**1st Workshop of Early Career Scholars on Hong Kong History**

**8 June 2023**

**Revised**

Time: 12:00-18:00

Venue: Research Space (1.H020), Art and Humanities Complex,

7 Woodland Road, University of Bristol

**Program**

12:00-13:00: Arrival, Introduction and lunch

13:00-14:15 Presentation by Gary Wong

14:15-15:30 Presentation by Gray Sergeant

15:30-15:45 Coffee break

15:45-17:00 Presentation by Patrick Hao

17:00-17:30 New series of Amsterdam University Press/Florence Mok

17:30-18:00 Rounding up

**Exhibiting Hong Kong in Wembley, London, 1924-1925**

Gary Pui-fung Wong (Leeds)

In 1924 and 1925, the British government organised the British Empire Exhibition in Wembley, London to promote cooperation within the British Empire. Hong Kong took part, with its own exhibition area - the Hong Kong Section – with the involvements of British and Chinese elites in Hong Kong. Two major general strikes, closely associated with the growing ideas of anti-imperialism and communism, took place in Hong Kong before and during the Exhibition. Unlike Indian and West African Sections, the Hong Kong Section did not provoke anticolonial sentiments. This presentation argues that the British businessmen’s identification with the metropole, as well as the Chinese elites’ identification with ancient China, their frustrations with the conflicts between warlords and the suspicion of communism, allowed for the successful exhibition of new images of Hong Kong in Wembley, despite some stereotypical images being exhibited.

**The Hong Kong Working Group and the Making of an Anglo-American Misunderstanding, 1957 - 1961**

Gray Sergeant (LSE)

At the October 1957 Washington Talks, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan sought to usher in an era of ‘interdependence’ in Anglo-American relations. To realise this objective and institutionalise close cooperation between the Cold War allies, a series of secretive working groups were established. This included one covering Hong Kong, which was tasked with assessing the Chinese Communist threat to the colony and formulating joint measures to meet it. Yet London failed to follow up on the second stage of these discussions. Prevarication ensued as British officials sought, unsuccessfully, to shift talks away from the working group machinery and back to the region, to be conducted between UK-US military staff. For all of Macmillan’s hopes of renewing a partnership of equals, in the case of Hong Kong, this ambition proved unfeasible. This paper explains why this failure occurred.

**Why did British colonial policy towards Hong Kong shift from an approach of gradual democratisation and convergence with Chinese political planning for Hong Kong’s future, to one of rapid democratisation and confrontation with China during the period 1989-94?**

Patrick Hao (Oxford)

The 1994 political reforms launched by Chris Patten marked a watershed in Hong Kong’s political development, ushering in a momentous era of rapid democratisation. This project focuses on a critical five-year period from 1989-1994, where British policy on political development in Hong Kong dramatically shifted from an approach of gradual democratisation in cooperation with China to one of rapid democratisation in confrontation with China. Crucially, while several explanations have been put forth by existing literature as to why this shift occurred, none of these explanations or any combination thereof have been tested against relevant governmental documents declassified by the UK National Archives in June 2020. This is the key empirical and theoretical challenge this project seeks to resolve, through extensively utilising highly pertinent recently declassified British FCO, CAB, and PREM documents, cross-referenced against Oral History interviews of key decisionmakers such as Chris Patten. The ultimate aim of this project is to create a substantive explanatory framework for why this extraordinary policy shift occurred.