be made for political expediency, different groups' representations of life within the empire are interesting and may offer some indication of their genuine feelings. Whilst Lord Salisbury's notion of 'an empire of mutual goodwill, sympathy and affection' is far-fetched, it is possible to sense that there were benefits to British rule, such as good governance, protection, personal freedom and material progress, and that some gratitude for this did percolate down into the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The official address to the queen submitted on behalf of the Chinese community of Hong Kong stated that they found 'peace, order and good government' in the city.⁹³ Whilst there were grave events that threatened Hong Kong's community harmony in the years leading up to the celebrations, a quarter of a million Chinese people had chosen to reside in this British city by the time of the Diamond Jubilee. Hong Kong had no captive colonial population: Chinese residents travelled frequently to and from the Qing-controlled mainland without impediment, particularly during native festivals. Although life in Hong Kong was tough, many of them had been able to improve their position and prospects in ways that would not have been possible in the more socially-stratified lands over the border, where the ability to bribe officials and make good contacts, *guan-xi*,

⁹³ *The Overland China Mail*, 12th May, 1897.

could largely determine an individual's fate. The levels of discrimination that they may have encountered on a daily basis in Hong Kong may make the words of their official address sound preposterous, but tempered by this should be an understanding of the lifestyle and prospects that were on offer to many of them under the Qing. If Hong Kong had not offered the Chinese better conditions and opportunities for enrichment than what was available in their homelands, then the city would not have held so many of their number – even if many did indeed return home once their sojourn in Hong Kong had reached its conclusion.

In the same way, the official address of Cape Town's Indian community made no mention of the suspicion and the discrimination that they encountered in daily life: 'we should never forget how much we owe to the just rule of the great Queen.... under whose benign rule and government we live in peace and contentment.'⁹⁴ The Jewish community also made an address 'on behalf of all the Jews of the Cape Colony, Natal and Rhodesia', stating that 'Under Your Majesty's enlightened sway the Jews of the Empire have gone from strength to strength, materially, politically, intellectually and spiritually.'⁹⁵ Although the empire's Jewish contingent were habitually looked upon with suspicion, due to the perennial question of whether their primary allegiance was to the House of Israel or to the House of Hanover, the community appear to have been enthusiastic celebrants of the Diamond Jubilee. This was also the case in the United Kingdom: Feldman reports that 'The Anglo-Jewish pulpit was fulsome in its support for empire. In 1897 Queen Victoria's jubilee was celebrated in every synagogue in Britain.'⁹⁶ Many of Cape Town's Jewish community would have arrived in the city as refugees, fleeing the violence directed against them in Eastern Europe. Therefore, it is surely likely that a sense of gratitude for a place of refuge would have formed an integral part of their enthusiasm for the jubilee.

The gift of good governance was also lauded by the Cape of Good Hope Parliament. However, the context here was rather different as it scored a political point by thanking

⁹⁴ *The Cape Times*, 18th June, 1897.

⁹⁵ *The Cape Argus*, 18th June, 1897.

⁹⁶ D. Feldman, 'Jews and the British Empire c. 1900', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 63 (2007), p. 70.

the queen for the ability to govern the region itself – rather than be dictated to by her officials in London: ‘we thankfully acknowledge the wisdom of that policy which has bestowed upon us the privileges of self-government and secured to the Colonial subjects of your Majesty unexampled peace and prosperity.’⁹⁷ This address highlighted the independent spirit of many white settlers: they were happy to be subjects of the queen and to be part of a wider British Empire, but they were determined to be responsible for their own local affairs. It was this attitude that would finally sink Chamberlain’s plans for a stronger political and economic imperial union. Their reluctance to join Britain in a political federation was noted by Gorman, who argues the concept of imperial citizenship ‘failed to resonate throughout the empire’.⁹⁸ Despite the razzamatazz of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, they did not bring the empire together in the way that Chamberlain hoped: as Robert Bickers writes, in relation to the International Settlement at Shanghai, ‘These settlers paid nominal allegiance to the empire and paraded their loyalty on ritual occasions, but the gulf between their ambitions and those of the empire for them grew wider year by year.’⁹⁹ Increasingly comfortable in their colonial skins, the white settlers valued their independence from Britain as well as their ancestral links to it.

The suggestion that membership of the British Empire provided a source of protection was also implicitly made in some of the official responses, particularly by groups that had experienced persecution in the recent past. As well as the Jewish community of Cape Town, who acknowledged that they dwelt in South Africa ‘under the benign protection of Your Majesty’, the ‘Loyal Indians’ of Cape Town stated that ‘Under the protecting aegis of the flag which floats here as a true symbol of the British Throne we live a happy and contented people, though far away from our mother land.’¹⁰⁰ Andrew Thompson has identified that the Black and Coloured populations in South Africa may also have based their feelings of loyalty towards the queen and the empire on the protection of rights that British society appeared to offer: ‘Conscious of their rights as colonial subjects, Blacks and Coloureds developed their own strains of loyalist ideology,

⁹⁷ N. A., CO 48/532, ‘Colonial Office Despatches, May – August 1897’, p. 78.

⁹⁸ Gorman, ‘Wider and Wider Still?’, p. 1.

⁹⁹ R. Bickers, ‘Shanghailanders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843 – 1939’, *Past and Present*, vol. 159, no. 1 (1998), p. 179.

¹⁰⁰ *The Cape Argus*, 18th June, 1897. *The Cape Times*, 18th June, 1897.

which saw the British Crown as a source of protection against the machinations of labour- and land-hungry settler politicians.’¹⁰¹ This proposal harks back to the petition made to Queen Victoria by the Coloured fishermen of Rogge Bay in 1878 and their confidence in her ability to correct the decision of local politicians. The issue of protecting the rights of native colonial subjects from the excesses of the white settler communities also appeared in the response of the Marquis of Ripon to the petition produced by Hong Kong’s civilian elite in 1894.¹⁰² This evidence suggests that some of the support for the British Empire that could be found in these colonial cities was based on the levels of protection that life under the Union Flag offered the individual subject – either from external aggressors or those from within the local population.

Another factor for African support towards the celebrations, discussed by Terence Ranger, was participation in the event being used by the African bourgeoisie to demonstrate their recent social and political progress.¹⁰³ Ranger draws attention to the enthusiastic celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee by the African educated classes of Kimberley in order to illustrate his point, arguing that their outward expressions of loyalty were intended to signify to those around them their belief that their recent progress had elevated them to a place of prominence, within not only local society but across the empire itself. Although there are no reports of grandiose celebrations made by the Black and Coloured communities of Cape Town, local English newspapers reported that many of its members took an interest in the proceedings. The presence of many Black and Coloured spectators was apparent to the *Cape Argus*, which reported that ‘The Jubilee procession certainly gave one cause to wonder what sort of a people – in point of colour – we shall have in the Peninsula in say fifty years’ time. It is not stretching a point to say that 70 per cent of the people in the streets on Tuesday were of black descent.’¹⁰⁴ The newspaper also diagnosed that some of the onlookers had made their way to the event from rural areas, commenting that ‘The country visitors in

¹⁰¹ Thompson, ‘The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa’, p. 635.

¹⁰² Both of these petitions were discussed in Chapter One.

¹⁰³ T. Ranger, ‘The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa’, in Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 237 - 8.

¹⁰⁴ *The Cape Argus*, 26th June, 1897.

particular had a most distinct trace of the tar brush.’¹⁰⁵ This report illustrates not only some of the racist language that was employed by mainstream newspapers of the day, but that the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Cape Town were certainly not played out in front of exclusively Anglo-Saxon audiences. Although the Black and Coloured communities did not participate with the visible enthusiasm of the Malay community, it is clear that they were aware of the size of the spectacle that would be on offer.

The queen also appeared to have been held in particularly high esteem by some members of Cape Town’s non-white community due to their belief that she was integral to the group’s liberation from slavery. Despite the fact that slavery was officially abolished in the Cape Colony in December 1834, two and a half years before Queen Victoria ascended to the throne, slaves continued to be bound to their former masters as ‘apprentices’ until 1838. Therefore, this gave a valid historical linkage to their *de facto* emancipation and the time of Queen Victoria’s reign – a linkage that would have been further encouraged by the image of the benevolent Great White Queen that the British authorities encouraged them to consume. As a result, their official addresses to the queen gave thanks for the personal freedom that they saw as a consequence of British rule. Although very few – if any – of their number could have experienced the time of slavery at first hand, their liberation was still a key reference point in their celebration of the Diamond Jubilee. This was most graphically illustrated by a group of Malay residents carrying a banner in the city’s Diamond Jubilee parade which read ‘Once We were Slaves: Now We are Free’ – described by the *Cape Times* as the most picturesque and touching incident of the whole procession.¹⁰⁶ Further evidence of the continuing importance of the end of slavery is provided by a letter sent to Queen Victoria in December, 1888, written by representatives of the Coloured community in Kokstad, East Griqualand. At this time, they were celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of their *de facto* emancipation by holding a fete and planting an oak tree in the town’s Victoria Park. They wrote, ‘May it please Your Most Gracious Majesty to accept our hearty thanks for, and on behalf of, all the coloured people in this part of Your Majesty’s Dominions for

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

the liberality and magnanimity shown by Your Most Gracious Majesty's government and public for the emancipation of slavery in South Africa'.¹⁰⁷

The material progress made during the reign of Queen Victoria also encouraged the cities' celebration of her. This sentiment was evident in the address of the Afrikaner Bond, which recognised the 'material progress experienced by the Cape Colony as a part of the British Empire under Your Majesty's wise rule'.¹⁰⁸ However, this tribute was leapt upon by some local pro-British newspapers as being insincere: the *Cape Mercury* called it 'lip loyalty' while the *Wynberg Times* stoked the flames of controversy further by arguing that it was difficult to reconcile this statement of loyalty with a contemporary political situation where 'considerable numbers of the Cape Dutch are known to have been coquetting with their cousins in the South African Republic' with the intention of severing southern Africa from the British Empire.¹⁰⁹ Despite the intended *bonhomie* of the celebrations in Cape Town, and the Dutch Reformed Church's hope that the jubilee would restore 'perfect confidence and goodwill' throughout the region, the shadows cast by recent political events – most emphatically, the Jameson Raid – continued to hang over the event.¹¹⁰ As a result, the reaction of the city's ethnic Dutch contingent to the jubilee appears to have been keenly scrutinised by Cape Town's loyalist press.

Recent historiography has challenged the assertions made here by the *Cape Mercury* and the *Wynberg Times*, arguing instead that, whilst an Afrikaner cultural and political renaissance may have taken place in the late nineteenth century, it was still possible for white citizens of Dutch and other European extractions to be loyal to Queen Victoria. Prominent among these is Thompson who argues that loyalism was not just the exclusive preserve of the pro-British settler elite and that 'strong sentiments of loyalty to the Crown and the Empire were frequently expressed by a range of other communities,

¹⁰⁷ N. A., CO 48/516 'Colonial Office Despatches, 1888', p. 492.

¹⁰⁸ *The Cape Times*, 4th June, 1897.

¹⁰⁹ *The Cape Mercury*, 12th June, 1897. *The Wynberg Times*, 19th June, 1897.

¹¹⁰ The Dutch Reformed Church's 'Loyal Address to the Queen', *The Cape Times*, 3rd June, 1897. The Afrikaans-language newspaper *Het Dagblad* also expressed its hope that the jubilee would 'bind the hearts of the various parts of the white population in South Africa in closer union.' *Ibid.*, 28th June, 1897.

African and Afrikaner.’¹¹¹ For them, loyalty to the queen – which was, Thompson argues, vastly different to loyalty to the politicians in Downing Street – did not compromise local ties: it was possible for them to be loyal to more than just one thing.¹¹² The work of Tamarkin endorses this argument, asserting that Cape Afrikaners saw no contradiction between professing loyalty to the Crown and expressing their solidarity with the Boer Republics.¹¹³ He argues that it was Alfred Milner’s intolerance towards this nuanced sense of loyalism, and his need to present a valid case for war, that led to the Cape Afrikaners being falsely painted as disloyal citizens. He states that the reluctance of the Cape Afrikaners to take up the cause against Transvaal marked them out as expendable in Milner’s eyes. Therefore, according to the logic of Milner’s binary approach, they ‘had to be presented as part of an anti-imperial conspiracy, in order to justify the war and to transform good, loyal subjects of the empire into its victims.’¹¹⁴ Saul Dubow has further elucidated on this point, stating that ‘Milner wilfully overlooked or denied those colonists, English as well as Dutch-speaking, who combined loyalty to the Crown with patriotism towards South Africa’ and – as a result – showed his misunderstanding of the difference between ‘colonialism’ and ‘imperialism’.¹¹⁵ The editors of the *Cape Mercury* and the *Wynberg Times* may have misunderstood this too.

It may well have been the case that the ethnic Dutch population of Cape Town felt a greater sense of empire loyalty – and, by extension, loyalty towards Queen Victoria – than might have been recognised by the more cynical members of the British contingent at the time. Cape Afrikaner businesses and newspaper offices in the city centre were garlanded with bunting, and the appropriate addresses of congratulation were issued by the community’s representatives. These included a poem commissioned by the Afrikaner language newspaper *Ons Land*, one that was not noted for its loyalist credentials, which proclaimed that ‘As subjects of her Empire, we are loyal and true. And he who suspects us of unfaithfulness, and considers us disloyal, does not know the heart of our people,

¹¹¹ Thompson, ‘The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa’, p. 620.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 620 – 1.

¹¹³ M. Tamarkin, ‘Milner, the Cape Afrikaners, and the outbreak of the South African war: From a point of return to a dead end’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 25, no. 3 (1997), p. 408.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹¹⁵ S. Dubow, ‘How British was the British World? The Case of South Africa’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2009), p. 8.

and only libels us.’¹¹⁶ Ironically, it would be the newspaper’s editor, F. S. Malan, who would find himself in prison a few years later for libel, having been convicted of publishing seditious material which criticised the conduct of General French and British troops during the Second Boer War.¹¹⁷ However, with some local English-speaking newspapers seemingly on the prowl for acts of sedition to report, such as the *Cape Mercury*’s description of Afrikaner Bond leader Jan Hofmeyr looking visibly uncomfortable at the levels of loyalty displayed around him, it is perfectly plausible that some of the city’s Cape Afrikaners felt disenfranchised from the event.¹¹⁸ Therefore, although the more recent historiography suggests that Cape Afrikaners were, on the whole, more loyal to the queen and the empire in the period immediately prior to the Second Boer War than was traditionally thought, the Cape Town celebrations do not appear to bear this idea out decisively.

V. Other Reasons to Celebrate

There would also have been a large number of spectators in attendance at the jubilee events in both cities – such as the Chinese tourists from Canton and the ‘tar-brushed’ visitors from the countryside in Cape Town mentioned earlier. As well as those who saw the celebrations as an opportunity for relaxation and amusement, there were also those who may have seen the celebrations primarily as an opportunity for enrichment. Prominent examples of these were the Chinese traders and hawkers found in Hong Kong. Tsai argues that these people, who included artisans, boatmen, sedan chair bearers, pickpockets and beggars, had no interest in the ceremony and the focus of the celebrations, but that – in common with all the major Chinese religious festivals – they welcomed the event as an additional opportunity for financial gain. Tsai dismisses the concept of a loyal Chinese population in Hong Kong, a few wealthy pro-British collaborators aside, arguing that the vast majority of the Chinese population saw the city as providing ‘no more than political stability and an opportunity to sell their hard labour

¹¹⁶ The tribute of *Ons Land*, which consisted of a poem written by popular Afrikaner poet Melt J. Brink, was reproduced in the *Cape Times*, 28th June, 1897.

¹¹⁷ A. T. Wirgman, ‘The Religion of the Boers’, *The Nineteenth Century: a monthly review*, June 1901 issue (London), p. 973.

¹¹⁸ *The Cape Mercury*, 24th June, 1897.

for a subsistence living.¹¹⁹ It is difficult to find fault with this argument from the evidence available, and Tsai's access to Chinese source material also gives this statement considerable credibility. No doubt there were many people in Cape Town who similarly viewed the Diamond Jubilee primarily as a business opportunity.

Among those who did take a more active participation in the events, there is the question of whether the celebrants really were united in saluting Queen Victoria and the contribution of the British to the city in which they lived, or whether it would be a mistake to take their contribution at face value. In her analysis of the 1893 Silver Jubilee celebrations of the International Settlement at Shanghai, Bryna Goodman takes issue with earlier works by Ye and MacPherson that drew attention to the lavish contribution made by the Chinese community towards the jubilee's celebratory procession.¹²⁰ Goodman questions their assertions that this showed that relative harmony between the races existed in the International Settlement in these days of pre-nationalist, anti-Manchu agitation, revealing that prominent Chinese businesses were grateful for the economic transformation that the Westerners had instigated. Instead, she argues that this episode showed how ceremonial occasions such as these could be appropriated by different groups of participants and used to broadcast their own messages.¹²¹ In her analysis, the large amounts of money spent by the Chinese merchants, which dwarfed the contribution made by the Shanghai Municipal Council, indicates that they 'may have viewed the Jubilee as an opportunity to give themselves (and the associations they directed) greater "face", both in the Chinese community and in Western eyes.'¹²²

Such an interpretation is perfectly plausible in relation to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations that took place in Hong Kong in 1897, for it satisfactorily explains the paradox of the amount of subscriptions and evidence of implicit tributes to the queen from the wider Chinese community being relatively low, yet a great demonstration of

¹¹⁹ J. Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842 – 1913* (New York, NY, 1993), p. 122.

¹²⁰ Goodman cites X. Ye, 'Popular Culture in Shanghai, 1884 – 1898', Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University (Canberra, 1991), p. 38 and K. MacPherson, *A Wilderness of Marshes: The Origins of Public Health in Shanghai, 1843 – 1893* (Hong Kong, 1987), pp. 259 – 75.

¹²¹ Goodman, 'Improvisations on a Semicolonial Theme', p. 891.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 906.

cultural and material wealth still being organised by them to celebrate the event. The magnificent Chinese procession, that had been the highlight of the queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations, was not repeated in 1897. Instead, static displays were used to show off the cultural riches of the community: temporary mat-sheds were built to house exhibitions, triumphal arches were erected and lanterns and banners festooned the streets. Whereas the use of fireworks to drive off the plague demons in 1894 had been considered ridiculous by the British authorities, fireworks were now officially sanctioned by them as a legitimate means of celebrating the jubilee. Chinese music and theatre was allowed to go on through the night during the celebratory period, elegant Chinese artwork and curios were displayed at the City Hall and there was also a flower show for visitors to admire.¹²³ The Chinese contribution to the steam launch procession, which provided the centrepiece of the celebrations in Victoria Harbour, stunned onlookers as a collection of fishing junks appeared – each carrying 'lanterns in the shape of fish, some bigger than the junks that carried them. The Westerners thought them "a capital illustration of Chinese skill in this branch of art".'¹²⁴

However, there is little sense from either the reports of the celebrations in the English-speaking newspapers, or from the few grainy photographic images that document the event [see Figures 10 and 11], that these celebrations were specifically centred on Queen Victoria. Figures 10 and 11 show decorations that look traditional in style and little attempt appears to have been made to acknowledge the queen. Therefore, it is appropriate to judge that the Diamond Jubilee may have principally served other purposes for the city's Chinese community: not least, the demonstration of their cultural and material wealth to the British elite who repressed them on a daily basis. The British may have rejected the ability of Chinese traditional medicine to combat the plague, but the Chinese remained proud of other facets of their culture and were keen to emphasise the differences that existed between them and the foreigners. The queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1887 were remembered chiefly for the great Chinese procession.

¹²³ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 17th May, 1897.

¹²⁴ N. Cameron, *Hong Kong: The Cultured Pearl* (Hong Kong, 1978), p. 141.

By creating the same level of impact in 1897, the Chinese could overshadow the British celebrations and provide the defining moments of the event.

Secondly, as Goodman argues, the efforts of the Chinese community during the Diamond Jubilee were also likely to be aimed at fellow Chinese. Those present in Hong Kong at this time included many people from mainland China, principally from the port cities of the south such as Canton, Amoy, Shanghai and Macau, who may have travelled specifically to view the celebrations.¹²⁵ Although the Hong Kong Chinese may have considered themselves to have been mainlanders themselves, due to their well-maintained links to their ancestral areas, a measure of civic pride may have kicked in at this point and encouraged the community to show the visitors from the mainland how magnificent and wealthy Hong Kong now was, and how wise its Chinese community had been to make the journey and seek employment there. The internal Chinese audience would have been no less important in the considerations of the participants due to the levels of factionalism that existed within the community. The Diamond Jubilee was an opportunity for Chinese families, merchants, neighbourhoods, clans and ethnic groups to show off their largesse, to improve their levels of 'face' and to score political points off one another.

Therefore, it is important to recognise that the great Chinese turnout for the jubilee in Hong Kong should not necessarily be construed as evidence of empire loyalty – as the British colonial officials were quick to do in their despatches and telegrams back to London. Whether the colonial officials really believed what they were reporting is difficult to know, but a combination of the unsophisticated level of understanding that many of them had of the Chinese community and their own levels of self-confidence in the value of British rule may have led them to have offered these verdicts with sincerity. It is interesting to speculate whether the colony's Colonial Secretary Stewart Lockhart, who had a more rigorous understanding of the Chinese in Hong Kong, privately recognised that the nature of their celebrations were far more complex than they were being projected as. However, no evidence has been found that this was the case.

¹²⁵ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 24th June, 1897.

The Malay community of Cape Town also understood that advertising their ‘otherness’ would allow them to attract further converts to their faith, thus giving them a means to enhance the standing of their community, and so the decision to do this at the Diamond Jubilee was a conscious one. Like the Chinese of Hong Kong, they also had a rich cultural heritage to show off, and felt that by enchanting the other residents of the city with displays of exotic eastern mysticism – even if many of their songs and traditions came directly from the early Dutch settlers – they could attract respect and improve their political status.¹²⁶ Replete with camels, their Imams paraded in ‘the gorgeous robes to which their pilgrimage to Mecca entitles them’.¹²⁷ It is ironic that these robes should now have been so admired, considering Thomas Scanlen’s earlier fear, quoted in Chapter Two, that holy water brought back from the *haj* would one day be responsible for bring cholera into the city. In Cape Town too, the Diamond Jubilee may have also been perceived as an opportunity for one-upmanship and for political points scoring: McCreery suggests that the local Malay community used the visit of Prince Alfred in 1867 to demonstrate the social and economic progress made by them since their emancipation, and there is no reason to believe that this motivation was not present at the Diamond Jubilee also.¹²⁸ By providing a memorable display, they – like the Chinese in Hong Kong – could appropriate some of the clearest memories of the event for themselves.

McCreery also argues that rather than take the Malay community seriously and view them as individual colonists, the British preferred to see them as a flamboyant circus act.¹²⁹ Therefore, there is a sense of the Malays playing to the gallery in this regard, presenting a tongue-in-cheek performance in order to mock those who were taken in by their eastern mysticism shtick. Vivian Bickford-Smith has also discussed how their parades might have been used by them as a means of satirising the other-worldly image that was imposed on them: ‘the concept of fixed identity through gaudy, sometimes self-

¹²⁶ R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750 – 1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 143 – 5.

¹²⁷ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

¹²⁸ McCreery, ‘Telling the story’, p. 824.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 824 – 6.

mocking disguise'.¹³⁰ The British perceived them as a loyal and exotic group that appeared to accept their subservient position. Therefore, this community may have enjoyed the chance to take centre stage at the jubilee procession, and to 'ham up' their performance for all it was worth, in order to ridicule some of the cultural stereotypes that had been imposed upon them.

Although there were vestiges of support expressed for the monarch and for the empire which did appear to be genuine in nature, it would be foolish to take all the celebrations and levels of participation that were present at face value – as the British ruling elite of both cities appeared to do. The analysis of this chapter confirms that the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in these cities were highly complex events and that many convincing interpretations can be bestowed upon what took place. Across Hong Kong and Cape Town, people took part in the celebrations for different reasons – and there were doubtless many people who did not celebrate at all. Therefore, the Diamond Jubilee is a problematic piece of source material for anyone wishing to ascertain the levels of loyalty that were present in these two cities, and, indeed, across the British Empire at this time.

¹³⁰ V. Bickford-Smith, 'Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town, British Cape Colony, 1838 – 1910', *Kronos*, no. 25 (1998/9), p. 128.

Figure 8: Hong Kong stamp bearing Queen Victoria's image, issued 1862



Image taken from 'Hong Kong Stamps' section of the website of *Sandafayre Stamp Auctions*.

<http://www.sandafayre.com/countries/hongkongstamps> [Accessed 7th April, 2016].

Figure 9: The Chinese community's gift to Queen Victoria



Governor Robinson sent this photograph to Joseph Chamberlain, informing him that the Chinese characters meant: 'Happiness – Long life – "May Your Majesty long be spared to your subjects" – Health – Peace.' The four Chinese symbols in the corners ('Happiness, Long Life, Health and Peace') had been shown together on coinage since the Han dynasty, so this is a traditional set of sentiments – not something that was specially created for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

This image, a photograph of the original, and Governor Robinson's translation were taken from N. A., CO 129/276 'Colonial Office Despatches, 1st June – 15th August 1897', pp. 80 – 2.

Figure 10: The Chinese decorations in Queen's Road, Central



Figure 11: Further Chinese decorations in Hong Kong



Both these images are from R. C. Hurley, *Sixty Diamond Jubilee Photographs of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1897).

In order to have images of higher quality in this thesis, Figure 11 was taken from the website of *Gwulo: Old Hong Kong*, <http://gwulo.com> [Accessed 27th April, 2016].

CHAPTER FOUR

Joining the Club: the Diamond Jubilee and ‘Britishness’

Despite the fact that the official Diamond Jubilee celebrations at home were constructed around a narrative of the imperial citizen, with soldiers and politicians converging upon London from all corners of the empire, the event also allowed the colonial elite in Hong Kong and Cape Town to reassert, to both their local populations and themselves, the intrinsic values of Britishness that were considered integral to their rule. Although the authorised depiction of the event portrayed subjects uniting across the world in order to salute the queen, the Diamond Jubilee was also deeply divisive as it allowed the British elite based in the colonies to more emphatically demarcate themselves from their native populations. Therefore, the official celebrations that were organised in Hong Kong and Cape Town were quintessentially British in nature, mirroring the events held back at home and paying homage to their interpretation of Britishness. This approach stood in contrast to the great imperial durbars that the British staged in India, where they appropriated Mughal court rituals in the hope of giving historical context and increased legitimacy to their rule.¹ Instead, the officially-planned Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Hong Kong and Cape Town eschewed local traditions and were drawn from the ‘neo-tradition’ of recent British royal and civic pageantry.² Although the Diamond Jubilee celebrations were a global event, they were very British in nature.

However, this did not automatically entail that the celebrations in both these cities were entirely homogenous, and interesting analysis can be attained from the different sets of festivities that were produced. In the Crown Colony of Hong Kong, the city’s official events were organised by a committee whose members were selected by Governor Robinson and his staff: drawn principally from the Legislative Council and the business

¹ B. Cohn, ‘Representing Authority in Victorian India’, in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 166 - 9.

² T. Ranger, ‘The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa’, in *Ibid.*, p. 215.

elite, this committee contained many of the leading personalities from the colonial establishment.³ Although there were a few non-British representatives on it, the measure of control that the British Government held over Hong Kong through its Crown Colony status was replicated by the control that the colonial establishment held over the city's official celebrations. Therefore, this city's official celebrations were closely intertwined with local political considerations and the British community appeared to care deeply about how the festivities were perceived by outsiders. The Diamond Jubilee took place at a time of great geo-political importance, and was perceived as being a significant event in the city's relatively short existence.

Lacking a large resident British population, the contribution of the armed forces was particularly important in generating the great spectacle and celebration of Britishness that was desired in Hong Kong. Local British civilians felt that British power needed to be showcased to its visiting audience – mainland Chinese and competing foreign power alike – during the jubilee and, despite the strong reservations that some of them held over the military having too great a say in the city's affairs, the presence of a strong Royal Navy contingent in its harbour was campaigned for by the very same English-speaking newspapers that had called for greater local autonomy in 1894. There was also a constant need for the events to be stage-managed so that they were not over-run by the local masses: many of the British official celebrations took place in venues where access was restricted – a hotel's ballroom, at the cathedral, at the racecourse and out in the waters of the harbour, where the spectating public could not encroach upon them. Although the small size of the British contingent would have naturally hampered the options for celebration that were available to the organisers, there was a political requirement to present them as being unified in body and spirit. This may explain why celebrations of British individualism were absent from the programme of festivities, and activities which promoted *esprit de corps* – such as the singing of patriotic songs as part of a massed choir – formed an important component of it.

³ Details of the jubilee organising committee found in 'Government Notification. – No. 97', 17th March, 1897. N. A., CO 132/38, 'Hong Kong Government Gazettes', 1897, p. 163.

The British community of Cape Town, on the other hand, presented a seemingly much less politically sensitive event, despite the turbulent political backdrop against which it took place. The city's greater political autonomy was reflected in the make-up of its jubilee organising committee, being composed of locally elected politicians and representatives drawn from the churches, the Chamber of Commerce, the University Council and the local newspapers.⁴ Thus, the celebrations here were a much more civically-minded affair, far removed from the power politics that infused the event in Hong Kong. In Cape Town, the much larger resident British community was also able to impose itself more easily on the public spaces of the city and it was able to produce a set of festivities that directly involved more of its members, celebrated their individuality and projected a more informal, less ceremonial, representation of Britishness. Although the contribution of the military was certainly not unimportant here, the greater size of the British community, and its consequent ability to process in force through the city's streets, meant that a wider range of British institutions and British lifestyles could be represented: temperance societies, municipal bodies, cycling clubs, ancestry groups and financial co-operatives all took their place in the city's Diamond Jubilee procession.

The official Cape Town celebrations were also not in any danger of being overshadowed by any produced by local rivals – unlike in Hong Kong, where the local Chinese community had the wealth, the motivation and the manpower to create a magnificent display – so they could take place in a more relaxed, less self-conscious atmosphere. Whereas the festivities in Hong Kong sought to project British power, the Cape Town version consisted of a more internalised celebration of Britishness. Of course, the spectacle here needed to be an impressive one, in order to meet the requirements of local community one-upmanship and to display due reverence for the queen's great achievement, but in Cape Town there is a sense that the British residents celebrated their ancestry, and their continued links to the mother country, in a more secure and imposing manner than their counterparts in Hong Kong were able to.

⁴ Western Cape Archives, 1/5/1/1/1, 'Special Committees: Minutes', Feb. 1894 – Feb. 1898, p. 367.

Although the Diamond Jubilee was a celebration of Britishness, those who hailed from lands outside the mother country could also be incorporated successfully into the events. Although Britishness can be narrowly defined as referring exclusively to those from the Home Nations, Britishness was also a more fluid concept at this time – open to an interpretation that spoke more to a sense of place and a set of perceived values rather than being defined by ethnicity. It has been argued that, unrestricted by the more primordial sentiments that infused older notions of kinship, Britishness formed an integral component of colonial identity within the empire and created a rallying point around which members of other ethnicities felt they could also congregate.⁵ Indeed, Paul Ward argues that its compatibility with other identities was integral to the persistent relevance of Britishness within colonial society.⁶ Linda Colley argues that Britain was, and is, ‘a synthetic, invented nation that was never based on ethnic and cultural uniformity’ and notes that it is still striking today how those of African or Asian ancestry residing in the United Kingdom today often refer to themselves as ‘Black British’ or ‘British Muslims’ rather than ‘Black English’, for example.⁷ Therefore, at the time of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, it was not totally incongruous for Chinese or Afrikaner overseas subjects to feel part of a British community, whilst continuing to hold on to their own indigenous identities: Britishness was a ‘composite’, rather than an ‘exclusive’, form of identity which could dovetail quite happily with colonial nationalism.⁸ This aura of inclusivity also appeared to have extended to white foreign nationals during the Diamond Jubilee: the participation of residents from European and North American states, who held similar ethnic traits and values to the British, was a feature of both these cities’ celebrations.

⁵ D. Killingray, “‘A Good West Indian, a Good African, and, in Short, a Good Britisher’: Black and British in a Colour-Conscious Empire, 1760 – 1950”, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 36, no. 3 (2008), p. 375. V. Bickford-Smith, *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis: Cities and Identities in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 8.

⁶ P. Ward, *Britishness since 1870* (London, 2004), p. 5.

⁷ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 – 1837* (New Haven, CT, 5th ed., 2014), p. xxx. Added to these examples is the epithet ‘B.B.C’ – ‘British-born Chinese’, used today by second and third generation U.K. citizens of Chinese – predominantly Cantonese - extraction.

⁸ S. Dubow, ‘How British was the British World? The Case of South Africa’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2009), p. 7.

However, despite the fundamentally inclusive nature of Britishness, the presiding elite in the colonies often appear to have ignored the claims of others to it – in particular, those made by people of different race or low birth. In the same way that British clubs, lodges and other social institutions overseas replicated the domestic hierarchies by guarding access to their membership lists fiercely, with many lower class native Britons being just as unable to join them as they would have been back home, access to Britishness was selective.⁹ Stefan Collini argues that a synthetic, self-conscious nationalism – such as Britishness – is ‘largely a matter of asserting an identity against someone or something’.¹⁰ Therefore, although fundamentally more inclusive in nature, restricting access to Britishness was also used as a means of preserving the established hierarchies within the empire, bonding the colonial elite together and creating a psychological bulwark against the ‘Other’ – namely the indigenous communities encountered overseas. In the more liberal and democratically-accountable setting of Cape Town, where a ‘colour-blind’ franchise – although recently undermined – still persisted, the relaxed manner of the celebrations appeared to occasionally extend towards a greater acceptance of the appropriation of Britishness by non-whites. However, the existing racial hierarchy remained relevant throughout the celebrations and, despite a few cameos by non-white actors, the event remained a predominantly white affair. In the even more racially-stratified Hong Kong, members of the non-white population were openly discriminated against during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and would have been made to feel that, regardless of their enthusiasm for the event, they were considered by the city’s authorities to be second-rate participants.

I. A Celebration of Britishness

Despite the fact that Joseph Chamberlain gave the colonies free rein to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee in whichever manner they saw fit, the itineraries for the official festive events in Hong Kong and Cape Town were based around a similar model.¹¹ They both

⁹ R. Bickers, *Empire made me: an Englishman adrift in Shanghai* (London, 2004), pp. 43 – 4.

¹⁰ Stefan Collini quoted in Colley, *Britons*, p. xix.

¹¹ Circular Despatch by Joseph Chamberlain to the colonies, 25th February, 1897, reproduced in CO 132/38, p. 227.

took their blueprint from previous events of this ilk, such as the 1887 Golden Jubilee celebrations in London, which showcased a new wave of pageantry and public display that would shortly become standard fare across Europe, as monarchs tried to repel the creeping threat of popular democracy through turning royal ritualism into a grand spectacle that could strengthen their link with their subjects.¹² As a result, many of the festivities seen in Hong Kong and Cape Town – processions, military tattoos, sporting events, the laying of foundation stones, firework displays and the decoration and illumination of buildings – were of an identical nature to those taking place back home.¹³ The Diamond Jubilee celebrations imposed the cultural dominance of the British upon the cities, reflecting their position at the apex of the social pyramid.

Therefore, Hong Kong and Cape Town were both *en fête* during the celebratory period in a manner that would have been easily recognisable to any British visitor of the contemporary – or present - period. In the Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Cambridge, ‘an unbroken array of flags, bunting, pictures and triumphal arches’ ran from the station to Castle Hill, and this scene was replicated in many streets of the two colonial port cities that were located many thousands of miles away [see Figures 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16].¹⁴ Displays of flags and banners were principally a means of displaying loyalty towards the queen and the event, but they also allowed the British to impose themselves on the urban landscape. The cultural power inherent in this was summarised by Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India during the time of Queen Victoria’s proclamation as Empress of India in 1877, who said ‘the further East you go, the greater becomes the importance of a bit of bunting.’¹⁵ British businesses, regiments, householders and neighbourhoods would have competed with each other to produce the most impressive decorations – in just the same way that the disparate groups of the Hong Kong Chinese did – and these displays would have reminded the populations of Cape Town and Hong Kong that they

¹² E. Hobsbawm, ‘Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870 – 1914’, in Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, pp. 281 - 3.

¹³ E. Hammerton and D. Cannadine, ‘Conflict and Consensus on a Ceremonial Occasion: The Diamond Jubilee in Cambridge in 1897’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1981), p. 132.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140. The Figures relevant to this chapter are located at the end of it.

¹⁵ Lord Lytton quoted in Cohn, ‘Representing Authority in Victorian India’, p. 192.

resided in a city of the British Empire and so the Diamond Jubilee celebrations were an important event.

The Diamond Jubilee offered a temporary window for extravagant demonstration, but the British were already fully aware of the role that appearances played in maintaining their power on a day-to-day level. Some of the colonial elites of both cities are shown in Figures 12 and 13, wearing the same styles of suits and dresses that would have adorned the well-to-do men and women of the time back home. No evidence is shown here of any allowance being made to differences in climate or geographical position. In the case of the crowd that had gathered in Adderley Street, this is less surprising because Cape Town's winter temperatures do not differ too radically from those experienced during a mild British summer. However, the attire shown at Happy Valley [Figure 13] is rather more remarkable: during late June, the temperatures and levels of humidity present in Hong Kong usually far exceeded those encountered in Britain, the climate for which their woollen coats, starched collars and heavy dresses were designed. With the athletics events that were scheduled to take place the day after this picture was taken being entirely washed out by torrential rain, it is likely that the Military Review took place in extremely uncomfortable and energy-sapping conditions. The fortitude of the Victorian Britons in the face of this punishing climate is astonishing: their reluctance to undo a top button or to leave their suit jacket at home shows the importance that they placed on protocol and on the maintenance of a united front, regardless of their own levels of personal comfort. By stoically adhering to the recognised customs of the period, and by demonstrating to the colonial subjects around them their apparently superhuman levels of endurance and strength, they aimed to provide evidence of a natural superiority and a clear pre-determined mandate to rule.

The Diamond Jubilee afforded the British communities of these cities the opportunity to reaffirm their ethnicity and to construct a celebration that reflected the British values that they believed bound them together in their distant imperial outposts. The attributes of Britishness that Daniel Gorman has identified as being central to this identity – 'character, masculinity, whiteness, and Protestantism' – were all on show during the

festive events that took place in both cities.¹⁶ Protestantism was a key driver in the creation of a coherent and united Britain following the Act of Union in 1707 as it allowed the English, the Welsh and the Scots to become ‘fused together’.¹⁷ Although there were several denominations of Protestantism present across the empire, the movement helped to further bind the colonies to the mother country through the frequent interactions that took place between churches based overseas and in the United Kingdom. For example, the fact that many ministers in the South African churches were recruited directly from Britain strengthened these links and the sense of a shared identity.¹⁸ Protestantism also helped to bind its overseas congregations more closely to the monarch through the preaching of service to the Crown.¹⁹ Alongside the importance of Queen Victoria’s position as the figurehead of empire lay the vital role she fulfilled as the head of the Church of England. The monarchy, the established church and the empire formed an important nexus, each of them bringing greater influence and support to the others.

In both cities, services of thanksgiving for the queen’s reign were prominent features of the official Diamond Jubilee itinerary. In Hong Kong, the best attended, most splendid and most significant of these was staged in its Anglican cathedral, St. John’s. There, boundaries between church and state became blurred as the Royal Standard and the flag of St. George were hung above the altar, showing the strength of the connection between the monarch and the established church and the importance of the jubilee to the cathedral’s community.²⁰ In Cape Town, the central role of Protestantism was reinforced by the *Cape Times*’ statement, made during its reporting of the jubilee, that the queen’s eligibility to the throne rested on the Act of Settlement’s endorsement of her: ‘to wit, being a Protestant, having married a Protestant, and being a member of the Church of

¹⁶ D. Gorman, ‘Wider and Wider Still?: Racial Politics, Intra-Imperial Immigration and the Absence of an Imperial Citizenship in the British Empire’, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2002), p. 2. <https://muse.jhu.edu/>, [Accessed 13th June, 2016].

¹⁷ Colley, *Britons*, p. 376.

¹⁸ J. Lambert, “‘An Unknown People’: Reconstructing British South African Identity’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 37, no. 4 (2009), pp. 602 – 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 603.

²⁰ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 21st June, 1897.

England.’²¹ In this city, the central religious service for the jubilee took place in the Dutch Reformed Church’s *Groote Kerk* on Adderley Street. With the original St. George’s Cathedral resembling the size of a modest parish church, and the foundation stone for the present, more spacious incarnation of it not being laid until 1901, this building was used regularly by the Anglican community at this time when a large congregation was expected. On the morning of the Diamond Jubilee, the church, which could seat 3,000 people, was reported as being ‘filled to its utmost capacity’.²²

Following on from Collini’s assessment that Britishness was self-consciously created as a bulwark against the ‘Other’, Linda Colley argues that Britishness was initially created in order to unify the largely Protestant countries of England, Scotland and Wales against the Catholic threat in mainland Europe. However, she argues that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as the empire grew and Catholic soldiers in the British Army proved their loyalty in battle, the perceived threat from Catholicism receded and the position of the ‘Other’ was taken instead by the foreign races and faiths that the British encountered overseas.²³ In her view, Protestantism played a pivotally important role in the original formation of Britishness. At the time of the Diamond Jubilee, despite the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and the progress made in ecumenical relations, the Protestant churches clearly remained intrinsically linked to the queen, the idea of Britishness and – by extension – to the empire at large. This is illustrated by the fact that, in both Hong Kong and Cape Town, the Anglican services of thanksgiving were the first significant events to take place on 22nd June, the official day of the Diamond Jubilee.

Strength and masculinity, which were both seen as being integral components of Britishness by contemporary commentators and colonial elites, were also in evidence during the celebrations due to demonstrations of athleticism. In Hong Kong and Cape Town, as in British India, games and physical exercise was taken very seriously and formed a key part of the colonial routine.²⁴ The colonial elite believed that these

²¹ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

²² *The Port Elizabeth and Eastern Province Standard*, 24th June, 1897.

²³ Colley, *Britons*, pp. xix - xxii.

²⁴ D. Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste: Imperial Lives in the Victorian Raj* (London, 2007), p. 262.

occupations developed character in a man and instilled in him the essential qualities of moral rectitude: ‘teamwork, loyalty, honesty, and fair play’.²⁵ In 1897, there was to be no repeat of the Golden Jubilee cricket match that took place in Hong Kong, between a colonial staff eleven and the Hong Kong Cricket Club, presumably because the delayed Golden Jubilee celebrations that year took place in November, during the city’s cricket season.²⁶ High June may have been too hot, humid and prone to thunderstorms for cricket, but a Diamond Jubilee Gymkhana was organised to provide the coda to Hong Kong’s events. Originally scheduled for the second day of the celebrations, the 23rd June, the gymkhana finally took place on 10th July, having been postponed a number of times due to inclement weather. Featuring pony races, bicycle races and an obstacle race for sailors and soldiers, it was attended by Governor Robinson, the colonial elite and ‘all the leading residents’ of the city.²⁷ Cycling was also popular in Cape Town – with an inspection of 140 local cyclists, ‘including two ladies’, forming part of the celebratory itinerary and prizes being awarded for the best costume and the best decorated machine.²⁸ This group then paraded through the streets as part of the Diamond Jubilee Procession.

The masculinity of the event was underscored by the relative absence of women from the celebrations: a fact exemplified by the *Cape Times* feeling that the presence of two women among the ranks of the cyclists was worthy of comment. No women contested any of the prizes during the gymkhana at Hong Kong and, the two female cyclists aside, it is quite possible that no other women processed in Cape Town – as none were said to have formed part of the Grand Procession held in May, 1863, to celebrate the marriage of Prince Albert.²⁹ Even though two female cyclists did join the flotilla of cyclists as they made their way along the processional route, Figure 17 shows that – in the case of one of them at least – they were not even in control of a bicycle of their own: this image, which captures part of the group as it traverses Greenmarket Square, clearly shows the

²⁵ J. Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), p. 98.

²⁶ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 12th November, 1887.

²⁷ *The Hongkong Weekly Press and China Overland Trade Report*, 15th July, 1897.

²⁸ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

²⁹ V. Bickford-Smith, ‘Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town, British Cape Colony, 1838 – 1910’, *Kronos*, no. 25 (1998/9), p. 106.

lady perched on the crossbar of a bicycle ridden by a male companion. This photograph powerfully symbolises the subordinate role that was held by women in both these celebrations and in the social order of the period. Her male companion could no doubt have argued that the lady shown possessed neither the riding experience nor the female-friendly machine that would have allowed her to participate in the parade independently. However, such an answer would only highlight the discrepancies that existed between men and women in their access to leisure pursuits. Athleticism was considered to be an exclusively manly virtue and the Cape Town celebrations confirmed this view.

Indeed, Vivian Bickford-Smith argues that, during these festivals, women ‘were only allowed to be noticed as part of a charitable elite, flanking the Governor or accompanying their men to the subscription dinner.’³⁰ What specific sightings there were of female involvement in the event were seemingly limited to those ladies who had the finest social connections. For example, adjudicating the costumes and decorations of the Cape Town cyclists was Mrs. Hanbury-Williams, the wife of Major Hanbury-Williams, and the *Cape Times* obsequiously reported that her awards ‘gave the highest satisfaction’.³¹ In the more male-dominated and macho environment of Hong Kong, direct and unaccompanied female involvement in the performance of the celebrations was rarer still, with the defining image being of a passive, dutiful wife attending the proceedings with her important husband. This image is portrayed well in the lone female onlooker depicted in the centre of Figure 18, who the camera catches as the foundation stone to Hong Kong’s new hospital is laid by the governor. Whether any of the colonial elite of these cities reflected on the irony that a festival which celebrated the achievements of a woman – Queen Victoria – was so largely devoid of female contributions is impossible to know, but, due to the patriarchal attitudes that dominated at the time, it is surely unlikely.

The virtues of British strength and masculinity were also projected in the cities through the use of the armed forces. Martial displays echoed the celebratory events back home,

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

³¹ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

where soldiers from across the empire processed through London on the day of the jubilee and there was a further review of the army at Aldershot and of the fleet at Spithead. For Jan Morris, the jubilee was ‘unmistakeably a militarist demonstration of supremacy’, despite the deep misgivings that some prominent individuals had over the ability of Britain to maintain its status as the global leader.³² The military formed an integral part of the British national identity: castles dotted the islands' landscape, regimental flags hung in its places of worship and great military victories on land and sea were lavishly memorialised.³³ England's military successes, such as the defeat of the Spanish Armada, had earlier kept the young Protestant nation independent from the great Catholic superpowers on the continent, allowing for the creation of Great Britain in 1707. While the Diamond Jubilee was taking place, an army led by Lord Kitchener was slowly and methodically making its way through northern Africa to the Sudan, seeking to avenge the death of General Gordon twelve years before and to remove a deep stain from the British Army's recent reputation.

Examples of military pomp were central features of the celebrations in Hong Kong and Cape Town: the parading of servicemen, the gun salutes to the queen and the martial music that formed the components of a military tattoo appear to have been enacted here with the utmost precision and seriousness. Although the arrival of a storm on the eve of the jubilee caused the abandonment of its Torchlight Tattoo on the Grand Parade, Cape Town successfully held a military review on Green Point Common the following morning. Hong Kong's military review took place on the afternoon of the same day at the Happy Valley racecourse. In both celebrations, local soldiers – the Volunteers – paraded alongside regular imperial forces. Both events were also on a larger scale than their Golden Jubilee predecessors. However, as opposed to the great surge in fundraising seen in the Diamond Jubilee subscription lists, this was not an indication of greater enthusiasm being present for the 1897 celebrations. Instead, these bigger and more impressive military contributions bore testimony to the concerns that were felt in Whitehall over the state of geo-political affairs in the wider regions. Whilst troops were

³² J. Morris, *Pax Britannica: the climax of an empire* (London, rev. ed., 2012), p. 7.

³³ J. Andrews, ‘The Imperial Style: Rhetorical Depiction and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee’, *Western Journal of Communication*, vol. 64, no. 1 (2000), p. 71.

not sent to the colonies from Britain specifically in order to help the locals celebrate the Diamond Jubilee, their celebrations of Britishness would have been all the more authentic and impressive for the army's enlarged presence there.

The troop build-up that was taking place at the time in South Africa has been already discussed. Some of the troops that had recently arrived in Cape Town had already been sent in-country – such as the Middlesex Regiment, which arrived at their new barracks in King William's Town a couple of days before the jubilee celebrations took place.³⁴ In addition, hundreds of the Cape Town Volunteers were missing from the Green Point Common parade, having been sent north to put down native uprisings in Bechuanaland – a territory that the Cape Colony had annexed in 1895.³⁵ However, swelled principally by 500 Royal Navy sailors and marines, and infantry from the Leicestershire Regiment and the King's Royal Rifles, a turn-out of roughly 3,000 men was achieved.³⁶ This figure was said to be around 50 per cent higher than the number present during the Golden Jubilee celebrations, where the detachments of the Volunteer Corps formed the majority of those on parade.³⁷ Therefore, the military review at Cape Town during the Diamond Jubilee not only witnessed a larger turn-out, but also a far higher proportion of imperial troops: testimony to the threat of war that existed at the time.

Conversely, despite the strong possibility of a conflict breaking out in southern Africa, it was in remote Hong Kong where the role of the military during the Diamond Jubilee was of greater concern to the local British population. Large and impressive though the military's contribution to the Cape Town celebrations was, its presence at its local jubilee event was not discussed and fretted over to the same extent as it was further east. The Military Review at Happy Valley was on a similar scale to Cape Town's, with nearly 3,000 men estimated to have been present.³⁸ However, this number, composed mainly of Royal Marines, Royal Navy personnel, the Volunteers and the West Yorkshire Regiment, constituted an enormous increase on the 1,000 troops that were on parade ten

³⁴ *The Cape Mercury*, 24th June, 1897.

³⁵ N. A., CO 48/531, 'Colonial Office Despatches, January – April 1897', pp. 213 - 4.

³⁶ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

³⁷ *The Cape Times Mail Edition*, 22nd June, 1887.

³⁸ *The Hongkong Weekly Press and China Overland Trade Report*, 22nd June, 1897.

years previously.³⁹ This large increase symbolised the greater geopolitical insecurity of the wider region in 1897 – a period when fears were expressed over the vulnerability of Hong Kong to attack and when new imperialist powers, principally Russia, Germany, France and Japan, now appeared ready to threaten Britain's position.⁴⁰ For many years, British politicians, residents and military leaders had been aware of Hong Kong's defensive vulnerability. The extent of their misgivings was later laid bare by the frantic public reaction to a fictional account of a Franco-Russian attack on Hong Kong which was published within just a few months of the Diamond Jubilee. Serialised between the 30th September and the 8th October, 1897, in the *Overland China Mail* as 'The Back Door: A sketch of what might happen', this anonymously-written account described the taking of Hong Kong by an attack on the island's sparsely protected southern flank.⁴¹ Fears of such action being realised had been raised following the 1893 Franco-Russian alliance, and so 'The Back Door', which belonged to a new genre of 'purposive, supercharged fiction.... that sought to warn nations of the disasters-to-come' certainly tapped into some deep-seated fears held by the British public in Hong Kong.⁴² Gillian Bickley argues that 'The Back Door' was unquestionably intended as a warning to the British authorities to secure the island's southern defences.⁴³

However, despite the levels of widespread consternation that greeted its publication, there were signs that the defence of Hong Kong was already being addressed by the colonial authorities: the compulsory purchase of the Mount Austin Hotel in the summer of 1897 for conversion into a military stronghold, which was made in the teeth of significant local opposition, was a direct consequence of the fears held by the British Government over the city's defensive frailties. Had 'The Back Door' been serialised at the beginning of the summer, rather than at the very end of it, then it is possible that the amount of opposition to the military's requisition of the Mount Austin Hotel might have been significantly less.

³⁹ *The Overland China Mail*, 1st July, 1897. *The North-China Herald*, 24th November, 1887.

⁴⁰ P. Wesley-Smith, *Unequal Treaty 1898 – 1997: China, Great Britain and Hong Kong's New Territories* (Oxford, 1980), p. 21.

⁴¹ 'The Back Door: A sketch of what might happen' is reproduced in G. Bickley, *Hong Kong Invaded: A '97 Nightmare* (Hong Kong, 2001), pp. 27 – 86.

⁴² I. Clarke, 'A New Kind of Fiction', in *Ibid.*, p. ix.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

There had also been concerns voiced recently over Hong Kong's ability to repel any attack that emanated from the nearby Chinese mainland: Governor Robinson had warned the Colonial Secretary in 1894 that an enemy force could 'easily shell Victoria from Chinese territory as well as cut off the entire food supply of the Colony.'⁴⁴ Although the Chinese had recently been resoundingly defeated by Japan in the 1894-5 war, there was a belief that China would not remain enfeebled for long. Although it was not until 1905 that the aura of military superiority held by the white powers over the Asiatic races was broken by Russia's defeat to Japan, there was acknowledgement in the mid-1890s that Hong Kong might one day come under severe threat from the direction of the mainland – particularly if China industrialised itself with the speed and success of Meiji Japan – and so any opportunity to boost its defensive capabilities should not be missed. This view was expressed by the influential local business leader, and unofficial member of the Legislative Council, Catchik Paul Chater in the autumn of 1894. Referring to the humiliating losses that China had recently suffered, Chater wrote that 'China is now at her lowest ebb, but 50 years hence, possibly 20 years hence, judging from the progress Japan has made, China will probably be a powerful nation fully armed and with the skill and knowledge that will enable her to make use of her vast natural strength.'⁴⁵

Although the leasing of the New Territories in 1898 hugely increased the size of the British colony and greatly improved the military's ability to defend it, the large body of imperial troops that was present during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, and the increased size of the Hong Kong Volunteer Corps, reflected the unease felt over the security of the British position there at the time. Despite the acquisition of the New Territories, the comparative ease with which the Japanese Imperial Army captured Hong Kong in December 1941 showed that it remained highly vulnerable to any large, well-resourced, invasion.⁴⁶ However, the ruling authorities would have hoped that, by staging impressive military tattoos such as the one which marked the Diamond Jubilee, the

⁴⁴ Governor Robinson to Colonial Secretary Ripon, secret despatch of 9th November, 1894, quoted in Wesley-Smith, *Unequal Treaty 1898 – 1997*, p. 12.

⁴⁵ Letter from Catchik Paul Chater to Governor Robinson on the need to enlarge the colony's boundaries, partially reproduced in *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ F. Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong* (London, rev. ed., 1997), pp. 410 - 7.

city's defensive deficiencies could be masked and potential invaders deterred. As in Cape Town, the increased imperial military presence at the Hong Kong jubilee event could also only have fortified the celebration of Britishness that took place there.

However, significant elements of the British civilian community in Hong Kong were also concerned that a strong showing should also be made at sea during the celebrations. Despite their general opposition to their city being classified primarily as a military base, there is no doubt that the presence of the Royal Navy was a huge psychological comfort to them. Local newspapers were stridently in favour of the Senior Service, which guarded the vital sea routes that linked the city to the rest of the empire, being out in force during the event: 'Many people are anxious to see a strong fleet of British men-of-war lying in the harbour on Celebration Day, and we sincerely trust that.... there will be a magnificent and unparalleled display of warships for the occasion. They ought to be represented in Hongkong as they have never been represented before.'⁴⁷ The Royal Navy was of fundamental importance to British identity, as illustrated by models of *H.M.S. Victory* and *H.M.S. St. George* being paraded in the Cape Town procession.⁴⁸ The importance of the Royal Navy and its heroes, such as Nelson, Blake and Collingwood, to the identity of this maritime nation remained profound: its great walls of oak had kept Britain safe from invading armies for centuries and its victories 'held a special place in the British psyche.'⁴⁹ Morris reports that, at the time of the Diamond Jubilee, the prestige of the Royal Navy 'had reached an almost mystical plane'.⁵⁰

During the Cape Town celebrations, three Royal Navy warships left the naval base at Simon's Town to steam round Cape Point and fire off barrages of *feux de joie* in Table Bay.⁵¹ However, Hong Kong's British community called for as many ships of the China Squadron as possible to assemble in Victoria Harbour. Aware that foreign warships would also be in port during the Diamond Jubilee, the local English-speaking newspapers also warned of the loss of prestige that would accompany a poor showing by

⁴⁷ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 8th May, 1897.

⁴⁸ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

⁴⁹ Andrews, 'The Imperial Style', p. 71.

⁵⁰ Morris, *Pax Britannica*, p. 24.

⁵¹ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

the Royal Navy: 'It would be strange indeed for these friendly visitors to find the white ensign conspicuous by its absence from the harbour!'⁵² The *Hongkong Daily Press* was also conscious that this was an opportunity to impress not only the rival foreign powers, but also the Chinese spectators: 'The eyes of the Chinese nation are upon us: there will be tens of thousands of visitors from the mainland to witness the pageant, and its details will be talked of far and wide.'⁵³ Therefore, the British civilian community of Hong Kong seemed to have been firmly of the opinion that, in order to fully take advantage of the opportunity for prestige and powerful imagery that the Diamond Jubilee provided, the Royal Navy needed to perform a central role in the celebrations.

However, these hopes would be dashed. The warships of the China Squadron remained scattered around the ports of the wider region when the celebrations took place, with the cruiser *H.M.S. Undaunted* being the only warship of significant size to join the receiving ship, *H.M.S. Victor Emmanuel*, in the harbour.⁵⁴ Admiral Buller's flagship, *H.M.S. Centurion*, remained at its summer station in Yokohama, where its crew could escape the tropical heat of southern China. The lack of a strong showing by the Royal Navy in Hong Kong was commented on outside the city: the *Peking and Tientsin Times* remarked that 'it seems a pity that something like a naval review could not have been organised in those waters, and a full muster of the China Squadron have taken place.'⁵⁵ This article finished on a cynical note, with the newspaper questioning whether the presence of more benevolent weather conditions elsewhere was really the motivating factor for the poor turnout at Hong Kong, or whether a potentially memorable demonstration of imperial might and splendour had fallen victim to bureaucratic penny-pinching: 'the question is, is it the health of the men, or the comfort of the officers, or – the cost of the coal?'⁵⁶ Back in Hong Kong, the *Hongkong Daily Press*, clearly disgusted by the situation, passed its final verdict on the issue: 'The practical desertion of this Colony by Her Majesty's Fleet on the reddest of all red letter days in Queen Victoria's unexampled reign will cause great disappointment amongst the Anglo-Saxon

⁵² *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 12th May, 1897.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ 'Her Britannic Majesty's Ships on the China Station', *The Overland China Mail*, 23rd June, 1897.

⁵⁵ *The Peking and Tientsin Times*, 5th June, 1897.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

community.’⁵⁷ The relative absence of the Royal Navy from its regional headquarters undermined Hong Kong’s celebration of Britishness and the martial values that the identity incorporated.

Therefore, it is clear that some within the British civilian body of the city were aware of the great symbolic power that would have been generated by a strong mustering of the China Squadron in its magnificent natural harbour and regretted the squandering of this opportunity. It may also have led them to speculate on whether the navy’s absence from Hong Kong’s harbour during the Diamond Jubilee was a symptom of a wider malaise – whether the navy was now overstretched, underfunded and in danger of being eclipsed by some of its rivals in the Pacific region. If so, such fears may have been astute: Paul Kennedy pinpoints the year of the Diamond Jubilee as the turning point in Britain’s mastery of the seas. He argues that, inspired by the great jubilee naval review at Spithead, foreign navies promptly embarked upon enormous programmes of shipbuilding and rapidly challenged the Royal Navy’s dominance across the globe.⁵⁸ In 1900, only a few years later, questions even began to be asked over the Royal Navy’s ability to protect the integrally important maritime routes of such a vast empire.⁵⁹

While the British community in Hong Kong seemed to attach significant importance to the *realpolitik* of the region and the need to demonstrate imperial strength to the foreign audiences, the larger and more self-assured British community in Cape Town provided a quainter, less politically-motivated set of celebrations. As they formed a large part of the city’s population, they were able to assert themselves over the central public spaces to a far greater extent than would have been possible in Hong Kong. Had the small British community there attempted to parade through the city, this would have surely illustrated just how small, and therefore vulnerable, the British community actually was. In addition, any British procession would undoubtedly have looked far less impressive than one that was orchestrated by the Chinese. As a result, there was no tradition of British

⁵⁷ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 24th May, 1897.

⁵⁸ P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London, 1976), pp. 208 – 9.

⁵⁹ N. R. Bennett, ‘The Naval Pivot of Asia: an examination of the place of Hong Kong in British Far Eastern Strategy, 1900 – 1914’, *Journal of Oriental Studies*, vol. 7 (1969), p. 65.

civilians processing through the streets of Hong Kong in the manner that their counterparts in Cape Town did: no British procession took place at the golden jubilees of either the queen, in 1887, or the city, in 1891. However, Britain could assert itself over the Chinese and other foreign competitors on water, as those who bemoaned the relative absence of the Royal Navy had surely realised. Therefore, Hong Kong's official Diamond Jubilee procession was a maritime one, where Britain held a comparative advantage in the size and technological impressiveness of its craft. Although the decorations on the Chinese junks which took part in the flotilla impressed onlookers, the sea was Britain's domain: the sight of its steam launches, rigged with lights and processing majestically across the harbour, was said to be 'unusually brilliant'.⁶⁰

In Cape Town, despite the city's Dutch roots and the spectacularly cosmopolitan nature of its community, Britishness was of fundamental importance to the identity of many of its residents – called by Robert Ross, the 'prime nationalism of South Africa, against which all subsequent ones, whether Afrikaner or Africa, reacted'.⁶¹ Therefore, this city's connections with Britain, and the general identity of Britishness, were celebrated with enthusiasm during the Diamond Jubilee. Links of family and trade with Britain remained strong at this time, and these links to Britain were promoted by the city's English-speaking newspapers, such as the *Cape Argus* and the *Cape Times*, which acted as prominent drivers of British consciousness within the community.⁶² In contrast to the vast majority of the British community in Hong Kong, many of the Britons in Cape Town would have had no first-hand experience of the mother country.⁶³ Therefore, many of them celebrated a place that principally resided in their imagination: 'To them, England was, and was to remain, an idea rather than a place: the idea of "home". Self-government having removed the Downing Street irritant, the natural loyalism of kinship found nothing to grate its teeth on, and so could sentimentalise about the imperial bond without feeling irked by it.'⁶⁴ Although the number of British immigrants never

⁶⁰ *The Overland China Mail*, 1st July, 1897.

⁶¹ R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750 – 1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 43.

⁶² Bickford-Smith, *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis*, p. 63.

⁶³ Lambert, "'An Unknown People'", p. 605.

⁶⁴ A. Thornton, *The Imperial Idea and its Enemies: A Study in British Power* (London, 1959), p. 25.

managed to topple the numerical superiority of the ethnic Dutch contingent among the region's white population, Britishness was a powerful force in Cape Town's society at this time. Furthermore, the city would also have had many British tourists and recent immigrants from the United Kingdom present during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations – certainly more so than would have been present in Hong Kong – and so the nationalist pageantry that was produced would have been recognisable to many among the assembled masses – and so the celebrations would surely not have been short of enthusiastic British participants and spectators.

Cape Town's celebrations tapped into the city's rich traditions of parading through its public spaces – whether as part of the funeral processions, that had been recently challenged by the new sanitation laws, or as part of community events, such as the annual *Tweede Nuwe Jaar* minstrel carnival. Through this format, the Cape Town event was able to project a more expansive and civically-minded view of Britishness. Despite the fact that the settlement of an individual Briton's family in South Africa may have occurred decades or generations previously, efforts had been made to celebrate this identity of origin and to preserve its traditions and customs.⁶⁵ National societies proliferated and those of Scottish descent, in particular, were well-represented in the city: the Caledonian Society celebrated the jubilee with an event in Good Hope Hall that included Scottish dancing, songs and bagpipe playing.⁶⁶ But whilst the St. Andrew's Society in Hong Kong marked the jubilee by holding a private dinner and sending a telegram of congratulations to Queen Victoria, Cape Town's Caledonian Society were able to play a direct and more public role in the celebrations by taking part in the city's jubilee procession.⁶⁷ The procession allowed other groups to contribute to the eclectic, and somewhat eccentric, image of Britishness that was consumed by the spectators: friendly societies such as the Ancient Order of Foresters and the Cape Friendly Society; fraternal organisations such as the Ancient Order of Druids and the Society of Free Gardeners; temperance societies such as the Order of Good Templars; boys' brigades;

⁶⁵ A. Thompson, 'The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa, c. 1870 – 1939', *The English Historical Review*, vol. 118, no. 477 (2003), pp. 629 - 30.

⁶⁶ *The Cape Argus*, 17th May, 1897.

⁶⁷ *The Overland China Mail*, 1st July, 1897. *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

church brigades; fire brigades and the dignitaries of the municipal government all completed the circular route through the city that began and ended at the Great Parade.

This route was also the one used for the procession that celebrated the marriage of Prince Albert in 1863, although this earlier event culminated in the dispensing of large amounts of free wine to spectators.⁶⁸ As symbolised by the presence of the temperance movement groups, the Diamond Jubilee procession was much more abstemious in nature, an indication of how social attitudes had changed over the interim thirty four years. Although generosity was also a theme of the Diamond Jubilee event – and, in common with the celebration for Prince Albert’s wedding, a meal was provided for some of the city’s poor – there is no evidence of alcohol being given away.⁶⁹ Additionally, the procession to celebrate Prince Albert’s marriage was followed by a Carnival Parade, replete with men dressed as clowns and mythical monsters: Vivian Bickford-Smith states that ‘if this royal holiday was largely about respect, it was also about fun.’⁷⁰ In contrast, the Diamond Jubilee event presented a more sombre representation of Britishness, indicative of the more socially conservative atmosphere of the late Victorian era. Gone were the clowns and the free grog, although alcohol still managed to play a part in the spectator experience: a few days afterwards the *Cape Argus* reported on the court appearance of Annie Muller, a Cape Coloured servant charged with drunkenness, who, wearing ‘a Jubilee medal and a continual smirk’, said ‘she had been tempted by the Jubilee celebrations to have a little drink.’⁷¹ Such stories further entrenched the culturally stereotypes held by many members of the white community that linked non-whites with drunkenness and degradation.⁷²

However, it is not true to suggest that British civilians made a negligible contribution to the official jubilee celebrations in Hong Kong. There, communal singing played a particularly important role, with a massed choir performing at the end of the Military Review at Happy Valley. Their patriotic repertoire included a medley of songs taken

⁶⁸ Bickford-Smith, ‘Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town’, pp. 105 – 8.

⁶⁹ *The Cape Times*, 19th June, 1897.

⁷⁰ Bickford-Smith, ‘Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town’, p. 108.

⁷¹ *The Cape Argus*, 2nd July, 1897.

⁷² Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony*, pp. 125 – 7.

from different corners of the empire, a rendition of the ‘Hallelujah Chorus’ from Handel’s *Messiah* and concluded, predictably, with the National Anthem – where it was reported in the press that ‘the deep feelings of loyalty and devotion that burned in the hearts of all the assembled subjects of Queen Victoria found utterance’.⁷³ A select group of civilians also attended the Diamond Jubilee Ball that was held in the Mount Austin Hotel, where, it was reported, disquiet over the building’s recent requisition by the army still lingered: ‘Many were the regrets expressed that so fine a ballroom is so soon to be converted to other uses – those of Tommy Atkins.’⁷⁴ Boats that were manned and owned by British civilians took part in the night-time procession in the harbour, and many of them would have attended the services of thanksgiving in the city’s churches and put up bunting outside their homes and businesses.

However, just as Crown Colony status denied them significant political power, the planning of the official festivities gave the British civilian community of Hong Kong little chance for self-expression. Again, pragmatism no doubt played a role here: the small British community in Hong Kong needed to be presented to the outside world as a unified mass of people. In Cape Town, the British citizens could be split up into small factions of cyclists, druids, Scots, *et cetera*, without any concerns over how this may be perceived, but in Hong Kong, the continuation of British rule there seemed to contain an acknowledgement that the British community needed to put on a united front at all times. This further explains why, as discussed in Chapter One, inter-racial relationships were such a taboo among the British community: while the racial theories that existed at the time meant that this was a controversial issue across the empire, in Hong Kong the stakes appeared to be higher. Although inter-racial sexual relations were common in Hong Kong, those Britons who dented the façade of community cohesion by making their inter-racial liaisons and marriages a public matter, risked being ostracised. Therefore, it is somewhat fitting that the massed choir present at the Happy Valley review should have formed the main civilian contribution to the event, for the coming together of men and women to literally ‘sing from the same hymn sheet’ perfectly

⁷³ *The Overland China Mail*, 1st July, 1897.

⁷⁴ *The North-China Herald*, 9th July, 1897.

symbolised the solidarity that was felt to be needed to survive in a remote, undermanned outpost such as Hong Kong. Although a performance of the 'Hallelujah Chorus' took place in Cape Town during the queen's Golden Jubilee, it was done in a small concert given by the choir of the Metropolitan Church, not by a massed choir as in Hong Kong ten years later.⁷⁵ Nigel Cameron has labelled the mass singing of patriotic songs a 'truly Victorian indulgence'.⁷⁶ In Hong Kong, community events and demonstrations of unity such as this were not an indulgence, but perhaps more of a social and political necessity.

In conclusion, the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the British communities in these cities reflected the political system of governance that was employed there. Hong Kong's official organising committee, which was composed of men who had been hand-picked by the governor, produced a celebration that was highly stage-managed, fastidious in its attention to detail and restrictive in its access. The military played a vitally important role in creating the pomp and ceremony that was required and the vast majority of the British civilian community would have been spectators, rather than participants, in the event. Although this event contained many of the attributes that were considered to define Britishness, they were expressed within an atmosphere that was highly sanitised. The wider British community was given little freedom of expression and were largely presented as being a faceless, yet unified, block.

In contrast, the Cape Town celebrations were a more democratic affair, reflecting the relative autonomy of governance that the city enjoyed. A greater number of its citizen body was able to have an input in the production of the celebrations and were therefore able to project their own personal interpretations of Britishness upon them. Despite the turbulent political climate in which the event took place, the celebrations here were more municipally-driven, appeared less anxious to impress outsiders and were able to celebrate a vision of Britishness that was more romanticised and more tailored to the perceptions of the individuals involved. Although the more conservative social attitudes of the day meant that the Diamond Jubilee event in Cape Town may have been less

⁷⁵ *The Cape Argus*, 18th June, 1887.

⁷⁶ N. Cameron, *Hong Kong: the Cultured Pearl* (Hong Kong, 1978), p. 139.

licentious than previous events of a similar nature, a sense of relaxation and fun still appears to have infused the celebrations and – as a result – they were able to project different themes of Britishness to those that were on display in Hong Kong.

II. Non-Britons at the Celebrations

A celebration of ‘whiteness’ and a shared Anglo-Saxon culture was also identifiable in the jubilee celebrations of Hong Kong and Cape Town’s British communities, and an example of this can be found in the warm welcome shown to the white foreign nationals who participated in the event. At the beginning of the decade, the English writer Edward Dicey, who had recently returned from a trip to South Africa, articulated that ‘In all countries where there is a white minority ruling over a subject coloured population, all white men, by a sort of free-masonry, stand on equal footing as members of the dominant caste.’⁷⁷ This sentiment was echoed in the immediate run-up to the Diamond Jubilee by the *Peking and Tientsin Times*, which argued that it was natural for European identities and characteristics to merge somewhat in colonial ports and for a ‘cosmopolitan freemasonry’ to develop.⁷⁸ Therefore, despite the unease felt in both cities over the challenge of European rivals to Britain’s status in the area, the British communities of both cities appeared to welcome the interest shown in the event by white non-Britons and the reinforcement that their contributions provided to the official programme of celebrations.

The celebration of whiteness is shown most strikingly by the national flags incorporated into the sets of bunting that were sold in Cape Town by Thorne, Stuttaford & Co., of Adderley Street. For 4 shillings and 6 pence, customers could buy a line of bunting a yard long which featured the English, American, French, German, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian and Italian national flags. In addition to the flags of the Home Nations, the Royal Standards and the British naval ensigns, other items in their bunting range included the flags of the South African Republic, Orange Free State, Belgium, Canada,

⁷⁷ E. Dicey, ‘Mr. Rhodes as Premier’, *The Nineteenth Century: a monthly review*, (London, August, 1890), p. 179.

⁷⁸ *The Peking and Tientsin Times*, 12th June, 1897.

Russia and Spain. Swedish, Portuguese and Austro-Hungarian standards were also available.⁷⁹ All these nations shared a European and Christian heritage. Muslim powers, such as the Ottoman Turks, did not appear to have their flags represented, nor did other non-white powers such as imperial China and Japan. Clearly, these flags may also have been partly chosen to have reflected the ethnic make-up of Cape Town's community, but the absence of non-white and non-Christian flags is surely no coincidence and none of the flags represented the heritage of the city's many non-white residents.

Therefore, the message that this assortment of flags makes is that the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Cape Town were viewed by the white community as being a predominantly European affair. Whilst no direct impediment was made to restrict the ability of non-whites to attend the proceedings, gazing up at the flags that were draped across many of the streets and buildings of the city may have led those who were not of European ancestry to conclude that this was not a celebration that they had a stake in. Although the Great White Queen was conveyed to non-whites as being a benevolent, matriarchal figure, the decorations employed during the Diamond Jubilee here do not seek to marginalise the difference in skin tone that existed between the queen and many of her subjects. Indeed, the queen's whiteness, and her British and European background, appears to have been consciously celebrated here.

In both Hong Kong and Cape Town, the contribution of the resident German community seems to have been particularly welcomed by the British. During the Cape Town celebrations for the 1887 Golden Jubilee, an estimated 500 members of the city's German contingent 'fully maintained their reputed respect for the British flag in this, their adopted country' and created a memorable spectacle by holding a torchlight procession which culminated at Government House.⁸⁰ Afterwards, their address of congratulations to the queen was responded to by the high commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson, who stated that 'I know from experience here and in Australasia that Germans make most excellent colonists. They are, as a rule, industrious, frugal, temperate and

⁷⁹ *The Cape Times*, 8th May, 1897.

⁸⁰ *The Cape Times Mail Edition*, 22nd June, 1887.

law-abiding.’⁸¹ However, the public furore generated by Kaiser Wilhelm II’s telegram of congratulations to President Kruger in January 1896, following the defeat of Jameson’s forces at Doornkop, meant that public opinion, in Britain at least, towards Germany appeared to be mixed. Some there continued to view Germany as Britain’s ‘oldest and firmest Continental ally’, and Queen Victoria’s strong family ties to Germany, which included – most notably – her late husband, surely helped to strengthen this connection.⁸² In contrast, there is also evidence that Kaiser Wilhelm’s ill-advised machinations did continue to cast a shadow over Anglo-German relations at the time of the Diamond Jubilee: the queen’s eldest grandchild felt snubbed at not being invited to join the celebrations in London and there was also a fear that Londoners might give an impolite reception to any German representatives who were present at the event.⁸³

However, it seems that if there was ill-feeling held towards the German residents of Cape Town, then diplomacy and the desire to present an image of white solidarity won the day: the issue of the telegram to Kruger did not seem to have impeded either the resident German community’s enthusiasm to take part in the city’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations or the reception given to them by the local ethnic British population: an estimated 400 members of the German Friendly Society took part in the procession and, drawing a statue of Queen Victoria alongside them on a wagon, they appeared to fully engage with the event.⁸⁴ In Hong Kong, the city’s German colonists appear to have been equally highly regarded by the authorities. German missionaries and merchants had been present along the Chinese coast for many years by this time, but their presence in Hong Kong was a relatively small one: only 366 Germans were counted during the 1897 census.⁸⁵ This small group took ‘the prudent and pragmatic step of playing down their national identity’, mixed well with the local Britons and supported the authorities on the

⁸¹ Sir Hercules Robinson quoted in *Ibid.*

⁸² J. Gregory, ‘The Proposed German Barrier across Africa’, *The Nineteenth Century: a monthly review*, vol. 39 (February, 1896), p. 248.

⁸³ G. King, *Twilight of Splendour: the court of Queen Victoria during her Diamond Jubilee year* (Hoboken, NJ, 2007), p. 20. J. Hammond, ‘England, Germany and Mr. Kruger’, *The Speaker: A Review of Politics, Letters, Science, and the Arts*, vol. 3 (8th December, 1900), p. 260.

⁸⁴ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

⁸⁵ 1897 census report, N. A., CO 131/28 ‘Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1898’, p. 270.

key issues of the day.⁸⁶ The closeness of the German community to the colony's elite was symbolised by the German Club's reservation of a stand for its members at the Diamond Jubilee review at Happy Valley.⁸⁷ As one of the few other organisations that was able to reserve a stand for its members was the Hong Kong Club, this shows that the Germans were in excellent company and were able to rub shoulders with some of the city's most exalted residents: a clear indication that they – unlike the more numerous Portuguese contingent – were a foreign section of the population that was highly regarded by the British elite. As with all sections of the community, it is unclear how much the enthusiasm shown for the jubilee by the German contingents in both cities was a product of genuine respect and affection for Queen Victoria, and how much of it was down to established protocol and the desire to take advantage of a great opportunity for point-scoring and self-promotion. However, the strong links that existed between Queen Victoria, Germany and the Kaiser may well have encouraged some deep-seated and genuine feelings of goodwill towards the event amongst many of their number.

Other nationalities were also conspicuous in their celebration of the Diamond Jubilee: the Italian Society of Cape Town held a banquet in honour of the queen on the eve of the event and, carrying their flag aloft, they also brought up the rear of the city's jubilee procession.⁸⁸ A small number of Italians were also present in Hong Kong – as symbolised by the presence of the flag of the Kingdom of Italy in Queen's Road, Central during the celebrations [Figure 14]. In Hong Kong harbour, the Spanish cruiser, *Reina Cristina*, joined the Royal Navy ships present in firing a 60 gun salute to the monarch and ethnic Dutch friendly societies also took part in Cape Town's parade.⁸⁹ In the cosmopolitan concessions of the Chinese treaty ports, English-speaking newspapers reacted with enthusiasm to the demonstrations of support for the jubilee provided by fellow white foreign nationals: in Beijing, it was reported that the good turn-out from the French, German and American communities 'gave very sincere pleasure to British

⁸⁶ R. Mak, 'The German community in 19th century Hong Kong', *Asia Europe Journal*, no. 2 (2004), p. 239.

⁸⁷ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 16th June, 1897.

⁸⁸ *The Cape Times*, 22nd and 23rd June, 1897.

⁸⁹ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 24th June, 1897. 'Foreign Men-of-war on the China and Japan Station', *The Overland China Mail*, 23rd June, 1897. *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

residents' there.⁹⁰ Further international support for the jubilee was provided by the French authorities in Shanghai through their illumination of their section of the Bund in honour of the event.⁹¹ As in Hong Kong and Cape Town, the resident British communities in these cities were clearly happy to receive the support of the white foreign nationals present, and this racial solidarity helped to reinforce the importance of 'whiteness' to the celebrations.

The celebration of whiteness was further entrenched by the levels of discrimination shown towards non-whites during the event – particularly in Hong Kong. In Cape Town, where the 'colour blind' franchise remained in place and the city's authorities publically endorsed the theory of racial tolerance, it is difficult to spot overt, institutionalised discrimination against non-whites during the celebrations. As discussed earlier, non-whites from the city and the rural areas attended the celebrations in great number and some non-white groups, such as 'MacAdoo's minstrels' and the 'Order of True Templars', a black temperance movement society, were present in the procession.⁹² However, there was one unsavoury incident that took place during the city's jubilee procession which indicated the presence of racial prejudice among some of its working class participants: the *Cape Times* reported that on each of the Salt River Workmen's wagons was placed 'a youth with a blackened face and a half-empty bottle in his hand feigning drunkenness'.⁹³ Although English-speaking newspapers did not shy away from publishing stories that strengthened the linkage between members of the Coloured community and alcohol abuse – such as the court appearance of Annie Muller and the *Cape Argus*' report of 'a tipsy coloured subject prancing at the heels of an elderly bannerman and brandishing two bottles which had probably contained dop brandy', seen as the procession moved through Adderley Street – the blacking-up by the representatives from Salt River appears to have been regarded as being ill-judged.⁹⁴ The *Cape Times* said that the conduct of the youths 'spoilt that particular part of the show.'⁹⁵

⁹⁰ *The Peking and Tientsin Times*, 26th June, 1897.

⁹¹ *The Hongkong Weekly Press and China Overland Trade Report*, 22nd June, 1897.

⁹² *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *The Cape Argus*, 26th June, 1897.

⁹⁵ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

Indeed, some newspaper reports of the event appeared to glory in the jubilee's appeal across all sections of the community: 'At the time the procession arrived at its breaking-up point it is estimated that there could not have been less than 20,000 people of all ages and colours gathered upon the Parade and in its near vicinity, and there was scarcely a single individual in this vast concourse who did not sport a Jubilee badge of some sort, from the most elaborate purple costume down to the modest rosette of red, white, and blue.'⁹⁶ Therefore, this report suggests that it was a matter of pride that Cape Town residents of all hues should have sported the British colours of red, white and blue. Although the Cape Town celebrations were a largely ethnocentric and quintessentially British affair, the British community seem to have been relatively accommodating towards non-Britons engaging in the event and appropriating Britishness for themselves. By wearing the red, white and blue rosettes, non-whites showed their support for the event and for British values and institutions. By reporting this, the British newspapers endorsed these subjects' desire to be associated with the event and with wider notions of Britishness. Of course, there was racial segregation at the event – and the rows of white faces on the balconies of Adderley Street in Figure 8 bear witness to this – but these incidents appear to have taken place in the private sphere, where tickets were sold to view the festivities from particular vantage points. No such segregation appears to have been present in the public areas of the city, and residents and visitors of all races and social standings appear to have mixed there freely.

This state of affairs was not replicated in Hong Kong, where institutionalised racial discrimination was a fact of everyday life and national identity was a more relevant and zealously guarded concept in this younger and less well-integrated city. Here, the involvement of non-whites in the Diamond Jubilee was a complex matter: although the small British community needed to try to galvanise their fellow residents into supporting the event, so that an impressive spectacle could be provided, a degree of distance and control needed to be maintained throughout. Therefore, while a select group of representatives from the non-white communities sat on the official jubilee organising

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

committee and the lavish contribution of the Chinese community was officially welcomed, discrimination towards non-whites remained visible during the proceedings. As a result, the vast majority of the city's non-white community would surely have been prevented from feeling that they were *bona fide* and appreciated celebrants.

The spatial arrangements that were constructed for the Diamond Jubilee serve as an important indicator of the social position of the celebrants.⁹⁷ While examples of spatial restrictions were less visible in the Cape Town celebrations, where access to the public areas remained unfettered, the organisers of Hong Kong's celebrations controlled access to the city's public spaces and to the official celebratory events to a much greater degree. Although the authorities might have argued that, as space was far more contested within a densely populated city such as Hong Kong, control of it had to be maintained during an event such as this, it is not immediately clear – by this logic – why race had to be the defining characteristic in determining who could go where: after all, a Chinese man did not necessarily take up any more space than a European. Therefore, any decision to cordon off areas of the city to those of a certain race, rather than just put a limit on the number of people that could gather there, could be clearly seen to be a discriminatory act and a blow to the sense of imperial unity that the Diamond Jubilee was supposed to promote. The most striking example of this was a directive, issued by F. H. May, the city's Captain Superintendent of Police – who was also a member of the jubilee organising committee – on 17th June. This directive stated that, during the two days of the official jubilee celebrations, a number of streets alongside the harbour would be 'closed to the general public, and will only be open to Europeans and Americans and to such Chinese as can produce passes from the Registrar General.'⁹⁸ Although May had a reputation for racial intolerance, the compliance of the Registrar General and 'Protector of the Chinese', Stewart Lockhart, in this scheme is a clear indicator that this policy had been agreed upon by the colonial governing elite.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Bickford-Smith, 'Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town', p. 109.

⁹⁸ 'Police Notification', reproduced in *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 17th June, 1897.

⁹⁹ Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong*, p. 359.

This notification clearly sets out the racial pecking order that existed in the city. Coming only a few days after the victory of the Chinese community in finally achieving the suspension of the hated 'Light and Pass' ordinance, this new directive was a fresh assault upon their status. Other non-whites were also insulted by this decree: a day after the notification was published, an incredulous correspondent named 'British Subject' wrote to the *Hongkong Daily Press* to enquire whether this restriction really did also apply to the Indian and Parsee community.¹⁰⁰ Alas, it transpired that it did – and the cordoning off of the area to non-whites was challenged more stridently in a letter published a day later, by a correspondent called 'Neither European nor American': 'It is no doubt very discouraging to find that dissatisfaction of this kind is caused on an occasion in which the whole community, no matter of what nationality, has so willingly co-operated. If *class legislation* is the motto of the Hongkong Government, I would suggest that in future Asiatics should keep themselves aloof from taking part in any celebration where cast and creed is taken into consideration.'¹⁰¹

A backlash against the directive also appeared to emanate from the British community, with a correspondent named as 'Englishman' arguing that 'In a National and unique celebration like the present, when all classes and races of Her Majesty's subjects and foreigners residing under the "Flag of Freedom" have vied with each other in subscribing to do honour to the occasion, it seems a pity that such invidious distinctions of race and creed should have been considered advisable.'¹⁰² This intervention is a reminder that there were liberal members of the white community in Hong Kong who would have been aghast at the levels of institutionalised racial discrimination that were present in the city, with racist legislation continuing to be on its statute books at the time of the jubilee. Just as some of their number contested the apparent anachronism of its Crown Colony status, this letter suggests that others felt that the city authorities' attitudes towards race were similarly locked in the past. To further drive home his point 'Englishman' finished his letter with a flourish: 'I have visited many parts of the British

¹⁰⁰ Letter of 'British Subject', printed in *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 18th June, 1897.

¹⁰¹ Letter of 'Neither European nor American', printed in *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 18th June, 1897. The italics are the letter writer's own.

¹⁰² Letter of 'Englishman', printed in *Ibid.*, 19th June, 1897.

Empire, but have never yet heard of the Queen's highway being reserved for the selfish pleasures of a privileged few. It is a shame.'¹⁰³

It is understandable why these restrictions placed upon the Parsee and Indian community should have caused such levels of outrage, for they had been a constantly loyal and industrious presence in Hong Kong. In particular, Parsee businessmen had co-operated with the British since the early days of the Canton concession and their capital, ships and contacts had played an important role in the subsequent opening up of China to British trade and in the development of Hong Kong itself.¹⁰⁴ This willingness to help the British, and to capitalise on the trading opportunities that their arrival presented, had earlier been seen in Britain's increasing involvement in India: Caroline Plüss highlights the fact that some Parsees even adopted English names in order to help the British identify their expertise, 'such as Captain, Readymoney, or Engineer.'¹⁰⁵ Although a small community, many of the Parsees in Hong Kong were rich and influential and, at the time of the Diamond Jubilee, they played a highly visible and effective role in the life of the city.¹⁰⁶ This was most graphically shown by the putting on of special launches for the event by Parsee merchant Dorabjee Naorojee Mithaiwala, founder of the Kowloon Ferry Company.¹⁰⁷ Mr. Dorabjee's ferries provided a vital service to the city and many white residents would have used them to travel between the island and the Kowloon peninsula. However, it is apparent from the Captain Superintendent of Police's directive that the Parsee community was never fully accepted by the British authorities.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, despite their enthusiasm for the event and support for British rule, they too were subjected to racial discrimination during the Diamond Jubilee.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ R. Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832 – 1914* (London, 2011), p. 33, p. 105.

¹⁰⁵ C. Plüss, 'Migrants from India', in C. Chu (ed.), *Foreign Communities in Hong Kong, 1840s – 1950s* (Basingstoke, 2005), p. 157.

¹⁰⁶ H. Lethbridge, 'Caste, Class, and Race', in *Hong Kong: Stability and Change: a collection of essays* (Hong Kong, 1978), p. 177.

¹⁰⁷ *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 18th June, 1897. A year after the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the company's name was changed to the Star Ferry Company. Star Ferries still transfer people across the harbour and are one of the most famous sights of Hong Kong today.

¹⁰⁸ Lethbridge, 'Caste, Class, and Race', p. 178.

Hong Kong's Indian community would have contained many members of the police or the armed forces: men with direct links to the Crown. Although it has been argued that military service in the British armed forces fostered a sense of Britishness among non-whites, statements such as this Police Notification would surely have acted as an obstacle towards this.¹⁰⁹ Despite the subaltern position of the sepoys in the Hong Kong garrison and the Sikhs in the city's police force, they may too have clung to an identity of Britishness in order to further isolate themselves from the local Chinese population, which may have been aided by their relationship to the monarch through the institutions in which they served. They would have pledged allegiances to the Crown, had British officers in charge of them and would have mustered under the British flag. Links to the British might also have been strong among the Indian civilian community, whose numbers included Muslim traders who possessed long-standing business relationships with this part of southern China and shopkeepers whose stores supplied the British garrison.¹¹⁰ They too might have partly defined their identity in Hong Kong through an appropriation of Britishness, and may well have felt disappointed that discrimination towards non-whites should have now reared its head. The benevolent and inclusive image of the Great White Queen, which had been projected to them by the British, would surely have taken a battering as a result of this directive.

An attempt to discriminate against certain sections of the population was also apparent in the ticketing policy of the review and the gymkhana at Happy Valley. The spatial segregation here was a continuation of a theme first introduced during the corresponding event in 1887, where an area was reserved for 'respectable Europeans'. The *Hongkong Daily Press* subsequently reported that this new enclosure 'was greatly appreciated by those Europeans, who, not being officials, have had on previous occasions to crowd with the lower class Chinese, who always attend these reviews in very large numbers.'¹¹¹ For the Diamond Jubilee, tickets for the general public enclosures had to be obtained from the organisers in advance – a process which alone would have acted as an obstacle for

¹⁰⁹ Killingray, "A Good West Indian, a Good African, and, in Short, a Good Britisher", p. 368.

¹¹⁰ Plüss, 'Migrants from India', p. 156.

¹¹¹ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 11th November, 1887.

many people gaining admission.¹¹² Subscribers to the jubilee fund received a priority in obtaining these tickets, which further narrowed the criteria for watching the festivities. Chinese subscribers voiced their fears that they might not be able to attend these events, due to the late distribution of tickets and a rumour that only people who had subscribed \$25 and over would be eligible to receive them.¹¹³ Finally, it was announced that 400 spaces were reserved for them in the public stands, out of a capacity of 2,500, and that another thousand of them could watch the proceedings from a nearby mat-shed.¹¹⁴ However, it appears that, by then, the wider Chinese community had already got the message that their presence was not highly desired, for their turn-out at the Diamond Jubilee Review was much smaller than anticipated.¹¹⁵

However, those that did attend the Diamond Jubilee Gymkhana would have been able to cheer on Chinese representation in the event's two bicycle races. All the pony-riding events appear to have been restricted to Europeans only, with racial segregation being the norm for sporting events in this period across the empire and the Chinese, despite being highly enthusiastic bettors and attendees of the pony-racing events held at Happy Valley, having little tradition of competitive horse-riding themselves at this point.¹¹⁶ The opening up of the bicycle races to non-whites therefore bucked the trend of segregation, and indicates that cycling was both universally accessible in a way that pony racing was not, and that it was not regarded as a serious sport for a European gentleman. The first bicycle race was won by Mr. Tse Wing Yun, and the *Hongkong Weekly Press* report states that 'The Chinaman won by about two yards and his victory was loudly applauded.'¹¹⁷ The listing of the top three finishers reveals the cosmopolitan nature of this race, with Mr. Alves and Mr. Silva Netto – surely men of Portuguese extraction – completing the podium. However, British participation in the races must also have been present, for the second race was won by a man named Mr. Kirdy. Following his victory,

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 16th June, 1897.

¹¹³ Letter of 'A Chinese Subscriber', printed in *The Hongkong Telegraph*, 19th June, 1897.

¹¹⁴ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 22nd June, 1897.

¹¹⁵ *The Overland China Mail*, 1st July, 1897.

¹¹⁶ Segregation in sport become a more widespread phenomenon in Cape Town from the middle of the 1890s onwards, and there is little evidence to suggest that this situation was not replicated across the British Empire. Bickford-Smith, 'Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town', p. 110.

¹¹⁷ *The Hongkong Weekly Press and China Overland Trade Report*, 15th July, 1897.

the cup was presented to him by a Chinese resident, Chun Sew.¹¹⁸ However, these bicycle races were an anomaly during the gymkhana's programme: the vast majority of its prizes were competed for by exclusively white – and what appears to have been exclusively British – competitors, further underlining the importance of both competitive sport and whiteness to the notion of Britishness.

A select few non-white citizens did appear to have received a degree of acceptance during the jubilee celebrations in Hong Kong, and these men were principally the non-white members of the jubilee organising committee. Whilst the communities that they came from faced discrimination during the enactment of the celebrations, these men were acclaimed as playing an important role in bringing the festivities to life and they all later received medals in commemoration of their involvement in the event.¹¹⁹ However, it is difficult to see how the presence of the non-white members on the jubilee organising committee amounted to little more than tokenism. Certainly, the decision to appoint representatives from the non-white communities to the committee may have been intended to create a spirit of inclusivity around the event, which may also have provided a boost to the city-wide fundraising efforts. Yet, the British contingent within the 27-man committee remained firmly in the numerical ascendancy and would have held the upper hand in any discussions that were put to a vote. The seven non-white representatives – with the possible exception of Ho A Mei - were also highly Anglicised, with strong business or social connections to the British contingent and to the committee's Chairman, Catchik Paul Chater, in particular. Many of them would go on to receive knighthoods in later years and they were important figures in the implementation of colonial rule in the city. Therefore, although the support of the whole population of Hong Kong was welcomed as an indicator of the queen's popularity and as a means of creating a more spectacular event, the presence of the non-white men on the organising committee seems to have been more an act of diplomacy rather than an attempt to make the Diamond Jubilee more inclusive.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16th December, 1897.

Both the barrister Ho Kai and the comprador Wei Yuk, the unofficial Chinese members of the Legislative Council, had places on the committee – as did the fabulously-wealthy Eurasian comprador Robert Ho Tung. Two of the other four men were of Chinese origin; Li Sing and Ho A Mei. As well as being influential in the Chinese community, and one of the founder members of the Tung Wah Hospital, Li Sing was a well-known and successful merchant who, on his death in 1900, left property valued at more than six million dollars. By the time of the jubilee, he held large shareholdings in European-run companies such as the Hong Kong, Canton and Macao Steam Boat Company and the Hong Kong Land Investment Agency, which had been partly founded by Chater in 1889. For him to have held such large amounts of stock in such companies shows his level of involvement with, and acceptance by, the foreign business elite. Li Sing was also close to both Ho Kai and Wei Yuk, and he sat alongside them on the committee of the recently-created Chinese General Chamber of Commerce.¹²⁰

However, Li Sing's biographical details, which present a picture of outward respectability and compliance with British colonial rule in the city, are in contrast to those of his fellow Chinese committee member, Ho A Mei, who was something of a political firebrand. Pauline Rule argues that, having spent a formative decade of his life on the Australian goldfields, Ho A Mei returned to Hong Kong in 1868 and became an outspoken critic of the colonial government's handling of the Chinese community.¹²¹ However, despite being a constant irritant to colonial authorities, Ho A Mei rose to a position of importance within the Chinese community and, in 1896, was elected to be the first Chairman of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce. Rule argues that it was recognition of his importance within the Chinese community that led to him being asked to join the jubilee organising committee.¹²² This invitation may have represented something of a gamble: Ho A Mei had already by this time shown a capacity for confrontational and controversial action, as seen by his provocative flaunting of his

¹²⁰ Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, p. 52, pp. 84 – 5. B. Mellor, *Lugard in Hong Kong: Empires, Education and a Governor at Work, 1907 – 1912* (Hong Kong, 1992), pp. 199 - 200.

¹²¹ P. Rule, 'The Transformative Effect of Australian Experience on the Life of Ho A Mei, 1838 – 1901, Hong Kong Community Leader and Entrepreneur' in S. Couchman and K. Bagnall (eds), *Chinese Australians: Politics, Engagement and Resistance* (Leiden, 2015), p. 22.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

loyalty to China at the opening of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce's new building in 1896 – behaviour which caused both Ho Kai and Wei Yuk to boycott the event.¹²³

However, the organising committee may have felt that they could handle him and that it was better to have him inside the tent and involved with organising the celebrations rather than risk him creating a spectacle outside it. In addition, they may also have felt that, as Chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, his endorsement of the jubilee might provide a valuable boost to the fundraising efforts within the Chinese community.

The final two non-white members of the committee were Parsee businessmen. Both of these had strong connections to the opium trade and one of them, H. N. Mody, was a long-standing business partner of the committee's Chairman, and fellow freemason, Chater.¹²⁴ Indeed, the part played by Chater in the construction of the official celebrations in Hong Kong was clearly extremely influential. Born to an Armenian family in Calcutta, Chater was the main driver behind the recently-completed Praya Reclamation, which had extended the waterfront towards Kowloon. His importance to the city at the time was recognised during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations with him being awarded a C.M.G. (Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George) in the accompanying honours list – a decision that was derided by the *North-China Herald* in Shanghai, which stated 'What Mr. Chater has done to deserve such an honour at the Queen's hands, beyond being a successful speculator, we do not know....'¹²⁵ Warranted or not, the fact that only he and Governor Robinson were the only officials from Hong Kong to be recognised in the Diamond Jubilee Honours List shows the extent of his perceived value to the city. With his close links to both Li Sing and Hormusjee Mody, his influence on the composition of the organising committee becomes ever clearer.

Mody was also linked to the opium trade, through his position as an opium auctioneer, as was the second Parsee man on the committee; H. M. Mehta. An opium merchant, Mehta's signature is visible on an 1887 petition to the Hong Kong Government which

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 24. J. Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842 – 1913* (New York, NY, 1993), p. 99.

¹²⁴ Mellor, *Lugard in Hong Kong*, p. 194, p. 201.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 194. *The North-China Herald*, 25th June, 1897.

argued against tighter restrictions being placed on the trade in the drug.¹²⁶ The fact that Chater attended this meeting of the Legislative Council and voted, unsuccessfully, in favour of the petition suggests that, as well as being sympathetic to his cause, he may have personally known Mehta. Just as the trading giant Jardine Matheson had received invaluable assistance from a Bombay-based Parsee businessman, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, during the earliest days of its trading life, links between British entrepreneurs and the Parsee community appear to have remained strong at the time of the Diamond Jubilee.¹²⁷ The presence of the two Parsee men on the jubilee organising committee shows this, and explains some of the furore which greeted the decision to ban members of the Parsee community from the waterfront area during the celebrations. The Parsees played a role in Hong Kong life that was disproportionately large in size to their numerical presence, and the enormous contribution made by Hormusjee Mody to the creation of Hong Kong University in later years is just one example of the enormous impact this community had on the city.¹²⁸

Besides these seven non-white members of the organising committee, the only other non-white subject to have received recognition for his work towards the Hong Kong celebrations was Fung Wa Chuen. A comprador and friend of Ho Kai, he had provided the official link to the Chinese community's efforts and had been the man responsible for distributing the tickets for the events at Happy Valley to the Chinese jubilee subscribers.¹²⁹ In a public demonstration of their incorporation into the event, Fung Wa Chuen, Ho Tung, the Legislative Council members Ho Kai and Wei Yuk, and the Parsee businessmen Mody and Mehta, all formed part of the procession of dignitaries that accompanied members of the clergy down the nave of St. John's Cathedral at the beginning of the Diamond Jubilee Thanksgiving Service. However, this was the extent of the invitation given to non-whites to integrate fully into the festivities. For the vast majority of Hong Kong's community, greater levels of assimilation were impossible and

¹²⁶ 'Legislative Council No. 21', Friday 25th March, 1887. Located in the digital archives of the Hong Kong Legislative Council, <http://www.legco.gov.hk>. [Accessed 24th August, 2016].

¹²⁷ Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, p. 30.

¹²⁸ Mellor, *Lugard in Hong Kong*, p. 56.

¹²⁹ G. Choa, *The Life and Times of Sir Kai Ho Kai* (Hong Kong, 2nd edition, 2000), p. 127. *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 21st June, 1897.

the lines of demarcation, which separated the British community and its allies from the bulk of the colonised population, were assiduously maintained at all times.

For many upwardly-mobile non-whites across the empire, associating themselves with Britishness appeared to be an extremely attractive proposition, for this ‘civic’ identity seemed to offer them a pathway to modernity, the protection of a global superpower and its monarch from settler discrimination, and a greater range of career choices.¹³⁰ Whilst this may have turned out to have been an overly optimistic assessment, it is clear that this notion of Britishness retained significant appeal throughout the period. In Cape Town, the appropriation of Britishness by non-whites during the Diamond Jubilee appears to have been largely tolerated – and even welcomed – by the newspapers that served as the mouthpiece for the ethnic British contingent in the city. However, this situation was not replicated in Hong Kong, where a person’s identity was a well-defined and highly defended currency. In this city, some of the empire’s greatest and most loyal supporters – such as the Parsees – found themselves being discriminated against due to the strong emphasis placed on the link between Britishness and whiteness here. The two cities offer contrasting pictures of how Britishness interacted with race during the event.

¹³⁰ Bickford-Smith, *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis*, pp. 18 – 9.

Figure 12: The Diamond Jubilee procession in Adderley Street, Cape Town



Photo: S. B. Barnard, Cape Town.

THE JUBILEE PROCESSION IN CAPE TOWN.

Everyone who knows Cape Town knows Adderley Street, the broad thoroughfare at the end of which the massive outline of Table Mountain fills up the view. Here we see Adderley Street transformed. Never before was so great and gay a crowd witnessed in the streets of Cape Town. Happily, "Queen's weather" lasted through the early part of the day, although rain marred the festivities and illuminations in the evening. That there are difficulties and troubles still in store for South Africa is probable enough; at the same time there can be no doubt that the display of loyalty to the Queen which marked the 22nd of June, 1897, was deep and spontaneous, and that the flag which flutters from every house will be upheld in the time of trouble no less effectually in Cape Town than in other parts of the Queen's Empire.

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The Queen's Empire: A Pictorial and Descriptive Record Illustrated from Photographs (London, 1897).

Image taken from the website of *York Fine Prints*, <http://stores.ebay.co.uk/YORK-fine-prints>, [Accessed 27th April, 1897].

Figure 13: The Grand Stand at the Military Review, Happy Valley



Figure 14: European decorations in Queen's Road, Central



R. C. Hurley, *Sixty Diamond Jubilee Photographs of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1897).

For the sake of having higher quality images in this thesis, Figure 14 has been taken from the website of Gwulo: Old Hong Kong, <http://gwulo.com> [Accessed 27th April, 2016].

Figure 15: The Royal Engineers' Wellington Barracks, Hong Kong



Figure 16: The Commemorative Arch on Adderley Street, Cape Town



Figure 15 is taken from Hurley, *Sixty Diamond Jubilee Photographs of Hong Kong*.

Figure 16 is taken from the Dr Juritz collection: Western Cape Archives, Dr J333.

Figure 17: Cyclists crossing Greenmarket Square, Cape Town



Figure 18: Laying the foundation stone of the new hospital in Hong Kong

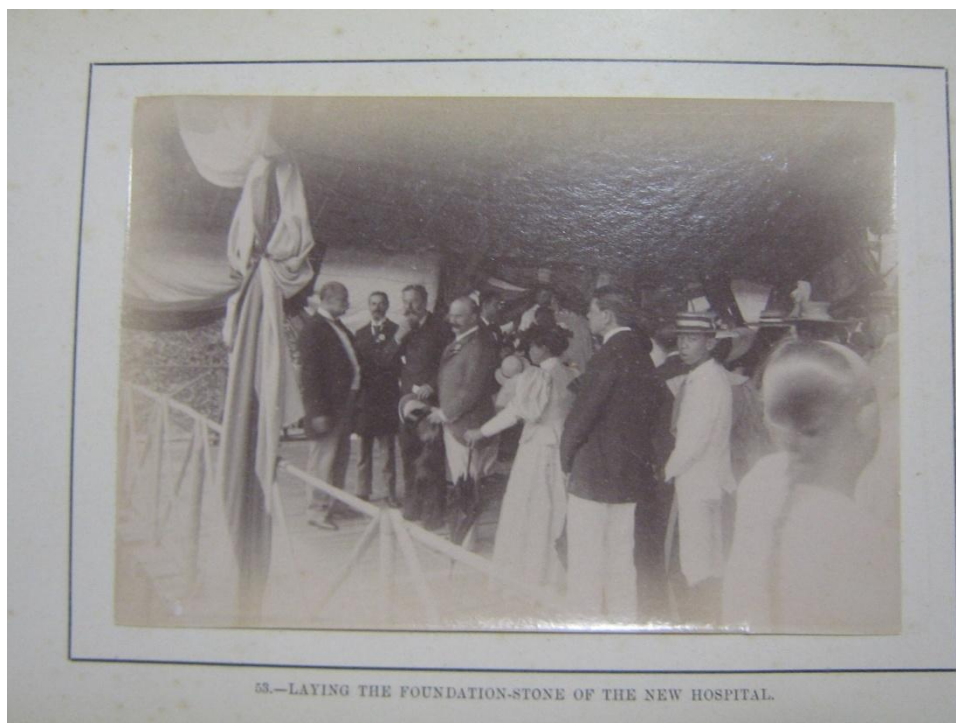


Figure 17 is taken from the Dr Juritz collection: Western Cape Archives, Dr J582 (3).

Figure 18 is taken from Hurley, *Sixty Diamond Jubilee Photographs of Hong Kong*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Celebrating the City

Throughout the history of British royal jubilees, which began with the festivities created to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of George III's reign in October 1809, communities used these occasions to demonstrate local civic pride.¹ The 1897 Diamond Jubilee events in Hong Kong and Cape Town were no different: just as individuals or groups within the cities had sought to use them for self-promotion, the celebrations were also seized upon by some inhabitants as an opportunity to showcase their city's unique personality, culture and place in the global pecking order. This chapter seeks to examine more specifically the relationship between the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and the cities themselves. It will argue that, although the celebrations were ostensibly a demonstration of loyalty to a monarch who resided far across the seas, they were also notable events in the histories of these settlements. They became important building blocks in their identities and in the strategies to attract tourism and fame that were now being developed. This chapter will also argue that, due to the projects that commemorated the event, the effect of the Diamond Jubilee was not solely confined to the authorised days of the celebrations, but continued to reverberate in these places for many years to come.

A specific celebration of their city was particularly evident in the narrative broadcasted by Hong Kong's English-speaking press during the festivities. Founded only a few years after her coronation, Hong Kong considered itself to be intrinsically linked to the fortunes of the monarch and perceived itself as 'a child of Queen Victoria's reign'.² By the time of the Diamond Jubilee, Victoria's name was emblazoned across this young and swiftly growing metropolis: the harbour; the Peak; the prison; the main park; various streets and the City of Victoria itself all provided evidence of this strong symbolic

¹ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707 – 1837* (New Haven, CT, 5th ed., 2014), p. 227.

² *The Overland China Mail*, 15th November, 1887.

connection. Whereas the local Chinese community placed their faith in their City God, Shing Wong, for security and prosperity, Queen Victoria appeared to hold a similar position of totemic importance in the minds of Hong Kong's colonial elite. Whilst she was not deified in the same manner, it is certainly appropriate to think of Queen Victoria as Hong Kong's patron saint within the expatriate British community – her reassuringly constant presence on the throne offering succour to the ruling classes whilst the city was establishing itself. Taking place six years after Hong Kong residents had marked the fiftieth anniversary of the first planting of the British flag there with a jubilee event of their own, the Diamond Jubilee was used by the local English-speaking newspapers as an opportunity to re-impress upon their readerships the achievements of this young urban centre which, having seemingly ridden out the challenges recently posed by both Bubonic Plague and a sharp depreciation in the value of silver, now possessed the architectural riches and economic power that marked it out as a port and business hub of global significance. During the celebrations, Hong Kong was celebrated by this section of the press as being a specifically 'British city' – one that was viewed by them as owing its astonishing growth and success primarily to the imagination and resourcefulness of the resident Anglo-Saxon contingent. Although the Diamond Jubilee was ostensibly framed by Hong Kong's authorities as being a celebration of Queen Victoria, this event was also firmly grasped by them as an opportunity to celebrate further the British city that they believed they had successfully created during her time on the throne.

By contrast, the narrative that was broadcasted by Cape Town's English-speaking press during the festive period did not include such a strong and specific celebration of place. As a significantly older city, founded by a Dutch trading company, Cape Town appeared to lack the intimate connection to Queen Victoria that the colonial elite of Hong Kong had manufactured and so assiduously sought to maintain. Although sections of Cape Town's population certainly celebrated the Diamond Jubilee with enthusiasm and vigour, as discussed in previous chapters, it would appear from the sources that this event was not considered by them to be such a momentous event in the city's history as it was considered to be in Hong Kong. Monarchs and ruling regimes, British and Dutch, had come and gone in the two-and-a-half centuries that had elapsed since Jan van

Riebeeck had first landed at Table Bay and, although Queen Victoria was a colossally important and revered figure of the late nineteenth century, she does not seem to have possessed the particularly strong symbolic linkages to Cape Town that were in evidence in Hong Kong. Instead the local English press appeared to focus more upon expressing admiration for the queen's unique royal milestone and upon reporting on the general cultural celebration of Britishness that took place. But unlike the narrative employed in Hong Kong, the press coverage in Cape Town did not include a specific celebration of the city as a British metropolis. This is not to say that civic pride was not in evidence here, for the city was garlanded by its residents and shown to its finest advantage, but indications of a specific celebration of place were also far less conspicuous during the reports of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations than they were in those of their Hong Kong counterparts. In Hong Kong, there is a sense that the Diamond Jubilee represented a real 'coming of age' for the city and the event provided the British authorities with an opportunity to take stock and to celebrate their creation as another wonder of the Victorian Age. In Cape Town, whilst the celebrations were on a grand and lavish scale, this event did not appear to be considered as such a pivotally important landmark in the city's history and as such a great opportunity for reflection and self-congratulation.

However, regardless of whether they celebrated themselves as a specifically British city, by the time of the event both places had been part of the British Empire for a significant number of years. If Hong Kong had been created to resemble a British settlement from the outset, Cape Town had also by this time acquired a significant number of the architectural and urban planning accoutrements that marked it out as being part of Queen Victoria's realm. Although the extent to which these two cities celebrated themselves as British cities differed, the festivities in both places took place against an urban landscape that was now highly westernised in form. During the year of the Diamond Jubilee, the recent development of Cape Town along the lines of the Anglo-Saxon concept of modernity had caused both comment and celebration. While it had not started life as a British city, much of its urban fabric and infrastructure had become significantly anglicised over the previous decades leading up to the celebrations.

The Diamond Jubilee also gave the two cities the opportunity to advertise themselves across the world through the contribution of their military detachments to the celebrations in London. Although a large proportion of the general public in Britain may have been traditionally ignorant of, or disinterested in, the imperial possessions overseas, it is clear that the presence of the colonial troops in London during the summer of 1897 piqued local curiosity and provided them with an exotic and much admired spectacle. Therefore, the Diamond Jubilee celebrations also gave these cities a great opportunity to further levels of understanding and appreciation of them in Britain, and the evidence suggests that the detachments were warmly welcomed and that their presence there resulted in a significant public relations coup for both places.

Both cities also continued the tradition of using royal jubilees, and the funds raised by the corresponding public subscriptions, to create public works.³ The importance of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in both these cities is confirmed not solely by the impressive scale of the celebrations witnessed, but also by the ambitious infrastructure projects that were planned to mark the event. Both Hong Kong and Cape Town had used the money raised during the 1887 Golden Jubilee to purchase and erect impressive statues of the queen. The larger amount of money collected during the Diamond Jubilee gave the organising committees scope for bigger, more practical and more wide-reaching projects to be considered – some of which had been conceived of at an earlier time but had been hitherto moth-balled due to lack of funds. With the requirement of possessing an impressive statue to the monarch already fulfilled, the cities' Diamond Jubilee organising committees – perhaps taking their cue from the reported wishes of the queen herself – centred their discussions on creating a legacy for the event around the provision of public health. Although both the statues of Queen Victoria that were commissioned in 1887 remain intact and on public display to this day, the hospitals that the Diamond Jubilee funds created would have had a more direct effect on the lives of many of each city's inhabitants and would have represented an impressive memorial. In Hong Kong, a road was also built to mark the jubilee, and the incorporation of this into the city's transport infrastructure of the present allows echoes of the 1897 event to

³ Colley, *Britons*, p. 228.

reverberate here today. However, all these memorial schemes took place in the face of fierce scrutiny and criticism, as the jubilee organising committees were held to account by the local residents who had, between them, donated a large proportion of the amount of the money that was available. These incidents show how contentious the decision making process that lay behind the memorialisation of such events were, as committees tried to determine how best to spend funds that had been donated to them by businesses and members of the general public.

I. Representing the City

In Hong Kong, the relationship of the city to the reign of Queen Victoria was an important component of the British narrative expressed during the celebrations. Although the fiftieth anniversary of the city had been celebrated relatively recently, in January 1891, the same plaudits and self-congratulatory airs used during that event were dusted off and redeployed during the Diamond Jubilee. For example, whilst the *Hongkong Daily Press* was fulsome in its praise of the queen and her great achievement – arguing that ‘Victoria’s queenly virtues have given a new lease of life to the monarchical principle among the British peoples’ – it also incorporated a eulogy to the city into the same editorial, placing the successful development of Hong Kong during the Victorian period firmly within the scope of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations:

When Her Majesty ascended the Throne the island was little more than a barren rock, its scanty population consisting only of a few fishermen and farmers living in tiny hamlets. To-day the population numbers nearly a quarter of a million, the port ranks amongst the first of the world, all the elegancies and convenience of European civilisation are here to be found, and the thriving colony affords to the Great Chinese Empire on the fringe of which it stands an object lesson in the advantages of a just Government and commercial freedom.⁴

The transformative effect that the British adjudged themselves to have had on their easternmost colony thus formed an integral theme of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

⁴ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 22nd June, 1897.

These hubristic sentiments were certainly not confined to Hong Kong; similar messages were expressed in many of the more recently-established cities of the empire during this period. For example, in 1888, J. Freeman painted a picture of Melbourne that also paid tribute to the wonders of a metropolis that had been created from equally humble and unprepossessing origins: 'From a few wattle-and-daub huts and weather-board shanties has risen the magnificent city to which we are all so proud to belong.'⁵ This 'foundation myth' was of integral importance to a city's identity, as, Robert Bickers has also confirmed, was also the case for the International Settlement of Shanghai.⁶ Hong Kong's own foundation myth was also described in florid terms by the writers of an 1893 guide book to the city: 'For ages prior to the year 1841, it [Hong Kong] existed only as a plutonic island of uninviting sterility, apparently capable of supporting only the lowest forms of organisms. To-day, it stands forth before the world with its City of Victoria and a permanent population of over two hundred thousand souls – a noble monument to British pluck and enterprise.'⁷ That the foundation myth should have formed a prominent component of the Diamond Jubilee coverage illustrates the strength of the link between the queen and the city in British minds. Located on the very edge of the empire, it is understandable that this community would have made every effort to symbolically tie their fortunes and their sense of identity to such a grand, durable and seemingly unbreakable institution as the British monarchy.

Further evidence of this association comes from R. C. Hurley's introduction to his commemorative book of photographs of the Hong Kong jubilee celebrations. In it, he draws attention not only to the city's development, but also to the characteristics that he believed enabled the British to create such an outwardly successful settlement:

In publishing, on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, this collection of pictures of Hongkong, - the first of which displays the Island in all its primitive barrenness and desolation, and the latest of which shows it again in its present extent and magnificence – the Author would venture to draw

⁵ J. Freeman quoted in A. Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963), p. 286.

⁶ R. Bickers, *Empire made me: an Englishman adrift in Shanghai* (London, 2004), p. 51.

⁷ 'Introduction' to Kelly & Walsh, Ltd, *A Hand-book to Hongkong: A Popular Guide to the various Places of Interest in the Colony, for the use of Tourists* (Hong Kong, 1893), p. i.

attention to the fact, that the extraordinary transition here illustrated lies wholly within the period of the sixty years covered by Her Majesty's Glorious Reign – and also to the fact, that nowhere throughout the wide extent of her dominions is there to be found a more striking illustration of the vast changes that have signalized that reign, and of the marked qualities which have enabled her subjects to extend that dominion to the furthestmost corners of the earth, their spirit of enterprise, their power of dealing with and successfully governing and controlling alien races, their determination and ready adaptability, their general honesty and integrity and their steady perseverance and pluck.⁸

Hurley's book began with photographs of the striking yet wild Hong Kong countryside – visions of a *terra nullius*, devoid of any hint of prior human interaction. Later on in it, the influence of the British becomes increasingly clear as photographs of the countryside are followed by shots of the seemingly well-ordered and extensive settlement that Hurley portrays Hong Kong to be. Figure 19 presents a good example of this, showing the City of Victoria ranging across the waterfront and the lower slopes of the Peak.⁹ With not a single inhabitant in sight, the scene projected is one of tranquillity: there is certainly no indication from this photograph of the cramped, chaotic and over-crowded Chinese residential areas that exist within the city, nor of the everyday hustle and bustle on its streets that result from a quarter of a million people sharing such a confined and congested space. Hong Kong is thus presented to the viewer as a model of order and respectability in this photograph – as though a genteel British seaside resort of the time had miraculously been transplanted to the other side of the world. The scene appears incompatible with the levels of chaos and insurrection witnessed during the 1894 plague outbreak.

Other fruits of British civilisation are presented to the viewer in Hurley's Diamond Jubilee compilation, such as the importation of Christianity into the region. In Figure 20, St. John's Cathedral stands proudly, bearing all the hallmarks of a fine Victorian Gothic church, with only the tropical vegetation and the sails of the junks in the harbour betraying its exotic location. Britain's mastery of nature and the strength of the city's

⁸ Introduction to R. C. Hurley, *Sixty Diamond Jubilee Photographs of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1897).

⁹ The relevant figures for this chapter can be found in the concluding pages of it.

commercial prowess is recorded in the photograph of the Praya Reclamation, showing where the sea had been turned to land and where additional moorings had been created for the many vessels that made use of its fine harbour [Figure 21]. This photograph also shows the newly completed building of the Hong Kong Club. Designed, like many of the buildings that lined the waterfront at that time, in a luxurious and elegant Italianate style, this building opened just a month after the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and replaced the original clubhouse on Queen's Road. This upgrading of facilities provided an indication of the Hong Kong Club's growing size, prosperity and influence within the city.¹⁰ The themes of commercial and military strength are also imparted to the viewer through the photograph displayed in Figure 22, with small craft zipping around the warships and opium hulks lying at anchor in the harbour.

However, it is interesting to note only a tiny number of the city's inhabitants are visible in the images discussed here. Although some of Hurley's photographs in this compilation do show some of the city's Chinese inhabitants, such as the shot of Queen's Road, Central, discussed previously in this thesis [Figure 14], he introduces the reader to a highly sanitised view of the city. As a result, Hong Kong is presented as a concrete monument to British rule – an architectural statement of power rather than a place of residence for a quarter of a million people. The photographs are clearly intended impress the viewer, rather than to offer an accurate indication of everyday life in the city. The integral role that the Chinese played in Hong Kong's development also received little recognition in the newspaper coverage of the Diamond Jubilee, although the 'commercial aptitude of the Chinese' was lauded during the city's Golden Jubilee in 1891.¹¹ Queen Victoria's great milestone afforded the colonial and metropolitan elite a great opportunity to again express their pride in Hong Kong and to categorise the city as being a truly British and Victorian success story.

The urban landscape that the British created also became a major player during the celebrations due to the Hong Kong Government's adherence to the fashionable Victorian

¹⁰ J. Morris, *Building Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1995), p. 77.

¹¹ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 21st January, 1891.

practice of illuminating the city's grandest public buildings. These great and imposing edifices were therefore – like the artefacts and curios that were presented by the Chinese community as evidence of their cultural heritage during the festive period – also offered as exhibits for onlookers to admire. Maurizio Peleggi has called the grandest and most important public buildings, such as the General Post Office, the governor's residence and the clock tower, 'the architectural embodiments of colonial authority' – and he suggests that their presence in the cities of the empire combined a great statement of power with their purely practical function.¹² It is clear that the illumination of public buildings in Hong Kong formed a significant part of the celebrations: in his annual report for 1897, the Director of Public Works, R. D. Ormsby, informed the Legislative Council that 'Numerous public buildings and structures, including the Clock Tower, Queen's Statue, Government House, Central Market, Queen's College and Tsimshatsui Police Station were illuminated on the night of the 22nd June. About 9,000 lanterns and 4,000 glass lamps, besides 1,325 incandescent electric lights, were utilised for the purpose.'¹³

Of these, the clock tower was the most advantageously-situated for the jubilee events, located on the strategically-important junction of Pedder Street and Queen's Road [see Figure 23]. The illumination of this building during the jubilee festivities also carried additional symbolic significance – for not only was the tower a fine example of Victorian architecture, one of the great stone landmarks that the British had built in the city, but clocks have also been considered by some prominent historians and social anthropologists, such as Benedict Anderson, Georg Simmel and Lewis Mumford, to have represented the ultimate symbol of modernity.¹⁴ Therefore, the illumination of the Pedder Street clock tower can be seen to have represented the triumph of modernity, urbanisation, rationality and science in the area: great themes whose power the British felt sure that they had harnessed and had now brought successfully to the Chinese coast.

¹² M. Peleggi, 'The Social and Material Life of Colonial Hotels: Comfort Zones as Contact Zones in British Colombo and Singapore, ca. 1870 – 1930', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 46, no. 1 (2012), p. 129.

¹³ N. A., CO 131/28, 'Sessional Papers of the Legislative Council, 1898', p. 232.

¹⁴ T. Allen, *A Republic in Time: Temporality and Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2008), pp. 1 – 9.

Many of the city's Britons also appeared to have rejoiced in the comparison made in the Jubilee Day editorial of the *Hongkong Daily Press* between their creation and its counterparts in Qing China. For years now, Hong Kong had been framed by them as a beacon of good governance that the Middle Kingdom would do well to emulate: 'it has been a growing and living evidence of western progress *vis-a-vis* to Celestial slumber and the Empire of "*Laissez aller*".'¹⁵ This theme was further expounded upon by the *Overland China Mail*, which at the time of the Diamond Jubilee compared Hong Kong to Canton – the city's predecessor as the main base of British operations in China and the one from which they were once unceremoniously ejected. In a withering attack on this historic Chinese port, which had served as the gateway to foreign trade for so long, the *Overland China Mail* said 'After the best has been said that can be said, Canton has not much to be proud of; and in view of their inattention to the material improvement of the city, neither officials nor people deserve to be immortalised for works of merit. Rip Van Winkle could have slept his 20 years here, and awakened without discovering a Canton remodelled by the enterprising activity of its rulers and inhabitants.'¹⁶ Therefore, just as Chinese medicine and living habits had earlier been ridiculed by British commentators in Hong Kong as being medieval in form, its great cities were now held up as being equally backwards. The city's bullish English-speaking press argued that the lack of effective governance and entrepreneurial spirit there meant that the Chinese settlements nearby were incapable of keeping pace with their own dynamic and successful metropolis. Despite the significant existential threats that the small British community of Hong Kong continued to face at this time, a spirit of self-congratulation hung heavy in the air during the Diamond Jubilee.

Linda Colley argues that the settlements that participated in royal jubilee celebrations most enthusiastically were those that felt themselves to be among the most successful.¹⁷ To illustrate her point, she offers the example of Liverpool during the original jubilee celebrations of George III in 1809 – a city whose fortunes had been transformed during the fifty years of the king's reign to the extent that it was now regarded as the second

¹⁵ W. Legge, *A Guide to Hongkong, with some remarks upon Macao and Canton* (Hong Kong, 1893), p. 2.

¹⁶ *The Overland China Mail*, 1st July, 1897.

¹⁷ Colley, *Britons*, pp. 228 – 9.

city of the empire behind London. In their jubilee address to George III, Liverpool's municipal representatives wrote 'You found us, Sire, unknown to fame. Under the protecting influence of Your Majesty's government, we have now arrived at so high a degree of commercial.... importance, as to be left almost without a rival throughout Your Majesty's extensive empire.'¹⁸ Such euphoric and assertive sentiments bear an uncanny resemblance to those expressed in the colonial newspapers of Hong Kong in 1897. Due in part to the industry of its traders and financiers, the shelter provided by its magnificent natural harbour and the effectiveness of the Royal Navy, Hong Kong had transformed itself throughout Queen Victoria's reign into a city that the British elite could feel justifiably proud of. Although the great contribution of the resident Chinese community was largely excluded from the narrative that was employed by the local British press during the Diamond Jubilee, this celebration of place formed an important component of the proceedings. Following in the footsteps of the municipal governors of Liverpool in 1809, the Hong Kong authorities used the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee to reflect upon and celebrate the rapid growth and economic success of their city.

The narrative espoused by Cape Town's English-speaking newspapers was a rather less politicised one that focussed more on the extravagant display that the celebrations offered rather than dwelling on the symbolic resonance of them in terms of the city. Where they do appear to have taken stock and attempted to evaluate the levels of progress made under the reign of Queen Victoria, it was in the context of the region of southern Africa – rather than the city of Cape Town itself – that such assertions were made: 'The sixty years of Her Majesty's reign have been marked by a wonderful development in South Africa, while within the last fifty years, through the explorations which began with the travels of Dr. Livingstone, the regions of the Zambesi [*sic*] and of Central Africa have been added to the civilised world, and have been opened to the influence of Christian missions, and of lawful trade.'¹⁹ Although civic pride was firmly in evidence in Cape Town during the Diamond Jubilee, this pride was not implicitly

¹⁸ The address of the city of Liverpool to George III on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 229.

¹⁹ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

linked to British achievement and the reign of Queen Victoria to anything like the extent that it was in Hong Kong.

However, although Cape Town had acquired the reputation of being ‘distinctly un-British in its human mix and built environment’, by the summer of 1897 British municipal governance had begun to create a city that was more easily recognisable as an important outpost of Victoria’s empire.²⁰ As the first industrial global superpower, Britain’s creation and development of towns and cities across its empire was one of its major defining characteristics.²¹ This development also tended to follow a particular style. For example, according to Asa Briggs, Melbourne at the end of the nineteenth century was ‘a very British kind of metropolis. The city centre included well-stocked and well-lit shops “equal to the best in London”; bank buildings, described in 1856 as “of considerable architectural pretensions”; a Theatre Royal, built in 1842, where you could see “Italian opera in a style worthy of the English metropolis itself”: and a new Melbourne Club, opened in 1858, which “though it has not the Corinthian pillars and fine architectural proportions of the Conservative at home.... would not at all disgrace St. James’s Street”.²² Therefore, many of the new cities of the empire clearly took their cue from the imperial capital – and it was against the buildings and amenities of London that they tended to be judged.

Although Melbourne, having benefitted from the influx and generation of great wealth following its own mineral revolution, perhaps stood out as a particularly magnificent example of urban development and affluence within the British Empire at this time, Cape Town in 1897 also now had the well-lit and well-stocked shops of Adderley Street, the fine stone buildings and the availability of cultural pursuits that could give most imperial cities a run for their money. The city’s grand and imposing railway station, which – like the clock tower – is considered to be a vital indicator of European modernity in the colonial lands, was lavishly decorated: ‘a real work of art’ said the

²⁰ V. Bickford-Smith, *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis: Cities and Identities in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 62.

²¹ J. Morris and S. Winchester, *Stones of Empire: The Buildings of the Raj* (Oxford, rev. ed., 2005), p. 196.

²² Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, pp. 287 – 8.

Cape Times.²³ The impressive nature of this spectacle, and of the bunting that surrounded it, can be gauged from Figure 24. The railway station was also a central feature of the illumination of the city that took place, in the teeth of one of the fierce storms for which Cape Town had become famous, on the eve of the celebrations. Indeed, so splendid was the sight of the railway station under lights that the *Cape Argus* was moved to comment ‘we shall make nobody jealous if we say that the terminus was far and away the finest piece of illumination Cape Town has ever seen or is likely to see.’²⁴

Other new urban features were also proudly portrayed in a book, published in Cape Town by Edwards & Co., which was produced specifically to celebrate the condition of South Africa at the Diamond Jubilee. While it contained images from cities across the region, two of its pages were devoted to showing some of the development that had taken place in Cape Town over recent years. One of these pages showed two images of Adderley Street. The first of them, a photograph from 1880, clearly sought to transmit the idea of a rural and parochial settlement to the viewer; it shows a quiet, wide street with low buildings and the prominent positioning of a horse and cart in the shot. In contrast, the photograph from 1897, which was displayed below it, presents a supremely modern and significantly more built-up version of the street to the viewer: trams and automobiles are shown forming an orderly procession through a bustling, high rise and grandly ornamented thoroughfare.²⁵ The comparison between the two photographs is stark – although this may have been exacerbated by a sleight of hand in the framing of the shots: in the photograph from 1880, the camera faces south, with the formidable and majestic presence of Table Mountain providing the image’s backdrop. The inclusion of this great natural landmark in the shot adds to the sense of comparative urban underdevelopment that the editors clearly wished to project to the onlooker. However, the 1897 version shows Adderley Street from the perspective of its southernmost end, near the Company Gardens, and the camera looks down the street in the direction of the faraway docks. With no great natural landmark in the background to dwarf Adderley Street’s fine new stone buildings, the credentials of the scene as a site of significant

²³ *The Cape Times*, 23rd June, 1897.

²⁴ *The Cape Argus*, 23rd June, 1897.

²⁵ Dennis Edwards & Co. Ltd, *The South African Record of the Glorious Reign* (Cape Town, 1897), p. 6.

urban development are all the more enhanced. However, this alteration in the direction that the camera faces does undermine these photographs as a wholly legitimate means of comparison – possibly the publishers may themselves have not picked up on this discrepancy in the camera’s gaze or were hoping that many of the book’s readers, particularly those who were unfamiliar with the geography of the city centre, would not study the photographs sufficiently well enough to notice.

The strength of Cape Town’s cultural credentials was also celebrated in this publication: a second set of photographs of Cape Town compared the city’s new, imposing and substantially larger opera house on the Grand Parade, created in a Classical style with many decorative columns and pediments, with its attractive yet smaller and far less ostentatious predecessor on Burg Street.²⁶ The overall message transmitted by these two sets of photographs is clear: in the year of the Diamond Jubilee, Cape Town – along with the other cities of the region that the book celebrated – was a city on the move and was wholehearted in its embrace of European conceptions of modernity. A guide book to the city, published by the same company in 1897, passed further comment on the transformation that had taken place:

The changes that have taken place in Cape Town during the past five or six years have been so extensive, and have affected so great a portion of the city, that a visitor who may chance to see the capital of Cape Colony after an absence of, say, half a decade, can hardly recognise it as the place he was formerly acquainted with. Adderley Street, St. George’s Street, and Strand Street, not to mention less important thoroughfares, have been so altered and improved by the erection of imposing-looking buildings, and by the removal of the hideous *stoeps* that were once an obstruction and an eyesore, that the Capetonians may be forgiven for cherishing feelings of pride regarding his place of residence, and for holding to the opinion that he is indeed a “citizen of no mean city”.²⁷

While allowances have to be made for the sensationalist tone of the piece, one that is probably common to all publications that seek to sell the attractions of a city to an outside audience, this quotation presents an important local insight into the pace and

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁷ Dennis Edwards & Co. Ltd, *The Illustrated Cape Town Guide* (Cape Town, 1897), pp. 66 – 7.

scale of these changes. Although, in contrast to the guide books of Hong Kong, the direct contribution of the British to the modernisation of the city is unheralded in this extract, it is clear that Cape Town was being developed by its municipal authorities in keeping with British notions of what a successful modern city should look like.

Indeed, vindicating this point further, Vivian Bickford-Smith states that many imperial cities were rebuilt in the latter half of the nineteenth century ‘in accordance with British and American perceptions of what would remedy urban defects and provide a supposedly desirable and attractive urbanity.’²⁸ As the extract from the guide book confirms, cultural imperialism was visible in the commentary on Cape Town’s new architectural style: the removal of the Dutch *stoeps* and their replacement by ‘Victorian civic architecture, neoclassical business premises, neo-Gothic churches, and the ubiquitous use of wrought-iron adornment and signage imported from Britain’ appeared to symbolise to many of its Anglophone and ‘progressive’ residents how British modernity had swept through the area and ejected many of the perceived Dutch architectural anachronisms from the streets.²⁹ The city had also recently installed electric lighting and electric trams in areas of the city – amenities that were adjudged by the editors of the guide book to have been important indicators of a British modernising spirit that was considered by them to be now transforming the region.³⁰ These trams were clearly an enormous source of civic pride within the city, and Figure 25 shows two of them that were decorated especially for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

It is surprising, therefore, that the local English-speaking press did not use the Diamond Jubilee as a platform from which to trumpet the progress and changes made within Cape Town during its time under British rule and to claim Cape Town as a ‘British city’. In addition to the progressive policies employed by the Clean Party in the field of public health, equally-transformative changes had indeed taken place to the city’s architectural identity, street plans and transport infrastructures. These developments appeared to confirm the increased influence wielded by ethnic Britons in Cape Town’s municipal

²⁸ Bickford-Smith, *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis*, p. 12.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³⁰ Edwards & Co., *The Illustrated Cape Town Guide*, pp. 66 – 7.

government during the final decades of the century, as well as providing a powerful indication of the enormous economic enrichment provided by the mineral revolution. The city was now presented as having undergone a metamorphosis: from being a sleepy Dutch town to a modern, thriving and now more distinguishably British metropolis. However, a specific recognition of this did not appear to have made its way into the reports of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations that were published by the city's English-speaking press. Instead, the journalists sought to laud the unique length of the Record Reign and to provide a detailed report of the extensive celebrations that Cape Town produced in honour of this event.

One can only presume that Cape Town was not labelled a specifically British success story during the celebrations for good reason. For example, it is possible that any attempt on the part of Cape Town's English-speaking press to proclaim the city's essential Britishness might have been considered ludicrous, and somewhat offensive, by a large number of local residents. Although many facets of Cape Town's urban fabric and identity had indeed been anglicised over the previous few decades, the influence of the Dutch was still perceptibly strong: the Castle of Good Hope remained a quintessentially Dutch seventeenth-century fortification; despite the removal of many *stoeps*, Dutch architecture was still a regular occurrence in the city's central districts, suburban areas and wineries; names such as Robben Island, Buitengracht and Kloof Street continued to remind both residents and tourists of the city's Dutch heritage; the Afrikaner *taal* was widely spoken and overheard in its public areas and the ethnic Dutch contingent as a whole remained numerous, highly visible and influential. Accordingly, while the conception of Britishness was celebrated with enthusiasm here, the city of Cape Town was not implicitly claimed as 'British' during the Diamond Jubilee.

The Diamond Jubilee celebrations also allowed both cities to project an image of themselves to a significantly large outside audience. This was not only due to the reports of their celebrations, which found their way into newspapers across the world, but also because they sent military detachments to take part in the London celebrations. The presence of the cities' soldiers and policemen in the imperial capital, some of whom can

be seen parading along the jubilee processional route in Figures 26 and 27, provided local audiences with a dramatic indication of the cities' loyalty to the empire. Moreover, the sight of these men – and they were all exclusively men – also raised the profile of the cities in the minds of the British public. Evidence of this comes from the fact that these detachments appear to have created quite a stir in London: the correspondents of the *Manchester Guardian* drew attention to the ranks of 'almond-eyed Chinamen' and the 'sombre-clad Cape Mounted Rifles' who rode their mounts with 'perfect judgment' during the parade, and the *Times* reported on how crowds regularly congregated at the gates of the Chelsea Barracks in order to catch a glimpse of the exotic colonial troops whilst they were quartered there.³¹

Further evidence of the high level of public interest in the presence of the colonial troops is provided by the extremely small entertainment expenses claim that was filed by the representatives of the Hong Kong police detachment. As the men prepared to embark back on their journey home, the commanding officer of the 30-strong contingent of Sikh and Chinese constables, Deputy Superintendent J. Badeley, informed staff at the Colonial Office that, although he had been authorised to spend a sum of up to £1 per man in order to show them the sights of the capital, the total expenses incurred came to little more than £3 – approximately a tenth of his budget. The reason for this, Badeley explained, was that 'so many places of entertainment were thrown open to the men, and other pleasures provided for them, that I did not find it necessary to spend more.'³² Based on this evidence, the Hong Kong police detachment certainly appears to have been warmly welcomed by ordinary Londoners, and there is no reason to believe that the other colonial troops would not have been greeted with similar levels of generosity and hospitality during their stay in the mother country. Although Joseph Chamberlain's plans for an imperial federation received a fatal blow at the conference that followed the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the presence of such a large array of troops from across

³¹ *The Manchester Guardian*, 2nd July, 1897. *The Times*, 21st June, 1897.

³² J. Badeley, Dep. Supt of Police, Hong Kong, 'Expenses for Colonial Detachment in London', 11th September, 1897. N. A., CO 129/280, 'Individuals' Correspondence, 1st January – 31st December 1897', pp. 260 - 2.

the British Empire can only have raised levels of interest in the country's overseas possessions among ordinary Britons, albeit temporarily.

II. Urban Commemorations

The various foundation stones, notices and plaques that adorn objects which commemorate a particular historic event rarely offer any indication that their creation was anything other than a foregone conclusion or the product of a unanimously popular decision. However, the installation of each of these items possesses its own story – and it might surprise the contemporary observer to find that a longstanding building, statue or fountain could once have been the subject of fierce debate and might easily have not been erected. The furore that surrounded a more recent commemorative project, the creation of the Millennium Dome in London, shows how debate over these projects is not a solely historical issue. Indeed, plans to memorialise particular events are often hotly contested, as local communities often emerge as stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Both the cities decided to mark the queen's 1887 Golden Jubilee event by commissioning an impressive statue of Queen Victoria – although, as previously discussed, the Cape Town committee was ultimately unable to afford the high specification model that they had originally coveted. Neither city had possessed a truly impressive statue of her prior to this celebration, so a contemporary observer viewing either one of the statues, which now stand in Victoria Park, Hong Kong, and in the grounds of the South African parliament building in Cape Town, might assume that the decision to commemorate the event in this manner had been a relatively straight-forward one. However, as members of the public had donated the money that allowed the objects to be built, they felt entitled to pass comment on how this was spent. In Hong Kong at least, there was a significant divergence of opinion on how the Golden Jubilee should be commemorated: 'considerable opposition' was expressed to the proposal of a statue and some citizens called instead for a public library or a sanatorium on the Peak to be built

instead.³³ Finally, despite some concern expressed that a statue of the queen would not directly contribute to the community and would therefore represent a waste of money, the scheme was given a green light – to the agreement of the *Hongkong Daily Press*: ‘As to the local memorial, there can be no question that a statue is the most appropriate form it could take.... It is one which conveys a direct compliment to Her Majesty; it is entirely free from the selfish taint which characterised the other proposals; and it is one which will doubtless meet with the approbation of the Chinese community, who are going to share the expense.’³⁴ However, this episode shows how the memorialisation of these events could become afflicted by significant disagreement.

Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, which benefitted from a significant increase in its fund raising total in comparison to the 1887 event, thus had the potential to provoke an even greater debate on how the money should be spent. However, this threat may have been partly defused by a suggestion that emanated from the Royal Family on how the jubilee might be commemorated: the Prince of Wales announced that his mother wished for ‘work of mercy among the sick and the suffering... anything which may tend to brighten the lives and ameliorate the condition of Her Majesty’s poorer subjects’ to form the central plank of the event’s legacy.³⁵ Many places did focus their efforts on providing some alleviation for the poor, and the popularity of building hospitals to mark the Diamond Jubilee was particularly noticeable across the empire. The frequency of this also reinforced the fact that the issue of public health and sanitation was still a pressing one at this time. In Hong Kong, the event’s proceedings included the laying of a foundation stone for a new hospital for women and children [Figure 18]. In addition, a new training institute for nurses was also established. In Cape Town, a foundation stone was laid for a new wing to the New Somerset Hospital and, in the city’s suburbs, new wards were created in the existing cottage hospitals at Rondebosch and at Woodstock.³⁶

³³ *The Hongkong Daily Press*, 5th December, 1890.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 31st May, 1887.

³⁵ The Prince of Wales quoted in E. Hammerton and D. Cannadine, ‘Conflict and Consensus on a Ceremonial Occasion: The Diamond Jubilee in Cambridge in 1897’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 24, no. 1 (March, 1981), p. 125.

³⁶ *The Cape Times*, 18th June and 19th May, 1897. Western Cape Archives, 1/5/1/1/1, ‘Special Committees: Minutes’, minutes of the public meeting held at the Town House in Cape Town to consider the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, 15th February, 1897, p. 367.

In addition, a nurses training institute was also built at Woodstock. Therefore, in both cities, the decorative yet functionally useless statues that had marked the queen's Golden Jubilee had evolved into rather more practical legacies for the Diamond Jubilee.

Although the extra money that was available to spend may have also helped to determine this choice, the creation of this much needed infrastructure also illustrated how the priorities of the cities' governing authorities had evolved over this period.

Although the practice of establishing hospitals in tribute to the Diamond Jubilee was certainly not ubiquitous, with the commencement of building works on town halls (Graaff-Reinet and Singapore), a clock tower (Uitenhage), parks (Middelburg, Ceres and Wynberg), a school for poor white children (Kimberley) and a palm house and conservatory (Durban) also being incorporated into local events, many towns and cities in the vicinity of Hong Kong and Cape Town did also choose to mark the celebrations in this way.³⁷ For example, in the British enclaves in China, foundation stones were laid for a nursing home in Shanghai and a hospital in Tientsin.³⁸ In southern Africa, funds were raised to add another wing to the hospital in Port Elizabeth and cottage hospitals were also established at Stellenbosch and at Pretoria.³⁹ As a result, there is certainly evidence to suggest a strong link between the Diamond Jubilee's legacy and an increase in the provision of public health across the British Empire.

However, the choice of a new wing for the New Somerset Hospital in Cape Town was also not a unanimous one: the Rev. Canon Ogilvie, Vice Chancellor of the Cape University, advocated that a fitting memorial would be a hall for the university – something that he said was certainly required and the absence of which had been commented upon by overseas visitors.⁴⁰ However, the argument deployed for building the new hospital wing makes it clear that practical considerations dictated that the money needed to be spent on this project: in response to the Vice Chancellor's proposal,

³⁷ *The Straits Times*, 25th May, 1897. *The Cape Times*, 15th May, 18th June, 21st June, 28th June and 29th June, 1897. *The Port Elizabeth and Eastern Province Standard*, 1st May and 10th June, 1897. *The Cape Mercury*, 1st June, 1897.

³⁸ *The North-China Herald*, 25th June and 2nd July, 1897.

³⁹ *The Cape Times*, 19th June, 1897. *The Cape Argus*, 25th June, 1897.

⁴⁰ Western Cape Archives, 1/5/1/1/1, 'Special Committees: Minutes', minutes of a further meeting to consider the jubilee celebrations, 24th February, 1897, p. 372.

J. E. Fuller – a member of the Legislative Assembly – informed the meeting that the existing capacity at the hospital was unable to cope with the supply of patients and so ‘the Hospital Authorities were placed in the regrettable position of being compelled to refuse admission to many cases.’⁴¹ As discussed earlier, both Hong Kong and Cape Town were rapidly growing cities at this time. While the jubilee organising committees could debate the merits of various alternative schemes, the practical necessity of providing services to their rapidly growing populations – as well as a possible desire to accede to the queen’s wishes – seem to have been at the heart of each committee’s decision to use the proceeds of the Diamond Jubilee to extend the existing public health infrastructure.

Due to the financial windfall generated by the enormous success of the Diamond Jubilee subscription lists, cities were also able to breathe new life into projects that may have been previously conceived, but had been moth-balled due to a lack of money. One of the most expensive infrastructure projects that a municipality could undertake was road building, and in Hong Kong the amount of money available to the organising committee allowed the idea of building an orbital road around the island to be resurrected. This scheme had earlier been mooted during the city’s Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1891, but it had failed to progress beyond the drawing board at that time.⁴² However, for R. D. Ormsby, Hong Kong’s Director of Public Works, the Diamond Jubilee presented an opportunity to begin this project that should not be missed: ‘The Victoria Jubilee Road round the Island will soon be in progress and its completion in a few years will provide an immense boon to the whole population of the Colony, European and native. If followed, as no doubt it will be in time, by a road side tramway, the overcrowding of Victoria will probably be relieved by many of the better class of Chinese and Eurasians moving out to the suburbs.’⁴³ Almost inevitably, opposition to this proposal was swiftly encountered, with residents querying whether the money could not be better spent on improving existing road infrastructure instead. Some also objected to the high-handed manner in which the organising committee was acting: ‘When it is remembered that the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

⁴² Letter of ‘An English Resident’, *Overland China Mail*, 8th January, 1891.

⁴³ N. A., CO 131/28, p. 234.

Jubilee Committee, who were nominated by the Governor, have not discussed the question of a road round the island with the public at a public meeting, and when it is also considered that to complete such a road a good deal of public money will have to be spent, I suggest it behoves the Committee to be quite certain they represent the wishes of the public, or at any rate the majority of the subscribers to the Jubilee Fund.’⁴⁴

Six years previously, the *Hongkong Daily Press* had voiced significant concerns over whether the road represented good value for money anyway: ‘By a few enthusiastic horsemen and cyclists the advantages of the proposed road would be highly appreciated, but by the great bulk of the population they would not be felt at all.’⁴⁵ There is a strong sense here that this commemorative project might have been seen by many within the city as one that disproportionately favoured its elite residents. However, the celebratory events of the Diamond Jubilee did include a ceremony to lay the foundation stone for the orbital road. However, R. D. Ormsby’s vision remained unrealised: beginning in westernmost suburb of Kennedy Town, the road snaked its way around the westernmost part of the island, but proceeded no further south than Kellett Bay – perhaps covering a tenth of the distance originally envisaged. Despite the great fanfare that greeted the commencement of work on the project, Hong Kong’s great Diamond Jubilee orbital road proved to be a huge disappointment.

However, what was built of the orbital road remains ‘Victoria Road’ and so continues to tangibly provide a link to the jubilee celebrations. Although the building of roads in honour of royal jubilees was generally a highly controversial practice, with citizens arguing that these projects should be provided by the local public works department anyway if they are truly necessary, those that were made have often proved to be the most durable legacies of these events. While some of the hospitals and training institutes that were created in Hong Kong and Cape Town in honour of the Diamond Jubilee have been closed or demolished, the street names and the statues remain to this day. Cape Town also has its own ‘Victoria Road’: opened in 1887, it runs between the coastal

⁴⁴ Letter of G. C. C. Master to the Hon. C. P. Chater, Chairman of the Jubilee Committee, 16th June, 1897. Reproduced in the *Hongkong Weekly Press and China Overland Trade Report*, 22nd June, 1897.

⁴⁵ The *Hongkong Daily Press*, 5th December, 1890.

communities of Camps Bay and Hout Bay. Its presence continues to draw attention to the queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations that took place in the city that year. The improvements made to the public health infrastructure appear to have been less controversial at the time and would surely have contributed a more direct improvement to the lives of both cities' residents. However, ironically, it is the more contentious, uninspiring and unloved slabs of concrete and stone that now allow echoes of the Diamond Jubilee to continue to gently resonate in Hong Kong and Cape Town today.

The Diamond Jubilee events in Hong Kong and Cape Town present two contrasting examples of the relationship between the celebrations and the city in which they took place. Whilst both cities were, by 1897, convincing monuments to British rule – with both now possessing the grand public buildings and modern western infrastructure that would be considered essential in the most prominent outposts of the empire – it was only in Hong Kong that specific connections between the city, the British foundation myth and the monarchy were implicitly made. In Hong Kong, the celebrations were a hugely symbolic event. Although the beginning of 1891 had seen the colonial authorities and some members of local population celebrate the fiftieth year of the city's foundation, the sixtieth years of the queen's reign appeared to be no less important a landmark in Hong Kong's development. So enthusiastic and effective had been the engineering of a connection between the monarch and her easternmost possession that, for the colonial authorities and the English-speaking press of Hong Kong, the Diamond Jubilee was arguably every much a celebration of the city as it was a celebration of Queen Victoria. The same could not be said for the celebrations in Cape Town, however. Although the Diamond Jubilee took place during a period when the architecture and infrastructure of Cape Town was being altered according to Anglo-American concepts of the modern city, and publications were being produced which lauded the transformative effect that recent, predominantly ethnic British, municipal administrations had fashioned on the urban landscape, specific linkages between the city, the queen and Britishness were not an important component of the English-speaking press coverage of the event. In Cape Town, the Diamond Jubilee was a highly extravagant and memorable occasion, but it does not appear to have been regarded as a seminal event in the city's history – as it was

in Hong Kong. Unlike in Hong Kong, during the event Cape Town was also not overtly celebrated by its colonial elite as being a 'British city'.

In both Hong Kong and Cape Town, the great success of the public subscription lists allowed for significant forms of commemoration to be considered. Both cities centred their contribution to the legacy of the event on the improvement of public health provision. The hospitals and nursing institutes that were built may have been in keeping with the queen's wish that the commemorations should focus on assisting the empire's poor, but they can more accurately be seen as evidence of the effect that recent great increases in the resident populations of these cities was having on public infrastructure. With the existing public health capacity being rendered inadequate by enormous flows of migrants into the cities, the organising committees of Hong Kong and Cape Town perhaps had little option but to spend the subscription money on these new facilities. Just as the commissioning of statues of Queen Victoria in both cities can perhaps be now perceived as being a frivolous and highly impractical use of the money that was donated in 1887, the building of hospitals and nursing institutes ten years later can be considered to have been a pragmatic and much-needed response to one of the biggest challenges that Hong Kong and Cape Town faced at that time. The creation of these buildings alone mark out the Diamond Jubilee as being an important event in these two places.

Figure 19: The City of Victoria



Figure 20: St. John's Cathedral, Hong Kong



Both images from R. C. Hurley, *Sixty Diamond Jubilee Photographs of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1897).

For the sake of having higher quality images in this thesis, both have been taken from the website of *Gwulo: Old Hong Kong*, <http://gwulo.com> [Accessed 27th April, 2016].

Figure 21: The Praya Reclamation and the new Hong Kong Club



Figure 22: The Man-of-War Anchorage at Hong Kong



Both images from Hurley, *Sixty Diamond Jubilee Photographs of Hong Kong*.
For the sake of having higher quality images in this thesis, both have been taken from the website of *Gwulo: Old Hong Kong*, <http://gwulo.com> [Accessed 27th April, 2016].

Figure 23: The Pedder Street Clock Tower, Hong Kong



Image from J. Morris, *Building Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 1995), p. 76.

Figure 24: Cape Town Railway Station, decorated for the Diamond Jubilee



Figure 25: Decorated Tram Cars, Cape Town

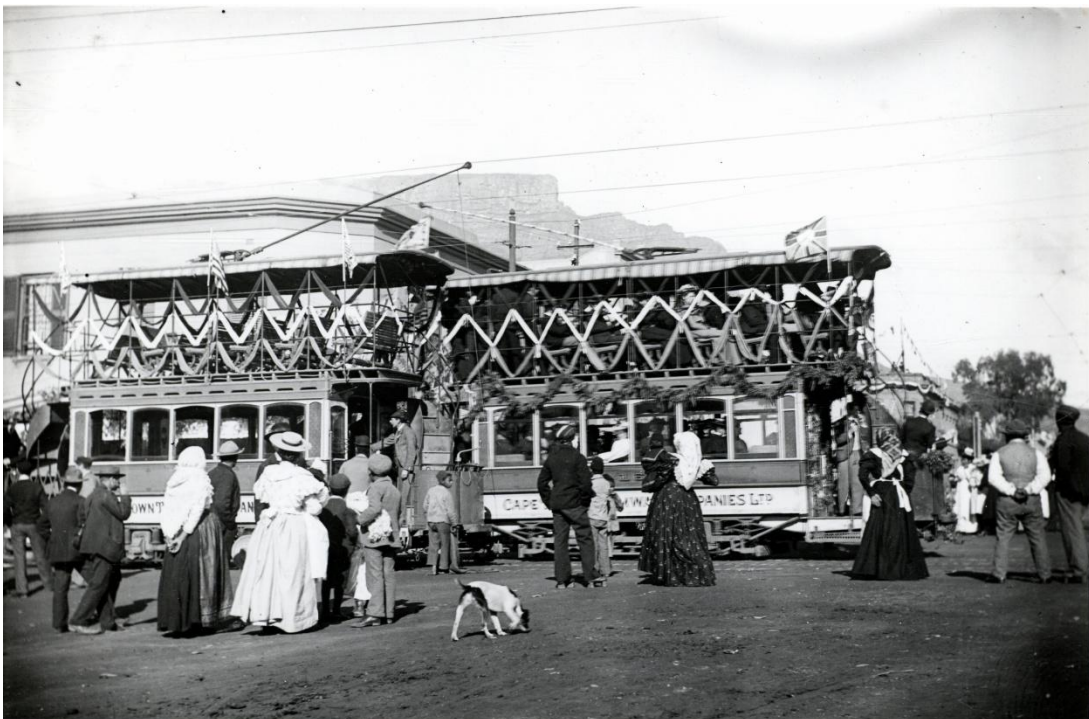


Figure 24 is taken from the Dr Juritz collection: Western Cape Archives, Dr J361.

Figure 25 is also taken from the Dr Juritz collection: Western Cape Archives, Dr J585.

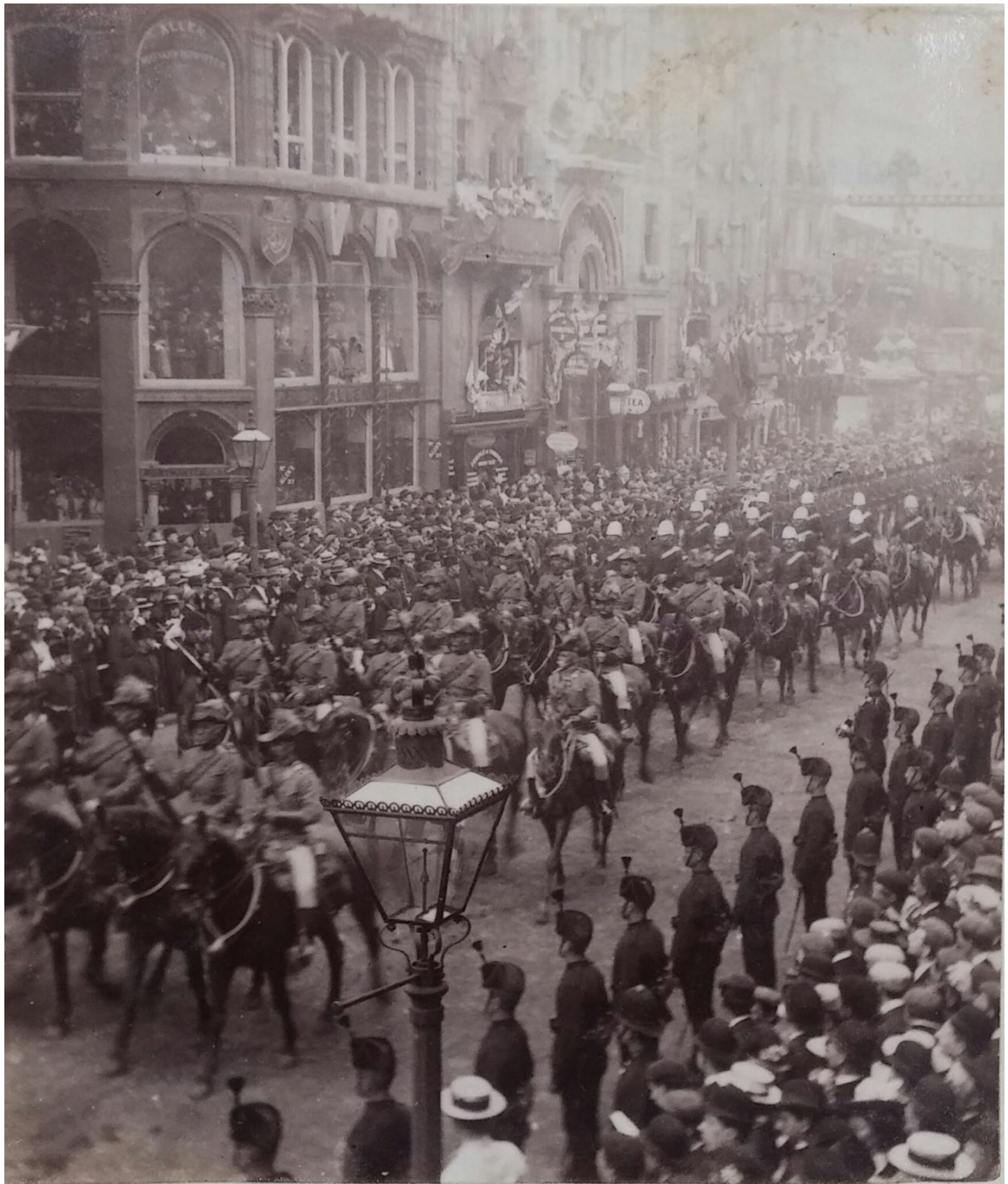
Figure 26: Policemen from Hong Kong at the Diamond Jubilee in London



Wearing white gaiters and conical hats, and being led by their European officer, the Chinese policemen in the foreground follow a smaller group of Sikh policemen – who are also from Hong Kong.

N. A., COPY 1/431/119, 'Photograph of the Diamond Jubilee Procession showing Colonial Troops, Hong Kong Police [etcetera]'.

Figure 27: Men of the Cape Mounted Rifles at the Diamond Jubilee in London



The detachment of the Cape Mounted Rifles is the first group shown in this image.

N. A., COPY 1/431/22, 'Photograph of the Diamond Jubilee Procession. Queensland Mounted Rifles and Cape Mounted Rifles, taken from balcony, 431 West Strand, London, June 22, 1897.'

CONCLUSION

Although Hong Kong and Cape Town shared many characteristics, and a certain amount of uniformity was present in their respective celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee, there were also profound differences in their situation in 1897 – particularly in terms of their demographic structures, their historical identities and in the style of governance that was employed there. These discrepancies manifested themselves during the festive period and the various organising committees and communities produced events that present important insights on a number of themes – in particular those of empire loyalty, notions of Britishness and the evolution and identification of the cities themselves.

What can be said for the Diamond Jubilee events in both Hong Kong and Cape Town is that, despite the strains and open ruptures that were evident in the community relationships of both places, the celebrations appear to have passed off relatively peacefully. Neither place witnessed the levels of rioting that were seen in Dublin, where the police took part in running battles with stone-throwing Nationalists and ‘all the principal establishments showing colours or illuminations had their windows smashed.’¹ Nor too did either city see their events tainted by the murder of British colonial officials, as was the case in the Indian city of Pune – where anger over the new sanitation measures that had been recently enforced following the arrival of Bubonic Plague from the Far East prompted the Chapekar brothers to assassinate the hated local plague commissioner, Walter Rand, and a young army lieutenant, Charles Ayerst, as they made their way home from the local celebrations.² For all the discontent that was present over various levels of discrimination being shown to certain racial groups in Hong Kong and the tightening of their grip on political power by white elites in Cape Town, as discussed in Chapter Two, overt opposition to the event was not reported in these cities – even

¹ *The Manchester Guardian*, 24th June, 1897.

² M. Echenberg, *Plague Ports: the global urban impact of Bubonic Plague 1894 – 1901* (New York, NY, 2012), pp. 66 - 8. D. Patel, ‘India and the last jubilee queen.’ *The Hindu*, published online 16th June, 2012. <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion> [Accessed 3rd August, 2008].

though some English-speaking newspapers in Cape Town did appear to question the levels of enthusiasm and participation shown by some of its Afrikaner residents.

Although only English-language material has been consulted during this project, it seems unfeasible to believe that some opposition in these cities may have manifested itself in a visible way, only for news of such disturbances to be smothered by a blanket of silence in both the local press and in newspapers based in Britain. As the reporting of the fractious events in Dublin by Fleet Street newspapers show, there were journalists and newspaper titles that were unafraid of publishing reports of trouble during the celebrations – and there may even have been those within the Fourth Estate who might have been specifically on the lookout for such stories. Therefore one can be relatively reassured that the factual reporting of the event's central proceedings in both cities involved a relatively high degree of accuracy.

This thesis has sought to examine the subject of empire loyalty within these cities and the extent to which genuine levels of affection for the queen could be found amongst their inhabitants and the visitors that were present. Whilst it is apparent that the celebrations were largely well-attended and general levels of engagement with them appeared to be high, one can only take issue with the facile assumption, expounded by the colonial institutions at the time, that attendance at the event can be considered proof enough of its popularity. This unconvincing argument is challenged most strongly in the analysis of the celebrations in Hong Kong, where 95 per cent of the resident population were ethnic Chinese. Although there are grounds for concluding that some genuine degree of appreciation may have existed towards the monarch, overall it is difficult to believe that this was the prime motivating factor behind the attendance of many Chinese people at the proceedings. The work of Bryna Goodman is particularly illuminating on the subject of inter-clan rivalry in the Chinese treaty ports, and her argument that the Chinese used events such as these to showcase their wealth and power, to each other as well as the colonisers, is a convincing one. Whilst the Chinese community of Hong Kong produced a lavish display for the Diamond Jubilee, as they had done for the corresponding event a decade earlier, their motives remain unclear.

The case for a strong sense of empire loyalty driving their participation is further weakened by knowledge of what the Chinese community endured in terms of discrimination at the time. Although the hated ‘Pass and Light’ regulations were abandoned shortly before the Diamond Jubilee, it is unlikely that this act would have erased the memories of decades of discrimination and the treatment meted out to them during the visit of Bubonic Plague in 1894. Amongst the thousands of visiting onlookers, many of whom travelled down the Pearl River from Canton for the event, the lure of the celebrations was surely the spectacle itself – rather than any desire to show appreciation for either Britain or its queen. Of fundamental importance in regard to the question of empire loyalty here in Hong Kong is the fact that the resident Chinese community tended to retain strong links to the lands beyond the border. As shown by Governor Robinsons’ complaint that so few of them had become anglicised, it is likely that very few of them would have considered themselves to have been subjects of the queen and part of the British Empire. Therefore, whilst the events of the Diamond Jubilee may have presented a welcome opportunity for relaxation and celebration, it is difficult to conclude that significant levels of empire loyalty could be found in this community and – by extension – this city.

Whilst, on the face of it, the Cape Town celebrations seemed to confirm the British administration’s impressions of the city’s Malay community as being an exotic, yet loyal, group, there are also certain caveats which should be applied to their outwardly enthusiastic showing at the Diamond Jubilee. As with the Chinese of Hong Kong, the use of this event for political point scoring cannot be ruled out. As with the Chinese of Hong Kong, there is also the wider political situation of the region to consider: British rule may have been seen by them as representing the least bad option that was available, rather than something to have been genuinely enthusiastic about. Whilst the Malay community certainly had grounds for feeling that their general position had improved since British rule had replaced the Dutch administration, it would certainly not be accurate to state that the Malay community now existed on a similar level to the European whites, regardless of the continuing presence of a ‘colour blind’ franchise. As

the events surrounding the outbreak of smallpox during the previous decade showed, at the time of the Diamond Jubilee the Malay community had continued to be the victims of cultural discrimination and whispering campaigns.

However, there is perhaps scope for less cynicism when considering the question of empire loyalty in Cape Town as opposed to in Hong Kong. The colonially orchestrated cult of the Great White Queen appears to have gained more traction in this part of the world, and there is evidence enough to suggest that it held significant currency in not only the city's Malay community, but also in the hearts of local Coloured and black residents. Certainly, pragmatism may have played a part in this; and these latter two groups may also have predominantly embraced Queen Victoria and British rule as presenting a much more palatable alternative to domination by the Afrikaner population. However, Britishness, and the values of modernity and progress that it was viewed as incorporating, also appeared to have appealed to certain sections of these societies – in particular, their new middle classes. Whilst the true feelings of the city's Afrikaner community during the Diamond Jubilee, and in the lead-up to the Second Boer War in general, is still a subject of much debate, there are still sufficient grounds for arguing that there might have been a genuinely cosmopolitan groundswell of support for the jubilee in Cape Town, as local English-speaking newspaper reports alluded to. As in Hong Kong, British rule had helped to galvanise local economic activity and develop urban and industrial infrastructure – actions which had translated into the increased availability of jobs. Although, as discussed, life was harsh for many of the new arrivals into this city, gratitude for the ability to make a fresh start there, away from the threat that a drought or a poor harvest might have on their livelihood, may have been present nonetheless.

The reaction of the local British communities is also analysed, and the examples of Hong Kong and Cape Town present a contrasting picture of how they celebrated. Although, on the face of it, both celebrations may be perceived to have been remarkably uniform to the countless other events taking place in a near simultaneous fashion across the globe, interesting nuances and discrepancies are visible. In the remote imperial

outpost of Hong Kong, where the embattled British community constituted a tiny fraction of the city's population, the celebrations were a highly politicised affair that were designed to present to the outside world a picture of unity within the British population and to showcase a military display that would deter potential invaders. This presented a contrast to the more relaxed and civilian-orientated festivities that took place in Cape Town where, unconcerned by the strength of their position in the region (despite a military build-up taking place around them), the British community could celebrate a more ethnically-driven, individual and nostalgic interpretation of Britishness.

The spirit of the celebrations also reflected the political system employed in the city. The event in Hong Kong was very much a 'top down' affair: the organising committee, whose members were nominated by the governor, produced a detailed and highly-controlled event – which mirrored the control that the imperial government continued to have over this Crown Colony. The timing of the events, the space that they were conducted in and the ability of particular people to enter these spaces were all controlled by the city's governing authorities. There was little room for acts of individualism and spontaneity. In contrast, the celebrations in Cape Town were much more community-driven – as befitting a city whose method of governance contained significantly greater levels of democratic accountability. The greater size of the British population in the city allowed them to take to the streets in a manner that was not possible in Hong Kong. This practice, which also tapped in to the city's rich traditions of public processions, gave scope for a wide range of British themes and peculiarities to be exhibited. Whereas the British community of Hong Kong was presented as a solid and faceless mass, the British inhabitants of Cape Town were able to show off their individual hobbies, social connections and ethnic affiliations.

However, both sets of celebrations were consistent in displaying particular themes of Britishness. Both cities recognised the connection between 'throne and altar', with the principal services of thanksgiving for the queen's rule taking place under the aegis of the established Protestant church. Both cities were the venue of impressive martial displays which benefitted from an increase in the number of troops stationed there. A projection

of military power was also made at sea although, in the case of Hong Kong, the relatively poor showing there was a matter of acute disagreement and embarrassment. Both cities also produced a male-organised and male-dominated event, with such female involvement as there was regulated to very minor or ornamental roles. The celebrations, despite taking place in hugely cosmopolitan societies, also reinforced the dominance of the white races. This was seen most graphically in Hong Kong, where access to the Praya was denied to non-whites during the celebrations. In Cape Town, where racial segregation was less visible, it manifested itself in the warmth of the welcome extended to fellow white communities to take part in the celebrations and in the flags of white nations that adorned the city's streets. Although there is a measure of the contribution of non-white residents and their attempts at appropriating Britishness being more valued in Cape Town, the presence of a racial pecking order still remained visible.

The Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Hong Kong and Cape Town also presented a contrasting situation in the relationship between the event and the city. For the colonial elites of Hong Kong, the queen's jubilee was regarded as a significant milestone in the development of their city – one that, from the time of its creation, had symbolically attached itself firmly to this particular monarch. The central position of Hong Kong's foundation myth in the English-speaking press coverage of the event demonstrated how the fortunes of monarch and city appeared to be linked in the popular imagination of the British community there. Hong Kong was emphatically proclaimed to be a 'British city'. In the work of R. C. Hurley and other commentators, it was considered to be a fine monument to the pluck and ingenuity that was native to the British race, and a demonstration once again of their supposed genius for turning an uninhabited and previously barren piece of foreign land into a modern and dazzlingly successful urban marvel. However, although the Diamond Jubilee event in Cape Town contained an exuberant celebration of Britishness, the city itself was not included in the scope of the festivities. Although the progress that the city had been seen to have made under British municipal governance was acclaimed during this period, the status of Cape Town as a traditional site of diversity and the product of a Dutch foundation appears to have been respected. Although the urban fabric of Cape Town was being altered to depict a more

traditionally British imperial city, local British commentators appear to have refrained from using the event as an opportunity to claim the city as their own.

Regardless of the discrepancy in the symbolic importance of the celebrations to each city, the Diamond Jubilee can be considered to have been a significant event in the lives of both Hong Kong and Cape Town as a result of the substantial improvement in public health infrastructure that their legacy projects delivered. The creation of hospitals and nursing institutes to mark the jubilee provided evidence of the pressing problems that both cities continued to face in the area of public health, and the popularity of hospitals as Diamond Jubilee commemorations across the empire shows that Hong Kong and Cape Town were not alone. The hospitals had been commissioned in order to expand capacity during a time of rapid urbanisation and an enormous increase in their resident populations. The use of these facilities would ensure that the Diamond Jubilee celebrations would live on for many years in the public memory long after the final pieces of bunting and triumphal arches had been cleared away.

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